

Tribhuvan University

Fragmented Subjects in Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections*: A Critique of Globalization

A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English for  
the Fulfillment of Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Philosophy in English

By

Bhola Nath Chalise

TU Regd No.:22561-92

March 2022

Kirtipur, Nepal

Letter of Approval

This dissertation entitled, “Fragmented Subjects in Jonathan Franzen’s *The Corrections: A Critique of Globalization*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Bholanath Chalise has been approved by undersigned members of the Research Committee for the award for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in English.

Members of Research Committee

---

Dr. Komal Phuyal

Internal Examiner

---

Prof. Dr. Dhruba Karki

External Examiner

---

Prof. Dr. Jib Lal Sapkota

Head, Central Department of English

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Acknowledgments

I am very much indebted to my supervisor, Dr. Komal Phuyal, whose supervision, continuous encouragement and guidance made it possible for me to complete this study. In a sitting of half an hour, he captured the amalgamation of my zeal of research and the dilemma to penetrate through it; and he immediately provided me a skeleton and I could add flesh and blood. I wonder what fate this thesis would have to face without his invaluable support. I highly acknowledge Prof. Dhruba Karki for his constructive suggestion which helped me to accomplish dissertation.

I owe an equal gratitude to all my faculties in both the semesters: Prof. Abhi Subedi, Prof. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Prof. Amma Raj Joshi, Prof. Birendra Pandey, Prof. Anirudra Thapa, Prof. Chen Lok Chua, and Dr. Shiva Rijal. I am equally obliged to Prof. Jib Lal Sapkota, Head, Department of English who encouraged me to accomplish the task. My sincere acknowledgement also goes to the current faculties of M.Phil. program.

Likewise, I owe much to my friends Mr. Narayan Jung Ale, Mr. Shree Prasad Neupane, Mr. Tikaram Sapkota, and Mr. Madan Raj Baral for their continuous encouragement. Needless to say my family members— wife Mrs Hira Sharma Chalise, son Pramit, and daughter Pragya—deserve my sincere thanks for allowing me to remain indifferent to them in the course of my study.

Bhola Nath Chalise

March 2022

## Abstract

This dissertation argues that globalization results in producing fragmented self which contradicts its original promise of bringing about happiness and coherent personality as such. In other words, the study illustrates the paradox between the integrating promises and the disintegrating effects of globalization and consumer culture in post-industrial America. Analyzing Jonathan Frazen's *The Corrections*, the study explores the dissociation in the life of the characters and the society they represent. The notion of globalization and the generation gap brought by this phenomenon, the illusion that the drugs can cure depression and anxiety, passion over the financial market correction, question over sexuality and gender roles are some areas causing disorder in the life of the characters. This research has based on the cultural criticism theories on globalization. Globalization is a multi-disciplinary phenomenon. So, to support the cultural aspect of globalization, I have, on and off, brought classical theories of macroeconomics that supports promises of globalization, and the concept of "supply chain" to explain how those promises have been shattered. Including the theories of cultural criticism of Arjun Appadurai, James Annesley, and Joseph Carroll, I have borrowed the concept of globalization and its explanation from *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*, a comprehensive book of Thomas L. Friedman. The concept of Self-Psychology propounded by Heinz Kohut has been crucial to understand and analyze fragmented subjects and fragmented self.

## Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction	1
Chapter II: Globalization, its Promises, and Literature	4
Chapter III: Fragmented Subjects in Global Village	22
Fragmentation and Globalization	23
Mobility without Destination	38
Chapter IV: The Promises of Globalization as Mirage	47
Works Cited	50

## Chapter I: Introduction

Globalization results in fragmented subjects which emerge against the original promise. In the beginning of the discourse, it asserted that the global village would have happy and coherent citizens with access to all the resources of the world. However, the dream gets shattered by the time the world witnesses the third millennium. This study claims that such fragmented subjects begin challenge the early promise of the globalization in general. This study analyzes Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* (2001) to examine the adverse impact on the self and family of the people. The implication of the term "subjects" and the phrase "fragmented subjects" in the field of economics and elsewhere will be of secondary significance in my research.

This dissertation attempts to link the issue of globalization and fragmented subjects in *The Corrections*. In this dissertation, I argue that the phenomenon of globalization has brought anxiety, depression and dementia opposite to the promise that it would bring about stability and coherence in characters' life. I have analyzed such problems in character's life consulting books and research articles on globalization and its cultural criticism by different writers representing different time periods.

*The Corrections* published a week ago the September 11 attack in the US challenges the unifying effect of globalization by its plot of disintegration of Lambert family till the last Christmas. This research makes a significant contribution with its independent analysis to dig out the positive and negative aspects of globalization and consumer culture.

Globalization and post-industrial consumer culture had a great influence in the last decade of the twentieth century life and letters of America. This project makes a

critique of globalization on fragmented subjects in Franzen's *The Corrections* (2001). It presents a family drama that broadens into an ideological critique of the late twentieth century.

Globalization is the word used to describe the growing interdependence of the world's economies, cultures, and populations, brought about by cross-border trade in goods and services, technology, and flow of investment, people, and information. Globalization pervades mainly in two domains- in economy and culture. In economics, "supply chain" is the dominant idea in globalization which refers a focus on the core activities within an organization required to convert raw materials or component parts through to finished product or services. The effects of this supply chain in the characters as consumers have been analyzed in this dissertation.

Likewise, globalization has its own defining technologies such as satellite communication, fiber optics and internet which have made easy access in the field of media and information. Flow of capital by means of this easy access can be taken under the economic domain of globalization which ultimately has dissolved Lithuania, an independent state as portrayed in the novel under this study. The major concern of this dissertation is the cultural domain of globalization which has penetrated throughout the life of the characters. Enid's desire of material accumulation, deterioration of Alfred's mental state, Chip's failure in every field till the last of the novel, Gary's antagonistic relation with his wife Caroline, Denise's ever-disturbed marital relation are some examples away from the coherent life style and culture. This kind of fragmentation of self of the characters has, of course, affected the culture of their family, food, dress, music, mobility and as a whole their total behaviors.

There is significance of this research of cross-cutting issue of globalization comprising cultural and economic domains because it analyzes the direct effect of globalization in economy and thereby in culture. Although the setting of the novel is in the United States of America, this study won't be less relevant in our context for further study in academia and implication in the society. In this sense this study is new too. This dissertation attempts to explore the problem of globalization, an unavoidable phenomenon of the present world. Analyzing the further causes of fragmented subjects, further research can be built on possible solutions of the existing problems. In this sense, this study has epistemological and pragmatic significance.



## Chapter II: Globalization, its Promise, and Literature

Books on basic principles of globalization, which are normally prose, are found defining globalization on positive perspective. It is true that globalization has made the technology accessible on an affordable price. Thomas L. Friedman in his book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* has termed this opportunity as “democratization” of technology. He writes: This democratization of technology is how Thailand, in fifteen years, went from primarily a low -wage rice producing country to being the world’s second largest producer of pickup trucks, rivaling Detroit, and fourth-largest maker of motorcycles (51). This is one of the several evidences the promise of globalization being successful. Friedman has cited several other examples in which a country or an individual being prosperous and happy by the effect of globalization. Friedman has discussed a lot about “The New System” of globalization in his book following which, he claims, the life of an individual and a country can be ever happy, intact and coherent. Friedman also proposes that globalization can be practiced in local context which he calls “glocalization.” Even during this glocalization, according to him, the coherence and happiness can be retained as in the process of globalization.

On the other hand, there are so many fictions and literary criticisms produced, which depict the perils of globalization. *The Corrections*, the primary text of this dissertation is an example. This chapter of literature review has, as a whole, discussed about the notion of globalization and critique of globalization.

Some of the representative works that have a close bearing with the argument of this dissertation have been analyzed in this chapter of literature review. In September

2001, Jonathan Franzen published his much-anticipated novel, *The Corrections*, to hyperbolic critical and popular acclaim. Oprah Book Club, a highly successful nationally televised book discussion, chose the novel as its 45th Book Club Selection. A few weeks later, this notice was posted on the Oprah.com website:

Jonathan Franzen will not be on The Oprah Winfrey Show because he is seemingly uncomfortable and conflicted about being chosen as an Oprah's Book Club selection. It is never my intention to make anyone uncomfortable or cause anyone conflict. We have decided to skip the dinner and we're moving on to the next book. (October, 2001)

The announcement followed a series of casual (and careless) comments made by Franzen during his book tour whereby he expressed distrust of the "corporate logo" of the book club and uncertainty about the club's appropriateness to his writing, which he felt was "solidly in the high-art literary tradition."

