Chapter III

Postmodern Women

This Chapter “Postmodern Women,” focuses on how women have been marginalized in the society and in their home. The theme of Hariharan’s novel has got autobiographical undertones, showing the life of Hariharan herself. Apart from all the postmodern techniques, this chapter focuses on her female characters how they survive in the male dominated society. Her characters pass through a self-analyzing process which makes them prove their identity, self-realization to self-actualization. The women of Hariharan face different kinds of problems in the society; through their experience they build the inner strength for surviving. These women focus the real position of women in the Indian scenario.

In India, the women writers as postmodernists are separated from the constitutional rights, social recognition, and power. Sometimes they are unable to express their opinions directly and at times it is indistinct, because the male writers have pointed out that the language which is used in the works of the female writers is not that much readable. But, Hariharan has provoked the readers to think innovatively and resourcefully. The postmodern writers are influenced by their respective cultures, which have made them to accept, adopt different techniques and the themes which have highlighted their feminist views. Jameela Begum, in her article, “Postmodern as Feminist Text: A Reading of the Short Text of Canadian Women Writers” has said the position of feminist writers as,

Women writers in attempting to explore a deeper reality are caught between two languages - ‘the father language’ and ‘the language of the womb’. Suspended between the two they end up with a split
relationship to language. This split makes the writer is fractured female identity, making it difficult to either center or to know self. The doubleness of woman’s speech makes for a shattered identity that begins to write stories express this. Language and genre consciousness become more obsessive for the doubly marginalized.

(147)

“Postmodernism” can be sensed in different opinions of the critics. According to Jacques Derrida, (1978) it is a disjuncture between objects of perception and the meanings which are symbols of representation. In the year 1984, Jean Francois Lyotard, stated that: it could refer to the multiplicity of voices, meaning, and configurations which need to be considered when trying to understand the social world. They supposedly, negate the possibility of any particular authoritative accounts. In the year 1992, Walbyan, pointed out that: postmodernism could also be related to the multitude of different subject positions which constitute the individual.

On the other hand, Indian women novelists of this century noted challenges in the society and in themselves through their works, but by pointing out the issues related to the modern women. In the postmodern period, the woman novelists like, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Bharati Mukherjee, Arunthathi Roy, Manju Kapur and Hariharan have dealt with the themes of love, sex, marriage, loneliness, search for identity and contemporary realities of them. Hariharan has concentrated on all the themes with the intermediary of the myth, legend and the Panchatantra stories, and the other postmodern technique acts as another central theme known as “Re-visionism.” According to Adrienne Rich, “Re-vision – the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction – is for (us ) women more than a chapter in critical history: it is an act of survival.” (18) Hariharan has deserved an outstanding place in the world of Indian
English fiction as her works have got the outstanding position with the art, act of re-
visionism. She has taken few characters from the epic and has given a new definition.
After the period of 1980, the Indian fiction in English had a tremendous change in
seeking “literary antecedents” in the traditional narrative forms, most of the Indian
writers’ are expertise in using different scenario.

The works of Hariharan have worn the differences of postmodern- feminist varia-
tions. In the view of W.S. Kotteswari, Hariharan has encompassed the multi-layering
of postmodern feminist differences. When it is compared to other foreign women, Indian
women are initiated to move towards “self - identity,” “self -perception,” “self -
expression,” “self - determination” and “self-actualization or self-realisation”, but they
have not gone beyond their tradition and their family bindings. In India, there is
contemplation that a woman is not capable of having the western concepts like equality,
individual rights, and personal choice challenges. They have also dismantled the Indian
family structure, which is based on sharing and accommodation. Hariharan’s works are
resided with these “differences” of postmodern feminism. Vinay Kripal has differentiated
Indian postmodernism with the western Postmodernism in “Postmodern strategies in the
Indian English novel,” by stating that:

[...] while the same themes of gender relations and self-identity,
history political and social reform, have been addressed in the
novel since 1920’s, the technique has changed dramatically since
1980’s. Again although the Indian novel has been influenced by the
dominant literary trends and theories prevalent in the west, novelist
have invariably adapted them or chosen out of them eclectically to
suit representation of the society. Thus, in 1980’s novelist may
have been influenced by current postmodernist writing and
poststructuralist mode of thinking but their novels can, by no stretch of the imagination, be described as postmodernist in the Western sense. The postmodern novels of the Euro-American world are a continuation of the modern novel and carry to the extreme its contra-traditional experiments particularly those with language. (30)

Hariharan has deliberately described each character in different angles. The characters are closely related to the characters in the myths, legends, and fairy tales. Though she has used large number of characters in her novel, she has lime-lighted only her female characters. All her novels as well the short stories are known for her story telling which led the characters to undergo the psychological pressures. Jacques Lacan has said in “The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious” that:

[…] the notion of desire, which replace the enlightenment’s faith in reason the enlightenment’s faith in reason as the motor historical change, arguing that the self is split between conscious and unconscious minds, and that other becomes a constituting part of the subject which in turn drives history.(79)

Hariharan in her novel, The Thousand Faces of Night, has focused on the sufferings of the protagonist Devi. She has also focused the sufferings of other characters like Devi’s mother Sita, her maid Mayamma, Gauri and Uma. Apart from grief, disintegration is also found throughout the novel. Shiv Murthy, in In Times of Siege, and Vasu, in The Ghost of Vasu Master are focused on both the present and past of the characters, which are related to the characters from the myth and tales. For example Devi has remembered the stories told by her grandmother that the stories from the great legend The Mahabharata and stories of Baba. In the fourth novel, Shiv is related his father to
the character of Basava and the shadow figure of Rekha. In the second novel Hariharan has narrated the stories through Vasu to his student Mani told by his wife, mother and his grandmother. In *When Dreams Travel*, Sharhrazad has narrated the stories to the King Shahryar to protect her life from him. The characters in these novels are re-imagined the mythical characters which are provoked with the hidden expressions of the individuals that have changed the person’s nature towards self-definition and change of relationship with others. The novels also reflected the autobiographical tone of Hariharan. In an interview, with Arnab Chakladar for “Another Subcontinent,” she has said that:

[…] kind of relationship they can have outside physical […] which, of course, is over-determined from day one. Talking about gender concerns being there, though not in an obvious way - *The Ghost Of Vasu Master* was my most ambitious attempt at looking at gender elliptically. And I think that is actually the most autobiographical of my novels. Which is why when people ask if the first novel is the most autobiographical, I say, “no, no, Vasu master is” […] and they look at me as if they are thinking, “My god, she’s weirder than we thought.”(2)

Devi the protagonist of *The Thousand Faces of Night* has been caught between the two world of past and present. Hariharan has accomplished in bringing out the “neurotic self of Devi in the shadow down, battling with the pangs of alienation for emancipation through mythological stories” (102). It is a fact that each human being, without learning the necessary concept of life they suffer a lot in their family and in the society. Nowadays, the children are much interested in hearing the stories and fairy tales which are told by their grandparents and their parents. These stories have guided the child to be humane with “sympathy, kindness, sacrifice, and patience and self-discipline” (102).
Devi has remembered all the stories which had been narrated by her grandmother. Through the stories of grandmother and Baba, Hariharan is satisfied and has given messages to the readers. She has acted as an extraordinary narrator throughout her novels, as she has specified the real status of woman. It is well known that mother has played an important role to train their children to protect themselves from the evils in the society. Chevigny has stated, “Women writing about women will symbolically reflect their internalized relation with their mothers and in some measure recreate them” (79).

