

I. Introduction

Shanghvi acknowledges that history gives meaning. His narrator is preserving history in order to give meaning to his random and chaotic life. In his quest for individual identity and meaning, the narration about Vardhmann weaves together the stories of his family through several generations. In his attempt to create himself through narrative, he is rewriting the whole of history experientially with himself at its center. The narrator embarks on a desperate search for meaning as he attempts to link his own history with that of the nation. He resolves to recount history. The narration about Vardhmann, therefore, involves in a mission of preserving the past in totality. By searching for one unified meaning accepting a multiplicity of meanings that resembles the disintegration of one unified historical view point with a unity of meaning. While he attempts to give a comprehensive view, his efforts at comprehensiveness are subverted by the partiality and incompleteness inevitable in the telling of past events. There is always the recognition that other readings of history are possible.

The narration about Vardhmann communicates his history in oral form. The narration about Vardhmann reinforces the emphasis on communication as he announces. But the correspondence between people, whether written or oral involves distortions. The distortions are inevitable because of the very nature of language on the one hand and the individual perception on the other. The narration about Vardhmann realizes that, by the very nature of language, a narrative of whatever type history or fiction - will always be an incomplete, biased, and one-sided discourse which will unavoidably push other discourses to the margins. Likewise individual perception also distorts the presentation of history in the sense that different aspects gain emphasis from different tellers:

[. . .] is an exuberant picture of India between the wars. A novel whose combination of humour, darkness and exuberance seems to be drawn as if not more from Latin American magical realist tradition of Isabel Allende or Laura Esquivel than from what I at least might think of as “Indian” novels. (Gordon 32)

The historicity of each historian affects his/her historical writing. The history is, thus, affected by the subjectivity of a person because a person grasps those events which have a particular meaning or significance to that person. History, thus, necessarily emphasizes certain aspects over others by the manner in which a person communicates this history. Shanghvi dramatizes this point as the narration about Vardhmann relates that conveys as fact illustrate the manner in which presentation of history and historical events receives emphasis and coloring from the person relating the information.

History therefore, must be communicated. But, because of communication, history necessarily lacks objectivity and thus embraces subjectivity, like the reality; “The story actually begins with spoken word” (Charles Hix 31). Shanghvi believes that history is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish, and capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on our prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge. History, in this sense, is not merely a record of facts but rather coloring of facts with individual opinion, toward the end of his narrative, the narration about Vardhmann learns that it is impossible to present the past events as it really occurred. Thus the narration about Vardhmann realizes that any account of the past-autobiographical or historical -is coloured with personal feelings. Human subjectivity, therefore, plays vital role in the preservation of past throughout the narrative. The subjective nature history accepts

that many versions of historical truth are possible. Shanghvi, thus, attacks the notion of objective facts.

Shanghvi believes that as the reality is built not upon the fact but upon opinion, so is the history. In this sense, the act of writing history is unreliable. Shanghvi portrays history as unreliable only if one searches for a single unified historical truth. He states that no single truth stands out but the inevitability of multiple truths. He emphasizes this point by making the narration about Vardhmann's narration unreliable. The narrator himself acknowledges his unreliability at several instances. The narration about Vardhmann's unreliability as a narrator emphasizes the nature of history. Furthermore, the narration about Vardhmann undermines his own claim to tell the "truth" about the past and renders his narrative as merely a human artifact. In other words, he doubts whether the complex reality can be objectively represented in the narrative. Thus, Shanghvi demonstrates the impossibility of classifying and representing all the data of our experience without generalization or omission. We can not encapsulate the whole of reality in narrative. Shanghvi ridicules the whole project of realist art in its attempt to represent life as it really is as Chadwell says; "the novel remains in magic realism" (103). Shanghvi here states that the representation of reality in totality is impossible. Shanghvi views history as an elusive concept, indefinable because we see only what we wish. Shanghvi, interrogates notions of truth and suspects the ability of arriving at a single meaningful version of the world.

Unlike the traditional historicists, the narration about Vardhmann does not try to be omniscient of the past events. He does not pretend to be an all-knowing historian who explains each and every event of the past. He sometimes gives up his narrative authority, leaving the things unexplained. The narration about Vardhmann does not

explain the events of the past in detail. He leaves the things unexplained as if to be speculated by the readers themselves. Moreover, the narration about Vardhmann himself asks questions that he can't answer. The narration about Vardhmann admits that he is not able to write a pure history. The gaps have inevitably occurred in his writing of history. The narration about Vardhmann believes that in any history there must be events which can't be explained or understood by reason. However, the historians neglect them in order to secure the authority of their interpretation of history:

Hence, the dilemma of historical interpretation can easily lead to a kind of aesthetic formalism on the one hand, which denies history any constitutive role in the formation of texts, and on the other hand, to a historical view of texts as culturally and socially determined, a view that reduces emphasis on authorial intention and agency. (Habib 761)

The narration about Vardhmann brings them on the foreground in order to highlight the problem of representation of history. His reading of history, like the pickling process, yields an artificial product, for coloring and spicing are important in giving immortality to the raw materials. In both process, he acknowledges inevitable distortions. This is as true of history-writing as it is of novel-writing. Unlike pickled fruit and vegetables, whose flavours can be synthesized, the words which form the pickles of history always retain their openness and contradictions. Distortions are thus inevitable. The narration about Vardhmann realizes that nothing can be presented in totality and in an objective way. Shanghvi, thus, foregrounds the problems in history-writing by exposing the ruptures and leakages in history-writing which the traditional historicists endeavor to smooth.

History can never be represented in an absolute and valid form; “the book arrives on a swelling chorus of hype that is a mixed blessing for any first time novelist. . . . British rule is in its twilight in India” (Sandip Roy 1). Shanghvi, therefore, does not view history as a record of objective facts and absolute truth. He rather views it as an individual creation. Vardhmann's unreliability as a narrator, therefore, emphasizes the need to create our own version of history that functions as an alternative to official history. This unreliability also addresses the reader, shocking them, into forming their own views on history. It makes the readers question their own interpretation. Showing the impossibility of reliable narration in history writing, Shanghvi plays with the conventional techniques of narrative. In his a self-conscious narrator who reflects on his own narrative and directly speak to the reader. By doing so he undermines the traditional acceptance of and adherence to the official history seen as a record of objective facts. Shanghvi believes that people read and internalize the world and its events in different ways, based on individual perspective. The truth-value of an individual perception of history retains validity independent of recorded "facts" of history. Truth is contained in the creative act and is no more than memory. Shanghvi conveys a historical account based on his perception that proves to be just as valid as the official history which it may contradict. *The Last Song of Dusk*, thus, introduces a new view of history that accepts multiplicity of history as valid forms of history.

Shanghvi does not follow the mode of linear narrative throughout the novel. He is informed by the New Historicist idea that history does not move only linearity. The narration about Vardhmann rejects linear narrative both as Anuradha's and his own orderly historical chronology of events. The historical events, the narration about Vardhmann believes, do not occur in cause and effect relationship. The things have

rather a way of linking in to each other. The narration about Vardhmann, therefore, states that if we want to understand just one life, you have to swallow the world. Since the things are connected to each other, it is not possible to present the things in linearity; “Literary criticism found itself in the contradictory situation of justifying the study of literature as an alternative mode of knowledge, one more fundamental than that of science, but requiring the development of an analytic and 'scientific' methodology to confer on it the authority to make such a pronouncement” (Waugh 29). The narration about Vardhmann's narrator Anuradha represents his typical audience, bringing to the surface the reader's thoughts and questions. If Anuradha doubts the reliability of his narrative, the narration about Vardhmann simply says that a little uncertain of the reliability, well, a little uncertainly is no bad thing. He believes that each and everything of past events can not be explained in a reliable manner. In other words, history can never be available in pure form. Thus, even though it points to the errors that mark his work and unreliability of his facts, he can still be assured that Anuradha and other people will believe him. His writing, in this sense, becomes a process of providing his version of history in the way the readers believe him. The narration about Vardhmann is also helped by Anuradha to produce his narrative in the manner the readers believe him. In this sense, Anuradha pulls back the narration about Vardhmann to the right narrative track.

The explanation is needed to comprehend what the narration about Vardhmann says, for his ambition to tell everything has made his narrative digressive. In his version of history, Shanghvi deliberately prevents his reader from being caught up in a story with its 'organic' life, that progresses uninterrupted. Shanghvi encourages the readers to participate in the creation of history. The reader is engaged so as to aid the author in discovering alternative forms to archaic absolute truths. Shanghvi

entreats his audience to join the process of interpreting and creating. His narrator directly affirms what he expects. Since each and every event of the past can not be explained or represented, Shanghvi regards the role of audience, Shanghvi uses the narration about Vardhmann to implore the reader to accept an alternative to traditional notions of historical truth and also to entreat the reader to explore those alternatives. Furthermore, presenting the idea of memory as creating a new reality, Shanghvi encourages the readers to participate in forming their own conclusion rather than blindly accepting the presented conclusion. Moreover, this notion asserts the individual nature of history. The readers too can form their own reality depending upon their subjectivity. Shanghvi, thus, encourages the readers to create their own versions of history. The individual version may differ from recorded official version, but still it remains valid. Individual perception and participation allows the narration about Vardhmann, as well as readers, to accept that which makes meaning to that person. Shanghvi invites the readers to analyze the nature of history and, by doing so, encourages them to conclude.

In developing this critical approach, Plato anticipates the contemporary theoretical method known as New historicism, which analyzes literary texts as socio-political discourses rather than as timeless aesthetic objects. Of course, Plato differs from these critics in believing that some special individuals, philosophers, can transcend the social realm and contemplate metaphysical truths that exist beyond time and space. (Nightangle 41- 42).

Shanghvi believes that the reality of history is not single and objective. For him, history is subjective and, therefore, multiple. He interrogates the traditional notion of history and suspects the ability of arriving at a single, meaningful and knowable

version of the world. Truth depends upon the perception of an individual. Shanghvi's narration does not assert that his version is the final and absolute one. His is simply one of the many possible versions of Indian history.

For the politicians, or for the state, the alternative versions of the history are the threats. The official version of history, for them, is the absolute, final and the only version of history. Shanghvi interrogates this notion of history. History, for Shanghvi, can never be single and a unified whole. There is always the possibility of giving alternative version, or interpreting the world and its events differently. We, therefore, can create "alternative realities" which may not be similar to the official version of reality.

Truth as a single and unified whole is, therefore, unknowable. The nature of truth differs according to the purpose. Truth is not what already exists or what is already there. It is rather created or made up. It is controlled by different networks of power. The fiction, thus, helps to unravel those parts of history which are neglected or concealed in official version. The politicians try to homogenize history. So they take any alternative versions to the official history as a threat for they may contradict with their version of truth. The fiction can serve as a resistance against this effort of the politicians. Shanghvi tries to disclose the truths that are hidden in official version of history, through his fiction. By doing so, he resists the official authoritative view. To put it differently, the cause and effect pattern in history is the creation of the historians themselves. Different historians create this pattern in history differently. So their versions of history may contradict each other. The truth-value is determined by the state ideology. The existing power relation in the state determines which one is true and which one is false. But for each historian his own version is the truest one. These truth are hidden in official version of history, but revealed through Shanghvi's

fictional work. Fiction, in this sense, is not a mere product of human imagination. It rather contains fact too. Moreover, fiction helps to uncover the truths that are hidden in official version.

History, for the narration about Vardhmann, is both history and his story. In other words, *The Last Song of Dusk* is a work of fiction, and at the same time, a record of modern history, and it is Salem's position midway between historian and fiction writer that blurs the demarcation between history and fiction. Generally, by history, we understand the official history -the history which is conveyed through text books or, more recently, through the mass media. Shanghvi is skeptic about such established version of history. For him, history is multiple and heterogeneous, or even more, personal. Shanghvi dramatizes this point when he warns us not to impose one's view on others. Moreover he urges us to create our own version. He, thus, focuses on the multiplicity of history. For him, history is multiple and alternative versions are as valid as the official one.

