Summation
Chapter V

Summation

In the vast family of Indian writers in English, Githa Hariharan’s works mirror the historical repercussions both at the personal and public levels. Literature is a manifestation of the cultural, social, political and spiritual growth of a nation. It is a mirror of the society because it personifies not only the long cherished and deep rooted tradition but also a comprehensive perception of the changing aspects of society with contemporary life and true reality of a nation. To understand the customs and cultural modes of a nation, one should study the thematic concerns and innovative writing techniques like the tools Hariharan adopts which are quite sharp and probe very deep. She has skilfully done the orchestration of innumerable stories. The central themes deal with social evils. Historical romance, social realism, hunger, poverty and tradition versus modernity are found in the literary works of earlier periods in Indian writing in English. Movements like Communism, Socialism, Feminism and Humanism are like waves in the sea which come one after the other and bring change after change in the society. Hariharan is perhaps the Indian author, who has made a bold attempt to voice the frustrations and disappointments of women despite her vehement denial of being a feminist. She is at best can be called an articulator of a society which is caught at the cross roads of change.

The story is the most popular form of literature. Epic, ballad, anecdote and romance are all stories. However, the novel is a representation of the recent trend of storytelling. The novelist is different from the storyteller. The novel not only tells a
story along with the story, it also gives a portrait of characters. The novel may be the last form of literature to establish itself, but its rise has been meteoric. The novelist’s art is a great one. It is the form of literature in which women have established themselves as successful as men. The writers were the bridge between pre and post independent India. Their writing reflected the turbulent time they lived. Thus, the Indian English writer, both men and women, created through their work. Few writers, however, chose to hold a mirror to the psychic changes that blew like silent whirlwind through Indian society. A writer, who is a product of the age reflects the society through his or her work. Contemporary female authors have diverged away from traditional portrayals of enduring and self-sacrificing women toward conflicted female characters who are searching for self identity. In contrast to previous novels, female characters from the year 1980s onwards affirm themselves and defy marriage and motherhood. Current female writers depict both the diversity of women and the diversity within each woman, rather than limiting the lives of women to one particular ideal.

The novels emerging in the twenty-first century set an example of a whole range of attitudes towards the imposition of tradition, some offer an analysis of the family structure and the caste system as the key elements of patriarchal social organization. Githa Hariharan reviews mythology by using new symbols and subverting versions. The main aim of Indian women writers is to give awareness to the society. They also re-interpret mythology by using new symbols and subverting versions. The work of Indian women writers is significant in providing a medium for self-expression and, thus, re-writing the History of India. Twenty different stories in
Harihan’s TAD mirror contemporary life, society and situations. She depicts the changing society of India, its attitudes and beliefs, values and behaviour, morality and hypocrisy. She is well aware of the changing Indian society towards resocialization; she knows the ins and outs of it and therefore, her descriptions are quite realistic. While giving a picture of the contemporary social values, she does not forget to portray the conventional ones. It provides some degree of mutual caring and sharing that transmit knowledge, values and material benefits from generation to generation. A modern educated working woman faces some major conflicts and problems in adjusting herself between these two worlds of family life and career life. Indian family has forced gradual changes in its structure and functions as it moved from an agrarian and rural to an industrialized and urban social ethos. Families always work through blood relationships and interdependence. Every human being is a member of the family which we consider as the smallest part of the society. Hence, families in themselves are a powerful medium of socialization.

The nuclear family is organized around a pair of adults, bound together in strong with mutual emotional dependency. The emotional bonds are reinforced to the extent that mutual economic dependency is created through a division of labour, with the male as primary breadwinner and the female as primary homemaker. Urban communities, on the other hand, are not organized around couples, even though many members are paired. Emotional support is available from many, rather than one. The need to accept an economically dependent position is sharply reduced by cost savings available in large groups and by communal norms which require more or less
equal contributions from all adult members. The division of labour by sex has been all but eliminated in the breadwinner area and greatly reduced in the homemaker area. Leadership and influence are shared, diffused and subject to challenge through regular and accepted processes. Problems of communal living include interpersonal conflict, especially over inconsideration and lack of communication. Lack of privacy is often seen as a disadvantage for individuals, although it is rarely an explicit cause of group tension or conflict. Jealousy and sexual rivalry are not seen as frequent causes of group level conflict. People form and join urban communes in search of an alternative family style which provides the social support and economic security of a nuclear family, while broadening the opportunities for intimate interpersonal interactions with a variety of adults. In such a context, members seek and find opportunities for individual growth and for social development.

Family transmits the values and ideas to the next generation. Post-Independence Indian society also witnessed a new social order coming into existence. It also saw the emergence of new patterns of class structure and the formation of new communities according to the changing patterns of life. The writer presents an analysis of social strata along with various conflicting phases. Hariharan, in her short story collection TAD, has projected the post modernist ethos of difference with perfection. The short story *The Remains of Feast* was first published in Debonair under the title *Forbidden Fruit* and included *In Other Words: New Writing by Indian Women (1992)* and *The Remains of the Feast* in the collection which has become one of Hariharan’s most anthologized short stories. The widowed grandmother in the last days becomes greedy
for all things that she had not tasted during her life. Perhaps this is her suppressed revolt against the system in which she lived. The great grand mother’s ability to take liberties against unwritten normative social codes and expectations from society for instance, is largely made possible by the fact that she belongs to a brahmin family.

The story *The Art of Dying* is yet another story which deals with a dying old widow woman. On the whole, the two short stories *The Remains of the Feast* and *The Art of Dying* stand out highlighting human behaviour. The dying suffers emotion suppression. The living prefers to look at the past life with reference to their emotions and do everything, of course, in a mechanical manner. Old women in Hariharan’s stories in fact seem to have an impulsive grasp of truth. Short stories *The Remains of the Feast* and *The Art of Dying* represent the human and social behaviour. Thus, the eponymous character of her short story is an ageing child widow ‘Revati’. In the short story *Revati*, female identity becomes highly problematic. In *The Will*, the widowed Sushila, who had meekly lived out her life holding on to her husband’s pithy aphorisms, is demolished when her husband’s last letter flies out of the window.

