

## **Introduction**

The matrix of nostalgia has a significant role in the dynamic socio-political system of the twenty-first century where human beings are captured into the web of commercialization and globalization. Moreover, survival on Earth has become a tedious issue for Man who has power and knowledge in the age of Information Technology, but this does not appear to be useful for revival of humanity; as politics of growth and development has disrupted common sense of living in the world. Additionally, violence, murder, rape, exploitation, communal riots and wars have become means of power politics sustaining hegemonic discourses where political propaganda appears to have humanitarian outlook, but end in negation. Hence, Man is condemned to live in a hegemonic system which has obstructed the real meaning of his life. However, humanity is not completely dead, but has been surviving in the form of suppressed emotions which in the present study are termed as the matrix of nostalgia. Thus, this matrix of nostalgia is not merely about negative emotions of human beings. Indeed, it is a story that could vary from person to person, but resonates with equity, justice and freedom. Hence, the researcher intends to analyze the matrix for betterment of the subjugated, suppressed and marginalized communities. It will also be a critique of the very base of power politics in which communities are trapped, misrepresented and exploited. It, in other words, aims to explore and contextualize longings of Man through varying modalities of nostalgia that consist in their stories. Therefore, the researcher plans to study such stories where nostalgia as 'longing' stands for revisiting history; reclaiming some specific territories; questing for equity and equality; and anticipating a proper ecological sustainability in the globalised world. Hence, nostalgia with reference to survival of such communities should be measured in terms of social arrangements; for voices from such marginalized communities are not only for art's

sake but for life's sake. Subsequently, if nostalgia survives, then literature survives, and if literature survives, Man survives. Nostalgia, therefore, should be considered as a revolution in mind that comes from a marginalized space where it does not stand only for pleasure and politics in hypocritical sense; but for survival and sustainability on Earth. In addition, nostalgia is not about past-ness of the past but it can also be futuristic through which Man can desire to have his space and identity passing through the turmoil of the present. Hence, nostalgia can be divided into a number of categories where it works as an affirmative force finding a place for betterment of human civilization.

To think of 'nostalgia' is to think of one's home concerning several ambiguities of human existence; for everyone has different notions of being at home. Therefore, nostalgia is as problematic as Man's mind. Literally, the term nostalgia is concerned with merely homesickness; as Merriam Webster online dictionary defines it as "the state of being homesick". Nostalgia, in a sense, reflects the pain that deals with a desire to return home; but the pain is mixed with pleasure. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary clearly defines it as, "a feeling of sadness mixed with pleasure and affection when you think of happy times in the past." Subsequently, it is usually "conservative in nature" (Lu 172) attempting to sustain the past that is not available; as it is a "realism' of a distant outsider" (Stewart 231). If one seeks history through imagination, then there would be multiple pasts for each individual; but it does not appear quite significant. As William Cunningham Bissell points out, "If history cycles around eternal return, then nostalgia becomes redundant" (216). Thus, nostalgia is not a positive phenomenon of human life even in the twentieth century where thinkers associate the term with mental disorder. It is obviously asserted, "By the beginning of the 20th century, nostalgia was regarded as a psychiatric disorder. Symptoms included

anxiety, sadness, and insomnia” (Sedikides 304). Earlier, it has been regarded as “cerebral disease” rather than a matter of feelings. Svetlana Boym supports this as:

Contrary to our intuition, ‘nostalgia’ came from medicine, not from poetry or politics. It would not occur to us to demand a prescription for nostalgia. Yet in the seventeenth century, nostalgia was considered to be a curable disease, akin to a severe common cold. Swiss doctors believed that opium, leeches, and a journey to the Swiss Alps would take care of nostalgic symptoms (7).

Nostalgia is also viewed as “the Melancholy feelings of dispossession” (Fritzsche 1588) that is the result of pushing people away from their possessions. Jennifer Robertson defines it as “a state of being provoked by dissatisfaction with the present”. He also calls it as “barometer of present moods” (495). Additionally, Judith Shklar supports the argument terming it an “adequate response of all to these discomforts” (379). Furthermore, Yang Guobin locates it in the form of “cultural resistance” (269) by which people can construct identities by connecting the present to the past, by articulating past experiences. Consequently, Svetlana Boym has rightly resituated it in Russian context as “Exile seemed to breed a peculiar kind of nostalgia, not for the actual Russia, but for utopian Motherland, the Russia never existed” (143).

Before considering complex modalities of nostalgia, it becomes imperative to go back to classical antiquity where the term ‘nostalgia’ has not been coined by any thinker systematically; yet most critics begin it with textual description of Homer’s *Odysseus* in which the protagonist, a warrior, wanders from city to city to pacify his quest to reach his desired destination, i.e. his home. Hence, the very idea of classical literature in Europe has obviously been linked with literal meaning of nostalgia, i.e. homesickness. However, it might not be applicable absolutely for holistic interpretation

of that heroic age; as nostalgia seems to have a profound base for a piece of literature to appear as a story or a text. Therefore, glimpses of the past are usually seen in literary writings. It is often debated among scholars whose interpretations vary about the past, but it is clear that nostalgia is not as gloomy as it has been considered through ages, as Yasuko Taoka points out that “Nostalgia is more than the literal ‘aching to go home’, it is an impossible desire to return to a time and a place when things were perfect. This notion lies at the heart of the two adaptations of Homer’s *Odyssey* ... [wherein] the protagonist seeks to revive the past and to recreate the *Odyssey* in the present” (243-44).