By offering an alternative version, Shanghvi refuses any claim to absolute truth in the official version. He even interrogates the validity of the official history. The official version of history is not the valid and authentic history. He rather views it as a discourse created by state ideology which can never go beyond the ideology in which it is written or produced. In other words, they created their own versions of truth which were supported by state ideology. The narration about Vardhmann, therefore, claims that official version of history is not the absolute and final one. It is merely a version of history which is shaped by the state. To counter it, we must keep on producing other versions of history. According to Shanghvi, alternative versions of history must be produced in order to defy the politicians' ambition to homogenize history. In this regard, Shanghvi's *The Last Song of Dusk* serves as a resistance against

the efforts of the politicians to produce single version of the history. *The Last Song of Dusk* discloses the various truths that are hidden in official version of the history. By doing so, Shanghvi, through *The Last Song of Dusk*, resists the official authoritative version of history

The next series of responses are more or less related to the practices of postcolonial mode of interpretation. These critics expressed the view the *The Last Song of Dusk* is a postcolonial novel, for it tries to reassert the epistemological value of non-European world. They argue that Shanghvi, through *The Last Song of Dusk* redefines and recreates national history by restoring the reinventing myths and his own cultural roots. Elleke Boehmer expresses similar view: “conventions of pickle making images, which separately and together are made to correlate with national self perceptions” (199). The next series of criticism label *The Last Song of Dusk* as a postmodern novel. These critics argue that the novel embodies various postmodern features-confusion and violation of the borderline, adaption of a self-conscious narrator, questioning of the totalizing impulse, land discussion about the act of literary creation itself etc.

Similarly, Linda Hutcheon talk about the totalizing impulse in any writing of past. She claims that *The Last Song of Dusk* interrogates the historians' objectivity and their effort to present the past in totality. She argues that it is a postmodern novel in which the stress is on the act of de-naturalizing documents in both historical and fictional writing" (83). Hutcheon says that the novel talks about how the documents can no longer pretend to be a transparent means to reveal past events. The novel states that historians never seize events directly and entirely but rather incompletely and only through texts like the novel itself. These multifarious responses from various sources will display the richness of the novel. A novel can have multiple

interpretations. However, the present study aims to analyze how Shanghvi blurs the borderline between history and fiction in the novel. Inclusion of fantastic elements in to a realistic plot and setting is leading exponent of the genre. It is disputable that the word fallible is justifiably included in the term a realist impulse can be detected; the main concern of the novelists involved is to explore what they can see as contemporary reality, rather than to provide an alternative to it. In the novel, we find two conflicting perspectives, one based on a rational view of reality and the next on the acceptance of the fantasy. There is the lack of clear opinions about the accuracy of events and the credibility of the worldviews expressed by the characters in the text. The technique promotes acceptance of fallible narration.

II. New Historicism: An Alternative to Traditional Notion of History

Shanghvi juxtaposes pieces of town gossip to create the mystical setting of the novel which admittedly have contributed to the sketches of his peculiar characters and their actions. His narrator develops large portions of plot in passages introduced by shaky statement. When an author calls for the reader's skepticism of stories within a story, subtly pointing as evidence to contradictory information or unlikely authority, the inevitable challenge that follows is to convince the reader to accept the author's own account, which is, after all, just another story. A method of literary interpretation called 'New Historicism' is, at the present moment, the dominant procedure for studying British Romantic literature in the Anglo-American academy. Indeed, its practice is so pervasive that its hegemony is being protested by scholars who feel they might be penalized if they write in any other way. The present volume itself is a product of the impetus given to Romantic studies by the New Historicism, especially in its representation of authors who would not have appeared in such a volume a generation ago, most of whom have been rediscovered by New Historicist imperatives.

The "New" Historicism dates back to Stephen Greenblatt's use of the term in 1982 in an introduction to an issue of the journal genre devoted to the Renaissance. His statements concerning the new movement will be considered below. In general, both Greenblatt and subsequent critics identified with new historicism rejected the notion that it was a theory or a specific doctrine. Rather, they identified some persistent concerns and approaches, some of which have been indicated above, such as the rejection of the formalist notion of aesthetic autonomy and the situating of literature within a broader cultural network. Louis

Montrose stressed that this contextualization of literature involved a reexamination of an author's position within a linguistic system.

Montrose also points out that New Historicists variously recognize the ability of literature to challenge social and political authority. (Habib 762)

Shanghvi is using history to describe the events which are used to describe various events and incidents in the novel. Shanghvi is discussing the events of our time but the readers are confused in such use. Thus, this simultaneous use of both the calendars is very subtly intended to produce the effect of magic or unreal and real at the same time. This blurring of present with the past, magical with the real is one of the dominant trends in the mode of fallible narration. Even the use of narrative technique is intended to create a false effect, mixing personal and realistic details with fictional one.

We find the characteristics of postmodern fiction in *The Last Song of Dusk*. Literary postmodernism has: self-conscious narration, technical languages, long lists of objects used to create either a cramped and busy world or a barren and empty one and grammatically incorrect sentences. All four appear in the novel as the following passage shows Shanghvi uses self –conscious authorial instructions to the distinction between story and reality. There are a number of similarities between New Historicism and Marxism, especially a British group of critics making up a school usually referred to as Cultural Materialism. Both New Historicists and Cultural Materialists are interested in recovering lost histories and in exploring mechanisms of repression and subjugation. The major difference is that New Historicists tend to concentrate on those at the top of the social hierarchy (i.e. the church, the monarchy, the upper-classes) while Cultural Materialists tend to concentrate on those at the

bottom of the social hierarchy (the lower-classes, women, and other marginalized peoples). Also, though each of the schools practices different kinds of history, New Historicists tend to draw on the disciplines of political science and anthropology given their interest in governments, institutions, and culture, while Cultural Materialists tend to rely on economics and sociology given their interest in class, economics, and commodification.

The new historicism is marked by a 'methodological self-consciousness' rather than the old historicist "faith in the transparency of signs and interpretive procedures." The new historicist will view the work of art itself as "the product of a set of manipulations . . . the product of a negotiation between a creator or less of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society" ("TPC," 12). The general movement here is away from a mimetic theory of art to an interpretative model that will "more adequately account for the unsettling circulation of materials and discourses that is . . . the heart of modern esthetic practice. (Habib 764)

Shanghvi's self – conscious instruction into the story is conspicuously accentuated by very personal informal languages. The narrator a fictionalized version of Shanghvi himself appears as character within the story as much as the narration about Vardhmann. By bringing himself directly into the story he blurs the distinctions usually found between the real world and the fictional world.

In addition he also blurs the edges of the story by describing characters who marched in from the peripheries of the story to demand the inclusion of their own tragedies thus giving character power over reality we usually think of as under our

control or at least under a real writers control. New Historicism is also more specifically concerned with questions of power and culture (especially the messy commingling of the social and the cultural or of the supposedly autonomous self and the cultural/ political institutions that in fact produce that self). Like other postmodern novelists he creates a world trapped between reality and fictionality one surreal and unsteady. Michel Foucault is quite possibly the most influential critic of the last quarter-century. His interest in issues of power, epistemology, subjectivity, and ideology has influenced critics not only in literary studies but also political science, history, and anthropology.

The new Historicism, argued that analysis of literary text could not be restricted to these texts themselves or to their author's psychology and back ground; rather, the larger contexts and cultural conventions in which text were produced needed to be considered. Subsequently, Foucault offered extended critiques respectively of the institutions of the prison and of sexuality in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976). (Habib 766)

Shanghvi adds to these same techniques bizarre even surrealistic imagery. It generally happens in a sub-conscious situation. He also employs a metaphor in *The Last Song of Dusk* in this case. New Historicist criticism first tries to understand what historicism is, what problems it tries to solve and what other problems it creates in doing so, and, of course, whence it arose historically, in both the long run and short term. It is abundantly clear that New Historicism means studying literature in relation to its historical contexts, but a wealth of possibilities and problems lie buried in the innocuous phrase, 'in relation to'. His willingness to analyze and discuss disparate disciplines (medicine, criminal science, philosophy, the history of sexuality,

government, literature, etc.) as well as his questioning of the very principle of disciplinarily and specialization have inspired a host of subsequent critics to explore interdisciplinary connections between areas that had rarely been examined together. Foucault's accusation is the idea that difference, so integral to this concept of writing, is itself elevated to transcendent status.

The notion that has impeded a proper examination of the author's disappearance is that of critique, where this term implies a signifying system constituted by relation and difference, embodying a rejection of the notion of simple, self-contained identity. Shanghvi is narrating the real events in an imaginary way to draw the attention of the readers. Foucault also had the ability to pick up common terms and give them new meaning, thus changing the way critics addressed such pervasive issues as "power," "discourse," "discipline," "subjectivity," "sexuality," and government. While Foucault acknowledges that this notion stands for a remarkably profound attempt to elaborate the conditions of any text, he charges it with subtly perpetuating the existence of the author. This poststructuralist notion of writing says Foucault, has merely transposed the empirical characteristics of an author to transcendental anonymity (Habib 767). A definition of historicism is a theory that all social and cultural phenomena, all categories, truth and values are relative and historically determined, and can be understood only by examining their historical context, in complete detachment from present day attitudes and that historians must therefore study each period without imposing any personal or absolute value system.

Through disfigurement Shanghvi creates an oppressive world. Delight goes out of fantasy and fantasy converts into the nightmare that is the narration about Vardhmann. The reader no longer recognizes him as a character 'me', evolves into a myth and a legend - a beast lusty for kill stalking the country naked matted with grime

and blood. In Shanghvi's attempt to fictionalize the integral human emotion becomes the name he gives an abstraction. New Historicists are, like the Cultural Materialists, interested in questions of circulation, negotiation, profit and exchange, i.e. how activities that purport to be above the market (including literature) are in fact informed by the values of that market. However, New Historicists take this position further by then claiming that all cultural activities may be considered as equally important texts for historical analysis: contemporary trials of hermaphrodites or the intricacies of map-making may inform a Shakespeare play as much as, say, Shakespeare's literary precursors. Patricia Waugh supporting this concept argues:

This history of criticism is riddled with such contradictions, and they go a long way to explain the tensions in the twentieth century over the recognition of the role of 'theory' in literacy studies and the constant oscillation between 'hermeneutic' and more 'scientific, though problematically; Leavis towards the hermeneutic; Russian formalism and structuralism seek a 'poetics' or 'science of literature', deconstruction and new Historicism insist on undecidability and contingency and both are uneasy with designation 'theory'. (29)

Shanghvi narrates the real story in a magical way. Because of this technique he is succeeding to draw the attention of the modern reader. So far as modern readers are concerned they do not believe and satisfy in other style rather than magic realism. It makes the reader curious and suspicious. On the other hand as soon as the readers go through the title the image very immediately triggers their mind.

Thus this bipolar use of pure fiction (film) and the reference to the real historical person serves Shanghvi's technique of magic realism. On the other hand Shanghvi's play with the character of Vardhmann also reminds the readers of another

real. The character in the novel is also referred to as a remarkable poet. So this connection between these imaginary in the novel with the real poet comes to confuse the readers. This is how the imaginative side is linked with the real one. Another definition is the belief that historical change occurs in accordance with laws, so that the course of history may be predicated but cannot be altered by human will, and that history is determined by immutable laws and not by human agency:

The fundamental principles of historicism, then are opposed to those of many twentieth century movements such as Russian Formalism and new Criticism. In general, structuralism also has been historical, focusing on synchronic analyses of language and literature. Yet structuralism differs from rigid formalism in that it does not isolate the literary text but situates it within the broader codes, sign systems, and registers of other discourses. In this sense, its endeavors are compatible with those of historicism. (Habib 761)

As a result, a primordial status is granted to the notion of writing: the play of representations which was previously gathered up into an image of the author is now extended within gray neutrality. The privileges of the author are effectively sustained by attributing a "transcendental" causality to "writing" itself, and there is effectively reintroduced into criticism "the religious principle of hidden meanings" requiring interpretation (Habib 767).

The nature of history and the problems of the representation of it in Shanghvi's *The Last Song of Dusk* are from the viewpoint of New Historicism that discusses in class that the proclamation of universal truth in history can no longer sustain; but different versions and perspectives of interpretations in the histories. Within the postmodern moment, the traditional ideas that every history is viewed as the coherent,

objective, and continuous unity have been strongly questioned and challenged by the new historicists who doubt the validity of the representation of the history and examine the factors manipulated behind it.

The "New" historicism which arose in the 1980s reacted against both the formalist view of the literary text as somehow autonomus and Marxist view which ultimately related texts to the economic infrastructure. It was the literary text not as somehow unique but as a kind of discourse situated within a complex of cultural discourses religious, political, economic, aesthetic which both shaped it and, in their turn were shaped by it. If there was anything new about this procedure, it was its insistence, drawn form Foucault and post structuralism, that "history" itself is a text, an interpretation, and their there is no single history. It also rejected any notion of historical progress or teleology, and broke away form any literary historiography based on the study of genres and figures. In the same way, the Culture in which New Historicism situated literary text was itself regarded as a textual construct. (Habib 761)

For the new historicists, history no longer serves as a transparent medium through which one can have a full picture of the past; rather, it works for a particular class or ideology and therefore it is always contaminated, oblique and subjective. Shanhvi's novel is classified as a sort of metafiction of which the author is highly conscious of himself during the process of his writing. The writing about the past history is like historiographic metafiction which foregrounds the problematic and intricate relationship between the history and the cultural context.

