

# **A Voyage into the Narratives of Memory and Trauma: A Study of Richard Flanagan's Select Fiction**

Thesis submitted to University of Calicut in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

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in

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by

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## DECLARATION

**I, Sreelekshmi. S.**, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “**A Voyage into the Narratives of Memory and Trauma: A Study of Richard Flanagan’s Select Fiction**” submitted to the University of Calicut for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, is an original *bona fide* work of research, carried out by me at the Post Graduate and Research Department of English, Sree Kerala Varma College, Thrissur, under the guidance of Dr. Divya. N. and it has not formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma.

Sree Kerala Varma College

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Date:

## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**A Voyage into the Narratives of Memory and Trauma: A Study of Richard Flanagan’s Select Fiction**” submitted by Sreelekshmi S to the University of Calicut for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English, is an original *bonafide* work of research, carried out by her under my supervision and it has not formed the basis for the award of any degree or diploma.

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## **A Note on Documentation**

**For the purpose of documentation, the eighth edition of MLA Handbook is used.**

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## **Abbreviations**

GBF - Gould's Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish

DRG - Death of a River Guide

TSOHC - The Sound of One Hand Clapping

TNRDN - The Narrow Road to the Deep North

## Chapter One

### Introduction

“A happy man has no past, while an unhappy man has nothing else” (Flanagan, TNRDN 3). Stories have played a powerful and prominent role in the evolution and maturing of human beings by assisting him in making sense of the world around him through the stories that are told and propagated. Literature too consists of such numerous stories that have emerged as traditions.

Human beings have communicated from time immemorial both verbally and non-verbally and it constitutes of a narrative. A writer is that person who assimilates the social elements of any given society and replenishes it with important messages through numerous kinds of narratives. Just like Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner* in “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (1798) every writer owes a tale to community. “Since then, at an uncertain hour, / that agony returns: / And till my ghastly tale is told, / This heart within me burns ” (Coleridge 578-585). Coleridge through these lines echoes the inevitability and inescapability of narrating stories. These lines of Coleridge can be taken as a metaphor of the impulse that any artist (narrator) senses unless and until he embarks upon the journey of conveying his message to the world. The protagonist a mariner halts a wedding guest and narrates his story. The story contains a message for the entire world. Adopting a potent narration technique, the wedding guests’ reaction turns from bemusement to willingness to despair to bewitchment and wisdom while listening to the tales that bloomed and enveloped him.

The research aims to analyze the select fiction of Richard Flanagan using narratology as a framework and also including various other elements like that of memory, identity and postcolonial elements as detailed in the novels. Although rooted



in narratology this work is an interdisciplinary study which draws from the various discourses about memory studies, trauma studies and post colonialism.

Any literature review demonstrates knowledge and understanding of academic literature on a specific content. It establishes familiarity with understanding of current research before carrying out new research investigation. Research has been conducted in various universities on the works of Richard Flanagan.

“Nationalism, Reconciliation and the Cultural Geneology of Magic in Richard Flanagan’s *Death of a River Guide*” (2007) by Marc Delrez offers instances of appropriation and allocation of Aboriginal culture and spirituality on the part of a White settler abiding in Australia. The article is published in SAGE Journals. This article also discusses the novel’s affiliation with European cultural inheritance. “‘The Impossibility of Knowing’: Developing Magical Realism’s Irony in *Gould’s Book of Fish*” by Ben Holgate is published in JASAL: Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature. The journal is edited by Tony Simons da Silva. The article discusses Flanagan’s shared predicament with Gould. Holgate is of the opinion that Flanagan cannot escape being a settler author and he navigates around his position by employing a range of epistemological magical realist techniques that aids him to indirectly portray the pre-colonial Tasmanian Aboriginal society. This creates an ironic distancing between the author’s point of view and that of pre-modern indigenous world.

“Cannibalised Girlhood in Richard Flanagan’s *Wanting*” (2012) by Tammy Lai Ming Ho highlights an amalgamation of Greek mythology (Zeus and Leda) and cannibalistic imagery to recount the relationship between the girl and her surrogate parents. The article is published in *Journal of Neo-Victorian Studies*. It analyses the

various levels of interpretations about the cannibal savages that are portrayed in the novel. The author says that Flanagan questions and undermines the masculinized imperialistic project that is meant to be read as a representative of Britain and the Empire.

“(Post) Modernity in the penal colony: Richard Flanagan’s *Gould’s Book of Fish*” (2011) by Robin Chen- Hsing Tsai is published in *Neohelicon Journal* discusses the penal colony theme, that which has far reaching ethical and political implications. The penal colony themes are justice, judgement, suffering, religion, foreignness, tradition, custom and primitiveness. The author looks at Gould’s fish in relation to Foucault’s critique of “technologies of the self” and “regime of truth.” Tsai also elaborates about Benjamin’s concept of history and Agamben’s notion of bare life. The author also mentions Flanagan’s diagnosis of progress in a modernity project.

“Submerging the imperial eye: Affective narration as environmentalist intervention in Richard Flanagan’s *Death of a River Guide*” (2012) by Laura A White analyses about reinventing the postcolonial analysis of the novel form into a conversation with ecofeminist critiques of rationalist constructions of the human mind. The article is published in *SAGE Journals*. Flanagan utilizes the position of his narrator to deliver a critique of the imperial eye and the rationalist illusion of human separation from nonhuman nature that has immense destructive environmental consequences.

“Art in Life/Life in Art: The ‘Catastrophe of Colonialism’ in Richard Flanagan’s *Wanting*” (2016) by Caterina Colomba is published in *Living Art: Essays on Words and the Worlds*. The Journal was edited by David Lucking. Colomba elaborately discusses the entrapment affected to those who are in between two worlds

and two cultures. Mathinna in this work symbolises the most tragic of encounter between the colonizers and the colonized. “The Narrow Road to the Deep North and the De-sacralisation of the Nation” by Lars Jensen discusses about the war experience literature. Flanagan’s novel can be read as a critique of the rise of militant nationalism that is emerging in the wake of Australia’s Bush war. It is about the terror and the idea that the arrival of refugee boats require a militant response.

*Richard Flanagan: Critical essays edited by Robert Dixon (2018)* published by Sydney studies in Australian literature consists of twelve critical articles by different scholars. “Circles of Violence: Historical Constellations in *Death of a River Guide* and *The Sound of One Hand Clapping*” by Robert Dixon speaks about the aspect of history that has been handled by Flanagan. Dixon analyses the above-mentioned novels and comments about Flanagan’s construction of an alternative genealogy for historical materialism that aligns with the current critical work on planetarity and environmentalism.

“Greening a Narrative Mode: Antipodean Magical Realism and Eco criticism in Richard Flanagan’s Fiction” by Ben Holgate discusses Flanagan’s works paving the path for an ideal opportunity to examine the links between magical realism and environmental literature. The article is published in *Richard Flanagan: Critical essays edited by Robert Dixon (2018)*. Holgate speaks about the human world being fused with the natural world and thereby breaking down the distinction between human and animal on multiple levels.

“‘Smashing and singing and sobbing and howling’: Sound and Richard Flanagan’s Tasmania” by Joseph Cummins is an article that investigates Flanagan’s four novels that are explicitly concerned with Tasmania and the other surrounding

islands. The article is published in *Richard Flanagan: Critical essays edited by Robert Dixon* (2018). According to the critical review of Cummins these novels weave together Tasmanian histories of violent convictism, colonialism, global migration and labour.

“Spatial Anxieties: Tourists, Settlers and Tasmania’s Affective Economies of Belonging in *A Terrible Beauty, Death of a River Guide* and *Gould’s Book of Fish*” by Laura A White activates a connection between tourism and imperialism. The article is published in *Richard Flanagan: Critical essays edited by Robert Dixon* (2018). Postcolonial tourism studies encourage an opportunity to scrutinise certain specific contexts in which, tourism being both perpetuating and diverging from earlier forms of imperialism, in order to refine general claims about tourism as a continuation of imperial tours.

“Rewriting History: *Gould’s Book of Fish*” by Bill Ashcroft analyses Richard Flanagan’s novel by celebrating his mastery in the reinstatement of rhetoric into historical discourses. The article is published in *Richard Flanagan: Critical essays edited by Robert Dixon* (2018). Ashcroft argues that when colonial societies are historicized, they are brought into history, brought into the discourse of modernity as a function of imperial control- mapped, named, organized, legislated, inscribed. The author suggests that the question of truth or fiction in history can be best resolved through Flanagan’s narration. He opines that narrativity reflects the continuity of events.

“Richard Flanagan’s ‘Post-post’ and the Mapping of the Altermodern” by Salhia Ben-Messahel describes the deconstruction of national discourses and the incorporation of migrant others into the multicultural framework. The article is

published in *Richard Flanagan: Critical essays edited by Robert Dixon* (2018). Sahlia Ben-Messahel has taken *Death of a River Guide* (1994), *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2014) to discuss moving beyond the 'post' of the postcolonial nature of Australia. These three novels depict characters, whose identities are in constant motion.

“The Genealogy of *Wanting* by Margaret Harris” describes ‘Wanting’ as a moral drama played out in a particular set of historical contexts, deploying the inventive freedom of fiction to offer an alternative version of received histories. The article is published in *Richard Flanagan: Critical essays edited by Robert Dixon* (2018). Harris elaborates in her critical view that *Wanting* (2008) showcases a particular set of historical contexts thereby offering an alternative version of received or original histories. “Fireless flame gone amorous: War amid Love in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*” by Nicholas Birns explores how Flanagan utilizes war as the concept of an interruption of the mysterious quest for love. The author also traces Flanagan’s imagination of war by elaborating the affiliations and affinities that he maintained in the Australian context of writing about war.

“‘Out of the tear-drenched land’: Transnational Sites of Memory in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*” by Liliana Zavaglia traces the novels’ cross-cultural resonances with that of the Holocaust literature. The article is published in *Richard Flanagan: Critical essays edited by Robert Dixon* (2018). A discourse embedded with the residues of a particular national concern that has materialized into a postcolonial particularization of the liberal whiteness of the empire is also located.

Richard Flanagan in his *Writing Landscapes* (1997) says “All I have tried to do in all my writing is remind people that all land is made up of stories, and to

understand the land one must learn those stories and make up new ones” (Dixon 2).

The subject matter of literature is of general human interest, the term is that of emotive, and the form applied will provide an aesthetic ecstasy and contentment.

Literature possesses its own unique and potent power and a universal appeal.

Richard Flanagan and his literary oeuvre:

Richard Miller Flanagan is an Australian novelist from Tasmania. He has also worked as film director and screen writer. He was born in Tasmania in 1961. He is descendant of the Irish convicts who were transported during the great famine to Van Diemen’s Land. He grew up in the remote mining town of Roseberry on Tasmania’s Western coast. His creative oeuvre includes non-fiction, fiction, and film scripts in and around Tasmania. His major novels include *Death of a River Guide* (1994), *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997), *Gould’s Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish* (2001), *The Unknown Terrorist* (2006), *Wanting* (2008), *Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013), *The First Person* (2017), and *The Living Sea of Waking Dreams* (2021). His major non-fiction includes *A Terrible Beauty : History of the Garden River Country* (1985), *The Rest of the World is Watching-Tasmania to the Greens* (1990), *Codename Iago : The story of John Friedrich* (1991), *Paris –Fed Bastards : A History of the Politics of the Unemployed in Britain 1884-1939* (1991), *And What Do You Do, Mr. Gable ?* (2016), *Notes on an Exodus* (2015), *Seize the Fire: Three Speeches* (2018), and *Toxic: The Rotting Underbelly of the Tasmania Salmon Industry* (2021).

The *New York Review of Books* hails Flanagan as “among the most versatile writers in the English language.” Flanagan’s father was a survivor of the Burma Death Railway incident (1942-1943). Flanagan graduated from the University of Tasmania.

His honors thesis was later published as *A Terrible Beauty: History of Gordon River Country* (1985). In this work Flanagan reveals the silenced histories of the Aboriginals and the colonizers' unsympathetic attitude towards the region and its people. He also has received a Master of Letters in History in 1982 from Oxford. His MA dissertation was later published as *Parish- Fed Bastards: A History of the Politics of the Unemployed in Britain (1884-1939)*. In 1939 he co-edited with the fellow historian Cassandra Pybus, *The Rest of the World is Watching: Tasmania and the Greens* (1990). It is an anthology of essays about the history and politics of the conservation movement. Flanagan has written four non-fiction before his endeavor in writing novels. The work *Codename Iago* (1991) is assumed to be the autobiography of Australian conman, John Friedrich. His essays and works of non-fiction were published as *And What Do You Do, Mr. Gable?* (2011). Flanagan has brought Tasmania to the focus, especially the Van Diemen's Land, a penal colony on the furthestmost outpost of the British Empire. His novels are known for their prolific language and visual images. Some of the awards won by Flanagan include Australian Prime Minister's Literary Prize in 2014, Man Booker Prize 2014, Tasmania Book Prize 2011, Miles Franklin Award 2009, Queensland Premier's Literary Award 2009, Western Australian Premier's Literary 2008 and Commonwealth Writers Prize 2002.

Richard Flanagan has written eight novels. Flanagan made his debut in the world of fiction with *Death of a River Guide* (1994) which narrates the story of Alijaz Cosini who is granted with a vision while drowning in the flooded river Franklin. Beset by this vision he reminisces his own life and that of his family and ancestors. In his hallucination Alijaz sees his father Harry burying his grandfather Boy. Alijaz also witnesses his grandfather Boy as a young man and his aunt Ellie, being chased by a werowa spirit. During the process of drowning Alijaz is hallucinated and he dreams

about a world where his story connects to the family histories. Flanagan applies the technique of magical realism to narrate the drowning man's experience. The novel has won Festival Awards of Literature and National Fictional Award in 1996. It has also won Victorian Premier's literary awards in 1995.

The title of the second narrative *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) is influenced from Zen Koan philosophy of Hakuin Ekaku. There is a famous riddle in a koan by the eighteenth-century monk Hakuin "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" A koan is a parable or query used in Zen Buddhism to obtain enlightenment. A koan can be a story dialogue or statement which is used as a practice in Zen Buddhism. By asking a question about the sound of one hand clapping, the motive of the author is to meditate into one's own self. Such a quest will lead to self-awareness. Flanagan's this particular work focuses on the relationship between a woman Sonja Buloh and her father Bojan. Bojan is a Slovenian immigrant from the post-World War II period. He came to work on the Tasmanian hydroelectric schemes. The tale is narrated using flashback and flash-forward techniques. In the winter of 1954 when Sonja was just three years old, her mother had walked into blizzard. Maria's absence creates a void in their lives. In 1989 Sonja returned to Tasmania as a middle-aged and pregnant woman. The past intrudes their lives the memory of the European war and their present living condition their survival and the past sufferings are all made unbearable due to the memory of her mother's disappearance. The novel is about Sonja's empty life and her father's death like state. It is the barbarisms of an old world that is left behind and the harshness of a new country. The novel has won Victorian period Literary Award in 1998, Vance Palmers Prize for Fiction in 1998 and Third Book seller's choice award in 1998.



*Gould's Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish* (2001) is a speculative account of the convict, William Buelow. It makes use of the authentic paintings of William Beulow Gould, who was a Van Diemen's Land convict. Flanagan has reproduced few of those paintings and sketches in his novel with the permission from William Gould's *Sketchbook of Fishes* (2001) held by the Allport library and museum of fine arts in the state of Tasmania. The images of fish are used both as chapter headings and as inspirations for character types. Billy Gould was a forger and thief. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in the Van Diemen's Land. After six months in prison Gould escaped and boarded a whaler for America. But before long he was imprisoned again. The prison doctor Lempriere utilizes Gould's drawing talents to create an illustrated taxonomy of Island' sea creatures. The book also employs magical realism and evokes a sense of awe and horror throughout the novel. The novel has won Commonwealth Writers Prize 2002, South East Asia and South Pacific Region Best Book 2002, Overall Best Book Award 2002 and Victorian Premier Literary Award 2002.

In his fifth novel *Wanting* (2008), Flanagan has successfully merged two plots together. The novel is an amalgamation of two cultures, that which are merged only for the advantage of the writer's imagination. He describes the Aboriginal killings in the Black War and its consequences. Flanagan also juxtaposes the love life of Charles Dickens. He opted to base the plot of the novel as per the historical personae. Flanagan has brought two streams of stories and merged it into one. The novel revolves around the lives of great men like Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, John Forster, Sir John Franklin, Lady Franklin and Augustus Robinson. Mathinna is the protagonist of the novel who links both the worlds and also she is also the representative of the Aboriginals' suffering. One of the striking aspects of this novel

is that it is based on a painting, a painting of a bare footed girl in red dress which is done by another Tasmanian convict. A glimpse of that painting very much asserts her blackness, her Aboriginality and the utter denial faced by the Aboriginal communities of Tasmania.

Dixon in his *Richard Flanagan: Critical essays* (2018) explains how Flanagan was inspired to write the novel *Wanting* (2008) by looking at the picture of a black girl in red dress with naked feet:

When I was shown the painting and the person who showed me told me the story, he lifted the wooden frame off the painting, it was framed a little oval frame, and beneath those oval frames were two bare feet. I realised that they'd used the frame to cut off that complete assertion of who she was. Like at the end of the day they'd dressed her up in the dress of reason, but there she was asserting her blackness, her Aboriginality, and they'd denied her that with a wooden frame. (Dixon 143)

The novel has won Western Australia Premiers Prize in 2008, Queensland Premiers Prize in 2009, New Yorker Notable Book of the year in 2009, Washington Post Book of the year in 2009 and London Observer Book of the year in 2009.

His sixth novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) which won him The Man Booker Prize is a semi-autobiographical novel that centers around the Death railway incident during World War II. It has references to various historical incidents like the Second World War, war crimes, the Burma railway constructed by prisoners of war under extreme malnourishment and unhygienic conditions and the aftermath of the Second World War. Here, Flanagan has solely made use of the historical incidents and has spun his novel around the above-mentioned history. He has also shaped his

main character Dorrigo Evans around the actual historical hero Colonel Dunlop. This novel is inspired by the experiences of his own father Arch Flanagan during the Second World War and the readers also get an ample opportunity to understand Flanagan's views on aspects like crime, love and humanity.

Richard Flanagan while receiving his Man Booker Prize on 14 October 2014 mentions that most of the Australian novels were often concerned with those qualities that have become a part of the Australian folklore. It covers a variety of topics like the convicts, the bush, the bushrangers, tales of pioneering, family sagas, floods, droughts, bushfires, battles, Aboriginal people, Irishmen and lost children. According to him the idea of Tasmanian authorship is remarkably diverse. It is individual and collaborative, cross-hatched by trajectories of birth, exile, and return, drawing on the most universal of literary values, symptomatic of historical changes in the modes and economics of publishing.

This study scrutinizes the select fiction of Richard Flanagan. Flanagan combines history with fact and thereby creating new combinations of events and his novels are based on narrative techniques. The research delves deep into the course of how the past is connected to the present and how Flanagan's narratives play a major role in achieving the grandeur. The select novels for study are *Death of a River Guide* (1994), *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997), *Gould's Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish* (2001), *Wanting* (2008), and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2014). The study aims to describe the constants, the variables and the combinations that are typical of Flanagan's narratives. It tries to exemplify how these characteristic combinations connect with the entire framework.

Flanagan's narratives exhibit literary regionalism. Literary regionalism is a style or genre of writing, in which, the setting is specifically given importance. It may include both prose and poetry, and the writers usually emphasize upon the dialect, customs, history and landscape of a particular region. That specific region might exist in reality or the writer's imagination. For example, R K Narayan, an Indian novelist, based all his works in the imaginative town of Malgudi. Similarly, Thomas Hardy the famous British author based all his works in the fictitious town of Wessex. The creation of a fictional place called Macondo by Gabriel Garcia Marquez that caught the interest and imagination of readers is worth mentioning. Flanagan has based almost all his novels in Tasmania, which is an island state of Australia and is separated from the Australian mainland by the Bass Strait.

Flanagan mentions the reason for change of name of Tasmania from Van Diemen's Land in *Death of a River Guide* (1994). He opines that the people want to forget their past. In order to start afresh the government opted for change of name of the island. Tasmania has been inhabited by indigenous Aboriginals for more than thirty-five thousand years. At the time of the British occupation, their population was estimated to be about three thousand to ten thousand. The merger of the Black war, continuous conflicts, infectious diseases, and frequent troubles reduced the population to three hundred in 1833. All of the indigenous inhabitants were forced to get relocated to Flinders Island by George Augustus Robinson. The first European to land on Tasmania was the Dutch explorer Abel Tasman, who renamed the island Anthonij van Diemenslandt, after the governor of Dutch East Indies. Later the name got shortened to Van Diemen's Land. The first settlement was by the British Risdon Cove on the eastern bank of Derwent estuary. Van Diemen's Land and its history has been incorporated by Flanagan in his novel *Wanting* (2008).

Tasmanian writing is a subset of Australian writing. Australian writing is often regarded as the body of literature consisting of oral and written works produced in Australia. It expresses the collective values of almost all the sects of people. It describes ordinary, typical and representative experiences of individuals. Tasmania is often recognized as a source of innovation adequate to transform and transfigure the distant centers of world power. Flanagan in his non-fiction, *The Rest of the World is Watching* (1990) opines that “It is no happy accident that the most potent force in current Australian politics should come from the periphery rather than the perceived centers of power, or that this remote place should prove to be a paradigm for political change internationally” (133). The above-mentioned antipodean perspective often recurs in Flanagan’s later writings. It is with this emotional connection with Tasmania that Flanagan, in his acceptance speech and media interviews in London had told that “I do not come out of a literary tradition. I come from a tiny mining town in a rainforest on an island at the end of the world” (Dixon 3).

The landscape of Tasmania becomes Flanagan’s motive of narration. Richard Flanagan has also given due prominence to vegetation and landscape of Australia in all his oeuvre. Australia also has certain animals that are peculiar to the land alone. Some of the animals are kangaroo, possum, platypus, macropods, jellyfish, molluscs, stonefish, and stingrays. His narrative portrays the bonding between human lives and animals in the context of Australia

For Flanagan Australia is excruciatingly throbbing and full of sore memories. Aboriginal Australian culture can be considered as one of the oldest continual civilizations on the earth. His writings display Aboriginal Australian culture. Indigenous Australians have an oral culture, with spiritual values that are based on reverence for the land and its entire inhabitants and a belief in the Dreamtime.

Flanagan's narratives also depict the aspect of Dreamtime. The Dreamtime is a commonly used term for describing important features of the collective and the original spiritual beliefs and existence of any community. The land and its people are created by the spirits and it strongly advocates the belief that these spirits have designed and produced everything and even provided them with their hunting tools. Each tribe has got its own land, its own totems and their dreaming.

The indigenous population of Australia was estimated to be around one million in 1788 declined drastically to one hundred and fifty in the subsequent years. Flanagan's *Wanting* (2008) clearly explains how the British strategically got on the task of diminishing the Aboriginal population. Aboriginal narratives of Australia refer to their glorified songs, chants, legends, and stories that are based on oral literature. They believe that the past exists in an eternal present which is omnipotent and ever present. The literature of that area mostly relates to the individuals, landscapes and to the continuing spiritual influence of the Dreamtime. The relationship between the Aboriginal tales, the landscape, the process of naming the places and the people, all these are very much dependent upon their poems which connects them with their totemic groups and functions. All these refer to their mythological past where their entire natural environment has been shaped and humanized by their ancestral beings. Dreaming often distinguishes good conduct from the bad. The stories become more elaborate and complex over due time.

Aboriginal literature usually helps a reader to understand local geography. The knowledge and recitation of each totemic membership can be determined from their association with their locale and with an acknowledgement of their spiritual kinship. Each ancestors' story forms a cycle which is exchanged at specific meeting points. The Djanggawul song cycle recounts one hundred and eighty-eight songs which

describes the journey of three ancestral beings, a brother, and two sisters in the Millingimbi region. Most of the themes that recurred in such songs were about fertility and abundance. The traditional song is often associated with dance, mime, and gestures. Richard Flanagan incorporates these features about spirits and occult in his novels *Wanting* (2008) and *Death of a River Guide* (1994).

Australian community comprises of those who have descended from the European settlers. They have inherent foreign cultures and characteristics that are typical of a settler society, with they honouring their pioneer values and infinite attachment to the land. Australian writers have always found themselves in a constant dilemma. They feel that if they write for a local audience about their experience, they feel that they are restricting their scope and if they write for the world, they think they are risking their roots. Migrant writers write about their native traditions and the ultimate Australian reality. In the “Afterword” of *Australian Literature*, Mc Laren says that:

In one sense all Australian writing is a part of New World Literature, the literature of displaced peoples and cultures. Aboriginal writers represent a people displaced in their land; Migrant writers adapt by adapting the forms and language of their homelands to their antipodes; the internationalists recolonize the old world, denying its exclusive ownership of any culture and forcing it to admit to the global reality of its history. (Laren ii)

Flanagan’s writing has an amazing autobiographical tinge that helps the readers to know further about the indigenous and the Aboriginal culture. Flanagan in his interview with Giles Hugo opines that:

Essentially, I come from a Tasmanian oral culture where stories are passed on from generation to generation. It wasn't a literary culture; it wasn't an intellectual culture- it wasn't a culture that had reference in books or ideas. It only had references in stories and images- its own life and other lives- and they were but all forms of stories. I had grown up loving those stories. The more I thought about them the more incredibly circular they were in structure and they had very discursive elements within them but they always came in the end to a very tight point. (Dixon 30)

Flanagan's works sometimes grant a passing mention of the Aboriginal rituals and practices. It has become inevitable to understand his perceptions about the Aboriginal stories. Australian literature has seen tremendous growth in this area by nineteenth century.

Australian culture is connected to its convict past. Convicts were sent to Australia from England and Ireland between 1788-1868. The convict system in Australia were physical labor, solitary confinement, physical reprimands and hard labor in gangs. In the mid-1800s, the transportations ceased and efforts were made to distance Australia's future from its convict past. Many prisons were dismantled and some became sites of tourism. Initially Australians were politically and socially reluctant to engage in discourse regarding Australia's convict past until 1970s. Flanagan tries to picture the sentiment of Australians to hide their convict past in the novel, *Death of a River Guide* (2001), through the characters of Rose and Boy. Rose firmly believed that if the future generations come to know about the family's convict past, they might not get due respect from the society. Therefore, she tried to keep their past a secret from the rest of the family members.



In the nineteenth century England, the sentence for a variety of crimes was transportation to Australia. The most common reason for transportation was theft. This included pickpocketing, shoplifting, stealing horses and sheep, highway robbery, house breaking and receiving stolen goods. Less common reasons for being transported were the crimes of rape, manslaughter, murder, forgery and bigamy. William Gould the protagonist of *Gould's Book of Fish* (1994) is transported to Tasmania for the crime of forgery. The convicts were employed according to their skills. Convicts were a source of labor to build roads, bridges, outhouses hospitals and other public buildings. William Gould was a good painter therefore he was employed to paint fish around Sarah Island.

Tasmania's convict stories are important part of Australian history. Van Diemen's Land was the ideal location for British government's largest and the most notorious penal colonies. Britain has sent more than 1,65,000 convicts to the colonies during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The first Tasmanian prison was built at Risdon Cove in 1803. In the novel *Wanting* (2008) Flanagan mentions about the Van Diemen Land and the plight of Aborigines in the region. In *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001) Richard Flanagan gives a detailed review of Tasmanian prisons and the corporal punishments given there. Flanagan tries to speak about the living conditions of the prisons and the psychology of inmates

In his novels, Flanagan foregrounds the tales and narratives of convicts, piners and river men in ways that will help in countering their marginalization in the dominant narratives and he portrays their potentials as enriching and an understanding of the human relationship with the island of Tasmania. Common themes in Australian literature includes that of a sense of exile, a sense of being cut off from their mainland, their culture, familial surroundings and the dominance of Australian bush,

with its vastness, harshness and mystery. Convictism has been yet another theme that has been prevalent in his works. The myths and realities that a convict experiences and the brutality, corruption of the penal system and its horrific effects have always reflected and resonated in many of his works.

The methodology adapted in this study is multidisciplinary in nature but narratology forms the structural framework. Narratology is utilized to study other aspects like memory, trauma and post colonialism. Literature consists of stories, both real and imaginative. Literature includes a variety of genres, through which a harsh reality can be converted into beautiful and sublime work of art. Similarly, the knowledge about the process of creating and transforming a work of art is even more significant. It is here the role of narratology becomes a salient feature in examining and assimilating a work where numerous elemental plays will help in transforming a study into something arresting. The in-depth analysis of any literature and the various criteria that acted detrimental for its transformation render deeper depth to the subjects discussed. M.H. Abrams defines narratives as “Narratology denotes a recent concern with narratives in general. It deals especially with identifying structural elements and their diverse modes of combination, with recurrent narrative devices, and with the analysis of the kinds of discourse by which narrative gets told” (Abrams 123). The narrative is the convergence of normative, rhetoric and poetics, practical knowledge of novelists, and critics' observation. The organized origin and development of narratology can be traced back from the codification of Henry James' prefaces to his novels by Percy Lubbock, in his book *The Craft of Fiction* (1921).

This study makes use of narratology as the major methodology for the analysis. It has employed using the narrative techniques that are necessary to come out with every possible solution for the research questions. Narratology is the

technical explanation of how time can be caged in narratives or legends. This study aims to investigate how Richard Flanagan, the Man Booker Prize winner, has made use of memory, transnational history, genealogy, trauma, and the postcolonial aspects in the select narratives, to generate a separate identity for his characters, by wielding various devices of narratology. Similarly, this research endeavors to deconstruct few of the selected works of Flanagan by applying various devices of narratology and thereby get into an in-depth study and analysis of the regional elements that are prevalent in his works and a close analysis of these elements that has helped him immensely to make the local into global.

Narratology has become increasingly popular since the 1990s. It is an interdisciplinary field, with no unified method or rules about data or analyses technique. Narratology has four major characteristics, they are: It uses narratives as data, It is mainly focused upon the social origins of narrative and shows how shared narrative conventions can be drawn upon to account for the human experiences. Narratology is an interpretative approach, Language does not give direct access to what happened or to the underlying psychological motives. It is also a process to know how experiences are refashioned and reconceptualized once they have occurred. Narratology is mostly interested in the content like who tells to whom and where in what condition.

Narratology enables one to perceive how individuals make sense of their experiences, concerning that of the social, collective, public, political, and the professional perspectives. A wide variety of narratives are found in texts. Narratives are found in private, general, and personal realms. Some are naturally occurring narratives, and others are oral or cultural narratives that are collected for research purposes solely. Narratives may be public like policy documents and media texts or

personal like memoirs and diaries. Literary critics have initially developed narratology focused upon Russian formalism and the French structuralist tradition. After World War II, the development of narratology can be identified in three distinct phases; the first phase is the classical phase that spanned from the mid-1960s to the 1980s. The narratologists of this period were certain about the components of the narratives. They tried to contain the scope of narratology, by framing rules and definitions. This initial stage of the study has tried to contemplate narrative as a sequence of events and the theorists' focus were upon the content irrespective of the medium. Vladimir Propp drew upon the formalistic style whereas Claude Levi Strauss and Tzveton Todorov followed the structuralist tradition. Gerard Genette, Mieke Bal, and Seymour Chatman represents the second strand of the development.

The contemporary postclassical narratology is the second phase of development. The narratologists have paid much attention to historicity, contextuality and pragmatic function of narratives across the various dimensions of media. The final strand encompasses Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco, and Jean Francois Lyotard. Narratology encompasses subjects like philosophy, aesthetics, history, sociology, psychology, religion, ethnography, linguistics, communication, and media studies. Paul Ricoeur and Peter Brooks have applied an existential approach to narrative whereas Mark Turner and Jerome Bruner applied the cognitive approach to narratology. Philip Sturgess's book *Narrativity: Theory and Practice* (1992) shows the strategy to fuse narrativity, fictionality, and literariness together.

The European Narratological Network (ENN) encompasses narratologists and professional institutions, that are focusing on the European text languages and cultures. *The Living Handbook of Narratology* (2009) is the latest encyclopedia in the field of narratology. The fundamental concepts of the narrative theory are story,

narrative, narrative voice, focalization, digenesis, digenetic, fabula, syuzhet, chronotype, analepsis, and prolepsis. Narrative approach helps one to understand how a text works, and make it efforts to scan it by being in the author's shoes. It helps to extrapolate how a tale is narrated. Exploring narratives help one to deduce and describe how texts create their effects and how they relate to texts in other fields. It also helps one to find structural patterns in different texts. The narratologists who have led to these recent developments in the narratological field are Gerald Prince, Thomas Pavel, Marie- Laure Ryan, David Herman, Meir Sternberg, Shlomith Rummon- Kenan, Tamar Yacobi, Wolf Schmid, Manfred Jahn, Angsar Nunning, Monikaa Fludernik, and Werner Wolf. The narratologists who have contributed to the grammatical aspect of narratology are Dijk, Petofi, Rieser, William Labov, Deborah Tannen, Wallace Chfe, Harweg, Norrick, Susan Lancer, and Nilli Diengott. This study aims to apply narratological theory as a structural framework to find the unique pattern in Flanagan's works. Narrative analysis is done in order to bring out various narrative aspects of a text that which are preserved in the sequencing and structuring of narratives.

Narratology is the study of narrative structure and it looks into what the narrative has in focus and has in common or simply what makes it unique. Narratology is based on the universal pattern of codes that are found in literary language. The bedrock of narratology is the fact that narratives can be found and articulated through different mediums. The body of theory, theoretic terminology and literary jargons have been developed in the mid twentieth century. Narratology or the narrative theory pertains to the study of such narratives. In 1966, *Communications*, a special issue journal containing the articles by Barthes, Claude Bre`mond, Genette,

Greimas and Todorov marked the beginning of narratology. The Living handbook of narratology defines narratology as:

Narratology is a humanities discipline dedicated to the study of the logic, principles and practices of narrative representation. Dominated by structuralist approaches at the beginning, narratology has developed into a variety of theories, concepts and analytic procedures. Its concepts and models are widely used as heuristic tools, and narratological theorems play a central role in the exploration and modelling of our ability to produce and process narratives in a multitude forms, media, contexts and communicative practices. (Meister “Narratology”)

Narratology also enables an individual or a community to form an identity. Flanagan’s novels stand for communal, regional and cultural identity. Like a literary writer, one uses narrative techniques to shape memories into narratives that define the identity. The narrator/ the author chooses from the memories that are both pleasant and bad and then arranges the facts into a sequence of events, in order to create a coherent structure.

Narrative theory has kept on growing since the late 1980s. It has widened its focus to the extent of classical narratology. Narrative turn refers to the next developmental stage in the concept of narrative in critical theory. Things are mentioned in the text because they have significance. Narratology is one of the developing areas of research throughout the World. It helps to unravel various forms of narrative, approaches to the interpretation of linguistic aspects of any given text. The significance of narratives in novels is that, the novelist records facts in the form

of history, politics or geography or in fiction and camouflages them in his work of art. The narratives form a sort of explanation for their historic or psychic behavior.

Narratives are also used as a therapy, Michael White and David Epston are the originators of narrative therapy. White and Epston began their collaboration in the 1980s and together published *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* in 1992.

Narrative therapy hypothesizes that the client distress arise from sufferings that are caused by personal life stories or experiences which have caused a low self-esteem. Through restructuring and refocusing social workers can assist their clients and create different life narratives or stories that help the clients to portray themselves in a different aspect.

This study is an attempt to unravel the narrative patterns that are common to the select novels of Richard Flanagan. The research hypothesis is, if the narrative structure and tools employed by the author are identified by applying the narratological theories, then the unique narrative discourse interwoven in Flanagan's select narratives can be revealed. The research question is to understand how unnarratable abstract emotions common to the characteristic traits of characters in the select novels get narrated beautifully in the course of the select novels.

This research using narratological theories helps to experience the lives of the protagonists from various angles and it also enables the researchers to understand what the story would be, had the fact been conveyed in a different manner. The expected outcome is to contribute to the tradition of literature and to ascertain the unique patterns and key narratives which form the crux of Flanagan's writings. The study undertaken can be considered as a pioneering attempt to understand Tasmanian writings in general.

The research aims to examine the select novels of Flanagan, using narratological theories, with the proceeding chapters giving emphasis about how Flanagan has employed the tools of memory, trauma and postcolonial aspects in his narration and the final chapter summing up the findings of this study.

The second chapter titled “The Presence of the Past and Richard Flanagan’s Tasmania” elucidates how memoirs of the characters get narrated throughout the course of the novel. All the five select novels *Death of a River Guide* (1994), *Gould’s Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish* (2001), *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997), *Wanting* (2008) and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) are taken for analysis. These select novels are contemplated in the light of episodic memory a concept found by Endel Tulving using which an individual can conjure up remembrances based on their own life or their imagination, in the course of sequence of events, depending on the situation. All the select novels have the trace of episodic memory. Yet another concept of Postmemory coined by Marianne Hirsch is used to analyze how memory gets narrated in the select novels. Postmemory states that the traumatic experiences of a generation will be passed on to later generations unconsciously. The select novels are seen in the light of these two concepts and thereby exploring the technicalities of how Flanagan has merged memory within narrative.