Firstly, the term has been used by an eminent Swiss scholar Johannes Hofer in his thesis in 1688 with etymological details of the word ‘nostalgia’ derived from two Greek words ‘nostos’ and ‘algos’ or ‘algia’. This depicts pain and suffering of a person who wished to return home; but this longing for home was named as ‘home-sickness’ rather than homesickness in Homeric sense. It, in other words, had been engaged with medical discourses that entailed some neurological and psychological disturbances of human mind concerning anxiety, depression and feelings of insecurity. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, nostalgia had not been taken positively, but regarded as a ‘cerebral disease’ rather than a matter of feelings. Doctors used to provide medicine to improve patients’ conditions.

In mythology, the Christian story of Adam and Eve also depicts an idea of homesickness that deals with their expulsion from the Eden garden. This is the first incident of ‘Original Sin’ in Christian mythology through which scholars can see substance of nostalgia, which has become one of the core part of all theological discourses; because Earth has not been considered as an ultimate place for salvation. Even in *Vedantic* philosophy, earthly life has been regarded as *maya* (illusion). Therefore, Man does not believe in materialistic reality that is all about mortality. On

the contrary, it is only the soul that never dies unlike body which is a matter of decay. Hence, this longing for ultimate home can be termed as nostalgia in the studies of theology and religious discourses. This theological notion of nostalgia has been utilized by certain persons like fraud saints in India who have shaped this connotation of nostalgia in a politicized frame to exploit the people spiritually. They, in other words, know how to use religious construct of nostalgia that might not be political in its fundamental form, but can be a means of sustaining roots of a political agency over certain communities. Nostalgia, in this sense, is not a revolution in mind, but it has been regulated and adjusted to perpetuate false nature of religious politics where the whole agenda of utilizing spiritualism depicts how some swindlers can exercise their power over socio-psychological setup of the world.

In Psychology, nostalgia has been studied as a mental disorder affected by some incidents of one's past. The concept of 'trauma' (now nostalgia) reveals patient's inhibited, fearful and fragmented psyche due to horrible incident/s of the past. Therefore, feelings of inferiority complex can be viewed as an exploration of that traumatic past which unexpectedly disturbs the affected person's mind in the present. Hence, psychologists like Sigmund Freud developed theoretical ideas of psychoanalysis about the layers of human mind dividing them within the structures of conscious, unconscious and sub-conscious. Hereafter, it is clear that the origin of the term 'nostalgia' in the historical records of a few centuries has been dealt with medical studies and clinical psychology instead of politics, history and literature.

Later, nostalgia has been associated with studies of philosophy, history, literature and modern sciences. Therefore, the idea of home-sickness and homesickness about the connotation of the word nostalgia does not appear to be appropriate; as everybody seems to have a desire to go away from one's home in order to establish a new

definition of one's home rather than longing for home in the past. Hence, the connotation of this term has completely changed owing to modern Man's desires in which he appears to be celebrating contemporary changes of human progress. Scholars might disagree to the view of celebration of these changes in society, but it is a postmodernist idea that provides a space to see hegemonic tradition differently; as yearning for the past is supposed to be elusive nowadays. Additionally, Man's yearning for home is defined in new terms showing a gap between a home and the home (new) for which Man is nostalgic. Man and home, in other words, are merged with developing modes of social system; and home is a place where one lives rather than a constructed frame of one's mind in traditional sense. Indian epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* seem to justify the idea of this displacement about home and Man who has adopted certain new things that affect his ways of thinking about the home. Rama in the *Ramayana* is not the same person as he has been before exile; for his ways of responding to society (home) have changed owing to spending fourteen years in exile. Moreover, his homecoming has been a sharp criticism in the gender discourses where Sita's status is viewed as secondary to Rama. Hence, it depicts how Rama has become a different person who thinks differently about society. The critical perspective on Rama, in this sense, is not to interrogate Rama's character, rather it reveals the impact of duration in which Man remains away from his home, might affect his basic instincts.

On the other hand, *Pandavas'* desire for having their parental home in the *Mahabharata* changes after the battle of Kurukshetra; as their victory has not been fruitful in actual sense. Additionally, their thinking about materialistic world gets transformed into spirituality. This shows that longing for home is one thing; but achievement of the same is certainly a different one. Therefore, nostalgia may lead to different directions in which each person may think differently. It, in other words,

depends upon individuals who can project it as a means of celebration, pessimism, loneliness, depression and social connectivity.

English Renaissance can also be interpreted in terms of nostalgia; for it is acknowledged as a revival or re-birth of Greek and Classical knowledge. People of that age in England showed immense interest in Classical literature. Moreover, ancient books had been translated so that common men could be benefitted by that revival which was taking place in England during the sixteenth century. Therefore, people started thinking about different dimensions of life. Furthermore, discourses of medieval period were challenged and transformed. Hence, Renaissance in England was not a pale imitation of Greek knowledge nostalgically; but this could be seen as an improvement upon medieval dogmas of England. Moreover, any movement cannot be separated from its tradition completely; as it attempts to look at its heritage with fresh eyes through which people recognize relevance of their legacy in new forms. R. K. Gupta remarks in "Trends in Modern Indian Fiction" as: "Literary trends do not emerge full blown like Minera from Jupiter's head, nor do they vanish suddenly and completely leaving not a trace behind." (299)