New historicists tended, then, to view literature as one discourse among many cultural discourses, insisting on engaging with this entire complex and localized manner, refusing to engage in categorical generalization or to commit to any definite political stance. Indeed, new historicists have been criticized for accepting uncritically Foucault's somewhat disembodied and abstract notion of power which floats free of political and economic agency. They are also accused of arbitrariness in the ways in which they related literary text to other cultural discourses. (Habib 762)

The mode of writing attempts to encourage the readers to reconsider the "valid" interpretation of the history which functions as a kind of writing constructed by ideological discourses in a certain period. At the same time, through the self-reflexive techniques, it also stirs us to question our own credibility of interpretation of the history from a particular socio-political context. Thus, The narration about Vardhmann's has a strong reason to believe that he is somewhat responsible to write or interpret some events which happen to him in his life. In a sense, he is prophesied as histories that are destined to witness the fate of his country.

Although his facts may be very difficult, even preposterous for those non-Indians to comprehend, they are quite true for most of the Indians. Therefore, the simple dichotomy is insufficient to account for the border between reality and fantasy in a place like India. In fact, Shanghvi to a large degree aims to challenge the conventional prepositions of writing history as unity, continuity, and objectivity. Like fiction, history is textualized, a kind of human fabrications. Hutcheon further elaborates that historiographical metafiction's "selfawareness of history and fiction as human constructs" can serve as a basis for the "rethinking and reworking of the forms

and contents of the past" (5). Therefore, history no longer functions as a discipline of the only legitimate documentation of the past events; instead, it is ideological product. Throughout the novel, Vardhmann's story is often interrupted by what Hutcheon calls "narcissistic narrative" (1). Vardhmann's ambitious belief to tell many stories makes his narrative discontinuous, digressive and episodic. The narrator exposes his conditions of writing to others, comments on his own narrative, exchanges opinions with Anuradha about how to tell a story and sometimes speaks directly to the reader. While he writes, his illiterate listener Anuradha sits beside him showing her emotional responses to his stories, questioning their credibility, and sometimes even forcing him to change the way he tells the story. By the self-reflective techniques, we see that the narration undermines his claim to tell the "truth" about the past and renders his narrative as merely a human artifact. In other word, he doubts whether the complex reality can be objectively represented in the narrative. For example, Vardhmann feels obliged to tell his story, but he is also highly aware of the mistakes he has made. He is rushing ahead at breakneck speed; error are possible, and overstatement and jarring alterations in tone. This is not to say that no other kinds of criticism are being written. Yet even romantic criticism that is not in the New Historicist vein often proceeds today by referring to it, either antagonistically or apologetically, as what historicist philosophers like Michel Foucault or Louis Althusser would call the 'dominant ideological formation' among current literary critical methods.

We can feel a tension between immutable laws or by contingent human beings and the stress on the behavior. Historians suggest that human agency and attitudes do have a tendency to interfere with strictly law-governed behavior. Terms used by New Historicism are presented in alphabetical order; however, someone beginning to learn about New Historicism needs to stay conscious of the fact that this school is

particularly heterogeneous, with many different critics interpreting terms in their own way. Critics have indicated those terms that are particularly tied to an individual theorist, as well as those terms that are used differently by two different critics.

The versions of history proliferate endlessly. Every version is a provisional reconstruction. Shanghvi would agree that the broken mirror may actually be as valuable as the one which is supposedly unflawed. In the sense that it is never possible to know all the facts about anything, even the smallest act. Literature is, in part, the business of finding new angles at which to enter reality; but any account, whether it is given the status of history or fiction, is a reinterpretation, an attempt to read significance into events according to a selected frame of reference. Shanghvi takes some pains to reveal the interests at stake in choosing one frame of reference over another. Hence these historians began their researches with a purpose, although their idealized goal was a history without prior interpretations. Only what really happened, as critics repeatedly state rigorous scientific rules of evidence and interpretation were marshaled to produce 'results' of a definite ideological tendency. In this foundational episode of historicism, we see an eighteenth-century philosophical ideal—a belief in the rational progress of all mankind - giving way to a new nineteenth-century national or political 'law' or origins, technically applicable to any people anywhere, but implicitly intended to justify the existence of this or that European nation.

The concepts are designed to work aggregatively, so that each subsequent module tends to build on the concepts discussed in the previous modules; however, each is also designed to stand alone, and will sometimes be hyperlinked in other sections of the Guide to Theory. In this way, the modules seek to rethink the way most text-based introductions work. Like a text-based introduction, the modules can

work progressively, as if one were thus turning the pages in a book. However, the structure is actually more akin to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome: endlessly aggregative (at least in theory) and connected to each other by multiple additional links. One can therefore progress through the modules in alternate ways; in the New-Historicism modules, for example, one can concentrate on a single concept, history, exploring how Foucault and Greenblatt each understand this term differently. One can also explore connections between the modules on New Historicism and those found in other locations in this site. The Foucault modules, for example, link up logically with the Foucault modules under Gender and Sex. There are also important connections between New Historicism and Marxism (especially the Marx-inspired critical school, Cultural Materialism). It is obsessed by the multiplicity and the duplicity of history, which contains so many stories and so many silences. In seeking to make visible/ audible what has been pushed to the margins and forcibly silenced, it is seeking to deconstruct the opposition between history and fiction, to make available what has been suppressed, and, by so doing to reveal the official interest at stake in this suppression. They are revisionist histories which subvert the official view and offer a critique of authority, violence imposes a single meaning on the multiplicity of truth, and how it is political power that makes laws and makes lies. That history and the law impose are arrived at only concealing other reading that resist the official ones. Shanghvi comments that writers and politicians fight for the same territory and the novel is one way of denying the official, politicians' version of truth.

This is a story about modern historical novel in which Sidhartha Shanghvi blurs the boundaries between history and fiction. It has the stories about national histories; are attempts to give a more comprehensive and comprehensible form to documentary history; and offer supplements to incompleteness or revisions of official

histories. Shanghvi views that there are so many different stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives, events, miracles, places, rumors, so dense a commingling of the improbable and the mundane. It is the sheer multiplicity of stories, of alternative versions of history, that Shanghvi tells his fiction; its uncomfortably subversive power. He cites referential authority, for historical events and documentary evidence for his framework; but his novel operates on the margins of preferentiality, introducing other stories-invented and fantastic and private-which put the official historical records in question. He does not necessarily deny the official records (though they sometimes do); but by offering many other versions of history-so many different stories. He refuses any claim to absolute truth in the official versions. It is in this sense that he is subversive political acts. The canon is shown to be arbitrary rather than true, devised by concealing or eliminating other resistant readings. Michel Foucault seeks throughout his work to make sense of how our contemporary society is structured differently from the society that preceded us. He has been particularly influential precisely because he tends to overturn accepted wisdom, illustrating the dangers inherent in those Enlightenment reforms that were designed to correct the barbarity of previous periods (the elimination of dungeons, the modernization of medicine, the creation of the public university, etc.). As Foucault illustrates, each process of modernization entails disturbing effects with regard to the power of the individual and the control of government. Indeed, his most influential work, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, paints a picture of contemporary society that sometimes resembles George Orwell's '1984'. He explores the ways that government has claimed ever greater control over and enforcement of ever more private aspects of our lives.

The role of fragmentation in the formation of identity also applies to nations, particularly to India. The fragmentation of the large British colonial territory into Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, whose cultural, religious, political, and linguistic traditions differ, presented a tremendously complex and intimidating task. Shanghvi also uses metaphorical allusions to fragmentation or disintegration that indicate the loss of a sense of identity. For example, Shanghvi describes both Aadam Aziz and Vardhmann Gandharva as possessing a void or a hole in their centers as a result of their uncertainty of God's existence. In their respective last days, Shanghvi describes the eventual disintegration of their exteriors. In particular, Foucault explores the transition from what he terms a culture of spectacle to a "carceral culture." Whereas in the former punishment was effected on the body in public displays of torture, dismemberment, and obliteration. In the latter punishment and discipline become internalized and directed to the constitution and, when necessary, rehabilitation of social subjects. Stephen Greenblatt's brilliant studies of the Renaissance have established him as the major figure commonly associated with New Historicism. Indeed, his influence meant that New Historicism first gained popularity among Renaissance scholars, many of whom were directly inspired by Greenblatt's ideas and anecdotal approach. This fascination with history and the minute details of culture soon caught on among scholars working in other historical periods, leading to the increasing popularity of culturally- and historically-minded studies. This general trend is often referred to as Cultural Studies:

In fact, modern and postmodern theorists strenuously reject the claim that the philosopher (or any human being) can transcend history and culture; indeed, they deny the very existence of a metaphysical realm of meaning and truth. None the less, Plato's approach to literature bears

a significant resemblance to that of new historicists and Marxist literary critics. Like these theorists, Plato reject the idea (espoused, in the modern period, by New Criticism and certain formalist theories) that one should examine texts as aesthetic objects rather than as socio-political discourses: for Plato, there is no separate aesthetic sphere with its own set of norm and truths. (Nightangile 41- 42)

Historical difference, in other words, creates a new set of meanings exceeding the economies of difference belonging either to past or to present understandings.

Historicism translates into the lowest common denominator the human variety willingly acknowledged in the past, but offensive to egalitarian sensibilities now. Part of the difficulty of introducing this school is that a number of different approaches to history and culture often get lumped together under the category of "new historicism." The sheer number of historical and cultural studies that have appeared since the early 1990s, including the dominance of the still-larger umbrella term, Cultural Studies, makes the cordoning off of a group of critics as "New Historicists" difficult.

Over the course of his narration, Vardhmann identifies many people as his parents. His biological parents Wee Willie and Vanita, are in some ways the least important of suggestion. Each time Vardhmann finds a new father, he experiences a rebirth of sorts. This multiple metaphorical parentage also relates to the feeling of homelessness and exile as well to the fragmentation of identity and memory that plague vardhmann throughout the novel. After its liberation from English rule, India has arrived at a type of double parentage: that is, both native and colonial tradition have the nation. Historicism, though, far from judging this enforcement of similarly bad or even barbaric, instead regards it as politic, creative, and responsible. Out of a dialogue with the past, mutually cognizant of differences, historicism claims to reach

an accommodation that expands the horizons within which we recognize what we have in common. Jeremy Bentham's *Nineteenth-Century Prison Reforms* provides Foucault with a representative model for what happened to society in the nineteenth century. The constant shift back and forth in time during Vardhmann's narration becomes a dominant element in the telling of Vardhmann's life story. The narrator frequently refers to event or feeling that takes place much later in his life. As a result of these shift in time, Shanghvi refers to almost every life event far before its occurrence and full description in the novel. This method not only speaks to the tricks time plays, and to the unreliability of measures of time and the telling of history, but also to the theme of fragmentation. Much of the narration included the fragments and need to bring those pieces together the numerous elements and phase of his life and heritage. The narrator calls upon the reader to solve the puzzle of Vardhmann's narration which does not follow chronological or linear logic but rather rides the waves of his emotion.

The "Panopticon" is the perfect that would be structured in a way that cells would be open to a central tower. In the model, individuals in the cells do not interact with each other and are constantly confronted by the panoptic tower (pan=all; optic=seeing). They cannot, however, see when there is a person in the tower; they must believe that they could be watched at any moment: "the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so" (Foucault, "Discipline" 201).

Shanghvi's writing emphasizes sensory experience as a means of expressing or receiving emotion. Smells, tastes, sights, sounds and feeling abound in Rusdie's description of life experiences. Shanghvi also establishes an intimate connection between sensory experience and memory. Foucault's historicism is

less linear and more diffuse, charting the circulating movements of power in many spheres or society outside the strictly political. As Arun Gupto has suggested, Foucault views on New Historicism as:

About history, his approach is to select a problem rather than sketching an entire period. His history is not simply about the past. He focuses on the order mechanism, and exclusion that have been the feature of western societies since the enlightenment. In this context he would ask a question like: “How has the prison evolved as the important form of punishment?”. . . His approach to history is problem based approach. (113 – 14)

Historicism is a theory that all social and cultural phenomena, all categories, truth and values are relative and historically determined, and can be understood only by examining their historical context, in complete detachment from present-day attitudes, and that historians must therefore study each period without imposing any personal or absolute value system. Besides the power of class and money, there is, for example, the power of professions or disciplines, the complex powers of gender, the power of language-which is the source and form of the discourses in which we inevitably chart past contests of power. The New Historicist working in the Foucauldian vein most commonly attaches her findings to one discourse or another existing at the time (the anti-slavery discourse, for example), for which she can readily find contemporary parallels. The first- person narrative style not only conveys to the reader the innermost thoughts and emotion of Vardhmann Gandharva, but also at time speaks directly to the reader. The style also hints at the influence of stream-of-consciousness writing on Shanghvi. Although he employs more punctuation than other stream-of-consciousness

writing, his writing reflects the rephrasing and reworking of a writer's or a narrator's mind. He also addresses the reader in the informal second person, and in so doing engages the reader in his life story much as a story teller engages his listeners. The narrative style largely resembles more of an oral than a written experience.