Upon hearing his remarks, Oprah promptly cancelled the celebratory dinner with Franzen and the program's discussion of his work. A media frenzy followed, with readers and cultural critics taking sides in the debate: was Franzen or Oprah in the wrong? Why would Franzen resist the whooping sales and publicity that invariably accompany the Oprah endorsement? What was it that Oprah's Book Club that made him so uncomfortable? Was Franzen an ungrateful snob, or was Oprah just being sensitive when she ditched the planned program? Most importantly, why was this simple event such a big deal? Oprah's decision, Franzen's response, and the consequent public uproar, signal a pivotal moment in American literary culture. The historical tension between readers and writers of "highbrow" or "literary" fiction and the makers and consumers of

“middlebrow” or “popular” fiction was pushed into the public eye. Issues of class, taste, populism, gender and even race were implicated in the ensuing debate that played out on the pages of almost all the major newspapers, magazines and web publications in America.

*The Corrections* can be read and reviewed through different lenses. This project tries to view this novel as a fiction of globalization. James Annesley clarifies the features of the fiction of globalization in several places. Annesley argues:

The success of Eric Schlosser’s *Fast Food Nation* (2002) and Morgan Spurlock’s *Super Size Me*(2004) offer striking illustration of the extent to which a whole range of contemporary fears and anxieties have coalesced into a broad critique of consumption, corporate power, and the complex and often loosely interpreted network of socioeconomic forces that have come to be known as globalization. Employing the image of the unhealthy body to dramatize anxieties about consumer society, both *Fast Food* and *Super Size Me* use the consumption of fast food as a emblem for a world bloated by greed and weighed down by materialism. Stuffed full of junk, these accounts suggest, the body politic is making itself terminally ill (1).

Citing two examples of the fictions of globalization, Annesley describes the features of globalization as: contemporary fears and anxieties, broad critique of consumption culture, dominance of corporate power and network of socioeconomic forces. Annesley also believes that greed and materialism will be other defining features of the society in globalization. “Body politic” means the people of a nation, state, or society considered collectively as an organized group of citizens, which according to Annesley will be

ultimately ill due to globalization.

The features of the novel of globalization which Annesley describes in case of *Fast Food Nation* and *Super Size Me* can also be found in the novel which has been taken as a primary text for this dissertation. If ever there was a gloomy foreshadowing of things to come in the opening paragraph of a novel, we find one in Jonathan Franzen's celebrated work *The Corrections*. The novel starts with the words "the madness", and it is indeed with madness of various kinds that the novel aims to confront us. These bleak opening words take us straight to the threat contained in the second sentence: "You could feel it: something terrible was going to happen"(3).

Melvin Jules Bukiet, himself an author cherishes rather anarchic fictional realities in his novels, praises Jonathan Franzen's work in the highest manner: "There are two kinds of literature that endure: that utterly transcends its era, and that which perfectly reflect it" (13). Jonathan Franzen's work, in Bukiet's view, belongs to the second group. Bukiet borrows a rather curious term from Richard Powers to characterize literature which " perfectly reflects" its era: he calls it "Crackpot Realism." By this he means a literature which has the power to "cut underneath the skin, into very marrow of how we perceive the new world we suddenly occupy ... beyond the welter of random, inchoate experiences" (13-14). To Bukiet, "Crackpot Realism" is simply the "quintessential fiction of this age"(15), a literature that very few authors are able to produce, among them Thomas Pynchon, Jonathan Franzen, and Richard Powers. The criteria for defining "quintessential fiction" are certainly disputable, as is the question of who should belong to the noble group of authors writing such literature. Yet it is worthwhile to consider Bukiet's opinion on how to describe the characteristic features of "crackpot realism." He

sees it as a literature “that faces the absurdity of modern life, as does Barthelme, with the imaginative freedom of Marquez and the seriousness with which Updike pursues his suburban angst. Then, if one adds a pinch of mystical gnosis to the stew, one begins to get the recipe for Crackpot Realism” (16).

If we add that the “crackpot’s” world is one of “chaos and disruption” (16) in which we find an “elevation of random meeting to inevitability” (17) and that “[c]onspiracies typically form the heart of these novels’ plots” (14), the question poses itself whether *The Corrections* has been prepared according to this recipe. And if so, how would the novel, in staging a “crackpot” reality, manage to “reflect its era perfectly”? For the opening pages of Franzen’s text already show very clearly, for example, that Pynchon and Franzen use very different narrative strategies to aesthetically express a world view of chaos and disruption. Susanne Rohr agrees with Bukiet about the quality of worldview that underlies the work of both these authors, yet how does Franzen, who unlike Pynchon obviously obeys the narrative conventions of literary realism, manage aesthetically to translate this worldview into the novel, i.e. to reflect it? She has shown in her essay that the answer is to be found not only in the realm of content, but also in the novel’s narrative structure.

The novel opens with scenes displaying “suburban angst.” At the beginning, we are introduced to two of the main characters, Enid and Alfred Lambert. They belong to the elder generation of the family that holds center stage in the novel. We meet them in their “gerontocratic suburb” (3) of Midwestern St. Jude under quite distressing circumstances. They have become deaf to the “alarm bell of anxiety” (3) that has been ringing in their house for years, presumably since the 1950s: the Age of Anxiety proper.

In fact, it has been ringing for such a long time that through prolonged intimacy with warning signs, the main characters have come to integrate the bell's message harmoniously as an unconscious undercurrent into their life's text. As we meet them at the turn of the century, this text, and, by extension, their house, have become seriously corrupted and all order undermined.

The question of order, or rather disorder, dominates the first chapter explicitly and the central element of the plot. Seen from this perspective, the novel is true to the "crackpot" recipe and can indeed be related to the literary tradition of the classic post-modernist novel of the 1970s and 1980s. In the works not only of Thomas Pynchon but also, for example, of Don DeLillo and William H. Gass from this time, the fracturing and reconstitution of ordering systems characterize the novel at both the level of content and of aesthetics. *The Corrections* makes no secret of its literary forebears and happily creates intertextual relations.

Such is the case in a scene taking place in the 1960s, where the then young Alfred, an engineer working for the Midland Pacific Railroad Company, is shown in his basement laboratory, avidly pursuing his metallurgy hobby and deeply involved in experiments. These experiments finally result in a patent that, decades later, leads to a fight with his children, who try to prevent Alfred from selling it much under value to a major chemical firm. In his original experiment, however, Alfred is shown fighting a very different fight. Although he is engaged in finding a substance that displays the qualities of plastic and metal, he experimentally fights the metaphoric fight of his life. Alfred tries to outdo Nature, which stubbornly prefers disorder to order. He wants to control entropy, the "chaos of warm things" (272). According to the Second Law of Thermodynamics,

much work was required to resist this tyranny of the probable—to force the atoms of a metal to behave themselves. Franzen highlights the interesting metaphor from Physics known as the Second Law of Thermodynamics. This states that not all heat energy can be converted into work. It is a concept of irreversibility of natural process. The nature and natural process inherent in Alfred is irreversible. So he prefers disorder to order.

To prove her point, Susanne Rohr has compared two crucial passages from *Gravity's Rainbow* and *The Corrections* regarding the concepts of reality and structures of order displayed. Enid Lambert is introduced in *The Corrections* is promising—or for it is through her Nordstrom shopping bag that we get to know her:

...any lingering semblance of order was lost, and so the random Nordstrom shopping bag that was camped behind a dust ruffle with one of its plastic handles semi-detached would contain the whole shuffled pathos of a refugee existence—non-consecutive issues of good housekeeping, black-and-white snapshots of Enid in the 1940s, brown recipes on high-acid paper that called for wilted lettuce, the current month's telephone and gas bills, the detailed First Notice from the medical lab instructing co-payers to ignore subsequent billings for less than fifty cents, a complimentary cruise ship photo of Enid and Alfred wearing leis and sipping beverages from hollow coconuts, and the only extant copies of two of their children's birth certificates, for examples (6-7).

Various items speak of a life gone to pieces. The original order—which is one of a strict chronology—is lost. As a result, a composition of reality evolves which the bag image captures in snapshot-like manner. Utterly irrelevant and random details are exposed in an intense effort of narration—the precise depiction of the bag's broken handle, for

example—and frame a picture of haphazard fragments. In this picture, various episodes in this life, or, rather, in this family’s life, are tumbled together: the most recent and most remote events only enter into a contiguous relationship with each other.

While important incidents like the birth of a child vanish into remote, copied representations, a vacation trip is illustrated in vivid detail, even down to the hollow coconuts serving as cups. An arbitrary system of valence emerges. A life is derailed, its various affairs reshuffled like a pack of cards, like the “non- consecutive issues of Good Housekeeping”. Good housekeeping, once Enid’s prime task as a house wife, is no longer possible for her; it has become non-consecutive indeed. All household order has inevitably given way to chaos, just as entropy emerged victorious in Alfred’s battle against Mother Nature and her tenacious atoms.