Neo-classical writers attempted to imitate classical antiquity stylistically in their works in which dominant aspect had been intellectual rather than emotional; but this tactic of imitation proved them as pseudo-classicists. If Plato emphasized philosophy of intellect, and desired to push poets away from society; then there had been different circumstances to use the means of utilitarianism; but neo-classicists' interests to revive aspects of intellect were different from classical antiquity. This simply means that there might be various reasons to be nostalgic; as every age has its problems. The pure justification of this idea can be seen in Gothic revival in nineteenth-century England that depicted a great interest in medieval elements of narratives that focused upon

stories of ghosts and witches; but this genre, in a sense, exposed the hollowness of Industrial development where innocent people and children were exploited physically and financially. Famous novelist Charles Dickens (1812-70) called this situation as hard time by entitling his novel as *Hard Times* (1854). The novelist himself had been affected by the predicament of that time in which he had to work in a factory as a child. Therefore, nostalgia should not be taken as a politicized propaganda of humanitarian outlook; for it consists in pain and suffering of those people who have suffered the atrocities of society; and their nostalgia is not compatible with the hegemony of that power politics which considers them only as objects.

The past is considered to be beyond the capturing power of nostalgia. Hence, nostalgia seems to be merely a waste of time; and it cannot play a vital role in re-shaping the human existence; as it always remains apart from harsh realities of the social system. Following this sense, literature of the Romantics can be viewed as a flirtation with actuality; for they used to live in the realm of fancy and imagination instead of concrete pain and suffering of contemporary society. John Keats seems to escape from anxieties of the world after his brother Tom's Death, which obviously is visible in the poem 'Ode to Nightingale'. Even William Wordsworth, has attempted to find out meaning in the realm of Nature rather than in the turmoil of the contemporary social system. Therefore, his longing for childhood and Nature appears to be nostalgic that has nothing to do with the displacement of the social system. However, this should not be supposed as an absolute truth about Romantic literature. To be a romantic, in other words, should not only mean to live in the realm of fancy and imagination; as it is the very literal meaning of romanticism that has usually been taught in classes of literature. On the contrary, true meaning of this movement consists in the reaction against hegemonic traditions. Therefore, it is a kind of revolutionary spirit desiring to

get freedom from the prevailing clutches of tradition. Full-fledged form of this spirit is visible in the writings of P. B. Shelley who clearly rejects the burden of that tradition which relies on the notions of exploitation. In this sense, the idea of romanticism is not limited to fixed historical duration of Romantic poets in England; but literature from any country having similar spirit can be termed as romantic literature. Therefore, literature of Romantic writers in England should not be seen as a means of only flirtation with actuality; as there is also a spirit of revolution that turns out as romantic nostalgia in positive terms. Hence, there can be various ways to be nostalgic, as there are various ways of being in love with someone. Sometimes lovers can be opposite to each other; but it does not mean that there is no love between them. Even separation can be a means of loving. Therefore, nostalgia, which has been categorized as a disease, has more positive meanings; but it has not been explored earlier. Even now, scholars hardly move away from the literal meaning of nostalgia. Research with such nostalgic layers in literature do not mean to disrupt the very literal meaning of nostalgia; but it is an attempt to see it in other possible forms positively; as Man thinks of circumstances in which he has been living. Mostly it is believed that circumstances are responsible to make Man rather than he makes them. In other words, his idea of being in this world is based upon external forces of social system; and displacement into circumstances may create a kind of nostalgia in Man's mind that starts concentrating on that turmoil; as it is cultural system that decides his identity and space in society. Sometimes Man can be aloof from materialistic world; but he has to think of his identity and destiny ultimately in terms of this materialism; for life is not always based upon such philosophical visions which have nothing to do with concrete realities of social system. Nostalgia generally appears to be apart from such realities, but it is not always so; for hidden memory of Man's mind has several things to share with external world in which Man

lives. Indeed, nostalgia is an imaginative force that turns into retaliation against those strategies that divide communities for exploitation.

The twentieth century has emphatically changed the prevalent connotation of medical discourses regarding nostalgia. Now, meanings of nostalgia has taken multiple and ambiguous directions owing to immeasurable development of human sciences where traditional ways of thinking are obviously challenged with the theoretical tools of Deconstruction and Post-Structuralism. Jacques Derrida, J. S. Miller and Roland Barthes have been the most popular icons supporting new discourses through which western metaphysics gets several critical interpretations. Every sign, in this sense, gets into a domain where it leads to other multiple significations to decide its original locus; but it depicts that locus in altering form which is a play among signs and their significations in the Derridean sense. This does not mean that one cannot establish a locus for multiplications of signs and their significations. In other words, one can provide some structural bases for significations of that particular sign; but these will not be a complete end of this grounding process; for assumptions of totality are clearly questioned in these discourses. Therefore, the same thing is applicable with reference to the connotations of the word 'nostalgia' by which it takes different meanings into the studies of literature, politics and history; but the term has not attained positive meaning with respect to the visions of the twentieth century. When people realize deceptive nature of progress and development in modern time; then they immediately start longing for the past. So, the concept of nostalgia becomes an opposite reaction to the idea of progress. In addition, contemporary thinkers suspect the basic ideology of Enlightenment that only intellect and reason would be the core parts of true progress in the world. Hence, this cannot be regarded as a true base of success in society. That is