Historicism is not inconsistent with formalism, certainly not at the level of practice: the historicist critic can also be a good formalist critic. Some egregious historicists errors for committed when a reader fails to understand the conventions of a text's genre, for example, or has a tin ear in responding to a poem's political impact, but the literary historicist need not give up her ability to distinguish a good poem from a worse one, even if she feels that is not necessarily the most important decision to make about the text in question. The importance of sensitive close reading of texts continuous even when we venture outside a text into its archive, meaning not just the library but all the kinds of evidence that can be brought to bear upon it.

With terms, rather tools like archeology, genealogy and discourse, one understands how Foucault defines history, knowledge and their link with power. One needs to handle these tools with care. For Foucault, archeology and history are not the same thing. There is general history and total history. Total history looks at the overall development of the period, whereas general history looks at describing differences, changes, continuities, alternations, mutations and so on. It is not a fairy tale like totalizing concept of history . . . (Gupto 114)

By extension, this problem seems to give rise to a third definition: 'a profound or excessive respect for historical institutions, as laws or traditions'. This suggests that the project of historicism has been dogged by its own pretensions from the outset. All facts are not equal, and some may be false, or even falsified. Some understanding of

the rules governing historical evidence will save the novice historicist the embarrassment of treating different orders of information as if history outside the text were all the same thing, an undifferentiated mass. The original authority and subsequent provenance of all evidence should be known, so far as possible.

Corroboration of source evidence is at least as important in scholarly writing as it is in journalism. The anecdotes and memoirs surrounding famous texts and artists can be distorted by petty or significant interests as often as those attaching to famous political figures and events, if not more so.

The Last Song of Dusk explores the ways in which history is given meaning through the telling individual experience. For example, the protagonist Vardhmann Gandharva, born at the instance of India's independence from Britain, his life becomes inextricably linked with the political, national, and religious events of his time. Not only does Vardhmann experience many of the crucial historical events, but he also claims some degree of involvement in them. Vardhmann expresses his observation that his private life has been remarkably public from the very moment of his conception. In a broader sense, Shanghvi is relating Vardhmann's history to the generation of Indians with whom he was born and raised. Historicism becomes more interesting when it addresses questions of perennial philosophical importance, such as the relations between fact and fiction in history and aesthetics. Traditionally, the aptness of literary skills to the evocation or re-creation of the past has helped to distinguish historical explanations from scientific ones, for which fictional assistance is usually thought to be a disadvantage. And the philosophical legitimacy of poetic and other literary practices has been enhanced in proportion to their historical uses. More recently, though, New Historicisms have presumed on this discursive friendship and have explained away literary effect as an entirely historical phenomenon. The

final irony in this story, though, results from the return to prominence of the idea that history has come to an end. He is trying to restore something to the dispossessed of the nation so that these acts of reclamation become acts of restoration. Only through his imaginative recreation in fiction can these dispossessed people have any future life at all. Shanghvi's narrator acts of writing about *The Last Song of Dusk* are a refusal of his own castration and a denial of his own lack of progeny. *The Last Song of Dusk* rewrites history as protest, deconstructive and creative reworking of history, which supplement historical facts in order to give a more comprehensive account of historical process and the continuum between lived experience and recorded history. Shanghvi concludes that legends make reality, and become more useful than the facts.

This research tries to show how Siddhartha Shanghvi uses narrative technique, genre and the concept of history in a very new way in *The Last Song of Dusk* in order to place his story outside the Euro-centric tradition of literature, narrative and history. It makes the reader curious and suspicious. These traditions, appearing in the colonial period, have constructed a notion of universalism in literature where the 'classics' of the western canon have set the order of the day (Ashcroft 91-92). Additionally, history has been written with Europe as the subject of all interpretations of history (be they Whig, Tory, Marxist, etc), thus constructing a master narrative which Chakrabarty calls 'the history of Europe', where even the histories of their world countries are written with Europe as subject (Chakrabarty 383). The theory of history presented in *The Last Song of Dusk* attempts not to replace the centre in this traditional binary of centre and margin, but rather to deconstruct this binary in order to gain access to history and literature. Shanghvi tries to break the binary by using a very different kind of narrative, a mixture of an oral narrative style with all the colloquialisms typical of that style, on the one hand, and a very formal style typical of

written language on the other. In addition to this other 'English's' like pidgin English are used. These elements serve to place the novel outside the Western tradition, even though it uses a language, English and a format, the novel which are central to the western literary canon. It analyses the style and genre of the novel to show how Shanghvi accomplishes all this. It tries to show that the novel fits into the magic realism genre' a genre which also helps to place the novel outside the master narrative, finally, I will look at the theory of history presented in the novel to show how Shanghvi tries to break the binary of Euro-centrism. Chakrabarty describes this type of history as the appropriation of 'the antihistorical devices of memory' by India history in order to represent 'the antihistorical "histories" of the subaltern classes' (Chakrabarty 384); antihistorical in the sense these devices are not concerned with the 'great' events and battles of traditional history, but rather history of the individual. Thus Shanghvi provides a voice for the marginalized and the subaltern, not just subaltern classes, but the subaltern individual.

Another way in which *The Last Song of Dusk* opposes the Euro-centrism of master discourses is by the use of the magic realist genre. This genre, originating from a school of painters, has been applied, at first, to such notable South American post-colonial writers as Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and, later, to a wide variety of post-modern and post-colonial writers as well. It has been described by Lyotard as means of reversing the master narratives. Shanghvi presents the story in a magical way. Because of this technique he is succeeding to draw the attention of the modern reader. So far as modern readers are concerned they do not believe and satisfy in other style rather than magic realism. Its central features are characterized by a juxtaposition of realistic historical and detailed everyday events on the one hand, and fantastical or magical events, and material from fairy-tales and

myth on the other. All described in an everyday language with a passion for storytelling, giving a sense that the fantastical is just as ordinary as the realistic.

Another feature of the novel is what we normally as 'fact' or 'truth' is questioned; again this is a way of blurring the boundary between real and fantastic to create a voice outside the master narrative. A good example of this is when India's independence is describe not as a historical fact, but as a new myth to celebrate a collective fiction in which anything was possible. Here we see questioned the existence of something which we usually think of a very concrete and the juxtaposition of two concepts both given as example of fantasies. This is a very odd juxtaposition since traditionally in Europe these two have represented opposites. The theory of history presented in *The Last Song of Dusk* is an attempt to deconstruct the traditional Western theories or interpretations of history, eg Imperial, National, Marxist, etc. These theories, which are based on the Hegelian teleological view of history, all have the same notion of a purpose in history. Though the purpose or goal of each of these interpretations is different they all ignore what does not exactly serve these goals, e.g the histories of the subaltern. The basis of these interpretations is, if not always the complete objective truth, then at least a certain reliability of the fact presented.

In *The Last Song of Dusk* a very different view of history is presented; a view which seems to be founded on Nietzsche's theories about facts and truth. He claims that these two concepts do not exist; all we have is a never ending amount of interpretation: there is these two concepts do not exist; all we have is a never ending amount of interpretations: there is '[n]o limit to the ways in which the world can be interpreted. [...] there are no facts; everything is in flux, incomprehensible, elusive' (Nietzsche 384). This same view is expressed in *The Last Song of Dusk* where The

narration about Vardhmann's history does not pretend to be objective or to have a purpose. It doesn't even claim to be true. In fact, the reliability of the narrative is questioned many times in book, though never explicitly by the narrator and main character. The reader is constantly made aware of the unreliability, because of what he/she is told. For example he admits that he fills in the gaps of the story but he does not see any problems with this himself. In fact, he continually claims that what he says is absolutely true; that is incredible, fantastic story is not to be understood as a metaphor.

The narration about Vardhmann also questions the truth validity of traditional history, e.g. when describing the traditional history that is shown to be a web of lies and interpretations when it comes to the official descriptions of the event during the war. In the face of all these lies anything becomes a potential truth. Thus, the narration claims that is as likely to be true as anything that is to except what we were officially told. Additionally, sometimes 'truth' or reality becomes so unbearable that it cannot be believed. Vardhmann experiences this and he witnesses the massacre of hundreds of innocents. The atrocities are so horrifying that they refuse to believe that what they see is actually true. From the narrator's facial expressions, he can sense his error and then modifies the direction of his narrative. Vardhmann speeds on telling his story. In this respect, Anuradha becomes the co-producer of Vardhmann's narrative. Besides, unlike traditional historicists who allege to be omniscient of the past events, Vardhmann sometimes gives up his narrative authority, leaving the events unexplained. When truth is anything but the rules want it to be and what you see cannot be trusted, reality ceases to exist. In the face of this, Vardhmann describes alternative realities and infinite number of falsenesses, unrealities and lies. Thus

relationship of reality is compared with fictionality. It is a web of illusion and deceit and, thus, cannot be trusted in any way.

Another consequence of the lack of reality is that the individual must find a new concept of truth, and for Vardhmann this is his memory. But of course, this concept of truth only has any validity for the individual, and indeed Vardhmann admits that no one can trust another person's memory. Here, he again draws the validity of his own narrative in question; if another person's memory can't be trusted and Vardhmann's narrative is constructed from memory then it must be untrustworthy. But Shanghvi, comparing this fragmentary, fallible memory to a broken mirror, actually claims that the broken mirror can be as good as a flawless one. This is because the fragments, when separated from the whole, become symbols of his past life. Trivial events could therefore attain a much higher value for him, just like a broken piece of pottery becomes a window into the past for the archaeologist. Likewise, to Vardhmann the unreliable and fallible nature of memory is not a problem. To him, facts are unimportant; all that matters is what the author can manage to persuade the audience to believe. Shanghvi admits that the whole narrative is based on his and other people's memories and, thus, is full of mistaken dates, myths, etc. However, he claims that is intentional; he did not want to write 'something that had journalistic truth but rather something that had a kind of remembered truth. Unreliable narration in *The Last Song of Dusk*, according to the writer is a try to accentuate these mistakes in order to put focus on the filter of memory, the way it distorts our recollection of the past.

So, the narration about Vardhmann ends up having shown that the master narratives of history and media are lies, that there is, indeed, no objective reality, thus leaving the individual to construct his/her own meaning. In place of these master

narratives he introduces memory as the only basis of truth for the individual, though he admits that it is a heterogeneous but *usually* coherent version of events. From this quote it is clear that to Vardhmann there are as many truths as there are people in the world. This view is also expressed by Shanghvi in his interview with Chaudhuri, where he says that a country must also have a very large number of versions of the truth in it. The consequence is that voice of the subaltern, in this case, *The Last Song of Dusk* narration, has much validity as the master discourses of the West, and yet Shanghvi has avoided just replacing the centre of the centre-margin binary. He has created a history, or rather an infinite number of histories, which achieve what Chakrabarty rhetorically asks for: “a history that deliberately makes visible, within the very structure of its narrative forms, its own repressive strategies and practices [...] so that the world may once again be imagined as radically heterogeneous” (Chakrabarty 388). The mistaken dates, name, etc. which appear throughout the narrative are a means to this end in that they help to emphasize not just the unreliability of the narrative, but also the fact that he has an interest in telling the story, a point he wants to get across, i.e. like the traditional histories he tells the story in a particular way to get his point across, but unlike traditional histories he exposes the purpose within the narrative as well as questions the validity of his own narrative.

Part of the criticism against the book, according to Shanghvi, has been the people have expected it to be not a story but the history while other has criticized it for what it levels out. However, this kind of criticism is to judge the novel from within the binary; complaining that it does not replace the centre in the centre-margin binary, thus becoming a new master narrative. Yet that is exactly what Shanghvi is trying to avoid history that is always ambiguous.