When Devi is aloof and alone, she has recollected all the stories said by her grandmother,

My grandmother’s stories were no ordinary bedtime stories. She chooses each for a particular occasion a story in reply to each to my childish question. But her answers were not simple they had to be decoded. A comparison had to be made, an illustration discovered, and a moral drawn out. (27)

In the novel _The Thousand Faces of Night_, Devi has remembered the stories of her granny which have always stained in her mind. When she is supposed to meet any incident in her life, immediately she has related and being caught back rapidly returning to the memories of her grandmother’s stories of predestined husbands and idyllic marriages. The lucid dreams have also become a module of her life. The characters in the stories influenced her slowly; as she has started to live with fancy. It has been evergreen for her when she identified her mother started to perform “her next card” (16). When her mother has started Devi’s _Swayamvara_, she has imagined the _Swayamvara_ of Nala and Dhamayanthi the mythical characters of _The Mahabharata_. In it, Princess Dhamayanthi a daring damsel has chosen her life with self-determination, worn the garland to Prince Nala. Like Dhamayanthi, Devi has selected Mahesh a mechanical
human, the regional manager in a multinational company as her husband. He has
expected his wife to take care of him, to serve for him, follow him, and wait for him, bear
child for him. The female is always supposed to think for their service to their husband
and his family which quoted in the script written by Manu.

It is understood that Hariharan, through her novels, has tried to rejuvenate the new
woman by the “myth-making” program; through which she has attempted to create a new
society of women. According to Shashi Deshpande, “‘Myths’ have given us a moral
frame work by which we live. The readers are transported into the mythological world of
The Mahabharata. She says The Mahabharata stories have an important place in all our
lives, but it is getting less and less known” (4) and also she has described the importance
and purpose of Myth which has been served in the right aspects of every human. Deshpande has quoted the significance of Myth in “Afterwards” to the book,

Myths are still important to us. We do not want to demolish them, we need them to live; they have shaped our ideas for a great many years, they embody our dreams. To destroy them would be to leave a large dent in the fabric of our culture. On the other hand, if we are not able to make them meaningful lives, they will ease to survive. In India, specially, myths have an extraordinary vitality, continuing to give people some truths about themselves, about the human condition. What women writers are doing today is not a rejection of the myths, but a meaningful and creative reinterpretation of them. We are looking for a fresh knowledge of ourselves in them, trying to discover what is relevant to our lives today. (5)
The writers have quoted the mythical characters and the stories in their writings. They have made the readers to understand the position of each character in the past. Some of the characters cannot be accepted in the postmodern situation. So the present writers have given a new dimension to the characters. They have supported the characters with fresh idea which is relevant to the present. The novels of Hariharan have focused on the protagonist. She has conveyed that the blindfold is still happening in the society. The stories of her have also implied the same. It has been practiced in the remote place, a tranquil that a woman gets married immediately after her basic education or her graduation and she has not been allowed to continue her higher studies. Even if she continues with her higher studies, it could be a problem for her to search for a perfect match. Devi has also come under this category. Once she has completed her graduation abroad, her mother started searching a perfect match for her. She has been happy only in her own world.

Whenever Devi is alone in her home, she is trapped with more stories told by her grandmother and her father-in-law. When she has noticed her mother’s photo with Veena, the eagerness of the child (Devi), has made her to enquire with her grandmother. This incident has portrayed the mental ability of the child. She has remembered the story related to her mother’s anger, a story from the same epic. When Gandhari met her husband for the first time as a blind man, she never said anything in her pride and in anger she tore a piece of her thick red skirt and tied it tightly over her own eyes. Like her, Devi’s mother Sita has played Veena so beautifully. Once when her father-in law has ordered her to keep the Veena away from her and also yelled her that she did not perform the duty of a wife or daughter-in-law, she has hung her head over the Veena for a minute then she has pulled the strings from the base. Devi’s mother has sacrificed her entire part of her life; though she has sacrificed all her desires she has not had identity in her
husband’s family. She has not expected them to treat her as a Princess or Queen, and never demanded for that position, but she has preferred to have a space for her.

Hariharan has described the factual position of women in the society and also alerted them through her characters. All the stories clearly show that women are being moved towards their destiny without blaming anyone. Devi is not exceptional. She is caught between the past and the present and has co-related to her servant Gauri with an ancient fable the one has married a venomous reptile. After her (Gauri) marriage, she has come back to get her job and also said, “Her husband was an animal” (32). Here, in this novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, Hariharan has criticized the sufferings of a woman with a turning in the life, to manage their survival in the world, and also compared the human characters with animals. Still it is not believed that, a woman can be beaten like an animal. Even now it is discussed everywhere. For example in Amir Khan’s column has been published in the dailies The Hindu, on Monday, June 18, 2012 has stated that:

Patriarchal thinking […] men are superior to women! […] men are the bosses! […], they will decide what is good for their women […] men will control women’s lives as they please and as they deem fit! […], And so we have female feticide, female infanticide, the girl child is not fed properly, her health is not a priority, she is not sent to school, or less importance is placed on her education, instead she is taught to do housework. And while all this is happening, she is often beaten! This thinking also results in child marriages, dowry, and discrimination against widows, and of course unequal share in property, that is, if there’s any share at all. Leave alone empowering our women, we are specifically disempowering them and have been doing so for millennia. (3)
Some of the women in the society have been forced to get married brutally, later she has been cheated and self-explanation has been given for her life. This has connected with the anecdote of the snake and the young girl. In the story, the young girl has got married to a snake and accepted him as her husband. She has sacrificed her desire and moved towards her destiny without any grudge. In the same way, many women in the society as self-punishment have accepted unsuitable matches. It has happened only because of their family members, even being could not live alone in the incredible dominated society as the girl said, and a girl could marry once in her life. In this story she has voluntarily accepted the venomous snake as her husband she has chosen her destiny of her own. But after spending night together, the next day she found a young man on her bed. Devi has compared it with herself and Gauri as,

I spent days trying to unravel this message from my grandmother; “should Gauri, my happy, down-to-earth Gauri, have married a snake? And who was the snake in her story – her bestial husband or her freakish lover? Every time I saw Gauri […] I still longed to give some clue, a hint that would enable her to penetrate the snakeskin itself between her and feminine fulfillment”(TTFN34).

The use of the paranormal pragmatism has made the audience to think as well as has prepared them to argue further. These unpredictable stories will never happen in reality, but they have been compared with human characteristics. Magesh, a venomous tongue, has pricked Devi for each and every activity, in such cases she has lost her “self.” The continuous rudeness of her husband has made her to analyze herself in order to actualize personal visions for her identity.

