

# LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* and Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*  
as Detective Fiction – M.Phil. Dissertation

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Novel is a fictional narrative, long and complicated in structure, with life like representation of actions and characters. The modern novel is the typical growth of the eighteenth century. The word “Novel” is derived from Latin word “Novellus” and Italian word “Novella”, which means a “tale” or “Short story”. There are many types of novels as Historical novel, picaresque novel, Epistolary novel, Gothic novel, Regional Novel, Psychological Novel, Sentimental Novel, Historical novel, Romantic novel, Detective novel and science fiction.

Detective novel is one in which an investigator either professional or amateur investigates a crime or murder. Detective fiction can be divided into following branches. It is a subgenre of crime fiction. It is categorized as: The whodunit is the most common form of detective fiction. It features a complex, plot driven story in which the reader is provided with clues from which the identity of the perpetrator of the crime may be deduced before the solution is revealed at the end of the book. Locked Room Mystery is a specialized kind of whodunit in which the crime is committed under apparently impossible circumstances, such as locked room in which no intruder could have left. Cozy is a subgenre of detective fiction in which sex, profanity or violence are treated humorously. Hard-boiled is subgenre of detective fiction. It was tough, unsentimental style of American crime writing that brought a new tone of realism or naturalism to the field of detective fiction. It used graphic, sex and violence vivid but often sordid urban back ground and fast paced, slangy dialogue.

Characteristic Features of Detective Novel Follows:

- Mystery, crime or another puzzle to be solved.
- Main character is a detective who sets out to solve a mystery.
- Suspects and their motives; there must be weighted and evaluated.

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- over clues about crime are presented
- Hidden evidence is presented, i.e., essential details are offered in such a way that they seem unimportant.
- Inference Gaps – mysteries, by their very nature, do not tell the whole story. It is up to readers to notice the gaps in the story and try to fill these gaps by using and connecting the information that is presented.
- Suspense - having to hold various possible conclusions at bay as reader waits to see what happens, they are expected to enjoy the suspense, and to read to find out what will happen.
- Fore shadowing – clues left by the author as to possible outcomes.
- Red herring – a kind of foreshadowing clue that leads the reader to false conclusions.

Mystery or detective novels flourished by the British writer Arthur Conan Doyle, Dorothy Sayers and Willkie Collins. Arthur Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes* stories first appeared in serial form in monthly Strand Magazine. The series quickly attracted a wide and passionate following on both sides of the Atlantic and when Doyle killed off Holmes in the Final problem. It was a very pathetic situation of the stories.

Most of the Holmes stories are set among the higher levels Victorian and Edwardian society, a world inhabited by professional men, retired army officers and country gentlemen as well as members of royalty and ministers. Few take place among the working class or very poor. This situation is the precise opposite of the actual occurrence of criminality, which is overwhelming fanned by poverty, alcohol, gangs and domestic violence.

Another successor was Willkie Collins. His detective novel *The Woman in White* was published in 1860. It was a new type of fiction which did not depend on characters or incidents alone but on the clever manipulation of incidents to hide a secret and finally to reveal it. The story is told by several characters and the secret concerning Sir Percival Glyde, the central character in the novel, is kept unrevealed till the end. There is mystery, suspense, love, death,

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murder, villainy and seething passion in the novel. In 1866 Collins masterpiece in detective fiction, *The Moon Stone* was published. It was a better constructed novel than *The Women in White*. It was the first full length detective novel in English. The mastery in the novel is centered on an enormous diamond called “Moon stone” that falls into several hand. The diamond is recovered at the end by three Indians and its mystery is revealed. Apart from these two novels which set a new trend in English.

American detective story began in the late nineteenth century with the work of Anna Katharine Green, succeeded by the tales of mystery and terror written by Mary Roberts Rinehart and Dashiell Hammett. Hammett wrote all his novels between 1929 and 1934. He wrote classic detective stories. His detective stories mostly based on his real life experience. He invented Hard-boiled detective genre.

Another successor was W. R. Burnett. He would count as one of the most important writers of his time. *Little Caesar* was popular detective fiction of Burnett. It stands at the start of a period of fascination with the criminal’s own perspective, not only in gangster narratives but in the other central noir roles of investigator. He filmed *Little Caesar* in 1930; it was the most influential of the gangster sagas.

Detective field of South Asia appeared in Postmodern period. Postmodern detective novels portray human experience, the subjective nature of human consciousness and the way in which people attempt to seek the truth. South Asian detective writer such as Rajorshi Chakraborti, Ashok Banker, Ravi Shankar Etteth, Nave Deep Singh, Michel Ondaatje and Vikram Chandra.