why, writers, philosophers and thinkers depict a strong disbelief in that prevalent idea of progress; and they appear to be nostalgic through which they can revive layers of history and tradition; as it is ostensibly remarked that “The ruins [of the past] need not be discarded, they can be put together in newly meaningful ways. [...] It is better to understand our heritage than to try to produce in a void without direction” (Crinson 123-24). The word nostalgia, in this sense, is closely linked with a retreat from the present, as feelings of insecurity appear to be seen as a core part of modern Man’s mind that depicts a sense of frustration from the idea of progress. The longing for the past might be true in partial sense, as modernity has several other positive aspects through which Man has got freedom from the burden of the past. Gender discourses can be seen as the best elaboration in concerned directions of positivity towards modernist idea of progress. Despite hegemonic chains of tradition, a woman has started to realize about her rights and space in modern time. Her longings should not be regarded as a desire for that past from which she has to liberate. Moreover, her utopian longings have a sense of creating a new home rather than earlier one that is imbued with patriarchal politics. Therefore, there are various ways of modernity and its progress that can centrally be engaged with positive feelings through which nostalgia takes a positive shape. Michael Pickering and Emily Keightley have rightly observed in “The Modalities of Nostalgia” that “Modernity has changed the very conception of loss along with the compensations offered for it ...” (920-21). Nostalgia, in this sense, appears to lose its literal meaning of medical discourses; but it does not mean the end of further implications of this word; for the very basic reason to be nostalgic is closely linked with a fear of insecurity. Then, it does not mean a longing only for the past, as one’s longing might be a shifting from the past to the future. An acute dissatisfaction with society in the present can ultimately move in multiple directions. Hence, nostalgia is a

multi-dimensional activity of a fragmented consciousness in which Man usually searches for a meaning in the world. Consequently, to be nostalgic does not mean merely to have an attachment with the past as it is always re-constructed and re-perceived differently since ages. Therefore, nostalgia cannot be an objective and factual detail of the past, as subjective truths might be different from official records of history. Even interpretation of literary text comes up with a new meaning when a passionate reader attempts to re-experience it. Hence, author never dies; but is born again in the form of a reader. Michel Foucault rightly remarks in “What is an Author?”

He [the author] is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction. (n.pag.)

Further, the central idea of the Theatre of Absurd can be seen as an unknown quest for meaning in the world, as nobody knows from where it would come. People’s expectations are dealt with Godot’s comings. This ‘waiting’ can be named as a kind of nostalgia in which Man remains unsatisfied with everything. Even assumptions of metaphysical realm and ‘magical realism’ are unable to provide solutions to their fragmented consciousness. Therefore, nostalgia is not negative in this arena of absurdity in twentieth-century literature; but it is always parallel to the layers of meaninglessness longing for a home that looks like a vacuum of homelessness. This does not mean that idea of home does not exist in the world; but one can realize it from representation of Sisyphus, a Greek mythological hero, who depicts absurdity of human actions into social system where Man does not have a sense of belongingness due to the hegemonic politics scattered all over the world. Moreover, Man is trapped into a web where life has become a means of perpetuating power politics; and his destiny is

decided on the basis of such terms which are either elusive or unattainable in society, yet Man should not stop his efforts of getting meaning from this meaninglessness of the world; as nostalgia does not die from meaninglessness; but becomes revolutionary to reform society. Hence, Man should hear this revolutionary voice; otherwise, he will be into a new web of the old game or into a new game of the old web. In addition, the meaning does not consist in the political web of the term 'eternity' that is closely linked with spirit of meaninglessness. On the contrary, Man can be free from it by subverting this politics with revolutionary spirit of nostalgia.

Apart from this, the very idea of literary theory in the West has also dealt with nostalgia. Plato, a Greek philosopher, does not regard this world as a real one; as it is always a matter of change. Moreover, physical world is viewed as a duplicate copy of some metaphysical world that consists in 'ideas'. Hence, physical world cannot be real; and Man has to be nostalgic about his real home. Platonic idea of 'real' is not concerned with going back or forward; rather, it crosses boundaries of time and space. Therefore, nostalgia is obviously imbued with a phenomenon of 'timelessness' in its extensive implication. Secondly, it is not limited to any particular space with socio-political divisibility of historical time; for space and time are the same as they are in their actual forms; but it is only Man who thinks differently about circumstances which might be different within the ranges of time. Hence, Man might be nostalgic owing to a particular notion of his mind that might have numerous manifestations of its growth. Therefore, it is philosophy that makes it a timeless phenomenon in Platonic sense.

On the contrary, it is the Marxist philosophy that deals with a concrete ground about a right justification of nostalgia which can be realized through the writings of creative writers who have empathy for suppressed communities which are claiming a proper space in social relationships and arrangements, but are always pushed away

from that space. Similarly, Postcolonial discourses are voices from erstwhile colonies which yearn for their real home consisting in re-definitions of their cultural setup with reference to colonial structures that has been employed in indigenous life style oppressing and dismantling their native history.