In this novel The Thousand Faces of Night, there are many stories which are separated but are interlinked with the message which is interconnected with the other
story of past and present. *The Mahabharata* has enormous stories within the story. Each story has a moral which has taught man the way to lead life. It has also been discussed the Great War “Kuruchethra” that happened only because of the great woman Draupadi and the story of Ganga, Gandhari, Amba have interlinked with the epic.

In Hariharan’s novels, woman has been characterized as she has worn a shield, when she been insulted, deserted, and annoyed. The same way every woman has worn out an imaginary mask of a ferocious woman. She has destroyed the entire family where she has been ill-treated either in her dwelling place or in the society. Each age woman has imitated like Kritiya - first Gandhari, next Amba and in the novel Devi. She has incarnated herself as the Goddess Devi who has cut off the evil and the demons head. When her grandmother grew older, her stories formed a new shape with sharper tone precious dangerous possibilities. In the same way, when Devi grew older, she could understand the hidden truth of the stories. She has caught and commented in such situations as,

I must have, as I grew older, begun to see the five cracks in the bridge my grandmother built between the stories I loved, and the less self-contained, more sordid stories I saw unfolding around me. The cracks I now see are no longer fine; they gape as if the glue that held them together was counterfeit in the first place. But the gap I now see is also debt: I have to repair it to vindicate my beloved storyteller. (TTFN 30-31)

Devi has imagined the life of Uma, her cousin and compared her life with Amba the eldest princess later became a ferocious woman. Amba had garlanded the young king Salwa, at that time Bheeshma entered the *Swayamvara* like a wild wind, kidnapped Amba for his stepbrother. Afterwards Bheeshma and his stepmother had come to know about
the marriage of Amba without letting any words they sent her to Salwa, “Go, Amba, ‘go where you will. Be a faithful wife to the man you have chosen” (TTFN37).

She walked with a bride’s grace up to Salwa’s throne. “I am here O King,” she said for all the court to hear, “to keep the promise I almost made earlier. You are my chosen husband. See the wife who stands before you, pure and untouched as her garland of fresh flowers. (TTFN 37)

But Salwa had insulted her and was not ready to accept her as his wife. In all the places, she has lost her identity that is in front of Bheeshma, Salwa and her father. Consequently, Amba has crept back to Bheeshma but he refused to accept her.

The younger princess had lived several lifetimes in a week or two. She cast aside her finery, the trappings of a life denied to her, and set out for the forest, a new hardness in her heart. She no longer thought of silks, thrones, flowers, children; she had thrown away her woman’s lot when Bheeshma scorned offering. Now she was a woman only in the name. (TTFN 38)

After this incident, she has changed herself and slowly the poison of taking revenge grew inside her. This incident has become the turning point in her life. She has not accepted the life which has been preferred by Bheeshma, where her sisters accepted and married Bheeshma’s stepbrother Vichitravirya. She has tried to prove her femininity but it has gone vain. She has started analyzing herself, later she has transformed, emerged into a new woman who has been capable of thinking questioning, honor, dishonor, right and wrong. It has been analyzed that no man’s real emotions could not be identified with their words. As a result, she survived in the forest for several years,
When she had, with superhuman energy, piled penance on penance, poured the bitter juices from her hard nipples as libation for the hissing fires, lit a fire so powerful within her that the forest might groaned with the festering wound in its bosom, Amba stood ready to meet. Shiva, a garland of thick – skinned, flesh colored nagalingapushpa in her hands. (TTFN 39)

Lord Shiva appeared and blessed a boon to Amba that whoever will wear the garland will surely kill Bheeshma. Later she was dead alone in the forest, after that she was reborn as “Drupada’s daughter, a daughter has raised as a son” (TTFN 39) has killed Bheeshma in Kuruchethra. In Hariharan’s novels, she has also pointed out the feminine sensibility perception of Indian women. In all the stories, she has focused the women who have undergone sufferings as their destiny. Simone de Beauvoir has echoed in her work *The Second Sex* that, “she was only a woman, she was to be disregarded and ignored; her will, her emotions had to be set aside as nothing because she was a woman” (19). It is stated clearly that a woman has to be abandoned; this has been the message for a woman has been received since time immemorial. Here Amba has been transformed into a feminist who has tried to seek answer for the questions. She has analysed the cause, finally she has found it in her own verdict. This incident has reflected the agonized deep feeling of a woman, and has also proved that these women have not primed to compromise themselves with male domination. Instead of living a life of degradation, she has preferred to embrace death (39).

Devi could remember the message and the importance of motherhood when she has remembered Ganga and Shantanu. Shantanu has fallen in love with Ganga. She has accepted his love with an assurance that he could not ask anything related to her. But it has not lasted for long. She has thrown seven sons in the river Ganga. When she was
about to drop her eighth son the promise is broken by him and she said “take him away and been as a father and mother. [...] I shall not free him from life” (TTFN 88). Devi has assured with the words of her grandmother when she has gone to meet the gynecologist “to be a good mother, to be a mother at all, you have the title, just as you have to renew your wifely vows every day” (TTFN 89). Vijayasree has pointed out in “Revisionist Myth – Making: A Reading of Githa Hariharan’s *The Thousand Faces of Night*,” that:

This common story of marital discord and women’s quest for identity outside marriage is turned into a remarkable rendering of the collective struggle of women for self-liberation through the author’s play with narrative structures. Framing texts within texts, with text overlapping in curious ways; her carnival ensue accumulation of inter texts ranging from the tales from *The Mahabharata* folk stories and her deft writer weaving of these with the lives of real women. Githa Hariharan’s narrative voices strike a powerful chord in contemporary literature returning to the multi-dimensional vibration of voices unfolding within a vast mythic social time space. (177)

When Devi has sat day after day in the airless room, the brass and stone pantheon surrounded her. She has occupied under depression and she has heard the words of Mayamma that “Like sati you must burn yourself to death, like sati you must indicate your husbands honour and manhood” (TTFN 94). The internal urge of Devi danced and their frenzy increased to a manic pitch into her dreams night after night.

But now Mayamma, Annapurna, my unseen mother-in-law Parvatiamma, the maidservant Gauri, my cousin Uma, the man
turning Amba and even the barely recognized, bent frame of any grandmother whizzed past as they whirled around chanting.