Philip Michael Ondaatje is a Sri Lankan born Canadian novelist and poet of Burgher Origin. He is perhaps best known for his Booker prize winning novel *The English Patient* which was adapted into an Academy-award winning movie.

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Courtesy: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael\\_Ondaatje](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Ondaatje)

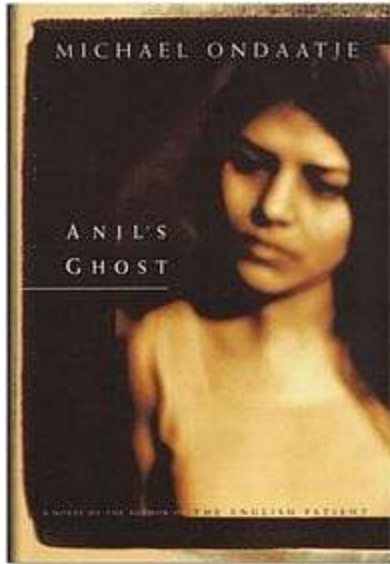
Michael Ondaatje was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1943 and moved to England in 1954. He attended Dulwich College – alma mater of literary luminaries such as P.G. Wodehouse and Raymond Chandler. After relocating to Canada in 1962, Ondaatje became a Canadian citizen. He studied for a time at Bishop’s College School and Bishop’s University in Lennoxville, Quebec, but moved to Toronto, where he received his B.A from the university of Kingston, Ontario. In 1970, he settled in Toronto and from 1971 to 1990. He taught English literature at York University and Glendon College.

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Ondaatje's work includes fiction autobiography poetry and film. He has published thirteen book of poetry and won the Governor General's Award for *The collected works of Billy the Kid* (1979). *Anil's Ghost* was winner of the Giller Prize, The Prix Medicis, and The Kiriama Pacific Rim Book Prize. In 2001, Irish Times International Fiction Prize and Canada's Governor General's Award. *The English Patient* won the Booker Prize. He won Canada Australia Prize and Academy Award for Best Picture. *The English Patient* could be considered a sequel to *In the Skin of Lion* is a fictional story about early immigrant settlers in Toronto. He won the City of Toronto Book Award in 1988 and Secured Ritz Paris Heming way Award for best novel of the year in English.



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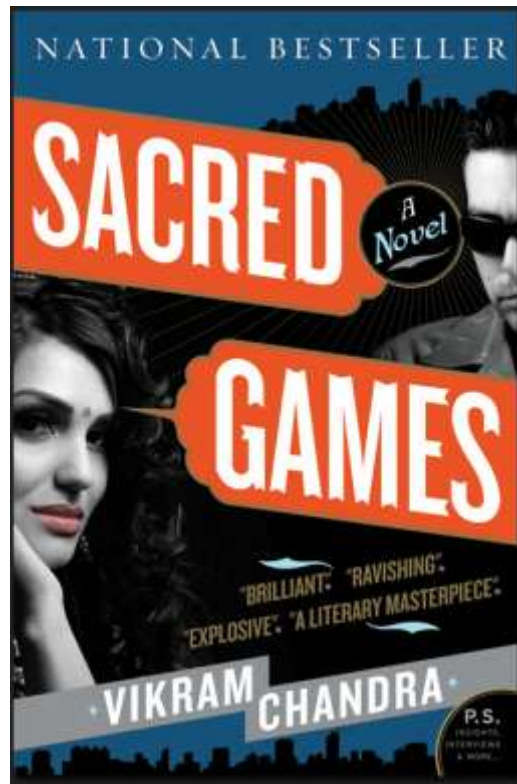
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Courtesy: <http://minnesota.publicradio.org/display/web/2007/01/25/vikramchandra/>

Vikram Chandra is an Indian writer. He was born in New Delhi in 1961. His father, Navin Chandra, is a retired executive. His mother Kamna Chandra has written several Hindi films and plays. He received his high school education at Mayo college in Ajmer, Rajasthan and attended St. Xavier's College in Mumbai. As an under graduate student, he transferred to United States. He graduated from Pomona College in Claremont, California, with a B.A. Then, he attended film school at Columbia University, leaving half way through to begin work on his first novel. He received his M.A. from the writing seminars at Johns Hopkins University in 1987. He taught at George Washington University, and lectured at University of California Berkeley. His first novel, *Red Earth and Pouring Rain* won the 1996 Commonwealth Writer's prize.



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Chandra's **Love and Longing in Bombay** a collection of short stories was published in 1997 by the same publisher as **Read Earth and Pouring Rain** was short – listed for the Gurdian Fiction Prize and was well received by international press and media. These short stories explored with humor, passion, and romance the high and low contradictions of life in the Bombay of the 1990s economize boom.

