

**RHIZOMATIC PLOT AND CHARACTERS:
A SCHIZOANALYSIS OF MEGAN TERRY
AND JEAN CLAUDE VAN ITALLIE'S
SELECTED PLAYS**

BY

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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

Title: Rhizomatic Plot and Characters: A Schizoanalysis of Megan Terry and Jean Claude van Itallie's Selected Plays

This research focuses on the impact of postmodernism on drama and its constituent elements. Situating the selected postmodern plays in the theoretical concepts of rhizome, schizoid individuals and schizoanalysis research method propounded by Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, the research investigates the narrative structure and characters of the selected plays. The research highlights the postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency exhibited by the selected plays who have rhizomatic structures. This research also investigates various ways through which the selected transformation plays have challenged the prevailing realistic theatre characters. The postmodern dramas freely sabotage and violate the characterization norms hence, the concept of character is rather a controversial subject in postmodern action. The research substantiates this argument and affirms that characters undertake massive transformation in postmodern literature in accordance with the paradoxical and contradictory essence of postmodernism. Hence, they cannot be defined with regard to the conventions of characterization. Through these transformation plays, the playwrights have questioned the conception of a fixed, objective truth. The research validates that the American playwrights Megan Terry in *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* and Jean-Claude van Itallie in *Interview* and *Motel* have attempted to create a unique Postmodern American identity and have revolutionized the genre of drama.

Key words: Postmodernism, transformation drama, rhizome, schizoid individuals, schizoanalysis.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, who are the wings to my endeavours. They gave me my name, my life and shaped my being. They are the reason I strive to become a better person every single day. In all good and bad times, they stood tall by my side. They cherished my dreams as their own. I know no matter where life takes me I will always have their back and I can't thank them enough for that.

CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This research critically engages with the plays *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* by Megan Terry and *Interview* and *Motel* by Jean-Claude van Itallie. The research aims at identifying how the selected plays exhibit a form of a rhizomatic structure by depicting incoherent plots and characters. As characters' actions make up the plot of a play so, in this research, schizoid characters are probed to see how they contribute to the formation of a rhizomatic plot. The selected plays are analyzed by applying the theoretical concepts of rhizome and schizoid individuals and the schizoanalysis research method presented by Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze in their theoretical works *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and *Chaosmosis*. The term 'rhizome' is used by Deleuze and Guattari to describe theory and research that allows for multiple representations and interpretations of the data. Schizoanalytic criticism is also introduced by Deleuze and Guattari. Schizoanalysis is a method that deconstructs binaries and breaks with the traditional theories of the subject, representative modes of thoughts, and totalizing practices. It aims at destructions of all sorts of traditions, norms, fixed assumptions, etc. This research further attempts to see that how in selected postmodern plays there is no fixity hence, there can be no authority or agency as the postmodern world favors chaos over order.

The debate on the relative significance of plot and characters has been going on since Aristotle's theorization on this issue. Aristotle in *Poetics* argues that plot is the most important element of a play as it is the underlying principle of tragedy whereas characters serve to advance the action of the story, not vice versa. According to him, tragedy can be written without a character but not without a plot. In Elizabethan plays, the characters assume infinite variety and the plot is not subservient to the characters rather it has its significance. In the 19th and 20th-century realist plays, the plot appears to be at a privileged position in comparison with characters whereas in Modern plays, individual characters are given a central position. These plays lay stress on the delineation of the characters. Action in modern drama takes

place more within the minds of the characters hence, the relative position of the plot seems to be reduced.

The most recent form of drama i.e., postmodern drama appears to have been deprived of characters in the conventional sense. Both the plot and characters in postmodern texts are unconventional and neither the plot nor the characters gain privilege over the other rather both play a significant role in the formation of unconventional plays. The postmodern plays do not have a proper structure. As Jonathan Baumbach says in a short story *The Return of Service* (1979): “Nowadays often we read a story but it does not seem like a story at all, in the traditional sense” (24). The postmodernist writers view the completion and wholeness associated with conventional stories with skepticism, and they prefer other forms of formulating narrative. One substitute is the multiple endings of a story, which resists resolution by providing several potential endings for a story (Mambrol). Likewise, the postmodern characters are not characters in the conventional sense. Brian Phillips in *Character in Contemporary Fiction* highlights the “the decline of character” (Phillips 636) in postmodern fiction by saying that:

While character remains central to every idea of fictional narrative, and interest in character remains the signature pleasure of literature, the character is not precisely what one finds while reading contemporary fiction. (Phillips 635)

Postmodernism is an artistic form and a cultural movement that rejects the established authorities and foundations and creates room for multiplicities. It challenges the notions of absolute truth and knowledge by questioning everything that claims to be absolute. Jean Francois Lyotard defines postmodernism as an “incredulity towards metanarratives” (Lyotard 9). According to Lyotard, postmodernism has an experimental agenda and it is a dynamic process that is constantly engaged with rising new arrangements. It is an embodiment of various theoretical and historical concepts as well as a system of social practices which are complex, conflicting, and are a part of an unending process of transformation. The main agenda of postmodernism is not to postulate new concepts that may replace the older ones rather it is concerned with the exploration of novel forms that have the capability to rejuvenate life and art.

Postmodern philosophy has a profound impact on theatre as well. The meta-dramatic orientation of postmodern drama is foregrounded by postmodernism as an endeavor “on the limits of what is conceivable” (Lyotard 12). Postmodern theatre, according to Pavis, is a

dramatic “text [...] that can no longer be recapitulated, resolved, or proceed to action” (Pavis 24). It highlights the postmodernist revolutionary self-devotion to the investigations of various forms of drama rather than writing successful commercial plays. Postmodern drama talks about the fragmented nature of reality. While modernist and modern plays propagate that reality is extremely complex but singular, the postmodernists are interested in showing how realities are constructed or shaped and how they collide. Postmodern drama does experiments on the limits of drama, and postmodernism has provided the necessary tools and theoretical framework for such endeavours. As Jean-Francois Lyotard comments:

The boundaries of what is conceivable are being probed in terms of sensing and phrasing, thus expanding the domains of the perceptible-sensing and the speakable-speaking. Experiments are carried out. This is our whole postmodern vocation and commentary, which has an endless number of possibilities. (Lyotard 24)

As Lyotard commented above the postmodern drama continues the postmodern fascination of exploring the edges of possibility by advancing dramatic experiments on the margins of possibility.

This postmodern technique of transformation is a key movement of postmodern drama. In Postmodern drama when traditional techniques of making plays are called into question, transformation takes up the role of the connective in it. Transformation drama challenges the prevailing realistic theatre characters which reinforce social and theatrical expectations and defies the concept of closure in a play. It aims to neutralize fixed assumptions, dismantle stereotypes, and reevaluate the hierarchies in the institution of theater. It recognizes the numerous and ever-shifting selves that make up a developing self at any given time and places the composite in a context that shifts as well. It prefers individuality and the idea of the disintegrated subjects over grand narratives of the past. The result is a perceptual drama akin to a Picasso drawing of a woman’s profile seen in the same canvas as the woman’s frontal view. Neither has precedence over the other nor does anyone disregard the other; rather, both reveal the complexity of the dynamic mechanism that we can only tentatively refer to as the self.

The present research aims at exploring how the American playwrights Megan Terry and Jean-Claude van Itallie attempt to create a unique Postmodern American identity in their selected plays. The research attempts to demonstrate how the postmodern temperament opened avenues for the rise of transformational drama and became its driving force. The

researcher attempts to show how the postmodern playwrights aim at depicting before the audience plays which defy the set traditions of the conventional plot and characters.

The research identifies how the selected plays *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* by Megan Terry and *Interview* and *Motel* by Jean-Claude van Itallie exhibit rhizomatic strains. For instance, the transformation play *Calm Down Mother* written by Megan Terry depicts an incoherent plot and characters and has various rhizomatic strains. Megan Terry is an American playwright and screenwriter. She is often acclaimed for developing Transformational plays and is associated with The Open Theatre, a theatre composed by the collaboration of several playwrights including Peter Fledman, Barbara Van, and Megan Terry. The Open Theatre uses innovative stylistic elements and embraces certain avant-garde techniques. Terry has composed many transformational plays which are characterized by a sudden transmutation in mood, time, place, action, circumstance, and even character's identity which intend to disrupt the audience's conception of a set standard of truth and authenticity. She defines transformational drama as "a dramatic action composed of brief sequences that are suddenly transformed into different sets of characters and circumstances" (Terry 21). Terry has indited some fifty works which include screenplays for theatre, television, and radio plays. Terry is highly praised for incorporating in her plays several stylistic techniques which challenged the norm and additionally for addressing diverse political issues.