The story *The Reprieve* was first published in *The Indian P.E.N*: In this story the widower Nagaraj Rao, a senior advocate, is the head of a large joint family. He constantly remembers his wife Mangala after her death and retreats himself from the world around him. He tries to understand his wife by constantly remembering the past event.

Another short story *Untitled Poem* was first published in *Debonair*. It shows the intimacy between couple in their daily works. In these two short stories 'Untitled Poem' and 'The Reprieve' Githa Hariharan, gives the male characters a chance to
voice their feelings and in turn puts them into the dock where they reveal the layers of sensitivity that lies undiscovered in them. They are accountable to themselves for all their actions and such actions give the female characters a stronger position. In the story, *Voices in the Twilight* Hariharan shows how a widowed mother brings up her three children lovingly. The protagonist in the story entitled *Forefather* is playing a game to guess when his father would die. This shows his callousness towards his own father who is suffering from paralysis. The story makes us realise the present contemporary generation which is so much engrossed in career orientation that takes the death of their near and dear ones as casual events. In the story, *The Closed Room* an ideal wife helps to her husband in the act of writing biography even after his death. In *Close-up* the photographer’s job experience clicks up as a colourful expression of the society. In *The Warden* there is a noble poignancy in characters like Basamma a poor woman, employed to take care of a mad wife. In *Halfway Animal* Hariharan psycho-processes a stenographer who spends his afternoons in the zoo with the animals. He draws a parallel of his situation at home and office with the trapped animal. Githa Hariharan has touched the teenage to old age experience in *Virgin Curry*. In *Love Poem* she portrays the college girl’s life in different aspects. The sense of alienation felt by Tamil maid servant as a child labour shifted from village to city is seen in *Gajar Halwa*. Another story, *Field Trip* shows how the boy from city enjoys his vacation at his uncle’s village. *The Rain Maker* enunciates multifarious aspects of personal and interpersonal relationship. The story *Retrospective* sought to
identify the extent to which employee level and stress were associated with mental problems as experienced by Prem Lal.

Sociologists have always regarded that man who has a mind and a brain, has a different social order and intelligence in comparison to animals. It is said that man is a speaking and a social animal and he is civilised. Man’s uniqueness is found in the special factor such as the culture and society that he lives in. Culture makes not only human but also the society unique. The cultural element is so pervasive in human society that no individual behaviour is free from its influence. Human society is unique because it depends on culture. The writer has tried to project a realistic picture of Indian society. It is indeed a remarkable picture of society one gets in Githa Hariharan’s TAD. Yet, each story is different from the other in terms of pattern and theme. Hariharan wants to make the people to be aware of human condition, human potential and human destiny. She wants mankind to be aware of the evils or anti-human effects such as child labour, widow’s suffering and abuse of women and children which are the main issues found in her short stories. Her writing becomes her tool or weapon to accomplish this social task. Hariharan makes a significant impact on society, specifically, on resocialization in the contemporary Indian society. It is not enough to look upon history as a mere chain or parade of events, or just a physical phenomenon: the turns and twists of history generate ideas which do have their own sociological importance and value, for the govern human action and the shape of things to come. It is really important to take note of the fact that, in one way or another the term resocialization has undergone various modifications and transformation in all the
twenty short stories. After reading the collection, one develops a kind of feeling that if living the life is an art, even dying is also an art. The present age of Githa Hariharan is the most complex phase of the cultural history of India due to globalization and multiculturalism. There were sudden changes and subtle and unpredictable changes that reformed, redefined the identity of individuals in general and of a woman in particular. The spread of education is also a factor of great significance which took place during the last two decades. The education is not confined to make people literate but it has new functions to perform. The spread of technical education and individual awareness shapes and reshapes the minds of common Indians with handsome participation of women, especially writers, in reshaping the cultural history of India towards modernity. Man must know how to live in good terms with himself, how to manage and control and sometimes to improve himself. *In Black Skin and White Masks*, Mary E. Donnelly remarks:

There are close connections between the structure of the family and the structure of the nation. Militarization and the centralization of authority in a country automatically entail a resurgence of the authority of the father. In Europe and in every country characterized as civilized or civilizing, the family is a miniature of the nation. (147)

The role of different socio-political institutions is stifling humanity for its own growth and development. This kind of attitude should be resocialized. Human values can be protected only if politics is made to serve man. This can be achieved only if the people wielding for political power realise. Human rights are the indices of peace and
prosperity of any civilized society. When denied, backlash is imminent thereby causing
greater unrest in the society. The position of man depends upon a lot of things like the
atmosphere of the family, the socio-cultural aspects of the surroundings, and more
importantly, the age in which a man is born. These are the significant factors found in
shaping a man’s personality as well as the society. Hariharan’s literary works depict
fiercely, with brilliance and passion, the problems which torture and torment the
Indian spirit in contemporary times.

Her body of work underlines the specific features of many social problems which
seek the attention and gives a sense of direction in order to solve the problems. Her
short stories are not only the mirrors of society, but also try to transform the society and
to remould it. Globalization refers to mutual interdependence of the countries of the
world, particularly their economic interdependence and freedom to integrate with one
another. The process of globalization in India has brought changes in the spheres of
economic issues, culture, education and other aspects of life on the positive side. Life
has become comfortable with the scientific and technological innovations, but on the
negative side there has been erosion of values and increase of violence in the society,
particularly against women and children has become rampant. Impact of globalization
on the country’s value system and the deterioration in social values has been
immense.

Psychological theories and concepts are continuously evolving and changing.
It is Freud’s view that man is driven by the same basic instinct as animals and he is
continually struggling against a society that stresses the control of these impulses.
Freud’s quest is for data in man’s unconscious which is invisible, and untouchable.