(TTFN94)

She has been interpreted herself with Durga a beautiful woman, with ten arms and “ride on a Himalayan lion” (TTFN 95). In the dark night, she imagines and being disguised herself as a beautiful woman, with flowing hair, her skin which has glorified like a dark blue lotus emerged from her body in complete armour, terrifying three eyed four armed, holding untouchable’s bell in one hand. “Like the blank mother of earth, smear your task with blood and grow claws on your hands” (TTFN 95). All the mythical stories have occupied a prominent position in the world of Devi. She has incarnated herself as a deity the avenger who was against all the evils. Finally, she has decided to fly with Gopal, the singer. Here the activity of Devi has been related to Terry Eagleton principle that “the unconscious is just a continual movement and activity of signifiers, whose has signified is often in accessible to us because they are repressed” (TTFN 40). When she has survived with Mahesh, she has depressed by the behaviour as well as venom tongued words of him and even with Gopal, she has trapped alone. Gopal has treated her as a dancing peacock in his garden that he has to be admired by someone in silence. Immediately, she has flown from him and reached her home, heard the music of her mother’s favourite musical instrument. It has been played by her mother though she has been eagerly waiting for a long time to invite her daughter. Vijayasree has portrayed in “Revisionist myth – making: A Reading of Githa Hariharan’s The Thousand Faces of Night,” as,

The mothers of Devi’s rebirth are, thus, manifold. Besides her mentors there are many other women whose lives offer new and useful lessons to Devi. She draws on her biological matrilineage as well as spiritual and mythical heritage. The invisible energies of
the ancient goddess – Devi, Kali and Saraswathi among as well as genetic inheritance from all women who lived in the past ages and experimental wisdom of her own contemporaries – all these contribute to the eventual psycho-spiritual growth of the protagonist. (TTFN 181)

Even in the absence of the storytellers grandmother and Baba, Devi has prepared to live in the world of her own, but could not live either in the world of illusion or reality. “Her stories were a prelude to my womanhood, an initiation into its subterranean possibilities. She define the limits. Her stories are for a woman […] an exacting touchstone for a woman, a wife”(TTFN 51). The conception of the self of Devi has a detached individual and has turned into feasible because of the reflexivity of her inner voice, which has activated as a sense of self-rule for the re-imagination of roles. According to Taylor, self-exploration has considered to be very important which has given a meaning for reflecting on the meaning of self. The self of each individual has explored the way they have thought or drawn out a hidden characteristic which has made the individual unique. This hidden self-exploration of thought has provided an outlet of visual aid which has expressed different dimensions of a person existence. This self can be changed an individual’s self-definitions and also relationship with others.

Devi as an individual has no longer dependent on the stories or the moral has said by her Grandmother or Baba. She has started analyzing the actions of her own and examined with others in her home and public. She has realized herself to search for her own “self”, for her it has not been possible with Mahesh or anyone in the family. Her inner thought after having cleansed the hidden dimensions of her thought, finally she has come out of her individual existence and identified her self – dimension by comparing with the mythical figures and with other relationship. The reflexivity of Devi has
provided the condition of the modern self of her which has started to examine her personality and pursue with what she has thought and has reached her desires and aspirations.

Devi has also become a stimulator to her mother; through her she has received the entire happiness of her life. She has analyzed and also retrieved her lost self with the exploration of her daughter. She has started to live for herself, this has shown, when she returned to music and played Veena. In the beginning, she has proved herself to be an ideal daughter-in-law, wife, and mother. Idealism of her has become ineffective and void. She has self-examined herself and through which she has got a new meaning and started a new look and self of her, “she sat before the relic from her past, the broken Veena, freshly dusted, and waited for Devi to come back to her” (109). Both of them (daughter and mother) have had a new positive relationship which has been liberated from the stress of feminine role-play to attain a free creative individuality. Hariharan has shown that these women as strong self-willed women have the ability to survive independently. The new avatar has made her gain what else she has lost in her life to her comfort, privacy, and needs.

Hariharan has proved the conflicts between the old stories and the new one. She has given complete freedom to prove her ability not only to her protagonist but to the entire women society. Here Devi as well Sita have performed their self-analysis process which has led them to self-actualization which has personally viewed with a new beginning, new hopes, and new identity. As a result, Sita has brought up her daughter Devi alone without anyone’s support. On the other hand Devi has chosen her life eloped with Gopal, there she was disappointed again she returned to her mother.

In the novel, *In Times of Siege*, Shiv the protagonist and the history Professor has written a history lesson for B.A. correspondence students on Basava. An argument has
risen that he has completely misinterpreted the social reform on Basavanna’s movement. Everyone, in his college, has charged that:

It seems you implied that Basavanna’s city, Kalyana, was not a model Hindu kingdom. It seems you have exaggerated the problem of caste and written in a biased way about the Brahmans and temple priest. And also you have not made it clear enough that Basavana was much more than a ordinary human being there are people who consider him divine you know. (ITS 53-54)

Here the history of Basava has been remembered by Shivand his words too “things standing shall fall, but the moving shall ever stay” (ITS 81) When he hears the questions of his own,

Shiv’s father meticulous answerer of difficult questions wanders into his mind. Shiv knew his father only for the first thirteen years of his life. He has had to stretch memory fill in the blank spaces and obliterate stubborn question marks to fashion his father’s life into a viable narrative. (ITS 82)

According to Shiv, for a short period probably the span of one generation, “Basava helped to create a new community; a new ethos, which provoked people to dare experiment” (ITS 104). Like Basava, Shiv’s father has also been a reformer. Till now, he has remembered the words of his father’s private mythology, freedom, truth, and values. His father has said, “You must mine the truth, his father would say. If you settle for safety, if you choose to go along with whatever makes your life comfortable, truth will escape you completely” (ITS 82).
Shiv’s father has told that the person who has been living like this was called an opportunist; he made Shiv to repeat the words after him. He has also compared his father to Basava. Like Basava, his father has disappeared. In an interview with Gowri Ramnarayan, Hariharan has stated that “To make her point juxtaposes three ages from the past with the current rise of the “fundoos” (Fundamentalist): the Virasaiva movement of the 12th Century in Kalyan city has wrought a social upheaval, protesting against all discriminations, including those based on caste and gender, the 16th Century sacking of the Vijayanagara empire. Finally, the “nationalism” has practiced by freedom fighters like Murthy’s own father, wholly different from the saffronised version of today.” (28)

The unheroic protagonist has examined these heritage chapters to arrive at some understanding of his legacy.

Hariharan, in all her novels, has brought out the historical facts. She has framed a new contour with the character Meena, Rekha and Tara. It has been noticed that Rekha and Tara are off stage, Rekha has guided Shiv over the Phone. Shiva has been caught with the memories of his father as well as Rekha. He could have realized Rekha’s presence at the time when he has been in trouble, but Meena has filled the gap as an advisor to Shiv. Hariharan has applied another technique of fragmentation (that is zigzag) and has followed in all the novels as well as short stories. She has focused political issues in the novel, and the domination of that in each and every citizen.

The novel *When Dreams Travel* is a typical postmodern novel of Hariharan. She has integrated the past tale into the present by resorting to the past tale of *The Arabian Nights* also called as *The Thousand and One Nights*. W.S Kottiswari, in her article, “Postmodernism in the Indian Context – Githa Hariharan and Shashi Deshpande as Postmodernist,” has stated a concept from the Encyclopedia Britannica, 1974 (Vol-IX) that:
[...] a collection of stories of uncertain data and authorship [...].