Calm Down Mother: A Transformation Play revolves around three Women. It presents multiple scenarios in which these three women bear different relationships with each other. It shows women first adopting the most favorable situations that a woman can strive for and then shows how other women, as well as society, places restraints on their achievements. These three women are first introduced only as Woman One, Woman Two, and Woman Three. However, throughout the play, the women take on different roles, different names, and bear different relationships to one another as they change from middle-aged shop owners to young prostitutes than to old women in a nursing home, later on as sisters, friends, mothers, and daughters, etc. All the characters in the play present a fragmented sense of reality without any coherence.

The second play of Meghan Terry selected for this research is *Comings and Goings*. The play shows multiple situations encompassing different relationships between two characters who are simply called as he and she. The characters are not given any designations

throughout the play. In this play, random actors often replace other actors in the mid-sentence. The play encompasses continuous subversion of identities both of actors and characters. The play highlights gender roles and social roles that the two characters bear with each other and shows how these constitute power relationships between genders. The characters he and she are shown in the beginning as husband and wife who keep on switching roles on various instances without any intimation. At one instance, they are shown spouses who are quarreling with each other and after some moments without giving any clue to the audience they assume the role of master and waitress. In both plays, Terry has rejected the principles associated with conventional plot development as observed in a normative, realist play. In both plays, not only do characters' identities perpetually transform but the situation also keeps on changing. There is neither a coherent plot nor a coherent identity of the characters. It is an example of rhizomatic structure as in the case of rhizome, anyone point or circumstance can be connected with any other point or circumstance and it is evident in the plays. In these plays, The disintegrated identities of the characters lead to the formation of rhizomatic plots.

Jean-Claude van Itallie's play *Interview: A Fugue for Eight Actors* is also selected for this study by the researcher. Itallie is an American playwright who is best known for his play *America Hurrah*, *Interview*, and *Motel*. His plays are an attempt to break the audience's idea of what a play is by challenging barriers in theatrical form. His plays are not just an attempt to break certain barriers rather through his plays he has transformed various theatrical concepts. That is why his works are associated with the theatre of transformation. Dramatic innovations are central features of his plays that make him an exemplary postmodern writer.

Itallie is associated with Open theatre as well. Open Theatre provided him the chance to challenge the boundaries of theatrical representation, and thus it turned into an innovative state for him that prioritized experimentation and intellectual growth and challenge at the cost of commercial success. Itallie being a competent playwright manifested the Open Theater's pointless act of spontaneities and activities into plays. Itallie is not a proponent of art for art's sake. His plays show major concerns for social criticism. Along with writing in an innovative style, Itallie never ignored the social purpose of writing. That's why he is also called a political playwright. Through his plays, Itallie showed humanity's perilous position in this world. There are strains of absurdism in his writings. Also, in his plays, he seemed to be more interested in the dramatic form than character or plot development. Most of the plays have a one-act form.

Interview is a fugue play by Itallie which has eight characters who perform multiple roles throughout the play. It is a one-act play that was first performed in 1965 with the title *Pavane* and was made part of Itallie's book *American Hurrah*. Later, it was renamed *Interview: A Fugue for Eight Actors*. The play is about a formal job that has a musical structure. The word fugue which is a significant part of the title refers to a contrapuntal type of composition which is started by one phrase or a subject and is then taken up by others. In psychology, fugue is a disorder that is associated with a sense of loss of identity, this meaning is also relevant to the play.

The play *Motel: A Masque for Three Dolls* by Jean-Claude van Itallie is also probed to meet the rationale of the study. This play is a critique of American society and postmodern man. It is performed in a motel room which is furnished with various rubbish plastic items. The sole speaker in the play is a monstrous doll who spins in little circles and keeps up a consistent discourse concerning the several trifling things which can be requested from a catalog. The other two characters in the play are two dolls i.e., Man doll and a Woman doll who enter the motel room as guests and without noticing the presence of the Motel-Keeper Doll they settle in the room. The male and female dolls engage in the love play although they do not have true feelings for each other. This is characteristic of postmodern characters who are devoid of true human identity and humanly emotions.