Leon Edel asserts in *Experiments in Literary Psychology*:

> Literary psychology is the art of discovering the unseen through the seen: it is the art of defining a shape when we see the dancer in the dance or the author in the book is a legitimate object of artistic, critical and scientific inquiry. If this inquiry takes us into troubles and torments of human existence, it lends us at the same time to mankind’s most characteristic way of transcending our existential state. (20-21)

The psychological novel has opened out new horizons to novelists. Writers have brought the reader into direct contact with the experiences of the human mind. The temperaments, human behaviour, inner emotion of a character, moods, fantasies, associative memories, corelated past and present situation, momentary observations and subconscious thoughts of the leading persons in the novels have assumed a greater significance than before. In many of the novels where the psychology of the characters is analyzed, the author tries to enumerate the several motives involved and further distinguishes for the readers certain subtleties or refinements in the characters’ reaction. Self-actualization represents a concept derived from humanistic psychological theory and particularly from the theory created by Abraham Maslow. Hariharan attempts to project the large society as a whole through her characters in three different generations. Her novel mainly delineates the awakening of woman’s consciousness which impels her to strive for self-actualization. This awakened consciousness of woman stands for the human effort to be a whole human being.
Women characters in TFN fictional world, attempt to fulfil their needs which appear in a particular hierarchy. They achieve different levels of satisfaction depending upon their generations. The trend of writing novel in English is growing gradually and creating a global repute by virtue of its cosmic characteristics. The identity of India as well as that of Indian fiction in English cannot be hallmarked unless the social-cultural ethos is scanned. India which is well known for its vast treasure of regional literature gives a source to the growth and development of world literature. Hariharan’s perception, envelops the whole history of woman’s role and the emergence of a new woman who is true to her own self and quest for self actualization. ‘The New Woman’ is a burst out of a long passion with a spirit of rebelliousness. They are representatives of the whole women society. The spirit of rebelliousness provides the right impetus to move on with confidence, atleast with self-awareness. Female protagonist in Hariharan’s novels stands apart from their counterparts in the writings of many contemporary women writers. All the three main female characters progress to delimiting restrictions through self analysis and self discovery. They try to create both physical as well as psychological space for themselves to grow on their own. The innermost consciousness of the Indian psyche and the social relations depend on the traditional image of ideal womanhood even in the present context. Devi being the representative of the new generation of self actualizing women has a balanced practical approach to her problems. She shows that success does not lie in the subjugation and destruction of the male, rather than take him to see the indispensability of each other’s space through individuality. She starts up as a rebellious reformer but ends up as a renewed and rejuvenated
woman. The traumatic experience of psychological separation between Devi and Mahesh is inevitably followed by the physical separation between the two. Here, Hariharan feels that there should be a harmony between the man and woman relationship. They should be considered as equal partners, by giving equal space, freedom of expression and love. There is a question posed on the concept of “real love”. Women have the power to assess and judge their condition and situation. According to Indian women, family is their priority and soul part of life, but how much the family provides space and freedom to the individuals in the family is a debated issue. Moreover, they are unable to express their passion and mental agony directly towards those who are responsible for injuring their pride and dignity. Rejection or negation by the family leads them to a feeling of loneliness, emptiness and guilt. Hariharan’s writings are immensely readable and she is able to convey serious issues in a deceptively simple style. Her fiction entertains, educates and widens one’s awareness, all at the same time. Through her writings, Hariharan has tried to fulfil her duty as a writer. The search for self identity for a woman is the first step taken towards her becoming a human. The novel TFN discovers the search of the woman to fulfil herself as a complete human being towards her traditional role as a daughter, wife and mother. She has undergone a variety of common domestic crisis, which triggers off the search.

In the process of revealing the woman’s struggle to secure self-respect and self-identity for herself from the society that she is living, the author subtly bares the multiple levels of oppression, including sexual oppression experienced by women.
Hariharan specializes in portraying the undulations of the female ego or self under the pressure of critical human situations and emotional relationships. Her attention is on women sufferings in the complex cultural stresses and strains in Indian society even though they have strong past moorings.

Hariharan explains the human relationship in modern Indian society, particularly the husband-wife relationship which elaborates clearly from their personal point of view. Her women characters are entirely tolerant, obedient and submissive. But a feminist awakening and upsurge is all along notable in their feelings and conduct. The three female characters are not radical feminists. They do not perish, they do not collapse, but survive through their self-realization and awareness which emerges from their own mind and it finally becomes the centre of struggle, conflict, intellectual amendment and revolution.

The behavioural patterns for the Indian women are predetermined by the caste into which one is born and the value and traditions of a culture that upholds archetypal images of women. In this novel, the character Mayamma is a servant representative of a lower caste and she is a victim of a heartless husband and mother-in-law; her life becomes worth living only after she becomes a servant to Mahesh's mother Parvathi. Upper caste Sita and Parvathi also lost their self in their marriage life due to patriarchal society. This boundary ties them inside the web of patriarchal society. If anybody tries to break and deviate from prescribed norms or any display of transgressive potential in violation to the ideal image of womanhood.
In this novel, various aspects and various dimensions of familial relationships that are discussed will help the readers to get a clear idea about the role they play in a family. There are mother-daughter, mother-son and relationship with in-laws, but the much focused one is husband- wife relationship which is the foundation and base of a family from where many new relationships start taking shape and develop.

Psychoanalysis is the dynamic form of psychology which was developed by Sigmund Freud as a psychoanalytic criticism. It created space for a number of speculations. Psychoanalysis is taken place in literature through the characters representation.