A scene in which Alfred’s experience of reality is depicted illustrates how all structures of a formerly known reality collapse for this Parkinson’s patient who also suffers from a severe, growing dementia:

... Denis left the kitchen and took the plate to Alfred, for whom the problem of existence was this: that, in the manner of a wheat seedling thrusting itself up out of the earth, the world moved forward in time by adding cell after cell to its leading edge, piling moment on moment, and that to grasp the world even in its freshest, youngest moment provided no guarantee that you would be able to grasp it again a moment later. By the time he’d established that his daughter, Denise, was handing him a plate of snacks in his son Chip’s living room, the next moment in time was already budding itself into a pristinely on grasped existence in which he could not absolutely rule out the possibility, for example, that his wife , Enid,



was handing him a plate of feces in the parlor of a brothel; and no sooner had he reconfirmed Denise and the snacks and Chips living room than the leading edge of time added at another layer of new cells, so that he again faced a new and ungrasped world; which was why, rather than exhaust himself playing catch-up, he preferred more and more to spend his days down among the unchanging historical roots of things. (66)

Susanne Rohr concludes that this novel neither gives primacy to wild modernist aesthetic experience nor does it delight in anarchic post-modernist playfulness. As she has argued, we can identify a nexus of literary tradition in relation to which the text both positions itself and unfolds rich intertextual dialogues.

Friedman means unfolds the hostile world in the past has been made interdependent to each other changing the Cold War into a new system and logic. Friedman was the foreign affair columnist to *The New York Times*. There were three predecessors to him writing for this column. He claims that by the time he become the columnist the bipolar world system had changed into an integrated web due to globalization. He argues: “The Cold War international system, with its competition for influence and supremacy between the capital West and the communist East, between Washington, Moscow and Beijing, became the superstory within which the next three foreign affairs columnist organized their opinions”(5). The writer means to say that the clash between communism and capitalism, which was the dominant idea of the Cold War, had in a sense shattered due to the phenomenon of the globalization.

The word ‘integration’ has been used by Friedman frequently while defining globalization and its features. However, we can trace the evidences of disintegration from

*The Corrections*, the primary text of this research. Friedman observes:

The globalization system is a bit different. It also has one overarching feature-integration. The world has become increasingly interwoven place, and today, whether you are a company or a country, your threats and opportunities increasingly derive from who you are connected to. This globalization system is also characterized by a single word: the web. So in the broadest sense we have gone from a system built around division and walls to a system increasingly built around integration and webs (8).

Friedman defines “the new system” in terms of capital economy. He borrows the idea of “creative destruction” from Professor Schumpeter’s classic work *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (1942) in this discourse. He writes: If the defining economists of the Cold War system were Karl Marx and John Maynard Keynes, who each in his own way wanted to tame capitalism, the defining economists of the globalization system are Joseph Schumpeter and Intel chairman Andy Grove, who prefer to unleash capitalism (11). Friedman dissects history of economic structures in which economists including Karl Marx had the philosophy to control or tame the liberal economy of capitalism, whereas the economists supporting the globalization had the philosophy to release the controlling mechanism of capitalism paving a path for liberal economy.

The business model of globalization capitalism leads to creative destruction and vice versa. While defining globalization system; Friedman clarifies the power structures in the globalized world contrasting it with that of the Cold War period. He says: “..as a system, the Cold War was balanced at the center by two super states: the United States and the Soviet Union. The globalization system, by contrast, is built around three

balances which overlaps and affect one another” (13). The writer further enumerates and exemplifies the three balances of the new system. The first is the traditional balance between nation states. The second balance in the globalization system is between nation states and global markets. The third balance that you have to pay attention to in globalization system—the one that is really the newest of all – is the balance between individuals and nation-states.

All the writers and theorists have one common opinion that globalization is the effect of multiple disciplines. Arjun Appadurai categorizes these disciplines. He writes: I propose that an elementary framework for exploring such disjunctures is to look at the relationship among five dimensions of global cultural flows that can be termed as (a) ethnoscapes, (b) mesiascapes, (c) technoscapes, (d) financescapes , and (e ) ideoscapes. (46). These five dimensions of globalization contribute for the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa.

Cosmopolitanism is the idea that all human beings are members of a single community. Its adherents are known as cosmopolitan or cosmopolite. Cosmopolitanism is both prescriptive and aspirational, believing humans can and should be “world citizen” in a “universal community”. Stella Ladi critiques over the cosmopolitan identity of the globalization. She writes:

Although the term cosmopolitan identity has been widely used not all theorists agree that we are actually moving towards a cosmopolitan identity and a common international value system. The skeptics and those that consider globalization to be mainly an economic activity dispute the existence of such a trend. In contrast,

the supporters of globalization trace a trend for the creation of a cosmopolitan social democracy that has its main values, global social justice, democracy, ecumenical human rights, human security, the rule of law and internationalist solidarity. They believe in the creation of “citizen of the world” (12).

Mouzelis has similar opinion on globalization as that of Stella Ladi. Peter Singer argues that the developing nations are negligent about the adverse effects of globalization to the world environment. He mentions:

At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the representatives of the developing nations asked President George Bush senior to put on the agenda the over-consumption of resources by the developed countries, especially the United States, he said, “the American lifestyle is not for negotiation.” It was not negotiable apparently ,even if maintaining this lifestyle will lead to the death of millions of people subject to increasingly unpredictable weather and the loss of land used by tens of millions more people because of rising ocean levels and local flooding. (17)

This extract shows how the American hegemony of President George Bush senior was not ready to compromise with the adverse effect of over-consumption of resources even at the cost of millions of people.

The Golden Arches are the symbol of McDonald’s, the golden fast food restaurant chain. Originally, the real arches were part of the restaurant design. They were incorporated into the chain’s logo in 1962, which resembled a stylized restaurant, and in the current Golden Arches logo, introduced in 1968, resembling an “M” for “McDonald’s.” They are widely regarded to one of the most recognizable logos in the

world. Borrowing this concept of the golden arches, Friedman provides us with his “The Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention.”

He admits that “despite globalization, people are still attached to their culture, their language, and a place called home. And they will sing for home, cry for home, fight for home and die for home. Which is why globalization does not, and will not end geopolitics” (250). We feel the cultural attachment of Nepali migrants living in the United States of America and Australia. They are often found celebrating Nepali festivals, eating Nepali dishes, wearing Nepali costumes, and listening Nepali songs. Friedman further writes “there is no more Canadian music, theater, film, culture or language. It has all been Americanized” (292). In a similar context, when Indian Prime Minister I.K. Gujral was asked by Friedman the importance of this issue, Gujral replied “unless you preserve at least some of your own olive trees in your own backyard, you will never feel at home in your own house”(292). This means to suggest that even if we are connected to the global village and are affected by global culture, we cannot totally forget our own root. Friedman clarifies, “to have our own cultural olive trees uprooted or homogenized into some global pulp is to lose your bearings in the world” (293). This quote is self-explanatory to the illustration mentioned above.

In his Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention, Friedman writes about some exceptional countries which have chosen to live without global connectivity. He has given examples of North Korea, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Iraq. He writes, “The Golden Arches Theory does not apply to them because they have chosen not to plug into the herd and the Supermarkets, and they have either enough oil or enough ideology to live without the herd for a while. But this is true of fewer and fewer countries today” (258). This mean

to say that living without global connectivity for a long time for many countries and people is impossible. Hence the best option with us is to get connected with the global village retaining our identities as far as possible.

Russian and China are two powerful countries moving with the cadence of globalization. They are not simply moving, but taking advantages from this phenomenon. They have not aggressively challenged the United States in their respective places. “It is not because they are weaker than the United States, but also because it is not their interest,” (258), Friedman says. The interest is that of mutual commercial benefit to these countries being connected with the global phenomenon.

Let’s discuss some more about China. In 1979, China had no MacDonald’s. Around this time, Deng Xiaoping was just opening China to the world. In 1996, within a time of seventeen years, China had more than 200 MacDonald’s franchises. As we know China is a country having its own political culture of communism and a religious culture influenced by Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. Nevertheless, it decided to get into the global culture, and has taken maximum benefits selling its products throughout the world. Friedman writes:

From Beijing’s perspective, China is no longer the isolated, peasant-based economy of the Mao and early Deng eras. It is now partially connected to the Electronic Herd, and the only ideology of the Chinese leadership today is: “To get rich is glorious.” China’s leaders cannot deliver on that ideology without billions of dollars in foreign investment that pour into China each year (259).

This extract means to say that now the world economy is basically governed by financial markets and not so much by political ideology. The think tanks of economics are found

interpreting the present relation between China and Sri Lanka based on economy not on political thought. Similar interpretation is found about the tussle between Russia and Ukraine.

Friedman discusses about the adverse effects of globalization in culture and environment. This effect on culture and environment will certainly effect on people's personalities and behaviors. Such behaviors will, of course, be reflected in literary and creations as in the case of *The Corrections*. To avoid such adversaries, Friedman recommends the concept of "filter" and "glocalization." He writes:

I believe the most important filter is the ability to "glocalize". I define healthy glocalization as the ability of a culture, when it encounters other strong cultures, to absorb influences that naturally fit into and can enrich that culture, to resist those things that are truly alien and to compartmentalize those things that, while different, can nevertheless be enjoyed and celebrated as different. The whole purpose of glocalization is to be able to assimilate aspects of globalization into your country and culture in a way that adds to your growth and diversity, without overwhelming it (295).