The third chapter entitled “Trauma and Narration in the select fiction of Richard Flanagan” deals with how traumatic incidents which are ingrained into the characters’ personalities gets narrated. In all the five select novels, the characters are subjected to mental, spiritual, and physical trauma, throughout their life’s journey, which leaves an everlasting imprint in their lives as well as in their deaths. They develop ‘A sense of foreshortened future’. This concept was developed by Mathew



Ratcliffe, Mark Ruddell, and Benedict Smith. This section also throws light on the development of the trauma theory. The chapter also discusses various methods of narrating trauma, using mimetic and antimimetic approaches of narration as employed by Ruth Leys. This approach answers the questions like how trauma which is usually incommunicable is narrated by Flanagan. The traumatic incidents from the select novels are discussed in great detail in this chapter.

The fourth chapter is titled as “A Postcolonial discourse into the literary world of Richard Flanagan” deals with all the select novels in the light of postcolonial narratology. This section delves deep into the postcolonial aspects as depicted in the select novels. It discusses in detail the aspects of postcolonialism and the incidents and characters that are inclined towards the postcolonial treatment in the select novels. Gerald Prince has written an essay entitled “On a Postcolonial Narratology” in 2005. The chapter takes a cue from Prince’s explanation of how narratology along with postcolonial aspects would best serve to study and understand different narratives. The key concepts of postcolonialism include ambivalence, alterity, the concept of Other, colonial education, diaspora, essentialism, ethnicity, exoticism, hegemony, hybridity, identity, ideology, magical realism, metanarrative, mimicry, orientalism, race, space, subaltern. This chapter aims to understand the narratives through these perspectives.

The fifth chapter entitled “Summation” tries to sum up the findings of the research work undertaken. This particular section discusses in detail the narratological and technical jargons that are used by Flanagan and it also throws light on various narrative techniques employed in the selected novels. The chapter also validates the research hypothesis and research question. Further scope of research is also highlighted.

## Chapter Two

### **The Presence of the Past and Richard Flanagan's Tasmania**

“And no one will ever know. Their names are already forgotten. There is no book for their lost souls. Let them have this fragment” (TNRDN 25). There exists an interdependent relationship between memory and narrative. The literary world has seen many a number of works that reveal memories through specific modes of narration. Most of these works display a common trend where the plot revolves around the deeply embedded memories of the characters. It is through their memories that the reader gets an opportunity to assess their lives. Many of these works have always been regarded as nothing but heaps of memories narrated in a random fashion and as fathomless pits where the interpretation lights shine rarely.

Memory is one of the most commonly adopted alternatives for remembering. It employs the medium of language to represent the past. Remembering is a voluntary act whereas memory is involuntary and it the ability to accumulate and hoard information. Memory can be considered as a social phenomenon. Memory does not require an audience whereas narration posits the requirement of an audience or readers. Here the audience refers to those who co-create the story through their responses, agreements or objections.

While determining the effects of narratives on Flanagan's works, episodic memory along with Postmemory has played a prominent part in many of the works that dealt with trauma and memory. Postmemory describes the relationship that the future generation bear upon the personal, collective and cultural trauma of their ancestors. It is their emotional bonding to the experiences they presently remember. The memories are reinstated by means of the stories, images, and culture in the midst

of which they grew up. But these experiences are passed on to them so deeply and effectively that they seem to constitute memories of their own. Postmemory's connection to the past is contemplated not by remembrance, but by imagination, projection, and creation. Marianne Hirsch coined the term Postmemory. Hirsch defines Postmemory in *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (2012) as:

postcolonial does not mean the end of the colonial but its troubling continuity, though, in contrast, postfeminist has been used to mark a sequel to feminism. We certainly are, still, in the era of "posts," which continue to proliferate: "post-secular," "post-human," "postcolony," "post-white." Postmemory shares the layering of these other "posts" and their belatedness, aligning itself with the practice of citation and mediation that characterize them, marking a particular end-of-century/turn-of-century moment of looking backward rather than ahead and of defining the present in relation to a troubled past rather than initiating new paradigms. Like them, it reflects an uneasy oscillation between continuity and rupture. And yet Postmemory is not a movement, method, or idea; I see it, rather, as a structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. It is a consequence of traumatic recall but (unlike posttraumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove. (Hirsch 9)

It is worth undertaking a close examination about the concept of episodic memory as propagated by Endel Tulving. Many contemporary writers have taken advantage of memory as a device in narrating the Aboriginal culture and the Australian past through the lives of numerous characters in their works. Episodic memory is effectively used for personal memories such as the sensation emotions,

personal association with particular place and time. Endel Tulving defines episodic memory as:

For a rememberer to remember something means that he or she is auto-noetically aware of the past happening in which he or she has participated. For an experimenter or theorist to study episodic memory means to study auto-noetic awareness of the past experiences separately from noetic retrieval of the semantic contents of the remembered episodes. (Tulving, "Memory and Consciousness" 5)

A crucial component of cognition is memory. Episodic memory is defined as "an information processing system that receives and stores information about temporal-spatial relations among the events, retains various aspects of these information, upon instructions transmits specific retained information to other system, including those responsible for translating it into behaviour and conscious awareness" (Tulving 7). The distinguishing features of semantic and episodic memory includes that of the particular kind of information that is processed, the characteristics of operations and their applications. According to Tulving, episodic memory:

is a recently evolved, late developing and early deteriorating past-oriented memory system, more vulnerable than other memory system to neuronal dysfunction, and probably unique to humans. It makes possible mental time travel through subject time, from the present to the past, thus allowing one to re-experience, through auto-noetic awareness, one's own previous experiences. Its operations require but to go beyond, the semantic memory system. Retrieving information from episodic memory (remembering or conscious

recollection) is contingent on the establishment of a special mental set, dubbed episodic retrieval mode. (Tulving 5)

*The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) revolves around two main protagonists Sonja Buloh and her father Bojan Buloh and their lives that which is filled with pain and trauma of the past events. Flanagan has narrated the entire novel using the techniques of Episodic memory and Postmemory. The novel is narrated in the form of a short narration, compiling event after event and that too not in a particular chronological order but each chapter denoting a particular year. The story revolves around the life of a father and a daughter who is engaged in a constant struggle trying to overcome their personal tragedy. Bojan is unable to articulate his feelings for his daughter whereas Sonja couldn't understand her father. She ends up in erratic behaviour. The story proceeds in the form of flashbacks. Flanagan through his omniscient narrative lets the reader know the story from Bojan's, Maria's and Sonja's perspectives. Apart from these there are other supporting characters too who enliven the story and throw light upon the protagonist's actions and reactions.

The novel begins with the year 1954 when Maria Buloh Sonja's mother leaves her humble abode for the eternal world. Maria leaving Sonja and Bojan is an important episodic memory that is registered in all their lives. Sonja and Bojan never come out of this unfortunate occurrence. Maria had to endure a tough life and she feels absolutely disheartened to continue living her life although she has a loving husband and a daughter. This particular memory narrated from Maria's perspective draws the reader towards the story line:

'Mama,' Maria Buloh heard a small girl's voice coming from insider the hut.

Then once again, this time more a whimmer-'Mama...'Maria Buloh felt

herself at that moment to be watching everything including herself, as if she were in a movie and this were a movie set. By thinking this way she did not hear the distant sounds of her daughter crying out to her from the hut she had just left. Strange sounds. Sounds she would not hear (TSOHC3).

The novel plot moves forward in the form of memories narrated in the episodic form. The novel follows the notion of episodic memory in detailing each incident elaborately. Yet another notable episodic memory happens when “Sonja Buloh tried to remember the first thing that had formed in her belly but she was cold and her hands burnt and her nipples ached so and the chill tore through her flesh into her bones” (TSOHC 17). Sonja Buloh returns to her ancestral home after twenty-two years. She is pregnant and needs emotional support from her father. Bojan is initially reluctant to shower fatherly love upon her, but eventually they understand each other’s flaw and reach a harmony. Sonja had two abortions before and she was confused whether to have this baby or not. It was finally Helvi who helped her decide to have the baby and to enjoy the joy of having a small family.

A memory suddenly burst upon Sonja and she abruptly butted her forehead into the dam face to force it all back down. Then as the memory receded and her fear abated, Sonja slowly turned her face to one side of the wet concrete and looked to the west, her cheek pressing upon the numerous cream -coloured stalactites that formed from leaching calcium to roll like tears down the face of the dam. (TSOHC 27)

Yet another memory of Sonja is that of her father Bojan who was a Slovenian migrated to Australia during the Second World War in search of a peaceful life. Unfortunately, the Australian community did not welcome them either and he was

forced to work as a wog, in the hydro-electric project. It is after their shifting over there that her mother committed suicide and that Sonja's life had turned topsy-turvy and after twenty-two years on her way back to home from Hobart to Tasmania upon the sight of the dam her memories fill her eyes in the form of tears.

Marianna Hirsch is of the opinion that Postmemory is that kind of memory where a catastrophe is imbibed even by the second generation as well. Sonja is a victim of such suffering. She believes in absurdity and Sonja claims that she has no right to lead a happy life. She vividly remembers a time when a local politician was delivering a speech about the immigrants of Australia. It was a time when her mother's suicide was fresh in her father's mind. She remembers how her father had left a three-year-old Sonja with three ladies and how they had offered her a tea pot to play with. The tea pot, made of ceramic accidentally breaks and she imagines that her entire life will be broken and shattered similarly:

Teapot and milk jug smashing. Her mother singing. Her father sobbing. Saucer and cup breaking. A howling inside that would not leave. Her father and her mother.

Saucer and cup.

Singing.

Saucer and cup.

Breaking. (TSOHC 46)

Even Bojan's life loses meaning because of the injustice and trauma of war. Bojan was a Slovenian migrant and he was living a happy life with his family until everything was destroyed. Bojan is the representative of the first generation of war

victims. Flanagan through the episodic memory technique explains what has happened during the war time. Bojan's sense of alienation is felt in his daughter Sonja as well. Flanagan explains the cruel incident which has left him heart broken.

And of what did Bojan Buloh not tell?..In a corner bound to a kitchen chair to prevent her harming herself further, he saw his mute aunt Angelica who had grown so frightened that she had tried to kill herself earlier that evening, by slitting her throat ...They killed all but one of the partisans, whom they made dig a hole in the ground. It was still early morning, and after half an hour or so of the partisan making very slow going of the rocky mountain soil, the German soldiers presumably grew sick of waiting for the hole was nowhere deep enough for its purpose. They made the partisan squat in his shallow hole and they filled the hole back in, leaving only the partisan's head exposed.

Then they kicked that head back and forth like some weird fixed football until the partisan was dead" (TSOHC109)

There are various incidents in this novel that narrates the interconnectivity between trauma and memory. Sonja being a broken character depressed and distressed follows a philosophy in her life which is the philosophy of being indifferent to pain and suffering. Sonja doesn't let any sort of trauma affect her be it physical or emotional or psychological. That is her method of resisting trauma. "“You never cry”, said Sonja. ‘No matter how bad you feel, you never cry’”(TSOHC 134). She tries to console a crying baby by telling him that one is not supposed to cry or expose one's weakness at any point of life:

If Sonja could remember more she might have been able to call to mind how it all began...As if she were once more chanting the decades of rosary that bitter



winter's night long ago, all kneeling in a circle in Mrs Maritza Michnik's lounge room holding rosary beads, her, the nine year-old Sonja, dressed in a nightie, and the other three sour women –the Polish woman, the Italian woman and Mrs Maritza Michnik- in their work aprons. (TSOHC 84).

Sonja had left her father's home at the age of sixteen and is now returning as a middle-aged woman. While driving back towards her home she remembers her past. Bojan Bulow always wanted his daughter to grow up in better living conditions. For that he used to entrust her to certain families and pay for her expenditure. Sonja clearly remembers the time she spent with these women. Sonja thought of those difficult and painful episodes of her life and how her childhood was engulfed with all those painful memories, and that those memories refused to leave her even after twenty-two years.

Episodic memory often refers to specific episodes or events in a person's life. These memories are tied to the time and place in which the information was acquired. It is a form of explicit memory that involves coding, consolidation and retrieval of particular events. Episodic memory has been described as autonoetic, personally relevant, complex, content rich and allowing mental time travel. Semantic memory is theorized to be free of content and personal relevance and is noetic and consists of general knowledge and facts about the world. Kamilica refers to the Slovenian herb that can cure eczema. Bojan arranges for Kamilica flowers after the migration and her grandma sends it for Sonja. Here the very usage of the flowers provides an immense cultural touch to her memory. It demonstrates how much Bojan is still rooted in Slovenian beliefs even after spending a life time in Australian as a wog. In his fifth novel *Wanting* (2008), Richard Flanagan has utilised episodic memory approach. He has opted to formulate the plot of the novel based on the historical personae and

narrating it in the form of episodes. Flanagan has brought two streams of stories and bound it together. The novel revolves around lives of famous men like Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, John Forster, Sir John Franklin, Lady Franklin and Augustus Robinson.

The entire novel is in the form of episodes which is about the lives of certain historical personalities of the actual history as well as those who are in the novel. It must be noted that Australian historical events like the Aboriginal war began during the seventeenth century whereas the great novelist of English Literature Dickens lived in the nineteenth century. “‘We have in our lives only a few moments,’ said Dickens, but then he stopped... ‘A moment of joy and wonder with another, some might say beauty or transcendence.’... Then you reach an age, Miss Ternan, and you realise that moment, or, if you are very lucky, a handful of those moments was your life. That those moments are all and that they are everything (*Wanting* 168).” Here Dickens narrates the philosophy of life to his lover Miss. Ellen Ternan. Flanagan purposefully brings out his own philosophy about life through Dickens’ narration. According to him life is nothing but memories of happy and sad moments combined. The combinations of ups and downs form a man’s life. A person who has thoroughly enjoyed each moment of his short life can be considered to have lived quite well.

“The war had ended as wars sometimes do, unexpectedly (*Wanting* 1).” This novel further deals with the history of Van Diemonian natives, the Black war and the miserable lives of the survivors who were christianized later. As a subplot the life of Charles Dickens his love for Ellen Ternan and his friend Wilkie Collins producing a play, are narrated simultaneously, in the form of episodes. The novel also throws light on the explorations of Sir Franklin. The connecting link between all these plots is an Aboriginal girl called Mathinna. Mathinna is the character who is subjected to the

lashing of violent memories about the looming threat of diminishing Van Diemonian race.

Flanagan also narrates the episodes in the lives of various historical personae. They are Sir Franklin and his wife Lady Jane, novelist Charles Dickens and his friend John Foster. He has included various historical events like polar expedition, Black war, Dickens' art in theatre and novels. Flanagan has presented the real living Dickens before the readers. He narrates various episodes in Dickens' life in detail, his dedication to writing, his mourning over his daughter Dora's death, his frustration with his wife and ten children, his friendship to Wilkie Collins, his love for Ellen Ternan and Dickens' unfulfilled wanting to declare his love to Ellen Ternan. There is also an episode of Dickens directing and acting in the play 'The Frozen Deep', and his acting reaches the zenith and he dies in the lap of his beloved, after confessing his love for her.

Wilkie Collins who was the close friend of Dickens also has a role in *Wanting* (2008). His famous works are *The Woman in White* (1859), *No Name* (1862), *Armadale* (1866), *The Moonstone* (1868). Collins' works were classified as sensational novels, which acts as a precursor to numerous detective and suspense novels. Flanagan has presented Collins as a foil to Dickens. He is his confidante, gets assistance from Dickens for his play *The Frozen Deep* (1866). John Foster was an essayist and friend of Dickens. Flanagan makes use of this character too to discuss about the polar exploration. Ellen Ternan also known as Nelly Ternan was an English actress. History mentions her as the mistress of Dickens. Here Flanagan presents her as Dicken's true love.

Flanagan narrates episodes of different characters and through the episodes of memory the narrative progresses further ahead. He presents relocation of memories in terms of history. Sir John Franklin was an English royal navy officer. He served as Lieutenant Governor of Van Diemen's Land from 1837-1843. He disappeared on his last expedition attempting to discover the Northwest Passage and the crew never returned. Flanagan extracts these incidents from history and builds upon it. Here, a thorough portrayal of his character is depicted. Sir Franklin is an explorer and finds it tough to be the Governor of Van Diemen's Land. Lady Jane and Sir Franklin adopt Mathinna and in Mathinna's uncontrolled wild spirit he experiences freedom. They could not take Mathinna with them to London. Because Sir Franklin believes that her magic is responsible for his downfall as a Governor. And soon after that he leaves for the exploration of Northwest passage where he dies thinking about Mathinna his daughter. "But he was south of no north now, and every compass point served only, to concentrate his thoughts more powerfully upon her. For whether it was west by northwest or south west or south –south east, she was everywhere" (*Wanting* 135). Only at the final moment of his death does Sir Franklin realize what Mathinna meant for him. It was she who gave him true happiness. By abandoning Mathinna in an orphanage Sir Franklin had abandoned his will to survive.

Flanagan makes use of realistic characters from history by depicting revisiting time and memory. He also takes advantage of the strong Lady in history Lady Franklin to bring a turning point in the novel. She acts as the connecting link among the characters. It was her idea to adopt Mathinna and bring her up as her daughter but when she fails in her task to civilize her she has to leave Mathinna behind in Tasmania. She is a shallow character who leads her life in pretension. She wants to hold and caress the child and finds her hugs very soothing yet never acknowledges her

love for Mathinna. The title of the novel suggests her longing and yearning to become a mother. She wishes to bring up Mathinna as her own daughter but ends up considering her a social experiment yet personally in her heart she loves Mathinna and is pained with guilt to know about her downfall.

Flanagan narrates the episodes from the life of a humanitarian George Augustus Robinson. He was sent to launch a friendly mission to persuade the Aboriginal people to surrender. The terms Black war and Black line were coined by journalist Henry Melville in 1835 and historian Lyndall Ryan argued it to be known as Tasmanian war. The Presbyterian carpenter cum preacher called himself the Protector. The blacks were called wild blacks and were considered as miserable. The Protector has induced fear in them and shifted the Van Diemonian tribes from the main land, to the distant islands. The protector had salary of 1500 a year along with a garrison of soldiers and a catechist. He also had the power of raising stable charges to the level of English civilization. He tried to preach the tribes Christianity and the Aborigines bartered beads and tobaccos in exchange of skins and shell necklaces.

Their health began deteriorating because of the drastic alteration in their food pattern. The protector further introduced them to flour, sugar and tea and thereby depriving them of their native diet of berries, plants, shellfish and game. "And the more they took to English blankets and heavy English coats abandoning their licentious nakedness, they coughed and spluttered and died" (*Wanting* 2). They always wanted to move out of their English homes and return to their aboriginal ways of living. These historical facts are narrated through episodic memory of Augustus Robinson. At numerous junctures throughout the novel, Robinson contemplates his past and the tribe that was under his care. And during these contemplations, Flanagan narrates the plot, using the technique of episodic memory.

Yet another episode is of John Foster who had received the unfortunate news of death of Dora Dickens's daughter but decided to delay conveying the news until Dickens had given his speech addressing General Theatrical fund. The child was sick and Foster wanted Dickens to postpone the speech. Yet, the Dickens was obstinate. He took the news of her death calmly. John Foster has limited role to play in this novel. Yet he is depicted as the best man friend of Dickens and the one who delivers the news of the death of Dora.

Flanagan narrates Mathinna's story using episodic memory and each and every important event of her life is picturised using episodes. Mathinna the protagonist of the novel acts as the connecting link for both the plots of the novel. She was barely seven years old and yet she knew stories of spirits who could fly. She lived in the settlement of Wybalenna. Mathinna's christened name was Leda. Through this episode Flanagan throws light on the Aboriginal war fought by the British against the Aboriginals of Australia. The war resulted in the establishment of British control. Several indigeneous population declined due to killings, starvation, forced migration and epidemics. The Aboriginal war also resulted in disruption of traditional culture. The Aboriginals of those times were dying of some mysterious cause and the protector who was a carpenter by profession had built new streets and buildings. The white settlers would shoot the blacks with glee, as if they were hunting kangaroos. The Aboriginals died monstrous deaths and the protector knew that he was somehow responsible for it. He would post mortem their bodies to find the cause of death. The turn of King Romeo also came. The novel opens with the episode of King Romeo suffering and the Protector brutally killing King Romeo.

Mathinna's father King Romeo had saved the protector from the flood "He realized King Romeo was breathing heavily, that the bleeding was pointless, that he

had wished to hurt the black man for his incurable illness, for all their incurable illnesses, for all their failures to allow him to cure them, to civilize them, to give them the chance no one else cared to give them” (14). The Protector had to perform the surgery because the surgeon had died last month and they were awaiting replacement.

In Wybalenna the Protector and the Aborigines welcomed Sir John Franklin and Lady Jane. She is impressed by the indefinable attitude of Mathinna. Lady Jane’s inability to conceive children paved way for her motherly affection towards Leda. Leda wore the necklace made of hundreds of tiny vivid green seashells threaded on several yards of possum linen. It belonged to her dead mother. Leda’s dance intrigued Lady Jane to possess her. Jane had married to better herself and John was dull whereas she was ambitious and they had a loveless marriage. Sir John’s chief virtue was endurance.

The common feature of Flanagan’s writing is that he employs third person narration a technique by which the reader gets to hear even the thoughts of the characters. It is through the Protector’s account that the readers trace the parentage of the black princess. The Protector thought of the friendly mission that which had brought him to Van Diemen’s Land. Towterer was a strong Aboriginal and he lived along with other natives. George Augustus Robinson went on to capture some remotest tribes and there he met Towterer. A week later the Black Ajax had brought Towterer’s daughter in a kangaroo’s skin and swung it around Robinson’s chest. The Protector gave King Romeo’s box-Van Diemonian timber huon pine. That child was Mathinna. The Governor and his wife adopted Mathinna.

The narrative of Mathinna the protagonist too is quite a ride down the memory lane. Mathinna was named Mathinna Flinders, since she did not have a

second name and since captain felt one should have a second name. And also she came from Flinders Island and she was taken to the government house, her second name got decided as Flinders. It took several months for the Robinsons to get hold of the girl since she disappeared and went missing everytime they tried to bring her home. Finally they shipped her on a cormorant. Lady Jane wanted to civilize the child every way possible. Beginning with simple things like wearing shoes was made mandatory. Many Tutors like Karl Grolz and Mr. Francis Lazurette were employed to teach and civilize her. Mathinna had lots of dresses but red dress was her favourite. This episode is quite important for the novel as Flanagan was inspired by the painting of a black girl in red dress to pen down this novel. Mathinna had the largest and the darkest of the eyes imaginable and had learnt the odd art of playing the coquette and she was the most beautiful of the savages that they had ever seen.

Lady Jane's episodic memory during her last visit to Mathinna is worth mentioning. The forest behind the lodging was burnt and most of the children nearly choked. Few of them even died and Mathinna was thrashed for this action and she refused to eat for a day and a night and began eating insects as a revenge. Lady Jane visited Mathinna. She wished to take Mathinna with her but her ego of being an aristocratic stopped her. She wanted to comfort her and to show the child a mother's love but her realization, "that her great experiments was the most ignominious failure and that she must not suffer the further humiliation of taking Mathinna home to England...The dance had left the dancer" (*Wanting* 196). Lady Jane failed in her duties as a woman and as a mother.

Mathinna has the characteristics mentioned in the Postmemory. The pain of the suffering which the previous generations have undergone and it is represented quite beautifully through her. Mathinna was a vibrant child but the suffering of her



ancestors is automatically embedded in her and her existence itself becomes absurd due to that. Lady Jane Franklin had provided ample opportunities for the girl to civilize herself and get educated but Mathinna devoted her time in pursuing the habits of her tribe like playing with the pets dancing wildly as if possessed by a spirit. Later in life she regrets not being educated. Also she neither belongs to the Van Diemonian tribe nor to the English and this absurd state of existence makes her life miserable.

Lady Jane's meeting with Dickens is an important episode in the novel. It bridges the narratives of two plots. It is in this part that Flanagan explains the interdependence of the two plots of the novel. Lady Jane met Dickens and requested him to write an apt reply to John Rae's report, stating that the mighty adventurers including Sir John would have been prey to cannibalism. It is with this motive of helping Lady Jane that Charles Dickens conceives the idea of the play "The Frozen Deep". Dickens articles 'The Lost Artic Voyagers' was published in Household Words. He was obsessed with Raes' report on his play *Little Dorrit* (1855). Dickens read a whaling Captain's description of a ship struck between the two masses of ice joined together. He along with Wilkie Collins planned to play the role of Richard Wardour the villain of *Little Dorrit* (1855) in their new play 'The Frozen Deep'. Dickens' mind was engaged in bringing this play to a conclusion. Dickens wanted to redeem Wardour by sacrificing his life for his rival. Dickens thought of staging it in front of a larger audience and he was in need of professional actresses. For this he chose Mrs Ternan and her three daughters. Dickens was obsessed about Ellen Ternan and she became his mistress eventually. The dialogues of this novel have been written in the same style of that of Dickens and through this, Flanagan has tried to write from Dickens perspective and he imitated Dickens' style to some extent.

Walter Talba Bruney protested against the killing of the blacks. Three years passed and Robinsons' black slaves got broken free and came to Wybalenna. Mathinna tried to convince black women that their ways are wrong but at night she enjoyed the devil dance. Walter was made the publisher of Flinders Island Chronicle. Only forty-seven Van Diemenian natives were left free.

Episodic memory's functioning depends upon the semantic memory. It is subserved by multiple brain regions. Neutral substrates are involved in the retrieval of personal and past events. The memory is known as recollected experiences. It also generates a particular kind of feeling tones in people. Autonoetic consciousness is the capacity that permits humans to mentally represent and to become aware of their protracted existence across time. It functions in the subjective time. It is oriented to the past and is specifically rooted in the past of the any person's memory. Episodic memory assumes that individuals possess the unique potential to retrieve the spatial-temporal context of the memory. This element answers specific questions like what occurred, where it took place, and when it transpired. The memory paradigm has been used in various studies of recognition in order to distinguish between recollection and familiarity. "When a new memory system with specialized novel capabilities evolves or develops, it enables the organism to increase the number, and the sophistication, of its memory functions" (Tulving 387).

Late towards the concluding part of the novel Mathinna's condition before her death is mentioned. Mathinna spent some time in the orphanage and was later returned to Wybalenna. All the aborigines of the Island were glad that at least one of their kids had come back. But Mathinna was neither black nor white. She considered whites to be her kith and blacks as filthy strangers. She was not interested in living. She was equal to dead. She had neither passion nor spirit for living.

Mathinna who was fifteen was sent to an orphanage and after six months she was sent to work for a seamstress Mrs Dellacorte. She owned a grog shop at night and there Mathinna acquired habit of having rum and tea, spiced with cinnamon. Over the course of time Mathinna had pox general itching and lice. Francis Lazarette her previous tutor met her and she was thrown out of the household. Mathinna was haunted by the memory of her people. "She roams the streets as if it were all a dream" (*Wanting* 227). Mathinna started trading her body because the only work she knew was little writing and this was what she had learnt. Robinson had come to meet the black Princess. Mathinna died at the age of twenty-nine. Her body was found by the old sledge bearer. Flanagan had used the technique of episodic narration to provide wholesome details of Mathinna's life and the readers come to know her through Mathinna's, Lady Jane's, the Protector's and Sir John Franklin's narration.

Flanagan provides the readers with many of the major and minor details of the novel in the form of episodic memory. The episode of the performance of 'The Frozen Deep' is narrated in a unique way. Charles Dickens remembers how the play was put up for performance and how he had found the stage an apt place to reveal his love for Miss Ternan. The Manchester free trade Hall was the free trade hall in Peter street, Manchester and was a public hall constructed in 1053-56 on St. Peters fields the site of Peterlov massacre. It was the venue for public meetings and political speeches and a concert hall too. Dickens performed in the Manchester Free Trade Hall in the summer of 1857 in Wilkie Collins' play 'The Frozen Deep.' Dickens acted as the villain of the play Richard Warder who loved Clara Burnham, who in turn loved Frank Aldersley.

"Ruin ought be, if ruin must come, ruinously worthwhile" (*Wanting* 205).

Flanagan takes the novel forward with the memories of all major and minor

characters. Nell returned the diary and she wanted to become a part or benefactor of the great legend. By the second day the companionship of Ellen and Dickens grew. Final performance was staged and Lady Jane had come to Grand Western Hotel to witness the drama. In the very last scene the character Wardour played by Dickens dies in Ellen Ternan's arms.

Here, Flanagan moves away from the original history. "He had come here by chance, coincidences were bringing him to his destiny, and yet, as in his stories, he knew that there was of no coincidence in this world that the purpose of everything is ultimately revealed, be it a savage's skull or Sir John lost in ice floes or he, Dickens, lost until this moment" (*Wanting* 239). Flanagan has portrayed the numerous characters using the episodic and Postmemory techniques. The novel proceeds in the form of bits and pieces, each episode is a narration of one memory after the other. For this purpose Flanagan follows the technique of cinematic narration where action takes place in the form of bits and pieces and one information after another is provided at a time.

*The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) has references to various historical incidents like the Second World War, war atrocities and crimes, the Burma railway that was constructed by the prisoners of war under extreme malnourished and unhygienic conditions and the aftermath of the Second World War. Here, Flanagan has solely made use of the war related historical incidents and spun his novel around the above locally available history. He has centered his main character on real historical person Colonel Dunlop. It is through the lens of the protagonist, Dorrigo Evans that the entire novel is narrated. There are umpteen numbers of characters who are introduced and their narratives are explained in episodic format. All these characters are connected to Dorrigo Evans' memory in one way or the other. Hence,

the readers are given access to Evans' memory and thoughts, in order to move along with the novel.

A C Grayling the Chair of Judges of Man Booker Prize 2014 says "Some years, very good books won the Man Booker Prize - but this year a masterpiece has won it" (Miller). *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) is divided into five parts and narrates the fictionalized history of the Death Railway through the ageing nonagenarian protagonist Dorrigo Evans. The novel narrates the struggle of the prisoners of war in constructing the Death Railway, the effect of Second World War, the life of the prisoners of war, the tortures they endured, war crimes and the criminal trials undergone by Japanese officers. The historical events which propelled actions of the past are discussed in detail throughout the entire work.

The prominent historical event is the history of the Burma Railway or the Death Railway "It was a fabled railway that was the issue of desperation and fanaticism, made as much of myth and unreality as it was to be of wood and iron and thousands upon thousands of lives that were to be laid down over the next year to build it. But what reality was ever made by realists?" (TNRDN 22).

The railway project, which was previously proposed, got abandoned because of inaccessible terrain. The name Hellfire Pass came from the working condition that existed at the site. Such a similar plot about the railroad workers is mentioned by Henry David Thoreau in his "Where I lived and what I lived for" in *Walden* (1854)

We do not ride on the railroad; it rides upon us. Did you ever think what those sleepers are that underlie the railroad? Each one is a man, an Irishman, or a Yankee man. The rails are laid on them, and they are covered with sand, and the cars run smoothly over them. They are sound sleepers, I assure you. And

every few years a new lot is laid down and run over; so that, if some have the pleasure of riding on a rail, others have the misfortunes to be ridden upon.

(Thoreau 143)

The inhuman treatment faced by the prisoners of war is elaborated and detailed quite successfully by Flanagan. The prisoners were subjected to squalid conditions, frequent beatings, starvation rations and poor medical treatments. The prisoners of war found themselves at the bottom of social system that which was equally harsh, punitive and often deadly. The episodes provide first-hand experience of the war time trauma

As naked slaves to their section of the Line, with nothing more than ropes and poles, hammers and bars, straw baskets and hoes, with their backs and legs and arms and hands they began to clear the jungle for the Line and break the rock for the Line and move the dirt for the Line and carry the sleepers and iron rails to build the Line. As naked slaves, they were starved and beaten and worked beyond exhaustion on the Line. And as naked slaves they began to die for the Line. (Flanagan, TNRDN 49)

Flanagan makes it a point to mention all the memories of those incidents that took place during the war period. And one such is the incident of speedo. Even the environmental conditions were against the prisoners of war and the whole nature too conspired against them. Apart from the atrocities from the hands of the Japanese, they had to face the fury of nature as well. In January 1943, the Japanese issued an order called speedo. It was meant to hasten the construction of the railway line. Speedo speeded the death rate alarmingly. The death railways were meant to send supplies and reinforcements to the Japanese troops that have occupied in Burma from Malaya

through Thailand. Japanese engineers had calculated that the mountainous terrain was so impenetrable that it would take at least five years to complete the railways. But more than sixty thousand prisoners of war, Asian slave workers were employed and the Japanese government decided that the railway should be completed in eighteen months. As a result of the savage treatment by Japanese and Korean guards, tropical diseases, starvation and merciless hard labor, especially known as “Speedo campaign” in 1943 more than twelve thousand westerners died. (Ray)

The plight and the sufferings which the prisoners had to undergo are explained through the memories of different characters. Flanagan provides the readers a heterogeneous array of characters who are both the oppressed as well as the oppressors. Flanagan gives a vivid account about the prisoners of war, war criminals and oppressors. Dorrigo Evans is the main protagonist of the novel. The story begins when he was one or two years old in 1950. Dorrigo was nine when Tom had returned from Great War in France and seen him weep “A happy man has no past, while an unhappy man has nothing else (TNRDN 3).” Dorrigo’s father worked for Tasmanian Government Railways Weather Board Cottage. At the age of ninety-four, Dorrigo looks back into his life. He remembers his mother calling him a boy. He is reminded of playing football with his seniors. His mother had died when he was nineteen years old. He studied medicine at University of Melbourne from Ormold College where only distinguished scholars of British families studied.

At the age of fifty he worked as a Colonel in the “Death Railway” and he was the second in command of thousand imprisoned soldiers of the Australian Imperial Forces 2/7 casualty clearing station near the frontline. Australia was fighting for England. “He had in recent years become a war hero, a famous and celebrated surgeon, the public image of a time and a tragedy, a subject of biographies, plays,

documentaries...To deny the reverence seemed to insult the memory of thoughts who had died” (TNRDN 16). Colonel Dorrigo was called Big Fella by his troop. He used to show goodness by letting the soldiers get food, medicine and help as much as possible. He had come to love them and care for them. Evan’s always did his best to help soldiers survive the camp “He was not a good surgeon, he was not a good doctor; he was not a good man, he believed in his heart, but he refused to stop trying” (TNRDN 238).

Flanagan describes different episodes that are stored and carefully retrieved in Evan’s memory. Flanagan describes the wartime reality of prisoners of war. The following episodes throw light on the hardships faced by the prisoners of war during the Second World War. Jack Rainbows right leg had been operated twice of ulcer. And then the second time gangrene had set in. Evans had to amputate high up the thigh where gangrene started to rot Jack’s left leg. Evans had to operate without tourniquet. Tourniquet is a device that controls bleeding by compressing blood vessels. Evans objected to Darky’s beating but was helpless. Dorrigo didn’t want to leave his work even after the war ended in 1945. But the opportunities were less and he waited for another nineteen months and then returned to his family. There is a portrayal of the Second World War in the recollections of Dorrigo Evans:

They walked on through the dead, the dead in the half-moon sangars of rocks pointlessly piled up as a defense against death, the dead bloating in a durra field turned to a hideous bog by water split from an ancient stone water channel broken by a shell, the fifteen dead in the village of seven houses in which they had tried to escape death, the dead woman in front of the broken minaret, her small rag bundle of possessions scattered in the dust of the street,



her teeth on the top of a pumpkin, the blasted bits of the dead stinking in a burnt-out truck. (TNRDN 32)

This passage is one classic example of episodic memory where he describes the scene when the Australian soldiers during the Second World War were crossing a village of the dead. All they see or rather find around them are the dismal images of the death. The soldiers witness the dead people stranded in their own village. After this image, they never get to see anything pleasant till the end of the war.

An episode of his love affair is also a constant source of suffering for him. He thinks more about his lovers than his wife and daughters. Evans was a promising young man. He was engaged to Ella but had affairs with his uncle's, wife Amy, and he was attracted to Lynette Maison. Dorrigo Evans met Amy in a book store and liked her. Later, she was introduced as his uncle Kaith's wife. In Kaith's absence, the bond between Dorrigo and Amy grew strong. Amy narrated how she had to abort her baby and Kaith married her and gave her all the comforts of life. Kaith came to know about their affair and told her that Dorrigo died in the war. Years later he sees a happy Amy walking with two children. Evans married Ella and had three children; Jessica, Mary and Steward. Evans saved his family from a fire accident and they started loving him and began living as a family. In spite of the fame and glory Evans was tortured by his past war experiences. The author has tried to portray Evans as the representative of the suffering faced by any ordinary soldier, who was taken as prisoner of war.