Jacques Lacan was responsible for the gradual move away from persons. His views of psychoanalysis involve the intermingling of human subjects and language. Like Freud he also focuses on the topics such as ego, transference psychosis, the death drive, repression and sexuality. Hariharan’s art lies in selecting situations which most Indian women can identify. Her focus is on the woman within marital, domestic relationship. Gender equality and women empowerment are the current issues which have picked up momentum in India in the last three decades. There has been a shift from ideology of women themselves to modern view of life. In this way, women writers play a vital role. Hariharan’s novels are concerned with a woman’s search for her identity and exploration into the female psyche. Her protagonists undergo an arduous journey to discover themselves and this leads them through a maze of self doubts and fears in her novels Hariharan portrays woman in different roles such as wife, mother, daughter and an individual in her own right.
Although, consistently pressured in tangled relationship, her women firmly refuse to become prisoners of orthodox, fossilized traditions and stereotypically idealized identities, although hers is not exclusively a women’s world. She casts a hard look at the fissures in the structural dynamics of the society functioning to the disadvantage of the human race. Her novels play out their lives’ flux and fragility, differences and clashes, sufferings and struggles, societal and interiorized levels of their experience, as well as the extent of inter subjectivity of these women and self. The story is narrated in the autobiographical style. All the events and episodes are narrated as experienced by the protagonist Devi who is the central character of this novel. The author rarely intervenes to interact with the readers. There is not much progression or happening in the novel as far as plot and action are concerned. The whole novel completely penetrates into the personal relationship and inner consciousness. There is more depth and complexity in the choice and treatment of women in the novel as it depicts victims. Self-actualized people always guide others because they have realistic perceptions of themselves and the world around them. Through the novel TFN, Hariharan expresses the inner suffering of more than thousand women through the characters Mayama, Sita and Devi. Devi, who belongs to the present generation revolts against the entire system of social relationships.

But some characters like Sita and Parvathi, though they are steeped in the Hindu value system, manage to find space and scope for rebellions within the institution of marriage they conform. Self-actualized individuals approach problems inside and
outside themselves through different analyses including helping others and finding solutions to the problems in the external world. These people are often motivated by a sense of personal responsibilities and ethics.

Moreover, Devi’s own story is complimented by the stories of four other important women: her grandmother, her mother, her mother-in-law and her servant. All these women have been both victims and survivors in their own way. Their lives have been marred by sufferings, sacrifices, injustices and disappointments. Yet they are undefeated, unbroken instead they are strong. The major theme running throughout is one closely to psychological crisis, loss of identity and the way it travels through generation to generation as a sense of loss. A major development in modern Indian fiction is the growth of a feminist or women centred approach that seeks to project and interpret experience from the point of a feminine consciousness and sensibility.

All the evidence that we have indicates that it is reasonable to assume in practically every human being, and certainly in almost every newborn baby, that there is an active will toward health, an impulse towards growth, or towards the actualization.

(http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/abraham_maslow.)

As the above quote says self actualization is present in all. Human being needs a sense of identity and belonging. Individuals derive their sense of identity from their culture where a system of beliefs determine how people should live their lives. One of the underlying themes of twentieth century writers is to point out the increasing
existential crisis through protagonists from their families, communities and society. The close-knit tie of the journey and the means to undertake it is self-evident. Devi, her mother, grandmother, mother-in-law and maid-servant, all are in a line, each epitomizing the woman who is asked to play a role. Devi's grandmother, in her widowed old age, had at last asserted her feminine individuality through sheltering women who had been broken by marriage, or rendered homeless or helpless of women due to the unwritten norms of a chauvinist patriarchal society. Devi's mother-in-law Parvathi had struck her own revolt by running away from the family to her god. Devi makes the same gesture with a minor variation. She elopes with musician Gopal because, Mahesh has crushed her dignity, self, individual aspiration and mocked at her emotional imaginative refinement.

Devi's mother Sita also had to give up her individual pursuit after marriage and adapt to pre-fixed roles instead. Years afterwards, when she learns of Devi's escape, Sita stops to probe herself for the first time, and realizes how wrong she had been to give up the Veena for the society-approved self-effacing unfulfilling role of a model homemaker. One can see the life of a modern woman's quest and sufferings through the protagonist Devi. In the late 20th century, various feminists began to argue that gender roles are socially constructed and that it is impossible to generalize women's experiences across cultures and histories. Post modern feminists also insisted on the social construction of gender and the discursive nature of reality. However as Pamela Abbot notes, “A post modern approach to feminism highlights the existence of multiple truths rather than simply of men and women standpoints.”
The monotonous work at home gives her no autonomy. Her services deny her from any real dignity. With its endless repetition, housework becomes a torture for her. According to prevailing social norms and expectations, a wife as a woman is not a complete individual; she becomes one as a mother. She is supposed to find self-realisation sexually and socially through the child; the child is her happiness, her justification. It is through childbearing that the institution of marriage secures its meaning and purpose. Society treats motherhood as the supreme stage in woman’s life history. She fulfils her physiological destiny in maternity. This self-actualisation or full realization of human potential requires a prerequisite civil society in which individuals are free to choose their lives for themselves. It is neither man nor woman, but human. Self-actualisation is a state of self-fulfilment in which people realize their highest potential in their own unique way. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs suggests that there are five needs: physiological, safety, love and belongingness, esteem and self-actualisation. Only after the basic needs are fulfilled, a person is able to move higher towards other needs. When men and women share not only children and family but the responsibilities and passion of work, then only peace will reign. Women must have serious commitment, education and training so that they can grow as a part of society. They shared feelings of powerlessness and underdevelopment. Soon they began to see that there was a social basis for their oppression. The women’s liberation movement brought the psychology of women into direct focus and provided a starting point for developing psychotherapy from a feminine perspective. Githa Hariharan in TFN agrees completely with feminist ideologies and supports and suggests for a
change in system where women have greater control of their lives. She advocates individual rights and freedom over their body. However, questions have been asked and alternatives have been suggested. The silent revolution has begun. Within a few years, the quest for self-will became the quest of the nation where the myths would be re-written and the rules of the power-game will be changed.