Nostalgia does not end with changing modes of globalization; as notions of this age are closely coeval with a longing for home in global sense. Hence, nostalgia has taken different shapes with global changes where people are in a process of developing a common language so that different countries can get the easiest means of communication over global issues. The idea of global village can be replaced with a vision of global home in the twenty-first century. Therefore, Man cannot be away from the idea of home which is concerned with the term nostalgia. Even computer science, that claims no connections with nostalgia, has a unique relation with it; for the format of the homepage is a core part of this virtual world. Svetlana Boym precisely describes in *The Future of Nostalgia*:

The study of nostalgia does not belong to any specific discipline: it frustrates psychologists, sociologist, literary theorists and philosophers, even computer scientists who thought they had gotten away from it all—until they too took refuge in their home pages and the cyber-pastoral vocabulary of the global village. (Introduction XIII)

Moreover, it appears to be much relevant in the age of Information Technology where Man can easily communicate with others without caring for space and time. Reduction of time and space is dealt with impacts of new inventions of communication technology; but it does not mean that nostalgia has changed completely, as it can be seen as a means through which Man might have desires to communicate with his relatives living on a distant land. Hence, technology has given a platform on which

communication gap appears to have no gap and distance. However, the actual world, in a sense, can never be replaced with the virtual one. Subsequently, Man has become lonelier in the present than the past; for he seems to realize the falsehood of interaction through these digital tools. Also, Man's longing for a secure space has become more intensive than the past. Hence, nostalgia can be considered as a phenomenon of timelessness with multi-dimensional activities of human mind that might go towards different directions. It happens when a sensitive mind encounters with harsh realities of society where people are forced to live under hegemonic discourses demanding justice, freedom and space. Man has never ever been free from power politics. Hence, he starts expecting of a change in human existence. Moreover, he feels nostalgic about those places and persons who are lovely to him but they all keep a distance from him in the present time. Therefore, literal meaning of the word is not enough to show the potential of its growth, as nostalgia can be studied without any particular time period. In addition, nostalgia is not about past-ness of the past but it can also be futuristic through which Man can desire to have his space and identity passing through the turmoil of the present. Therefore, nostalgia can be divided into various categories where it works as an affirmative force that would find a place for the betterment of human civilization.

The present study is closely imbued with modalities of nostalgia through which the researcher intends to examine such literary works that have certain glimpses of a time and a place in which people are in an essential need to survive on Earth; but they remain away from the basic needs of home, food, water, education, employment and a healthy atmosphere. These issues, no doubt, are not new in Humanities and Social Sciences; yet longing for utopian society is always in a process of establishing it in an actual sense where a political propaganda of claiming utopia is a matter of profound criticism for the sake of a humanitarian stance that is obviously coeval with the survival

of the margins. Hence, nostalgia is not considered only as a fellow feeling in the present research but as a human right with a vision of co-existence where Man can be more sensitive and sensible not only towards living things but also for such non-living things which are there to establish a socio-psychological construct that deserves to be called a real utopia on Earth. Hence, the present research will focus to identify the trajectory of nostalgic modalities with reference to selected works where nostalgia is not just a dull emotion; but it deals with hidden cries and crises of marginalized communities which have several things to share with the world. Moreover, the researcher also seeks to verify nostalgia with reference to those political agencies which attempt to twist the actual trajectory of nostalgia by misrepresenting it ideologically.

The approach of the present study is interdisciplinary in nature focusing largely on socio-cultural and existential problems of the contemporary society. Therefore, tools of literary theories including Postcolonialism, Marxism, Postmodernism and Eco-criticism would be taken into consideration during the present study. The term nostalgia has been used as a strategy to understand various topical issues of the twenty-first century. Additionally, it will be a content analysis of the selected texts of diverse writers wherein a comparative scrutiny of various modalities of 'nostalgia' would be done to understand literature.

The area of nostalgia is so large that it would not be possible to discuss the term in its entirety, as human nature with respect to its hidden and explored faculties might not be as systematic as a scholar expects it generally. Therefore, the major focus of the present study will be on four major modalities of nostalgia analyzing them with reference to a particular trajectory for each of its types; but it might go across other trajectories of nostalgia that will be a flexible part of the present research. For this purpose, the scholar has collected four words to discuss the matrix of nostalgia: (1)

Retrospective Nostalgia (2) Restorative Nostalgia (3) Reflective Nostalgia (4) Prospective Nostalgia.

As such there is no meaning of reviewing Humanities without certain purposes of being better in the world, however, if there is something that exists meaningfully; it should be measured through the utopian assumptions of those living on Earth. Kristine Johanson rightly observes: “Nostalgia is ‘both the bittersweet side-effect of modernity and a potential cause of deadening hostility’ to modernity’s inevitable changes; nostalgia has a tendency to engage in the ‘antimodern myth-making of history’ and as such, its ‘genial sentimentality’ must be diagnosed and cured” (6). Therefore, the present research is an attempt to explore the burning issues of the twenty-first century with reference to such selected texts through which the term nostalgia appears to be meaningful positively. Hence, it is the ‘context’ of select texts by which the researcher intends to look critically upon issues such as power-politics, geographical displacement, secularism especially in Indian subcontinent. Moreover, the environmental problems will also be a major concern of the study as it is of extreme importance nowadays across the globe. In short, no such study, as the researcher has undertaken in this thesis been attempted in the field of literature till date.