The novel has yet another protagonist who suffered or has become the symbol of suffering that is Darky Gardiner. Flanagan pictures the trauma of an honest soldier and the prize he gets for his good work. He is opposed to Dorrigo Evans in gaining fame and name for his deeds. Darky was not even recognized. Darky was a sweet man

with a huge helping mentality and tendency. He was optimistic in almost all circumstances. Darcy seemed to have inexhaustible supply of food and cigarettes and thereby earned the nick name Black Prince. He would steal food from the Japanese and help the soldiers in need. He even helped Evans collect food and medicines for the patients.

Yet another episode from Darcy's life as remembered by Evans is equally noticeable. In the course of the railway construction Darcy's body got wasted and he couldn't even lift a hammer. Darcy was the sergeant who was in charge of sixty men. The men working under him absconded from the allotted work and were sure of not getting caught. Darcy snagged his boot in a limestone cleft. The sole tore away from shoe and his foot was cut by bamboo. In spite of the pain he told his men to find him a sole although he knew that rubber was out of stock in the camp. He continued to walk through the jungle to reach the line. He kept on falling and was left behind others. He stumbled repeatedly and lost the ability and energy to walk or even to move. He was carrying hemp on his shoulders which got on becoming heavier due to the pouring rain. Rooster Mc Niece and his gang who were absconding found Darcy but he asked all of them to get back to work. Colonel Kota found Darcy lying in the work place and was about to chop his head when he immediately sensed his death and somehow Colonel Kota left him alive.

Later on Colonel Kota found eight men missing from work and he found seven but the eighth person refused to come forward. He decided to punish the sergeant who was in charge. Poor Darcy was pulled from the cholera ward and beaten to death for no mistake of his. Darcy Gardiner stands for all the optimism of the soldiers and humanity as a whole. Flanagan has created this character in such a way that he shines through his affiliations. He is a hardworking man who has an

abundance of pity and sympathy for the sick and the weak. Even when fate leads him through harsh conditions he keeps on trying and believing that he will be set free one day. He is dragged from the cholera camp and beaten inhumanly. This forms the most painful episode in the entire novel. This episode represents the atrocities or rather even more bitter atrocities that were committed during the Second World War.

Rabbit Hendricks was yet another soldier whose experiences provoke pity and trauma. He was a painter and used to sketch on the back of post cards. He had even traded a duck egg in exchange for a paint brush. While working on the line, he caught cholera and was taken to the cholera ward. He took along with him the sketchbook and water colours. He had painted the POWs in his book before he died. He knew he would not survive the war but believed that his sketchbook will survive long after his death to serve as an emblem to the crimes that had been committed. Hendricks' sketchbook was handed over to Dorrigo Evans. Evans ordered the sketchbook to be burned along with the body. But the sketchbook flew out of the fire and Evans decided to retain it. In the later years, Evans wrote a forward and published it. Such an incident is recorded in history as well.

Jimmy Biglow's body was wasted. He was fit only to play bugle at the funerals and that's what he used to think about himself. He was always intrigued about how the war would end and whether later generations will doubt if ever such a war happened or not. He used to play bugle during the funeral service. At some occasions, he would find it difficult to play the bugle but still he never missed any chance. He survived the war to love and to be loved. Jimmy Biglow played the bugle for the first time after the war on his deathbed and felt that was the best thing that has ever happened to him. Jimmy represents all those veteran soldiers who outlive others

and are constantly under guilt of out-living others. He had faced so much of horror in his life that he was afraid of even raising his voice to his children.

Through this conglomeration of characters Flanagan has succeeded in highlighting the effects of war on human kind in general. Each character stands for Australian mateship, helping tendency and positivity of the people who lived died or survived the war. Mateship is an Australian term for equality loyalty and friendship. The prisoners of war spent each day expecting the war to end followed by their freedom. Those who survived the war lived with the bitterness and guilty conscience to have outlived the dead. The war had enlightened or changed the angle of perception of the soldiers towards life. The afore mentioned lives are examples that express the trauma experienced by the prisoners of war. These characters are present only in Dorrigo's memory and here Flanagan has made use of the episodic memory, a technique developed by Endel Tulving to narrate the trauma and sufferings of numerous prisoners of war during the Second World War. The story/ life narrative of each of these soldiers form the episodic memory of Dorrigo Evans, who suffers from extreme survivor's guilt.

Every coin has two sides and Flanagan has presented both the sides of the coin. After providing the victim's point of life, Flanagan expresses the psychology of the oppressors as well. It is a pity that some of them tortured their fellow soldiers without even knowing the reason for doing so. Flanagan shows in the after effects of war that they regret the crimes or sins that they had committed previously. And one of their representatives is Nakamura. Nakamura's parents raised him as a gentle man. He didn't get any pleasure to see the poor prisoners getting beaten but he used to order such terrible punishments as he believed that punishment was about honour, "The central command sent them nothing, not machinery, not food, certainly not medicine,

just a few old broken hand tools and impossible orders to build miracle out of nothing in this green desert” (TNRDN 288). Nakamura was a sergeant in charge of the Japanese army. He, along with Colonel Kota, was in charge of building the railway by making the prisoners of war work. He thought it as his life’s mission to serve the Emperor. Colonel Kota found eight men missing from work to his shame. He ordered to beat the sergeant in charge of the troop terribly so that others learn a lesson. After ten minutes of beating Nakamura wanted to stop but he slipped and fell into the mud to his embarrassment. To take revenge of his fall Nakamura beat the guards for not beating Darcy properly. His decision brought about the death of Darcy. After the war Nakamura’s name was found in class B criminal list as he was hiding from the US officials.

He found work in a hospital with the help of a nurse Ikuko Kwabata. There he met a doctor and the doctor told him about the war crimes committed during the war. Japanese doctors were accused of live vivisection of American soldiers without the use of anesthetics. He narrates a heart wrenching incident. An American soldier was shot in his arm. He believed in the Japanese doctors, but was killed cruelly. “Finally, professor Ishiyama removed his heart. It was still beating when he put it on the scales the weights trembled” (*Narrow Road* 356). This incident killed the little of humanity that was left in Nakamura’s heart and he gave up humanity for the service of the Emperor. In his last days, he had throat cancer and he was amazed by the goodness of his wife and daughters. Guilt enveloped him and he wept on the tombs of the prisoners of war. Nakamura is one among many men who committed errors but later on regretted the mistakes. The beating heart of the dead American soldier placed on the scales is a tormenting episode both for Nakamura and for the readers. This episode is narrated to Dorrigo Evans by Nakamura during the war time.

There are some others who do not even bother to realise the gravity of their mistakes, Colonel Kota is one among them. Colonel Kota is a character who symbolizes the Japanese spirit. He is a shrewd person, who is known for making maximum out of any situation. Colonel Kota is a scholar of Japanese haiku. He always quotes Kikusha-ni, Basho and Umi Yukaba. Military life made him heartless. He describes his special field training in New Guinea where they were taught to chop off prisoner's heads. "But once I had cut it open the colours were so vivid, so alive – the red of his blood, the white of his bone, the pink of his flesh, the yellow of that fat. Life! Those colours were life itself" (TNRDN 123). Colonel Kota's turn came to behead a prisoner of war and he experienced the strange satisfying feeling for the first time. Thereafter, he was not frightened of committing any atrocities anymore.

There were yet another section of people who did not even know the reason for which they had to die. Choi Sang Min is a representative of the poor soldiers who had to sacrifice their lives for no particular reason. They neither received their rewards nor status as war heroes. Choi Sang Min was condemned as a class B criminal in Changi Prison. Murderers, soldiers who ill-treated the POWs, those who withheld food and medicine supply were often termed as class B criminals. Choi Sang Min was a Korean officer who did not have direct connection to atrocities committed to POWs, he got convicted because of colonel Kota's evidence against him "If they and all their action were simply the expression of Emperor's will, why then was the Emperor still free" (TNRDN 321). Another episodic memory related to Choi Sang Min is as follows. At Pusan, he had to undergo strict military practice which was a Japanese ritual called Binta. Binta is a face slapping practice that the Japanese insisted on even in the most interior of the hours. Choi Sang Min was transferred to Changis P Hall. He was a CD (convicted to die). He heard about Kenji Mogami who was good to

prisoners of war yet he had to die. Kenji had no regrets for he considered it as his duty to die for the emperor.

Choi Sang Min had to join army in search of employment and he was given many names in Korea. He was Choi Sang Min in Japan, sometimes he was Akira Sanja and for the Australians he was Goanna. "In Pusan they had slapped him because his voice was too low or his position wrong, they had slapped him for being too Korean, they had slapped him to show how to slap others- as hard as he could" (TNRDN 348). Goanna was undergoing a pathetic death and he was dying for no particular reason. He was working for fifty yen. The guards asked him his last wish Choi Sang Min wanted to ask for fifty yen more. Before he could ask he was hanged. These three characters are from the enemy camp. Flanagan makes it a point to narrate episodes from both the sides of the army. Flanagan employs the episodic memory from the lives of Nakamura, Colonel Kota and Choi Sang Min to depict their emotional states of mind.

Yet another predominant episode of the war is the prevalent hunger in the war camps. The prisoners of war do not have enough to eat. The Japanese always starved them. The supply that they were getting from the Japanese government was less. With the onset of Speedo, the prisoners fell sick always. An episode from the life of Darky Gardiner regarding scarcity of food in the camp is as follows: "If he ate his rice ball now, thought Darky Gardiner, he would have nothing more to eat for another twelve hours. If he kept it, he would have five hours until their short lunch break-five hours in which he could at least look forward to the prospect of food. But if he ate it now, he would have neither food nor hope" (TNRDN 229). Darky would eat slowly enjoying every morsel of food. Whereas his fellow soldier Rooster would swallow his little ration in one gulp "a man needed ten times that amount of food for breakfast"

(TNRDN 210). Flanagan has given the real and the pitiable condition and the sufferings faced by the prisoners of war during the Second World War by using episodic memory of the prisoners of war and their sergeant.

The Japanese soldiers even though the oppressors are examples of Postmemory. Postmemory states that the trauma is handed over from one generation to the other through genes. One can witness the Japanese's sense of superiority and a sense of culture. Their traditional methods of living is passed on from one generation to the other. Along with culture their sufferings are also handed over to numerous proceeding generations. It can be said that the Man Booker Prize winning novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) itself is the result of Postmemory operating in Richard Flanagan. Flanagan wrote this novel as a biography of his father Arch Flanagan's life. It is to be understood that Flanagan also has felt the pain and suffering undergone by his father as it got passed on to him through his unconscious memory.

Yet another noteworthy work of Flanagan is *Gould's Book of Fish: A novel in twelve books* (2001). As the title of this novel suggests, *Gould's Book of Fish: a novel in twelve fish* (2001) is divided into twelve chapters which are named after the twelve species of fish. Each chapter denotes each episode from the life of the convict. "Was it that mesmeric shimmer spiraling from the manuscript out of which seahorses and sea dragons and stargazers were already swimming, bringing dazzling light to a dreary day not long born?" (GBF 3). The very first chapter of the book is narrated by Sid Hammet. The book has incorporated magical fairy like elements in it. Sid Hammet an unemployed Tasmanian comes across a junk store in Salamaca where he gets a chance to come cross a strange book. The book was written in an utter chaotic manner where sometimes the letters went upside down or it was written wherever and everywhere the writer could find a little space.



Once upon a time there was a man called Sid Hammet and he discovered he was not he thought he was.

Once upon a time there were miracles, and the afore mentioned Hammet believed that he had been swept up in one....

Once upon a time there was a man called Sid Hammet who saw reflected in the glow of a strange book of fish his story, which began as a fairy tale and ended as a nursery rhyme, riding a cock horse to Banbury Cross.

Once upon a time terrible thing happened, but it was long ago in far-off place that everyone knows is not here or now or us. (GBF 6)

These lines are like a curtain raiser for the reader to guess what would happen throughout the entire course of the novel. Sid Hammet is not a reliable narrator and so is the novel. The book was colorful and written on material whichever Gould the prison inmate could grab. Some were written in parchment, other pages in cloth, others in materials like dried fish skin. The book was written by William Buelow Gould who was a convict and a talented painter. He was ordered by the surgeon of the prison to paint all the fish caught there. But Gould along with painting wrote his autobiography in every nook and corner of the book.

The different colored inks used were made from enigmatic things like red ink from kangaroo's blood. Blue color from stolen, crushed precious stone etc. "I saw that the threads grew out from a somewhat frayed binding, the spine of which had partly fallen away. As carefully as if it were a prize fish hopelessly entangled in my net, I reached in, lifted up the magazines, and from beneath eased out what appeared to be a dilapidated book" (GBF 14).

Hammet purchased the book and showed it to historians and publishers but his effort was a waste of time as they all turned it down. The museum showed little interest and they conducted tests on the parchment, inks, paints, carbon dating and they found it authentic to the age. Hammet meets an eminent colonial historian, Professor Roman de Silva, to discuss about the book. The Professor claimed that the convict was a fraud and the book was nothing but tourist-souvenir type of fraud and that it has nothing to do with history. During 1820-1831 Sarah Island was the most dreaded prison in the entire Britain. After meeting Kim Pearce, an archivist, Hammet understood that several convicts had written similar books. At last in the Allport Library Hammet found an identical *Book of Fish* (GBF 3) which has paintings of fish and their scientific nomenclature. Hammet feels influenced by the book where as others don't feel so. He feels pity for the book's author,

It sometimes seemed as if the author of the *Book of Fish*, the storyteller William Buelow Gould, has been born with a memory but neither experience nor history to account for it, and had spent forever after seeking to invent what didn't exist in the curious belief that his imagination might become his experience, and thereby both explain and cure his problem of inconsolable memory. (GBF 26)

Hammet speaks to Kim about the book's illuminating cover and the magical element in the book. The Book continues to go on and on and there was probably going to be no end of the story. Each page brings along an element of enigma and numerous episodes in the life of the author. The pages might be torn or sticking together. Those pages have interesting facts or a new aspect about the life that was endured by Gould. Hammet goes for a drink and finds the book missing. "Only now I realize that the *Book of Fish* was returning whence it came, that, paradoxically, just as

the *Book of Fish* had ended for me, it was also beginning for others” (GBF 30).

Hammet feels that the book had gone in search of a new reader. The instance is similar to the mystic element in Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* where the Mariner having narrated and changed the perspective of one of the wedding guests, going in search of yet another person who might be in need of his wisdom. Hammet feels that the book has left him with the feeling of unrequited love. The episodes of the twelve fishes that are mentioned in the novel are quite interesting too.

The novel is structured as if rewritten by Hammet based on his readings and understanding of the original lost book. Each chapter contains a preface. The preface to the chapters is like hints which are developed by Hammet the fictional author of the novel:

The invasion of Australia- An unfortunate misunderstanding- Barrels of black beads- The King & I-the error of Jean –Babeuf Audubon-Birds as burners- Captain Pinchbeck & the French Revolution- Black War-Clucas the banditto- His perfidy-The Cockchafer- Tragic death of the machine breaker-Bonfires of words. (GBF 46)

Each hinted phrase stands for an episode in Gould’s life and because of the lack of space he records them as hints. The novel is all about developing these hints and in each chapter Gould paints the fish which is mentioned as the title and hence each chapter is named after a fish. King was his fellow cellmate. Machine breaker was one of the cruel punishments given to convicts. They were supposed to ride the machine. One of the convicts slipped step and the machine broke his body and the convict was struck in between the wheels and he became an object of pity for he was left to die a painful death. In the character of Gould instances of Postmemory can be

seen clearly as he is the epitome of Australian Aboriginal suffering. His life and his character are molded by the life of his ancestors only:

At that very moment she heard the quick creek of the trap door open & saw a skinny man in a long dirty smock with a noose around his neck & a limb code in his hands fall from the sky in front of her. As his body reached the bottom of the drop taut rope conspiring with the sudden weight of the falling body to break his neck, she heard the small but undeniable sound of bone snapping. Afterwards she dreamt the skinny man opened his mouth as he fell, & what came forth was not a cry but a shimmering shaft of blue light. She watched the blue light fly across the field & leap into her mouth, open in astonishment.

The wretched woman became convinced that she had been taken possession of by the condemned man's evil spirit & gave up on life, surviving only long enough to deliver me into the world & then to the poor house, believing that as I was born blue I must be the very embodiment of that evil spirit. (GBF 63)

This is yet another episode from Gould's life, informing the readers about the basic reason for his pessimistic temperament. Here, Marianne Hirsch's Postmemory is very much applicable. Gould's mother when she was pregnant with him. She accidentally witnesses the hanging of a man and she imagines that she had seen a blue light leaving his mouth and entering hers. She believes it to be the evil incarnation and believe that even the unborn child is affected by the evil. She dies at childbirth and Gould is left as an orphan to fend for himself. His struggles in life begin and his disposition is based on his mother's traumatic experience. Gould experiences the same agony, desperateness and sense of absurdity that his mother experienced. The

trauma continues throughout Gould's life. He suffers for no mistake of his throughout the novel.

The novel *Death of a River Guide* (1994) narrates the tale of a drowning river guide, named Alijaz Cosini. Flanagan narrates the novel using flashback technique. Here, the writer has employed several narration techniques. At some points the readers can visualize the soul of Alijaz Cosini looking at his past and actually witnessing his own drowning process. The narrative is sometimes in first person and abruptly changes to omniscient narrator and then to a third person narrative. Alijaz Cosini the protagonist informs the readers that he is hallucinating and he is granted vision into the lives of his ancestors. Hence one can conclude that Alijaz Cosini is one among the best examples of characters, who can be interpreted through Postmemory approach.

The novel opens with the Alijaz Cosini's soul watching his own birthing process. Alijaz was born with the amniotic sac and his mother had preserved it. Alijaz's mother also believed in the myth that a person, whose membranes are stored, will never drown. The author has paradoxically mocked the myth, but the event after event presentation in an episodic manner makes it highly believable and realistic:

As I was born the umbilical cord tangled around my neck and I came into the world both arms flailing, unable to scream and thereby take in the air necessary to begin life outside of the womb, being garroted by the very thing that had until that time succored me and given me life ... I made strange, desperate movements as if condemned always to see life through a thin mucousy film, separated from the rest of the world and the rest of my life by

the things that had until then protected me. It was and is a curious sight, my birth. (DRG 2)

Episodic memory curbs the ability to remember events, occurrences and situations that are embedded in their temporal and spatial context. Episodic memory is the memory answering to the what, where and when questions. It is specifically a unique ability of humans to travel back in time and re-experience past events. To achieve this effect, elements, belonging to the same event, need to be associated with each other, while being separated from the other event. Episodic memory plays an important role in one's daily life and hence, the prospect of its trainability is highly attractive.

Tulving has identified three properties of episodic memory recollection namely a subjective sense of time, a connection to the self and the auto-noetic consciousness. Further, episodic memory possesses certain inherent properties. Episodic memory contains summary records of sensory, perceptual, conceptual and can affect mind processing functions. They are often represented in the form of visual images and they can retain patterns of activation and inhibition over long periods of time. They always have a perspective like that of a field or observer and they mostly represent short time slices of experiences. They are drawn on a temporal dimension, approximately in the order of occurrence. They are mainly subject to rapid forgetting and they make autobiographical remembering clearly specific. Finally, episodic memories are collectively experienced when remembered.

In some instances there are people who have seen their life flash before their eyes while dying. That is because some parts of the brain which stores memories is the last to be affected as other functions fail. Research on those who have had near

death experience suggests that the phenomenon rarely involves flashbacks in chronological order and that memories come random and sometimes even simultaneously says Laura Donnelly who is the health editor in the Telegraph. The episode where Alijaz Cosini experiences life review before his death is narrated below:

as I lie drowning, here of all places, on the Franklin River, looking up through aerated water at the slit in the rocks, above which I can make out daylight.

*I have been granted visions.*

Suddenly it is clear what is happening to me.

*I, Alijaz Cosini, river guide, have been granted visions.*

And immediately I am unbelieving. I say to myself, this is not possible, I have entered the realm of the fabulous, of hallucinations, for there is no way that anybody struck drowning could experience such things. (DRG 9)

A representation of life events as a continuum exists in the cognitive system and it may be further expressed in extreme conditions of psychological and physiological stress. Yet another case reported is that of victims getting to know other's perspectives in the near-death experiences. Researchers feel that this phenomenon might be caused by the parts of the brain that store autobiographical memories like the prefrontal, medial, temporal and parietal cortices. Those parts of the brain are not susceptible to oxygen and blood loss during serious injuries and it means they are one of the last brain parts and functions to suffer. A study published in the Journal Consciousness and Cognition, concludes:

Re-experiencing one's own life events, so called LRE, is a phenomenon with well-defined characteristics and its subcomponents may be also evident in healthy people. A life review is a phenomenon widely reported as occurring during near-death experiences, in which a person rapidly sees much or the totality of their life history- life flash before their eyes. (Yirkas 2)

As mentioned above Alijaz's narration is somewhat similar to a near death experience. He is able to know the second person's point of view. He gets into the psyche of his father Harry, his grandfather Boy and he gets to know what his aunt Ellie endured during her life. He gets to know how his mother Rose. He also gets to view how his mother and her brothers survived. He understands Couta Ho and her emotions regarding him and their dead daughter. Not only this he visualizes his clan being implanted into Black Pearls's womb. Black Pearl is his great grandmother. Alijaz also participates in the dinner offered for the dead and finds calm in understanding that his daughter is safe in the hands of Black pearl. This is made possible by the episodic memory. As science states it near death experience occurs due to the presence of episodic memory.

The narrator Alijaz Cosini had already mentioned in the earlier part of the novel that an element of spirituality had existed in the family. "Eileen, who was from the spiritual side of the family, had strange powers. The index finger of her right hand came out in warts and she sensed something bad was about to befall Rose" (Flanagan DRG 56). Eileen and George took care of Rose who is Harry's mother and Alijaz's grandmother. This episode explains in detail how Rose had many siblings and Aunt Eileen who was Rose's mother's sister was a barren woman. Aunt Eileen and Uncle George had adopted Rose. But her own father was not ready to give up Rose. He tried



to take rose away several times and then Auntie Eileen and Uncle hid Rose for a period of time and then took her home.

Yet another instance of the process of life review is from *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001). When Capois Death is about to die his entire life flashes before his eyes. He completes the life circle from where he began during his childhood to what he became in his old age. Everything flashed before his eyes. Through this process his trauma is revealed:

CAPOIS DEATH'S LAST sight before his own pitiful death was to be that of his whole sorrowful history being played in reverse. All his vicissitudes on Sarah Island, the machine breaker, the Cockchafer, his successes as a Hobart Town publican, his times in Liverpool, he was seeing running backwards through the spilling of a pincer of purl-ale. (GBF 352)

Flanagan unfolds the novel in the form of episodes. By merely following the episodes in a particular way and through the character's life, one can know the flow of the story. "Eileen's funeral was a grand affair in the Hobart cathedral...Harry looked up at the ceiling and noticed something moving at the top of the walls. Droplets of crimson fluid. Harry reached up and tugged Rose's coat arm. 'the walls, Mum,' he whispered, 'the walls are bleeding'" (DRG 59). This is yet another instant that helps to display the belief in spirituality in the Tasmanian community. Alijaz the narrator also mentions about the complex relationship between his grandfather and his grandmother.

Although both his parents were immigrants Rose considered her family to be belonging to the gentry. She treated her husband Harry as an inferior. Because he belonged to the convict family. This false belief spoiled their married life. There was

much emotional distance between his parents. In the flashback episode the narrator presents the relationship between Harry and Boy. After Rose's death, father and son would go to the forest together to hunt animals like wallabies. They would hunt enough for them to eat.

The episode of Harry's reaction to his father's death is quite interesting. Here Postmemory can be applied to Harry too who has suffered the trauma, as experienced by his father. His behavior on the occasion of his death of his father Boy is described in as an episode. "It did not anger Harry that the carrion-eating devils had eaten half his father's face and parts of his hands and arms. That was how it was. It was the same law that allowed them to snare wallabies with the slag of blood in their mouths. But like he felt for the wallabies he felt for his father" (DRG 73). Here through this episode, the reader can understand the man nature connect, as emphasized by the novelist. This also gives a glimpse into the relationship of Boy and Harry.

"These visions are my x-ray specs with them I see not the surface reality but what really took place, stripped of all its confusing superficial detail (DRG 79)." This quote again reminds the readers about the episodic memory visualized by deoxygenated brain. After this incident the narrator has focused on the life story of the protagonist. Because he has exhausted the stories of the ancestors. The visions show how the vents of Alijaz's life brought him to this particular juncture that is, being struck in river Franklin.

Yet another episode from the childhood of Alijaz is described below. Alijaz the narrator was absurd from his childhood days. His parents wondered on the child's weird behaviour. But on later inspection by the doctor they found out that he was partially deaf. "The boy Alijaz feels himself new. He feels his world around him to be

alien. Sometimes he closes his eyes and then reopens them quickly and all the playground looks to be made of angles that make no sense. I say his world, but he feels nothing in it to be his” (DRG 87).

The narrator Alijaz Cosini not only sees his own ancestors, but the ancestors of his lover Couta Ho. “Wiliam Ho’s grandson Reg did love his fellow beings, particularly those who were women. Most particularly women other than his wife” (DRG 102). As mentioned earlier, during the near to death experiences, the victim gets to know the third party’s story, emotions and perceptions. The novelist offers wide perspectives about Couta Ho’s and Alijaz’s relationship and how Couta Ho had accepted Alijaz inspite of all his flaws. Marianne Hirsch’s Postmemory typically describes:

The relationship of children of survivors of cultural or collective trauma to the experiences of their parents, experiences that they remember only as the narratives and images with which they grew up, but that are so powerful, so monumental, as to constitute memories in their own right. Having defined the concept of Postmemory in terms of familial inheritance, Hirsch has broadened its application to a more general, cultural inheritance that can transcend ethnic or national boundaries. Postmemory therefore, ‘defined through identification with the victim or witness of trauma, modulated by an unbridgeable distance that separates the participant from the one born after... Postmemory would thus be *retrospective witnessing by adoption*. It is a question of adopting traumatic experiences- and thus also the memories of others as experiences one might oneself have had, and of inscribing them into one’s own life story. (Hirsch 174)

Traumatic memory fuels its transmission and adoption. The first generation might evade its trauma by negating the events. But the next generation is in a position to work through traumatic experience and its symptoms which might be forgotten by the previous generation. Richard Flanagan's characters and his style of narrating the past can be studied using Postmemory technique. Postmemory stands for the generational trauma experienced by individuals. Postmemory refers to trauma that family collective experiences. It gets passed from one generation to another. William Gould was an artist. He found himself hopeless about his life but he could not understand the reason for his nature:

It sometimes seemed as if the author of the *Book of Fish*, the storyteller William Buelow Gould, had been born with a memory but neither experience nor history to account for it, and had spent forever after seeking to invent what didn't exist in the curious belief that his imagination might become his experience, and thereby both explain and cure his problem of an inconsolable memory. (GBF 27)

Flanagan suggests that Gould might be suffering from some trauma passed on to him by his ancestors. Sid Hammet could sense an unmeasurable trauma in Gould's writing. Yet another example of Postmemory is from *Death of a River Guide* (1994). Alijaz Cosini is a river guide who gets struck in the Franklin River. Flanagan throughout his narration about Alijaz's life suggests that he lost faith in good things. Alijaz always believed that he was doomed. Such thoughts might be because of the trauma suffered by his ancestors that has been passed on to Alijaz. Towards the end of the novel Flanagan reveals Alijaz's identity. Alijaz always believed that he was an immigrant. But he realizes that he was an Aboriginal. The passage below describes Alijaz's memory of his mother who was suffering from trauma:

Only when she stopped her incessant work out of weariness and sat down on the old russet-coloured armchair in the parlour, her shallow green eyes focused upon nothing, her fingers absently pick-picking out the threads of horse chair through the holes in the arms, did he glimpse a despair so total that it terrified him...and wonder what it was that connected this happy child with his unhappy mother, and what it was that had separated them. (DRG 51)

Flanagan indirectly comments that unhappy childhood and trauma passed on from previous generations made Alijaz a weird man who could not communicate trauma. All these analyses emphasize upon how memory is narrated in all the five select novels of Flanagan. The novels share the common thread of being narrated as episodes in the characters' lives. All the characters have in common the past of Australian suffering that is retained in their DNA. All of them are unhappy and indifferent in their own ways and they believe in the absurdity of mere existence. All the characters experience fleeting momentary happiness which is not at all perpetual. Marianne Hirsch's Postmemory frames their characteristics and enables the readers to understand why the characters behave so. The plots also confine to all the characteristics of episodic memory and therefore, one can drive home the fact that Flanagan's narratives can be better understood in the light of episodic memory and Postmemory.

## Chapter Three

### Trauma and Narration in the Select Fiction of Richard Flanagan

Richard Flanagan in Pen World Voices Festival opines on confronting trauma that “Man survives by his ability to forget, but at a certain point, it must be confronted in order to live. That sometimes falls to others to confront the darkness” (Galo). The prominence of the academic field of trauma studies since the 1990s has been explained as part of the ethical turn of the humanities by infusing the study of literature into the wider circle of culture. Trauma theory is a step ahead of other theories that are indifferent towards life and literature. With the rise of new historicism and cultural materialism, and other advocacy criticisms such as feminism, LGBT, Marxism and post colonialism, humanities have developed disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to portray both politicization and representation of historical experiences and this scenario has further widened the scope for the development of trauma studies.

Conceptualization of trauma has evolved into a new form of ethical criticism. With regard to mitigation, successful therapy can involve in changing the person’s sense of what others have to offer and in a way that facilitates re-integration into the public world. The study of trauma becomes so very important because there happens a miraculous cure that could be done by narrating. By talking about trauma, the victims can come out of it easily. Narrative cures is a developing field of medicine. American psychiatrist Judith Herman in her book *Trauma and Recovery* (1992) suggests three methods of recovery. They include safety and stabilization, remembrance and mourning and reconnection and integration.

The trauma narrative is a powerful technique that allows survivors of trauma to confront and overcome their painful memories through story telling. This trauma narrative is a psychological technique that can be used to help the survivors of trauma in making sense of their experiences. Trauma narrative acts as a form of exposure to painful memories. Without treatment the memories of a trauma can feel like a jumbled mess an unbearable maze of images, sounds, and emotions. While trying to complete a trauma narrative the story of a traumatic experience has to be told repeatedly through verbal, written, or artistic means. Sharing and expanding upon a trauma narrative allows the individual to organize their memories. Majority of the trauma narratives require several sessions to be completed. The amalgamation of trauma with narrative theory is made possible by Flanagan's use of cinematic technique. Flanagan has written the select novel as a thought process in pieces of internalised memory and as groups of traumatic incidents. Therefore, the readers are taken on a voyage from one point to the other. This method of narrating stories helped him to incorporate different elements in his novels. The elements of memory and trauma could be detailed so wonderfully because of the employment of this technique.

The predominant sense of having a somewhat foreshortened future posits a traumatic existence and experience for some. Surviving in a highly challenging environment which had given them nothing but trauma is a difficult task. They end up being dismal and absurd about the very existence. Traumatic conditions had made many a number of people stoic and withdrawn. Trauma leading to shock or denial can have long lasting effects upon all living things. It can result in both psychological manifestations like unpredictable behaviours, strained relationships, anger and depression bouts. The physical symptoms of the trauma victims are nausea and headaches. William Gould is a victim of trauma. Flanagan has created this character

to incorporate almost all characteristics of traumatic conditions. Gould had faced so much trauma growing up. This led him to become absurd and dismal about his life. The following episode from *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001) describes how Gould accepted punishment for a crime he never committed.

I wasn't a forger, & I wasn't happy being accused as such. I was a Villain on the lam who had once painted, & I was insulted that anyone would accuse me of stooping so low as counterfeiting Bank of Bristol notes. Still, having always maintained that the best way of battling power is to agree, upon being sentenced to be transported to Van Diemen's Land for forgery, I became a forger. After all, what else could I do? (GBF 73)

Various studies have been undertaken by a number of scholars to analyze the complex side effects of trauma. There are numerous ways in which trauma affects an individual's psyche drastically. And it is equally worth undertaking the task of analyzing the role played by narratives while dealing with the trauma infused memories. Narrating from a sound mind is easier when compared to the action of narrating things from a disturbed mind. Trauma, horror and severe forms of torture form the common threads in a wide number of fictional works. The characters who had to undergo intense horror, terror and suffering in life, gradually lose meaning of their lives and gets transformed into absurd beings. Most of the authors have been successful in providing the readers with a glimpse of the transformation in their characters, through the description and impact of trauma on their psyche. They have achieved success in delivering the effect by narrating their plots in a unique manner.

It really is a horrendous task to fathom what takes place in the process of internalizing and then narrating memory of tragic incidents. The research questions



this chapter aims to address is why Flanagan's characters have to be the way they are. Narration technique employed by Richard Flanagan show the immeasurable and the unnarratable trauma that was undergone by the characters in those works.

Twentieth-century trauma narratives remain connected, at least in principle, to a long tradition of literary representations of 'other people's pain', whose ethical implications are tied to their fictional status and to the fact that the other people and their fates whose pain the reader is witnessing or sharing are the fates of imaginary people in a de pragmatized and metadiscursive space of textuality, which however may paradoxically enhance its communicational intensity and its signifying power towards a collectively experienced historical reality. (Schonfelder 30)

In this analytical study, Flanagan's tragic characters are analyzed in the light of mimetic and anti-mimetic model of trauma. That is, the narratives of the select novels are viewed in both mimetic and anti-mimetic model of trauma. The characters like Alijaz Cosini, Mathinna, William Buelow Gould, Bojan, Sonja, Dorrigo Evans, Black Pearl, Two penny Sal, Maria Bulow are subjected to trauma and they are being considered as per both the models, proposed by Ruth Leys. Their trauma can be seen as an oppressor who denies their capability to convey trauma. Yet at the same time, Flanagan has created these characters as accomplished enough to witness their own trauma as an incident that has happened to someone else. The model of trauma, as proposed by Leys, forms the yin-yang model. By applying this model of trauma Richard Flanagan's characters' trauma can be better analysed and understood. By opting this methodology of representing trauma Flanagan has vocalized the trauma through his narratives.

Ruth Leys in her work on trauma focuses on the structure and the role attributed to imitation. Imitation implies the trauma victim's experience of shock which is felt by the continuous tension or oscillation that is felt in them. There is this general tendency in trauma theories to sway to conceive trauma in mimetic terms and the opposing tendency to theorize trauma in anti-mimetic terms. In the mimetic model, trauma victims are imagined as behaving like hypnotized people who are identified with the hypnotist's commands. They are unable to distance themselves from the traumatic incident and blindly keep repeating in the form of a compulsive acting out.

In the mimetic model the unconscious imitation of the aggressor or the other leads to doubt about the reliability of the victim's testimony. Because victims are traumatized into a state of imitative suggestibility. In the mimetic model victims of trauma are held to be identified with the aggressor, they are judged to be possessed by the violence directed against them.

The second or the anti-mimetic model understands imitation differently. The anti-mimetic model imagines the victims as capable of yielding imitatively to the enemy but they remain as mere spectators who can see and represent to themselves what is happening. The result will be the denial of the idea that victims of trauma are immersed in and hence complicitous with the traumatic violence and also to establish a strict dichotomy between the victim and the external event or aggressor. According to anti-mimetic model, trauma is a purely external event that befalls the passive subject.

The very process of amalgamating trauma into the narratives can be explained using Ruth Leys' idea of "mimetic and antimimetic" (2000) theory. She coined this

idea in her essay “Trauma: A Genealogy” (2000). Leys presents a characterisation of this dominant understanding of the modern trauma. Characterization made during the contemporary times face emotions of terror and surprise. These emotions caused by some incidents result in the split of a person’s mind. The person might land up in situations where the mechanisms of awareness and memory are damaged. Therefore, the mind is unable to register the wound in the psyche. This causes the victim to be unable to recollect painful experiences in normal conditions. These emotions start to outpour in dreams and unconscious. Ruth Leys proposes her theory in untangling the trauma of a victim. The process can be understood as involving a kind of hypnotic imitation. The process involves identification with the victim by imitating scenes events and its end result. The victim is asked to act the incident or to imitate it. Trauma creates a shock so that the victim distances himself from the cognitive knowledge of what has happened. The mimetic theory explains the tendency of the victims to forcefully repeat their violent experiences in the form of nightmares or by comparing the repetitive trauma of hypnotic imitation. Unconscious imitation leads to doubts about truthfulness of subject’s testimony.