The loss of self-identity in a woman is the root cause of many conflicts, because, writers depict psychological suffering of the frustrated homemakers. The last three decades have seen the emergence of a promising search for selfhood that is essential for all-round happiness. But Devi is confident of her capabilities to make choices and assumes control over her life. The courage, the dignity, the responsibility and the independent spirit displayed by her proves that she has reached a stage of self actualization. She proves that women like her are capable of ushering in a positive change in the social structure. The variety of subjects, that Githa Hariharan has touched upon is a great contribution in creating awareness for the modern women all over the globe. Nature is open to all in equal manners. It does not discriminate. It is available to everyone. Discrimination is manmade. It is not natural but mechanical. In the present scenario, human life is not at all possible without the mutual co-operation of male and female in all aspects. Both are equally important and should treat themselves like the two wheels of a chariot for the smooth running of life and creation of the world as the Rigveda says:

Ermanyadwapushe vapushchakram rathsya yemthuh

Paryana nahusha yuga mahna rajansi deeyathah (1958:99)
The Upanishad does not make any difference between man and woman. There is the same supreme consciousness in them:

He who dwells in all beings, and within all beings,
whom all being do not know, whose body all beings
are, and who pulls (rules) all beings within, he is thy
self, the puller (ruler) within, the immortal (1936:135)

It is also imperative to comprehend the cultural background of Indian women through the ages to assess the plight of Indian women in the backdrop of the wide canvass of Indian women of different ages. Although women have played a crucial role in the creation of society and have been active agents in history, the patriarchal thought has spared no effort to relegate them to margins. Equal status was endowed upon women to participate in sacrificial rites on par with men during the Vedic period. They enjoyed the privileges of fighting wars, involving themselves in philosophical debates and were allowed to hold on their spinster. Thus, Githa Hariharan sends different signals for the new woman of modern India, that she must shake off the shackles of imposed notions which still haunt her life with their thousand faces of deep darkness. Feminist study in Indian writing in English is neither new nor of recent origin. With its distinctive and defined substrata, feminism in the Indian subcontinent has several associative factors such as bringing equality of sexes, the aspirations of and the aspirations on women through education, the whirlpool of tradition and modernity. Literally speaking, it boils down in effect to a search for identity and also an attempt at defining oneself. Hence, Indian feminist literature presents many hues and facets,
soft, prominent and vociferous. The issues are also assorted like male chauvinism, sexist bias, psychological and physical exploitation and disregard for the female’s psychological, cultural, familial and spiritual quests. The ways out are mild protest, seeking accommodation through moderation, love and persuasion, etc. The modern Indian woman wants to disregard, even resent, man’s protective or guardian role. Literature is a record of experiences and emotions of women. As the novel TFN unfolds a from character to character and scene to scene, the essence of Indianness is witnessed. In a nutshell from the feminist point of view one can inhale the smell of nativeness in each every part of this novel through three different generations of women.

Hariharan’s TFN is at best to be read as a part of the re-visionist myth-making programme that one finds in women’s texts. She presents myths in a new dimension to the present scenario. Stories from Indian epics, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* provide scaffolding to the main storyline of the novel. Hariharan matches great epic’s minor characters with her heroines who are living in contemporary society. The Vedic Aryans imposed their caste based hierarchical society on indigenous Indians in later years so that caste system spoilt the humanity inside the Indian society. English people with all subsequent cultures, ideologies, religions and ethnic groups settled in India through peaceful migrations mainly as pastoralists and traders as usual. To Indian ancestors, mythological stories provided guidance in difficult times. It was useful to uplift their confidence and give hope in life. In TFN also, one can clearly see those classic heroes and heroines to get through their awesome challenges. The tales also
provide hints on dealing with mid-life crises or other difficult transitions. All these stories reflect life as a mirror whereby people may look for meaning in experiences that are so overwhelming. Unpleasant tragic events carry enormous value in terms of a personal experience into a complete human being. Overcoming passion or oppression is the effort. India’s great epics, Vedas and Puranas envisage marriage not as a mere social instrument but also as a moral weapon to stabilize an individual. But unfortunately, it is an irony of fate that in a post modernistic world, because of inequality, couples turn upside down. The main victims are their children. The in-depth value of mythology is often misunderstood. The soul awaits its resurrection, not through an apocalyptic end but through each individual beginning to wake up. A myth has at its core a timeless, eternal quality. A myth occurs when the objective reality confuses itself with a subjective reality. Every orthodox family woman struggles to fit in a limited role. To break free, one needs not only the construction of a new myth but the deconstruction of the old one. Hariharan shows the typical brahmanical morality which pervades even in the twenty first century. She is very conscious of the main current of Indian tradition. She perceives her past with its relevance to the present. She explores various prospects of women in south Indian brahamanical society. In the modern context, women writers attempt to project a new sense of woman’s identity that transforms her status from the victimized to the empowered individual. With the legacy of sexes inherited from the freedom struggle, we understood constitutional rights of women, spread of education and the consequent new awareness among women are the indigenous factors that contribute for her empowerment. The received
education wakes up her inner wish and gradually made women conscious of the fatality or emptiness of the various long-preserved notions and taboos. Women therefore burst out with unhesitating crusade against years of slavery, suffering and suppression, thus redefining her identity. The relentless probing of man woman relationship by the author intrigues the reader enough to question her stand on feminism.

Githa Hariharan has been acknowledged as an outstanding writer. Her fiction is wonderful, full of subtleties, humour and tenderness. The novel The Thousand Faces of Night conceals nothing and reveals everything. It is an outspoken book dealing with problems faced by women, both before and after marriage. In Hariharan's work, the old stories undergo subtle and gradual transmutations through narration as they are passed on from one generation to the other. Re-visionist myth-making thus becomes an act of perpetual remaking and insistent interrogation of the received tradition, affecting a constant renewal of culture. Furthermore, one can locate in Hariharan's work, a thread of re-visionist myth-making as a means to hear the wounds of one's soul, as a process of net-working among the women, the women of different ages and generations, an attempt at renewing the whole community of women through re-presentation of myths. This is a novel about the elemental things of life about two aspects namely, love and death, women and men, story and myth, passion and loneliness and clashes of culture of continents. Three women, Devi, Sita and Mayamma, belong to three different generations and encompass three Goddesses in their names. Each of them has an own story to tell. Devi, the daughter, educated in
America, married to the pompous Mahesh and Sita, the mother, sacrificing herself to the Gods of reason, order and progress, and Mayamma the old servant, married when she was still a girl to a drunken husband and abused by husband, mother-in-law and son are unique characters.