Eight of the contemporary writers, who markedly deal with varied forms of nostalgia in their select works, which literally forms a matrix, and the purpose of which is to ensure a certain progression in the thinking and attitude of the humans, who have been relegated to marginalized positions, viz. displacement from history, home, society and environment, are as follows:

### **I. Salman Rushdie**

Salman Rushdie, born in Bombay on June 19, 1947 is a British-Indian novelist writing on several debatable issues of socio-cultural arena. He does not write simple

stories in traditional sense. In other words, he deliberately problematizes stories to show arbitrariness of truth and meaning. Exploring themes of cultural displacement, identity crises, alienation and a critique of hegemonic tradition in his writings, he has various creative tools to decolonize people from power politics. His use of magic realism provides a wide scope to think upon unsaid stories of human existence. He knows how to assert when assertion moves into absurdity and complexities of its own communication with outer world. Therefore, he believes that stories should not be simple and one-dimensional; but they should be multi-dimensional concerning pluralistic vision of the world. His writings, in other words, are dealt with “worlds in collision”. His writings including *Grimus* (1975), *Midnight's Children* (1981), *Shame* (1983), *The Satanic Verses* (1988), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999), *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), *Luka and the Fire of Life* (2010) and *Joseph Anton: A Memoir* (2012) can clearly be viewed as a mirror of this complexity.

## **II. Amitav Ghosh**

Amitav Ghosh, an Indian novelist, essayist and non-fiction writer, was born on July 11, 1956 in Calcutta, India. As an Indian writer, he is aware about issues and problems of native people who have experienced colonial legacy of the British Raj. Therefore, his writings have a potential to write back to the imperialists. Moreover, he also has a good command over historical fiction where he depicts how people have been regulated under certain manipulated codes of socio-cultural realities. Therefore, he knows how to explore inner realities of human beings who sometimes have different things to share with the world. His idea of “shadow lines” is sufficient to show the hypocritical nature of socio-political realities. His notable works are: *The Circle of Reason* (1986), *The Shadow Lines* (1988), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995) *The Glass*

*Palace* (2000), *The Hungary Tide* (2005), *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015).

### **III. Rahul Pandita**

Rahul Pandita, born in the state of Kashmir, is a well known Indian author. He belongs to the community of Kashmiri Pandits who have been expelled from Kashmir by Islamist extremists in 1990. As a writer, he appears to have nostalgia about his socio-cultural livings in Kashmir before the expulsion. Therefore, his longings are not only for home but also for socio-cultural securities. Therefore, the idea of home stands for various controversial things with reference to his writings. Moreover, he clearly shows intensive pain and sufferings living in exile. He also knows how stories can be a means of identity and survival for uprooted communities. Hence, he shares experiences of fragmentation, exile and alienation through his writings. He has written several books including *The Absent State: Insurgency as an Excuse for Misgovernance* (2010), co-authored with Neelesh Misra, *Hello Bastar–The Untold Story of India's Maoist Movement* (2011) and *Our Moon has Blood Clots* (2013).

### **IV. The Dalai Lama**

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is known as a spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan. He was born on July 6, 1935 in a small village called 'Taktser' in north-eastern Tibet. Born to a peasant family, the Dalai Lama was recognized at the age of two, in accordance with Tibetan tradition, as the reincarnation of his predecessor, the XIII Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lamas are the manifestations of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, who chose to reincarnate to serve the people. Dalai Lama literally means 'Ocean of Wisdom.' Tibetans normally refer to him as Yeshin Norbu, the 'Wish-fulfilling Gem', or simply, 'Kundun' meaning 'The Presence.' Like

Kashmiri Pandits, his community has also been expelled from their native land, Tibet. Therefore, in his writings, the Dalai Lama is also nostalgic for his past, where he deals with the socio-cultural realities of his uprooted community. All this can be seen as a means of identity in his writings.

Some of his well-known books and collections of his teachings are as follows:

*My Land and My People* (1964), *Kindness, Clarity, And Insight* (1983) *The Union of Bliss And Emptiness* (1988), *The Dalai Lama: A Policy of Kindness* (1990), *Path to Bliss* (1991), *The Global Community and The Need for Universal Responsibility* (1991), *Compassion and the Individual Talent* (1991), *Freedom in Exile* (1991), *My Tibet* (1991), *The Way to Freedom*(1995), *Ancient Wisdom, Modern World: Ethics For A New Millennium* (1999), *The Universe in a Single Atom –the Convergence of Science and Spirituality* (2005), *The Middle Way –Faith Grounded in Reason* (2009), *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World* (2012), *The Wisdom of Compassion: Stories of Remarkable Encounters and Timeless Insights* (2012), *My Appeal to the World* (2015); and *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* (2016).

## **V. Shashi Tharoor**

Shashi Tharoor, born on March 9, 1956 is an Indian politician, novelist, essayist and story-writer. He has been twice elected Member of Parliament from Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. Furthermore he was also Minister of State for External Affairs (2009-10) and Human Resource Development (2012-14) in the Government of India. Since his childhood, he had been an avid reader of mythology, literature, history and sociology. His literary career can be seen as a representation of this plethora of knowledge. He has written on various issues and problems of Indian society concerning secularism, democracy and colonialism etc. His idea of re-writing history and tradition

simply means to show how antiquity has a liberal meaning to establish a better civilization in the twenty-first century where matter and commercialized socio-psychology have become ultimate realities of human existence. He has written several books including *Reasons of State* (1982), *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), *Show Business* (1991), *The Five Dollar Smile and Other Stories* (1993), *India from Midnight to the Millennium and Beyond* (1997), *Riot* (2001), *Nehru: The Invention of India* (2003), and *Bookless in Baghdad* (2005).