III. Fallible Narration in *The Last Song of Dusk*

The Last Song of Dusk is a kind of fiction that openly draws attention to its own fictional status. It is a novel about the creative process under constant threat. However, for Shanghvi, *The Last Song of Dusk* is merely his version of modern history. He discusses the writing of *The Last Song of Dusk* as a novel of memory, so that it was just that a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions. By offering an alternative version, Shanghvi refuses any claim to absolute truth in the official version. He never interrogates the validity of the official history. The official version of history is not the valid and authentic history. He rather views it as a discourse created by state ideology which can never go beyond the ideology in which it is written. Vardhmann clarifies this point when he gives an account of the truth and broadcasted the contrasting views.

This fiction, thus, helps to unravel those parts of history which are neglected or concealed in official version. The politicians try to homogenize history. So they take any alternative versions to the official history as a threat for they may contradict with their version of truth. The factors which contribute to the history of post-colonial nations air legends which sometimes seem that all are true and none is reliable. The post-colonial author must convey this paradox effectively within what is, essentially, just another legend. Fallible narration often results since fantasy becomes a virtual necessity when representing the meshing of two cultures, because at least two separate realities, both of which are relevant and neither of which is completely accurate, work simultaneously. One may argue that facts are facts and that they remain incontestable, but the choices a storyteller makes in presenting data are all-important to their interpretation. Sometimes by juxtaposing local history with world events and sometimes by juxtaposing two or more versions of the same events or

locale colonial author presents a story with so many facts that it necessarily becomes unclear. The fiction can serve as a resistance against this effort of the politicians. Shanghvi tries to disclose the truths that are hidden in official version of history, through his fiction. By doing so, he resists the official authoritative view. In other words, they created their own versions of truth which were supported by the state ideology, Moreover, Vardhmann argues that the truth regarding the cause of war never appeared in the papers, and the harshness of war was never described in the official history. The narration about Vardhmann, therefore, claims that official version of history is not the absolute and final one. It is merely a version of history which is shaped by the state:

It was this same simple but inexplicably alluring beauty which her daughter had inherited. Indeed, Anuradha Patwardhan's looks were so fabled that more than a few young Romeos of the Udaipur Sonnets Society categorically claimed her as their Muse. Was it her hair, that dense, fierce swathe of it- a poem in itself? Was it Anuradha's red bow lips, as thin and stenciled as Urvashi's – the Seductress to the Gods? Or was it her presence itself: assured, controlled and elegant, as though a hymn wrapped in a sari- which, this January morning, in the deep spleen of Rajasthan, was an easy pearl white. It duly complemented the pale yellow duranta flowers billeted in her thick chignon, flowers with such an aptitude for fragrance that several bees grew dizzy and promptly fainted in mid-air. (3-4)

To counter it, insists the narration about Vardhmann, we must keep on producing other versions of history. The critics argue that the novel embodies various postmodern features-confusion and violation of the borderline, adaptation of a self-

conscious narrator, questioning of the totalizing impulse, and discussion about the act of literary creation itself etc. Shanghvi exploits the ability of postmodern fiction to draw on innumerable fictional and factual sources as a means of representing the world. Shanghvi is using history to describe the events which are used to describe various events and incidents in the novel. So, Shanghvi is discussing the events of our time but the readers are confused in such use. Thus, this simultaneous use of both the calendars is very subtly intended to produce the effect of magic or unreal and real at the same time. This blurring of present with the past, magical with the real is one of the dominant trends in the mode of fallible narration.

Shanghvi's self – conscious instruction into the story is conspicuously accentuated by very personal informal that is fictionalized version within the story as much as the character Vardhmann. By bringing himself directly into the story he blurs the distinctions usually found between the real world and the fictional world. In addition he also blurs the edges of the story by describing characters who marched in from the peripheries of the story to demand the inclusion of their own tragedies. Thus giving character power over reality we usually think of as under our control or at least under a real writer's control. Like other postmodern novelists he creates a world trapped between reality and functionality one surreal and unsteady. Similar response observes that the novel contains various postmodern experimental elements. According to Shanghvi, alternative versions of history must be produced in order to defy the politicians' ambition to homogenize history:

It was rumored that Vardhmaan Gandhafrva was so highly thought of as a doctor that more than a few nubile lassies of Dwarika- the quaint, plush arm of north Bombay he had been born in twenty-seven years ago- feigned fevers and simulated stomach aches only so he might

measure their excited pulse or even – praise the Lord Shiva! - glide his stethoscope over places no man had ever touched before. (7)

In this regard, Shanghvi's *The Last Song of Dusk* serves as a residence against the efforts of the politicians to produce single version of the history. *The Last Song of Dusk* discloses the various truths that are hidden in official version of the history. By doing so, Shanghvi, through *The Last Song of Dusk*, resists the official authoritative version of history. History is, according to many post-colonial works, "a yarn", told by the once who have the power to be heard. Truth is nothing more than cultural definition or acceptance, and while all cultures define themselves in relation to others, the important question in constructing History, becomes one of identifying factors that show which culture has the military, political and economic power to definition most effectively. Independent nations that were once colonized find themselves in a unique position, though the piece of land may remain constant before and after an independence movement, native and imperialists perceive the significance of that land and the nature of the events that have taken place there simultaneously but not identically like nationalist who now must redefine an acceptable form of authority. While questioning the workability of any form of government, the formerly colonized must enter a similar process of re-evaluating history. The history of the nation as the colonizer has told it and the feasibility, existence of history as any sort of absolute entity at all.

Moreover, the narration about Vardhmann always prefers memory and we choose to preserve only those events which are meaningful to us and we preserve them in a way that gives meaning to us. *The Last Song of Dusk*, thus, views history as a partial and provisional act. Interpretation of history is affected by the historicity of the historian, a fact which Vardhmann himself realizes when he fails to preserve the

past without coloring it with his personal feelings prejudices, preoccupations and biases. Vardhmann argues that we can not attributed universal and exclusive validity to any interpretation of history. That is why he does not claim that he has presented a valid and final version of history; rather is merely a version, and other versions are still possible. Moreover, he encourage-, the readers to create their own version of history using their own imagination. The narration about Vardhmann communicates his history in oral form. By creating a character, Anuradha, who encourages the narration about Vardhmann to continue his tale and even, interacts.

Shanghvi acknowledge that history gives meaning. His narrator, Vardhmann is preserving history in order to give meaning to his random and chaotic life. In his quest for individual identity and meaning, the narration about Vardhmann weaves together the stories of his family through several generations. In his attempt to create himself through narrative, he is rewriting the whole of history experientially- with him self at its center. Vardhmann wonders if he is prepared to distort everything to re-write the whole history of his times purely in order to place himself in a central role. Vardhmann embarks on a desperate search for meaning as he attempts to link his own history with that of the nation. He comes to realize that the sum total of everything that went before him, of all have been seen done, of everything done-to-him:

On the day I left Udaipur, my mother told me there is no mercy in this life. She was wrong, so very wrong, so very wrong. For Nandini it will be, I believe, her painting. In your father's case....' She drifted away; but Shloka knew perfectly well what she meant. 'One day, it will be your turn. To hunt it out, to ask Fate for the motive under its actions, and when you find it, it will save you. It may be anything. A new land. A lover. Simple as a story it may be, or a kind breeze. Always stay

alert enough to receive this. Take it with you. Because you, Shloka, will have paid for it with all of your life.' (291)

Vardhmann, therefore, involves in a mission of preserving the past in totality. By searching for one unified meaning accepting a multiplicity of meanings, resembles the disintegration of one unified historical view point with a unity of meaning. While he attempts to give a comprehensive view, his efforts at comprehensiveness are subverted by the partiality and incompleteness inevitable in the telling of past events. There is always the recognition that other readings of history are possible. Shanghvi believes that history is individual. History, though, is not logical, scientific and even objective, it still can have meaning. In fact history has many meanings. But it is wrong to seek a unified meaning in history. Vardhmann's history then is not an absolute and the final history. His is merely a version and other versions are still possible.

Truth is, therefore, always controlled by power. It is affected by the existing power relation of the era in which the truth is created. The official history is controlled and manipulated by the state power of that time. It can never transcend the ideology under which it is written or produced. The next series of responses are more or less related to the practices postcolonial mode of interpretation. These critics expressed the view that *The Last Song of Dusk* is a postcolonial novel, for it tries to reassert the epistemological value of non-European world. Redefines the national history by restoring the reinventing myths and his own cultural roots. Truth as a single and unified whole is, therefore, unknowable. The nature of truth differs according to the purpose. Truth is not what already exists or what is already there. It is rather created or made up. It is controlled by different networks of power. The narration about Vardhmann further states the conflicting real. Nationalism, in other words,

reveals the weaknesses in the entire concept of rightful hegemony. But revolution is not a necessary factor in the hypothesis phenomenon can occur in any situation that involves a shift in the power relationship between any two (or among any several) cultures. And it is not only law and government which may be doubled, but also the authority of the powerful called history. Many post-colonial works of literature call into question the very nature of history.

History, for Vardhmann, is both history and his story. In other words, *The Last Song of Dusk* is a work of fiction, and, at the same time, a record of modern history, and its position midway between historian and fiction writer that blurs the demarcation between history and fiction. Generally, by history, we understand the official history -the history which is conveyed through text books or, more recently, through the mass media. Shanghvi is skeptic about such established version of history. For him, history is multiple and heterogeneous, or even more, personal. Shanghvi dramatizes this point when he warns us not to impose one's view on others. Moreover he argues us to create our own version of India as many Indian are there. He, thus, focuses on the multiplicity of history. For him, history is multiple and alternative versions are as valid as the official one:

‘In Rajasthan. When your brother died, I returned to my mother’s house. Those were the days when I could not understand how such a grief had reached me. I thought to myself: how could I have stepped so out of the course of normal existence, for surely, this must be the grief of another, greater life, entirely unworthy of me. And I wondered what it was that lay in it that I was suppose to see. The defining point of this experience. (289)

Even the use of narrative technique is intended to create a false effect, mixing personal and realistic details with fictional one. We find the characteristics of postmodern fiction in *The Last Song of Dusk*. Literary post modernism has: self-conscious narration, technical languages, long lists of objects used to create either a cramped or busy On the other hand, Shirley Chew, in a short essay "India" comments that the novel celebrates hybridity and "cultural polyvalence"-- the situation where by individuals and groups belong simultaneously to more than one culture.

The narration about Vardhmann communicates his history in oral form. The narration about Vardhmann reinforces the emphasis on communication as he announces as a people we are obsessed with correspondence. But the correspondence between people, whether written or oral involves distortions. The distortions are inevitable because of the very nature of language on the one hand and the individual perception on the other. Vardhmann realizes that, by the very nature of language, a narrative of whatever type history or fiction - will always be an incomplete, biased, and one-sided discourse which will unavoidably push other discourses to the margins:

He remembered one of their last conversations, when Nandini had returned to Bombay for a brief spell to pack up her remaining belongings. Anuradha had not yet spelled out the terms of his departure, but he was becoming uneasy at the hints she kept dropping. 'Do you think that maybe... perchance Anuradha's angry with me?' it was a little after midnight; an owl flew through the house. (280)

Likewise individual perception also distorts the presentation of history in the sense that different aspects gain emphasis from different tellers. The historicity of each historian affects his/her historical writing. The history is, thus, affected by the subjectivity of a person because a person grasps those events which have a particular

meaning or significance to that person. History, thus, necessarily emphasizes certain aspects over others by the manner in which a person communicates this history. The rumors that conveys as fact illustrate the manner in which presentation of history and historical events receives emphasis and coloring from the person relating the information.

Shanghvi's novel deliberately foregrounds the problems in writing history. Indeed, the self-reflective techniques reshape our knowledge to history. Vardhmann is caught in dilemma when writing his life. His interpretation of his own autobiography is in fact paradoxical in nature: he both totalizes and detotalizes his own past. On the one hand, he is aware of the necessary distortions in language, in his writing; on the other, he has to represent his life through language. The protagonist exposes the ruptures and leakage in the history which the traditional historicists endeavor to smooth. Although the story of other character seems to be real but the presentation and motifs are unreal. To know the reality, Shanghvi take help of fallible narrator. It is like a transformation of soul from one to other. He presents this story to link with the narration about Vardhmann. By using historical person like in modern sense Shanghvi creates an uncertainty to the readers. The readers suddenly begin to think over them instead of the role of story. Uncertainty and chaos are also the characteristics of fallible narration. We find fallible narration in the incident and the situation of the novel. Shanghvi juxtaposes pieces of town gossip to create the mystical setting of both the fiction and realities are used to describe various events and incidents in the novel. In the novel mainly the dream like fallible narration takes over when Vardhmann appears. He is a personification of independent of India. Then his identity vanished and transformed in to a fantasy like fiction.