Githa Hariharan, with such craftsmanship and sensibility of the creative artist has attempted to expose the cultural conglomeration and conflict through her works. She project the large society as a whole through her characters. But her novel work mainly to awakening of woman’s consciousness which impels her to strive for self-actualization. Githa Hariharan has dealt with the pathetic condition of women in Indian society oppressed by superstitions, myths, religion and marriage. Her novel TFN presents the effects of patriarchy on women of different social classes and ages and particularly, the varied responses to the restrictive institution of marriage. However, a peep into the ancient times seems to reveal interesting facts on women’s status. Women enjoyed a much advanced status, where matriarchy was the rule. It is believed that the family of early humans centered on the mother. Female deities were prioritised.

A patriarchal social setup firmly asserts men’s superiority over women and is based not on mutuality, but on oppression. Although women have played a crucial role in the creation of society and have been active agents in history, the patriarchal thought has spared no effort to relegate them to margins.
Women underwent trials and tribulations and were at the mercy of their masculine counterparts. Men looked down upon women as the creator of their race and no major roles were allotted to them, besides procreation and upbringing of progeny. They were considered as instruments of the satisfaction of carnal lusts by landlords, victors and invaders. It is to be noted that later, the industrial revolution in India had its impact on women psyche and thoughts. It totally changed the outlook of many affluent women on life. It created consciousness about their rights and the potential women rose up. This made women to come to the forefront of political scenario during the late 19th century.

Githa Hariharan’s vision encompasses the whole history of woman’s role in cultural labyrinth and edifies the emergence of a new woman, who is true to her own self. All the three women in the novel attempt their best to brave the strong oppositions and create a space for their own lives. They achieve different levels of satisfaction depending upon their inherent nature. Hariharan’s Devi created a new breed of woman-protagonists, who are neither loyal, committed traditionalists nor ultra-modern, but life-like. Such women have rediscovered and redefined their identity as new women. Devi becomes alert to the inner call of self-realization. She seeks the real music that her mother could probably provide. In Hindu mythology, the wife of Shiva has several names. She is both benevolent and fierce. The name ‘Devi’ is one of the names of the Goddess, the spouse of Shiva. And Shakti is regarded as the motivating energy of the universe without whom even Shiva is powerless to act. Paradoxically, it is only Devi, the Goddess, whether beneficent or cruel, who among the goddesses has an
independent personality of her own. While her grandmother's stories have initiated her into the humorous subterranean possibilities of womanhood, Baba's stories define Devi about the limits of wifehood. A ruthless probing into the life of these women provokes Devi to have a story of her own. She recollects all the heroines in the stories of her grandmother whose lives can be linked with those of the women of today. Gandhari, who wrapped her anger at being tied to a blind husband in a life-long blindfold, comes close to Sita, who pulls down the strings of Veena, with a vow never to point it again protesting against her father-in-law's accusation. These women meet their, fate all alone with a bitter experience. Amba the noble character in Indian epic transforms her fate, her hatred of Bheeshma, who has wronged her and disrespected her individuality by denying her feminine fulfilment into sweet revenge and glorious triumph. Though she realizes that the stories of women she knows are far more sordid than their mythological equivalents, Devi feels she ought to do something as a mark of protest worthy of the heroines she grew up with. She banishes the images of a virtuous sacrificial wife, Sati, Parvati, Haimavati and Gauri forever from her mind, she rejoices in imagining herself as Durga or Kali and ready to avenge the assault of her inner core. Alienation draws Devi to Gopal, a neighbour. She is drawn by his crude handsomeness. She goes into raptures when he sings. After the elopement, she realizes that the euphoria is fading fast. She understands that she had occupied merely a peripheral status in his life. Their inner selves are not united. Therefore, she returns to her mother in search of a more steadfast relationship. Thus, the emotional fulfilment which she seeks outside marriage also fails since the man lacks the substantial
strength to provide the firmly grounded emotional solace she expects. Initially, Devi appreciates Mahesh's frankness. But her myopic mind refuses to stretch beyond appreciation. She fails to come to grip with the reality of loneliness when she experiences it. She understands that she has been unprepared for this phase of life. She fails to understand her husband's struggle for existence in a highly competitive globe. There is no necessary co-relation between the existence of a powerful feminine imagery in Hindu religious tradition and an elevated status of women. Hindu women have suffered at the hands of societal attitudes. Some trace this oppression to fear their dual powers of benevolent fertility and malevolent aggression. According to Hindu mythology, goddess Kali does represent an image of strength, self-determination and wholeness. However, male elites have fostered an ideal of women's spirituality that conflicts with Kali as a model of fierce, independent action. Women growing up in India like Mayamma and Devi are exposed to the beautified image of Kali the Compassionate Mother, and not the Terrible Mother. It is obvious that this excessive sweetening provided by male intervention is to downplay the more powerful, independent and sexual side to the image. Devi’s vision about myths helps women to understand their lives in order to face all the sufferings. With the help of mythical stories, the women characters in the novel mould their lives and learn to struggle. Their mind and body become strong to face anything and to learn through experiences in their lives. Thus, Hariharan proves that strength and bravery are gained in the women characters through their knowledge of mythical stories. Hariharan is known for her bold and frank style of writing because her writing deals with issues concerning the
modern society. The great epics *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharatha*, The Four Vedas *Rigveda, Atharv, aveda, Yajurveda* and *Samaveda* and *Puranas* such as *Vaisnava, Brahma* and *Saiva* envisage marriage as a moral power to both stabilize and elevate the moral stature of an individual. Githa Hariharan’s vision encompasses the whole history of woman’s role in a cultural labyrinth and edifies the emergence of a new woman, who is true to her own self. All the three women in the novel attempt their best to brave the strong oppositions and create a space for their own lives. All three and other sub characters in this fiction achieve different levels of satisfaction depending upon their ability and their generations. The psychic crisis of women is belonging to different age groups and different social status and cast have been highlighted in this novel. Education is the only key to social change for improving the position of women. Hariharan’s Devi creates a new race of women who are neither very loyal and committed traditionalists nor ultra modern. Such a woman has rediscovered and redefined her identity as a new woman.