## **VI. Mukul Kesavan**

Mukul Kesavan, born on April 9, 1957 is known as an Indian historian, novelist and social essayist. He comments upon secularism and democracy in Indian society; as the discourse of secularism has entered into the domain of political parties in India. It has become only a hypocritical strategy to segregate the communities from one another in the name of certain theological and ideological strategies. Kesavan knows how uprooted communities feel while living in the present turmoil of ideological-clashes. In other words, his writings can be seen as a critique of political propaganda that has nothing to do with actual nature of secularism and democracy. Moreover, he looks back to trace roots of real means of secularism through his writings. As a historian, he also attempts to tell unsaid stories of the marginalized forming them into historical fiction. His first novel *Looking through Glass* (1995) is the best example of historical fiction where he appears to have similarities with Salman Rushdie and Amitav Ghosh. He studied at St. Xaviers' in Delhi. Thereafter, he went on to study History at St. Stephen's College, and at the University of Delhi and later at Trinity Hall, University of Cambridge where he received his M. Lit. by availing the Inlaks scholarship. Furthermore, he has also written a political tract titled *Secular Common Sense* (2001) published by Penguin India. He had written a book on cricket *Men in White* (2007).

Besides, he has written two books of essays including *The Ugliness of the Indian Male and Other Propositions* (2008) and *Homeless on Google Earth* (2013). He teaches social history at Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi.

## **VII. Varonica Rossi**

Varonica Rossi, a Brazilian-American novelist, is well known for her trilogy *Under the Never Sky* (2012), *Through the Ever Night* (2013) and *Into the still Blue* (2014). This trilogy has been sold in more than 25 international markets. Before she wrote her first book, she did her graduation from California University. Her latest novel *Riders* is expected to release in 2016. She is interested in writing apocalyptic fiction through which she appears to be very sensitive about problems and issues of posterity in the age of Information Technology. Therefore, her concerns deal with the upcoming securities of Man. Additionally, she knows how meaning of progress is ambiguous and ironical in the contemporary world; for environmental protection and socio-cultural securities are at stake. These aspects have been very base of human civilization for centuries. Her writings include *Under the Never Sky* (2012), *Through the Ever Night* (2013), *Into the Still Blue* (2014), *Riders* (2016), and *Seeker* (2017).

## **VIII. Ink Pieper**

Much information is not available about Ink Pieper; yet he started writing under this pen name. As a writer, he is aware about the nature of power politics and its new ways of suppressing others. This is a global problem where humanity has to die for progress and sustainability. Briefly, he is a writer of the novel *The Last Human* (2014). He has been influenced by dystopian fiction including *Cloud Atlas*, *The Book Thief*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *1984*, and *V for Vendetta*.

Structurally, this dissertation has been divided into four chapters preceded by an Introduction and followed by Conclusion as well as a comprehensive Bibliography. The chapters are further divided into two sections. Section-I is an interpretation of the select work of first author mentioned in the respective title of the chapter pertaining to the particular aspect of nostalgia; while Section-II brings out a critique of the second author's work in the same. In addition, the latter establishes the points of comparison and contrast observed in the authors works undertaken for study in the respective chapter. The division of the chapters is as follows:

### **Introduction**

**Chapter-I:** Retrospective Nostalgia: Iconoclastic Perspective on History in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*

**Chapter-II:** Restorative Nostalgia: Politics of Home in the Dalai Lama's *Freedom in Exile* and Rahul Pandita's *Our Moon has Blood Clots*

**Chapter-III:** Reflective Nostalgia: Contesting Secularism in Shashi Tharoor's *India: From Midnight to Millennium and Beyond* and Mukul Keshavan's *Homeless on Google Earth*

**Chapter-IV:** Prospective Nostalgia: Longing for Sustainability in Veronica Rossi's *Under the Never Sky* and Ink Pieper's *The Last Human*

### **Conclusion**

The "**Introduction**" will examine the diverse problematic layers of the term 'nostalgia' that has been a matter of debate and discussion in various disciplines. It will critically be based upon growing implications of the term which would come into a frame that has been named as 'matrix' in the title of the present research. Hence, it is the matrix of nostalgia which makes it more than what the literal meaning of the word

is. Subsequently, the chapter will deal with the treatment of nostalgia in Classical antiquity, Mythology, Medical studies, Psychology and Philosophy where the term has not been considered positively. However, the development of thoughts in this preliminary examination will depict how the term has its other positive implications that are quite useful for social development that consists in the writings of such communities of Man who demands justice, freedom, a sense of belongingness and a secure place. All this is a part of that 'matrix' of Man's mind which appears to be nostalgic for the sake of humanitarian outlook on Earth. Therefore, critical examination of the term with reference to the canonical patterns of history of English literature and a mention of literary theories will show how the term is not about the dull emotions and an abnormal mentality; but it has a social purpose in critiquing the oppressive social norms to re-arrange them in such a form that would be more utopian than those structures which appear to be more liberal and humane; but they are not. Moreover, it will introduce the objectives of the foregoing research with reference the select authors and their respective works. It will also detail the brief summaries of designed chapters.