Chandra's latest novel, **Sacred Games** was published in 2006. In this novel, Chandra focused that the Bombay underworld brought to bring life in this bestselling novel in which police detective's Sartaj investigates the suicide of crime boss Gaitonde. When it first appeared, Indian writers were excited that it had broken many taboos. The murk's complexities of politics, religion and caste sock the bloody plot and the Bombay described here rivals any mafia ridden Italian city.

This dissertation entitled Michael Ondaatje's **Anil's Ghost** and Vikram Chandra's **Sacred Games** as detective fiction. It consists of five chapters. The first chapter traces the detective fiction and the biographical details about Michael Ondaatje and Vikram Chandra and their literary works.

The second and third chapters deal with Michael Ondaatje's **Anil's Ghost** and Vikram Chandra's **Sacred Games** as detective fiction.

The fourth chapter discusses Michael Ondaatje and Vikram Chandra's innovative use of **Narrative Technique** employed in these novels. The fifth chapter in turn leads to the **Summing up** of the arguments of the previous chapter.



## CHAPTER 2

### MICHAEL ONDAATJE'S *ANIL'S GHOST* AS DETECTIVE FICTION

Detective fiction typically revolves around a crime, often murder, which seems impossible to solve. This seemingly unsolvable crime sets things in motion and throws the story down path to somehow find out what happened. The crime is the heart of the story, and its seemingly unsolvable quality hooks the reader and protagonist. In the course of the fiction, the protagonist keeps track of the crime and pin down the culprit.

A common feature of detective fiction is an investigator who is unmarried, with some source of income other than a regular job and who generally has some pleasing eccentricities or striking characteristics. He or she frequently has a less intelligent assistant, who is asked to make apparently irrelevant inquiries and acts as an evidence surrogate for the explanation of the mystery at the end of the novel.

Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* is a detective novel in which justice is re-configured with in a narrative of a forensic case study or murder mystery. This text places female investigator Anil, a native born Sri Lankan. She is western trained forensic Pathologist who returns to her native country on a U.N mission to investigate allegations of such human rights violation. Her duties require her to locate the victims of the violence, to determine if there are innocent unarmed people killed in the conflict. She has come back without any kind of nostalgia or longing to relate to her old home.

Anil Tissera arrived in Srilanka when she was met by Sarath Diyasena, an archeologist. She teamed with Sarath to put together concrete evidence of these events. They set off in search of such evidence as the killing fields of Sri Lanka will yield looking for new and unmarked gravesites amidst the ruins of ancient monasteries and sacred burial grounds in the jungle and

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concealed in hill top caves. Anil and Sarath's investigation in the different areas in Sri Lanka reveal gradually that the whole country had become a killing field.

Anil is teamed up with Sarath for the investigation. He has discovered a corpse in a site that can only be accused by someone working for the government. He gives her details of meaningless killings,

“There is no clear issue now; the reason for war was war” (AG 43).

Anil tries to establish that innocent and unarmed people were being killed. Anil and Sarath find a relatively recent murder victim that she name sailor, has been partially burned and other evidence clearly indicates that the man was murdered. She made a report about violent death. Anil's reports are frequently articulated in list form. Factual details are chronicled before they are narrated, as Anil demonstrates in the following passage:

She began to examine the skeleton again under sulphur light, summarizing the facts of his death. So far, the permanent truths, same for Colombo as for Troy. One fore arm broken. Partial burning vertebrae damage in the neck. The possibility of a small bullet wound in the skull. Entrance and exit (AG 64).

She could read sailor's last actions by knowing the wounds on bone. He puts his arms up over his face to project himself from the blow. He is shot with a rifle, the bullet going through his arm, then into neck. While he's on the ground they came up and kill him.

Next, Anil and Sarath meet Palipana a former teacher of Sarath. When Palipana is old and blind, Palipana's blindness means that he must rely much more on his other senses than on sight. He interprets Anil from her voice and by touching her forearm. He touches sailor's skull and immediately recognizes that it has recently been served than the body. He recommends Ananda, a former eye painter, who has learnt the traditional Buddhist art of sculpture of the Language in India [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com)

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heads, specially reconstruct a head and face for that skeletons. Through one victim they hope to reconstruct the stories of hundreds of others who suffered a similar fate.

Ananda is a sufficiently skillful to build sailor's face. When readers first see Ananda, however, he is working in a plumbago mine and spending everything he earns on alcohol to drown out the memories of his wife, who has been murdered.