The Nepali diasporic culture marking Dahain and Christmas can be taken as an example of glocalization. This kind of experiences can be observed even within our territory. The Hindus and Muslims in visiting both temple and mosque and respecting other's culture in a village in Parsa in southern Nepal can be taken as a good example of glocalization.

On one hand, globalization threatens the sustainability of the environment, and at the same time, on the other hand, globalization itself suffers the threat of sustainability. Friedman writes: Globalization will be sustainable depending, in part, on how well each

of us manages the filters needed to protect our cultures and environments , while getting the best out of everyone else's.(305). This extract bears the idea that everything has its positive and negative sides, as does globalization have. Globalization can be taken as means of our prosperity and happiness, not as an end itself. Human happiness is the end, not the globalization. If globalization brings about anxiety, depression and dementia, blame does not go solely to globalization; we rather have to think whether we have been using gloculization to minimize the adverse effects of globalization using “filter” as recommended by Friedman.

James Annesley, in the introductory chapter of his book *Fictions of Globalization*, takes globalization as “capital in its latest avatar” (2) which bears the characteristic of “omnipresent consumerism”(3). This avatar of capital has brought change in consumers’ culture. A consumer is not required to go to the real market to buy things. He can pay and purchase from home or from any place of his comfort. He should not be present at a particular place. He can virtually show his presence anywhere he requires, and hence he becomes an omnipresent consumer. This becomes possible due to “defining technologies of globalization that includes computerization, miniaturization, digitization, satellite communications, fiber optics and internet”, which according to Friedman “reinforces its defining perspectives of integration” (9). But at the same time it can be a cause of disintegration as well. We have experienced various harmful and criminal activities being taken place in cyber space. The dissolution of a nation state as depicted in *The Corrections* is also the cause of this easy flow of capital in its new avatar. The wallet which used to be in our pockets is in our digital device now. The culture of what we do and how we do are dominantly shaped by globalization.



Annesley admits that “his aim is neither to celebrate nor condemn globalization, but to find ways in which it might be possible to read contemporary fictions in terms that adds to knowledge about, and understanding of, its discourse.”(6) This again serves the idea that globalization is not an ends but a means. Reading fictions of globalization, Annesley says, helps to provide a context for the understanding of contemporary narratives and raises important questions about the ways in which the globalization debate is understood. Annesley writes: Equally relevant to the kind of debates in *Fictions of Globalization* is the exploration of consumer society and the emergence of the post-Soviet states offered in Franzen’s *The Corrections* (7).

Lithuania was a place occupied by Germany before its independent status. After The First World War it gained its independence on February 16, 1918. Lithuania joined the Soviet Union in August, 1940. The Soviet Union was formally dissolved into several states including Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Estonia and others in December 25, 1991. But Lithuania declared its independence before the formal dissolution of the then U.S.S.R. in August, 1940. The dissolution of Lithuania has been fictionalized in *The Corrections*. Globalization is supposed to bring coherence and inter-dependence within a country and between countries. Against this promise, the Soviet Union got fragmented into fifteen independent nation-states. The global effect of this political dimension of globalization was not felt within those fifteen independent nation states only. It was rather felt even across the Atlantic Ocean in the United States. The fictional character Chip in *The Corrections* is an example of this effect.

We already discussed that globalization is a new incarnation (avatar) as referred by Annesley. Kelley Lewis is referring *The Corrections* as new incarnation in these lines:

The majority of readers agree that *The Corrections* is a new incarnation of a traditional literary form: the social realist novel. Meaning can be found in the corruptions and corruptions of contemporary America alone; it is found in the relationship humans have with the world and one another: “the unit of meaning can be identified: It is a human life. And around that life, unit of meaning is the family” (Gessen 34). Whereas the postmodern novel with “its symbolic culture of perpetual boom” produced an “endless set of signs”(Gissen 34), *The Corrections* is finite; its value and meanings are attached to humans and their mortal limitations. Although some readers recognize that Franzen’s ambivalence is characteristically postmodern, the majority applaud the traditional restrictions he places on representation by choosing a small set of identifiable characters.”(89)

This extract from Annesley discusses the characteristic of the novel *The Corrections*.

While taking it as a new incarnation of social realism, some assume it to be a postmodern fiction, and some other still believes it following tradition features by the virtue of its small set of identifiable characters.

I have referred these prominent writers and critics of globalization to shape my research and finding. They have produced the meaning and criticism over globalization and about the primary text of my dissertation. No researchers are ever found analyzing fragmented subjects in *The Correction* through the perspective of globalization.

Therefore, living on the grounds of these various criticisms, my attempt will be to take a new step in this ladder of research. This is the research gap and the departure of this research from the rest of the researches in the field of globalization and consumerism.

### Chapter III: Fragmented Subjects in Global Village

This chapter of textual analysis has analyzed various issues to serve the theme of fragmentation. These issues vary in a large range. Some are symbols like “chair” in which Alfred sits hour after hour at the basement. This has been analyzed as a symbol that obstructs dynamism in Alfred’s life promoting stillness, agonies and depression opposite to his desire of hunting, fishing and recreation. The masculine authority and feminist protest between Alfred and Enid Lambert has never brought concord ensuing a kind of rivalry in their life. Enid’s desire of accumulation, a product of consumer culture, is another subject of discussion and analysis.

Chip Lambert, youngest son of Alfred and Enid, undergoes depression and pessimism. The three main causes of his depression have been analyzed. They are his three failures: failure in marital life—having several relations but getting married with his father’s doctor at the end, failure in academic life—his dismissal from university and life-long attempt to compose screenplay with no output, and failure in his professional life—having no good income and noble job like that of his brother Gary and sister Denise. Like every member of his family he desires to correct his failure. He earns good money by making fake website as instructed by Gitanas, deputy prime minister from Lithuania, a failure nation state. Being scared of this illegitimate and transitory earning, he has to flee even up to Edinburg, England—example of mobility without destination.

Likewise, Gary’s desire to be different from his father, but meeting almost the same fate and Denise’s predicament of being workaholic and skepticism about her sex, sexuality and marriage are other subjects under this analysis. Situation money and investment overpowering politics national order is another theme I have analyzed. All

these analyses have been attempted through the perspective of globalization, for which I have divided this chapter under two sub-headings—first, Fragmentation and Globalization, second, Mobility without Destination.

### Fragmentation and Globalization

As I have delimited the scope of this research primarily to the cultural effects of globalization resulting to fragmented self, this chapter of textual analysis does the same. As culture itself encompasses divergent area, so does this textual analysis. I have covered the themes of marriage, family, gender, sexuality, mortality, madness, society, class, politics, technology, and modernization in this analysis.

The very first lines of the novel, before the characters are introduced, expose the scene and setting of disintegration, disorder and restlessness suggesting enough the forthcoming development of the story to be surely fragmentation: The madness of an autumn prairie cold front coming through. You could feel it: something terrible was going to happen. The sun low in the sky, a minor light, a cooling star. Gust after gust of disorder. Trees restless, temperature falling, the whole northern region of things coming to an end (3). The very first phrase “the madness” is the result of disordered or fragmented state of mind. The word, here, directly implies to the very cold weather, which the anonymous third person narrator thinks, would bring “something terrible”, indirectly to the life of the characters. The fragmented sentence structure, “ Gust after gust of disorder”, for example, without main verbs conveying images, rather than complete sense is coherent to the thematic portrayal to signify the meaning of fragmentation.

The idea and image of “chair” which appears intermittently from first page of chapter one “St. Jude”, prologue of the novel, to till second last page of the same chapter

intermittently is a good reference of fragmented idea and structure. In between the references of chair, we can find number of other disjunct ideas in the narrative, which technically serves for the purpose of fragmentation. The “alarm bell of anxiety” (3) which “had been ringing for years” (4), and “letter from Axon Corporation” (5) are some examples of such disjunct ideas that hinders the smooth narrative serving the sense of fragmentation, the effect of globalization. The chair has symbolized various ideas which are either causes or effects or both around the theme of globalization and fragmentation.

Franzen narrates:

To the west of the Ping-Pong table was Alfred’s great blue chair. The chair was overstuffed, vaguely gubernatorial. It was made of leather, but it smelled like the inside of a Lexus. Like something modern and medical and impermeable that you could wipe the smell of death off easily, with a damp cloth, before the next person sat down to die in it (9).

If ‘life’ is the symbol of continuity and integration, obviously ‘death’, the focused symbol in this quote, implies discontinuity and fragmentation. The word ‘Lexus’, as in the dialectical discussion between ‘the Lexus’ and ‘the Olive Tree’ in Thomas L Friedman’s *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (2000) symbolizes globalization. The ‘chair’ itself is also the symbol of ‘consumerism’ which has a close affinity with globalization and fragmentation.