During the play, the male and female dolls destroy various things in the room. The very start of the play invokes a picture of war, devastation, and demise when the Motel-Keeper's voice informs:

I am the room: a Roman theatre where cheers break loose the lion; a railroad carriage in the forest at Compiegne, in 1918, and 1941. I have been rooms of marble and rooms of cork, all letting forth an avalanche. Rooms of mud and rooms of silk. This room will slash too as if by a scimitar, its contents spewed and yawned out. (Itallie 137)

One by one they destroy everything and when nothing remains to be obliterated, they walk around to the Motel-Keeper Doll and wreck her. After smashing the head of the Motel-Keeper Doll's body they leave as calmly as they came. On the whole, this play is a critique of American society and postmodern man.

The motives of the play are depicted in the first title of the play i.e. *Savage*. Later, it was renamed as *Motel* and was made a part of the *American Hurrah* i.e., a trilogy of Itallie's plays. *Motel* does not only give vent to the political and social turmoil outside but it also

depicts Itallie's dissatisfaction over the back lash by audience and critics on his previous plays. He called *Motel* as part of his angriest plays:

Quite a while back I composed the play *Motel*. I began with a feeling of incredible outrage. I was furious, enraged that no one had praised my three-act plays, which were attempting to please everybody. ...All of me wanted to destroy and breakthrough. (Itallie 14)

The play opens with these lines of W.B Yeats: "After all our subtle colors and nervous rhythm, after the faint mixed tints of Conder, what more is possible? After us the savage God" (Itallie 1). These lines themselves encapsulate the anxiety, discontent, and disappointment of modern and postmodern man that is present in the play *Motel* as well.

In all the selected plays, rhizomatic characters make the plot non-linear and present the audience with a fragmented sense of reality. The sense of reality that these playwrights have depicted appears to be rhizomatic because of multiple scenarios and circumstances. The rhizomatic strains in the characters make them schizoid as schizoid characters are defined by Deleuze as free, solitary, and irresponsible. According to Deleuze and Guattari, schizoid characters having pluralist identities can act as agents for revolutionary change in society. Their identities even dissolve into each other. It appears that the playwrights are questioning the conception of a fixed, objective truth by leaving the audience baffled through presenting constantly fluctuating circumstances.

1.2 Thesis Statement

The present research highlights the rhizomatic and disintegrated identities of postmodern characters presented in selected transformation plays who appear to overrule the unified, autonomous, and transcendental subjects of the pre/modernist world. The rhizomatic strains in the characters make them schizoid as schizoid characters are defined by Deleuze as free, solitary, and irresponsible. These schizoid characters appear to be apt representatives of the contemporary human condition. According to Deleuze and Guattari, such schizoid characters having pluralist identities can act as agent for bringing a revolutionary change in society. Characters play a major role in building the plot of a play, the disintegrated schizoid characters presented in the selected plays make the plots rhizomatic. These rhizomatic plots defy the set traditions of the conventional drama. It shows that postmodernism has transformed theatre as well.

This research provides a fresh insight into postmodern theatre which favors chaos over order. Deleuze and Guattari's concepts are useful in probing the selected texts as they help to show how the plots and characters of these plays exhibit a form of rhizomatic structure hence, defy the traditional notions of plot, character, and dramatic composition.

1.3 Research Questions

The present research intends to answer the following questions:

- In what ways are the postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency exhibited by the plot and characters of the selected plays?
- How do the selected plays present a sense of a rhizomatic world?
- How does the transformation technique used in selected plays assist in the formation of rhizomatic plot and schizoid characters?

1.4 Critical Framework and Research Methodology

The following research is based principally on the theoretical concepts of rhizome and schizoid Individuals given by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The concepts are given in their works *Capitalism and Schizoanalysis* and *Chaosmosis*. In these works, they proposed novel ways to produce and understand subjectivity that is conducive to the refoundation of politics in a broad sense. To conduct this study, the schizoanalysis research method proposed by Deleuze and Guattari is used. They suggested that the schizoanalytic subjectivity modeling is an alternative to psychoanalysis and its reductional fixations on the family, structure, and language.