History gives meaning because what you were forever who are you. History therefore, must be communicated. But, because of communication, history necessarily lacks objectivity and thus embraces subjectivity, like the reality, Shanghvi believes, "history is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish, and capable of being given many meanings. History, in this sense, is not merely a record of facts but rather coloring of facts with individual opinion, toward the end of his narrative, the narration about Vardhmann learns that it is impossible to present the past events as it really occurred:

She shut her eyes. And her mind raced back to the afternoon when she had met Pallavi for the first time, outside Church Maarkit, how she had offered to drop her home. For a moment she arranged and rearranged the memories of their friendship with unambiguous detachment, recalling the anxieties confide, the jokes bartered, the wisdom pondered, and the uncertainties they grew to accept out of a reverence for fortitude, and, oddly enough, the fortitude that come out of such an acceptance. (278)

As mentioned the traditional interpretations of history all have an idea of a purpose in history, be it the advancement of the empire and the education of the 'primitives', the rise of the nation and nationality of the resolution of class difference. The narration about Vardhmann's story, however, is the story of realizing that there is no purpose. This is a fact which is hard to accept for Vardhmann, though from the beginning he fears that his life 'might turn out to be utterly useless, void, and without a shred of purpose' in spite of all the prophecies, the ministers letter.

The Last Song of Dusk is consisting of the diversity of the people that never in its ageless history has there been united, multiple races, religious and cultures.

Likewise, all sorts of voice with different ambitions, described by the narration about Vardhmann as a many headed speaking in the myriad of tongues. Slowly, however, the narration about Vardhmann has to realize that the only purpose they have in their annihilation. On the surface it seems strange that annihilation can be a purpose, but when you consider the view of history presented above it makes sense; their destruction is a symbol of the meaninglessness of Hegelian history- their purpose, in the narrative, is to show that there can be no purpose in history, that all the ideologies, which they represent cannot be realized: “Nandini did her namastes and her hand-waves before she opened her simple but breathtakingly convincing argument that her infamous garment- her marvelous mini sari – was nothing more than the embodiment of Gandhi’s values of simplicity and austerity” (212). Additionally, as they are an analogy of history, their destruction also signifies and used possibilities of the uniting such a diverse people in the something as limiting as a nation state.

Thus the narration about Vardhmann realizes that any account of the past- autobiographical or historical -is colored with personal feelings. Human subjectivity, therefore, plays vital role in the preservation of past throughout the narrative. The subjective nature of history accepts that many versions of historical truth are possible. Shanghvi, thus, attacks the notion of objective facts. There are other critics who state that *The Last Song of Dusk* explores the boundry between history and fiction, and, in this respect, it is a postmodern novel. Its many narrative strategies complete with, and undermine, each other, and serve to question the relation of history of fiction. The novel undermines any claim to absolute truth in history:

Early the following year, in February, when Sherman Miller opened his rickety red postbox, he found a stiff brown manila envelope with smart fonts, sealed with formal black wax. In his kitchen, to a

depressing aria that Alvina the turtle dove was crooning for the amusement of his stew-bum, bereft mother, he slit open the envelope and found, much to his thrilled dismay, that he had been accepted at Trinity. (215)

Shanghvi believes that as the reality is built not upon the fact but upon opinion, so is the history. In this sense, the act of writing history is unreliable. Shanghvi portrays history as unreliable only if one searches for a single unified historical truth. He states that no single truth stands out but the inevitability of multiple truths. He emphasizes this point by making The narration about Vardhmann's narration unreliable. History is, according to many post-colonial works, "a yarn", told by the once who have the power to be heard. Truth is nothing more than cultural definition or acceptance, and while all cultures define themselves in relation to others, the important question in constructing History, becomes one of identifying factors that show which culture has the military, political and economic power to definition most effectively.

Independent nations that were once colonized find themselves in a unique position, though the piece of land may remain constant before and after an independence movement. Native and imperialists perceive the significance of that land and the nature of the events that have taken place there simultaneously but not identically like nationalist who now must redefine an acceptable form of authority. While questioning the workability of any form of government, the formerly colonized must enter a similar process of re-evaluating History. The history of the nation as the colonizer has told it and the feasibility, existence of History as any sort of absolute entity at all:

Dusting it and holding it up to herself in front of the oval mirror in her room, Nandini remembered that her mother had told her she had got

this number from a couturier just off the Left Bank for her date with Picasso (a rendezvous that left her repulsed because Picasso has a penchant for smelling armpits, and the only way she could put him off was by warning, 'Now, now, they're dusted with sulphur to keep out the fleas'). (234)

Vardhmann's unreliability as a narrator emphasizes the nature of history. Furthermore, he undermines his own claim to tell the "truth" about the past and renders his narrative as merely a human artifact. In other words, he doubts whether the complex reality can be objectively represented in the narrative. Shanghvi, in *The Last Song of Dusk*, does not deny that the knowledge of the past can enrich us and help us to confront the future more effectively. But he asks us to take into account that all written histories are partial and arbitrary.

The narration about Vardhmann involve in a mission of preserving his past in order to give meaning to his random and chaotic life, but rinds himself depressed later. He fails to present his past in totality, and then realizes that human knowledge can not encompass or describe the history in totality. He learns that it is impossible to present historical account without generalization and omission of some of the elements. Realizing the impossibility of the preservation of the past account in an objective way, he renders his narrative as merely a human artifact. He leaves some of the events unexplained. Moreover, he asks questions which he can not answer and, sometimes, tells lies too.

He, thus, deliberately creates a sense of unreliability in his narration, and, thereby, underlines the inevitable unreliability of any historical account; "On the day of the Muratta showing, Anuradha struggled out to the veranda and sat up on a pine armchair, a beige embroidered Kashmiri shawl draping her legs: infinite elegance

over finite ruin. ‘You look stunning. A cupful of moonlight and nothing short of it’” (236). The narration about Vardhmann believes that in any history there be events which can not be explained or understood by-reason. However, historian neglects them to secure the authority of their writing of history. But The narration about Vardhmann brings them on the foreground in order to highlight the problem of representing the past. He exposes the ruptures and leakages in the writing of history, which the traditional historicists endeavor to smooth.

Thus, Shanghvi demonstrates the impossibility of classifying and representing all the data of our experience without generalization or omission. We can not encapsulate the whole of reality in narrative. Shanghvi ridicules the whole project of realist art in its attempt to represent life as it really is. Shanghvi here states that the representation of reality in totality is impossible. Shanghvi views history as an elusive concept, indefinable because we see only what we wish. Shanghvi, interrogates notions of truth and suspects of the ability of arriving at a single meaningful version of the world. Vardhmann, therefore, warns it's a dangerous business to try and impose one's view of things on others:

Truth be told, no one ever pieced together here Khalil Muratta had vanished to, although the wickedly held rumor was that he'd returned to Kabul, where as the honored guest of the King of Afghanistan, he lodged in the west wing of the palace: three nightingales were commissioned to sing outside his window at seven in the morning. Others said he was in Peru, shacking up with a native woman of ravishing loveliness, a tame rattlesnake curled around her neck. But one harridan, a noted clairvoyant to the swell set, insisted that she had seen Khalil Muratta's ghost – robed in his customary pairon-tunbon-

weeping a stream of ochre-colored tears that collected in a perfect semicircle around him: a half-moon of mourning. (244)

Realizing the impossibility of the preservation of the past account in an objective way, he renders his narrative as merely a human artifact. He leaves some of the events unexplained. In addition to this the novel is narrated with a passion for story-telling with all the oddities of characters and where anything is possible-it's not what happened which matters, but what the author can persuade the audience to believe. This features make the novel not just a major work of literature, central to the new post-colonial 'canon', but also, and in my opinion just as important, an absolute joy to read.

Shanghvi always believes that truth is multiple. His narrator Vardhmann differentiates his experience stating that an infinity of alternative realities, while in the second I adrift, disoriented, amid an equally infinite number of falseness, unrealities and lies. The narration about Vardhmann, therefore, believes in the idea of multiplicity of truth. Truth, for him, is not a homogeneous entity that the official history claims to be. The novel replicates a kind of history chronicle and challenges our fixed conceptions of the facts of history by demonstrating that the materials that can be used to validate one version of history can be creatively rearranged to prove another. History is, Shanghvi implies what we choose to make of it; the politics and prejudices of the writer, rather than any meaning, inherent in the facts themselves, mold the interpretations that we commonly accept as truth. This novel starts with the description of an account of the unusual birth and circumstances of Vardhmann. Shanghvi presents these events to tell his own events comparatively the readers. And then; they are compelled to believe in his narration. Fantastically, he tells his reality. On the other, Shanghvi's play in the character in the novel is also referred to as a

remarkable poet. So this connection between these imaginary characters in the novel with the real comes to confuse the readers. This is how the imaginative side is linked with the real one.

However, historian neglects them to secure the authority of their writing of history. But The narration about Vardhmann brings them on the foreground in order to highlight the problem of representing the past. He exposes the ruptures and leakages in the writing of history, which the traditional historicists endeavor to smooth. Similarly, *The Last Song of Dusk* as a postmodern novel, for to questions the totalizing the impulse in any writing of past that interrogates the historians' objectivity and there effort to present the past in totality. It is a postmodern novel in which the stress is on the act of de-naturalizing documents in both historical and fictional writing. The novel talks about how the documents can no longer pretend to be a transparent means to reveal past events. The novel states that historians never seize events directly and entirely but rather incompletely and only through texts like the novel itself:

Although the Taj Mahal Hotel, the Billington Clubhouse and scores of other venues eagerly offered their grounds for Nandini's wedding- they figured that the uppity guest list alone would chalk up incalculable goodwill- the bride resolutely decided that she would get hitched no place else but on the lawns of Dariya Mahal. House painters were called in to erase away the shamble of the walls. Gardeners mowed down the four-foot-high grass and its mishmash of ravenous weeds.

(248)

Unlike the traditional historicists, The narration about Vardhmann does not try to be omniscient of the past events. He does not pretend to be an all-knowing historian who

explains each and every event of the past. He sometimes gives up his narrative authority, leaving the things unexplained. Shanghvi may be seen using fantasy as a mode of perceiving what appears as unreal in accepted situation. He takes the case which in his story he claims. He projects the land because it has forgotten shame registers horror and nightmare objectified in the series. The narration about Vardhmann with a clicking of tongues cannot accept nor acknowledge

The narration about Vardhmann who is Shanghvi whose voice weaves in and out of the narrative states that he is not writing a novel about a sort of modern fairy tale - nobody need get upset or take any thing seriously. Shanghvi narrates the real story in a magical way. Because of this technique he is succeeding to draw the attention of the modern reader. So far as modern readers are concerned they do not believe and satisfy in other style rather than magic realism. It makes the reader curious and suspicious. To illuminate the story which very clearly refers to the real moments of history? On the other hand as soon as the readers go through the title the image very immediately triggers their mind:

The next morning, the *Times of India* carried a report about the wedding debacle. 'I'd heard all sorts of things about her,' Lady Worthington was quoted as saying in the article. 'I disbelieved them because my son loved that girl. But what has happened is just unforgivable. I'm surprised we were never told about her ghastly faculty for the grand mal. Everyone said it was a form of madness.'

(259)

When a revolution occurs, when a group of people declares its refusal to believe in or follow the authority of the existing powers, their next and perhaps even more difficult step is to find or create an authority that does merit loyalty and obedience.

Nationalism, in other words, reveals the weaknesses in the entire concept of rightful hegemony. But revolution is not a necessary factor in the hypothesis phenomenon can occur in any situation that involves a shift in the power relationship between any two (or among any several) cultures. And it is not only law and government which may be doubled, but also the authority of the powerful called history.

The novel replicates a kind of history chronicle and challenges our fixed conceptions of the facts of history by demonstrating that the materials that can be used to validate one version of history that can be creatively rearranged to prove another. History is, Shanghvi implies, what we choose to make of it; the politics and prejudices of the writer, rather than any meaning, inherent in the facts themselves, mold the interpretations that we commonly accept as truth. Shanghvi views the working of literature as opposing the efforts of institutional powers to unify and totalize the world, of magic, of alternative realities - a number beloved of poets and detested by politicians, for whom all alternative versions of the world are threats. For the politicians, or for the state, the alternative versions of the history are the threats. The official version of history, for them, is the absolute, final and the only version of history. Shanghvi interrogates this notion of history. History, for Shanghvi, can never be single and a unified whole. There is always the possibility of giving alternative version, or interpreting the world and its events differently. We, therefore, can create "alternative realities" which may not be similar to the official version of reality.