Ananda primarily relies on the power of touch as he reconstructs the face with clay. Ananda's own struggle with his personal loss and with his public role as an artist surfaces as he is in the process of sculpting the face of unknown victim. The memories of his wife intervene and he realizes the pain she must experience. He fails to create the face of sailor instead he rebuilds the face of his dead wife.

Anil watches Ananda working at recreating the skull and she recognizes that key piece of information that enable Sarath to locate the village from which sailor was abducted. By listening to the stories of those in the village he and Anil identify the individual. Anil notices that Ananda adopts an unusual position when he is adding clay to the skull. She recognizes this as being the same position that sailor has adopted, as the stresses of the muscles against the bone have left certain marks on the skeleton. She is able to establish that like Ananda, sailor has worked in the mines. Significantly, Anil determines this fact by touching Ananda's body in much the sameway as the blind Palipana touching sailor's skull. Moreover, Palipana's knowledge has come from working alongside people practicing traditional occupations – stone masons and dhobi women washing clothes rather than from conventional sources. Anil has been trained to interpret bodies in the way by her professor; for her, “this is something she knows” (**AG 181**).

In other words, both Palipana and Anil use the same methodology, because of the place of their training. Anil's knowledge is considered more valuable. For, Anil's truth is absolute, scientific and provable. Her training as a forensic scientist has led her to believe in truthfulness as factual, fixed and certain.

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The comparison between Anil and Palipana is further underscored at the end of the novel when she presents her case to government officials, military, police personnel and Sarath. She is forced to make her argument without the evidence. Like Palipana, She has been able to fit the evidence together to form a pattern but the truth has become “unprovable”. Like Palipana, she gives up on the absolute, normative, neutral truth and focuses on the narrative, social and restorative truth. She reasserts the Sri Lankan origin declaring to the officials that “I think you murdered hundreds of us” (AG 272). Palipana and Anil represent opposite extremes on a continuum and he argues that

Anil, Palipana and Ananda ... Work together and their varied approaches complement each other, but each espouses different perspectives.

Anil occupies one end with her faith in scientific rationality and Palipana occupies the other with his belief in intuition. If, in the end no position is privileged it can also be interpreted as Ondaatje’s reticence to endorse any single ideological position (AG 177).

Anil does not know when she makes her presentation to the government when her evidence has been taken by Sarath. Sarath has been trained by Palipana, yet he is not willing to distort because he is unwilling to accept Anil’s simplistic normative views of truth. He begs her to “understand the archeological surround of a fact” (AG 144).

Palipana and Sarath consider the truth to be of little value. Anil identifies sailor as Ruwan Kumar, the toddy tapper. He recognizes that sailor has been murdered by government and this is provable fact, but whereas Anil finds this fact sufficient in itself. She fails to understand Sarath’s point, ultimately this failure leads to Sarath’s death. He literally gives his life for truth. Surly, this ghost will be a heavier for Anil to carry than sailor.

Gamini is a surgeon. He is a character study of contained political passion and great psychological sensitivity. He is a brother of Sarath.

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He turned away from every person who stood up for a war, or the principle of one's land, or pride of ownership, or even personal rights

All of those motives ended up somehow in the arms of careless power. One was no better and no worse than the enemy(AG 119)

The surgeon's private struggle with the war's injuries and his understanding of the practical value of his skills say more about the truth prevailing in Sri Lanka than any amount of outraged authorial commentary. He slowly shrinks into the confines of the hospital emergency room where he works, sleepless, attending to the sick, the wounded and the dying. For Gamini his work is the reality.

What do my marriage and your damn research mean.

And those armchair rebels living abroad with their idea of justice nothing against their principles, but I wish they were here. They should come and visit me in my surgery (AG 132).

By focusing on the medical profession, especially in its infrastructure in the shape of hospitals under the conditions of war, the novel gives particular attention to medicine and thus to the human body which is the ultimate truth.

Sarath's body is read by his brother, Gamini. He searches for a more intimate history, the history of the last few hours of his brother's life. In a scene, which is reminiscent of Anil's early work in mortuary upon her arrival in Sri Lanka and which contrasts sharply with the earlier description of Gamini in mortuary, the younger brother seeks understanding from the truth of the part. In the earlier scene, Gamini deliberately avoid looking at the face of victims in order to avoid recognition. In the later scene, Gamini seeks out all the identifying features.

Sarath chest said everything. It was what Gamini had fought against. But now this body lay on the bed undefended. It was what it was no longer a counter of

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argument, no longer an opinion that Gamini refused to accept. Oh, there seemed to be mark like that made with spear. A small wound not deep in his chest, and Gamini bathed it and taped it up (AG 289).