Deleuze and Guattari took the term rhizome from horticulture. The rhizome is a continuously growing stem that has multiple roots without any fixed order. In literary theory, the rhizome is a concept that allows multiple meanings, structures, and ideas. Cuddon and Anthony in their *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* define rhizome as a term derived from the field of Botany. Rhizome “refers to kinds of plants whose roots grow horizontally and may spread across the ground to develop new plants from several points rather than from a single root” (Cuddon and Anthony 45). The term ‘rhizome’ is used by Deleuze and Guattari to describe theory and research that allows for multiple representations and interpretations of the data. They showed, through this concept how the postmodern world favors chaos and mess over order. They stressed that instead of thinking that ideas and concepts are vertical, arboreal, and have a fixed center we should take them as horizontal,

poly-dimensional with no fixed center. Rhizome is a structure without any certitude and they believe that in post-modern times there is no fixity as in a rhizome and hence, there can be no authority or agency. These theoretical concepts are used by researcher to investigate the plots and characters of postmodern plays, which appear to defy the traditions of conventional drama.

1.5 Delimitation

The span of the literary history of drama ranges over centuries. As drama is a representation as well as an imitation of human life, the various modes of human life and different socio-political factors had a profound impact on it throughout history. The Postmodern age gave vent to transformational drama. The current study focuses only on selected transformation plays *Comings and Goings*, *Calm Down Mother*, *Interview* and *Motel* of two playwrights Megan Terry and Jean-Claude van Itallie to show how they reflect the temperament of the postmodern age. Due to the scale and nature of the study, the researcher has not explored the text of any traditional drama to show how postmodern dramas are different from traditional dramas.

1.6 Organization of Study

The tentative chapter breakdown plan for the thesis is as follows:

CHAPTER I- INTRODUCTION:

The introduction presents an overview of the evolution of drama over the ages in terms of character and plot development. It discusses the aim of the research and the plan made to meet those aims. The plan includes the discussion on the postmodernism philosophy and its impacts on theater which gave rise to transformation drama. This chapter also illustrates how in this study using the theoretical concepts of rhizome and schizoid individuals the researcher has explored the selected postmodern plays i.e., *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* by Megan Terry and *Interview* and *Motel* by Jean-Claude van Itallie. The study is an attempt to show how selected plays exhibit a form of the rhizomatic structure by depicting incoherent plots and disintegrated characters who appear to overrule the unified, autonomous, and transcendental subjects of the pre/modernist world.

CHAPTER II- LITERATURE REVIEW:

This chapter comprises the reviews of literature related to the current study which help to form the rationale of the study. This research critically engages with the postmodern plays *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* by Megan Terry and *Interview* and *Motel* by Jean-Claude van Itallie. This chapter is an attempt to trace the origin and the evolution of the genre of drama. From Greek drama to the most recent form of drama i.e., postmodern drama, in terms of plot and characters. This chapter also explores the researches that have been done on the selected postmodern plays to date to trace the gaps that this research aims to fulfill. An examination of such literature has provided a better understanding of the area of interest. Also, it has provided an opportunity to obtain more valuable insight into the chosen field of research which has opened a new pathway for the researcher.

CHAPTER-III: Critical Framework and Research Methodology

This chapter presents an overview of the theoretical framework and the research method applied to resolve the research questions formulated to conduct this study. The research is based on the theoretical concepts of rhizome and schizoid Individuals given by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The concepts are given in their works *Capitalism and Schizoanalysis* and *Chaosmosis*. In these works, they proposed novel ways to produce and understand subjectivity that is conducive to the refoundation of politics in a broad sense. To conduct this study, the schizoanalysis research method proposed by Deleuze and Guattari is used. These theoretical concepts are used by researcher to describe the plots and characters of postmodern plays, which appear to defy the traditions of conventional drama.