As in much medieval European Literature, the stories, fairy tales, romances, legends, fables, parables, anecdotes and exotic or realistic adventures are set within a frame story. Its scene is Central Asia or the islands or peninsula of India and China [...] the tales’ variety of geographical range of origin – India, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, and possibly Greece – single authorship unlikely [...] By the 20th century Western scholars agreed that The Nights is a composite work consisting of popular stories. Originally transmitted orally and developed during several centuries, with material added somewhat haphazardly at different periods and places [...]. (10-12)

Hariharan has revisited the old classic through this novel. It is stated as the manuscript a collection of stories of romances, fairy tales and legends, parables and fables, and both exotic and realistic adventures. This novel is based on the brutal and hypocrite king, named Sharyar, who married a virgin every night “deflowered her and then executed her the next morning” this has happened before when he has got married his Wazir’s elder daughter, Sharhrzad. After her marriage, she has become a master in storytelling. Through telling new stories, she has saved her life from the sharp edge of the sword. As Rama Kundu in her writing “Githa Hariharan Writing Back to The 1001 Nights” has stated,

Githa Hariharan -interrogates the patriarchal assumptions of the original tale and the culture in which the tale is embedded, through a subversive use of the devices of metafiction, intertext and magic
realism in order to foreground her feminist discourse in the postmodern context.” (151).

It has been noted that the methods Hariharan followed the style of Rushdie. Rushdie, in his novels, has used the Indian political scene from a post-structural perspective adapting certain strategies of the post-modernist novel and fashioning a new technique for his fiction. Vinay Kripal, in his article, “Postmodern Strategies in the Indian English Novel,” has stated that:

Indian society with its traditional, feudal, patriarchal structures (consolidated during the period of colonization) seems to offer sample materials and scope to a novelist desirous of subverting dismantling power structures. Official versions of history, patriarchal versions of womanhood class/ caste versions of the subaltern are the discourses that are being contested and undermined by the post of 1980’s Indian English novelists. For example, history writing is seen as ideological and official history seen to serve those in power. The marginalized protagonist challenges the hegemony of the state and even as the official versions offered, it is simultaneously subverted by other available. Public version. (27)

Hariharan has written specifically of tradition by installing some alternatives and gave new freedom to her style and techniques. This travel has begun after The Thousand and one Nights, when Dunyazad, the younger sister of Sharhrzad went for a long journey from her husband’s kingdom (Samarkhand) to Shahabad. At that time, she received the death news of her elder sister. The moment when she has reached the place, her mind was activated by the past and present. A slave girl Dilsad and the two (Dunyazad) have
told stories each other for seven days and nights as if Shahrzad stories have re-energized them.

The stories of Shahrzad have narrated the stories of herself as well women in the society and of the society. She has explained the travel towards life of a woman from her birth till death. In her life, she is forced to change her lifestyle according to the place where she is supposed to survive. It is completely based on the place. After her marriage, she is forced willingly or unwillingly change their costume, language, and setting at each serial on its way. The journey towards the life made her to adapt based on local conditions. The laws of women, belonged to this century or history, are considered as a permanent fugitive form from its officious parent, legitimate history. It is like Shahrzad that everywoman has learnt the lessons of the tales through her own tales of life. “Shahrzad – she too has learnt the lessons of the tales she told. She is now a myth that must be sought in many places, fleshed in different bodies, before her dreams let go of Dunyazad or her descendants” (WDT 25).

Through the character Shahrzad, Hariharan has shown the power of women and their diplomacy in critical situations that led them to power and happiness. “The powerless have a dream or two, dreams that break walls, dreams that go through walls as if they are powerless” (WDT 25). Even though she has talented in telling stories, escaped from the blood thirst sword of Sharyar, he has never thought of her excellence and her happiness, sacrificed for him. She has been imprisoned in the name of marriage, throughout her life which she has dangled over to tell the stories or to die. When she has died, the king has mourned only for her purity and chastity and not for her forfeit. In the male world, women have measured only the patriarchal value of chastity.

Hariharan has rewritten the legend and also paid attention in the Postmodern – Feminism context which has shown the pain of women. She has also proved the internal
journey of Shahrzad, identifying herself from self-actualization to realisation. Here Shahrzad, the creator of the stories, has not created of her own interest but out of compulsion and the threatening of his sword already took many lives of young girls. In one ground, she has been focused as a bold woman, who successfully has passed thousand and one nights by telling stories and on the other ground, she has caught under male chauvinism. Finally, she has lost her freedom, dignity, and life. One could find this sought of women in Shahrzad who has very much interested in telling stories and seems to be enjoying. In reality this kind of images of women has not been accepted as factual. She, the queen of Shahabad, has not had a room of her own. She has dwelt in the same room right from the day one she entered into the place. The unwashed bed smeared with blood, sweat, and semen even when she gave birth to a child. Even then this brave woman has remained pity, silent and forced to continue “creation and procreation.” (WDT132) When she has added as one more members in the harem she has started thinking how to satisfy her husband. At the end she has given back the venomous king’s happiness by exploiting her happiness. Every time when she has started to narrate the story, the most often question raised to her is “What will happen to you Shahrzad, when the urgent need for story telling for prolix invention, is withdrawn? Will you be satisfied with bedtime tales of your children?” (WDT133). Loneliness and the tales from the history narrated by Shahrzad have made her realize her potential and had self-examination and have discovered a new self of her.

The novel, When Dreams Travel, has also been criticized as “Histogarphic metafiction” which has focused on history. In this novel, Hariharan has concentrated on both history and fiction by following intertextuality. This text has completely based on the feminist issue, gender equality. It has started at a point of time and ended with the
happy married life of Shahryar’s and Shahrzad back to her domesticity. In the novel
*When Dreams Travel* Hariharan has pointed out that:

> The mistake, of course, is to imagine that a happy ending is possible when you have survived a shipwreck in a sea of blood. Shahryar should have killed himself in remorse, or at least renounced the city and the world, become a mad hermit in the desert. And Shahrzad? Can life continue, static, peopled with little events, commonplace milestones, after martyrdom? (WDT 105)

Hariharan has created a challenging character as a wakeup call to other women in the society and refused to accept the male domination. She has raised her voice through the stories in this novel that “The story ends on – stage. Off – stage it has just begun”. In part one in third chapter “Knots in the Afterlife” through Dunyazad the readers have come to know the death of her elder sister when she has undertaken a long journey in male disguise but there was a stunning climax towards the end of the novel in the last chapter “The Morning After”. In the chapter, she has reappeared as an enfeebled woman who was taken care of the slave girls in a remote corner of the palace. Though she has suffered a lot, she has excited that she has saved the life of many young girls at the time of her young age from the tyrant lustful king. Finally, Shahrzad has performed the process of analyzing herself which has led her to be away from her husband and lived a peaceful life.

Shahrzad has acted as a pioneer between the author and the reader. Hariharan has strongly supported the women through the protagonist. She has warned the present young girls to open their eyes widen to accept the challenges, dangers which they have to face in future. They have not been supposed to weep towards any evils, but have to tackle all the problems.
The title of the last chapter, “The Morning After,” symbolically has represented that the “Darkness” has been removed by the two bold women Shahrzad and Dunyazad, and lit the light to the present girls who could challenge the entire world with everlasting power, made them to develop the forethought of their actions. Now-a-days, most of the women are not much aware of the basic fundamental rights which they could gain. This has made the author to doubt the position of the women in the present world. It has been surprised when the darkness has shattered from them that it will lead to the way of shine.