Significantly, Sarath's corpse is described as being neither "a counter of argument nor "an opinion". Gamini cuts open Sarath's sleeves to reveal the broken femur. This means by which he has been tortured. He accepts that the truth of death is not merely opinion Gamini also treats the stale wound; a useless waste of limited resources. Up to this point the brothers have been contrasted through their responses to corpses. As a doctor, Gamini reads bodies in order to mend them.

Anil cannot dismiss her search for truth as frivolous just because she fails to accomplish her purpose. Her intentions are honest and bold and she is committed to her job of investigating human rights violation. But her project is hastily brought to an end by Sarath, who forces her to board an airplane and leave the country.

Ondaatje himself has just raised the question about the nature of truth but left them unanswered. It is reflected by the fact that the final chapter does not deal at all with Anil or the crime. It tells of Ananda's reconstruction vandalized statue of Buddha. The novel ends not with truth but with beauty.

Thus, the assumption of *Anil's Ghost* is that the Government is the cause of the murders in the society in which the protagonist Anil discovers corpse in ancient burial ground and does research on the sailor's skull. This kindles the curiosity in the reader's mind and renders the novel as an interesting film detective.

The next chapter also takes up the same thread of detective as exemplified in Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games*.

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## CHAPTER 3

### VIKRAM CHANDRA'S SACRED GAMES AS DETECTIVE FICTION

Crime fiction focuses on crime, usually murder. It typically continues to increase the tension until the final conclusion. The sleuth gets to solve the crime and while doing he faces problem either from other characters or environment. In crime fiction, some savory character commits the act. These characters might be thugs, gangsters or petty thieves that sleuth must investigate and possibly trust in order to solve the crime.

In crime fiction, the hero might be a police officer, who can still be tough and resourceful. He is pitted against villains determined to destroy him. In crime fiction, thrillers keep the emphasis away from the gangster or the detective in the crime related plot and rather focus more on the suspense and danger that is generated.

Hard-boiled is a type of crime fiction. It was published in pulp magazines. The protagonist is usually not a detective but instead a victim, a suspect or a perpetrator. He is sometime tied directly to the crime, not an outsider called to solve to fit the situation. Other common characteristic features are the emphasis on sexual relationship and the use of sex to advance the plot and self- destructive qualities of the lead characters. This type of fiction also has the lean, direct writing style.

The Hard-boiled detective was a character who had to live in streets of the city where fighting, drinking, swearing, poverty and detail were all part of life. This new type of detective had to balance the day –to- day needs of survival against justice. Living in the toughest of environments and required to be tougher than the evil surrounding him.

In this new world, the hard-boiled detective began to administer a new form of justice. The hero was thrust into a world where he had to choose between different levels of evil and no one was truly on the side of good. His survival often depended upon a shoot first; ask question

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later approach where the ability to reason out a murder is less important. The Hard – boiled detective was in response to the rising crime and gangster activity caused by prohibition and then the great depression. This chapter attempts to view Vikram Chandra fiction *Sacred Games* as an example of post-colonial fiction, especially the hard- boiled type.

Vikram Chandra has been definitively established as a major practitioner of Indian writing in English by his two previous books, the epic magic-realist novel *Red earth and Pouring Rain* and the short story collection *Love and Longing in Bombay*.

Vikram Chandra's short story collection, *Love and Longing in Bombay* comprises five stories named after Hindu philosophical concepts : a comedy of manners "Shakti", a ghost story "Dharma" a story set in the world of computing "Artha", a piece of romantic fiction "Shanti" and the detective story "Kama". This last short story may be viewed as an example of post-colonial crime fiction, specifically the hard-boiled type. In this story, Chandra challenges good or evil. Kama's protagonist the marginalized Sikh policeman, Inspector Sartaj Singh, is also a central character in Chandra's latest novel, *Sacred Games*. It is also hard-boiled crime fiction.

There are many continuities between "Kama" and *Sacred Games*, from obvious thing like the characters, Sartaj's mother, Katekar, Parulkar and Megha feature in both texts, to more obscure details such as the hide out bar that Sartaj goes to in the short story, Which is also briefly mentioned in *Sacred Games*, and the pilgrimage that Katekar undertakes in the hope of curing his backache, Which is referred to in both texts. There are so many connections between the two texts.

Chandra brilliantly develops the characters; the two main characters are Sartaj and Ganesh Gaitonde, a Hindu gangster who runs vast empire of criminal activities. The parallel development of Sartaj and Gaitonde is skillful and beautifully done. They are both vulnerable men.