There is no coherent relation between the old couple with regard to this chair.

This has built an adverse relation in the self of these two characters. In response to Alfred’s question “What about the chair?”(11), Enid replies “I never liked that chair (11).

Franzen writes:

This was probably the most terrible thing he could have said to Alfred. The chair was the only sign he had ever given of having personal vision of the furniture.

Enid's words filled him with sorrow—he felt such pity for the chair, such solidarity with it, such astonished grief at its betrayal—that he pulled off the dropcloth and sank into its arms and fell asleep (11).

This clearly suggests that the 'chair' is something connoting 'monument', 'comfort', 'happiness', 'choice', and 'solidarity' to Alfred and that it is something just the opposite feeling to Enid. So 'chair', a symbol of 'commodity' and 'purchase of chair', a symbol of 'consumerism' seem to have brought fragmentation within the old-aged couple in the opening of the novel.

Chapter two of the novel entitled as "The Failure" can be associated with the title of the novel. Correction of the anxiety, correction of the insecurity and as a whole the correction of the market is assumed by the title of the novel, but the result of such promise and assumption is the failure. The "anxiety of bell' (3) and the "anxiety of coupons" (4) which Enid struck at the opening of the novel also shift to Chip in the form of insecurity and "loss of confidence"(22) along with the shift of narrative to the second chapter. Chip leaves his mother in an illusion that her son works for the *Wall Street Journal*, one of the reputed papers in the country. What he actually works for was the *Warren Street Journal*, a less prestigious paper, for which he was making unpaid contribution. The following lines suggest similar idea:

Chip's problem was a loss of confidence. Gone were the days when he could afford to *epater les bourgeois*. Except for his Manhattan apartment and his handsome girlfriend, Julia Vrais, he now had nothing to persuade himself that he

was a functioning male adult, no accomplishment to compare with those of his brother Gary, who was a banker and father of three, or of his sister, Denise, who at the age of thirty-two was the executive chef at a successful new high-end restaurant in Philadelphia. (22)

Globalization is supposed to provide ample avenues for approaching problems and making progress. But the effects are contradictory as in the life of Chip, a university teacher who “had to work three fourteen-hour shifts at Bragg Knuter&Speigh to raise cash to pay his August rent and reassure the owner of his apartment( Chip had a sublease) about his September and October rent. This is how Chip is living his mechanized life at the age of globalization in which his intellectual pursuit of completing his screen play is still underway.

The cause of unemployment or employment with no remuneration in Chip’s life, mentioned in the earlier paragraph, is the cause of globalization and depression. The period of depression seems to continue from the age of father to that of his son:

“I’ve suffered from depression all my life,” Alfred said, or seemed to say.

“Excuse me?” Chip said.

“Depression years changed me. They changed the meaning of a dollar.”

“An economic depression, we’re talking about.”

“Then when the service really is especially good or especially bad,” Enid pursued,

“ there is no way to express it monetarily.”

“A dollar is still a lot of money, Alfred said” (23).

In Psychiatry, there is a term “repression” meaning “the classical defense mechanism that protects you from impulses or ideas, that would cause anxiety, by preventing them from

becoming conscious.” The tendency of repression over the phenomenon of depression is perceived in Chip’s character in the novel. This is evidenced in the following line: “I’m wondering why we are having this particular conversation,” Chip said to his mother. “Why this conversation, and not other conversation?” (24). In these conversations, Chip seems to suppress the concept and consequences of ‘economic depression’ which has almost brought or is likely to bring “traumatic depression” in his life; whereas his mother Enid is, adventitiously, unmasking his depression while she shows concern, in her reply, to his beloved son: “ We’re both terribly anxious to see where you work”(24). Chip has lied or not disclosed many things about his work to his parents. This is not simply because of the lack of trust between the family members, but because of the predicaments Chip is facing which are to be revealed one after another. And the parents, naturally, seem anxious about his work and his livelihood.

Chip was reminded of his parents when he was having conversation with Gitanas in which Chip replied that his father was Scandinavian and that his mother a sort of mongrel Eastern European: “Chip was in a hurry to get to his apartment before his parents left. Now that he had cash in his pocket, a roll of thirty hundreds, he did not care so much what his parents thought of him” (148). There is another example of confrontation between the family members, especially between Gary and his father over the issue of Orfic Midland. Gary is of the opinion that his father has to accept the offer of \$200,000 for the patent his father owns. Gary suggested his father that these guys were in a very weak position and so he could make some real money. In a reply Alfred said, “I’ve made my decision. What I do is not your business (173). Gary claims that he had a legitimate interest in this as: “I have a legitimate interest,” Gary insisted, If Enid and



Alfred ever ran out of money, it would fall him and Caroline—not his undercapitalized sister, not to his feckless brother – to pay for their care. But he had enough self-control not spell this out for Alfred. “Will you pay me that courtesy?”(173). Over this family dispute, Alfred thinks that his son Gary, instead, could have paid him the courtesy of not asking.

The effects of globalization and fragmentation seem to penetrate to a generation and pass to another in different forms. The character of ‘isolation’ and ‘depression’ in Alfred seem to shift to Gary. Franzen writes:

Gary left Caroline and followed him, his sense of isolation deepened by this demonstration that his wife had strong allies in the house. Her sons would protect her from her husband. Her husband who was a shouter. Like his father before him. His father before him who was now depressed. But who, in his prime, as a shouter, had so frightened young Gary that it never occurred to him to intercede on his mother’s behalf (184).

Despite his best attempts to avoid it, Gary ends up acting a lot like his father. Now he has a choice: He can accept this and become more empathetic toward Alfred, or he can hide from the truth. Similar context of transfer of fatherly qualities to son can be traced from the narrative when Enid decided Chip was exactly like his father – “at once hungry and impossible to feed” (302). What you discovered about yourself in raising children was not always agreeable or attractive. Time and time again, the novel shows us how our reality rarely meets expectations.

From among the fragmented subjects dealt in the novel is also the issue of “marriage” which we sense from the beginning of the novel as a force of creating tension.

As Franzen narrates, “Although Enid's ostensible foe was Alfred, what made her a guerrilla was the house that occupied them both” (7). This metaphor clearly defines the Lamberts' power dynamic: Enid is a "guerrilla" trying to overthrow the rightful leader, Alfred. The characters in the novel think in one direction and the realities happen to be what they do not expect. This principle applies in case of marriage too. As Franzen tells in the story, “It occurred to her that Denise's rash act might even have been prompted, in some tiny part, by her wish to do the moral thing and please her mother” (139). Enid should have been ecstatic about this; Denise married the wrong kind of guy. As we see time and time again, she has hard time dealing when reality does not measure up with her expectations.

Marriage, divorce, re-marriage and question over her sexuality have been the things which often torment Denise. When she had divorce with Emile, she supposes that it would have been better stay unmarried, “Having attached so much meaning to the marriage, having struggled so hard to accept it, she felt that the least Denise could have done was stay married” (141). There was no pleasant marriage relation between Gary and Caroline either. Gary accused Caroline of eavesdropping on him which Caroline rejected. Gary says that she can run but cannot hide. Caroline replies that it was his paranoia, not her eavesdropping. Franzen writes: After she and Gary were married, she'd undergone five years of twice-weekly therapy which the therapist, at the final session, had declared "an unqualified success" and which had given her a lifelong advantage over Gary in the race for mental health (182). This illustrates us how the issue of marriage produced fragmented self in Chip.

Enid hopes that every family member would gather at least for the last Christmas.

For this, Gary is trying to convince his wife to get to St. Jude for the Christmas. They have a dispute over this matter. Each failed overture of peace made the next overture less likely to succeed. Also, he mentions: “He could have ended the crisis in a minute if all he'd had to do was forgive her; but to see mirrored in her eyes how repellent she found him—it made him crazy, it poisoned his hope” (222). Enid had an experience of the Depression, which is taken as the result of globalization. She had learned many survival skills undergoing through the years of depression. Her mother ran a boarding house in the basin between downtown St. Jude and the university. She used to help her mother in different ways. He says, “Her mother had married a man who did not earn and died young. Avoiding such a husband was priority with Enid. She intended to be comfortable in life as well as happy” (308). The childish viewpoint and context of this quote has a serious explanation to convey. It explains the depression of Enid’s mother followed by the economic depression of the age. It also depicts the Enid’s anxiety for comfortable and happy life. The boardinghouse, in the introduction just above this quote, was the place where Enid had met Alfred and been caught in a relation of marriage.

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) was a German philosopher also known as the philosopher of pessimism. Franzen brings him in his novel to contextualize Enid’s desire to correct Alfred. Franzen borrows Schopenhauer in this passage: The pleasure in this world, it has been said, outweighs the pain; or, at any rate, there is an even balance between the two. If the reader wishes to see shortly whether this statement is true, let him compare the respective feelings of two animals, one of which is engaged in eating the other” (308). Schopenhauer means to say that if somebody believes pleasure is heavier than pain or they are in balance, then it is something like two animals engaged in eating

each other. In another words, if there is only one type of personality being dominant in a character's self, it is not said to be fragmented. If it is not the case or if there is tension between two personalities of an individual, then he/she loses stability and coherence. The person like Alfred in this case suffers from fragmented self.