Many post-colonial works of literature call into question the very nature of history. History is, according to many post-colonial works, "a yarn", told by the once who have the power to be heard. Truth is nothing more than cultural definition or acceptance, and while all cultures define themselves in relation to others, the important question in constructing history becomes one of identifying factors that

show which culture has the military, political and economic power to definition most effectively:

What I did to the weaver birds. And you're probably right. But what you don't know is that I loved Sherman in a way you cannot ever imagine. Take care of my itty-bitty li'l' thing, OK?' She sprinted back to her tanga, which trotted away, leaving behind a sparse cloud of dust inside which Anuradha found herself shaking with a fiery, compelling emotion she had no particular name for. (258)

The history of the nation as the colonizer has told it and the feasibility, existence of history as any sort of absolute entity at all. The factors which contribute to the history of post-colonial nations are legends which sometimes seem that all are true and none is reliable. The post-colonial author must convey this paradox effectively within what is, essentially, just another legend. In Shanghvi's attempt to factionist the integral human emotion, Vardhmann becomes the name of an abstraction. In this Shanghvi may be seen using fantasy as a mode of perceiving what appears in accepted situation. Shanghvi describe the story of Vardhmann; he was a ghost and inhabited a country that was entirely unghostly. Although the story of other character seems to be real but the presentation and motifs are unreal. To know the reality, Shanghvi take help of fallible narrator. It is like a transformation of soul from one to other. He presents this story to link with the narration about Vardhmann. By using historical person like in modern sense Shanghvi creates an uncertainty to the readers. The readers suddenly begin to think over them instead of the role of story. Uncertainty and chaos are also the characteristics of fallible narration. We find fallible narration in the incident and the situation of the novel.

Shanghvi juxtaposes pieces of town gossip to create the mystical setting of both the fiction and realities are used to describe various events and incidents in the novel. In the novel mainly the dream like fallible narration takes over when Vardhmann appears. Then his identity vanished and transformed in to a fantasy like fiction. In the novel, we find two conflicting perspectives, one based on a rational view of reality and the next on the acceptance of the fantasy. In somewhere, there is the lack of clear opinions about the accuracy of events and the credibility of the worldviews expressed by the characters in the text the, technique promotes acceptance in fallible narration. Fallible narration often results since fantasy becomes a virtual necessity when representing the meshing of two cultures, because at least two separate realities, both of which are relevant and neither of which is completely accurate, work simultaneously. One may argue that facts are facts and that they remain incontestable, but the choices a storyteller makes in presenting data are all-important to their interpretation:

Therefore when she spent an extended time in hospital she didn't allow Krishnan to inform the Gandharvas (but they came to know inadvertently, when Anuradha sent Shloka to their house, and he got no answer for his patient, timid tat-a-tat-tats). Restless from her curiosity over Pallavi's condition, Anuradha picked up all the force left in her legs and went to Nanavati Hostial, to seek out her friend. (260)

Sometimes by juxtaposing local history with world events and sometimes by juxtaposing two or more versions of the same events or locale colonial author presents a story with so many facts that it necessarily becomes unclear. Shanghvi presents these events to tell his own events comparatively the readers. And then, they are compelled to believe in his narration. Fantastically, he tells his reality. On the other,

Shanghvi's play in the character in the novel is also referred to as a remarkable poet. So this connection between these imaginary characters in the novel with the real comes to confuse the readers. This is how the imaginative side is linked with the real one. Shanghvi narrates all the stories in a way as if he himself has witnessed all those matters.

Shanghvi creates an uncertainty to the reader. It is also in the sense of ambivalent. Even the use of narrative technique is intended to create a magical effect mixing personal and realistic details with fictional ones. We find the characteristic of post-modern, bizarre, and even surrealistic imagery in this novel. Shanghvi conscious intrusion into the story is conspicuously accentuated by very personal informal language. The narrator, a fictionalized version of Shanghvi himself within a story as much as the narration about Vardhmann by himself directly into the story, he blurs the distinctions usually found between the real world and the fictional world. In addition, he also blurs the edge of the story by describing characters who marched in from the peripheries of the story to demand the inclusion of their own tragedies.

It is in the opposite sense of fact of history. This is the dream world where the man becomes unconscious and does not know about the real world. But Vardhmann sees the real event falsely in his nightmare condition. Through disfigurement, Shanghvi creates an oppressive world that becomes grotesque in its morbid ness. Delight goes out of fantasy and fantasy converts into the nightmare that is The narration about Vardhmann. The reader no longer recognizes him as a character. He evolves into a myth and a legend a beast lusty for kill stalking the country naked matted with grime and blood. In the novel, there can seldom have been so robust and baroque an incarnation of the true political novel. It can be read fable, poetic or excoriations, as history or as fiction. This is a novel as myth and satire, *The Last Song*

of Dusk is about invented, imaginary country, failure of the dreaming mind, born from the violence which is modern history. Revelation and obscurity, affairs of honor, blushing of all parts, the recession of erotic life, the open violence of public life, create the extraordinary Shanghvi mood. Shanghvi shows us with what fantasy our sort of history. The subjective nature of history gives way to create other versions of history. Shanghvi underlines this fact by presenting an alternative version of history from the point of view of Vardhmann. In his version of history, Vardhmann relates the history of his country to the history of his family. When an author calls for the reader's skepticism of stories within a story, subtly pointing as evidence to contradictory information or unlikely authority, the inevitable challenge that follows is to convince the reader to accept the author's own account, which is, after all, just another story.

The explanation is needed to comprehend what the narration about Vardhmann says, for his ambition to tell everything has made his narrative digressive. In his version of history, Shanghvi deliberately prevents his reader from being caught up in a story with its organic life, that progresses uninterrupted. We are, instead, always being shown. We are being directed to the future or the past, the beginning or the end of the story, instead of being ushered. Shanghvi encourages the readers to participate in the creation of history. The reader is engaged so as to aid the author in discovering alternative forms to archaic absolute truths. Shanghvi entreats his audience to join the process of interpreting and creating. His narrator Vardhmann directly affirms that he expects to be capable of imagining for them. Since each and every events of the past can not be explained or represented, Shanghvi regards the role of audience; Shanghvi uses Vardhmann to implore the reader to accept an alternative to traditional notions of historical truth and also to entreat the reader to

explore those alternatives. Furthermore, presenting the idea of memory as creating a new reality, Shanghvi encourages the readers to participate in forming their own conclusion rather than blindly accepting the presented conclusion. Moreover, this notion asserts the individual nature of history. The readers too can form their own reality depending upon their subjectivity. Shanghvi, thus, encourages the readers to create their own versions of history. The individual version may differ from recorded official version, but still it remains valid. Individual perception and participation allows Vardhmann, as well as readers, to accept that which makes meaning to that person. Shanghvi invites the readers to analyze the nature of history and, by doing so, encourages them to conclude that "no sane human being ever trusts someone else's version than his own.

By rearranging the events of history in such a peculiar way, The narration about Vardhmann displaces the official history. He subverts the traditional idea of viewing history as a record of facts and absolute truth. Shanghvi narrates all the stories in a way as if he himself has witnessed all those matters. He is presenting it as if he himself was witnessed and juxtaposes pieces of town gossip to create the mystical setting of the novel many different accounts admittedly have contributed to the sketches of his peculiar characters and their actions. His narrator develops large portions of plot. Shanghvi highlighted by desperate communiqués summoning popular support against efforts to subvert the state to be a cynical swindle. This is to say that there can be many motives behind an event and the real motive is never known. There is not only one cause behind an event. The cause of the event, which is available to us through history, is not the true one which the historians create using imagination. To put it differently, the cause and effect pattern in history is the creation of the historians themselves. He rather offers a complaint against the national culture,

or he tries to disseminate the force of nation culture far from producing the nation out of its fictional plenitude that endeavors to betray the functionality and nationhood.

The chief character, Vardhmann, does not explain the events of the past in detail. He leaves the things unexplained as if to be speculated by the readers themselves. Moreover, he himself asks questions that he can't answer. He admits that he is not able to write a pure history. The gaps have inevitably occurred in his writing of history. Vardhmann believes that in any history there must be events which can't be explained or understood by reason. However, the historians neglect them in order to secure the authority of their interpretation of history. But he brings them on the foreground in order to highlight the problem of representation of history. He finds the methods of making pickle similar to those of making history:

‘It must be karma, I think. Mohan’s karma was what he was to work out in his brief spell with us. And ours was what we were supposed to receive out of him. That continuous exchange between people- what we also call a relationship. But I always wonder what it was that he left behind in me and Vardhmaan . Violins? Memories? A terrible fear for love? I still wrestle with such things. Because there are no clear-cut answers, are there?’ (262)

History can never be represented in an absolute and valid form. Shanhvi, therefore, does not view history as a record of objective facts and absolute truth. He rather views it as an individual creation. Vardhmann's unreliability as a narrator, therefore, emphasizes the need to create our own version of history that functions as an alternative to official history. This unreliability also addresses the reader, shocking them, into forming their own views on history. It makes the readers question their own interpretation.

Vardhmann and Anuradha represents his typical audience, bringing to the surface the reader's thoughts and questions. While he writes, Anuradha sits beside him showing her emotional responses to his stories. Moreover, she questions the credibility of his stories and sometimes even forces him to change the way he tells the story. Though Anuradha forces him to change his narrative style, he continues to deliver his narrative in a self-conscious manner. Anuradha can do nothing, but accept what Vardhmann says. But it is with misgiving that Vardhmann refers to her unquestioning faith in his narrative. Doubting his narrative Anuradha sometimes asks him. If Anuradha doubts on the reliability of his narrative, the narration about Vardhmann simply says that Anuradha if you're a little uncertain of my reliability, well, a little uncertainly is no bad thing. He believes that each and everything of past events can not be explained in a reliable manner. In other words, history can never be available in pure form. Thus, even though points to the errors that makes his work and unreliability of his facts, he can still be assured that Anuradha and other people will believe him. His writing, in this sense, becomes a process of providing his version of history in the way the readers believe him. The narration about Vardhmann is also helped by Anuradha to produce his narrative in the manner the readers believe him. In this sense, Anuradha pulls back strayed Vardhmann to the right narrative track.

Vardhmann tells the story, he constantly digresses, when some elements of his tale remind him of something else. At one point he rails against these digressions, interruptions, nothing but interruptions. The different parts of my somewhat complicated life refuse, with a wholly unreasonable obstinacy, to slay neatly in their separate compartments. We find the characteristics of postmodern fiction in *The Last Song of Dusk*. Literary post modernism has self – conscious narration technical

languages long lists of objects used to create either a cramped and busy world or a barren and empty one and grammatically incorrect or back broke sentences. All four appear in this novel. Shanghvi uses self –conscious authorial instructions to the distinction between story and reality. Shanghvi does not follow the mode of linear narrative throughout the novel. He is informed by the New Historicist idea that history does not move on linearity. His narrator Vardhmann says that Anuradha, the narrator of the novel, is back into the world of linear narrative, the universe of what-happened-next. Vardhmann rejects linear narrative what-happened-next and his own orderly historical chronology of events. The historical events, Vardhmann believes, do not occur in cause and effect relationship. The things have rather a way of leaking in to each other. He believes that things even people have a way of leaking into each other like flavors. The narrator, therefore, states that if he wants to understand just on life, he has to swallow the world. Since the things are connected to each other, it is not possible to present the things on linearity.

Today, after two decades of post-modern and post-colonial writing, *The Last Song of Dusk* may not seem so radically novel as it did when it came out, but this is only because many of the stylistic features and its narrative style has been adopted by number of post-colonial and post-modern writers in my opinion, one of the reason why *The Last Song of Dusk* became so popular, and why so many later authors have ‘copied’ its style, is due to the way it uses the English language in a radically new way, mixing colloquial and formal language and mixing British English with vernacular Pidgin English. This style seems to make it possible for the post-colonial writer to reach the vast audiences of the English-speaking world, while retaining a voice which is radically different from the voices western tradition, which for so long have been part of Euro-centric attempts to create a view of Universalism in literature;

a where some works, e.g. Shakespeare's, are considered so universal that they apply to all people (s) at all times, thus excluding the voices of post-colonial, or 'subaltern' writers. He also employs as he so often does in *The Last Song of Dusk* a metaphor such as in this case. And a smile likes to maintain the rapid transitions and breakneck trains of thought which characterize his and other post modernist writer's work. Shanghvi is narrating the real events in an imaginary way to draw the attention of the readers. Through disfigurement Shanghvi creates an oppressive world that becomes grotesque in its morbidity.