Traumatic experience becomes unrepresentable due to the inability of the brain that is understood as the carrier of coherent cognitive schemata, to properly encode and process the event. The origin of traumatic response is forever unknown and unintegrated. Yet, the ambiguous, literal event is ever-present and intrusive. This theory argues that trauma is only known through repetitive flashbacks that literally re-enact the event because the mind cannot represent it otherwise. Traumatic experience is understood as a fixed and timeless photographic negative stored in an unlocatable place of the brain but maintaining the ability to interrupt consciousness and equally maintaining the

ability to be transferred to non-traumatized individuals and groups. Moreover, this concept of trauma perceives responses as fundamentally pathologic and privileges the act of voicing narration as the primary avenue to recovery. In other words, presenting trauma that which is inherently pathologic, perpetuates the notion that all responses to any kind of traumatic experience produces a dissolute consciousness. (Leys, *Trauma: A Genealogy* 2)

Flanagan has used a particular strategy in writing trauma novels. He conveys a variety of complex emotional states. Some of the narrative innovations are landscape, imagery, temporal fissures, silence, narrative omissions and not giving explicit information about trauma details. Flanagan has also employed nonlinear plots and disruptive temporal sequences to emphasize mental confusion. Another effective strategy used by Flanagan is employing silence. It creates gap in time/feeling which allows the reader's imagination to access the meaning. These strategies helped Flanagan to structure a traumatic narrative. Trauma novels also produce various trauma imagery suggesting various responses and conscious actions. The Hero's life and thoughts become disparate after the traumatic incident. Traumatized protagonist is created through painful process of reorientation and his behaviour reflect the trauma. Ruth Leys has developed the mimetic-antimimetic theory for approaching trauma narrative. The method incorporates in itself the elements of traditional hypnotic therapy and distancing effect. Flanagan has made characters like William Gould and Alijaz Cosini speak in the form of antimimetic method. And the characters like Charles Dickens, Mathinna, Dorrigio Evans speak as if they are hypnotized.

What has interested me about these competing models of trauma is the way in which from the late nineteenth century onwards theorists have oscillated between the mimetic and the anti-mimetic models. My argument has been that

the concept of trauma has been structured historically in such a way as simultaneously to invite resolution in favour of one pole or other of the mimetic – anti-mimetic oscillation and to resist and ultimately defeat all such attempts at resolution. My claim is that this mimetic – anti-mimetic oscillation has structured debates over the nature of trauma from then to now, and it is this structure that I have attempted to identify and analyze. Rather than trying to present crucial episodes in the history of trauma in a linear manner or as part of a continuously unfolding historical development, I wanted to show that those episodes had both an eruptive character, as if the problems involved were occurring for the first time, and a recurrent character, because each episode repeated the same difficulties and contradictions that had troubled conceptualizations of trauma from the start. (Leys 659)

Richard Flanagan has tried to convey the trauma using mimetic and antimimetic model of narration.

as he tried to crawl away, he felt their waddies begin to drum his body & he felt language starting to drift

away,

words tending to fall into one another a little made sense & then the centre of a guava returned & Tommy talking walking with me & far far far away & Tommy! Tommy! cold & cold &

&-----

As I ran I glanced over my shoulder & saw the black fellas beating Capois Death hard with their waddies & they seemed to be trying to break the bones

in each of his limbs. I saw him raise one arm slowly, an odd & insufficient gesture. (GBF 355)

Flanagan has used the mimetic technique of narration while imitating Capois Death's language. Flanagan has employed the antimimetic technique of narration when he speaks about Capois Death trying to lift his arm and to say something symbolically. Yet another example of Flanagan making use of mimetic and antimimetic technique is as follows. The questions asked by the tourists about life is an example of mimetic approach. William Gould's way of answering them in terms of furniture is an antimimetic approach. It is to be noted that both the parties are victims of trauma. William Gould's trauma has turned him into an absurd being. The tourists are suffering from trauma of self-doubt and safety. Flanagan presents the irony and an awkward situation when the tourists' questions are answered in terms of furniture.

The tourists had insistent, unspoken questions and we just had to answer as best as we could, with forged furniture. They were really asking, 'Are we safe?' and we were really replying, 'No, but a barricade of useless goods may help block the view.'... 'If it is our fault, then we will suffer?' and we were replying, 'Yes, and slowly, but a fake chair may make us both feel better about it' (GBF 12)

In this example one can practically witness the application of mimetic and antimimetic approaches. "It was this William Buelow Gould, a recidivist convict artist, who upon arriving at Sarah Island Penal settlement, was charged with the specific duty of painting fish for the surgeon" (GBF 26). This sentence is an example of an antimimetic model where the victim can see himself as another person. In this approach, the victim is detached from his trauma. In this condition the victim can

have clear vision about his pain. The following sentence is an example of mimetic model of narrating trauma. “I am William Buelow Gould – convicted murderer, painter & numerous other unimportant things. I am compelled by my lack of virtue to tell you that I am the most untrustworthy guide you will never trust” (GBF 61). Here Flanagan has employed mimetic model of narration. In this approach the victim is not detached from his trauma. In this case the victim will not have a clear understanding of his trauma. Flanagan has provided the fact about William Gould in two perspectives. One of his own opinion and the other of how the world see him. Flanagan has employed the mimetic and antimimetic model of narration to capture the dual perspectives about William Gould. Through mimetic worldly perception of Gould’s character is depicted. Through antimimetic Gould’s self-analysis is revealed.

Here is yet another example of how Flanagan practically employed mimetic and antimimetic model of narration. Alijaz Cosisni is struck in the Franklin River and is about to drown. He has hallucination in which he sees his past life. Cosini thinks about his dead daughter Jemma and his life after her death. In this passage Flanagan presents Couta Ho’s perspective about Alijaz. Couta Ho felt that Alijaz was not grieving for their daughter’s loss. This led to crack in their relationship. Couta Ho believes that by engaging his mind in other activities Alijaz could move on in life. This is antimimetic model of narration:

After a while after Jemma died, Alijaz came to think that I was too obsessed about it all. He said I needed to get my mind back on other things and stop being morbid. He meant well. I suppose that was how he coped with things. He trained harder, ran for miles and miles every night. He didn’t think it did to dwell upon such things. ‘Why cant you be normal?’ he’d ask. (DRG 178)

In the next passage Flanagan presents the mimetic model of narration. Here Alijaz himself addresses the readers on how he could not get on with life after Jemma's death. Alijaz felt as if a part of his body was lost. He was running away from Couta Ho to find that part and bring it back to her. Here Alijaz explains why he could not grieve on Jemma's death.

Everything else of her- finding her in the cot, her baths, her lying on the bed gurgling, her birth-goes out of my mind as the mortuary door closes, not to return to me till now...I did not feel grief. I did not feel anguish. I felt as if some substantial part of me- my legs, my arms- had been cut from my body and thrown away. How could I grieve the loss of myself? I did not grieve...I could not. (DRG 264)

Using the mimetic and antimimetic model Flanagan brings out the trauma through narration. The characters in trauma novels exhibit a conducive lead in their behavioral pattern and psychology. The characters are victims of one sort of trauma or the other. Here, Flanagan's characters are internally affected by trauma, from the very beginning of their existence. This has resulted in their erratic behaviour and a firm belief in the absurdity of existence. A detailed analysis and scrutiny about the reasons or causes that has facilitated for such strange attitudes in the characters demand a theoretical framework. It is an absolute requirement too, to unearth the reasons for absurdity, as suffered by the characters. The answer for such questions is found by employing the concept of "The Sense of Foreshortened Future". The chapter also delves deep into the aspect of how one can gain insight into the enigma as posed by Flanagan.

Trauma is innately complex and does not affect everyone in the same way. It varies significantly from person to person. Some people experience a terrible event



but suffer no long term adverse emotional effects. Meanwhile the same event might create a long lasting and devastating impact upon another person. Traumatic responses are shaped by a wide range of factors like genetics, previous life experiences/memories and support systems available in the aftermath of the event.

Trauma is defined as an injury to the body or psyche by some type of shock, violence or unforeseen incident. Trauma results from unfavorable life experiences that devastate an individual's capacity handle a threat that they may be faced with. Exposure to trauma increases the risk of the range of susceptibility such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, mental health problems, excessive hostility and anxiety. Prolonged exposure to repetitive or severe events from childhood is likely to cause the most severe and lasting impact upon people. Traumatization can also occur because of negligence that lasts for a lifetime. Trauma theory examines and attempts to understand the manner in which traumatic experiences are processed.

Trauma is one of the predominant themes in Richard Flanagan's select fiction. Trauma, memory and narrative are inseparably connected in the human psyche. They depend upon each other and are experienced almost simultaneously. The characters mentioned in the select fiction experience pain and hardship and they are the victims of trauma. Hence, the analysis to understand how such characters deal with trauma and to determine how trauma has shaped their narrative is worth undertaking. The article titled "“What is a Sense of Foreshortened Future?” A phenomenological study of trauma, trust and time” (2014) is authored by Mathew Ratcliffe, Mark Ruddell and Benedict Smith. It is published in “Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology” a section of the journal *Frontiers in Psychology*. The article sheds light and authority over the intermingling of trauma, trust and time in the lives of trauma victims.

Loss of trust is a characteristic feature that gets tagged along with trauma. The victim loses his confidence in people around him and starts to distrust everyone. The characters in Flanagan's select novels display such loss of trust. It is to be noted that the tragic characters do not even possess a friend to share their worries. Mathinna in *Wanting* (2008) is fated to suffer alone. She enjoyed the company of masters during her stay with the Governor, later on there is nobody to whom she could communicate her misery. The same is the case with William Gould. He tried to find solace in Two Penny Sal, but she does not reciprocate his feeling. William Gould is a prisoner who is confined to solitary confinement. Alijaz Cosini from *Death of a River Guide* (1994) is fated to be alone because his wife Court Ho abandons him after the death of their daughter. Dorrigo Evans also feels devastated after Second World war. Although he has family, he is not able to confide his sadness in them. There is something distinctive about the psychological effects of harm inflicted upon someone by others. A pervasive shift in how any person who has faced an interpersonal trauma relates to others. The connection is often described as a loss of trust. Loss of trust amounts to a profound shift in the experience of time. The characters from the select fiction experience that the sense of trust is disturbed by traumatic events.

Cathy Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* was published in 1995 and her second book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma Narrative and History* was published in 1996. These books had a major impact on trauma studies. The term Trauma Theory first appeared in Caruth's book *Unclaimed Experience*. Caruth interpreted trauma as a double injury, because the wound of the psyche that has occurred during the event is originally experienced suddenly to be fully known and is not available to the consciousness until it recollects itself again in repetitive actions

and nightmares in the survivor. To understand how trauma might shape its representation, the temporality of trauma must be understood.

Flanagan's select fiction has numerous characters who face PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). It is extremely hard and painful to define trauma. Yet Flanagan has attempted to articulate different sorts of trauma suffered by the Tasmanian characters. This difficulty arises as making sense of the confusing array of current conceptualizations of trauma, ranging from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) to cultural trauma is strenuous. In the field of psychiatry trauma is a particularly controversial subject. The history of trauma is a history of repeated gaps and ruptures. It has cyclical periods of attention, neglect, fascination and rejection. The study of trauma is originally situated in the domain of medicine and psychology but is extended to the fields of literature and cultural studies as well. Trauma has become a prominent topic in life writing and fiction, trauma studies has emerged as a new field within the humanities.

Some severe aftermaths of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) is penned by Flanagan in his *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013). Judith Hermans was the first among to advocate the term "Complex PTSD" (Hermans 1997) to be included as a diagnosis. She was of the opinion that it could address the multiple origins of trauma and its impact on the person's life on a whole. This disorder can address the complete developmental trauma histories of children, with exposure to child abuse and neglect. Trauma is that which refuses witnessing, cognition, conscious recall and representation of the belated disruptive experiences of the event, not felt at the time of witnessing, but only processed at a particular period of time.

The passage below articulates the efforts undertaken by Dorrigo Evans in order to save his fellow prisoners of war. Dorrigo Evans was a surgeon and was in charge of the second battalion. He did all he could do for the soldiers, yet he always felt dissatisfied. He even remained guilty of surviving while all his fellow prisoners of war got died.

Yet every day he carries them, nurses them, hold them, cuts them open and sews them up, plays cards for their souls and dares death to save one more life. He lies and cheats and robs too, but for them, always for them. For he has come to love them, and every day he understands that he is failing in his love, for everyday more and more of them die. (TNRDN 203)

Darky Gardiner is one of the characters in the *Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013). It is through him that Flanagan illustrates the emotions and the anguishes of war times. Darky Gardiner is so very appealing to the readers because he was an excellent and extra ordinary human being with an inherent goodness that always made him help others in every way possible. He remained optimistic even on the verge of disappointments and unfortunate events. Darky's health deteriorated in the worst manner and he did not possess anything and not even a pair of proper shoes. He was so weak that he had to crawl towards the work site. In spite of all these derangements, he always remained optimistic. "If he ate his rice ball now, thought Darky Gardiner, he would have nothing more to eat for another twelve hours. If he kept it, he would have five hours until their short lunch break- five hours in which he could at least look forward to the prospect of food. But if he ate it now, he would have neither food nor hope" (TNRDN 229). Food was one of the basic necessities that those prisoners needed for survival and even that becomes a luxury in the campsite. They were given meagre and that too damaged food. Yet Darky feels happy over his stale food and, he,

being very much optimistic, never once complained and rather preserved it for longer periods of time. Dorrigo Evans suffers from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder after the war.

Yet another instance narrated by Dorrigo Evans exhibiting his PTSD is as follows. This is the most agonizing and calamitous passage of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013). It describes that even doctors who are considered to be living Gods, treacherously cheat their patients. The captured American soldier was calmed on seeing the white coats of the Japanese doctors. In spite of being from the enemy side, he believed in the humanity of doctors. But to his horror, even before he could scream, his liver is taken out of his body. In the prime of his youth, he shrinks considerably and grows old. Before he could realize the actuality, his beating heart is taken out and is placed on the scales. Flanagan has so effectively described the terrifying, nightmarish scenes of trauma, recited to Dorrigo Evans by Nakamura, while explaining to him how even the Japanese doctors were helping the Emperor in inhuman ways. Nakamura's memory affects Dorrigo Evans and till the end of his life, Evans could not come out of it. This is the massive effect of trauma in individuals:

Professor Ishiyama first cut into his abdomen and cut away part of his liver, then sewed the wound up. Next he removed the gall bladder and a section of his stomach. The American, who looked an intelligent and vital young man at the beginning, now looked old and weak. His mouth was gagged but he was quickly beyond any screaming. Finally, Professor Ishiyama removed his heart. It was still beating. When he put it on the scales the weights trembled.

(TNRDN 356)

Flanagan's select fiction can be classified under literary trauma texts. Literary approaches to trauma have the potential to engage the readers' powers of emotional identification and sympathy on the one hand and critical deliberation on the other. The contribution of trauma writers posits, strives to make terrifying, alien experiences more understandable and accessible and thereby provide a means of witnessing the history of historically marginalized people.

Literary trauma texts expose and work with the essential paradox that characterizes trauma narratives in general. Any attempt to communicate with trauma results in the resistance of ordinary processes like remembering, narrating, representing and comprehending. Trauma has become a prominent topic in life writing and fiction. Trauma studies has emerged as a new field within the humanities and aesthetics.

Literary trauma texts have a particular impact on readers because they operate in an imaginary and textual realm. While the specific functions of trauma fiction may vary from text to text, the prominence is mostly laid upon each individual text's depiction of individual trauma history, the socio-cultural context, and the political agenda. Literary trauma writing is an important form of engagement with trauma and it stands with psychological and historical approaches as well as non-fictional trauma narratives. Literary trauma texts attempt to communicate ordinary processes of remembering and narrating, of representation and comprehension, by overcoming the restraints posed by trauma. Literary trauma writing performs a complex balancing act regarding the unspeakability, unnarratability, and incomprehensibility of trauma. These interrelations, however, have been theorized significantly in different ways.

The very notion of writing traumatic experiences may not make sense in the initial phase. If the horror element of any traumatic experience can be articulated and told as a story and no matter how terrible the story is, it becomes part of an autobiographical narrative, and it changes the character dramatically. One embeds traumatic experiences in memory through questioning where and when it happened and its interpretations. The history of trauma is a history of repeated gaps and ruptures, with cyclical periods of attention and neglect, of fascination and rejection. Literary trauma texts often expose and work with the essential part, that characterizes trauma narratives in general. The transformation of the trauma into a narrative memory allows the story to be verbalized and communicated, to be integrated into one's own, and other's knowledge of the past, may lose both the precision and the force that characterizes traumatic recall.

The concept used for analyzing Flanagan's trauma texts is "A Sense of foreshortened future". The Istanbul Protocol, a United Nations guide for investigating and documenting cases of torture, describes one of its long-term effects as follows: "The victim has a subjective feeling of having been irreparably damaged and having undergone an irreversible personality change. He or she has a sense of foreshortened future without expectation of a career, marriage, children, or normal lifespan" ("Istanbul Protocol" 47).

A "sense of foreshortened future" is also mentioned as a symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the fourth edition of the (DSM-IV-TR, p. 468). In DSM-5 there is a more general statement about various negative expectations concerning the future. The American Psychiatric Association's recognition and diagnosis of traumatic experience and its effects, under the title Post-traumatic Stress

Disorder (PTSD), is the culmination of a long history of the relationship between psychiatry and trauma. Caruth defines PTSD as:

an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomenon...these responses to trauma are not prescribed by traumatic event itself, because the traumatization of witnesses to the event will vary; nor are they informed by the meanings attached the event by witnesses, meanings that might render the reality of the event so unpalatable that they and the event remain lodged in the witness's unconscious. (Caruth 167)

Caruth opines that any tragic event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time of its occurrence, but later in the mind of the victim who experiences it. It is not the event itself that returns in the dreams or flashbacks or hallucinations and repetitive behaviour, but the failure to process it consciously and then to represent the event. Repetition is the attempt to master what was missed during first time round. Trauma studies have an ambivalent relationship with psychoanalytical understanding of the life of the unconscious and why the closing down of the traumatized mind's capacity for association. Trauma is contagious, unlocatable and uncontainable by witnesses and events. The force of trauma is felt in the testimonial language and literature and witnessing it, is constituted with the process of listening to another person or reading their texts.

A sense of foreshortened future is to be distinguished from domain of temporality. The traumatized person continues to recall and recollect what had happened in the past and remains anxious about his immediate present and future. The



person finds his mind struck in his past to the time when the tragedy struck his life. Hence, a foreshortened future is a matter of what is anticipated. It is a negative evaluation of what the future offers rather than an altered sense of the future itself. Sometimes a man may experience of “moving forward” in time, along with a change in how past, present, future is felt, and the relationship between them as experienced. Certain other symptoms of trauma are frequent flashbacks and the feelings of the inability to move on from what has happened, can also be understood in terms of this phenomenon.

The main characteristics of a sense of foreshortened future are enduring personality change after catastrophic experience. The symptoms of this include a hostile or mistrustful attitude toward the world, social withdrawal, feelings of emptiness or hopelessness, a chronic feeling of being constantly threatened and estrangement. And it also is consistent with Judith Herman’s account of what she calls “complex PTSD” (Herman 121).

The experiences of trauma are mainly heterogeneous and that diagnoses such as PTSD are compatible with a range of subtly different predicaments. Even so, the analysis suggests a phenomenological unity, to various symptoms, that might otherwise be regarded as closely related but distinct. The description of PTSD includes numerous symptoms like that of impaired affect modulation and feelings of ineffectiveness, shame, despair or hopelessness. They may feel permanently damaged feelings and a loss of the previously sustained beliefs. Social withdrawal, constantly threatened feeling, impaired relationships with others and a change from the individual’s previous personality characteristics are few among many of the psychological impairment feelings that a traumatic individual possesses of.

Feeling threatened, socially withdrawn, and unable to relate to others can all be construed in terms of losing interpersonal trust. The person suffering from this will be unable to participate in interpersonal relationships of any kind. It is also suggested that loss of trust has a profound effect on what a person believes. In addition to this, loss of trust amounts to a sense that one's life story has been cut short and hence to a feeling of being irreparably damaged. There are perhaps two aspects to feeling ineffective. One is the loss of interpersonal trust that disposes one to lose trust in one's own abilities and the other one is the belief that in a world where meaningful action is impossible, one is unable to do anything of consequence, something that might be expressed in terms of ineffectiveness. A substantial personality change occurs in the course of time.

It is also important to emphasize the interpersonal, social, and cultural aspects of trauma. Traumatic experience is essentially a way of relating to people in general. It elaborates how the victims of trauma respond to one's experience and how it may serve to mitigate or exacerbate the loss of trust that is so central to it. This approach can contribute to an understanding of the interconnectedness between trauma and psychosis. The indispensable regulatory roles, that other people play, help one to shape one's experiences, thoughts, projects, goals, and life stories. The development of psychosis following trauma are internal to an individual. One's beliefs are shaped by one's interactions with others, who provide reassurance and correction. So estrangement from other people affects the *ways* in which beliefs are formed, maintained and revised.

Complete loss of the interpersonal connection can erode one's sense of what is real and of the boundaries between self, other people, and the surrounding world. As a result, the victim is susceptible to symptoms such as hallucinations and delusions.

This unpredictability, further enhanced by the increasing social isolation, may render the victim to further disturbances in the manner of anticipation. Hence, it would be interesting to explore how an all-enveloping loss of trust, relates to and contributes to, dysregulation which is linked to psychosis, where things appear significant in anomalous and unstructured ways.

Alijaz is the protagonist of *Death of a River Guide* (1994). Flanagan has created him as a river guide who hallucinates while drowning. “Sometimes in my sleep I see a terrible flower of death: its stamen stone, its petals water foam variegated with blood, one man disappearing into the foam, another, a different man, arising from the foam. And that different man is me” (DRG 274). Here, Flanagan gives an example of dream trauma and night vision. Alijaz had repeatedly dreamt of a man going into the river and emerging as a different man. Freud’s theory of dreams is highly relevant here. Freud is of the opinion that dreams and visions are part of the unconscious and it means that the traumatic event has affected his psychology so much that, he envisions it in his dreams too.

Having described the origin and development of trauma as a vast research field of study and having defined the contours of a sense of foreshortened future as a tool for understanding the behavioral pattern of human beings, it is equally worth discussing with the in-depth analysis of such traumatic events that are managed and mentioned by the various novelists and its bitter impact on the day -to- day activities of characters from the certain select works. Among them, Flanagan has penned most of his characters in such a way that they have an excellent traumatic narration. The characters staunchly believe that their very existence is meaningless. Unfortunately, not only their lives, but their deaths also have something in common. The characters have an absurd indifference towards their life and a sort of anticipation for their death.

They have this sadistic attitude that only death can relieve them from their burden of life. The novelist, in various novels, mentions the scenes, describing the birthing process of the main characters, where they wish to be never born. It is equally important to confront and debate about the reasons such as why do the characters feel so, why do they lack the vigor to live, why are they uniformly dismal beings who crave only for death, and while facing, death they remain indifferent to their lives.

Using the theory of trauma and the concept of a sense of foreshortened future, a character analysis and an endeavor to understand why the characters sense that they have only foreshortened future needs a detailed inspection. Unlike normal human beings, these characters are erratic in peculiar ways. The narration technique which enables in a clear description of unfathomable trauma is definitely the cinematic narration.

The novel *Wanting* (2008) narrates two intertwined stories one is that of the British novelist Charles Dickens and the other is centered on Mathinna the Aboriginal girl adopted and abandoned by the Governor of Van Diemen Land. Two plots are narrated in the form of metanarrative that is story within the story. To understand the grand narrative one has to comprehend and incorporate the crux of both the stories. The novel narrates numerous painful events that are happening with the characters of the novel. The very title hints at the unfulfilled wishes of the lead protagonists. There is Charles Dickens who has a turbulent family life and an active literary life. And on the other hand there is Mathinna the Aboriginal princess who represents the collective pain experienced by Aborigines during the genocide:

He could not bear her misery, nor her listlessness. He could not forgive the way she withdrew from her sacred duties as a wife and a mother into a

lethargy that seemed to worsen with each new birth – surely a cause for jubilation not melancholy? - and how she grew fatter and duller with each passing day. Why did he resort to the grapes of domestic life – the caustic aside, the peremptory embrace, the sudden, terrible glance of knowing contempt—and why did he respond with pettiness, with rage, with absence.

(*Wanting* 34)

This passage explains the dilemma experienced by Dickens and his wife.

Although Dickens was a successful novelist of his time, most respected and a worthy enough man, he had a dismal and an unhappy married life. He never shared the temperament of his wife. He was guilty of mistreating her but he could not mend their relationship. After the death of their daughter Dora the compatibility between the couple became almost null. Mrs Dickens was experiencing trauma at her own level too. The couple had ten children and with each childbirth her health had deteriorated and her passion for housekeeping and raising children got reduced considerably due to mental trauma and physical unfitness. She finds her husband non-tolerant and unsympathetic and he failed to understand her. She clearly understood that the world of plays and fiction made her husband's life enriching and fruitful and he never wanted her or her children to be the source of happiness for him. In short his world will never incorporate her.

Lady Jane is yet another character who experiences mental trauma immensely. She is a sort of character who desires one thing but pretends to be desiring something else. She had married Sir John for improving her social standing. She always longed to become a mother to a child, but biologically, that was impossible. Every time she conceives, it somehow didn't last. Then, she started assuring herself that she did not

wish for children at all. But that feeling dissipated when she saw the young child

Mathinna:

She never forgot a younger Sir John asking why she was so white, and herself unable to say anything of that small red satin, for shame and fear... The grief had nowhere to go but inside her. And then time ran out: her body changed. And so now, watching the little Aboriginal girl on the beach, Lady Jane was shocked to sense some intolerable weight, dissolving, to feel an unnamable emotion rising. (*Wanting* 50)

Charles Dickens in spite of being a successful novelist of his times, experienced intense emotional turmoil in his married life. He carried a guilt that he could neither save his daughter Dora nor he could stay with her during her death. He also had a guilt that he had been a total failure in matters of compatibility with his wife. This awareness burned hard inside him and kept on inflicting pain within him. “Dora was something Dickens didn’t talk about, not even with Catherine. It wasn’t reducible to risible anecdote or ridiculous dialogue. Against her death seemed to be able to offer neither defense nor explanation” (*Wanting* 167).

Lady Jane wanted to be the mother of Mathinna but she never expressed her desire even to her husband. Mathinna was adopted not as her daughter but as an experiment because she wished to play with her and she remained only as Mathinna’s benefactress and not the mother. “How, as she went on with her dreary litany, Lady Jane wanted to dress that little girl up and tie ribbons in her hair, make her giggle and give her surprises and coo lullabies in her ear. But such frivolities, she knew, would only ruin the experiment and the young child’s chances. Mathinna would one day recognize the wisdom of her benefactress” (*Wanting* 118).

The afore mentioned passage plainly explains her simple desire to become mother to Mathinna and how she could have easily achieved her goal. But her longing remained without any effort and her want to be a mother remains unfulfilled has also been suggested in the title of the novel. Some wishes that are destined to remain wishes will never be fulfilled is one of the indirect messages that the novelist has tried to impart to the readers through this work.

By the end of the novel one can witness the deteriorating life of Mathinna. After years of wandering, she has returned to Van Diemen's Land. The Aboriginal group came to see their own princess but to their disappointment they could not find anything remarkable in her. Mathinna on the other hand, could not relate to them because of her English upbringing. She was not accepted in the English society either. She became marginalized in all the possible ways. She had fallen to such a state that she had to trade her body for survival. Due to her filthy way of life numerous diseases contracted her body and hence her life and death became a complete misery. "But something about Mathinna's fall and the way she now deported herself troubled both men. It had to know whether her seeming acceptance was submission or simple-mindedness or the most profound revolt, a contempt greater than any visited on her by pox-raddled redcoats, shepherds or ticket-of-leave men" (*Wanting* 227).

The people who suffer from Complex PTSD live their life as if there is no tomorrow. They feel hopeless about the future because to entertain hope is to entail the possibility of being disappointed again which they no longer have the strength to cope up with. David Hosier says that the DSM (Diagonostic and Statistical Manuel of Mental disorder) lists one of the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a sense of foreshortened future. PTSD involves several elements of altered feelings, perceptions and beliefs. The patient may have an extreme negative and pessimistic set

of beliefs about future. Those individuals regard the future as bleak, empty and without any meaning. They also feel alterations in the perception of time. They feel themselves to be stuck in the past and unable to move forward in the future. They experience their own life as flashbacks which design their entire structure of existence and they are unable to come out of their trauma and their narrative is an expression of the static stillness.

Narrative foreclosure upholds the strong belief that no further meaning can be derived from it and no possibility of containing any deep relationships with others or achievement of any kind. The individual affected in this way may also cease to feel or care about anything. They can never be committed to any cause or project in the future. The individual also experiences a general loss of trust. A person suffering from such foreclosures believe that any sort of relationship with existence itself is inherently shattered. The person becomes to consider himself a victim and comes to regard life as random and unpredictable. The person's future time is usually in a temporal vacuum. This leads to a feeling that nothing meaningful lies between life and death. Death seems abidingly and perpetually imminent.

In psychological terms trauma is an acute and intensely painful experience. The mental and emotional after effects of such an experience result in a complete re-figuring of the trauma sufferer's relationship with the surrounding world. A characteristic of trauma is the uncontrollable recurrence of events that are too horrible. The traumatic experience cannot be fully experienced by the survivor at the time that which happens or it cannot be incorporated into his or her memory about the past. This uncontrollable resurgence of the painful past is overcome only when the trauma sufferer is able to integrate the traumatic event into a narrative that he or she can control.



The ability to narrate the traumatic past can be considered as a sign of recovery. That means, the person becomes immune to his traumatic past and is able to place it in history or in some sort of autobiography. Extending this conception of individual trauma, one can understand that any kind of suffering or violence inflicted on an entire community also leads to the generation of a collective trauma. Collective or communal trauma entails not to merely a community that which is composed of individual trauma sufferers, but a community whose very nature is transformed, as a consequence of the traumatic event.

William Gould, the main protagonist of *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001) is a victim of "A Sense of Foreshortened Future" and his attitude towards future is the apt case while demonstrating the symptoms of A Sense of Foreshortened Future. "I received seven years for theft of personal property, a further fourteen years for insubordination & twent eight years on top of that for mockery of the crown. It wasn't, it is true the term of my natural life, which would have only been a kindness, but imprisonment for ever" (GBF 48). Gould did not enjoy a peaceful childhood. His childhood was replete with physical tortures and emotional turmoil. Hence, he did not have any hope about attaining a bright future. He forged currency and did petty thefts for survival and when he was charged for the crime and the judgement was passed he was absolutely indifferent to his own fate. Such an attitude is developed in individuals because of the trauma underwent by them in their early life.

The next incident describes the arduous times that he spent in the orphanage among the old priest and the old ladies. They used to read him stories about corporal punishments offered to others and sacrifices underwent by various Saints. Later when Gould himself is imprisoned and was undergoing his term he takes consolation in the

fact that those stories have helped in preparing himself for enduring his time in the jail:

He used to read to me from a Calendar of the Saints, in which for every day there was a saint whose life was an exemplary tale of suffering, torture & original punishments; a fabulous catalogue of virgin martyrs whose voluptuous but eternally pure breast were smote off by lecherous Roman perfects; medieval monks whose levitating became so annoying that they were tied down so as not to disturb the mealtimes of their fellow brothers; anchorites who became famous for flag elating. Really, nothing could have prepared me better for the reality of Van Diemen's Land. (GBF 64)

Flanagan takes great pain to reiterate the punishments given to convicts in colonial Australia. He describes with great detail the numerous forms of punishments given and its impact on the character's psyche. Traditionally, there were four justifications for punishments. They include justice for the victim, deterrence, rehabilitation and social protection. In colonial Australia, there were three main punishments for male convicts; the wheel, irons and floggings. These were inflicted not for the traditional justifications as mentioned above. Instead, they were inflicted to serve as a deterrence, to gain some economic benefit for a vested interest or just because some people in power gained pleasure in witnessing human sorrow.

Flogging was intended to act as a deterrent and it was dispensed for crimes such as neglecting work, attempting escape or general misconduct. It also became common during those times to flog convicts until they confess the crimes or to get information out of them. It was a tool of torture. "A short whip was made of nine strands of leather and knotted along its length to give it an extra bite. The convict was

typically spread eagled over a triangular frame or tied to a tree. Their skin usually split by the fourth lash and the backbone could be exposed by fifty lashes” (“Convict Punishments”).

Flogging was a popular punishment at that time because it was easy to dispense and much of the bureaucratic persons gained some sort of sadistic pleasure by viewing human trauma. As an act of defiance, many convicts tried to avoid showing pain. Flogging sometimes killed the convict or reduced his capacity to work. When convicts were unable to work because they have been flogged, they need to be flogged again for not working. Flanagan has depicted flogging in his works like *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001) and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013). The character Darky Gardiner in the *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) dies because of flogging and it is described in a very painful manner. Even at the time of his death, as a nonagenarian Dorriego Evan's memory is tormented by the scenes of Darky's death.

The jerking movements of Darky Gardiner's body and arms and legs as he tried to protect himself- all these were for guards now just natural obstacles, like rain or bamboo or rock, to be ignored or cut broken. Only when he ceased to struggle did they stop standing him up, and his cries gave way to a long, slow wheezing, like a torn fire bellows, and their grim work slowed to a moderate tempo, taking on the nature of manual labour. (TNRDN 294)

The treadmill was a punishment that seemed to have been devised to make an economic profit out of a convict's transgressions. The convicts had to walk up a revolving set of steps which powered mills that grinded grain to flour. For the convicts, it was really a tiring work and if they did not walk at sufficient speed, they

could be flogged again. If they slipped, their legs could fall into the blades and be mutilated. “In this manner he held the machine breaker tight & began to sing in a soft voice the songs he had learnt from his mother. The smothered man’s body bolted & bucked, but his thrashing seemed to all too quickly grow subdued & then halt altogether. Capois Death stays sitting on the man for a good minute more, then stopped his singing & stood up & dragged his paillasse off” (DRG 99).

Flanagan describes one such accident on the treadmill where a man got stuck between the blades and he pleads the other convicts to step down. But for that they must complete yet another circle. The mutilated man screams in agony and the other convicts also request the guard to kill the man instantly rather than letting him suffer in agony. Capois Death slowly arrives at his pace and kills the man. Flanagan describes the bloody scene with sarcasm with the mutilated man’s death being a break from work for the other convicts and the other convicts wish to prolong his suffering so that they could enjoy some more time to relax. Here Flanagan portrays a world bereft of humanity and compassion.

The Cockchafer was a wondrous cruel machine. It left your body feeling as if it were composed of pain rather than flesh. This was not from the sheer physical fatigue or the rasping effect even a few hours stepping up & down in coarse government slops would have upon one’s groin, leaving it a mass of raw red flesh, but the monstrous brilliance of its utter pointlessness, knowing at the end of the day that your cruel labour was entirely for no other purpose than to propel that monstrous tread wheel. (GBF 91)

*The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) is yet another novel, power packed with traumatic narrative strands. The novel narrates the story of the prisoners

of war. The Australian regiment got taken as prisoners of war by the Japanese regiment, and they were forced to face inhuman treatment and as slaves, during the construction of the Burmese railway while the Second World War was raging on. About sixty-one thousand allied prisoners of war were subjected to forced labour and nearly twelve thousand allied prisoners of war died and got killed brutally. Hence, the Burmese Railway also came to be called as Death railway. Richard Flanagan's father Arch Flanagan, was one of the prisoners of War and this novel is based upon his past. In an interview, Flanagan himself admits that, he and his siblings were the children of the Death Railway.

For good reason, the POWs refer to the slow descent into madness that followed simply with two words: *the Line*. Forever after, there were for them, only two sorts of men: the men who were *on the Line* and the rest of humanity, who were not. Or perhaps only one sort: the men who *survived the Line*. Or perhaps, in the end, even this is inadequate. Dorrigo Evans was increasingly haunted by the thought that it was only the men who *died on the Line*. He feared that only in them was the terrible perfection of suffering and knowledge that made one fully human. (TNRDN 26)

These lines alone are sufficient enough to narrate the cruelty that was inflicted upon the prisoners of war. They were not given sufficient food or clothing or medicines and they were forced to live in an extreme climatic condition since the climate of Japan and Australia are entirely different from each other. Apart from the physical and mental tortures they had to experience various other emotional hazards too and that made these soldiers feel imprisoned in their traumatic memories for a lifetime. There is no deviation which could relieve them from these haunting memories.

The prisoners were required to build the railway line without any proper instruments and machinery and most of the times, they had to use their bodies, amidst filthy surroundings, unsuitable climatic conditions and without medicines. All these have collectively contributed for trapping these soldiers in a life-time of pain and trauma. Their past experiences became so haunting that their past, present and future became entwined in the traumatic cycle. The characters lost their identity and their willpower to live and got pushed towards the abyss of an absurdity of existence. The characters suffer from guilt of survival and they consider themselves better dead than living amidst these painful memories.