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One morning Sartaj is stunned to receive an anonymous tip that the legendary mafia crime lord Ganesh Gaitonde is held up in a nearby safe house. As Sartaj and his colleague, the constable Katekar waits outside, Gaitonde talks to Sartaj through the intercom of the bunker's security system telling the story of his rise to power from humble beginnings. Sartaj tries to keep the feared mafia don talking, but by the time he and Katekar get into the building, the notorious criminal has committed suicide and killed his female companion.

Sartaj and his colleague investigate cause of Gaitonde's suicide and the identity of the dead woman, the veteran cop is unprepared when his superiors inform him that the case will be over seen by the government's top intelligent agency RAW who urges him to find out everything he can about Gaitonde's last day and about the woman found with him above all this investigation must be kept secretly. When Sartaj Singh plods off dutifully in search of details, Gaitonde resumes the autobiographical narrative so rudely interrupted by his suicide.

One of the sub-plots of the novel involves an Indian intelligence officer K. D. Yadav, who has knowledge about Gaitonde. Yadav's niece Anjali is also an intelligent agent who works with Sartaj in unraveling the conspiracy involving counterfeit currency, arms and ultimately an apocalyptic plot to engineer a nuclear war between India and Pakistan by shadowy groups. Gaitonde had connected these groups. K.D. Yadav narrates the story of Gaitonde. Now, the story moves backward.

Ganesh Gaitonde is another protagonist of this novel. He is just the opposite of Sartaj Singh. He is an arrogant and merciless killer with enormous ambition. Gaitonde metamorphoses from a runaway teen ager Kiran to a gangster in Mimbai, assuming the name Ganesh Gaitonde.

Ganesh makes relationship with Guru-Ji and has as his spiritual guide an internationally famous Guru-ji. He has discovered that his Guru-ji has organized, with Ganesh make relationship with the Guru Swami Shrinidhar Shukla. He becomes a man with mission and is fed messianic fantasies by Guru-ji who names him Arjuna to signify his warrior status in preparation for rooting about kaliyug. This ruthless gangster also has a tender side. He cannot consent to mass destruction. He takes good care of his employees. In spite of his wealth and power, Ganesh

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feels empty and alone, after he loses his wife and son. He feels uncomfortable to admit his family history and also fears about his future to Guru-ji and he becomes his confident and supporter. His Guru's philosophy is to change his mind.

Ganesh Gaitonde, the wealthy head of one of Mumbai's most powerful criminal gangs, has secretly collaborated with the Indian his help, an atomic attack that will destroy the city, in order to attribute responsibility to an Islamic terrorist organization that has been created for this purpose. The don Ganesh Gaitonde has unwittingly helped in the importation of nuclear material. Later he realizes his mistake and tried to stop the attack, and is waiting in the atomic bunker at Kailashpada, where he will survive the city's destruction. His only companion is Jojo Mascarenas. They planned to stop an atomic attack, organized by his Guru-ji swami Shridlar Shukla.

The plot moves forward along parallel track .One day, Sartaj Singh gets anonymous tips that Ganesh Gaitonde wants to meet him. Sartaj Singh does not know why the gangster has chosen him. The day before he had been called to a man barricaded in his bed room whose wife wanted to kill him and who kept stabbing a kitchen knife into the door panels. During an argument the husband had thrown his wife is white Pomeranian out of window of their fifth – floor flat. Thinking of the poor little body on the pavement, Sartaj Singh says.

Love is murdering gaandu. Poor fluffy (SG 5).

When Gaitonde takes him the next day to the Kailashpada bunker, Sartaj Singh does not know that he once looked at the terrible head of the Mumbai underworld with humanity. He does not even know that he has met him, as he was disguised. Gaitonde chooses him because he is a guardian of order whose humanity is not cancelled out by his uniform he is only person to whom he can give up himself and his story.

Sartaj Singh arrives in the Kailashpada bunker and usually tries to convince the gangster to leave it. He remains there, listening to Gaitonde as he tells the story of his first exploits in

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Mumbai and at a certain point becomes interested in the story, but when the bulldozer that he has requested manages to make a hole in the bunker's walls he stops listening

You're coming in. I am still talking but you aren't listening to me anymore. Your eyes are a fire. You want me, you and your riflemen. But listen to me. There is a whirlwind of memories in my head, a scatter of tattered faces and bodies. I know how they skirl through each other, their connection and their disjunctions. I can trace their velocities. Listen to me, If you want Ganesh Gaitonde, then you have to let me talk otherwise Ganesh Gaitonde will escape you as he escaped every time, as he escaped every last assassin. Ganesh Gaitonde escaped even me almost. Now at this last hour, I have Ganesh Gaitonde, I know what he was, what he became Listen to me, you must listen to me. But you are now in the bunker  
**(SG 816).**

At last, Sartaj Singh does have time to hear Gaitonde's story it is out of his determination to deliver his story and himself that the investigation is born that will lead to Sikh inspector's saving Mumbai from the atomic explosion.