India is a diverse country with many subcultures, different lifestyles and different people. One unique aspect of India is the fact that there are 15 national languages spoken. India has two official languages. It makes us wonder, with so many languages and so many cultures, it must be difficult to co-exist. Indian mythology is one of the richest elements of Indian culture, which enriches it further and makes it a unique one in the world. Through generations, different stories in Indian mythology have been passed from generation to generation either by word of mouth or through carefully stored scriptures. It is endeavour to bring forth the different elements of
Indian mythology by a myriad of articles and stories which not only make educational reading but also make a good source of recreational reading. These stories, which form the backbone of Indian mythology is a great medium for people, especially parents, to inculcate interest in Indian culture in the younger generation and to impart values of Indian culture to them. The interesting aspect of the stories in Indian mythology, is that they are usually meant to convey subtle facts, rules and maxims to guide our daily lives. Naturally, story-telling is the best medium for conveying even powerful messages. The stories in Indian mythology vary from subtle maxim conveying tales of *Panchatantra* and Jataka tales to subtle life paradigm defining stories from *The Bhagvad Githa*, *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. A key point to note is that there are usually multiple stories explaining the same fact or occasion or festival.

So, each version is right in its own merit. This is a result of the natural evolution the stories might have gone in the process of being handed over from generation to generation for centuries. Moreover, weaving the age-old formula of triumph of good over evil into a contemporary backdrop is a powerful tool. The different mythological stories in TFN connect and move together in the right pattern reveals the novelist’s vision of life. She talks especially about Indian mythical stories which are forgotten by many of us in the era of globalization and liberalization. She inserted the repertoire of mythological reference in her novel. Stories from Indian epics *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* provide main scaffolding to the main storyline of the novel in flashback technique. Hariharan relates the relevance of epic stories into the present society it really fixes to the background of story. The stories do not create any harm to
the meaning of the story and the aim of the novelist because the skilfully interwoven plots give each other substantial meaning. Hariharan writes in a clean and straightforward manner, characters talk and communicate effectively which keeps the novel flowing. Stories from Indian epics provide scaffolding to the main story line. She relates the relevance of epic stories in contemporary society.

Literary men have always used myth as an important literary devise to enhance the literary effect of their works. One of the reasons for the invention of tales and myths is that they act as a vehicle to make it interesting. They are sought by people all over the world and at all times, not only in modern Western culture but also in Indian tradition. This is often marked as something that seems more worthy. The words of Githa Hariharan can be identified to be one of the most closely related works with the backdrop of a story being a mythological preview integrated in the story. Githa Hariharan, in TFN, has revisited the women from the myths. Mukherjee (1985: 39) quotes Mircea Eliade and remarks that ‘mythic time of a pre-modern culture is cyclic, in which the same primordial drama is continually re-enacted’. She looks at these myths from the eyes of a modern, educated woman. In Hindu mythology, the women are treated as sacrificing, dependent, anxious to please, subordinate and submissive. This depiction of woman stands true in the present time as well and these are still the popular themes in a study of Indian writing in English. Myths are stories that are based on tradition. Some myths may have factual origins while others are completely fictional. But myths are more than mere stories and they serve a more profound purpose in ancient and modern cultures. Myths and sacred tales explain the world and
man’s experience. Myths are relevant from the ancient times to the young generations. The main characters in myths are usually Gods, supernatural heroes and humans. Myths answer timeless questions and serve as a compass to each generation. A myth taps into a universal cultural narrative, the collective wisdom of man. Myth is a tradition that speaks about God, supernatural elements and depiction of the same is always with a respect through heroism. Nearly all cultures have produced heroes in its myths. Some heroes, such as the Greek Achilles, have one mortal and one divine parent. Others are fully human but are blessed with Godlike strength or beauty. Many myths about heroes concern significant phases of the hero’s career such as the circumstances of the hero’s birth, a journey or quest and the return home. Indian mythology is one of the richest elements of Indian culture, which enriches it further and makes it a unique one in the world. Through generations, different stories in Indian mythology have been passed from generation to another either by way of mouth or through carefully stored scriptures. Indian mythology is used to inculcate interest and to impart the values of Indian culture in the younger generation. The interesting aspect of the stories in Indian mythology is that they are wholly meant to convey subtle facts, rules and maxims. Naturally, story telling is the best medium for conveying even a powerful message. The mythical and religious beliefs are based on the Indian epics accepting values of Indian traditional life. Myths and religion are important aspects of literature where writers of all the countries have used these themes to present culture and social aspects of their respective countries. Indian writers have made an excellent use of Indian myths in all their forms. Hariharan has also used religious and moral messages
to convey her feminine sensibility in her perception of the predicament of Indian households. Through the study of women characters, Githa Hariharan provides us a peep into the Indian tradition and culture and the position of women in the Indian society. It is about the journey of Indian women through tradition to modernity in search of self-identity. Githa Hariharan, in TFN, has revisited the women from the myths.