Shobhana Bhattacharji has spoken of the organization of the novel in her article “Dreams and Deeds” that, Hariharan has tried to bring out her originality and pervade with power as,

The organization of this novel is a delight in itself. For instance the second of its parts “Seven Days and Nights,” is in seven chapters, each with two stories. There is obviously a stern maker in change of the material who deliberately creates holes in her own umbrella narrative. Is a man’s narrative different from a woman’s? Can there ever be right narrative? Is knowledge always conveyed through clear and logical language or is a mystifying and mysterious style as useful? Like a good storyteller, Githa Hariharan prods readers into finding their own answers. (11)

Like other novels, The Ghost of Vasu Master has been also divided into forty-eight stories as chapters and has organised with several levels of storytelling with events and incidents. Vasu Master has shared the stories not only said by him, but also heard stories narrated by others like Grandmother, Mangala, Jameela, Venkatesan , Swami, Gopu who have a story to tell. The chapters of the novel have extended with independent oral tales like “one summer a cousin […].” There was once a little boy […].” “So
Eliamma waits [...]” Jameela said to me [...]” “Grandmothers the story tiger with [...]” and the stories told by Mangala to her two sons. The novel has constituted the postmodern strategies of fact and fiction, of fantasy and fable that has made the novel a metafiction. The stories of Jameela and Mangala have been related to their lives which have implied the lives of women in the society. The depth of friendship has been identified through these women. Both have tried to prove their self. The stories of these ladies have become a lesson to the women community.

Hariharan has spun the real incident which has happened in the life of a woman beautifully in the form of a story, through Jameela, when she came to collect her embroidered things which was given already to Mangala. Through the story, she has given a message that the treatment and the problem of women may vary, but the real position of her has to be uplifted in the society. They struggled for their identity but it has gone in vain. The story of Begum Three – in- one has conveyed a message of Caterpillars when examined and can be related to the three women Eliamma, Mangala, Jameela and has always been linked hand in hand, have not born together. But they have had their relationship of sisterhood.

These three women are referred to the caterpillars Ammukutty, Nanikutty, and Ummikutty. They have their own dreams, and described their future to fly with colours. As they have planned, they have started, working by twisting their silk threads into all kinds with fantastic shapes. They have survived together. They have spent the time together and learnt their dreams have varied and also tried to share new stitches from each other. Ammukutty the eldest has taught the method to swing and spun more and more threads in dizzy fantastic circles, other two sisters have followed everything blindly, and afterwards they have slept a sound sleep. On the other hand, Hariharan has introduced three identical brothers as triplets; because of these brothers the caterpillars have lost their
freedom. The eldest one Ammukutty is caught by the eldest triplet, tortured, distressed, and distraught, and finally it died. Again, in the same way, Nanikutty has also been caught by the second brother. But it has adapted herself to live in the paper box made of fine porous paper. Nanikutty has performed her duty perfectly, has laid eggs have taken care of them well and finally she has prepared to die by spinning the old dreams in her head. When Ummikutty was in a state to be caught by the third triplet, it has opened its wings and let out of the cocoon. Here freedom has had the ability to perform self-analysis which is analysed in order to actualize the personal thinking of new beginning, hopes, and identities.

Ummikutty, aware of the dangers around her, looked for a hiding place. Every time she heard a voice below the trees, she remembered the Triplets; and she flew to the bag she had made for herself, a cocoon with a difference. She hid in the shapeless camouflaging sack she had neatly stitched together with large green leaves. (TGVM 136)

Hariharan has endeavoured the characters into the clutches of the male dominated society. Ammukutty has referred to the women those who have struggled for surviving in the world. She has lived happily only in her own world, but her dreams and desires have been shattered continuously, at last she has come to an end pathetically. This has happened only because of the male dominated society, her entire potency has extracted for their family benefit. She has lived and practiced voluntarily to lead the life of sadhu inside the four walls and has over burdened with family responsibilities.

The Nanikutty type of women have been treated well, sophisticatedly, they have given freedom to dream, but in reality they have not given equal importance again their duty has to be taken care for their family, children, in-laws etc. They have tackled the
entire problem and they have taken effort, but it has not happened to come forward, again they have caught into the society, finally they have sacrificed their dreams. The problem has been raised in many ways. The most important has been pointed out, as they have been biologically weak as well psychologically. Even inside their protected place, she has been tormented without peace of mind; she has to be forced to be responsible for everything.

The Ummikutty type of women has started to think and explore. The freedom of thought has made them to move towards the modern exploration of knowledge in all the fields. It, found in human endeavor, could be traced to the reflexive nature of self-inquiry and examination. Hariharan has been very particular that though women have been talented in the entire field, it could not been accepted in the society, for each and every thing they have to prove their skill. In order to prove their ability they have taken many years, to design to create, to shape etc. It has been stated through the words of Jameela as,

Ummikutty, as far as I know, is still hiding somewhere in the forest, weaving on her old spinning loom. Year in and Year out she designs a tapestry full of meaning; but whatever she weaves is also ever dissolving. If you saw her creations, the colors, and shapes she uses, you would understand why she is no longer called Ummikutty; why she has grown into Begum Three-In-One. The stories she spins, you see, are not all her own; and not always easy to unravel; because all of them weave in, with the finest of silk threads, the ghosts of her lost sisters. (TGVM 137)

Hariharan has opened the feel of woman that the first one has filled her dreams in her heart and she has died without knowing that whether it will come true. The middle
one’s freedom has been caught into the family as well as her dreams withered. She has
been admired only for her body, she has emerged fully, be very beautiful. Later she has
been put into a carton with well protective shield, afterwards she has accustomed to the
life style, which she has never dreamt. The third one has lived with the old dreams in her
head, “round and round herself like a warm, safe shroud” (TGVM 136). These three have
not met together, but the same position has been sustained.

The story of Jameela is related to the women in the society as well Eliamma and
Mangala. Mangalahas not had identity of her own. But she has the identity as a
mother. Whenever Vishnu and Venu have expected to say ghost stories; they have
considered Mangala “a ghost expert.”

She knew hundreds of ghost stories, though it was not always easy
to make her part with one of these stories, it was an expected,
exotic gift. Part of the gift was the air about her when she spoke of
ghosts an air which told us that she knew what she was talking
about; that she was on familiar, even intimate terms with her
ethereal heroes and heroines. (TGVM 124-125)

Hariharan has mentioned the life of a woman through Mangala, the woman
Eliamma has led her life alone in the society; she has seen her very first time at the
seashore. She has lived in an old fishing village by the sea. Even if she was beautiful,
with thick long hair, fish- shaped eyes, she had not married any one of her admirers
belonging to the same village; she could not find anyone of her expectation. She has
continued to live alone in her hut by wandering by the seashore all hours of night, “like an
orphan looking for her home” (TGVM 126). She had never even smile to the people in
the village. They talked that “she had a secret; that she was in love, though no one knew
who the beloved was” (TGVM 126). She looked night after night with longing and
wanted to be there in the centre of the sea. Hariharan has pointed out the errors often happening in the society, that if a woman who is alone throughout her life mocked or teased or gossiped by the society as she may have an illicit contact with someone or she has been not suitable to lead a family. They never treated her as a human or even as a living creature. In some cases, these sorts of women were ill-treated by the so-called male dominated society and forced them to enter into an unwanted life style.