As naked slaves to their section of the Line, with nothing more than ropes and poles, hammers and bars, straw baskets and hoes, with their backs and legs and arms and hands, they began to clear the jungle for the Line and break the rock for the Line and move the dirt for the Line and carry the sleepers and the iron rails to build the Line. As naked slaves, they were starved and beaten and worked beyond exhaustion on the Line. And as naked slaves they began to die for the Line. (TNRDN 49)

The idea of absurdism is a common theme in many existentialist works, particularly in Camus. Absurdity is the notion of contrast between two things. Camus explains it in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, “the absurd is born out of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world” (Camus 28). Absurdism is a philosophical stance, embracing a wide range of relativist perspectives that which implies the fact that, the efforts of humanity to find or absolutely define, limit, express or exclude the inherent meanings of anything, including human existence, are absurd, due to the actual lack of meaning:

I stood behind the prisoner, got my balance, carefully examined his neck- skinny and old, filth in its folds; I've never forgotten that neck. Before it had begun it was over, and I was wondering why there was little globules of fat on my sword that wouldn't rub off with the paper they handed me. That's all I was thinking- where did that fat come from in such a scrawny man's scrawny neck? His neck was dirty, grey, like dirt you piss on. But once I had cut it open the colours were so vivid, so alive- the red of his blood, the white of his bone, the pink of his flesh, the yellow of that fat. Life! Those colours were life itself. (TNRDN 123).

Colonel Kota represents those people who found pleasure in traumatizing the prisoners of war. Colonel Kota is a heartless man who is also an opportunist. Flanagan mentions that even during the traumatic times, there were people who extracted sadistic pleasure in others' suffering. Colonel Kota is trained to torment others and when the war was over he was willing to handover Nakamura who was his closest associate as a prisoner of war. The afore mentioned lines explain the horror of killing a person but it is relevant to note that the horror and the trauma is narrated in a light hearted manner.

Trauma is present in the novel not only in the terror-some and horrible scenes but also in the intimacies of the heart. The entire novel is narrated as flashbacks of a nonagenarian, Dorrigo Evans. He remembers Amy, who was his love interest, but got married to his uncle Keith. Amy married Keith for the sake of her dead child but love never existed in between them. Yet she continued to live with him. This pain and sadness made her question her very existence.

But love is love.

Is it? Sometimes I think it's a curse. Or a punishment. And when I am with him I am lonely. When I am sitting opposite him, I am lonely. When I wake in the middle of the night lying next to him, I am so lonely. And I don't want to be. He loves me and I can't say...it would be too cruel. He pities me, I think, but it's not enough. Maybe I pity him. Do you understand?" (TNRDN 143).

The next novel that needs an in-depth analysis in the light of trauma theory and a sense of foreshortened future is *Death of a River Guide* (1994). Alijaz Cosini works as a river guide in the Franklin river and he is introduced to the readers as a person, who is stuck, in between the rocks that are within the Franklin river and only his hands are exposed. Flanagan narrates his life story in a metanarrative fashion. That is, he is explaining his life, before the accident and his visions and after the accident. Alijaz again has typical characteristics of Flanagan's characters. He is absurd, for nobody understands him, and an easy erratic man. It is worthwhile to discern why he reacts so and why Alijaz Cosini has become an escapist and always turning his back to the questions posed by life?

"My mother frequently lamented she would have been much better served if Maria Magdalena Svevo had taken me and left her the whiskey. Maria Magdalena Svevo laughed at that too" (DRG 5). Alijaz, when he is granted a vision, construes his life from the very moment of his birth. He traumatically depicts the attitude of his mother towards him. He remembers that his mother had received only a bottle of whisky and Alijaz from his father. Alijaz is affected by the notion of anonymity. He can be compared to Albert Camus' character Meursault from the novel *The Stranger* (1942). It is said that Camus brought his theory of existentialism through this novel.



The following lines explain the existential attitude of Alijaz Cosini who staunchly believed in the absurdity of existence. Here, through the character of Cosini Flanagan figures out all the characteristics of existentialism. Alijaz had a difficult childhood and he had to witness his mother's painful death. He had only brief moments of joy when he lived with Couta Ho for three years. But their infant daughter Jemma died and his happy period came to an end. A person who had experienced joy only as a trance and had to face trauma for the majority of his life span, it is probable for him to experience the existentialist crisis.

Though I was in constant flight, something about me was essentially still. The world rolled on but without me on it. I watched in disbelief. All of it. Its wars and its famines and its children selling themselves off Fitzroy Street... The world had no place for me and I saw it in all its ludicrous, crazed ways but it did not see me, and I would have to say there was a strange freedom in this.

(DRG 39)

This is a part of the vision that Alijaz witnesses where he sees his Grandfather Boy and his grandmother Rose. Rose always claimed that she came from a noble family and that Boy belonged to a generation of convicts. Because of this issue or rather the ego their married life was not at all blissful. She always considered him inferior and even he believed to be so. He loved his wife and children very much but he spent the majority of his time in the forest. On the occasion of her death, Boy reaches an anagnorisis that her family was no different from his. Boy is shocked to know the truth that Rose had hidden so many things from him all her life. He thinks at that juncture that how different their life would have been if Rose had told him the truth. Rose's behavior was always based on the bias that is present in the society.

No society would respect or approve them had they known their family past. Due to this consciousness and to ensure a serene future for her children, Rose kept on lying to herself and to her husband and even to her children and to everyone she met that she, belonging to a superior class, has been going through much because of marrying a man who is blow her stature. Belonging to a convict generation is a familial trauma that has been experienced by almost all the members of the society.

‘Why the hell...?’ said Boy, but his voice trailed off, because he did know why the hell, because he did know what it must have meant to her, because he did know how it must have been terrible for her to continually lie to herself and to everyone else, but worse to turn and look at the unspeakable, unnameable shadow, and to give it a name and give tongue to that name in conversation with others. (DRG 65)

Alijaz Cosini’s yet another vision is where he sees his own father, Harry’s, reaction to his grandfather Boy’s death. It is notable that not only Alijaz but the previous generations too have experienced trauma of one sort or the other. Here, young Harry’s indifference to his father’s death is explained in an egocentric manner. Harry had lost his mother few days before and now his father too and he was his sole pillar of strength and now very much dead. Flanagan has depicted familial trauma through Alijaz’s visions.

It did not anger Harry that the carrion-eating devils had eaten half his father’s face and parts of his hands and arms. That was how it was. It was the same law that allowed them to snare wallabies with the slag of blood in their mouths. But like he felt for the wallabies he felt for his father. He felt shock.

The way that in death the pink bone of his father's skull looked so similar to the pink bone of the wallaby carcasses (DRG 73).

As a young schoolboy, he was tortured immensely by his school mates and even while dying, he remembers all that and that he was not invited to a single birthday party. All except him were part of the fun and festivities. Traumatized childhood lays the foundation for the development of every facet of absurd attitude towards life. "And I can hear what the schoolmates are saying to the small boy. They are calling him wop and dago and greaser and Jew boy. He is hurt, but none of it hurts like the hurt of the time when he discovers that everyone in the class has been invited to Phil Hodge's tenth birthday party. Except him" (DRG 89). Here Flanagan has effectively traced the depth of pain, even from a very tender age and how it leaves a forever mark and trauma upon the human psyche.

Alijaz's mother's sudden death and the pain associated to it, was something that which he could never part with. He had never shared the incident with anyone, but with his lover Couta Ho. "He told Couta Ho how one night he had found Sonja sitting on the floor of her bedroom weeping with pain. Sonja had told Alijaz she was dying, that although the doctors said it was only gallstones, she knew different. She told him she loved him, that she loved him...In his stomach, for the first time, he felt the fear arise, the terrible terrible fear that was never to depart (DRG 104)." Flanagan mentions about the terrible fear that was never to depart and that much was the effect of trauma upon human minds. A trauma can alter personality traits and a person will never be the same before and after the trauma. A person loses his optimism, his confidence, his willingness to face the world once he is inflicted with trauma. Narrating trauma and memory are often difficult because as Cathy Caruth opines,

trauma sometimes becomes incommunicable. It is a proverb that the fear, which gives animals the loud screams make a man dumb.

How did Alijaz try to shrink the tragedy? By pretending it was Couta's alone.

Watching all this unfold for a second time, it is this macabre refusal to acknowledge his own involvement in the death that is so sad. More precisely: his sadness short circuits itself by being unable to recognize its own existence.

Alijaz said little; in fact he said less and less... 'You poor thing. Even if you wanted to, you couldn't understand.' Which was true and he knew it. (DRG 110)

Alijaz shared a true bonding with Couta Ho and they had a baby daughter named Jemma. But she died suddenly in her cradle and with that everything changed forever between them. Couta Ho understood Alijaz and his problems but his indifference towards Jemma's death was intolerable for her. She knew that Alijaz was incapable of grieving, yet she expected him to grieve their daughter's loss. Here, Alijaz is a character who is similar to Meursault of Albert Camus' play *The Stranger* (1946). Meursault is mocked by the society for his incapability to mourn for his mother's death. Alijaz is sad over the incident but does not know the societal norms of expressing grief.

People like Alijaz finds survival difficult in a society. He had worked as a river guide for a better salary and he also worked as a football coach. Pig's Breath is the company which had called Alijaz for an interview. The manager over there had previously worked with Alijaz and has known his weakness and character. He was offered a job for a very low salary and the person knew that Alijaz loved the river so much and he would settle for any meagre salary. "And while Alijaz sits there trying to

look as if chewing over numbers, Pig's Breath can tell what he is in fact doing is smelling the river, hearing it run, watching the rain mists rise from its valleys, drinking its tea colored waters from his cupped hands" (DRG 122). There always exist chances of cheating a person with absurd attitude and with a traumatic mind-set.

Alijaz in his vision while drowning in the river Franklin, witnesses not only his trauma but also that of the generations before. He envisions his great ancestor Black Pearl. He watches her, along with three other women, on a beach and they are the slaves of a Whiteman. They catch wallabies and kangaroos for him. Alijaz sees the scene of Black pearl's rape and the manner in which his family line is conceived from the very beginning. "She feels a white face behind her and she knows that she will never forget the fear and humiliation of this moment, knows that she will never forget, nor will her children nor the children they beget nor their children, even long after they have forgotten from where their terrible fears come, long after they cease to understand why they are afraid" (*Death* 314). Alijaz believes that this might be the reason for his family's suffering. The moment Black Pearl feels the breath of a white man, she is afraid and that fear or trauma is the cause of pain for everyone in his family. This is the concept mentioned by Marianne Hirsch in her work on Postmemory. It states that the trauma experienced by the family members is experienced by the generations to follow. The trauma or pain is stored in the unconscious and gets imprinted on the DNA for the generations to come.

What is a minute? How long have I been here? Minutes? Hours? Days?... But as these words scream through my mind, I feel the pulsing of the rocks dying away. The helicopter has enough footage of my death and is returning to Hobart to file its report in time of the evening news. All my hope and despair

and pain seem to leave with the chopper. All that remains is an immense stillness. (DRG 318)

Through this passage, Flanagan brings to the forefront the act of the commercialization of other's trauma. There are many people in the world who derive sadistic pleasure, out of the suffering of the others. They are unmindful of the pain and suffering that others go through. The human world becomes bereft of humanity when such atrocities happen. The river guide Alijaz Cosini is stuck in the river bed and his friends have tried their level best to save him. Then as a final hope, a helicopter arrives and Alijaz believes for a matter of time that he might be saved but he as the narrator sadly reports his hopes have flown away with the helicopter. The helicopter had come to capture pictures for the news company and left Alijaz to his fate.

The final work that has to be analyzed in the light of trauma theory a sense of foreshortened future and existentialism is *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997). *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* narrates the story of Bojan Bulow and Sonja Bulow. They were natives of Slovenia but had immigrated to Tasmania due to the war in Slovenia and in search of job and better living conditions. Both Bojan and Maria, his wife nurture immense traumatic memories of the war time and their lives are torn apart due to this. Unable to bear the pain Maria walks into a blizzard and commits suicide. After many years Bojan develops a love interest with Jean but Sonja, his daughter does not approve of it and Bojan decides to leave the matter then and there. Bojan had never revealed to Sonja the depth of his and her mother's trauma. But Sonja was always curious to know more about her dead mother.

Bojan almost hid his traumatic past from Sonja. He never felt the necessity to narrate it to her and the consequence of this action was huge that even after years of living together she could not understand her parents. In order to comprehend the thought process and the behavioral pattern of individuals one must know something about their past that has shaped their present and which makes them react the way they react to the various enigmas of life. “And of what did Bojan Buloh not tell?... In a corner bound to a kitchen chair to prevent her harming herself further, he saw his mute aunt Angelica who had grown so frightened that she had tried to kill herself earlier that evening, by slitting her throat” (TSOHC 108).

Bojan never told Sonja about his past in the war torn Slovenia. He never told Sonja how he had to witness the brutal murder of his relatives. One of his mute aunts had even tried to commit suicide by slitting her throat and they had to tie towels around her neck that had turned red with blood. It was very difficult for a small boy to tolerate such violence.

They killed all but one of the partisans, whom they made dig a hole in the ground. It was still early morning and after half an hour or so of the partisan making very slow going of the rocky mountain soil, the German soldiers presumably grew sick of waiting for the hole was nowhere deep enough for its purpose. They made the partisan squat in his shallow hole and they filled the hole back in, leaving only the partisan’s head exposed.

Then they kicked that head back and forth like some weird fixed football until the partisan was dead. (TSOHC 109)

Yet another instance of violence in the mind of Bojan in the war torn Slovenia is how his relatives got killed brutally. He had to witness horrific scenes where one of

the partisans is made to dig a hole in the earth and in which he himself is buried neck deep and the enemy kick the head until the person is dead. With such traumatic memories, a person cannot be expected to behave with sanity. Sonja also found her father a strange, absurd man but did not realize the reason for his existentialist behavior.

Sonja is a woman who had suffered harsh physical and mental trauma in the hands of her father. Bojan used to whip her desperately. “‘you never cry’, said Sonja. “No matter how bad you feel, you never cry” (TSOHC 134). This is the principle that she had followed in her life. Not to cry not to show weakness and even when a baby starts crying, she administers this advice to the baby also.

Sonja always dreams about awful and much dreaded things. In one of her stays with Picotti's, Mr Picotti, initiated sexual abuse upon her but she ran away from it. And the second sequel of the dream consists of such events when she finds her father along with Jane. Again it is an agonizing situation for a young girl because she was always afraid of losing her father. She liked Jane and Jane had brought a sort of peace and harmony in their lives but Sonja was not ready to share her father's love with anyone. After she had denied the comfort of Jane, her father turned to alcoholism and started torturing her by beating her every night. She got very used to beatings and the pain associated it and that, she refused even to sigh at every beating. “And her daydream gave way to a terrible nightmare. She was once more in the back seat of Picotti's Pontiac, cowering in the corner. Picotti sat in the front seat, head turned toward Sonja, smiling, beckoning her to come to him. She stole a glance out of the window and saw Bojan talking to Jean in the orchard” (TSOHC 222). Freud in his theory states that the trauma, in the minds of the characters, emerges in the form of dreams. “The waking life with, with its trials and joys, its pleasures and pains are



never repeated; on the contrary, the dream aims at relieving us of these” (Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams* 5).

Sonja’s parents experienced great agony because of the war and the imminent tortures in Slovenia. When the prospect of electricity and its related job opportunity came in Tasmania, they decided to migrate to the new land in hope of a better life and living conditions. They fled Europe with so much hope but soon their hopes fled them. They received no better welcome in the new land. There again they were treated as wogs and got excommunicated from the other settler communities. In Australia the term wog refers to residents of Southern European, Mediterranean or Middle Eastern immigrants. It is a racist term. Wogs used to wear baggy clothes, apply lot of gel in their hair and they spoke in their own slang. Originally, the term wog was used as an insult but has turned into a word of classification.

By such alchemy the dull fear of the past was transformed into electric power, the coveted gold of the new age, and the bottom of the alchemists’ distilling flask all that remained were the pestilential by-products of that magical process for which nobody cared: the cracked natural world and the broken human lives, both dregs easily discounted when their insignificant cost was tallied against the growing treasure of the burgeoning hydroelectricity grid, and no-one counted the growing cost and no-one thought that tomorrow might be worse than today, least of all on that day so long ago when Sonja’s parents had steamed into the port of Hobart with their sixteen-month-old daughter, at what they brought was the end of their long flight from Europe. (TSOHC 22).

Sonja faintly remembers her mother and the games that she used to play with Sonja and even the lace she used to wear. She was always unsatisfied with their life in

Tasmania and she used to remind Sonja that the place was not Slovenia. The trauma of having to abandon everything in their homeland and lose their roots is yet another traumatic feeling. These traumas eventually make a person devoid of emotion and transforms him into an existentialist.

And Maria wriggling her ring finger this way and that, that thin finger with the wedding ring loose upon it, Maria saying: 'Because it is Tasmania and not Slovenia. Because our world is upside down.' And as if to accentuate her point Maria grasped Sonja's palm. Maria ran her ring finger around Sonja's small palm, raising white circles upon the child's soft puffy flesh" (TSOHC 31).

Richard Flanagan's characters from the select novels have undergone trauma from the very event of childbirth and that trauma in one form or another have continued to haunt them throughout their lives. Their very transformation into an existentialist one with a sense of foreshortened future is the result of trauma that has inflicted and developed in their souls. Another example for the absurd character is of Alijaz Cosini, "Granted I ought to. I'll give you that, but then I've always been easy going. Lazy, some might say, but I wouldn't agree. Or maybe I would. All that they say about me being lazy, about being a drifter, about having no future, about not knowing what I want out of life, maybe it is all true" (DRG 13).

Existentialism is a philosophical and literary perspective that focuses on the way he or she understands the world. After World War II, some philosophers and writers saw the world as an indifferent place without a set of universal rules that can be applied to everyone. After the Second World War existential writers started to think of human beings as confused and powerless. The perspective till that time was

to see humans through society's expectations. They were not ready to paint the perfect picture but rather they wanted to point out the challenges that often had no solutions.

Chapter three elucidates how Flanagan has portrayed traumatic lives of his characters. One can achieve relief from traumatic incidents only by articulating about it. Flanagan has employed mimetic and antimimetic models of narration to illustrate effects of trauma upon the characters. Flanagan's characters experience a sense of foreshortened future which transforms them into absurd beings. Flanagan opines that in order to get rid of the pain one has to squeeze out trauma from one's mind. Characters from the select novels experience trauma because of immigration, convict life, Aboriginal genocide and as side effects of being settler society.

## Chapter Four

### A Postcolonial Discourse into the Literary World of Flanagan

Chapter Four entitled “A Postcolonial Discourse into the Literary World of Flanagan” aims to amalgamate the two fields of study, namely narratology and postcolonialism. The merging up of these two disciplines definitely have got both practical as well as theoretical prominence and impact. Both these areas are the growing spheres of research and academics. Gerald Prince’s essay entitled “On a Postcolonial Narratology” published in *A Companion to Narrative Theory* (2005) argues that new meanings or understandings can be unearthed, when one probes into literature, incorporating different lenses of narratology and postcolonialism. Hence it is equally relevant to scrutinize the select novels of Richard Flanagan from a postcolonial narratological point of view. This chapter would explore the different theoretical concepts of postcolonialism in coalition with the select novels.

Postcolonial literature assumes a unique perspective on literature and politics that demands deeper contemplation. Postcolonial literature is generally concerned with literature produced by the colonial powers and the works produced by the colonized. The postcolonial theory takes into focus the issues of power, economics, politics, religion, and culture and how these elements work as per colonial hegemony. Postcolonial criticism also questions western literary canon and literary history as the significant tools involved in the knowledge-making procedure.

Colonialism also inserts a sort of trauma on the colonized. There are several other factors that are intensely associated with post colonialism. In order to have a clear-cut notion of what post colonialism is all about, one should foster a clear

understanding of the colonial history and the way the world reacted and revolted against it when it came face to face with colonialism.

Gerald Prince cites the scope of amalgamating both the areas of research, “I will sketch a postcolonial narratology which would basically adopt and rely on the result of (post)classical narratology but would inflect it and enrich it by wearing a set of postcolonial lenses to look at the narrative” (Prince, “On a Postcolonial Narratology” 373). The necessity to consider each and every aspect of postcolonial narratology, with a thorough examination of the characters and the characteristics, from the select fiction of Flanagan reveals the various modalities and nuances that are involved in the process of narrating postcolonial literature. The thread of postcolonial aspects runs in all the select novels and some features are really prominent in specific novels. The quotes or situations stand out as unique and apt in the process of the representation of the postcolonial features.

Gerald Prince is one of the leading scholars of narrative poetics and he has helped immensely in shaping the discipline of narratology, developing key concepts such as narratee, narrativity, the disnarrated and the narrative grammar. Gerald G Prince is an American academic and literary theoretician. His works include *Narratology: The Form and Functioning of Narrative* (1982), *A Dictionary of Narratology* (1987), *Narrative as Theme: Studies in French Fiction* (1992) etc. He is also a distinguished critic of the contemporary French literature and is considered as an authority of French novel. In 2013, he received the Wayne C Booth Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society for the study of narrative. By bringing together critical discourse analysis of personal narratives and postcolonial theory, this study aims to provide different lenses in the process of looking at the discourse analysis.

In his seminal essay “On a Postcolonial Narratology” (2005), Gerald Prince defines the prospect of applying post-colonial theory to narratology. He cites that:

Narratology can be useful (and it has been used) in the accomplishment of these very tasks: even the simple characterization of the points of view selected, the speed adopted, the modes of discourse exploited, the actantial roles foregrounded, the transformations favoured in particular narratives can help to shed light on the nature and functioning of the ideology those narratives represent and construct. (Prince 372)

Postcolonial narratology is sensitive to matters associated with postcolonial characteristics like that of hybridity, migrancy, otherness, fragmentation, diversity and power relations. Apart from taking notice of the relative explicitness, precision and prominence of temporal anachronisms, narratologists are attentive to the nature of time as well as action. The action of a plot can be straight, cyclical, or looping, regressive or progressive, flowing irregularly or regularly and subjective rather than objective. It can be characterized by duration or by date segmented according to artificial or perhaps natural measures, close or distant from deictic focuses, curative, energizing, paralyzing and degrading.

Postcolonial narratology aims to account for that kind of characters who inhabit the special and the temporal settings and to supply instruments for the exploration and description of their significance, their complexity, the stability of their destination and identity, or the actual slots they occupy and the actual functions that they fulfil. Postcolonial narratology also studies the character’s utterances, thoughts and feelings, their motivations, their interactions and their positions with respect to categories like goodness, badness, class, power, sex, gender, sexuality, colonized or

colonizing, race or ethnicity, otherness and hybridity, collaboration, assimilation, resistance, ambivalence, linguistics and narrative capacity.

Postcolonial narratology can characterize the kind of events like goal directed actions and mere happenings, processes, accomplishments or achievements. It will specify the syntagmatic, paradigmatic, spatiotemporal, logical, transformational relations between these events and the types of change that the latter can bring about. The level of narrating has been studied much by the classical narratology and they also feature narrative speed and canonical tempos. They effectively investigate the narrative frequency, scrutinize the distance, their point of view and also examining the type of discourse the text can adopt. They also analyze the major kinds of narration that is posterior, anterior, simultaneous and intercalated. It also explores the distinctive features of first, second and third person narratives. Sometimes chronological ordering is adopted in narration and there are times where cases of chronicity, where the events are deprived of all the temporal connections and there are cases of anti-chronicity in which, the events are dated in erratic and contradictory ways. There are cases of poly-chronicity, where the narration involves and exploits a multivalued system of temporal ordering.

The term colonialism is important in defining the specific form of cultural exploitation that have developed with the expansion of Europe over the last four hundred years. Edward Said is of the opinion that: “‘imperialism’ means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory; ‘colonialism’, which is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory (Said 8).”

In Flanagan's select novels one can see the portrayal of other and colonized society. It is significant that no society ever attained full freedom from the colonial system by any involuntary action. It is repeatedly witnessed in history that any colonized nation attained freedom by active disengagement of the colonial power, that was provoked by a considerable internal struggle for self-determination and most importantly, extended by active violent opposition by the colonized. Hence, colonialism is often merely modified and developed into the neo-colonialism of the post-independence period.

*Wanting* (2008) is the fifth novel of Flanagan which depicts the story of the Aboriginal war and how the aboriginals who had surrendered to the English suffered and got destroyed in the hands of the masters. When the aboriginals began to emerge victorious with the help of the tribal warfare method the English adopted another plan where they were offered the protection of a protector who will offer shelter and protection to the tribes who surrendered. In this way the British won the Aboriginal war. Augustus Robinson was the Protector of Wyblenna Island and he served as the all in all of the island. This narrative gives a glimpse into the inner mind of the Englishman while he was cruelly slaughtering the Aboriginal king. "He had wished to hurt the black man for his incurable illness, for all their failures to allow him to cure them, to civilize them, to give them the chance no one else cared to give them" (*Wanting* 14). This has been the belief of the Protector of Van Diemen Land who had come to treat and cure King Romeo, the tribal chief, who had fallen ill and out of power. They had accepted the protection of the white Protector due to their original protector's incapacity. Mathinna his daughter had fetched the colonial Protector in order to save her father. The Protector operated on King Romeo but failed to save his



life. Flanagan has clearly represented what exactly the white Protector felt about the black Aboriginal king.

A way of reading and rereading texts of both metropolitan and colonial cultures draw a deliberate attention to the profound and inescapable effects of colonization on literary production, anthropological accounts historical records and scientific writings. It is a form of deconstructive reading that is usually applied to works emanating from the colonizers and that which demonstrates the extent to which any given text contradicting its underlying assumptions in case of civilization, justice, aesthetics, sensibility, race and also reveals its colonialist ideologies and processes. Postcolonial criticism also questions the role of the Western literary canon and the Western history as the dominant forms in knowledge making. This may raise many questions like that of:

How does the literary text, explicitly or allegorically, represent various aspects of colonial oppression? What does the text reveal about the problematics of postcolonial identity, including the relationship between personal and cultural identity and such issues as double consciousness and hybridity? What persons or group does the work identify as “other” or stranger? How are such persons/groups described and treated? What does the text reveal about the politics and/or psychology of anti-colonialist resistance? What does the text reveal about the operations of cultural difference- the ways in which race, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, cultural beliefs, and customs combine to form individual identity- in shaping our perceptions of ourselves, others, and the world in which we live? How does the text respond to or comment upon the characters, themes or assumptions of a canonized (colonialist) work? Are there meaningful similarities among the literatures of different postcolonial

populations? How does a literary text in the Western canon reinforce or undermine colonialist ideology through its representation of colonisation and/ or its inappropriate silence about colonized people? (Tyson 378)

Postcolonial state is yet another term applied to the new nation states that has emerged out of the process of decolonization in the post Second World War period. Another synonym for postcolonial state is the developmental state. The postcolonial state has been characterized in two different ways, that is, in terms of its political and economic agenda and in terms of its infrastructural capacity. *Gould's Book of fish* (2001) has an instance of how the colonizers exploit the natural resources of the colony.

The commandant then ordered the commissariat store to be opened up for trade. He ordered that the settlement's entire stock of barrels of salted pork be traded with a Nantucket whaling merchant for two old whalers...the other returned to a starving settlement living on rationed flour & fish, with two humpback whales in its hold, & the Commandant began a trade in whale oil. (GBF168)

Postcolonialism initially commenced with the context of trade, but then, the colonizers established their thumb rule and made maximum benefit out of the colonies. Here, Flanagan has provided enough specimens about how the Commandant of Sarah Island traded with the island's resources just to fulfil his fancies. The Commandant of Sarah Island is not an officially appointed chief. Yet in one way or another he has reached this position and he began exploiting the wood and whale oil in the island in order to construct a fancy building that which copies the relics of Europe.

Colonial discourse is compelled to be ambivalent because colonizers never want colonial subjects to be the exact replicas of the colonizers. Ambivalence is another term that was first developed in psychoanalysis in order to describe a continual fluctuation between wanting one thing and wanting its opposite. It also refers to a simultaneous attraction and repulsion towards an object, person or action. Adapting into the colonial discourse theory by Homi Bhabha, it describes the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The relationship is ambivalent because the colonized subject is never opposed to the colonizer. This concept is related to hybridity because just as ambivalence 'decentres' authority from its position of power, hybridity results in the authority becoming hybridized, when placed in a colonial context. It can be inflected by other cultures too.

Flanagan narrates the story of an Aboriginal princess Mathinna who got adopted by the Governor of Van Diemen's Land and it narrates how her life got ruined due to this. Mathinna was given a little English education during their stay in Van Diemen's Land but the governor and his wife abandoned her as they left for London. Mathinna was sent to an orphanage where she somehow survived the strident conditions but she could not associate with her own kin. She looked at them with disregard and she considered them stupid mere black fellows. She considered herself distinct from them. Mathinna was neither accepted by the Whites nor she was agreeable to the Blacks. This ambiguity became the cause for her dismal end.

Mathinna swung her conversation to dresses they were now wearing in London, and, though she knew she was only repeating what she had heard years before, she tried to lead the conversation as she had seen Lady Jane lead her soirees, introducing a topic and then turning to someone else for their

opinion. Yet when she tried to look her companions directly in the eye, Mathinna realised this wasn't Government House but Ire Bye's sly grog shop- an earthen - floor split timber hut of two rooms at North West bay- that it wasn't a soiree and they were anything but society, just stinking no-good stupid blackfellows. (*Wanting* 244)

Richard Flanagan's narratives exhibit the Alterity is derived from the Latin *alteritas*, meaning the state of being other or different or diverse or simply the otherness. Its English derivatives are alternate, alternative, alternation, and alter ego. This term was adopted by philosophers as an alternative to 'otherness', in order to register a change in the Western perceptions, about the relationship between consciousness and the world. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines alterity as the quality or state of being radically alien to the conscious self or a particular cultural orientation.

The aspect of alterity is pretty evident in these lines and the narrative technique used by the author is through the reading of the thoughts of Lady Jane while she was watching the play *The Frozen Deep* (1856). *The Frozen Deep* is a play directed and produced by English novelist Charles Dickens and his friend John Forster. It is the story that reveals Dickens' feelings for his lover Ms Ternan. The play is very much emotional and divulges into the philosophy that human beings give more priority to their social standing and their personal ego rather than to the real wanting of their souls and by doing so the humans are left with nothing but misery and guilt. This idea plagued Lady Jane as she was reminded of her own past. She could not conceive children and used to hide her agony in one pretext or another and how she wanted to become the real mother to Mathinna and thereby shower her with all the love and care. But she didn't act so and she abandoned the poor little girl in an

orphanage and smothered her own longing or wanting to have a child. Lady Jane couldn't allow the child to come with them to London too because Mathinna was a black child and moreover she was considered to be mysterious.

For arms wrapping around her legs and waist, grabbing and holding her. Why had she pushed the child away when she had secretly longed to be grabbed and held?...She could not forget her grief, and then the cruel awakening to her barren body, her loneliness, her inescapable sense of shame as a woman, her desperate desire for a child, her pride that rescued her and then crushed her and made her move relentlessly and constantly, desperately seeking to raise herself and her husband forever after, as though they might somehow escape the gravity of her grief. (*Wanting* 194)

Flanagan provides different instances for alterity throughout his oeuvre. The work *Wanting* (2008) narrates the life of Mathinna who is controlled by the colonial powers. Mathinna was the princess of Van Diemen Land, which the Aboriginals of that region had to surrender to the Protector, Augustus Robinson. After the death of her father, the protector gave up Mathinna for adoption to the Governor of Van Diemen Land. Lady Franklin was craving to become a mother and once when she saw the small girl her motherly instincts probed her to adopt Mathinna Lady Jane Franklin adopted her out of love but treated her as if she were a social experiment.

Yet another aspect of postcolonialism is colonial education. The manner in which the impact of colonial education upon the colony population is exhibited is clearly reflected in the characters of Richard Flanagan. Colonial education is set up as a by-product of colonialization and the colonizing nation implements its own form of schooling within the colonies in order to assist in the act of the consolidation of

foreign rule. Colonial education functions by the notion of assimilation. Assimilation involves the colonized is forced to conform to the cultures and traditions of the colonizers. Gauri Viswanathan points out in *Masks of Conquest* (1986) that “cultural assimilation is the most effective form of political action because cultural domination works by consent and often precedes conquest by force” (85). Colonial governments realize that they can gain strength with the help of mental control. This mental control is implemented through the school system and it is through this process that the colonial educators strip the colonized people away from their indigenous learning structures and there by drawing them towards the structures of the colonizers.

The implementation of such educational systems leave those who are colonized with a limited sense of the past. The indigenous customs and history once practiced slowly slips away. Growing up in a colonial education system, many colonized children enter into a condition of hybridity, in which, their identities are created out of multiple cultural forms, practices, beliefs and power dynamics. Colonial educational system creates a blurring that which makes it difficult to differentiate between the new enforced ideas and the formerly accepted native practices.

I am good little girl. I do love my father. I have got a doll and shift and petticoat. I read books not birds. My father I thank thee for sleep. Come here to se mee my father. I thank thee for food. I have got sore feet and shoes and stockings and I am very glad. All great ships. Tell my father two rooms. I thank thee for charity. Please sir please come back from the hunt. I am here yrs daughter. (*Wanting* 121)

The below mentioned passage is a letter written by the character, Mathinna to her father who is dead. Being an orphaned Aboriginal princess she is adopted by the Governor of Van Diemen's Land after the death of her father. She is considered as a social experiment for the mission of civilizing the savages. She initially finds the art of writing to be very interesting. She believes that writing possess magical powers. But once she finds her letters neatly folded in a box, she disowns learning. As a by-product of colonial education Mathinna cannot tolerate her own people and she feels that she is superior to them. This culminates in her becoming a misfit where she is neither accepted by the whites nor by the black fellows. Flanagan has provided opulent references to the colonial education that is provided to his characters and the transformation that it brought forth in their lives. Mathinna once adopted as a social experiment got forced to learn and study. She initially felt that words and writing have magical powers and so she had a keen interest in learning. Mathinna believed that she could communicate with her dead father through her letters but once she discovered that her letters are stored away in an antique box that contains a skull she stopped learning altogether. During her youth, Mathinna regrets not being able to read or write.

Diaspora comes from the Greek term meaning to disperse. Diasporas the voluntary or the forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions, is a central historical fact of colonization. Colonialism itself was a radically diasporic movement involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlement of millions of Europeans over the entire world. During the industrial revolution as part of job and for other opportunities, skilled labourers migrated to different parts of the world.

Some of the characteristics of diaspora as explained by Robin Cohen in his book *Global Diasporas* (1997) is worth mentioning. According to Cohen, diaspora refers to the displacement of people from the homeland, often traumatically to two or more foreign countries. Expansion happens in search of works, trade or colonial ambitions. They possess collective memory and myths about their homeland, including its location, history and achievement. There is usually idealization of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity and even to its creation. Development of a return movement that gains collective approval is often witnessed in a diasporic community. A strong ethnic consciousness sustained over a long time, based on a sense of distinctiveness, results in a common history and a belief in a common fate. A troubled relationship with the host land, suggesting a lack of acceptance is also visible in such communities. They also fear a possible calamity that might fall upon them. There will be a sense of empathy and solidarity within the ethnic members who reside even in other countries of settlement. There is also the possibility of a distinctively creative, enriching life in the host country with a tolerance for pluralism.

“That land did not welcome her or care for her, any more than it had welcomed or cared for her parents who had come to live here so long before, And, yet this land had shaped her, shaped them all” (TSOHC 24). The concept of diaspora is clearly explained through the novel *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997). The novel narrates the lives of immigrants from Slovenia. They left the war-torn Europe for a peaceful and calm life in Tasmania. But there they were not accepted into the new land. Even their new found haven was monstrous for them. Flanagan narrates the story of Bojan and Sonja Bulow and how their past as well as present trauma continuously haunting them. Sonja is the product of this diasporic culture. She is



educated and is apt in her profession and at one point when Sonja comes home after sixteen years Bojan says that she speaks so well because she had language. He didn't have language and couldn't communicate his thoughts. Both Sonja and Bojan had to undergo the problems of coming from a foreign culture.

In the narratives of *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) there is an instant of Maria. Maria is the mother of Sonja and she, along with her husband Bojan, had come to Tasmania with their infant baby. Maria had a cruel tormenting past and she had to witness her father's death in front of her own eyes. Her sister got raped and murdered before her own eyes and she herself got raped. They migrated from the war affected Europe in hope of a better prospect and yet that too was a short living dream. "Maria saying: Because it is Tasmania and not Slovenia. Because our world is upside down... Maria saying: 'Because to have a future you must forget the past, my little knedel'" (TSOHC 31). Sonja had only memories about her mother, and the aforementioned lines are a precedent of such a tormented memory. Maria believed that their world has become upside down and Sonja could never forget her past.