Hariharan expresses her anguish over the embedded ideologies of patriarchy that display its violence on women in myriad forms. She further emphatically conveys the notion of power and powerlessness. Indeed, her women characters of the novel have revised and re-invented the age-old conceptions about women and they offer alternatives to embrace the liberated feminist identity besides imbibing the strategies of resistance and survival. Hariharan has elucidated an old myth, but with feminist perspectives. She proves herself to be an expert in exposing the patriarchal ideologies from another angle too. With the portrayal of such feminist struggle confined within the four walls of the harem, Hariharan seems to be curious to analyse if a powerful women like Devi could be content with domesticity and if such a daring spirit like hers could be meek with her routine existence. TFN indeed challenges the generalizing definitions of motherhood by re-visioning the definition of the mother-daughter bond. Unlike other novelists, Hariharan’s approach is different in the sense that in contrast to the emptiness and void in women’s lives in a patriarchal set-up, she offers solutions through female bonding. In TFN, the presence and reminiscences about her mother makes Devi realise herself. Hariharan has succeeded in tracing the battles of woman
in her relationship with man and society. Together with Anita Desai, Shashi Despande and Meena Alexander, Githa Hariharan has been hailed as one of the woman writers producing a body of Indian literature that is committed to feminist and social issues. Hariharan is not only a renowned fiction writer but a story teller, editor, translator and essayist too. Almost all her works have been translated into many other languages which clearly reflects her popularity, fame and readers’ passion for her works. Her *The Thousand Faces of Nights* has been translated into French, Dutch, Spanish, German, etc. Hariharan shifted her reflection from the representation of a concrete society to the analysis of popular disclosures promoting certain notions of how to behave as a woman, what activities to perform or which dreams to nurture. Twenty stories of contemporary Indian life demonstrate the range of Hariharan’s writing, executed with a precision of style and magical imagery. In her novel, Githa Hariharan not only Indianised the incidents but also the language. Such as, she uses Indian words like *agraharam, ashtapdi, nadaswaram* and so on abundantly. English is more Indianised in her writings. Hariharan has added to this repertoire of knowledge through her mythological reference in her novel. Githa Hariharan belongs to the second generation of postcolonial women writers like Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Manju Kapur, Mridula Garg, Anita Nair and Shobha De. These writers have invigorated the English language to suit representations and narration of what they felt about their own women and their lives in post modern and post colonial India. Apart from sharing the common theme of exploring female subjectivity in order to establish an identity that is not allowed by a patriarchal society along with her fellow
Indian women writers, Githa Hariharan has also created a separate identity for herself by attempting to write about non-feminist subjects like the question of writers’ freedom and the true meaning of education and teaching in the Indian milieu. Among the contemporary Indian writers, she is considered to be one of the harder ones to pin down in terms of theme and setting and so on. Hariharan writes in a clean and straightforward manner. All her characters are suitably dealt with. Stories from Indian epics provide scaffolding to the main storyline of the novel. She relates the relevance of epic stories in contemporary society. Indian women writers have used themes of love, sex and marriage with confidence. But Hariharan articulates these themes with the help of myth and religion. She is well aware of the multiple identities that are attributed to a writer in India as the English writer, the regional writer, the woman writer and even as the children’s writer. As a writer she has been an astute observer of cultural issues. She believes that “Well-being does not come piecemeal, for rights co-exist, and repression in one area will not leave other areas unaffected” (Hariharan, Interview with Kala Krishnana Ramesh).

Githa Hariharan is a guide, a philosopher and a social thinker, who wants to see India and the rest of the world in a better harmony. Human values are greater and of more importance than other values of universe for the happy existence of humanity. Human life is not very easy and comprehensible as it appears to be; it is quite complex and complicated. From the very beginning of life, we start struggling for our acceptance. Since the beginning of civilization, every society had lived by certain human values and norms. All the floating mass of tales, traditions, legends and myths, for which
ancient India was famous for, has found a shelter under the expanding wings of two great epics. *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata*. These two classical epics of India are written in ancient Sanskrit and present the most common ideals of human civilization that seem to have gone down the drain in the modern times. The value of truth, the importance of self-sacrifice, self-realization, etc. that make an able individual are explained in much detail over here. The Indian epics are full of moral teachings and sacred discourses that are relevant in today's life also. The past and age old values can act as a stranglehold on progressive ideology. The past can cripple and suffocate the present. But if, treated wisely it can help smooth anything else to the transition of modernity. There is a need to redefine and modify but not change old values; and transition from tradition to modernity is the need of changing times. Hariharan, by extending her keenness to explore the psychological and sociological strains in the social and individual life, tries to unite the past traditional values with the fast emerging realities of modern living conditions. The real empowerment comes from our inner consciousness and our capacity to reach beyond the level restricted and guarded forts. Hariharan successfully makes her readers to analyse that all path breaking discoveries are the outcome of our faith, which helps mankind to enrich their life like a ladder to reach the zenith.

Sociology and Psychology are closely related with each other. Both are inter-related and inter-dependent. They are both involved in solving the existing social problems. Psychology is concerned with the human mind whereas sociology is concerned with man as a whole. Psychology depends on sociology for understanding
human nature properly. Psychology is concerned with the exploration of the depth of man's mind and behaviour in society. Sociology provides necessary materials regarding the structure, organization and culture of society, in which human behaviour is born.

Social psychology serves as a bridge between psychology and sociology. It deals with the mental process of man considering him as a social being. Human society emerged over 6 million years of hominid evolution. During this time group size steadily increased, and to maintain group cohesion, human beings gradually evolved a well-developed social intelligence based on the differentiation and refinement of emotions. Githa Hariharan has contributed a lot in making Indian English fiction famous the world over by shifting the property of her story from outer to inner reality. In her short stories it is quite clear that her attraction for the inner world of the mind is greater than for the outer world. She is one of the few remarkable Indian writers in English, whose works have been greatly praised both at home and abroad. Her novels are certainly presentation of social realities from a psychological perspective. She closely examines the emotional world of female class. She certainly presents their individual traits and peculiar and tender instincts as crushed by the dehumanization of society.
Suggestions for Further Research

The following studies are recommended and can be undertaken for further research on Githa Hariharan’s works:

- A Critical Study on Replica of Indian Heritage
- The Intricate Web of Human Relationships
- Revision of Myth and Tradition
- A Search for Identity and Culture
- Radical Re-fashioning of Self
- Postcolonial Perspectives
- Feminism and the Emerging Woman