Eliamma, in *The Ghost of Vasu Master*, has faced this as a routine in her life, but one night she was sitting behind an old boat, nearby the two guardians of the village, a man, and a woman with fearsome faces. She gazed them for sometime afterwards the sea. She had felt asleep, after sometime when she woke up she found everything was dim and unfamiliar, and then she realized where she was. She saw a stranger asked her; still she was interested in coming to the middle of the sea. He said if she was interested he was ready to help her, but she would become invisible. First she hesitated, frightened, and wanted to escape from the place, later she accepted his words, and he made her invisible. So that the fishermen would not prevent her and also said he would take care of her body until she comes back. She was very happy and enjoyed the waves in the sea which sometimes lulled her and sometimes struck her with awe. She forgot everything; simply she enjoyed everything around her.

When she came back to the shore in search of the stranger, she could not find him anywhere. Mangala concluded the story that:

[...] to be completely invisible was to be lonely in a way the living did not know [...] Eliamma waits. She waits and waits, a patient ghosts for the day she will find someone who sees her briefly. Someone who will willingly accept her freakish gift. (TGVM 130)
Eliamma has also symbolically referred to Mangala. The stories told by her reflect her internal urge of her unsatisfied wishes there in her life. She never said anything to her own husband or anyone of her close friends.

When Vasu Master has found his dead wife’s trunk, he has looked into the mirror and criticised himself as an ugly stranger, had grayed with thinning hair. The cruelty of his inner self as reflected with scarred face with pockmarks has created a map of lines and grilles. His figure itself has threatened him as a hounded animal. It was understood that everyone in this world has been hounded by death, this has made Vasu master to worry. He has never before worried about death when Mangala was alive. When he has taken the mirror from her it has sharpened the scars of time, but also it has offered him a virtual depth. He had the ability to perceive his body through time as a poetic whole where he recalled everything while seeing the mirror. The mirror has reflected the reality of one’s figure. It has made them to recollect their past. Here the object mirror was used to refer to realism.

The body is so easily damaged, its mutilated ruins disposed of. I knew this now as never before. All I could do was look into the mirror – the mirror I found in Mangala’s trunk; perhaps keep track of more than one body, one face – the before and the after. In depths of the mirror, this actually seemed possible. The face of the present loomed large in the foreground, a reflection that often seemed sharper than the reality, each pockmark a permanent scar or wound. But from this vantage point I could see it whole again. Otherwise I became a flat, one-dimensional figure, a man in the present of an empty room, on the verge of eviction. (TGVM 90)
Apart from the stories, Hariharan has pointed out the submissiveness of women in the society. It was shown very clear when Vasu Master started writing his memories, stories, life in a notebook which was given by the students. His past memories have rose up before him and reached out to his present. When he has remembered his grandmother, he thought his wife and his mother had the same qualities, entirely opposite in nature. Mangala and Lakshmi were in the same string came as a Shadow line in the memory of Vasu Master. They have not had their identity of their own. They were treated as a puppet in their home. Lakshmi, his mother, died when he was a little boy. He has narrated that when she was born, she had no name or identity because she has belonged to the submissive community (female). Her parents had not enough patience to search names for daughters. She did not have a name for a year “[…] because her parents did not want to spend money on a naming ceremony for one more daughter” (TGVM-31). Beyond that they have thought that people laughed at the failure of them year by year for not having a male child. He has continued with how her mother got her name. The old woman, who swept their backyard and collected the cow-dung, was fond of new baby. She has understood the problem of her mistress by saying “She could have been born with else down there, she admitted. That would have been best, of course. Life would have been easier with a little extra bit of flesh. Just a few inches” (TGVM 31).

The old woman gave her name Lakshmi to my mother. The old woman said still she would be the Lakshmi of her husband’s house. Being the sixth daughter, she remained the daughter of a ‘female –weary lions’ never came over her inferiority complex. Whatever the name stood for, she was timid “[…] worrying little thing, nagging and pestering like a high-pitched mosquito (TGVM 32). Lakshmi referred to the Goddess of wealth in Hindu mythology. Even though she was the Goddess of wealth, she was clutched in the heart of the Lord Vishnu, her husband the protector. Here, in this
novel, she had not even raised her voice to her husband and her jealous mother-in-law ruled of the household. Above all, she kept the house and everything in it clean and unpolluted.

Hariharan has effectively used irony in her novels and short stories and left them open-ended with multiple perspectives. She has also caught the reader’s attention all the way through her character. Mirnal Pande has affirmed in the article, “Death and the Art of Story Telling,” that:

Doubts and uncertainties, passion and unsuspected guile surface again and again in the stories as they set about with great courage to turn the traditional conservative Indian life upon its back, revealing a surprisingly soft underbelly. Here men and women, aged and dying, or dejected and burnt-out, reminisce about failure, about incompetence, about inability to cope, not with a sense of guilt anger, but with a kind of detached awe. (4)

Hariharan’s The Art of Dying and Other Stories (1993), an anthology focused a kaleidoscope view of death and the outburst of hidden suppressed desires of women which ended in pathos. Death is immortal. It has also made the importance of anyone in their absence. She has examined death through the sufferings of the people before and after death. The presence of the woman or anyone importance of them has been realized and felt after their disappearance. Still it would have been in the remembrance of the main characters and they remember each and every activity of them. Before the person who struggled for dying afterwards with the remembrance of the dead person’s, others suffer. She has also examined the treatment of widow women in the society and in their family.
The short story “The Art of Dying” from the anthology *The Art of Dying and Other Stories* has dealt with “Death, she says, the word rolling off her tongue with intimacy, demands strength, not a final weakness. Ram had it and I didn’t. That is why I could not follow him, as I should have” (TAD70).

Here in this story Hariharan has discussed not only the death but also the life style of modern generation, moved from a joint family to a nuclear family then from nuclear family to individualism. She has examined death towards realistic, rather than emotional way. The bedridden mother who has longed for love and affection from her children has not been satisfied even before her death. They never think of their parents, who love and scarified their life completely.

According to Hinduism, death is considered as a celebration. It has not only made a man a feared soul but also makes the other people to realize the situation making both ends sweet. Normally people should take some decision sooner or later when a decision has prolonged the procrastination self. They fear to take decision that is because they fear change. Karl Marx says, “Nothing is permanent except change.”(1) In accordance with the Hinduism, death is not be feared that is because death is not only a celebration but, is also a liberation. The departed soul reaches the Paramathma to get a body. It is distained to be so. If the departed is a blessed one, it does not get another birth at all. It becomes a Nithyasoori- a permanent residence with God. Lord Krishna has said in “The Bhagavat Githa” Azham, Brahmasmi which means all the Panja Boodhas are present within your body like land, water, air, fire, and sky. If one person is able to fully utilize potent power, he is bound to get success and death is not be feared because of the unification of the soul with Him (Lord Krishna) that is why Hindu mythology invites death.