In the novel *Death of a River Guide* (1994), Alijaz, while drowning receives a vision and in the vision, he witnesses the life of his ancestors. He sees his grandfather Boy, and his grandmother, Rose. Rose always said that they belonged to the settler community and she hid the truth till her death and it was only during her funeral that her husband Boy gets to know that her family also descended from the convicts of Tasmania. Because of Rose's claim of belonging to a noble family Harry always felt a sort of tension between them. Although they loved each other Boy considered himself inferior to her. Boy was shattered beyond words when he realized the truth from Rose's brother. "Because to get somewhere we had to make up a new world to replace their old world, because there was no hope for any of us in that old world" (DRG 66).

This explains the result of the existence of the traumatic past in the minds of the immigrants.

The postcolonial aspect of colonialism also features in the select narratives. Essentialism is one of the characteristic features of postcolonialism. It is the assumption that groups, categories or classes of objects have one or several defining features, inclusive of all the members of that category. Some studies assume the presence of essential characteristics distinguishing one race from another or the feminine from the masculine. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines essentialism as an educational theory, that ideas and skills basic to a culture should be taught to all and also it is a philosophical theory ascribing ultimate reality to essence that is embodied in a thing that which is perceptible to the senses. It is also the practice of regarding something as having innate existence or universal validity rather than as being a social, ideological, or intellectual construct. Essentialism is the view that every entity has a set of attributes, that are necessary to its identity and function. The idea of essentialism has been used in various disciplines like philosophy, psychology, ethics, biology and gender studies.

In the narrative *Wanting* (2008) Flanagan exhibits various instances of essentialism. “It is a king of the Van Diemenian savages, Mr. Dickens. I have shown it to several professors and men learned in phrenology. To test them, I did not say who it once was. Some found irrefutable signs in the skull’s shape of degeneracy, others of nobility. It appears it is both” (*Wanting* 30). This particular incident is narrated by Lady Jane herself to the eminent novelist Charles Dickens. There was a report by Dr John Rae stating that Sir Franklin and his team would have subdued to cannibalism. Lady Jane wanted Charles Dickens to write a defense for her husband something against Dr Rae’s report. For this, she arranges a meeting with Dickens and

it is during the meeting that she come to know about the skull of King Romeo, the aboriginal king. She considers it a privilege to own a king's skull as a relic.

Ethnicity is a term that has been used increasingly since the 1960s, to account for the human variations, in terms of culture, tradition, language, social patterns and ancestry and not about the discredited generalizations of race, with its assumptions of a humanity, divided into fixed, genetically determined biological types. Membership of an ethnic group is shared according to certain agreed criteria. The combination and the importance of those criteria may be debated or may change over time.

*Wanting* (2008) is a novel that narrates the story of the Aboriginal people who had to face extinction either by genocide or by subduing to colonialism. The Protector is a white man whose job is to catch hold of aboriginal people and colonize them and for this task he is allowed with a pension. Mathinna's father King Romeo got fatally injured and he was on the verge of death. Mathinna goes to call the Protector, who is a pseudo doctor, and all in all of the colony. On the way Mathinna witnesses an evil omen in the form of a black swan which is supposed to carry off people's soul. She utters the word Rowra, which means devil. This is the impact of colonization and no matter how the colonizer tries to teach his culture the colonized will always retain the essence of their culture and that is their ethnicity.

And suddenly realizing why she was there, Mathinna said 'Rowra' using the native word for the Devil, then quickly, like it was a spear rushing at her, 'Rowra' and then 'ROWRA!'...The Protector was about to rush past her when he saw the omen the natives feared the most, the bird that stole souls, a black swan swooping down towards the brick terraces (*Wanting* 10).

There is yet another instant of cruelty done to a black man. William Gould remembers an Aboriginal man who was made to witness the drowning of his wife and children. The colonizers also nailed a pair of wooden shoulder piece on his shoulders and called him Napoleon referring to Napoleon Bonaparte the French military and political leader.

Of seeing Negroes being publicly fed to dogs & being burnt alive; of their leader, Toussaint L'Ouverture, the black Napoleon, betrayed by the white Napoleon; of L'Ouverture's cultured black general Maurepas, having to watch his wife & children being drowned before his eyes as the French soldiers nailed a pair of wooden epaulettes into his shoulders, taunting him, laughing as they hammered so: *A real Bonaparte now!*" (GBF 97)

These lines show the terror and horror that has been imprinted upon the black people. The most tragic part is the French soldiers, nailing a man, who had to witness the drowning of his wife and children and by naming him a real Napoleon, the black soldier became an exotic warrior. Comparison to Napoleon who was an ethnic figure adds heroic tragic feel to the horror.

Another instance of exotic setting is from the novel *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001). Rose is sent to live with her aunt and uncle and on the way she comes across a graveyard. The manner in which the bodies are buried add to the exotic setting of aboriginal Australia. "But when they came to excavate the sand dune, they discovered not one but many skeletons, all in the same position, with the knees pulled up underneath the chin" (GBF 57).

The concept of ethnicity in the narratives also encompasses the aspect of myths. "In his paramatta hotel room half a century later, Dorrigo Evans dozed, he

tossed, he dreamt of Charon, the filthy ferryman who takes the dead across the Styx to hell at the price of an obol left in their mouth” (TNRDN 27). Here the protagonist, Dorrigo Evans, who is a nonagenarian, thinks about his past war experiences and the dead people and his thoughts suddenly gets struck at the Greek myth. According to Greek mythology Charon is the ferryman of Hades who carries the soul of the newly deceased, across the rivers of Styx and Acheron, that divide the world of dead from the living. The river Styx is also known as river of oblivion.

The select narratives also have the concept of exotic. Flanagan has presented exotic features in ironic manner. Various instances from the narrative *Wanting* (2008) display exotic incidents. “He drew the saw carefully across the skin to score a red guiding line. Then, good tradesman that he was, he completed the job with long, firm strokes counting them as he went. It took just six to saw off King Romeo’s head. Careful as the Protector was, he was annoyed to feel his hands greasy with blood” (*Wanting* 20). The Protector was a very crafty man and having severed King Romeo’s body, he carefully preserves King Romeo’s skull as an exotic item. He even gifts it to Lady Jane who keeps it as an exotic treasure to showcase it to her guests. In the novel, Lady Jane happens to show this skull to Charles Dickens, whom she had invited over in order to help her protect her husband’s honour. Such is the status that the oriental gave to occidental exotics.

Another instance of exotic is as follows. Sir John Franklin had abandoned Mathinna believing that she was the black spirit who had attacked him and it was because of Mathinna that he lost his position as the Governor. When Mathinna was with him, he was extremely happy and it was such a time when he lived his life fully. “In his final agony, Sir John’s thoughts were only of catching birds with a small dark girl who still laughed at him, and his head momentarily filled with the improbable

smell of a world that he now recalled as Eden after rain” (*Wanting* 177). Here Flanagan intends that Sir Franklin went in search of the North Passage in order to just avoid the gloom and monotony of his daily life. Even during his last minute, he thinks about Mathinna and the happy time they spent together and even then he visualises Mathinna in an exotic setting.

There are some exotic examples of culture, society and beliefs too that is being presented in Flanagan’s select works. Exotic again is a feature of the postcolonial studies. The westerners were always eager and curious about knowing the exoticness of the East. Especially, the British were inquisitive about the exotic stories of Australia. “‘Kamilica’ said Bojan. ‘I write and tell your grandmother in Slovenia about your skin and she pick and dry the kamilica for you, she send them across the oceans, she wants to heal her Sonja (TSOHC 153).’ Kamilica is a medicinal herb found in Slovenian region and Bojan asks his mother in Slovenia to send the Kamilica flowers to cure his daughter’s eczema.

Another example of exotic in Flanagan’s work is from *Death of a River Guide* (1994) where the author sarcastically narrates a myth. Gould’s mother believed that babies born with the caul, never drown, if the membranes are preserved. But Gould actually dies by drowning. “Mama kept the membranes. Later she dried them, for the caul that a baby is born in is considered to be of the greatest luck, fate’s guarantee that neither the baby born with the caul nor the possessor of the membranes will ever drown” (DRG 3). Here, Flanagan mocks at such exotic myths that which suggest one meaning and the exact contradictory happens. In spite of being born with the caul, Alijaz dies of drowning.

Flanagan provides a plethora of Australian Aboriginal myths and he refers to birds and animals in order to convey the meaning of the myth. These myths, either in a direct or contradictory manner, affects the lives of the characters. “A seal lay dying on the nearby rocks. It was said that the souls of the drowned came to rest in the bodies of seals, and once Auntie Ellie would have been down making the seal comfortable” (DRG 44). The aboriginal people always lived in close communion with nature and therefore, their myths are always surrounded to the flora and fauna of the region. Hence, the aborigines took great care of animals around them.

Similarly, there are beliefs regarding sea eagles as well. “The sea eagles. Auntie Ellie was big on sea eagles. She told Harry they were the family’s animal and that the family had to be kind to them, that the souls of Harry’s ancestors came back to the world as sea eagles” (DRG 47). Aunt Ellie used to say that their family is associated with sea eagles and that her ancestors would visit the world as sea eagles. Even Alijaz who is the protagonist of the novel while drowning, dreams constantly about an eagle, soaring in the sky. Even an astrologer in the family saw the image of soaring eagle while predicting the future of Alijaz. “Eileen, who was from the spiritual side of the family, had strange powers. The index finger of her right hand came out in warts and she sensed something bad was about to befall Rose” (DRG 56). Eileen is the maternal aunt of Rose, who is Alijaz’s mother. Flanagan points to the spiritual aspects in the family of Australians.

An example of hegemony is found in *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997), which narrates the story of the immigrants from Slovenia. Hegemony is yet another term referring to the dominance of one state, within a confederation and is generally understood to mean domination by consent. This broader meaning was coined and popularized in the 1930s by the Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. He

investigated about why the ruling class was so successful in promoting its own interests in the society. Hegemony is the power of the ruling class, to convince other classes, that their interests are the interests of all. Domination is exerted not by force, nor by active persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power over the economy, and over the state apparatuses, such as education and the media and by which the ruling class's interest is presented as the common interest and thereby, comes to be taken for granted. "The promise that had been made to the migrant workers, the offer of a better life in Australia than in war-ruined Europe, the elusive rainbow of prosperity and easier, more peaceable times, had grown thin and distant, till it was no longer something real but a half-remembered kaleidoscopic dream that it was better to try and forget" (TSOHC 50). In simple words, hegemony means the manner by which the colonial powers convince the locals, that whatever they are doing is for the betterment of the masses and this they achieve through interpellation. In the case of *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997), Bojan and Maria migrate from the war-torn Europe, in the hope of better future prospects in Tasmania. There Bojan even buys a car so that he can live a standard life in Tasmania but the new settler society denies to accept them for what they are. They are always outsiders, the wogs. In a general meeting of the hydroelectric project workers, an MLA narrates the good deeds done for the immigrants and listening to that Bojan cries and the MLA feels happy that Bojan believed whatever he has uttered.

The element of hybridity is also found in Flanagan's narratives. Hybridity is one of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in the postcolonial theory. Hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone, produced by colonization. The term 'hybridity' has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K. Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized



relations, stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities. Another instance of Hybridity can be found in *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001). The construction of Great Mah-Jong Hall and its significance to the Commandant portrays Hybridity as depicted in the narrative:

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory... may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. (Bhabha 38)

Through the character Capois Death who is a colonizing agent in the novel *Gould's Book of Fish* (1994), Flanagan narrates an important socio economical aspect of colonization. His dialogue reflects the fact that the wealth is always accumulated with the bourgeoisie community and the proletariats cannot even enjoy the basic necessities of life. This applies to the postcolonial scenario as well. Both the power and the capital are with the colonizers whereas mere bodies for hard labour are with the colonized. An instance of hybridity can be found in *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001):

It's the only way anyone ever got to rule & I for one didn't seek to argue with it, only to derive a small living as its fringes. For as Capois Death said, if shit ever becomes valuable, the poor will be born without arse-holes. That was our fate, & I didn't pretend I could alter it, I only wished to survive as best as I could, & what else was I to do? I had no desire to become a sawyer or shepherd or whaling deckhand. I didn't have the hands or back for it, far less the necessary practical skills. (GBF 149)

A perfect example of hybridity is the Great Mah-Jong Hall. It is a fictional infrastructure constructed in the Sarah Island, Tasmania, by the Commandant. The Commandant himself acquired power through false means and he received letters from a woman named Miss Anne, who actually wrote those letters to her brother. In those letters, Anne has written about the wonders of Europe like the flourishing of Romantic period, the invention of electricity etc. The Commandant desires to develop fake models of all the wonders of the world in Tasmania. He intends to promote tourism using these paintings and a museum and for that, he traded almost the entire stock of the salted pork and whale oil from the island whereas the penal colony survived only on fish.

The author describes the opening day of the Great Mah Jong Hall. “When finally the Great Mah-Jong Hall opened the Island rejoiced, but no-one came to pay to play mah-jong. Though it was incomprehensible to everyone on the Sarah Island that people might not wish to travel halfway across the globe to lose money in this wonder of the New World, still no-one came” (GBF 214). Here Flanagan presents the irony of the situation. The museum had Miss Anne’s letters painted on the walls along with other wonders of the world. There was also a train to take the tourists around the museum. The irony of the situation is that nobody turned up to visit the museum and nobody felt it necessary to spend money on tickets to see the wonders of the world. In the due course of time, the rainforest claimed the building and almost all the wealth of Tasmania got lost in the process. Similarly an attempt is made by Lady Jane one of the important characters from the novel *Wanting* (2008).

Do you think you could procure for me a pretty little design for a glyptotech?

She wrote to her sister in London, using the fashionable Greek word for a building to house sculpture. ‘The Island needs its own Ancients and

Mythology. I can think of no better way of beginning than' ...Could you arrange to have casts made of the Theseus, Ilyusus, Torso and Horse's Head at British Museum, also the Apollo Belvedere, Venus de' Medici and the Dying Gladiator. (*Wanting* 104)

Lady Jane was the wife of Sir Franklin who was the Governor of Van Diemen's Land. Her husband was a dancing bear for her. She used to be very interfering in the administration of the island. She wanted the island to have a museum and its own set of ancient classical characters. With the economic depression, her lavish extravagance led to poverty in the island. The land that welcomed them believing them to be redeemers understood the reality about them.

The notion of identity crisis is evident in the characters of Flanagan's select fiction. Identity is yet another powerful term to interpret in Postcolonialism. Colonial empires did not give up their colonized empires. Anti-Imperial movements motivated colonized people to agitate for independence. The sense of identity played a major role in these anti imperial movements. Identity becomes important only when one faces an identity crisis. The loss of past and culture ultimately leads to the loss of identity. It is this concept of the loss of identity is something that runs deep in the colonial and postcolonial literature.

Richard Flanagan has given priority to both the feelings of the colonized and the colonizers emotions. According to Flanagan the true nature of identity can be understood only when colonizer and colonized reveal their emotions to the readers. "Had he become God? He no longer knew. They kept dying. He was surrounded by corpses, skulls, autopsy reports, plans for the chapel and cemetery. His dreams were full of their dances and songs, the beauty of their villages, the sound of their rivers,

the memory of their tenderness, yet still they kept dying and nothing he did altered it" (*Wanting* 19). This content has been taken from the novel *Wanting* (2008) and it is about the easy go lucky character called the Protector, who was in charge of subduing the Aboriginal people and colonizing them and at the same time offering and promising them security and civilization. After the Aboriginal war and after witnessing the massacre of many of the aboriginal leaders, the remaining tribe surrendered to the Protector. The Protector became the paramount authority for the people. The aboriginals looked at the Protector for everything that is concerned with their lives. He got transferred into a godly figure. Yet Flanagan comments that nothing was in control of the Protector. The more he provided them with the English goods, the more they were prone to diseases and death and the aboriginals could not adapt to the English way of life. They lost not only their peaceful existence but also their health. The Aboriginals were falling sick despite the Protector's attempt to save them.

There is yet another interesting passage about the sense of identity of the savages that are inhabiting the island. As a colonized population, they were subordinated to the colonizers and yet they considered themselves to be superior to the convicts "Yet such doomed savages regarded us convicts as slaves below themselves. By their own account they were free & noble people who had given up their nation for exile & who in return would be looked after by the government & did not have to work like we did" (GBF 241). The savages were literally haunted by the colonizers for their economic and political benefits but they maintained a sort of self-esteem and they always believed that they were better than convicts who were on the lowest strata of society.

Similar concept about the superiority of savages is dealt in *The Death of a River Guide: A Novel in Twelve Fish* (1994). Alijaz's grandfather Boy and his grandmother Rose had a tumultuous married life because of the inferiority complex that was instilled in the mind of Boy. Rose frequently used to say that theirs was a settler family whereas Boy belonged to the convict generation. Boy loved Rose but there was a huge gap in between them because of this social divide. Only on Rose's funeral Boy realises that her family was also a descendant from the convicts. Rose had been lying to him and to everyone throughout her life and for this, Boy feels cheated and dejected for life.

Flanagan's characters from the select novels display discernable inkling of Ideology. Ideology refers to a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of any economic or political theory and policy. Colonization is based on the doctrine of cultural hierarchy and supremacy. It is the establishment and control of settlements for an extended period of time by a sovereign power, over the subordinate and other people who are segregated and separated from the ruling power. Another technique that has been utilised by the masters to subdue the native population is the sacking of the cultural patterns.

“‘You bring your hope and determination,’ continued the politician, ‘and in return receive the great gift of English civilization, the English language and our belief in justice and fair play’” (TSOHC 44). This is the ideology with which the migrants leave their homeland and reach the destined land and the same has happened in the case of Bojan and Maria who had left their homeland Slovenia and reached Tasmania, but their hopes were in vain.

Flanagan has depicted existence of postcolonialism in the language used by the characters in the select novels. Language is often a central question in postcolonial studies. During colonization, colonizers usually imposed or encouraged the dominance of their native language onto the people that they subdue and colonize and they even forbid the natives from speaking their mother tongues. In response to this systematic imposition of colonial languages, some postcolonial activists and writers advocate a complete return to the use of the indigenous languages.

The extract forms the conversation between a father and his daughter, Bojan and Sonja. Bojan is an immigrant and is not fluent in Australian English and he speaks the language of wogs, which is in the form of a creole. He is not accepted by the natives. Because of his lack of communicative skills, he cannot even procure a good job whereas Sonja is educated and has command over the colonizer's language. She has a decent job and a decent society. "Perhaps you say this because you have plenty of words," he said. 'You find a language. But I lose mine. And I never had enough words to tell people what I think, what I feel. Never enough words for a good job' (TSOHC 39). The conversation between Bojan and Sonja is proof for the part language plays in the postcolonial society.

Magical realism also features as a key aspect in the narratives of Flanagan. The term magical realism was introduced by Franz Roh a German critic in 1925. Unlike the other fantasy novels authors in magical realism deliberately withhold information about the magical element in their fiction in order to present the magical event as any ordinary occurrence and to present the incredible as the normal. It was first used in a wider postcolonial context in the foundational essay by Jacques Stephen Alexis, "Of the magical realism of the Haitians" (1956). Alexis sought to reconcile the arguments of post-war, radical intellectuals, in favour of social realism, as a tool for

the revolutionary social representation and with the recognition that in many postcolonial societies, a peasant, pre-industrial population had its imaginative life rooted in a living tradition of the mythic, the legendary and the magical. The term became popularized when it was employed to characterize the work of South American writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and got widely translated into English and other languages.

In this genre of literature the magical elements are presented as normal things and magical realists leave the magic in their stories unexplained in order to normalize it as much as possible and in order to reinforce the fact that it is a part of everyday life. Authors often use magical realism to offer an implicit critique of the society and most notably in politics and culture. This genre grew in popularity in the various parts of the world that were economically oppressed and exploited by the western countries. Magical realism does not follow the regular narrative technique. Magical realism incorporates many techniques that have been linked to postcolonialism and with hybridity being a primary feature. Magical realism is illustrated in arenas such as urban\ rural, western\ indigenous. The writer must maintain an ironic distance from the magical world. Authorial reticence refers to the lack of clear opinions about the accuracy of events and credibility of the world views as expressed by the characters in the text. The supernatural is integrated within the norms of perception of the narrator and characters in the fictional world. An illustration of Magical realism from *Death of a River Guide* (1994) is as follows.

“I, Alijaz Cosini, river guide, have been granted visions.

And immediately I am unbelieving. I say to myself, this is not possible, I have entered the realm of the fabulous, of hallucinations, for there is no way that anybody struck

drowning could experience such things” (DRG 9). This very quote enables the reader to see the magical element that is relevant in the narrative. Because it is usually impossible for a drowning man to have visions Alijaz informs the readers that his ancestors also had such dream visions. He had seen several times these kind of episodes in his dreams. Flanagan uses the element of magical realism to enable the character to deliver his autobiography effectively.

Further Alijaz would narrate a particular vision and then remind the readers about his present situation and that he is struck between two rocks in the flooding river Franklin. “At other times the faces simply appear from nowhere and are vast, huge apparitions and I seem to be able to see all the gorge below me, but all the gorge is filled with the immensity of that face as it begins to talk” (DRG 40). After narrating a single episode he again witnesses some other people’s figures or forms on the surface of the water. This is the way in which Alijaz Cosini, the river guide narrates his story.

The next episode where Flanagan employs Magical realism is from Alijaz’s childhood memory is as follows.

‘The walls, Mum,’ he whispered, ‘the walls are bleeding’...others who had overheard Harry looked up and saw the walls now bleeding in thick heavy runs and droplets. Even the priests, dressed in their finest mufti, looked up and abandoned their normal solemnity and started to point and chatter to one another. As the storm above grew in ferocity, as thunder roared and rain crashed upon the roof in sheets, the bleeding became more pronounced, until the walls appeared to be hemorrhaging. (DRG 59)



These lines elaborate the numerous gradations that are involved in the technique of magical realism. Flanagan's use of magical realism is different from that of Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Marquez employs the technique of implementing magic in his works with the aim of granting a continuity in the story. But Flanagan employs the magical realism tool with the aim of creating an enigma that which will be advantageous later while permitting a scientific interpretation too as a tool. Garcia Marquez suggests that cultures and countries differ in what they call real and magical realism facilitates the inclusion of alternative belief systems. The afore mentioned passage describes the magical events that took place during the funeral of aunt Eileen. She was a spiritual woman. On her funeral the walls of the church began to bleed and the Christ's statue was also covered in blood. The people were mystified as they believed that they were witnessing the crucifixion of Christ, the redeemer.

Alijaz mentions that his family members too were having certain dream visions. Freud in his *Interpretations of Dreams* (1899) suggests that people can actually know the revelation of unconscious in their dreams. "I can't stop seeing what I am seeing, what took place back then- the bedroom filled with tears, which then split over into a small kitchen and the dingy bathroom and from there filled the bedrooms and the lounge room, so many tears that we swam in them and drown in them" (DRG 79). Alijaz frequently dreams about drowning and he tells Couta, his lover, about two types of dreams that are recurring always. In one of his dreams, he sees a foam and he enters it and when later he comes out of the foam, he is a changed man and he sees an eagle, soaring high in the sky. The second dream describes tears flowing and filling the bedroom. The scene also shows Alijaz drowning in his own tears in the lounge. There is a repetitive element in his dreams and it is a like a form of foreshadowing.

Flanagan makes use of the element of magical realism in two of his novels. One is *Death of a River Guide* (1994) and the other is *Gould's Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish* (1997). A specimen of magical realism from *Gould's Book of Fish* (1997) is as follows.

I must make mention of a second unusual attribute of the *Book of Fish* in addition to its self-illuminating cover, a remarkable quality that seemed to mirror life. I have mentioned how the book seemed never to really finish. But that is not the whole truth...Every time I opened the book a scrap of paper with some revelation I had not hitherto read would fall out, or I would stumble across an annotation that I somehow missed in my previous readings, or I would come upon two pages struck together that I hadn't noticed and which when carefully teased apart would force me to rethink the whole in an entirely changed light...As I drew close to its conclusion the pages first grew damp beneath my fingers, then wet, and finally, as I felt ..that I was now reading words written at the very bottom of the ocean. (GBF 29)

Sid Hammet accidentally finds the *Book of Fish* in an old book store and he finds the book to be an enigmatic one. Each time a new chapter comes up, giving the impression that the book might never end, just like that each time he opens the book, it reveals a new facet of life. He takes the book to various people like historians, archaic museum owners and all. They test the book and find it authentic and belonging to the ancient times. Later, Sid gets drunk and suddenly he feels that his fingers are wet and he immediately finds a puddle of water in the place where the book was kept. The book has magically disappeared. Hammet believes that just like Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* (1798) finding each time a different person to narrate his tale, the book has disappeared in search of the person who might be in need of the

philosophy of the book. Sid Hammet is depressed and fights for a longer time to get out of this illusion.

Flanagan presents the element of magical realism in the very beginning of the book and later he employs the same technique in the very last chapter of the work. Here, there is no scientific explanation on the part of the author. The penal colony of Sarah Island catches fire and the guards were about to rescue Gould from his cell and to be transported to somewhere else, but they could not find him inside the cell. Flanagan narrates that somehow Gould has transformed or rather metamorphosed into a seahorse and has glided into the very depth of the ocean. Flanagan takes the readers to the next level of magical realism when he narrates how Gould metamorphosed into a seahorse.

With an agony that no human can ever understand & no fish can ever describe, I forced my body down, far, far, far from the light...is it easier for a man to live his life as a fish, than to accept the wonder of being human?...can a man become a fish? All you divers who have come so far to fathom my mystery...occasionally staring in at me, perhaps wondering what it would be to be a fish, I will stare at them wondering what it would be like to be like them. (GBF 445)

Flanagan doesn't stop his narration there and he says that Gould metamorphosed into a sea horse was later got caught by the human beings and he is put in an aquarium and that Gould has actually witnessed the agony and depression underwent by Sid Hammet. Yet another instance of magical realism from the novel *Gould's Book of Fish* (1994) is when Sid Hammet looks deeply into the eyes of the

seadragon their souls get transferred into each other's body. By this process the seadragon is able to narrate its previous life.

Whatever, there was a momentary sense that was both sickening vertigo and a wild freedom. I was without weight, support, structure; I was falling.

Tumbling, passing through glass and through water into that seadragon's eye while that seadragon was passing into me, and then I was looking out at that bedraggled man staring in at me, that man who would, I now has the vanity of hoping, finally tell my story. (GBF 43)

The aspect of metanarrative, an essential aspect of postcolonialism is also employed by Flanagan. Metanarrative or grand narrative or mater narrative is a term developed by Jean-Francois Lyotard in his work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report to Knowledge* (1979), to mean a theory that tries to give a totalizing, comprehensive account of various historical events, experiences and social, cultural phenomenon that are based upon the appeal to the universal truth. In this context, the narrative is a story that functions to legitimize power, authority and social customs. A grand narrative is the one that claims to explain various events in history by giving meaning through connecting the disperse events and phenomenon and by appealing to some kind of universal knowledge or schema. Lyotard defines the metanarrative in his *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) as "simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress of sciences: but that progress in turn presupposes it (8)." Lyotard proposes that metanarratives should give way to local narratives. Postmodernists attempt to replace metanarratives by focusing on specific local contexts as well as on the diversity of human experiences. This study can be called a metanarrative analysis

because it looks at the novels of Flanagan through memory, trauma and postcolonial narratology perspectives.

Mimicry as attempted by Flanagan in his novels is cited below. Mimicry is an increasingly important term in postcolonial theory because it has come to describe the ambivalent relationship that exists in between the colonizer and the colonized. The term mimicry has been crucial in Homi Bhabha's view of the ambivalence of the colonial discourse. Mimicry can be both ambivalent and multi-layered. Flanagan throws light on the attempt of the colonized people to mimic the colonizer through his novel *Wanting* (2008).

And the more they took to English blankets and heavy English clothes, abandoning their licentious nakedness, the more they coughed and spluttered and died. And the more they died, the more they wanted to cast off their English clothes and stop eating their English food and move out of their English homes, which they said filled with the Devil, and return to the pleasures of the hunt of the day and the open fire of a night. (*Wanting* 3)

The more the Protector tried to implement the English culture on the aboriginal people, they more they started being affected by incurable diseases and death in a speedy phase. The more he protected them, the more they died and that was the irony of the situation.

The mimicry of the postcolonial subject is therefore always potentially destabilizing to the colonial discourse and it locates an area of considerable political and cultural uncertainty in the structure of imperial dominance. "He would reinvent Europe on Sarah I, only this time it would be even more extraordinary than his sister's description" (GBF 174). The self-proclaimed Commandant of the Sarah Island came

to know about the wonders of Europe, through the letters of Miss Anne and he gets the idea of somehow making better structures on the island. This can be considered as an apt example of mimicry.

Flanagan's attempt to deconstruct Orientalism in his select novels is assayed as follows. Orientalism is the term popularized by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) in which he examines the processes by which the 'Orient' was and continues to be endlessly constructed in the European thinking. The significance of Orientalism is that it can be considered as a mode of knowing the Other. There emerged "a complex orient suitable for study in the academy, for display in the museum, for reconstruction in the colonial office, for theoretical illustration in anthropological, biological, linguistic, racial, and historical theses about mankind and the universe (Said 26)."

The passage below explains the gist of the Man Booker Prize award winning novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2014). *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* narrates the story of Death Railway, during the Second World War. Flanagan's father was a prisoner of war and so he had grown up listening to the stories narrated by his father. The characters like Nakamura and Colonel Kota explain the beauty of Basho's poems and describes the goal of the Second World War. They say that their race is superior than the other races in the world and in order to bring the entire world under the umbrella of Basho's beautiful and philosophical haikus, the Japanese Emperor must win the Second World War.

It's about the Europeans learning that they are not the superior race, Nakamura said.

And us learning that we are, Colonel Kota said.

For some moments neither man spoke, then Colonel Kota recited:

*Even in Kyoto*

*When I hear the cuckoo.*

*I long for Kyoto*

Basho, Nakamura said.

Talking more, Nakamura was delighted to discover that Colonel Kota shared with him a passion for traditional Japanese Literature. They grew sentimental as they talked of the earthly wisdom of Issa's haiku, the greatness of Buson, the wonder of Basho's great haibun, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, which Colonel Kota said, summed up in one book the genius of the Japanese spirit (TNRDN 125).

The East/West divide has always prevailed among the nations of the world from time immemorial. The West always considered the East as the land of mystery and they presented the East as an enigmatic and exotic land. This is discussed in detail by Edward Said. It is to be noted that the East never had blind admiration for the West and they considered themselves as superior. It can be argued that the Second World War was the reason for such a superiority complex among many eastern nations. Each side considered their own culture to be far more superior than the rest.

Here are few examples of how Flanagan has dealt with the categorization of the Other. The 'Other' is anyone who is separate from one's self. The existence of Other is crucial in defining what is 'normal' and in locating one's own place in the world. The colonized subject is characterized as the Other through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism.

Mathinna, the aboriginal princess, is sent to the orphanage and the proceeding sentence describes what the orphan children did for the others. “They offered up prayers for the wicked and the fallen, the lost and broken, the sick and the invalid, the poor fatherless and miserable motherless children, and afterwards they went back to cough and freeze and be beaten once more” (*Wanting* 185). This is an ironical situation where the children admitted in the orphanage are themselves helpless yet they are made to pray for people better than them. But they are the worst fated lot.

Yet another instance is from the novel *Wanting* (2008). The Protector is partially a good man but when he operates the dying King Romeo on the operating table, he sees the King as a non-white, as an Other. “Blood spurted up in a small geyser, hitting the Protector in the eye then running down his face. He pulled the knife away, then stepping back, wiped his eye and looked down. The emancipated black man was groaning only intermittently now. The Protector admired his stoicism: he took to bleeding like a white man” (*Wanting* 13).

Flanagan explains the concept of race through the novel *Wanting* (2008) and through his masterpiece *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013). Race is a term used for the classification of human beings into physically, biologically and genetically distinct groups. The notion of race assumes firstly that humanity is divided into unchanging natural types that are recognizable by physical features that are transmitted ‘through the blood’ and permit distinctions to be made between pure and the mixed races.

Flanagan also mentions the racial discrimination prevalent in Australian society. There are Aboriginals, convicts, immigrants and other people who inhabit in the mainland of Australia. They are sort of feudal system with power hierarchy. Some



characters from the select fiction try to hide their convict past and immigration details. In the Australian context wog is a term that refers to a foreigner or immigrant from southern Europe. According to the Macquarie Australian Dictionary, the word Wog originated in 1920s as British nautical slang for Indians. It is applied to postwar immigrants.

In *Wanting* (2008), he portrays the features of aboriginals of Van Diemen Land. He speaks about their culture, their unity, their sense of belonging to a single family. Mathinna in spite of losing both her parents, felt not at all lonely because she had her tribe, their myths and their folksongs. He explains how the aboriginals lived in close association with nature, how animals were part and parcel of their life and how their wild dance could enliven the souls. In *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013), Flanagan highlights the culture of the Japanese people who would do anything for the Emperor's wish. Flanagan explains through the conversation between Colonel Kota and Nakamura that the Japanese considered themselves superior to the other races of the world.

The women characters from Flanagan's novels exhibit characteristic aspects of Subaltern. Subaltern, meaning 'of inferior rank', is a term adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in the society, who are subjected to the hegemony of the ruling classes. In "Notes on Italian history" (1934–5) he outlined a plan for studying the history of the subaltern classes which included their objective formation, their active or passive affiliation to the dominant political formations, the birth of new parties and dominant groups, the formations that the subaltern groups produce to press their claims and new formations within the old framework that assert the autonomy of the subaltern. The notion of the subaltern became an issue in postcolonial theory when

Gayatri Chakravathy Spivak critiqued the assumptions of the Subaltern Studies group in the essay 'Can the subaltern speak?'

The subaltern is a group defined by its difference from the élite. "The task of research projected here is to investigate, identify and measure the specific nature of the degree of deviation of elements from the ideal and situate it historically from the ideal, the subaltern and situate it historically" (Spivak 27). Spivak goes on to elaborate the problems of the category of the subaltern by looking at the situation of the gendered subjects and of Indian women in particular since "both as an object of colonialist historiography and as a subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. For if in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (Spivak 28).

The subaltern characters of Flanagan's novels are Black Pearl in *Death of a River Guide* (1994), Mathinna, in *Wanting* (2008), Maria Buloh in *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997), Two Penny Sal in *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001). Two Penny Sal is a slave and a prostitute in the Sarah Island. Because of the unavailability of women in the Island almost all men have had a relationship with her secretly. The Protagonist William Gould comes to know about her tragedy. Two Penny Sal was a respectable aboriginal woman living with her family. One day Clucas and his team caught hold of her child and in order to retrieve the child, Sal agreed to go with them. But Clucas beat the brain out of the child and absconded with Two penny Sal to the Sarah Island. There she gave birth to two more children by Clucas but she could not accept them. So, in order to punish him she stuffed grass into the infant's mouth and killed them both. Two penny Sal is one of the few women mentioned in the novel:

They had rushed a mob of blacks on a beach, but only managed to seize a baby boy before being beaten back to their own boat by the natives. The sealers made it clear that the child was now theirs, & if their mother wanted the boy she would have to come with them. The mother was Two penny Sal.

She came to the boat & offered herself to them if the child could go back with the tribe. The sealers grabbed her. Clucas, taking hold of the boy by his legs, swung him against the rocks & beat his brains out...On Clucas's island, where she was condemned to live as a slave, Two penny Sal was reputed to have had two children to Clucas, & killed both by stuffing grass in their mouths. (GBF 243)

Black Pearl is a minor character in the *Death of a River Guide* (1994). She is a slave woman, stolen from the Tasmanian tribe, to work as slaying the seals and dry their skins. Flanagan narrates an incident when Black Pearl along with other two women were subjected to rape by a whiteman. Flanagan through his powerful description try to pen the emotion of fear that Black Pearl felt during the incident. She believes that even the generations to come would feel the fear and the trauma although they might not know the reason for their fear. "She feels a white face behind her and she knows that she will never forget the fear and humiliation of this moment, knows that she will never forget, nor will her children nor the children they beget, nor their children, even long after they have forgotten from where their terrible fear comes, long after they cease to understand why they are afraid" (DRG 314). Alijaz in his vision while drowning in the river Franklin, witnesses not only his trauma but also that of the generations before him. He sees his great ancestor Black Pearl along with three other women on a beach. They are the slaves of a white man and they catch

wallabies and kangaroos for him. Alijaz sees the scene of Black Pearl's rape and the manner in which his family line is conceived in the very beginning.