The idea of fragmented self of Alfred and Enid's desire to change Alfred into a coherent personality can be sensed explicitly in this quote: What to believe about Al Lambert? There were the old-man things he said about himself and the young-man way he looked. Enid had chosen to believe the promise of his looks. Life then became a matter of waiting for his personality to change (308-9). The two disjunct personalities of Alfred—one, the personality of the old man and the next that of a young man—are seen according to this quote. Enid chooses Alfred to be the second one. Her hope is something like the metaphor of two animals as expressed in the earlier quote from Schopenhauer. This divided personality is the fragmented subject caused by the globalization.

Melissa was Chip's student in the college where he was the only male professor teaching Theory of Feminism. Paradox to this was that he was accused by Melissa, his female student and would be fired from his professorship. Franzen narrates further: He understood how important it was for women not to equate "success" with "having a man" and "failure" with "lacking a man," but he was a lonely straight male, and a lonely straight male had no equivalently forgiving Theory of Masculinism to help him out of this bind. (52)

In patriarchal society, women are viewed with the perception of the politics of othering. Success is taken as being man and failure is taken as lacking a man or manhood. Chip, although he is the only male professor in the college he has been teaching, was

fired in a case with Melissa. In this sense he could not retain manhood, maleness or masculinity which he regrets in the above quote still having male arrogance. So he had no theory of forgiving himself supposing subordinate to female. It illustrates his fragmented self.

Robert Owen (1771-1858) was a Welsh philanthropist, social reformer and founder of utopian socialism who advocated and campaigned for “Eight hours labor, eight hours recreation, and eight hour rest.” Denise had could not enjoy this principle propounded by Owe. Denise at thirty-two was still beautiful, but long hours at stove had begun to cook her youthful skin into a kind of terra-cotta mask that made Gary, her brother a little more anxious each time he saw her. Franzen writes: “She was his baby sister, after all. Her years of fertility and marriageability were passing with a swiftness to which he was attuned and she, he suspected, was not. Her career seemed to him an evil spell under the influence of which she worked sixteen-hour days and had no social life” (237). This is, of course, the anxiety to an individual and to the family, anxiety of fertility, anxiety of marriageability, and anxiety of basic human rights caused by globalization.

Another example of how globalization interpenetrated in the conjugal life of Alfred and Enid can be illustrated referring these lines and the conversation between the couple that follows: “Made happy in this way by pregnancy, she got sloppy and talked about the wrong things to Alfred. Not, needless to say, about sex or fulfillment or fairness. But there were other topics scarcely less forbidden and Enid in her giddiness one morning overstepped” (280). In this particular context, Enid suggested him to buy shares of certain stock. There is a long conversation between them on which shares to buy and why. Alfred said they had no money and to spare and now a third child coming. Such

conversation brings unnecessary controversy between them and Alfred without kissing he goodbye left the house for eleven days and ten nights.

Death and mortality is another theme of the novel being closely linked with the theme of globalization and fragmentation. Chip is so much afflicted by his predicament that he thought in the grip of this affliction he was the sort of Devil's logic that confirmed a man's pessimism:

His affliction offended his sense of ownership. These shaking hands belonged to nobody but him, and yet they refused to obey him. They were like bad children. Unreasoning two-year-olds in a tantrum of selfish misery. The more sternly he gave orders, the less they listened and the more miserable and out of control they got. (77)

This extract exemplifies Chip's childish behaviors and failure to control his physical and emotional impulse being the victim of fragmented-self due to globalization.

Chip had to sell his books on feminism, formalism, structuralism, post structuralism, Freudianism, and his queer theory to raise money for lunch. All he had left was his beloved cultural historians and his complete hardcover Arden Shakespeare; and because a kind of magic resided in the Shakespeare—the uniforms volumes in their pale blue jackets were like an archipelago of a safe retreat—he piled his Foucault and Greenblatt and Hooks and Poovey into shopping bags and sold them off for \$115. After the sale Chip had some experience of purchase in a chaos street. As he says, “Around eight o'clock he ended up outside the new Nightmare of Consumption (“Everything—for a price!”) on Grand Street” (107). Although this is played as jokey satire, there's something sinister underlying Chip's grocery store experience. The well-orchestrated

chaos is something we'll see associated with consumer culture throughout the novel.

As defined by the Self Psychology, a consumer loses stability and coherence in his or behaviors over a time. In another words, there seem fluctuation in a character's life.

Franzen writes:

Although Chip was still paying the rent on his New York apartment and the monthly minimum on his Visa bills, he felt agreeably affluent in Vilnius. He ordered from the top of menus, shared his booze and cigarettes with those less fortunate, and never looked at the prices in the natural food store near the university where he bought his groceries.(507)

This quote indicates that Chip is no more a resident of New York only. He is rather like a global citizen showing his presence in New York and Vilnius at the same time. He had once sold his important books to his rent of apartment in New York which he still pays, but with the earning he is making living in Vilnius, Lithuania. He is no poorer. He is affluent now. With the growth of his prosperity his consumer behaviors have also changed. He orders expensive cuisines from the top of the menu at a restaurant, readily shares his alcohol and cigarettes with less fortunate people. He does not bother looking the price tags at the groceries. He is enjoying a kind of freedom of his self. So, he is trying to relieve his distress and disappointments in the past sharing his feeling and food at present with the type of the person he was in the past. This is his attempt to fill gap of his fragmented self.

Franzen compares Chip's academic and commercial, rather a fake commercial endeavor; and he leaves us for the interpretation on which of them is the source of gratification in the capitalist commercial culture geared up by globalization. He mentions:

True to Gitanas's word, there were plenty of underage girls in heavy makeup available at the bars and pizzerias, but by leaving New York and escaping from "The Academy Purple", Chip seemed to have lost his need to fall in love with adolescent strangers. Twice a week he and Gitanas visited the Club Metropol and, after a massage and before a sauna, had their needs efficiently gratified on the Metropol's indifferently clean foam cushions. Most of the Metropol's female clinicians were in their thirties and led day time lives that revolve around child care, or parent care, or the university's International Journalism program, or the making of art in political hues that nobody would buy. (507-8)

This quote very clearly demonstrates several dichotomies that pervade life and culture at this age of globalization. Chip had failed in academics in New York—he failed at his professorship in his college having an illegitimate relation with Melissa, his girl student in the course of feminism; and he also failed in "The Academy Purple", his academic work on screen writing. Now in Vilnius, he does not do any such work. This in a sense connotes his escapism from academics. Chip has involved him in a fraudulent commercial activity for his earnings now and seems to enjoy his life accordingly. Side by side, this quote also raises the issue of child right violation since the underage girls seem to have been exploited in bars and pizza houses. These girls and other women of their thirties have been shown to have commoditized their life, body and relationships. This quote is also a mockery of the concept of love at the age of chronic commercialization. As promised by globalization, the women working for double shifts are not perhaps happy. The most important issue which has been expressed implicitly in the quote is the relationship between art, politics and commerce at the age of globalization. Commerce



and commercial actors have overruled the art and politics at this age. So politics and art do not matter much to the consumers and hence they would not buy arts drawn in political hues.

The consumer behavior is uniquely shaped by globalization. Every character in *The Correction* are found having desire of material accumulation and consumer consciousness up to their old age. When Alfred remains busy working for Christmas lights at the basement, he shows such typical consumer behavior. Alfred affirms:

Much better, Alfred thought, to stay out of sight in the basement, to work with what he had. It offered his sense of proportion and economy to throw away a ninety-percent serviceable thing of light. It offered his sense of himself, because he was an individual from an age of individuals, a string of light was, like him, an individual thing. No matter how little the thing had cost, to throw it away was to deny its value and, by extension, the value of individuals generally: to willfully designate as trash and object that you knew wasn't trash (532).

Alfred admits that his self is the self common to all individuals at this age of individuals, that is the age of globalization. The economy governed by competition market and utility principle orients and builds a habit formation to accumulate things and not to waste them as far as possible. On the other hand, Alfred has not been successful installing electrical setting at the basement at his old age, and becomes ready to stay out of sight instead of wasting ninety percent materials.

The conflict between the white and the black is something opposite to the idea of “global village” and “global citizen” promised by globalization. The cultural and regional conflicts are rampant ever since the effect of globalization in the world. As the story

unfolds, “It was true that Alfred believed the only thing wrong with the death penalty was that it was not used often enough; true as well that the men ... were usually black men from the slums on St. Jude's north side” (148). Alfred is as conservative as you can get. As it is often the case in American society, race and class get mixed together to create a dangerous cocktail.