Revati, the center character of the short story “Revati” from the same anthology a child-widow whose identity has brought together by the absence and loss of her marital
status and consequently her position is very fragile and contested. Even though she has managed to live independently, supporting herself with a teaching job, towards the end of her life she has become ambiguous figure within the family setting.

In this case, the widow’s identity has completely adapted to the family’s needs. In contrast to this entire version, Revati has transcended all those dominant ideas on her identity. She has unashamed and obstinate ultimately; she has become a burden to the family.

Nobody said it in so many words, but clearly, something had to be done Revati. It was ten years since she had retired from her teaching career. The rest of the time she visited her brothers and sisters for long stretches, her bulky frame in the Wrong place at the wrong time, always in the way. (TADOS95)

Due to the indifference of her family members and by suppressing her emotions right from her childhood without sharing anything to anyone and the marginalization of the society, Revati has become a mentally retarded woman at the last. In histories, women are recognized as Kali, the destroyer of evil, Bharath Matha, the land of mother for patience etc. But in reality, they have treated as submissive stature. Even in the modern world they have not recognized their potential, though they have got the opportunity she has not been appreciated for the efforts.

The story “Forefathers” focuses on how a meek woman wore a mask outwardly with full of avenge in her heart. The venom has changed into a wild nature at the time when she has been ill-treated. Here the narrator has waited for her father’s death, had been paralyzed for more than six months, still, importunate for domination. Usually, she has allowed herself for three attempts for games expecting her sick father will die within
a week or a month or more than six months by hitting a crow. Though she has suffered
“At least six months more than one hundred and eighty nights of sleeplessness” (TADOS48), she did the duty and nursed well to her father like her mother, “At first my mother would cry at that, I would feel shame and guilt that he lay dying. But that passed: I wear a mask now that absorbs the sharpest sarcasm and then angriest of tears” (TADOS-52). Hariharan has emancipated the sufferings of women in all ways. They have hid their pains and have worn masks of politeness, humbleness, and dutifulness in front of others.

Her short stories “Untitled Poems” and “The Closed Room” had the same concept of a woman who was known for and the cause for creation, but they could not be given the role for creators. Hariharan has said that her characters were seemed to be meek but when they have turned to strike the evils they will become a vengeful Kali, the destroyer.

Sushila has found that she had nothing at all to say. If someone spoke to her, or asked her for an opinion, she has tried and tried, but she could not say what she has thought. Her shoulders began to droop, and her hair hung uncombed and lifeless. She spent most of the day in bed, and if she was out of it, she was even more incoherent.

“The family began to avoid her” (TADOS151) these lines are from another short story “The Will” of the widowed Sushila has held her husband’s last letter which has flied out of her. She has kept on remembering the words of her husband without taking food.

In another story, “The Remains of the Feast,” Hariharan has stated about ninety year old dying grandmother, Rukmani, of the narrator. “[...] outliving by ten years her only son and daughter-in-law” (TADOS-9). She was licked by a cancerous goiter.

Her arms were held down by the tubes and needles, criss-cross, in, out the glucose dripped into her veins but her nose still ran, the clear, thin liquid trickling down like dribble on to her chin. Her
hands clenched and unclenched with the effort and she whispered,

like a miracle ‘Ratna’. (TADOS 41)

Though, she had strictly followed her rituals during her lifetime “To the deathbed of a Brahmin widow who had never eaten anything but pure, home-cooked for almost a century” (TADOS-12), but before a week she ate cakes, samosa, ice creams, biscuits made by a non-brahmin. She had also tasted three-colored drink, “Get me a glass of the brown drink Ratna bought in the bottle […] (TADOS13) garlic, eggs, cakes laced with brandy, bhelpuri, peanuts, “No, no, she screamed deliriously. “ Get me something from the bazaar. Raw onions, Fried bread Chickens and goats” (TADOS-14). Finally, she wanted to wear a red silk saree. The red silk glittered like her childish laughter. In this short story, Rukmani satisfied her desires hidden in her heart more than a century. A Brahmin widow or a widow from any family was compelled to follow certain bounds towards the society.

In the concept of Rajul Bhargava, in his book, *Indian Writing in English: The Last Decade*, has compared Hariharan’s short fiction to resistant texts as narration but an art which is difficult and a challenging task to the narratives. They have framed an incident from the tales or the real situation happened in their lives. Sometimes, the writers have retold the epics. This has become a tool for the narrators to impress the readers. Narration has also occupied a prominent role in literature. The recent women writers have actively contributed their works and become part of the literature. Their works are mainly focused on women issues like resisting and renegotiating the ideologies of gender inequalities. It cannot be acceptable that women writings are more complex intertwines of the marginal. Some of the women writers have gone beyond the form and structure. Like “Thumri as Feminine Voice” an article, written by Vidya Rao in the year 1990, is specifically mentioned the female body. This Thumri is a song of emotions (erotic
romantic). It is based on the male gaze that articulates female desire as patriarchal constructed.

Rao argues that it contains a subversive edge, to be found in its structure and form. The space within the form appears to conform to traditionally feminine allocations of space in society. So also with the short story, which works on a small number of scales and in an enclosed space? And yet the short story like the “Thumri” can expand the space available to it, not linearly but laterally, not outwards but inwards, relentlessly questioning the established and accepted structures. (77-78)

Hariharan has belonged to the middle class narratives. She has introduced “open-endedness” in her novels. It is a radical choice in its rejection of neat closures and resolutions.” It is viewed that her novel is an eye opener to the woman society. She strongly winds to bring change in order to break ‘the pressures of cultural politics’ in the form of the dominance of gender ideology. It is also observed that, in her novels and short stories she has deconstructed the past and reconstructed into a meaningful lively present which could be followed by the younger generations. She has eroded the age-old wisdom contained in sayings, proverbs, stories, myths, and beliefs. Her anger has expressed itself through satire, irony, and sarcasm. Her vision encompassed the women community should be emerged to the new woman who is true to her own self. All her short stories and the novels both history and present have described everyday happenings, sufferings of a woman’s life, and this has to be changed.

From the study it is noticed that all her novels and short stories have autobiographical undertones. It reflects the life story of Hariharan. Apart from the multilayer techniques and revisionism, her characters hang on in search for their “self”.
There was no sudden change in her life style. They underwent a self-learning process to identify themselves. Mayamma thinks of her husband’s family and to her, his home is the entire world. She accepts all the problems and troubles given to her. She accepts everything as self-punishment. She is trained not to question the elders. There are many women like her in the society. They believe that they could not survive alone in the world like Mangala and Lakshmi. Sita, Devi, and Sharhzad struggle, survive, bolder and rebellious to lead a life of their choice. The women, who belong to the postmodern era, have tried to lead the life of their own choice. These postmodern women are capable of carving their own wishes unlike the previous era. They have returned back to their own homes. It is clear; the narrator moves forward steadily, the flashbacks and introspections into the past enable the women characters to discover their identity and further move towards self-actualization. It is also clear that the theme of a woman’s journey a self-discovery through the convergence of time-past and present is well explored in the novels of Hariharan.