Thus, Vikram Chandra portrays bloodshed and violence in modern Bombay city. He mentions suspense at the end of the novel. The meat of this novel clings to the bones of a crime story and there's certainly plenty of crime in it, the book is really a passionate tribute to contemporary India in all its vigor and vulgarity. Thus in this novel Vikram Chandra displays his skill as an excellent detective story - teller.

The following chapter discusses how Michael Ondaatje and Vikram Chandra have artistically handled the narrative techniques in their novels *Anil's Ghost* and *Sacred Games*.

## CHAPTER 4

### NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

Narrative Technique is the method of telling a story effectively. It may be defined as an account of a sequence of events. Realistic fiction narrates events typical of life as it is. The novelist at times assumes the form of an omnipresent narrator there by establishing a close link with characters and situations through his point of view. Consequently, while studying narrative technique of a particular novelist, one must view how form and content are intermixed. Mark Schorer in *Technique as Dictionary* says,

...Technique is means by which the writer's experience, which in this subject matter compels him to attend to it; the technique is only means ... he is discovering, exploring, developing his subject, of conveying its meaning and finally evaluating it (387).

The art of narrative is a highly aesthetic enterprise. There are a number of aesthetic elements that typically interact in well-developed stories. Such elements include the essential idea of structure, with identifiable beginning, middle and ends, focus on temporality, namely, retention of the past, attention to present action and future anticipation; and a substantial focus on characters and characterization. The novel is often enmeshed in intertextuality, with copious connection, references, allusions, similarities, parallels, etc.

This chapter takes up for the discussion how Michael Ondaatje and Vikram Chandra employ the narrative technique in these two novels *Anil's Ghost and Sacred Games*. The artistic excellence of Michael Ondaatje and Vikram Chandra is revealed through their precise techniques. Their great effort to achieve the best work of art stands as a proof for their skillful techniques and impressive artistic ability.

Michael Ondaatje is a familiar name in the English literary arena. His novel, *Anil's Ghost* is set up in different setting. He is a Sri Lankan born Indian writer, revisits his country of origin,

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painting through his artistic skills the devastation of another war ravaged nation. It is about life and death, the agony of dying victims of war and terrorism.

Ondaatje has brilliantly woven the elements of pathos in the fabric of the novel. The pathos arises not just from his skill in eliciting sympathy for a tormented nation, but from his evocation of a vexed understanding within a literary ethic that encourages and baffles the pursuit of justice. They are only concerned with healing, although he never prescribes any social remedy that might heal Sri Lanka's wounds.

Ondaatje portrays anarchic labour in *Anil's Ghost*. Anarchism is already used in *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. Both Ondaatje and Roy spiritualized manual dexterity in their economic, elegant descriptions of skilled labour. In the postmodern world increasingly fascinated by, yet disgusted with, mass production and mechanical substitutes for laborious, traditional craftsmanship, the figure of the highly skilled artisan symbolizes rejection of international trends towards globalization and the elevation of the consumer over the produce of goods.

All the anarchic labourers contribute to this concept of dangerous artisans. Ananda Udugama, sculptor or painter from *Anil's Ghost* and Velutha parravan, the untouchable carpenter from *God of Small Things* share certain traits: peerless manual skills, a tendency towards silence and a stubborn insistence on maintaining personal integrity even amidst domestic violence and war.

Of the two fictional artisans from the Indian subcontinent, Ananda is a Sri Lankan Buddhist who has risen from the symbolic pits of despair where he has been involved in physically grueling labour in mining gems and suffered injury. Velutha is a Malayalee Indian carpenter, an unusual position. Within the fictional world of these skilled artisans, colonial power structures are inverted as the binaries are dislocated. The identities of the skilled artisans - traditionally fixed by class distinctions are contested in the narratives, as ancient social bias is frustrated by the practical need for the services of those in a traditionally subordinate social rank.

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Next, employment of narrative techniques in Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* is taken up for discussion. Chandra's earlier short story collection *Love and Longing in Bombay* echoes throughout *Sacred Games*. The character worked as the well-respected handyman of a pickle factory, an unusual position, which further develops Chandra's engagement with the city by narrating a plot full of intrigue, melodrama, sex and violence that can rival any late Victorian novel or Bollywood film. The main focal point is the individual's negotiation of his role, space and place in this often hostile urban environment, which Chandra explores on all levels of Bombay movie starlet, the rich businessman to the airline stewardess, the corrupt politician to the high court judge, the gang lord to the spiritual guru, and the hairdresser to the policeman.