Showing the impossibility of reliable narration in history writing, Shanghvi plays with the conventional techniques of narrative. In his a self-conscious narrator who reflects on his own narrative and directly speak to the reader. By doing so he undermines the traditional acceptance of and adherence to the official history seen as a record of objective facts. Shanghvi believes that people read and internalize the world and its events in different ways, based on individual perspective. The truth-value of an individual perception of history retains validity independent of recorded facts of history. Truth is contained in the creative act and is no more than memory. Shanghvi conveys a historical account based on his perception that proves to be just as valid as the official history which it may contradict. *The Last Song of Dusk*, thus, introduces a new view of history that accepts multiplicity of history as valid forms of history:

Till memory is blank and the artist may entertain other sorrow, with less weight should have telegraphed you or something. But I didn't want to leave with more heft than I had. It's impossible, how brave and beautiful you are. Did I ever tell you that? And look at me. Damn! No one but street dogs will make any claims on me; I'd claw their eyes out

if they made an offer, tho. But whatever that 'home' bollocks is about, I'm letting go. I'm footloose, I'm free. Paris. It's home. Till something gets ghastly and I got to fly again. (279)

Shanghvi argues that history is a subjective phenomenon. One can not write or understand history without a point of view that is, without a perspective or an interpretation. The interpretation is always partial; lint useful for ordering partially what otherwise would be a chaotic accumulation of events. In order to highlight subjective nature of history, Vardhmann uses memory as tool to preserve his past. He openly states that he is preserving his past throughout his writing using memory. He believes that the past exists in one's mind. So the historian has to remember the past events to present them in the text.

This sort of blending of fantasy with the real is reflected basically in his character portrayal incidents situations and use of historical. The narration about Vardhmann the hero is the product of an unusual motherhood. He turns to a debauched and amoral life style. Similar inversion can be found in other characters their identity which is substituted by history that is disfigured into hatred and violence. Even in the characteristic of Vardhmann we find the amalgamation of real and unreal. The idea of parthenogenesis is presented there which is ambivalent concept. In the novel, there can seldom have been so robust and baroque an incarnation of the true political novel. It can be read fable, poetic or excoriations, as history or as fiction. Shanghvi argues that history is a subjective phenomenon. One can not write or understand history without a point of view that is, without a perspective or an interpretation. The interpretation is always partial, lint useful for ordering partially otherwise it would be a chaotic accumulation of events.

Moreover, the narrator always prefers memory and we choose to preserve only those events which are meaningful to us and we preserve them in a way that gives meaning to us. History as a partial and provisional act, is affected by the historicity of the historian, a fact which the narrator himself realizes when he fails to preserve the past without coloring it with his personal feelings prejudices, preoccupations and biases. Vardhmann argues that we can not attributed universal and exclusive validity to any interpretation of history. That is why he does not claim that he has presented a valid and final version of history. Moreover, he encourages, the readers to create their own version of history using their own imagination. Narrator, Shanghvi allows Vardhmann's narration to embody the features of oral narrative. The oral narrative form of the novel emphasizes the subjective, and therefore, individual nature of history. Focusing on the individual nature of history, Shanghvi undermines the traditional idea of viewing history as a single historical view point shared by all, and posits multiple histories that are created by memory.

IV. Conclusion

The postmodern and postcolonial writers use real and surreal real and fictional real and fantastic, real and supernatural elements in their novels. Such types of amalgamation of these opposite poles can be found in Shanghvi's *The Last Song of Dusk*. He blurs the demarcation line between history and fiction natural and supernatural and the past and the present. His easy and unhindered crossing of such borderline on the one hand becomes an important alluring aspect for the readers on the other it becomes at the same time a sources for confusing them. This sort of blending of fantasy with the real is reflected basically in his character portrayal incidents situations and use of historical.

The narration about Vardhmann turns to a debauched and amoral life style. Similar inversion can be found in other characters their identity which is substituted by history that is disfigured into hatred and violence. Even in the characteristic of the narration about Vardhmann we find the amalgamation of real and unreal. The idea of parthenogenesis is presented there which is ambivalent concept. It is in the opposite sense of fact of history. This is the dream world where the man becomes unconscious and does not know about the real world. But the narration about Vardhmann sees the real event falsely in his nightmare condition.

Through disfigurement Shanghvi creates an oppressive world that becomes grotesque in its morbidity. Delight goes out of fantasy and fantasy converts into the nightmare that is the narration about Vardhmann. The reader no longer recognizes him as a character. He evolves into a myth and a legend a beast lusty for kill stalking the country naked matted with grime and blood. In Shanghvi's attempt to fictionalize the integral human emotion in which he may be seen using fantasy as a mode of perceiving what appears in accepted situation.

Although the story of other character seems to be real but the presentation and motifs are unreal. To know the reality, Shanghvi takes help of fallible narrator. It is like a transformation of soul from one to other. By using historical person like in modern sense he creates an uncertainty to the readers. The readers suddenly begin to think over them instead of the role of story. Uncertainty and chaos are also the characteristics of fallible narration. We find fallible narration in the incident and the situation of the novel. Shanghvi juxtaposes pieces of town gossip to create the mystical setting of both the fiction and reality is used to describe various events and incidents in the novel. In the reference of history on the one hand brings to the reader. Shanghvi creates an uncertainty to the reader. It is also in the sense of ambivalent.

Even the use of narrative technique is intended to create a magical effect mixing personal and realistic details with fictional ones. We find the characteristic of postmodern, bizarre, and even surrealistic imagery in this novel. Shanghvi conscious intrusion into the story is conspicuously accentuated by very personal informal language. The narrator, a fictionalized version of Shanghvi himself within a story as much as the character Vardhmann by himself directly into the story. He blurs the distinctions usually found between the real world and the fictional world. In addition, he also blurs the edge of the story by describing characters who marched in from the peripheries of the story to demand the inclusion of their own tragedies, thus giving characteristics power over reality. In the novel, there can seldom have been so robust and baroque an incarnation of the true political novel. It can be read fable, polemic or excoriations, as history or as fiction. This is the novel as myth and satire and not about real that invented, imaginary counlry, falure of the dreaming mind, born from the voilence which is morden history. Revelation and obscurity, affairs of honor, blushing of all parts, the recession of erotic life, the open violence of public life, create the

extraordinary Shanghvi mood. Shanghvi shows us with what fantasy our sort of history. In the novel mainly the dream like fallible narration takes over when the narration about Vardhmann appears. Then his identity vanished and transformed in to a fantasy like fiction.

The Last Song of Dusk blurs the frontier that differentiates history from fiction. Shanghvi views both history and fiction as a story, a human construct. Not only fiction, but history too is a creation of human subjectivity. As in fiction, the prejudices and preoccupations of the narrator function in the writing of history. *The Last Song of Dusk* stresses the fact that history can never be represented in an objective and unbiased way; it rather remains relative to the historicity of the historian. History is organized by the historians as fiction is by the fiction writer. Historians are the ones who make history coherent and intelligible, through the use of points of view and interpretations that are always partial, provisional, and, in the final analysis, as subjective as artistic constructs. The subjective nature of history gives way to create other versions of history. He subverts the traditional idea of viewing history as a record of facts and absolute truth. The novel replicates a kind of history" chronicle and challenges our fixed conceptions of the facts of history by demonstrating that the materials that can be used to validate one version of history can be creatively rearranged to prove another. History is, Shanghvi implies, what we choose to make of it; the politics and prejudices of the writer, rather than any meaning, inherent in the facts themselves, mold the interpretations that we commonly accept as truth.

Shanghvi, in *The Last Song of Dusk*, does not deny that the knowledge of the past can enrich us and help us to confront the future more effectively. But he asks us to take into account that all written histories are partial and arbitrary. Vardhmann fails

to present his past in totality, and then realizes that human knowledge can not encompass or describe the history in totality. He learns that it is impossible to present historical account without generalization and omission of some of the elements.

Realizing the impossibility of the preservation of the past account in an objective way, he renders his narrative as merely a human artifact. He leaves some of the events unexplained. Moreover, he asks questions which he can not answer and, sometimes, tells lies too. He, thus, deliberately creates a sense of unreliability in his narration, and, thereby, underlines the inevitable unreliability of any historical account.

Shanghvi believes that in any history there are events which can not be explained or understood by-reason. However, historian neglects them to secure the authority of their writing of history. But the narrator, Vardhmann brings them on the foreground in order to highlight the problem of representing the past. He exposes the ruptures and leakages in the writing of history, which the traditional historicists endeavour to smooth.

Works Cited

- Adams, Hazard, ed. *Critical Theory Since Plato*. Rev. ed. New York: Harcourt, 1992.
- Ashcroft, Bill; Griffiths, Gareth; Tiffin, Helen. *Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concept*. Great Britain: Routledge, 2000.
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literacy and Cultural Theory*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1995.
- Bennett, Andrew, and Nicholas Royle. *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*. 2nd ed. Harlow, Eng. : Prentice Hall-Pearson Education, 1999.
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995.
- Brannigan, John. "Power and its Representations: A New Historicist reading of Richard Jefferies' 'Snowed Up'" *Literary Theory Theories: A case study in critical Performance*. Ed. Julian Wolfreys and William Baker. London: Macmillan, 1996.157-76.
- Brannigan, John. "Power and its Representations: A New Historicist reading of Brennan, Timothy". *Salman Rushdie and the Third World*. Houndsmills: Macmillan, 1989.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Postcolonial and the Artifice of History". *The Post-Colonial Studies: Reader*. Ed. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin. Great Britain: Routledge, 2001.
- Chodwell, Faye A.. "Rev. of The Last Song of Dusk." *Library Journal* 129.20 (Dec. 2004): 103.
- Cronin, Richard. *Imagining India*. London: Macmillan, 1989.
- Daiches, David. *Critical Approaches to Literature*. 2nd ed. Calcutta: Orient Longman,1997.

- Diyden, John. "Absaloin and Achitophel." *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. Ed. Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter and John Stallworthy. 4th ed. New York: Norton, 1996.458-73.
- Donovan, Deborah. "Rev. of The Last Song of Dusk by Siddhartha Dhanvant Shanghvi". *Booklist* 101.1 (Sept. 2004): 64.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.
- Esposito, Scott. "Difficult Loves: First Novel Heavy on Sorrow and Scandal." *Literary Arts Article* 20.4 (Jan 2005): 25.
- Foucault, Michel. "Truth and Power." *Interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino*. Adams 1135-45.
- Gaarder, Jostein. *Sophie 's World: A Novel about the History of Philosophy*. Trans. Paulette Moller. London: Phoenix, 1996.
- Gordon Peter (ed.) "Rev. Of The Last Song of Dusk by Siddhartha Dhanvant Shanghvi." *The Asian Review of Books* 15,3 (April 2004): 31-32.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. "The Circulation of Social Energy." *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. Ed. David Lodge and Nigel Wood. 2nd ed. Harlow, UK: Longman, 2000. 494-511.
- Gupto, Arun. *Healing Thoughts on Tender Theory*. Kathmandu: New Hira Books, 2004.
- Habib, M.A.R. *A History of Literary Critrism Criticism: from Plato to the Present*. Oxford: Black well, 2005.
- Handy, William J., ed. *Twentieth Century Criticism: The Major Statements*. New Delhi: Light and Life, 1976.
- Hawthorn, Jeremy. *A Glossary of Contemporary literary theory*. 2nd ed. London: Edward Arnold, 1994.

- Hix, Charles. "Debut Novelist Hopes to Strike..." *Publishers Weekly* 251.32 (2004):32.
- Howells, Coral Ann. "Rudy Wiebe's *The Temptations of Big Bear* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*:" *The Literary Criterion* 10.1 (1985): 191-204.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. NY: Routledge, 1988.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. "The Will to Power". *The Theory of Criticism*. Ed. Rama Selden. USA: Birch, Carol. "*Magic Realism*." Rogers 78-81.
- Nightigal, Andrea. "Mimesis: Ancient Greek Literary Theory." *Literary theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*. Ed. Patricia Waugh. New York: Oxford UP,2006. 37-47.
- Roy, Sandip. "Last Love in Twilight of Empire." *San Francisco Chronicle* 241.7(2004):1.
- Shanghvi, Siddhartha Dhanvant. *The Last Song of Dusk*. New Delhi: Viking Penguin, 2004.
- Waugh, Patricia.'Introduction', *Literary theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*. London: Oxford UP,2006.1-33.
- Witherspoon, Kim. "Rev. of *The Last Song of Dusk*." *Publishers weekly* 251 (2004): 37-56.