Chapter-I, **“Retrospective Nostalgia: Iconoclastic Perspective on History in Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines*”** is closely related to the problematic nature of Indian history which appears to be a matter of political manipulation that has not been enough to shape the present in humanitarian terms. Existing codes of history, in other words, have not been successful to fulfill the expectations of such communities or individuals who have been crying for their space. There are two texts that reflect hegemonic nature of history in India. Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* will be a matter of discussion with an iconoclastic perspective on history. This iconoclasm is a kind of contrapuntal reading of official history. The theme is not new in Indian writings in

English; but treatment of this theme with reference to these writers will definitely show new ways of looking back in the Indian history. Of course, these writers have fictionalized their experiences that will be viewed as retrospective nostalgia in this chapter; and which might be a means of re-shaping the present. Furthermore, selected works will highlight such things that are not visible in historian's history; and visibility of such experiences is their right that should be given space into major streams of the contemporary times. Hence, history is supposed to be an assertion of an identity that has been suppressed or manipulated in the official record.

Chapter-II, **“Restorative Nostalgia: Politics of Home in the Dalai Lama’s *Freedom in Exile* and Rahul Pandita’s *Our Moon has Blood Clots*”** is directly imbued with politics of home that has multiple meanings for various people belonging to different communities; as longing for home is a multi-directional activity of human mind that might be concerned with several orientations in the world. Additionally, the chapter will be a study of selected autobiographies viz. the fourteenth Dalai Lama’s *Freedom in Exile* and Rahul Pandita’s *Our Moon Has Blood Spots*, which are written by such writers who are forced to live in exile. Therefore, it is a kind of geographical displacement which would share mourning of this displacement. The longing for ‘home’ might be a sense of belongingness through written autobiographies that would be a means of their identity in the world where things are falling apart to such an extent that only stories can be a means to unite them. Hence, nostalgia of an individual is obviously imbued with the emotions of those communities that demand their space and identity in social system that appears to be indifferent entity about sufferings of these people. Politics of home, in this chapter, can be understood with reference to the discourses of Dalit autobiographies that have a voice to liberate from home which is coeval with hegemonic past; but the ongoing chapter is about forced diaspora where

banished communities attempt to restore their home not by violence but by telling stories which appear to convey emotions in such a way that shows a huge interest of these communities which reveal a sense of returning back to home that is a symbol of their lived past in their narratives. Hence, the scholar intends to research upon this politics of home regarding social emotions of such communities that are away from their home geographically. Their longing and mourning might be more than the idea of “mythical return” that is usually discussed in the studies of diaspora.

Chapter-III, **“Reflective Nostalgia: Contesting Secularism in Shashi Tharoor’s *India: From Midnight to Millennium and Beyond* and Mukul Keshavan’s *Homeless on Google Earth*”** seeks to analyze, in varying ways, the concept of secularism which has nothing to do with ground realities of people, as society has moved away from secularism. Secularism, in other words, is dead not in India but almost in the whole world as well. Communities have to pass through communal riots day by day. Indian politicians appear to have only a political propagation of secularism that has different meanings for different political parties. Hence, there is a need to re-invent secularism in India. The scholar intends to research upon various dichotomous layers of secularism that should be analyzed with a liberal understanding of human existence; for a true sense of living consists in secularism that is away from political agenda of political parties. The chapter illustrates assorted interpretations of Shashi Tharoor’s *India: From Midnight to the Millennium and Beyond* and Mukul Kesavan’s *Homeless on Google Earth* regarding issues of secularism. Reflective nostalgia is utilized as a tool as marginalized communities come face to face with the political notion of secularism that attempt to subjugate them. Moreover, people are not much interested in the past; but they try to strike against the

present hegemony; as they feel insecure and unsafe in this scenario. This sensitivity might be similar to that of those people who are uprooted geographically. Hence, exile is a state of mind that searches for a safe place nostalgically; but it comes out as a social emotion that directly cries for its space in the present. Writers strive to share this kind of nostalgic vision through their works; but their visions might be a socio-cultural propaganda that perpetuates old hegemony in different shapes. Therefore, the chapter will be a critical verification of secularism in the light of above discussion.

Chapter-IV, **“Prospective Nostalgia: Longing for Sustainability in Veronica Rossi’s *Under the Never Sky* and Ink Pieper’s *The Last Human*”** is clearly based upon a critical perspective on apocalyptic ideology. Futuristic vision with satirical tone is the major crux of such fiction where the ‘present’ appears as the past of the ‘future’ and that future is the present for that particular generation which is depicted in apocalyptic fiction. Hence, such works deal with prospective nostalgia where fictional characters appear to have a longing for the past (present) in a sense. There might be a lot of reasons behind this reflection of futuristic society; but the scholar intends to interpret it in terms of a longing for sustainability that is obviously dealt with the present state of safety of Man concerning environmental issues. Hence, this might be a means of awareness among peoples towards global issues. The chapter will critique Veronica Rossi’s *Under the Never Sky* and Ink Pieper’s *The Last Human* to establish this argument. It will be using theoretical tools of Eco-Criticism to examine the politics of globalization that appears to have utopian vision; but it ends in vain dealing with different shapes of new colonialism. Therefore, Orwellian ideology about future is not only a fantasy; but it is closely linked with Man’s activities of power politics exploiting flora and fauna. Moreover, life on Earth is completely in danger which creates a sense of insecurity in peoples’ minds that might start longing for sustainability in the world.

The **Conclusion** sums up findings of the preceding chapters where nostalgia is considered as a means of iconoclasm, identity, belongingness, security and sustainability that are core parts of such selected texts sharing several things with the world for betterment. Hence, the scholar will present certain observations and critical insights on the matrix of nostalgia and its role in building an actual utopia for mankind thereby extending the scope of the proposed study. Further, the researcher will also make concrete suggestions about potential areas for future researches on nostalgia in literature.