Mathinna is one of the subaltern characters in the novel *Wanting* (2008). She was an aboriginal princess, adopted by the Governor of Van Diemen's Land. Lady Jane considered Mathinna as a social experiment. Lady Jane tried to educate her but Mathinna refused to learn. She was like an exquisite pet in the household. When they left Van Diemen Land, they abandoned her in the orphanage and from there, she escaped and her life deteriorated eventually. Years later she came back to Van Diemen Land but she had degraded to a greater level. She had become a fallen woman and she refused to be included in the aboriginal group. At the same time, the whites refused to accept her as one among them and hence, she lived a marginalised life. The author narrates about Mathinna's life thus. "But something about Mathinna's fall and the way she now dejected herself troubled both men. It was hard to know whether her seeming acceptance was submission or simple mindedness or the most profound revolt" (*Wanting* 227). The Protector and her journalist friend were troubled by the way Mathinna ruined her life. They wondered if she was rebelling against her fate or she has accepted her fate.

Maria Buloh is one of the characters in the novel *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) who exhibit characteristics of subaltern. "'Mama,' Maria Buloh heard a small girl's voice coming from inside the hut. Then once again, this time more a whimper- 'Mama...'" Maria Buloh felt herself at that moment to be watching everything including herself, as if she were in a movie and this were a movie set. By thinking this way she did not hear the distant sounds of her daughter crying out to her from the hut she had just left. Strange sounds. Sounds she would not hear" (TSOHC 3).

Flanagan also presents characters who wanted to become Worldlings.

Worldling is a term coined by Gayatri Chakravathy Spivak in her essay “The Rani of Simur: An Essay in Reading the Archive” (1985) in which she has described the way in which colonized space is brought into the ‘world’, that is, made to exist as part of a world essentially constructed by the Euro-centrism. The Colonizers used to carry out activities such as mapping the colony on the map of the world and to control it. But the process of ‘worldling’ also occurs in much more subtle ways too. “In the Commandant’s mind events in Europe came to seem epochal, & connected in unexpected ways. Thus the steam locomotive & Byron’s Don Juan & Baron Rumford’s splendid scientific fireplaces-...he realised that all the new technological miracles in Europe had either been invented by Miss Anne...”(GBF 173). The Commandant wanted to have all the scientific inventions and art of Europe to Sarah Island. In another sense, though Flanagan writes about Tasmanian people, he appeals greatly to the global audience.

Australia has made some substantial progress in the social and political reclamation of indigenous rights but maintains a sense of colonization. Richard Flanagan provides firsthand experience of the prison islands of Australia. Flanagan also tries to provide a detailed account of the kind of lives endured by the convicts. The novel *Gould’s Book of Fish* (2001) is about William Buelow Gould who was a convict. It is through his narration that the readers get a glimpse of the penal colony. Sarah island was Tasmania’s earliest established penal settlement. The prisons are known for have imparted raw punishments to convicts. “But while it is a matter of historical record that between 1820 and 1831 Sarah Island was the most dreaded place of punishment in the entire British Empire, almost nothing in the Book of Fish agrees with the known history of that island hell” (GBF 23).

Flanagan also describes the horrid conditions of the prisons that are built next to the sea. “Then this cell, built at the base of sandstone cliffs below the highwater mark- one of those infamous fish cells you have no doubt read about in those lying street pamphlets that circulate about the bushranger Matt Brady’s cruel incarceration & subsequent villainous career- will fill to above my head” (49). William Gould the prison inmate of Sarah Island had to cling on to the ceiling of the prison during the high tide in order to breathe.

Flanagan has also intentionally mentioned about the famous bushranger Matt Brady. In the novel although Mathew Brady does not appear in person some of the cell inmates believe in a revolution headed by Mathew Brady. They believed that Mathew Brady would be able to liberate them from the prison. Mathew Brady was convicted for stealing at Manchester. He stole a basket some butter bacon sugar and rice. He was sentenced for transportation for seven years. He escaped the penal station with a group of confederates. They sailed a small boat to Derwent. And for two years roamed the island as bushrangers. Bushrangers were convicts who operated in the rural areas. They used to hide in the bush after committing a crime. His popular reputation as a man who used violence only in self-defense is supported by a host of stories.

Flanagan showcases forms of mild resistance from foreign rule in his select fiction. In postcolonial criticism resistance signifies any opposition to colonial authority. Within this postcolonial practice, literature is read as resistance. Resistance can be seen in active opposition against institutions, subversion of colonial laws or identity. It can also be associated with resilience of the colonized to survive colonial oppression. Creating counter narratives is also a form of resistance. William Gould tried to escape from the prison several times. In some attempts he was successful. Yet

he as an individual had wished to eradicate the entire convict system. “it was New Year’s Day, 1831, & I was determined to keep my newly made resolution to leave- but with an ambition far greater than escape: the intention of once & for all destroying the Convict System” (GBF 341).

Flanagan has also exposed the characteristics of appropriation in his select novels. Appropriation describes the way in which postcolonial societies take over some aspects of imperial culture. Through this process the imperial power incorporated its own culture. Postcolonial societies intervene readily into the dominant discourse. Flanagan mentions the fact that name of Van Diemen’s Land was changed to Tasmania in 1856 and selfrule was implemented. Flanagan comments that the people want to get rid of their dark past that is why they had changed the name of their region. “But do you ever wonder why they renamed Van Diemen’s land Tasmania? They wanted everyone to forget, that’s why. And everyone wanted to forget with them. Whether they were convict or policeman, none of them thought it was worth remembering” (DRG 67).

Yet another example of appropriation is Two Penny Sal. She used to wear western dress but at the core she was still an Aboriginal woman who followed their rituals. It was ritual of Aborigines to carry skull of the dead during the mourning period. “Two penny Sal was clad in an old black cotton skirt, a coarse yellow convict jacket, & red woollen stocking cap. She carried on her back a sling made of wallaby skin a baby...whose skull Twopenny Sal, in the fashion of her people while grieving, carried tied to her dress” (GBF 357)

Aboriginal Australians are the indigeneous people of the Australian mainland. Indigeneous people are the first people of a specific regional area. The colonized

communities fought against erasure, genocide and forced acculturation under colonial regimes. Indigeneity can be discussed with reviews of colonial politics and practices. Indigenous communities are minorities who work to preserve their ethnic identities and ancestral territories. Flanagan refers to the Aboriginal lives in *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001) and in *Wanting* (2008).

An instance from *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001) is as follows. Two penny Sal was an aboriginal woman whose children were killed in front of her eyes. She was taken to the Sarah Island as a prostitute. Later when the prisons of the Island were destroyed, she returned to her native tribal culture. The next passage describes the attire worn by Two Penny Sal. "She has abandoned her European clothes & apart from a red ochre smeared necklace made of sinew & a Strip of roo skin wrapped several times around her waist to which the tiny skull was now attached" (GBH 364).

Flanagan also describes the brutality with which the Aboriginal people were killed by the settlers. In *Gould's Book of Fish*, Flanagan describes an incident where the aboriginals were innocently hunting kangroos. Lt. Bowan mistook it for guerrilla warfare and killed the Aborigines.

Lieutenant Bowan, in his fury, took the subsequent arrival of a few hundred balcks out with their families hunting kangaroo as a declaration of war, & immediately ordered our cannons to be opened upon their clustering mob on the seashore, leaving some forty-five dead men, women & children on the sand, & who knows how many more whom their countrymen dragged off with them to die in their distant camps.(GBH 48)

Flanagan throws light on the stolen generation through the character Mathinna in *Wanting* (2008). Mathinna was an Aboriginal Princess who was adopted by the



Governor of Van Diemen's Land. She belonged to the stolen generation. Stolen generation were the children of Australian Aboriginals who were removed from their families by the Australian federal and state government agencies and church missions under the act of their respective parliaments. Official government estimates are that in certain regions one in three indigenous aboriginal children were forcibly taken from their families and communities between 1910-1970. Under the Northern Territory Aboriginals Act 1910 the chief protector of Aborigines was appointed as the legal guardian of Aboriginal child and half-caste child until 18 years of age.

Flanagan has discussed in detail various forms of slavery in Australia. Slavery in Australia has existed in various forms. The convicts were sent to Australia as punishment for crimes and forced into labor. They were often leased to private individuals. Aboriginal Australians were also forced into slavery. The convicts were subjected to assigned service. They would be sold to private individuals and placed under their controls. Aboriginal Australians were employed by the pastoralist industry, pearling, the boiling down industry, marsupial eradication. they were also used as domestic servants. William Gould while trying to escape from Sarah Island came upon a beach filled with human bones. He identifies the site as place where raids to capture Aboriginal women took place. "I walked to where green sea broke light into a shrapnel of silver & scattered it over glistening white beaches, along which I often came upon the bleaching bones & skulls of savages slaughtered by sealers in their raids for black women" (GBF 77).

Yet another incident of slavery is from *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001) where the slaves are rescued from death only to make them suffer.

and yet it was also another Frenchman, the sea captain Mazard, to whom he owned his life, who had refused to drown the one hundred and fifty slaves given him for that express purpose & instead took them to Jamaica. There he sold them to the English planters, something for which the captain was reviled by both white & black for the former wanted the blacks' death as punishment for their rebellion, & the latter would rather die in any manner than continue to live as slaves, because to die as a free man meant the revolt never ended. (GBF 98)

Mapping is a technique employed in postcolonial studies identifies the colonized land. Flanagan has employed mapping his homeland as a penal colony. Flanagan introduces the readers to the fact that Van Diemen's Land was once called Transylvania, the haunted gothic land. The mapping of global space in the context of colonialism was prescriptive. Maps were used to assist in the process of aggression:

How the penal colony described in the Book of Fish seemed, on the surface at least, the same as that which then existed on that island to which only the worst of all convicts were banished; how its location also accorded with what was known, marooned in a large harbour surrounded by the impenetrable wild lands of western half of Van Diemen's Land, an uncharted country depicted on maps of the day only as a baleful blankness colonial cartographers termed Transylvania. (GBF 23)

Richard Flanagan mentions Tasmania as Transylvania in his novel *Death of a River Guide* (1994). "He was heading into the rainforested wilderness, up the mighty Gordon river, up its tributary the Franklin River, up the Franklin's tributary the Jane river, following the paths these serpentine watercourses cut through the green

carpeted temperate jungle into the land once called Transylvania” (DRG 42).

Flanagan describes Harry’s knowledge of the forests and rivers. The Aboriginals have lived in unity with nature.

The chosen narratives also depict the possibility of contrapuntal reading.

Contrapuntal reading is a term coined by Edward Said to describe a way of reading the texts of English literature, so as to reveal their deep implication in imperialism and the colonial processes. Borrowed from music, the term suggests a responsive reading, that provides a counterpoint to the text and thus enabling the emergence of colonial implications that might otherwise remain hidden. “As we look back at the cultural archive,” says Said, “we begin to reread it not univocally but *contrapuntally*” (Said 59). The overarching implications ascertained to it is the extent to which English society and culture has been grounded on the ideology and practices of imperialism. Interpreting contrapuntally is interpreting different perspectives simultaneously and seeing how the text interacts with itself as well as with the historical or the biographical contexts. Contrapuntal reading takes into account the both aspects of an issue and it addresses both the perspectives of imperialism and the resistance to it. This chapter itself can be taken as an example of contrapuntal reading. Here, Flanagan’s narratives are read contrapuntally, using postcolonial aspects and thereby deriving a new image of what Flanagan had intended to mention about the postcolonial Australia, while penning these select novels.

This chapter means to derive an idea of postcolonial Australia as depicted by Flanagan in his narratives. The study has attempted to look into various characteristic features that make up the postcolonialism in the narratives. The novels discuss various aspects of postcolonial Australia have been discussed by incorporating detailed specimens and dialogues from the select novels. So far the chapter has strived

to locate the aspects of postcolonialism in the select fiction through the narrative techniques.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

“In this world/ We walk on the roof of hell/Gazing at flowers (TNRDN 375).

Different aspects of the novels namely how the memory and trauma get narrated and how postcolonial elements present in the psyche of the minds of the characters getting narrated have been of much academic interest in the past few decades. The necessity to look at the various modalities and nuances that are concerned with narratology including the unique techniques of narratology that enables the writer to embellish each novel with the afore mentioned emotions and values need detailed discussion. Flanagan’s novels comprise of different elements of memory, trauma and postcolonial elements and in order to unearth those elements, the basic techniques of narratology have been inevitable. The novels chosen for the purpose of study are, *Death of a River Guide* (1994), *Gould’s Book of Fish: A novel in twelve fish* (2001), *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997), *Wanting* (2008) and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2014). The narratological elements present in these novels need detailed analysis and explanation. This comprehensive study aims to throw light up on the research hypothesis and the results obtained so far. The discussion further provides some ideas for further scope of research and also emphasizes on how the gap in this particular field of research has been addressed through this study.

Richard Flanagan has written eight novels in total. Out of which, five novels have been mentioned and selected for study. That is because they have the common element of Australian life, narration of the past, history and culture of the society and the unique strategy of discourse narration.

The common narrative techniques used in Flanagan's works include analepsis, which is referred as the flashback or the retrospection, in which the time-line of the main narrative is interrupted by an earlier scene. Analeptic passages interrupt the forward movement of the narrative time, by narrating material events or an image or a figure of speech from an earlier time chronology. Prolepsis is also known as flash forward where foreshadowing and anticipation are the techniques by which a narrative interrupt the main story-time, with an event or events that properly belong to the future. Ellipsis is the omission of events from the narrative. The ordering of number of events in a narrative also has a role to play in the situation. One can witness prolepsis and ellipsis in Flanagan's select works.

The narratological distinction between story and discourse is that it is all in between what is told and how the story is told. Content means what one has to say and style means how one says it. In narratology, the most influential work on discourse is by Gerard Genette, titled *Narrative Discourse* (1980), which classifies discourse into tense, mood and voice. Tense refers to the story time and discourse time. Mood refers to the form and degree of narrative representation. Voice refers to the ways in which narrating itself is implicated in the narrative.

There are three classifications of tenses. They are order, duration and frequency. Order refers to the chronological sequence of story events and the rearranged textual sequence of events. This analysis can be done at microstructural and macrostructural level. At microstructural level, the object of analysis is a short episode, which is classified into temporal sections as per the change in the position in the story time. At the macro level, the object of analysis is divided into dozen temporal sections.

Narrative order can be divided into two. They are analepsis and prolepsis.

Flanagan has employed both these techniques in ample number of ways in his novels. *Death of a River Guide* (1994) narrates the plot through analepsis, Alijaz Cosini is a drowning man and he is granted a vision where he narrates his life in several flashback images. *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) is narrated using the technique of flash forward or Prolepsis. The novel is narrated in chronological order from the year 1954, when Maria walked out into the blizzard, followed by Sonja Buloh's unhappy childhood during the year 1967, and later in 1980 when she decides to come home. In between all this, Flanagan has made use of Analepsis to narrate an episode in their lives or so. The third novel *Gould's Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish* (2001), oscillates between these two techniques. As the title suggests the entire narrative is divided into twelve chapters having titles based on names of twelve fish species. Initially there is a framework narrating how Sid Hammet got hold of *Book of Fish*, then in the preceding chapters the life story of William Gould is being told. The techniques of analepsis has been used to describe Gould's life before imprisonment and Prolepsis to narrate his life in the cell and his magical metamorphosis.

The fifth book *Wanting* (2008), also employs both the orders. Initially till the middle of the book, the story is narrated in Prolepsis and later towards the second half of the book, the narrative is told in analepsis. The reason for employing this technique is because Flanagan has initially introduced the plot and its characters and later those characters narrate the life incidents using flash back technique. The sixth novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) is narrated using both these techniques. Dorrigo Evans' life is narrated in Prolepsis and later his memories of wartime and his memories of his lover Amy are narrated using analepsis.

Geoffrey Leech and Michael in *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional prose* (2007), a seminal work in the stylistics of fiction, devote quite an important attention towards the sequencing on microstructural level. There are three kinds of sequencing and they are chronological, presentational and psychological. *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) has chronological sequencing whereas *Death of a River Guide* (1994) is an apt example for psychological sequencing and the rest of the novels *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013), *Wanting* (2008) and *Gould's book of Fish* (2001) have presentational sequencing

There is yet another factor of paramount importance and that is the duration or the narrative speed, which is defined by the relationship between the actual duration of the events and the textual length. In Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* (191) variations goes from 150 pages for three hours to three lines for twelve years. That is, from a page for one minute to a page for one century. It means the accelerations and the slowdowns. Flanagan has hinted about the passage of time in his novels, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) and it spans from 1954 to 1990, a duration of thirty-six years. *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) spins around the lead character, Dorrigo Evans. When the novel begins, Evans is two years old toddler and he dies at the age of ninety-two. Hence, a time span of ninety years is depicted in the novel. Similarly, in the novel *Wanting* (2008), Mathinna, one of the protagonists, is introduced as a young child of seven years and her pathetic death at an early age of twenty-nine. So, the novel covers the time span of nearly thirty years.

The last temporal aspect of narratology is narrative frequency. A narrative "may tell once what happened once, n times what happened n times, n times what happened once, once what happened n times" (Genette 114). In *Wanting* (2008), the



narrative frequency is greatest when compared to the other select novels. Here, the same incident gets narrated through different characters and in different perspectives. Similarly in *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001), the same incidents get narrated through many characters and many times and in different styles and understandings.

Narratological theory emphasizes many kinds of narration. They are posterior, anterior, simultaneous, intercalated, syntagmatic, paradigmatic, spatiotemporal, logical and transformational. The novel *Wanting* (2008) is an example for simultaneous narration. On one hand, the story of the Aboriginal girl Mathinna is narrated and on the other, Charles Dickens' love life is narrated. Hence, this style of narration is an example of Simultaneous narration. *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) narrates the stories of numerous characters and it is narrated in intercalated narration. The novel focuses on the lives of the prisoners of war like Darky Gardiner, Rabbit Hendricks, Jimmy Bigelow, Jack Rainbow, Yabby Burrows, Rooster Mc Neice. The Colonizers are represented by Nakamura and Colonel Kota. The lovers of Dorrigo Evans are Amy and Emily. The narrations about these characters could be detailed only by using intercalated narration technique. Intercalated narration involves tales in which the narrative framework proceeds alternately between fictional acts and characters' dialogues

Flanagan follows the same pattern in both the novels. He narrates the novel as simultaneous plots, with parallel narration. One plot of *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) is the life and the plight of the soldiers in The Death Railway camp and the other plot is Dorrigo Evans' personal life, his childhood, education, relationship with his mother and brother, marriage to Ella, extra marital affairs, his affection for his children, his old age, retired life and ultimately his death. In *Wanting* (2008), Flanagan employs the same technique. One plot follows the life in Van Diemen's

Land. The plot follows the arrival of Sir John as the Governor, Lady Jane's efforts to civilize the savages, the Protector's duties for the Aboriginal people, the protagonist, Mathinna's life, her being adopted as Governor's daughter, later her abandonment and untimely death. On the other hand, the plot uncovers the personal life of Charles Dickens. His friendship with Forster, his disastrous married life, his extramarital affair with Ellen Ternan, his assistance to remove blame of cannibalism of Sir John's missing troupe and the performance of Forster's drama *The Frozen Deep* (1856).

There are different kinds of temporal narrations. One is achronicity, where the events are deprived of all the temporal connections with the other events. The novel *Death of a River Guide* (1994) has achronicity because it is narrated by a drowning man, who is granted with a vision, the flooding of river Franklin and water running above him. Hence, it is beyond his power to narrate his past in exact chronological order and the readers also are not expected of him to keep track of time in his narration.

Antichronicity is a technique in which events are dated in erratic and contradictory ways. *Gould's Book of Fish: A Novel in Twelve Fish* (2001) is an apt example of antichronicity. The novel centers around William Gould who was a forger, and is sentenced for lifetime rigorous imprisonment in Sarah Island. Gould sometimes describes his present condition in the jail, which is filled with seawater, during high tide and sometimes he speaks about the kind of physical labor that they are subjected to. Sometimes, he gives clue about his fellow prison mate, the King. Gould comments about the jailers and certain times, he speaks about the history of the Sarah Island. He also explains about his attempt to escape from the prison twice and therefore Gould narrates his tale in no chronological order. Polychronicity is a narrative technique where the narration involves and exploits a multivalued system of temporal ordering.

*The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) explores the lives of people who are affected by the Death Railway which is constructed during the Second World War and the atrocities and inhuman conditions in which they have to survive and work.

Point of view is the next category of narratological analysis. Flanagan has used a unique style in writing his novels. He writes about family history, regional myths and history in poetic prose. He also makes the reader understand the effect of these elements on the characters and the change that has overcome in them. For bringing the intended effect Flanagan makes use of unrestricted / omniscient point of view is a method of storytelling in which the narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of all the characters in the narrative. Through the usage of third person omniscient viewpoint, Flanagan brings to life an entire world of characters and give them significant depth and meaning. It is an excellent device, useful in complicated stories, when the writer is introducing the reader to a plethora of characters.

The use of figurative language and tropical discourse forms the characteristics of his novels. Flanagan uses figurative languages like allusion, anaphora, bathos and alliteration in both his novels. In the novel, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013), the plot is narrated through the character, Dorrigo Evans and the circumstances in which he lived. The story also flows through the narrations from other character's point of view as well. The author gives a bird's eye view of all the events. Dorrigo Evans is the omnipresent faculty who knew the past and can foresee the future. M.H. Abrams defines the omniscient point of view as

This is the common term for the large and varied works of fiction written in accord with the convention that the narrator knows everything that needs to be known about agents, actions and events, and also has privileged access to the

character's thoughts, feelings, and motives; and the narrator is free to move at will in time and place, to shift from character to character, and to report their speech, doings, and state of consciousness. (Abrams 166)

*Death of a River Guide* (1994) is narrated in an omniscient point of view. The only character in direct vicinity of the reader is Alijaz Cosini. Cosini is the river guide who narrates the story of his life and his family ancestors. Cosini is able to narrate the story of his great grandmother who was considered to be the propagator of his clan. He also narrates the family history of his lover Couta Ho. He introduces his fellow river guide Cockroach and gives insights into the lives of other punters. The punters generally propel the punt by pushing against the river bed with a pole. Thus, providing a glimpse into their personal lives.

Flanagan's narrations move from present to past to future. Flanagan himself serves as an intrusive narrator. Intrusive narrator comments, evaluates, and expresses personal views about general life. Their reports and judgments are taken to be authenticated. Writers like Fielding, Jane Austen and Charles Dickens have implemented and popularized this style of writing. Flanagan has imitated Charles Dickens' style of omniscient narration in his novels. Flanagan in his writing brings mid nineteenth century comes alive with the caricature and portrayal of Dickens. In a highly confident and expert hand, fiction can liberate the past and our perception about the major historical figures. While describing the prisoner's stay at Siam in 1943, the author cites, "It was hard, but in the beginning it was not insane" (TNRDN 22). The prisoners never imagined they would have to suffer poverty, workload and health problems for the sake of Japanese. "Nothing would ever be real to him. Life never had such meaning again" (TNRDN 10). These lines are the author's comment

on the life of Dorrigo Evans. Flanagan presents a vision of a young footballer, Dorrigo, who is destined to suffer so much in his later life.

The internal point of view or the first- person point of view refers to the story where it is narrated by one character at a time. The reader gets a first- hand experience about the character and one can understand that the speaker has clear knowledge about what the character is speaking. The novel *Gould's Book of fish: a novel in twelve fish* (2001) is written in first person. "At first, in the misty damp confines of the rising building, I penciled the letters on the already painted walls" (GBF 210). Internal focalizers appear as usually as characters within the story itself. These narrators display partial knowledge of the story that can be written in either the third or first person. Internal focalization can be fixed and derived from a single character and variable focalization from succession of characters or multiple focalizations from numerous characters of the same story is permissible.

The external point of view or the Third person point of view is a method of storytelling, in which the narrator knows the thoughts and feelings of a single character. Flanagan's novels like *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997), *Wanting* (2008) and *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) are written in external point of view.

The compound point of view happens when an element is perceived simultaneously and identically or differently, by more than one focalizer. There is an instance in *Wanting*, when Lady Jane meets Dickens and they discuss their opinions about cannibalism and at this point, the reader can hear two distinct mind voices. One is that of Dickens' who thinks that cannibalism exists outside the civilized community

and the other is that of Lady Jane's, who is reminded of Mathinna, and thinking about cannibalism as not existing even in the tribes.

Unspecified point of view is where no particular focalizer is identified. In the novel, *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001), Sid Hammet's narration about finding a mysterious book and its disappearance is clearly an unspecified point of view because Sid Hammet is an unreliable narrator.

An example of undecidable point of view is of the character Gould in *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001). Undecidable point of view happens when it is impossible to determine which of the two or more specific entities functions as focalizer and a split point of view- occurs when one focalizer yields one or more different but equally adequate presentations of the same existence and vents. The narrator keeps the readers in an enigma, regarding the concluding part of the novel. The readers are not given any specific idea about what happens to Gould, the prisoner. One is not sure whether Gould is dead or has simply transformed into a seahorse that got captured and kept for display in the museum. An example of split point of view is from the novel *Wanting* (2008). The readers are offered split point of view about Sir John's and Lady Jane Franklin's marriage and their respective experiences with Mathinna. The same scene of the novel is detailed by each character in turn and this provides clarity to the inner thoughts of the protagonists.

The next segment discusses attached text or contingent text. Gould writing his autobiography and Dorrigo Evans writing a preface for the illustrated book are examples of this. Attached text or contingent text is the something in which the primary I is assumed to be the author of the text and the one whose meaning depends upon the equation of the textual voice with that of the author. Usually, editorials and

scholarly essays can be considered as attached texts. Dorrigo Evans is a character in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013). He is the lieutenant of the Australian prisoners of war. He is a doctor by profession and tries his level best to save his fellow prisoners from death. After the war, he is entitled to write a preface for the illustrated book by a fellow belonging to his contingent. Yet another instance of attached text is from *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001). William Gould was a painter by position and he is charged and imprisoned for forgery. He was also entitled to paint the rare fishes in the Tasmanian sea. Apart from painting fish, he wrote his autobiography in the book. Therefore, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) and *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001) are the main texts and the sub stories in them can be taken as the contingent texts. Flanagan also gives a hint that the Gould's Book of Fish is narrated by Sid Hammet, who initially read the original work and reproduced it from his memory.

Flanagan's characters are complex beings. Therefore, in the course of narration Flanagan interferes and suggests who is speaking to whom. In some cases, the characters address fellow characters. And in other cases, the characters appeal to the readers. The term auscultation refers to the perceptual reproduction of sound in literature. It asks the question who is the listener and thereby paralleling the term focalization. Auscultation may be regarded as a subspecies of the broader concept of focalization. Focalization is the answer to the question, who is perceiving. In *Narrative Discourse* (1979), Gerard Genette noted that the term point of view is conflated with two distinct aspects of narrative discourses which is the voice and the vision.

Flanagan has employed narrative and meta-narrative. The story of Dorrigo Evans in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) is narrative. And the stories of

prisoners of war is meta-narrative. Similarly, the story of Mathinna in *Wanting* (2008) is narrative and story of Charles Dickens in *Wanting* (2008) is meta-narrative.

Narratives can be analyzed in relationship with different narrative levels. A text may have more than one level of story. A character, in one level, may appear as a narrator of another. A text may have stories within stories. These two levels of narratives are termed as narrative and meta-narrative respectively. The meta-narrative is a narrative within the narrative. Once these narrative levels are identified, it is possible to locate the narrators and characters within the text. The co-existence of different narrative levels manifest itself in the appearance of narrative voice.

The best example of extradiegetic narrator is Mr Sid Hammet. The sense of the word diegesis stands for the root for a family of terms and extradiegetic refers to situations that are not properly part of the main narrative world. A narrator who is not a part of the main narrative world or a narrator who is not a part of the action he or she narrates, is an extradiegetic narrator. Mr Sid Hammet accidentally finds the original *Book of Fish*, written by the convict William Gould. He mentions that the book has magical powers. He introduces the framework of the novel in the beginning and is never mentioned again in the novel. Apart from introducing the novel, he has no other role to play.

Intradiegetic refers to a situation within the main narrative world.

Intradiegetic narrator is the one whose narration is framed by another narrator. The style is aptly found in the novel *Wanting* (2008) where we have the narrations of Lady Jane Franklin and also the version of Charles Dickens. Both exist parallel to each other. Both Jane Franklin and Charles Dickens narrate their own stories but the connecting link between both the worlds is Sir Franklin, who was a great adventurer and founder of the famous North Passage. Sir Franklin never returns from the voyage



in his quest for the North channel and there are reports of cannibalism that is inherent in human nature. Dr Ray accuses Sir Franklin and his men for surrendering to the cannibalistic nature. Mrs Jane Franklin wants Charles Dickens to give a counter attack on this criticism and that is how both the twains meet.

Free indirect discourse refers to a locution in a narrative in which the narrator presents the character's speech or thought by blending the character's expression with his or her own. For instance, in the free indirect discourse the narrator would report the characters thoughts; like that of "he thought", "He would go home to sleep it off" and so on.

*Mise en abyme* is the device of having a part of a text as a mirror in miniature of the larger text and the classic example is the play within the play. In Flanagan's *Wanting* (2008), one can witness such a device where Dickens personally narrates the turmoil that he undergoes in his play *The Frozen Deep* (1866). The play narrates Dickens' emotions towards Ellen. "And no one will ever know. Their names already forgotten. There is no book for their lost souls. Let them have this fragment. So Dorrigo Evans had earlier ended his foreword for the book of Guy Hendricks's illustrations of POW camps" (TNRDN 25). Dorrigo Evans writes an introduction to Hendricks' book. That passage mirrors the sufferings of POWs, which form the major theme of the novel. Hence, *mise en abyme* technique has been used by Flanagan in his works.

Style is traditionally defined as the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse- it is how speaker or writers say whatever it is that they say. The style of a particular work or writer has been analyzed in terms of the characteristic mode of its dictation, or choice of words; its sentence structure and syntax; the

density and type of its figurative language; the patterns of its rhythm, component sounds, and other formal features; and its rhetorical aims and devices. (Abrams 203)

Some of the stylistic devices too demands special consideration and a detailed analysis. Distancing effect refers to deliberately preventing the audience from identifying with the characters, in order to let them be lucidly scrutinized by the audience. In the novel, *Death of a River Guide* (1994) Alijaz Cosini narrates various visions and once the story gains the natural flow, he suddenly interrupts and reminds the reader of his current situation. That he is struggling for his life struck underneath the flooded Franklin River. Imagery deals with framing mental images of a scene using descriptive words and making use of human senses as sensory details.

Flanagan employs pastiche in his novel *Wanting* (2008). Pastiche refers to the forms and styles from another author, generally as an affectionate tribute. For instance, employing Charles Dickens' style in *Wanting* (2008) can be considered as apt and effective. "London seemed all stench and blackness: blackness in the air and blackness in his eyes, blackness in his very soul begging to be white once more as he made his way home to his family" (*Wanting* 32).

In many interviews, Flanagan has expressed his admiration for William Faulkner. He has alluded to Faulkner's '*As I Lay Dying*' (1930). The simplest definition of allegory is a symbolic narrative in which the major features of the movement of the narrative are all held to refer symbolically to some action or to a situation. Allegory has always been a dominant mode of colonial representation. Majority of the life of the colonized subject has been constructed by colonialism and in that sense, allegory becomes a weapon using which such writings can be contested.

*As I Lay Dying* (1930) was Faulkner's fifth novel and it is in the genre of gothic fiction. This novel utilizes the stream of consciousness writing technique too with multiple narrators and varying chapter lengths. Faulkner has presented fifteen different points of view with each character narrating a chapter, including the dead woman, Addie. The characters are developed gradually through each other's perceptions and opinions. Faulkner employs this narrative technique by manipulating the stream of consciousness and the interior monologue techniques. The novel has helped abundantly in defining southern renaissance and it reflects on the being and the existential philosophy. The novel narrates the story of Addie Bundren and how her family struggle to fulfill her last wish. Addie Bundren had five boys and a daughter and the family is dysfunctional and they are united only for the purpose of burying Addie. Flanagan has developed his own style of writing combining various techniques and mannerisms. In Flanagan's novels, one can find the theme of death, suffering, dysfunctional families, existentialism and multiple narrators. Flanagan has made direct reference to "My Mother is a Fish" (Faulkner 841) in his novel *Death of a River Guide* (1994). And he has made slight reference to Faulkner's *Sound and the Fury* (1929) in his work, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997).

An allusion is a literary device that is used for reference with another object, outside of the work of literature. The object can be a real or a fictional person, event, quote, or other works of artistic expressions. Allusion adds emotion and draws value by drawing reader's prior association with the object. They can be used as the reference for a new purpose. M H Abrams defines allusion "in a literary text is a reference, without explicit identification, to a person, place, or event, or to another literary work or passage (Abrams 8)."

Dorrigo Evans is alluded to *Ulysses* (1842) throughout the novel. Ulysses takes part in the Trojan War along with Achilles. His idea of the trojan horse becomes the turning point of the war. The war prolongs for ten long years. After the war, it takes another ten years for Ulysses to return to Ithaca. Ithaca is the homeland where he finds his faithful wife Penelope and his son Telemachus. Ulysses had adventures with Cyclops and Sirens while journeying back to his land. Ulysses is not happy to remain in Ithaca as the war hero. He leaves his kingdom in his son's charge and starts his quest, looking for adventure. Similarly, Dorrigo Evans as a decorated war hero looks back at his eventful life. Evans was the head of J Force (POWs). He does his maximum to help men survive the war. Just like Ulysses who led the Trojan army to success, Dorrigo helps his team to survive the tough Japanese regime. After the war Evans searches for further opportunities. To his disappointment Evans has to return home to his family. There he suffers like Ulysses, craving for further adventures. It is to be noted that Dorrigo Evans frequently quotes from *Iliad* (1488) and Tennyson's *Ulysses* (1842).

Bathos is a literary term coined by Alexander Pope in his essay "*Peri Bathous*" (1728) to describe amusingly failed attempts. Bathos is associated with anti-climax, an abrupt transition from a lofty style or grand topic, to a common or vulgar one. Bathos is derived from the Greek word meaning 'depth'. Bathos occurs when a writer or poet falls into inconsequential and absurd metaphors, descriptions or ideas in an effort to be increasingly emotional or passionate. Flanagan uses bathos as the starting sentence of his Man Booker Prize winning novel, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*. "Why at the beginning of things is there always light." (TNRDN 1). These words serve as the bathos because Evans thinks about his early childhood and

happy times at the stage of dying. Since the sentence presents contrasting ideas, it is a suitable example of bathos.

Flanagan has made use of anaphora abundantly. They emphasize and give reference to the hinted meaning. Anaphora is the deliberate repetition of a word or words at the beginning of successive phrases, clauses, or lines to create a sonic effect.

The passage below is a monstrous demonstration of how Dorrigo Evans, the surgeon, had to perform major surgeries without proper anesthesia and how those surgeries were equivalent to butchering a living man. These acts of torment and torture are ever present in the mind of Dorrigo Evans. Flanagan could reach this effect by the use of the figure of speech, anaphora. The repetitive use of the word, blood, several times, adds the panic in the minds of the readers.

Blood was everywhere, blood over the bamboo, blood over them, blood dripping oily lines in the dark mud below. It took few more moments for Jimmy Bigelow and Wat Cooney to get a good grip of Jack Rainbow and hold him, but still that emancipated tiny body jolted up and down as if electricity were coursing through it, and their grips slipped in the blood that now seemed to grease everything. (TNRDN 279)

Yet another instance of anaphora is from the novel *Wanting* (2008). The context being that of the character Charles Dickens going to visit Lady Franklin to write an article about the missing Sir Franklin and his team. As the door closes behind him, he is mesmerized by the blackness of London. “London seemed all stench and blackness: blackness in the air and blackness in his eyes, blackness in his very soul begging to be white once more as he made his way to his family” (*Wanting* 32). The paragraph is similar to Dickens’ *Bleak House* (1853).

Another example of anaphora as employed by Flanagan is as follows. The words ‘tears’ and ‘never’ are repeated several times. The very sentence gives a complete picture of the sort of personality Mrs. Ternan is. Mrs. Ternan, as an artist, has struggled hard to bring up her daughters. She has lived the artificial life of the characters she portrayed on the stage, rather than being a real character in life. Her poverty never allowed her to be her real self.

But tears were what she wept on stage; tears were what she worked so hard to elicit from audiences; tears were art and art’s reward. This though, was life. Mrs Ternan’s vicissitudes has trained her to laugh at rather than to be broken by it. ‘Never,’ she said to herself. Though she was a thoughtful woman, she lived by this unthinking mantra. Never ever give in. Never ever complain. Never ever admit to failure. (*Wanting* 87)

Another case in point of anaphora is “Ruin ought be, if ruin must be ruinously worthwhile” (*Wanting* 99). This is the statement that the character Dickens utters to himself. The statement is self-reflexive. It defines the personality of Charles Dickens. He writes this sentence in his personal diary and even Ellen Ternan, his mistress, gets to know about him through his diary.