Globalization and fragmentation has a close connection. This relation between globalization and fragmentation can be observed on different layers. The primary effects of globalization are seen in economics and consumer behaviors. Ultimately the effects of globalization are seen in the life and culture of the people. In economics, it is revealed as diverse effects of supply chain in trade and commerce, production and distribution, import and export. These economic activities under the hold of globalization impact in society, family, kitchen, dress, music and in the individual character's self.

*The Corrections* and this dissertation basically explore the fragmentation seen on character's level. The confrontation between Alfred and Chip Lambert, their futile attempt to correct each other, Alfred's Parkinson's disease, anxiety about his patent on Midpac Corporation, his solitary stay at the basement almost every time, his delusion and dementia, his intake of pills are some instances to signify textual evidence to relate globalization and fragmentation. Chip's futile attempt to achieve success in teaching, script writing and in business till the end of the novel; his fraudulent attempt to become rich involving with Lithuania's vice president are fragmented subjects in this character. Likewise, Denise is another character in the novel with no stability and coherence at all. Her futile mobility to different places to quench her commercial and sexual desire and question over her sexuality whether she female or lesbian are some indicators to prove

her fragmentation. Gary is the eldest son in the family. His fragmented self is revealed through his tension with his wife Caroline and his father Alfred. He does not admit to his wife that he is slipping into depression. He tries to correct his father but he is unknowingly following his father's course of life. Gary feels delighted with the expensive consumer goods.

This section of textual analysis as a whole portrays the fragmented self of characters being demonstrated in their attitudes and behaviors in the form of anxiety, illusion, antagonism, sexual disorientation, depression, dementia, desire for accumulation, etc.

#### Mobility without Destination

In the first section of textual analysis, we discussed the fragmentation in character's life revealed in their inert characteristics. The fragmented self in character's life can be visualized in a state of character's mobility as well. Sometimes both kinds of fragmented self can be felt in a character behavior at a same time. Despite the difficulty to draw a clear demarcation line between inert and mobile fragmented self in character's behavior, this section of textual analysis attempts to prove fragmented self in character seen in mobility without destination.

The characters in the novel seem to oscillate to and fro with no destination or with a destination yielding no desired result. Such movement is sometimes largely from one place to another, sometimes within a place or sometimes the oscillation is within the fragmented mind of a character. Alfred and Enid still live in the house in suburban St. Jude in which they raised their children. They are going to visit their children in few days. But Alfred thinks they are leaving today and in his confusion he is trapped in the

space between words. “It’s Thursday,” she said, louder. “We’re not leaving until Saturday” (13). Chip Lambert, thirty nine, is shown waiting at LaGuardia airport for Alfred and Enid to arrive in New York City.

Alfred and Enid’s this visit to the city is not actually their destination. They are going for a luxury cruise. Enid and Alfred are shown typical Midwestern parents, whose children have scattered, eager to find their own definition of happiness. This kind of typical characteristic, as claimed by Geir Lundestad, is opposite to universal global culture. Franzen clarifies:

To anyone who saw them averting their eyes from the dark-haired New Yorkers careering past them, to anyone who caught a glimpse of Alfred’s straw fedora looming at the height of Iowa corn on Labor Day, or the yellow wool of the slacks stretching over Enid’s outslung hip, it was obvious that they were Midwestern and intimidated.(17)

For anyone at the airport, Franzen says in the quote above, Alfred and Enid Lambert were typically Midwestern in their way of fashion of uniform and mobility. What are their children’s perceptions toward them, toward Midwest, and toward St. Jude? To Chip Lambert, who was waiting for them just beyond the security check point, his parents were “killers”. This is a very nasty remark by Chip to his parents. It is nothing but the product of his fragmented self. The word “killer” is used either for “a person or things that kills some other person or animal” or in an informal sense it is used for “an extremely difficult or unpleasant thing”. Either for any sense, this kind of abnormal remark is nothing but fragmented self in Chip’s character.

No children of Alfred and Enid are in their hometown St. Jude. They feel honored

and privileged for their mobility towards the Eastern Coast. Enid's attempt to unite all family members at St. Jude becomes very difficult. Her children do not show orientation to their home and home town. Their home has been simply a house. They are moving here and there away from their original place in pursuit of establish their home. Franzen writes: What Gary hated most about the Midwest was how unpampered and unprivileged he felt in it. St. Jude in its optimistic egalitarianism consistently failed to accord him the respect to which his gifts and attainments entitled him (203). This shows that Gary desperately wants to be seen as upper class moving to the East Coast, and he believes that he cannot have that experience in the egalitarian Midwest. Gary wished that all further migration to the coasts could be banned and all the Midwesterners encouraged reverting to eating pasty foods and wearing dowdy clothes and playing board games, in order that a strategic national reserve of clueless might be maintained. This shows Gary's ambivalent or confused state of mind towards his original identity.

In this global village, people's trans-border migration has been common longing for bread and butter or for further enjoyment. Although the money they earn can be measured in some terms, how about the measurement of their happiness? Franzen expresses:

From a distance of four thousand miles, everything he'd left behind in the U.S. looked manageably small – his parents, his debts, his failure, his loss of Julia. He felt so much better on the work front, and sex front and friendship front that for a while he forgot what misery tasted like. He resolved to stay in Vilnius until he had earned enough money to pay down his debts to Denise and to his credit-card issuers. He believed that as few as six months would suffice for this. (509)

These lines means to say that in this global village, Chip has migrated four thousand miles away from his home, and his “for a while” happiness made his previous things look smaller and less significant. His relation with his parents and his beloved look less significant, his failure while in the U.S. and his other liabilities look less significant. He forgets for a while the taste of his past miseries and his fragmented self. He hopes that he can return to normality within six months. This positive vibration of his hope could not last even for six hours when he checked his sister’s email. Denise in her email had shown bossy attitude to her brother and had urged him to go to St. Jude to mark last Christmas. She had written about their father’s deteriorating health condition too. These things were the matter of little attraction for Chip to go back home in December that year. She again wrote another email where she mentioned about the sum he owed her. At this moment, the misery whose taste he thought he had forgotten, the troubles that he had seemed small from a distance across the Atlantic, filled his head again.

Chip deleted the email, smoked three cigarettes trying to dissolve his anxiety in rationalization. He thought that Alfred could live with his sister until June. By then he could pay his sister the \$ 20,500 that he owed her and also he hoped that he could keep his promise of all-family reunion. Contrary to his hope, Lithuania, was heading towards anarchy due to the global financial crisis. This again added fragmentation to this character’s self. Franzen writes:

In a familiar paradox depression, goods became scarce because there were no buyers. The harder it was to find aluminum foil or ground beef or motor oil, the more tempting it became to hijack truckloads of these commodities or to muscle in on their distribution. Meanwhile public servants (notably the police) continued

to draw fixed salaries of irrelevant litai. The underground economy soon learned to price a precinct captain as unerringly as it priced a box of light bulbs. (510-11)

This implies that the economy of Lithuania was on the verge of anarchism. People could not possess litai, their local currency. Even if they had, they could purchase little things with much. There was great want of non-agriculture and industrial product. Hijacking and forceful distribution using muscle replaced normal mode of sale and purchase. Informal and underground economy dominated the economic and monetary discipline. This, of course, scared Chip's hope of what he was planning in six months. In this situation, Chip compares Lithuania and America. He finds a wide similitude between the black-market Lithuania and free-market America. In both countries wealth was under the grip of very few people. In this situation, everyone was fragmented, Chip, the central character in *The Corrections* was no exception.

In globalization, some national and international actors can play crucial role in holding the economic activities. The following lines provide us with evidence in case of Lithuania:

The Lithuanian with the most guns was an ethnic Russian named Victor Lichenkev, who had paralyzed the cash liquidity of his heroin and Ecstasy near-monopoly into absolute control of the Bank of Lithuania after the bank's previous owner, FrenLee Trust of Atlanta, had catastrophically misjudged consumer appetite for its Dilbert Master-Cards. Victor Lichenkev's cash reserves enabled him to arm a five-hundred-man private "constabulary" which in October boldly surrounded the Chernobyl-type nuclear reactor at Ignalina, 120 kilometers northeast of Vilnius, that supplied three-quarters of the nation's electricity. (512)

This quote illustrates us about the strength of consumers. When a nation is weak, private actors get more space to influence government and manipulate consumers studying their self- psychology. In such a situation, consumers' rights and people's social security are paralyzed. Profit remains in the center. The impact of this situation falls on everybody's life and culture ranging from their workplace to their kitchen.