The idioms in which the novel is written are equally striking and unapologetic. The argot of the Bombay street and the idiom of the world of the gangster is splattered with an array of Hindi expletives and phrases that remain translated. Chandra masterfully narrates so that their meaning becomes readily discernible from their context. While Chandra includes a list of 'Dramatis personae' the main actors in this saga he does not provide a glossary. Chandra puts the reader into sink or swim situation and then the reader is forced to engage on a different level with the characters and the city and encouraged to get involved in the story characters and their language and their idioms.

Chandra uses temporal distortion or flash back. It is a literary technique Chandra's narrative propels the readers backwards and forwards between the past and present. Chandra narrates the flight of the Singh family to India during the partition riots or the injustice suffered by Gaitonde in a small rural village. He does not only provide the back ground information that reveals what has shaped the characters and explains his actions but also reveals the ruptures that have shaped the modern Indian nation.

Chandra's novel follows a comparable intertextual strategy. Intertextuality in literary kind is implied in detective conventions that Chandra follows. As well as in the books character as urban epic and critics have variously suggested such presence as Charles Dickens, Fyodor Dostovsky, Edgar Allan Poe and Raymond Chandler. There is also an immediate intertextual link within Chandra's own oeuvre through Sartaj Singh as recurring character, with story "kama"

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from love and longing in Bombay. Most striking, though, is an intertextuality of a different kind, with the literary novel rubbing shoulders with Indian mass culture.

Both Michael Ondaatje and Vikram Chandra place their novels in the literary post-modernist context. In their novels, they seek to represent a reality outside the literature, with the narrator as one of the major connection between life and art. Thus, this chapter narrative technique of Michael Ondaatje and Vikram Chandra reveal them as one of the leading master craftsmen in their time.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMATION

The detailed discussions put forth in the core chapters of this dissertation argue that the two novels Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* and Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* are effective detective novels. The two novelists Michael Ondaatje and Vikram Chandra exhibit display both substantial similarities and clear difference in their writings. Both are South Asian writers. Michael Ondaatje *Anil's Ghost* and Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* prove them as detective writers.

Michael Ondaatje is a Sri Lankan born Canadian novelist. His works include fiction, autobiography, poetry and film. His novel *In the Skin of Lion* is a fictional story about early immigrant settlers in Toronto. He won the Booker Prize in 1988. Ondaatje's *The English Patient* is a sequel to *In the skin of Lion*. The story deals with the gradually revealed histories of a critically burned English accented Hungarian man, Canadian nurse, a Canadian-Italian thief and an Indian sapper in the British Army as they live out the end of World War II in an Italian Villa.

Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* is a detective story in which heroine forensic pathologist; Anil Tissera leads to the exposure of a government crime and revelation of the truth. She returning to her native Sri Lanka to explore the current campaign of terror and murder brought about by a vast ethnic war near the end of the twentieth century. She has been educated abroad and has not returned to Sri Lanka in a number of years. She returns to find the country side torn apart by mass graves, night patrols, and government interrogations. With the help of Sarath an archaeologist, Anil discovers bodies, skeletons. They met Ananda, an artist who might construct from the skull a representation of the face. Then, they identify sailor toddy tapper.

The protagonist, Anil Tissera in Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* and the protagonist, Sartaj Singh in Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* put forth the investigation of the murder.



Vikram Chandra is an Indian writer. His first novel, *Read Earth and Pouring Rain* won Common wealth prize in 1996. His novel was inspired by the autobiography of James Skinner, a legendary nineteenth century Anglo-Indian soldier. The novel was written over several years at the winning program at Johns Hopkins University and University of Houston. His short Story, *Love and Longing in Bombay* explored with humor, passion and romance the high and low contradictions of life in the Bombay of the 1990s economic boom.

His novel the *Sacred Games* is the only fictional text in the conventional sense among the two books about Mumbai. One intertextual confirmation of the fictional status of *Sacred Games* lies in the fact that one of its two central characters the Sikh police inspector Sartaj, is a carryover from the earlier magnificent collection of stories *Love and longing in Bombay*.

*Sacred Games* is dual biography of Mumbai Ganglord, Ganesh Gaitonde and the police officer Sartaj. The two biographies drift apart in their range and direction: at the very beginning there is a dialogue between the two main characters through the door of a bunker in which Gaitonde has built himself a final retreat before his suicide. Sartaj's job is to clear up in his investigation the criminal and political context of Gaitonde's evil record, Gaitonde non-realistic posthumous dialogue with Singh charts the major phrases of his career in urban crime.

Thus, this dissertation entitled Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* and Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* as detective fiction has made an attempt to do an in-depth study of both the novels to prove them as a detective novelists.

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