Flanagan clearly pen pictures how an Aboriginal girl Mathinna confuses the concept of holy Trinity in Christianity using the device of anaphora. The passage below refers to the Aboriginal girl, Mathinna, who is forced to follow Christianity and she is confused with the concept of Trinity and the chaos and the confusion that it created in her troubled mind is mentioned in the novel.

Sometimes, as she lay alone in those two large rooms that were hers, so alone in an emptiness that felt to her greater than the starry night, she tried to unravel

her many fathers...There was God her Father and Jesus his Son, who was also a sought of a father; there was the Protector who had the Spirit of God the father; and then there was Sir John who was also her father, her new father –so many fathers. (*Wanting* 120)

The passage below is from the novel *Death of a River Guide* (1994). Alijaz, the drowning river guide remembers a nurse named Maria Magdalena Svevo. Alijaz sarcastically comments that Maria's lungs did not get damaged by the number of cigarettes she consumed but his lungs were getting damaged because of drowning. Alijaz thought that if had Maria had been witnessing his death, she would have made ironic comments.

Cigars, cigarettes, the principles is the same...She would point huge cigars at me...She would tap the double headed eagle cigar box...There were the melancholic last cigars...and ran from there onto cigar, adding a bitter briny after bite to her last taste of smoke. There was the amusing last cigar she had...that last cigar was my warning to the good Australian people...there were the tragic last cigars such as the one she smoked at Mama's funeral.  
(DRG 6)

Some of the examples of anaphora from the novel *A Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) are really commendable. "Dorrigo Evans hated virtue, hated virtue being admired, hated people who pretended he had virtue or pretended to virtue themselves...He did not believe in Virtue. Virtue was vanity dressed up and waiting for applause" (TNRDN 53). Dorrigo loved Lynette Mason and had an illegal affair with her but they parted and Dorrigo had to fulfil his duty to his family and it is this emotion and his shallow character that he expresses through his words. "For when he

was a guard, he lived like an animal, he behaved as an animal, he understood as an animal, he thought as an animal. And he understood that such an animal was the only human thing he had ever been allowed to be” (TNRDN 326). This figurative sentence describes Dorrigio Evans as the doctor and as a helpless human, who thinks of himself as an animal, living without any purpose.

Flanagan inscribes the idea of the Line using anaphora. The line refers to the Death Railway that has caused the death of several soldiers. The prisoners of war mostly were soldiers from different countries. But they had to toil hard to construct the railway line and that too in extreme conditions, without any basic facilities or health amenities. Despite all the odds, the prisoners had to live and die for the railway line.

As naked slaves to their section of the Line, with nothing more than ropes and poles, hammers and bars, straw basket and hoes, with their backs and leg and arms and hands they began to clear the jungle for the Line and break the rock for the Line and move the dirt for the Line and carry the sleepers and iron rails to build the Line. As naked slaves they were starved and beaten and worked beyond exhaustion on the Line. And as naked slaves they began to die for the Line. (TNRDN 49)

Flanagan has written his novels using a number of figures of speech. An example of splendid use of synesthesia in *Death of a River Guide* (1994) is described below. Synesthesia, refers to a technique adopted by the writers to present ideas, characters and places. Synesthesia appeals to more than one sense like hearing, sight, smell and touch at a given time. “I had loved that world, its serene pulsing darkness, its warm sweet waters, loved the way I could roll this way and that” (DRG 2). This



particular sentence from the novel *Death of a River Guide* (1994) is an example for synaesthesia.

Flanagan has employed ample imageries to help him reimagine the past. Imagery deals with the five senses, that which all work combined, to help us create mental images. “A rather vague critical term covering those uses of language in a literary work that evoke sense- impressions by literal or figurative reference to perceptible or concrete objects, scenes, actions, states, as distinct from the language of abstract argument or exposition” (Baldick 164). Visual imagery applies to the sense of sight and it plays the largest role. It describes the characters and the scenes.

Sitting there, he has a vision that would become inescapable, at once a talisman, a mystery, an explanation and a loadstone- the frozen ship leaning on some unnatural angle, forced upwards and sideways by the ice, immense white walls rearing behind its dripping masts, the glittering of moonlight on endless snow, the desolate sound of men moaning as they died echoing across the infinite expanse of windswept white. (*Wanting* 23)

Olfactory imagery describes scents. An example of olfactory imagery is when Darky describes various scents in the battle field.

Darky Gardiner sometimes softly singing as they made their way up and over the rocky slopes and screes, through the mountain passes, the broken villages, past the rotting flesh, the stone walls groggily half- standing, half-fallen, again and again that spilt olive oil smell, the dead horse smell, the scattered chairs and broken tables and bed smells, the collapsed roofs of broken houses smell. (TNRDN 31)

These lines describe the smell of rotting flesh, olive oil, dead animals, scent of cement etc. Gustatory imagery pertains to the sense of taste. An example is from the novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013), “he had forgotten the sharp taste of stone dust that hung around the broken village houses, the dead skinny donkey’s smell and the dead wretched goats’ groves’ smell, the sour stench of high explosive, the heavy odour of spilled olive oil, all melding into a single smell that he came to associate with human beings in trouble” (TNRDN 32).

Tactile imagery applies to the sense of touch. “A small girl ran fit to burst through wallaby grass almost as high as her. How she loved the sensation of soft threads of fine grass feathering beads of water onto her calves, and the feeling of earth beneath her bare feet, wet and mushy in winter, dry and dusty in summer” (*Wanting* 9). This passage brings into light the feel of wet grass and earth in Mathinna.

Kinesthetic imagery deals with movement or action of objects “The dog dropped its head sideways; the penguin’s now limp body flopped, and the dog turned and vanished. But the penguin’s howl- eerie and long, with its abrupt end remained in his mind” (TNRDN 135). Organic imagery deals with specific emotions or feelings. “He held the book there, looking at that book that light that dust. It was as though there were two worlds. This world, and a hidden world that it took the momentary shafts of late afternoon light to reveal as the real world –of flying particles wildly spinning, shimmering, randomly bouncing into each other and heading off into entirely new directions” (TNRDN 65). The passage describes what Evan’s thoughts were, while reading the book. There are passages that possess the visual, the auditory and the organic imagery

He would smell damp bark and drying leaves and watch the clans of green and red musk lorikeets chortling far above. He would drink in the birdsong of the wrens and the honeyeaters, the whip crack call of the jo-wittys, punctuated by Gracie's steady clop and the creak and the clink of the cart's leather traces and wood shafts and iron chains, a universe of sensation that returned in dreams.

(TNRDN 5)

Sheena one of the punters narrates the story of her weathered arm and how she went for mole removal and that the moles were removed but her arm got permanently damaged. Flanagan had used ironies in many occasions throughout the select novels. Irony refers to the expression of one's meaning that normally signifies the opposite or the typically or the humorous or the emphatic effect. It can be described as a state of affairs or events that seem contrary to what one expects and is often wryly amusing as a result. "Of how the radiation cured the moles but destroyed the arm, so it never developed properly. Of how the radiation had rendered her unable to conceive children" (DRG 34).

Flanagan has employed symbols of light, fish and flower in his narratives. Symbolism is a literary device that a writer uses to represent something more abstract. A strong symbol usually shares a set of key characteristics with whatever it is meant to symbolize or is related to it in some or the other way. Symbolism allows writers to convey things to their readers poetically or indirectly. When used as a literary device, symbolism means to imbue objects with certain meaning or function. Other literary devices like metaphor, allegory, allusion and so on aid in the development of symbols. The symbols usually represent grander ideas or qualities.

Symbol of light has been one of the frequently mentioned symbols in Flanagan's novels. Light is symbolic of happiness, hope and positivity. But Flanagan uses the word in an ambiguous form. "Who brought light to my world? Who brought doubt to my actions that were once innocent of reason or consequence" (DRG 2)? This line is uttered by Alijaz Cosini, who is a river guide and who is about to drown. Alijaz gets a vision about his life and his ancestors lives while drowning and observes his own birth and he describes himself as being reluctant to be born into this world and how at the end of the vaginal canal, he saw light for the first time. He remembers how he felt the light to be snatching away his innocence, the comfort of the womb and adding troubles to his calm and peaceful life in his mother's womb.

Yet another symbol of light is employed in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013). "Why at the beginning of things is there always light?" (TNRDN 1). The reference to light flooding is meant to represent both positive hope, faith and optimism and at the same time, to provide a stark contrast to the dark materials that fill the novels. This is the very first line of the Man Booker Prize winning novel, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013).

Flanagan opens the novels with such an ironic question. "that these people whom he had brought to God's light were yet dying in some strange way, in consequence of him" (*Wanting* 11). This again, is an ironic symbol. The protector Augustus Robinson has compiled the warring aboriginals under him and he provides for their needs and he wishes to civilize them and make them better but contrary to his wish happens ultimately. The more he tries to bring them to the English ways of life, the more they perish. The quote is quite ironic here. As the Aboriginals were those people who were in direct contact with God, through their own unique religious practices. The protector never tried interpreting their beliefs and culture and when

they got converted to Christianity they began becoming less and less connected to their God.

“*Lead, kindly Light, amid th’ encircling gloom; lead Thou me on!*” (Wanting 14)” The Protector, utters this at a very ironic juncture. King Romeo, the Aboriginal king, got brutally murdered in front of his people and in the pretext of operating him, Robinson brutally severed his arms and King Romeo got bled to death. The protector performed medical operation without a surgeon and adequate surgical tools. On seeing his death, the Aboriginal people started wailing and weeping. The protector got confused and did not know what to do and in order to prevent violence at that juncture, he started singing those lines which is a Christian hymn and the mob too began singing with him.

The symbol of fish as used by Flanagan is discussed below. Amy was the love interest of Dorrigo Evans. He has loved her and relied on her memories during the war time. Amy had to enter a loveless marriage with Uncle Keath. Uncle Keath had molested her but he was ready to accept the child. Amy suffered an abortion and they lost whatever meaning they had in their relationship. Keath always tried to keep her happy which is out of sympathy and she hated the sympathy that was offered to her by Keath. She loved Dorrigo Evans wholeheartedly. She compares her state to the dead fish floating in the river. There remains nothing in her power to change her situations.

As far as she could see all the fish were pointed in the same direction along the wave face, and all were swimming furiously as they sought to escape the breaking wave’s hold...Amy felt herself beginning to rise back into the wave’s swelling, she tensed in anticipation and excitement, not knowing whether she

would succeed in catching it, and if she did, where she and fish might end up.  
(TNRDN 121)

Flanagan has made use of magical realism in his novel *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001). In the last stage of his life, William Gould, the forger transforms into a fish, a sea dragon the quoted lines are an indication about the detailed process of metamorphosis that has happened in him, as mentioned by the character himself. Gould the fish stares at Sid Hammet, the initial narrator of the novel and inspires him profoundly. Gould has escaped the human boundary and slavery and has attained freedom in the form of a fish. Gould's metamorphosis into a fish is an example of Gould's existential beliefs.

With an agony that no human can ever understand & no fish can ever describe,  
I forced my body down, far, far, far from the light...is it easier for a man to  
live his life as a fish, than to accept the wonder of being human?...Can a man  
become a fish? All you divers who have come so far to fathom my  
mystery...occasionally staring in at me, perhaps wondering what it would be  
to be a fish, I will stare at them wondering what it would be like to be like  
them. (GBF 445)

Flanagan has made use of symbol of flower in his narratives. "Sometimes in my sleep I see a terrible flower of death: its stamen stone, its petals water foam variegated with blood, one man disappearing into the foam, another, a different man, arising from the foam. And that different man is me" (DRG 274). Alijaz Cosini the drowning river guide had always had a foreshadowing of his destiny. He used to see a nightmare in which there is a flower of death with the stamen made up of stones and petals made up of foam. Alijaz enters into it and emerges as a transformed man. Alijaz

was very much disturbed by this dream and he mentions that such visions were part and parcel of his family trait. Flanagan says that his dream became true as he entered the Franklin River as a man and later after his death, his soul fled his body as a sea eagle.

Kamalica flowers is mentioned in the *Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997). ‘Kamilica’ said Bojan. “I write and tell your grandmother in Slovenia about your skin and she pick and dry the kamilica for you, she sent them across the oceans, she wants to heal her Sonja” (TSOHC 153). Kamalica is a medicinal herb found in Slovenia region and Bojan asks his mother in Slovenia to send Kamalica flowers to cure his daughter’s eczema. There is yet another flower mentioned in the novel, that which was a chrysanthemum, which is usually found in the high slopes of Slovenia. Bojan Buloh, with great struggle, got it for his wife once. It was believed that the petals of the flowers would show direction to one’s destiny. Bojan and Maria Buloh placed the petals on the world map and the petals directed them to Tasmania. They somehow escaped the borders and the strict concentration camps to reach Tasmania and to start life afresh. Maria used to say that if the petals of the flowers were exhausted, they would be left nowhere to go. They find their life in Tasmania difficult and dismal and Maria, standing by her beliefs, commits suicide, whereas Bojan and their daughter Sonja lead an absurd life.

Many critics have noted that there is the recurrence of a symbol of circle in Flanagan’s writings. Flanagan has his own philosophy of history in *The Rest of the World is Watching* (1990), that which is “To articulate the past historically...means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger... In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that is about to overpower it” (Dixon 4).

The typewritten draft of *Death of a River Guide* reveals that it was originally to have been called “The Circle,” with an epigraph from William Blake’s *Jerusalem*: “I see the Past, Present and Future existing all at once.” As a professionally trained historian attempting to write literary fiction, the problem Flanagan wrestled with during the early 1990s was how to realize in language and narrative form what he understood as the “circularity” of historical time. Such an aesthetic form would coincide with the circularity of lived experience in oral cultures, and might serve as an alternative to mainstream historical narratives, with their characteristically linear and teleological forms. (Dixon 4)

Flanagan mentions about the superiority of Japanese art and literature in his Man Booker Prize winning novel *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013). In an interview, he mentions that he has depicted the beauty of Japanese literature and the horror of war crimes for the readers in order to comprehend the pain of the prisoners of war and the sufferings undergone by people in the Second World War. “Shisui’s poem rolled through Dorrigo Evan’s subconscious, a contained void, an endless mystery, lengthless breadth, the great wheel, eternal return: the circle-antithesis of the line” (TNRDN 28). There was a famous Japanese haiku poet, Shisui and he was asked about the mystery of life, while on his death bed. It is believed that he took a brush and drew a circle, indicating the circular nature of life. That means, man has to come to the same point from where he began.

“But with the fish gone, what joyful leap & splash would signal where these circles now began?” (GBF 223). William Gould, the forger and painter, is assigned to draw the rare fish found in the regions of the prison in the Sarah Island. During his rigorous imprisonment period, the time he gets to paint fish is his happy hours of the day. The quoted line is one such example of the fish and the endless ripples it creates



on Gould's mind. "-all this that is beyond us, all this that goes on & on, ever outwards, world without end, this, our third circle" (GBF 440). This philosophy is again uttered by William Gould but he utters this after he has metamorphosed as a fish and he states that he has entered the third circle. This particular line has reference to Dante's circle motion in *Inferno* (1472). Personification is the attribution of personal nature or human characteristics to something non-human. It stands for the representation of abstract quality in human form. An example of personification is found in *Wanting* (2008).

Sonja Buloh drove through them and into the sheep country, in which occasional ancient gum trees stood as if brooding survivors of some terrible massacre, sharing their melancholia only with the rainbow-coloured rosella parrots that briefly called in upon the trees before flitting off elsewhere, as though unable to bear the tales told them by those aching branches. (TSOHC 21)

Sonja Buloh has returned to her home country after sixteen years of fleeing from the harsh reality. While she drives home, she did not find any change in the landscape. The dam and the forest surrounding it seemed to convey the story of the suffering and the pain endured by its inhabitants. On seeing the dam and the surrounding areas she is overwhelmed by the flooding memories of her past life.

Flanagan has made use of epigraphs in all the select novels taken for study. In order to fully comprehend writer's idea of the narratives, a thorough study of epigraphs is necessary. An epigraph is a short statement and a literary device, such as a sentence, a paragraph or a poem, that comes in the beginning of a literary text but the words belonging to a different author. The epigraph is used to introduce the

current literary text, and gives it some clues as to its theme or its connection to the previous text. Epigraphs can be found in any section of the book, although it is mostly found in the beginning.

The epigraph provided at the beginning of the novel *Death of a River Guide* (1994) is “Who Present, Past & Future sees /whose ears have heard, /The Holy Word,/That walk’d among the ancient trees”( William Blake 2-4). The strength to retain the courage that is needed to endure the strangest, the most singular and the most inexplicable experience that we may encounter is the essence behind Blake’s words. The notion that mankind had been acting cowardly and that had transformed his life an endless suffering has been the belief among many. The experiences are called ‘visions’ for Blake and the whole so-called ‘spirit-world’, death and all those things that are so closely akin to us, have been so crowded out by life that the senses with which we could have grasped the nightmare, got atrophied.

William Blake, the English romantic poet, wrote this poem as an introduction to his *Songs of Experience* (1794). In this poem, the poet advises the reader to listen to the voice of the seer, the one who can hear the mysteries of life and the creation from God. Flanagan has introduced this particular stanza as the epigraph to his third novel *The Death of a River Guide* (1994). Alijaz Cosini is also envisioned with the vision of his life, before drowning. He understands the truth and the essence of his life, before his life gets over. Alijaz had a foreshadowing about his death and there are numerous times, when he contemplated on his dream. The poem indicates that instead of looking forward to God’s grace, man is busy contemplating about his petty life and that he has no time to listen to the seer, the one who has experienced the grace of God.

The epigraph is from the novel *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) is discussed below:

*Sarajevo, 1946*

Here, as in Belgrade, I see in the streets a considerable number of young women whose hair is greying, or completely grey. Their faces are tormented, but still young, while the form of their bodies betrays their youth even more clearly. It seems to me that I see how the hand of this last war has passed over the head of these frail beings...

This sight cannot be preserved for the future; these heads will soon become greyer and disappear. This is a pity. Nothing could speak more clearly to future generations about our times than these youthful grey heads, from which the nonchalance of youth has been stolen.

Let them at least have a memorial in this little note (TSOHC)

This epigraph is from the novel *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) and this passage is written by Ivo Andric as the opening lines to his marvellous short story "Letter from the Year 1920". The words are spoken by a character in the story, a Jew, who decides to leave Bosnia, after the First World War. Ivo Andric was a Yugoslavian novelist and he has won Nobel Prize for Literature in 1961 for his works about Bosnia under the Ottoman rule. Andric was very much inspired by the traditions and cultural practices of Bosnia and he examines in detail the complexity and the cultural contrast of the region's Muslims, Serbs and Croat inhabitants. His works reflect the historical turmoil of his homeland, Yugoslavia, and emphasizes about the plight of the people who are caught in the political unrest. His frequent reference to the widespread and deep-seated hatred, that which he describes as the element that

characterizes the environment of Bosnian life, is very much relevant. The nature of hatred which is seen as an organic force is the correlative of fear. In the context of Andric's experiences of war, the irrational fear, characterizing the human existence, has been channeled in a particular direction. Flanagan introduces similar themes of war, hostility and existentialism in his second novel *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997). The protagonists migrate from the war hit Slovenia and settle in Tasmania. There again, they are ill-treated and their previous memories of war, make their life miserable. The element of human hatred is also prevalent in the novel. Flanagan has effectively made use of the epigraph, of a novelist from Yugoslavia, the native country of his characters Bojan and Maria Buloh, in order to drive home the extremity and hardships that people of war-torn countries have to undergo.

“My mother is a fish” (Faulkner, *As I lay dying*) is the epigraph to his novel *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001). Flanagan has spoken of his admiration for William Faulkner's “life-long refusal to write an ‘American’ novel...(Dixon 6).” All the novels evoke the trauma of the Australian experience, from the initial upheavals and exiles, during the great transportation of its convicts and their history and the subsequent legacy of shame and oppression, with the overwhelming momentum of a metanarrative. Flanagan always quotes Faulkner and in many of his interviews, he has mentioned about having read him passionately. Faulkner's articulation of the colonial consciousness is note-worthy and Flanagan has noticed how this articulation can be translated into an Australian colonial experience and this made him follow Faulkner's path. The epigraph mentioned above is taken from the novel *As I Lay Dying* (1930) by William Faulkner. The statement is uttered by Vardaman Bundren, who is unable to understand the concept of death. During their journey to bury his mother Addie, in her hometown, they had to cross the river and the coffin fell into the river and it floats

along. Therefore, Vardaman immediately says “My mother is a fish” (Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* 841). He literally thinks his mother is a fish now and since her floating coffin in the river, reminds him of his encounter with a dead fish earlier in his life. The quoted line is an entire chapter in Faulkner’s novel. The dysfunction that runs in the Bundren family does not make him aware about the meaning of death. Flanagan has used the sentence as a metaphor in *Gould’s Book of Fish* in order to symbolize death.

Flanagan quotes Paul Celan’s poem *Wolf’s Bean* as epigraph in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013)

Mother, they are silent

Mother, they permit

Vileness to slander me.

Mother, no one

Interrupts when the murderers talk.

Mother, they write poems. (Celan’s *Wolf’s Bean*)

The torturers are men who are sensitive to literature. They write poems yet they are cruel. Richard Flanagan states that horror, hate and murder are as deeply buried in every human heart as beauty, love and goodness are far more closely entwined than we wish to acknowledge. Great Literature is life itself. One of the great war poets of the past century, Celan Paul Antschel, was born to Jewish parents in 1920. His style *Todesfuge* has come to represent the very symbol of human suffering and plight, during the Holocaust. His mother was convinced that it was futile to try to escape her fate. His mother was murdered near the river Bug, in a camp. The trauma

of the inexpressible loss, associated with his mother's death, has forever entailed Celan with an obsessive guilt of survival. In an uncollected poem 'Wolf's bean', the mother and her tormentors suddenly become linked inextricably, through the language and very act of writing. Like the ghastly image of the, Nazi officer who writes love letters to his lover and daydreams in Todesfugue, the phrase "Mother they write poems" appears out of nowhere and confronts the whole poem with the restless, frantic queries of a tormented mind.

Flanagan quotes yet another haiku as a para-text. "Even in Kyoto/ When I hear the cuckoo/ I long for Kyoto" (TNRDN 125). The inhuman perfection is the other side of the beauty of Basho's poetry and it is reflected through his works. It is not a series of episodes through which the narrator matures to wisdom, but through a series of moments. Each moment has to be accepted in its own terms and this is what constitutes Dorrigio's life. Each of the novel's four sections is preceded by a haiku. Flanagan quotes the great Japanese Haiku poet, Basho, "A bee/ staggers out/ of the peony" (TNRDN 1), introduces the section leading to the war. "From that woman/ on the beach, dusk pours out/ across the evening waves" (59). This haiku is almost a literal account of the climax of his love affair. Flanagan again quotes Issa, "A World of dew/and within every dewdrop/ a world of struggle" (TNRDN 175). This one precedes an account about the death camp on the Burma Railway. "in this world/ we walk on the roof of hell/ gazing at flowers" (TNRDN 375) This Haiku introduces the return of prisoners and jailers to their homelands and their guilt and sufferings thereafter. Flanagan quotes Issa's haikus thrice, before introducing each section of the novel. The novel is divided into four sections, which narrate various events of Evan's life incorporating the flash back technique.

Flanagan quotes Fyodor Dostoevsky and Ecclesiastes in his novel *Wanting* (2008) “You see, reason, gentlemen, is a fine thing, that is un-/ questionable, but the reason is only reason and satisfies/ only man’s reasoning capacity, while wanting is a / manifestation of the whole of life” (*Wanting*). The quote is taken from Fyodor Dostoevsky’s *Notes from Underground* (1864). Dostoevsky is a Russian novelist, short story writer, essayist, journalist and philosopher. His oeuvres are *Crime and Punishment* (1870), *The Dream of a Ridiculous Man* (1877), *The Possessed* (1871), *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), *The Idiot* (1874). The underground man cannot act as others do. He hates this spiteful part of him which is his inability to become anything. He takes pride in his superior intelligence. The truth upon which the entire age of reason crashes and that the capacity to reason is only one of the aspects of the human mind and that human nature is unchangable and no matter how much one might wish that conduct would yield to rationality been projected by Dostoevsky through his works and the variable characters.

Divided into parts and delineated by the Japanese haikus, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) has its own, unique structure. The novel is interwoven with haikus and quotes from literature. The first section of the novel covers the bird’s eye view of the novel in condensed form and the next focusses on Dorrigo’s and Amy’s relationship and their building up of a foundation for their love which followed by his bitter war experiences. Flanagan has explored Australian, Japanese and Korean ethnographies for this work and has strived to provide them with a voice and a return to a sense of humanity, logic and rationality.

Flanagan has made use of Biblical quote as epigraph for his fifth novel *Wanting* (2008). Flanagan starts his novel with this para-text where he describes, how even the most perfect people in the world, have faults of their own. He explains how

in spite of having everything, something is lacking in people's lives. He quotes from the Bible saying that it is the everlasting wanting which makes humans real humans. Here the concept of suffering for redemption is brought forward. "that which is wanting cannot be numbered" (Ecclesiastes 1.15). what is crooked cannot be made straight and that which is lacking cannot be counted. Both the epigrams point to the disorder and incompleteness of human actions and man's impotency to rectify them.

An element of history is ever present in almost all the select novels of Flanagan. Some of the historical events are worth mentioning. "It was 1839. The first photograph of a man was taken, Abd al Qadir declared a jihad against the French, and Charles Dickens was rising to greater fame with a novel called *Oliver Twist*. It was, thought the Protector as he closed the ledger after another post mortem report and returned to preparing notes for his pneumatics lecture" (*Wanting* 3).

Historical approach to literature seeks to understand a literary work, by investigating the social, cultural and intellectual content that has taken part in the act of producing it. Richard Flanagan has used historical sources for all his novels. Here, Flanagan has solely made use of historical incidents and spun his novel around the relatable history. He also centres his main characters around the real historical person, Colonel Dunlop.

Whereas in his fifth novel *Wanting* (2008) even though he has used the same approach, he has opted to base the plot of the novel based up on the historical personae. Flanagan has brought two streams of stories and wound it together. The novel revolves around these two lives. *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013) has references to various historical incidents like the Second World War, war crimes, The Burma Railway constructed by the prisoners of war, under extreme



malnourishment and unhygienic conditions and the aftermath of the Second World War. Flanagan also mentions great men like Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, John Forster, Sir John Franklin, Lady Franklin and Augustus Robinson. This study aims to analyse the part played by the referred historical personae, in the real history and in the novel.

The narration techniques related to plot of the narrative needs special consideration. Backstory is the story that precedes the events in the story being told and these past events in the background, add meaning to the current circumstances. Flanagan has used numerous backstories for the formation of his narratives. For instance, *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) has the context of Nazi holocaust as the backdrop of the story and similarly the novel *Wanting* (2008), has elements of Aboriginal war in the backdrop. Foreshadowing refers to the implicit, yet intentional efforts, of an author, in suggesting events, that are yet to take place in the process of the narration. The element of foreshadowing is adequately found in *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013). “Dorrigo Evans would live long to see all these changes” (TNRDN 2). The element of foreshadowing is explicit in *The Death of a River Guide* (1994) where the character, Alijaz Cosini, frequently dreams about a man entering a foam wave and emerging as a different person and he also dreams about a sea eagle soaring up high in the sky. These symbols foreshadow his own death. He had seen and felt the meaning of these foreshadowing symbols from a very early stage of his life. Narrative hook is yet another technique where a story opening culminates in the hooking of a reader’s attention, so that he will keep reading.

The ticking clock scenario refers to the threat of impending disaster, that is being often used in thrillers, where the salvation and the escape are the essential elements. An instance of ticking clock scenario is aptly found in *Death of the River*

*Guide* (1994). Alijaz Cosini is fighting for his life and his teammates have tried their level best to rescue him. Suddenly, Alijaz spots a helicopter above him and the people in the helicopter take pictures of his extended arm above the surface of water. Alijaz believes for a second that he might be able to live but having taken the pictures for news program, the helicopter leaves and Alijaz's ticking clock stops suddenly.

Ancestry is most forcefully and powerfully expressed as narrative. Plot structure is imposed on events. The narrative is given a linear development which leads to a closure. The context is being that of the politics and the position of the audience and the speaker. Threads of truth are woven into a coherent narrative. History is remembered more subjectively as an unconscious phenomenon. Ancestral history is recorded through oral stories, personal life and written records. Flanagan's novels are based in and around his homeland Tasmania. In all the select novels, there is a quest to identify the genealogy of the characters, a search for the roots and a search for family and identity which is thoroughly identifiable.

Flanagan employs cinematic narration in all his novels. Cinematic narration has been explained in full length by Seymour Chatman in *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (1980). Flanagan's writing has almost all the characteristics of a cinematic narration. His narrative proceeds in the form of chunks and pieces, episodes to be precise and this helps him in narrating one thing at a time. Hence, by using this technique, Flanagan could focus on the aspects like that of colonial history, trauma, episodic memory and Aboriginal genocide. Flanagan's cinematic technique is clearly visible in the following passages.

He begins with a reference to Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, which he invokes to illustrate the enrichment of our perceptual world by the

advent of film. Just as Freud's book had "isolated and made analyzable things which had heretofore floated along unnoticed in the broad stream of perception," so "film has brought about a similar deepening of apperception. Ali's fall into the river is his own "leap into the apparatus, which allows him to see the past anew, as if through a prism, recovering moments in time lost to the "broad stream" of national and world history, opening up registers of reality otherwise invisible to human eye. As Howard Caygill observes, it is in Benjamin's thinking about film in particular, that his concept of the optical unconscious assumes its "most political significance" by creating "the possibility of ...an openness to the future. (Dixon 26)

Flanagan openly states his movie like features in his select novels. Flanagan's narratives in some places resemble cinematic narration. The examples of cinematic narrations are as follows. "Where do I begin? Maybe with what I am seeing at this moment. Because it makes me feel funny, what I am seeing. Because I have never seen such things, least not the way I am seeing them now. It's like a movie, right?" (DRG 13). Both these quoted lines are specimens of how Flanagan openly states his movie like features in his select novels. "'Mama,' Maria Buloh heard a small girl's voice coming from inside the hut. Then once again, this time more a whimper- 'Mama...' Maria Buloh felt herself at that moment to be watching everything including herself, as if she were in a movie and this were a movie set (TSOHC 3)."

Flanagan has explicitly made the character speak as if she is witnessing her life as a movie.

Flanagan's novels have taken form out of his encounter with daily aspects of Australian life. The novelist is inspired by one thing or the other. In an interview with British journalist, Alan Yentob, for the television documentary, *Richard Flanagan*:

*Life after Death* (2015), Flanagan traces the origin of his mature fiction to that of a near death experience as a young man. When in 1982, at the age of twenty one, Richard Flanagan got trapped beneath a kayak on the river Franklin. Inspired by that incident Flanagan wrote *Death of a River Guide* (1994). Alijaz Cosini narrates his story in his dying moments. He is granted visions about the tangled histories of his family and his community. Just like the flooded river, his mind is flooded with memories.

Flanagan's second novel *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* (1997) was originally written as a screenplay and was adapted as a novel only when Flanagan was unable to secure adequate finance for film production. It is set in Tasmania during the hydro-industrial boom of the 1950s to the 1980s. Flanagan has said that "It struck me as very ironic that the people who were brought in to build these giant dams were the Europeans who were seeking to flee exactly that Europe of Ruhr Valleys and all the horror that it had produced. People who were entirely shaped by history- the poles, the Italians, the Yugoslavs" (Dixon 7).

Flanagan's third novel *Gould's Book of Fish* (2001) began with a simple inquiry at the State Library of Tasmania, about whether there were any surviving images of the convicts from the Macquarie Harbour Penal Station on Sarah island. The curator showed him the convict artist William Buelow Gould's, watercolour paintings of fish suggesting that they seem to possess human faces. The narrator is William Buelow Gould, a convict forger sent to Sarah Island, at the request of the surgeon, to paint a series of natural historical studies of the fish that are found around the island. Flanagan said to Nikki Christer that "the real life Gould's picture of the fish would form the organizing principle of the novel... Each chapter begin with a colour plate of one of Gould's studies of fish, and be printed in different coloured

ink...his idea for coloured typefaces was modelled on Faulkner's plan for *The Sound and the Fury*" (Dixon 8). Flanagan's framing apparatus is similar to that of the manuscript found in the narrative. Sid Hammet, a purveyor of fake antiques, for American market, discovers a copy of the Book of Fish. The book suddenly disappears from the shop and Hammet decides to replicate it from his memory. Hammet is an unreliable narrator.

Just like *Gould's Book of Fish*, Flanagan's fifth novel *Wanting* (2008) too was inspired by a painting, in a Tasmanian museum. It was painted in 1842, when Mathinna was about seven years old. Thomas Block's water colour portrait of Mathinna, a little Aboriginal girl in a red Victorian dress, triggered Flanagan's interest, when the custodian of the museum lifted the frame to show him the girl's bare feet, hidden beneath it. As Flanagan explains in "A Journey Deep into his Soul", the image of Mathinna resonated because it presented "this odd combination of the dress of Age of reason over an Aboriginal child at the end of what I knew had been this terrible war of extermination...it's the bare feet chopped off by the wooden frame" (Dixon 10). Flanagan makes use of the historical figures of Mathinna, Sir John Franklin, Lady Jane Franklin and Charles Dickens to explore the links between colonialism and culture. Flanagan explains in his Author's Note to *Wanting* (2008) that his concern is also to offer a corrective to the idea that Tasmanian indigenous peoples did not survive colonization and thereby, revealing the truth that instead of everything, how a pervasive Aboriginal presence continued in the "subsequent unfolding of Tasmanian history. His interest in the connection between Mathinna and Dickens, plays out in his meditations on desire, its cost when it is denied, and the power it holds over humans at different transnational sites. For Flanagan, that and not history, is the true subject of *Wanting* (2008).

Flanagan's Man Booker Prize winning novel, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North* (2013), can be considered as the fictional biography of Flanagan's father Arch Flanagan. His father had been a prisoner of the Japanese on the Thai-Burma railway after the fall of Singapore in 1942. In an article titled "Dinner with Richard Flanagan, a child of the death railway" Flanagan said that, "I spent a lot of time with my father in his final years," he recalls, "often talking about very specific details. It was a way of being with each other." The book is dedicated to the memory of his father, prisoner *san byaku san ju go* (number 335), the Japanese number, assigned to him, in the camps, as one of Dunlop's thousand. His brother the journalist and writer Martin Flanagan, co-wrote with their father, a memoir that includes a short history of Arch's childhood in rural Tasmania. The novel takes as its subject, many intersecting stories of love and war, that has got a thread through the small towns of Tasmania and to the other Australian states and finally culminating in the global events of the World War II.

The hypothesis of the dissertation has been to find out how the tools of narratology help to uncover crux discourses dealt by Flanagan. It also aims to understand what twain unites the concepts like memory, trauma, and postcolonial aspects in the select novels of Richard Flanagan. It also aims to find out, how narratology as a tool, is helpful in unearthing these valuable points. It is revealed through this detailed research that the past is embedded in human psyche in the form of memory and trauma. The study finds that people can overcome the burden of the past only by narrating about their lives. Only suitable form of narration, be it oral or written can relieve people from the pain caused by the past. These hidden values present in the character's conscious are clearly represented through narration, in the select novels. The thesis is an attempt to prove the research hypothesis that, by using

the narrative strategies like episodic memory, Postmemory, sense of foreshortened future and internalisation of various postcolonial reality, Flanagan has been victorious in articulating the abstract feelings of pain, loneliness and absurdity, through his narratives. The answer to the research question is that, by amalgamating memory, trauma and postcolonial aspects into his well-researched facts Flanagan has effectively narrated the unnarratable.

Richard Flanagan is a descendent from the Irish family of settlers. His well-researched novels bring out the effects of aboriginal genocide, the plight of the immigrants and the various heterogeneous cultures found in the multiple layers of the society. Narratology, using its various techniques, conveys even the inexplicable, the tranquil and the delicate concepts like trauma, memory and postcolonial history and it is easy to understand the actuality by analyzing the narrative styles employed by the author. The different techniques employed provide clarity in presenting the delicate themes. Thus, the hypothesis is proved.

While analyzing the role of this thesis in filling the existing gaps in research, it is to be noted that, Richard Flanagan is a less researched author with ample scope for research. The concepts dealt in the core chapters are vast and still emerging and currently trending field of study. Flanagan's works have been previously analyzed as short research papers. The dissertation will also contribute to the fields of narratology, memory studies, trauma studies and postcolonial studies.

Further scope of research in the novels of Richard Flanagan include incorporating detailed aspects of culture studies. As mentioned in the title, the thesis analyses the process by which Flanagan employs narrative techniques and the unique strategy. It is found that Flanagan has given voice to abstract emotions like trauma,

memory and internal conflict. The thesis also throws light on the surmounting importance of understanding the aspect of trauma and finding ways of overcoming it by narrating openly about the trauma. Flanagan attempts through his writings to say the unsayable.



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