The issue of mobility in global village within and across border is not merely concerned with people's desire to be happy and prosperous. It can have an enormous impact resulting to collapsing of empires, causing civil and international wars, cross-border crimes, and threat to peace and security. The domestic and migration law, and the volume of migration often determine the degree of such threats. Chip is the character in *The Corrections* who suffers a lot from anxiety and insecurity throughout his life. During his mobility within the borders, he lies about his working place. He does so to maintain his positive image to his parents. When he was fired from his college, he desperately goes upto United Kingdom. Like Chip, Gitanas—the vice president of Lithuania—is another character being victim of war and threat. Gitanas said: It killed my dad when I was eleven .And my best friend's dad. And hundreds of other people, over the years. And everything made sense. There was always an enemy with a big red target on his back. There was a big evil daddy U.S.S.R. that we all could hate, until the nineties (514). This extract implies that there was great mobility, hatred, threat, and mortality in different parts of the then U.S.S.R. Gitana also expressed that that havoc remained until 1990s, that is till the independence of Lithuania from the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union could not retain its integrity and was fully dissolved on December 25, 1991. Once Chip goes to Lithuanian capital Vilnius, and his situation in



America and there in Lithuania is compared in the following lines:

As for Chip, the inferiority he felt in Vilnius as a “pathetic American” who spoke neither Lithuanian nor Russian, and whose father had not died of lung cancer at a early age, and whose grandparents had not disappeared into Siberia, and who had never been tortured for his ideals in an unheated military-- prison cell, was offset by his competence as an employee and by the memory of certain extremely flattering contrast Julia used to draw between him and Gitanas. In pubs and clubs, where the two men often didn’t bother to deny that they were brothers, Chip had the sensation of being the more successful of the two. (516)

When a character’s self is fragmented, there is fluctuation in his temperament losing the coherence. Franzen defines him as a pathetic American because he has gone to Vilnius hankering in illusion in the hope of earning money in a country which is less prosperous than his country. Being a pathetic American, Chip also feels the pathos of death, disappearance, and torture that the Lithuanian had undergone before its independence. It was the time Lithuania was initially influenced by the effect of globalization. There were pubs and clubs. Chip’s fragmented self has tried to get a relief supposing himself more successful than the Gitanas.

Mobility, in a globalized circumstance, brings about criminal threats in character’s life. Gitanas and Chip are collecting investments fraudulently making a fake website. Chip is actually a hired employee for this task. Gitanas had bodyguards and Chip hadn’t. In this situation, Chip denies to leave the compound without an escort. Gitanas tries to comfort Chip as: You are not in danger. Lichenkev might want to kill me and take over the company for himself. But you are the goose with the golden ovaries (517).

Victor Lichenkev is private national actor in Lithuania. He scrutinizes fraudulent activities employing spies. Gitanas is scared of him for being caught and punished. Chip is his employee and he knows the secrets about it. It will be harmful Gitanas if Chip leaves the being demotivated. In this situation, to soothe Chip, Gitanas expressed his saying in the extract above while Chip was still there in Lithuania. Gitanas was the citizen of that country and the fraudulent company is under his name for which they are illegally collecting capitals. So he says that Lichenkev might kill him if their illegal act is revealed to him. But for Chip, as is simply an employee and a foreign national, there will be no much harm to him. It would be rather like a goose with golden ovaries. This is evidence on how the flow of capital under globalization is leading to the fragmented self of character.

In a nutshell, this textual analysis can be viewed in two ways. Firstly, it is the analysis of the characters and their mobility in the Lambert family who have undergone some identical and some varied traumatic situations. These situations are inevitable byproduct of globalization and capitalist consumer culture. Secondly, this analysis encompasses the geographical dimension of the globalization effect. There are disputes between different regions of a nation-state as between Midwest and Eastern Coast of America reflected in this novel and growing political influence of the financial industry in a sovereign nation like Lithuania ultimately being its parliament controlled by non-state actors. In this way, discussing the condition, mobility and geography of the characters, this analysis has portrayed the overall situations, which are most often adverse to the promises of globalization.

The effect of globalization is seen in the field of a nation's economy. The effect

gradually transmits to geography and culture in the form of fragmented subjects. This chapter as a whole analyzes this fragmentation due to globalization caused by mobility and migration in general, and mobility of the characters of *The Corrections* in particular.

#### Chapter IV: The Promise of Globalization as Mirage

Although the global effects in the field of economics and culture was felt from the earlier period, it became clearly visible after the Cold War. We were promised that by the effects of globalization, the world would be a small village. A country and an individual would benefit a lot having an easy excess in global technologies and information. We imagined that there would be coherence, happiness, and uniformity in the life and culture of every individual. As discussed in the earlier sections of this dissertation, there were and are cases in which such promises were put into practice. The primary text under this research and life of the characters in the text led me to conclude that the promises of globalization were merely the mirage.

The inter-dependency, challenges, and transformation in new world order, states and individuals were obliged to think in a new manner and act accordingly for their survival. Those who followed the systems of globalization integrating global culture with their local culture survived and are surviving more happily in the present world; and those who could not catch the global rhythm and local cadence in the pace of globalization are suffering as the fragmented subjects like the characters in *The Corrections*.

Doing this research, I have reached to the conclusion that there are two reasons for those promises remaining merely as mirage. The first reason is that of economics which is described as the theory of comparative advantage and principle of supply chain. And the second reason is related to Self Psychology which produces fragmented subjects as envisioned by this dissertation. To provide with theoretical backup and textual references on why the promises of globalization remained as mirage, I would like to

explain these two reasons shortly.

The theory of comparative advantage states that any two countries, as for example one poor and the other rich, can take mutual advantage following the principle of macroeconomic theory. Let's assume two goods paddy and cell phone device are produced by a poor and a rich country respectively. This theory supposes that there will be high demand of paddy in the rich country in which the white-collar human resource are reluctant to involve themselves in paddy production. Similarly, there will be greater demand of cell phone device in the comparatively poor country in which the majority of the human resources are involved in traditional occupation of farming. When there are demands of their reciprocal specialization, both the countries can take mutual advantage. This classical macroeconomic theory is not relevant at the present world governed by highly commercial strategies and globalization. The production and supply chain does not operate as explained in the theory of comparative advantage above. The raw materials and different parts of a particular product are not produced in a single country. There is still chance that the assembling of the different parts may take place in another different country. Hence, the traditional production and supply chain gets fragmented. This fragmentation will, of course, affect the people and culture they represent.

The second reason on why the promises of globalization remained simply as mirage can be analyzed referring the theory of Self Psychology. Self-Psychology was conceived by Heinz Kohut in Chicago in 1960s and is still developing as a contemporary form of psychoanalytic treatment. In Self- Psychology, the effort is made to understand individuals from within their subjective experience via vicarious introspection, basing interpretation on the understanding of the self as the central agency of human psyche.

The term “structure” is meant to suggest stability across time in a character’s life. When this structure, becomes unstable, the self is said to be fragmented. The characters in *The Corrections* are found to be fragmented at the age of globalization and consumerism. Without considering the clinical and psychological reason of their fragmentation, Alfred takes pills in an illusion that he would be cured. The aggravating consequence of those pills makes Alfred more serious and weaker every day.

To conclude, we can borrow the idea of gloculization. It’s almost impossible to remain aloof from the effects of globalization. So the option we have is to compromise between global culture and local identity. The characters in *The Corrections* are found either doing no compromise or getting no congenial space for the compromise due to the inherent impact of globalization and consumerism in their psyche.

## Works Cited

- Annesley, James. "Market Corrections: Jonathan Franzen and the " Novel of Globalization ". *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 29, no. 2, Winter 2006, pp 111-128. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journal/jml/summary/v029/29.2annesley.html>.
- . -. *Fictions of Globalizations*. London, New York. Continuum. 2006.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. London 1996.
- Carroll, Joseph. "Correcting of *The Corrections*: A Darwinian Critique of a Foucauldian Novel". *Style*. vol. 47, no. 1, Spring 2013, University of Missouri, St. Louis pp. 87-114.
- Franzen, Jonathan. *The Corrections*. Fourth Estate. London, 2001.
- Friedman, Thomas L. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*. Anchor Books. New York. 2000.
- Heilgendorff, Franz-J. "Conceptualizing Capitalist Globalization". 202.51.72.78 on Sun, 06 March 2022 16:08:07 UTC. <https://about.jstor.org/terms>
- Ladi, Stella. "Globalization and Europeanization: Analyzing Change". 202.51.72.78 on Sun, 06 March 2022 16:07:57 UTC. <https://about.jstor.org/terms>
- Lewis, Kelley. *Reading Literary Fiction and the Collision of Reading Practices: Jonathan Franzen and the Oprah Debate*. Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, September 2004.
- Lundestad, Geir. " Why does Globalization Encourage Fragmentation?" *International Politics*, 2004, 41(265-276). [www.palgrave.journals.com/ip](http://www.palgrave.journals.com/ip).

Marber, Peter. "Elephant: Understanding Globalization from Trunk to Tail". John Wiley & Sons, Inc. New Jersey. 2009.

Rohr, Sunnane. "The Tyranny of the Probable—Crackpot Realism and Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections*." *American Studies*, vol. 49, no. 1. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41157914>

Singer, Peter. *One World: The Ethics of Globalization*, Yale University Press, London, 2002.

Toal, Catherine. "Correctios: Contemporary American Melancholy". *Journal of European Studies*. 2003. <http://jes.sagepub.com/>