CHAPTER-IV: RHIZOMATIC PLOT AND CHARACTERS: A SCHIZOANALYSIS OF PLAYS *CALM DOWN MOTHER* AND *COMINGS AND GOINGS* BY MEGAN TERRY

This chapter comprises a comprehensive analysis of the postmodern transformational plays *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* by Megan Terry. In this chapter using the theoretical concepts of rhizome, schizoid individuals, and schizoanalysis research method, the researcher has explored how the selected postmodern plays exhibit a form of the rhizomatic structure by defying the traditional notions of plot and character. The chapter is segregated into two sections as two plays of Megan Terry are discussed here. Each section is further divided into two sub-sections, which deal in detail with plots and characters of the selected plays respectively. The conclusion of each section wraps up the analysis of each play

respectively. It illustrates that the plots of both plays are rhizomatic. The characters' identities are disintegrated unlike the unified, autonomous and transcendental subjects of the pre/modernist world and they make the plot rhizomatic. It also wraps up the discussion on how the postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency are exhibited by the selected transformational dramas.

CHAPTER- V: RHIZOMATIC PLOT AND CHARACTERS: A SCHIZOANALYSIS OF PLAYS *INTERVIEW* AND *MOTEL* BY JEAN-CLAUDE VAN ITALLIE

This chapter comprises a comprehensive analysis of the postmodern transformational plays *Interview* and *Motel* by Jean-Claude van Itallie. In this chapter using the theoretical concepts of rhizome and schizoid individuals, the researcher shows that the selected postmodern plays exhibit a form of the rhizomatic structure by defying the traditional notions of plot, character, and dramatic composition. Just like the previous chapter, this chapter is also segregated into two sections as two plays of Van Itallie are discussed here. Each section is further divided into two sub-sections, which deal in detail with plots and characters of the selected plays respectively. This chapter includes the discussion that how the plots in the selected plays are rhizomatic. Also, the characters have schizoid identities and they continuously transform. The conclusion parts of both sections show how the analysis is carried out and what results are deduced. Also, they wrap up the argument that postmodern temperament opened avenues for the rise of transformational drama and became its driving force which reflects in the selected plays as well.

CHAPTER VI- CONCLUSION:

This chapter concludes the argument that the postmodern temperament opened avenues for the rise of transformational drama and became its driving force. The critical examination of the postmodern transformation plays has shown that postmodern philosophy had a profound impact on drama. The analysis of the plays shows that there is no fixity in postmodern dramas hence, there is no authority or agency. The plots and characters in the selected transformation plays defy the set traditions of the conventional drama. The selected plays have rhizomatic structures as they have incoherent plots and disintegrated characters. This chapter includes the claim that everything is decentered in the selected plays and there is no culmination point in any play. There are numerous multiplicities in these plays that open up into other multiplicities and the notions of unified text, characters, or individuals are all challenged.

1.7 Significance and Rationale of Study

The present research is significant as it provides critical insight into the selected Postmodern plays on which little work is done so far. Although, the transformation drama reflects the temperament of the postmodern world and contemporary human condition yet little attention is paid to it so far by the researchers. The research is also significant because of the theoretical framework being used as the postmodern concepts of rhizome and schizoanalysis is not widely used by local researchers. So, the researcher assumes that this critical study provides fresh insight into this particular form of drama and it also helps to draw the attention of future researchers towards this particular area of study.

CHAPTER-2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises the reviews of literature related to the current study which helps to form the rationale of the study. Kenneth Broders, Bruce, and Abbot in “Research Designs and Methods” defined literature review as, “A literature review is a process of locating, obtaining, reading and evaluating the research literature” (Broaders, Bruce, Abbot 26). This chapter is divided into two sections. This research critically engages with the postmodern plays *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* by Megan Terry and *Interview and Motel* by Jean-Claude van Itallie. Section I traces the origin and the evolution of the genre of drama. From Greek Drama to the most recent form of drama i.e., postmodern drama in terms of plot and characters. The second section of this chapter includes a review of the researches that have been done on the selected postmodern plays to date to trace the gaps that this research aims to fulfill. An examination of such literature provides a better understanding of the area of interest. It also provides an opportunity to obtain more valuable insight into the chosen field of research and has opened a new pathway for the researcher.

SECTION- I

2.2 Evolution of Drama: Greek Drama to Postmodern Drama

Erik Henry in *Understanding Drama* (1998) probed the history of drama. According to this study, the history of drama dates back to Aristotelian times and is one of the major forms of literature. Henry comments that drama is different from other forms of literature because of its unique characteristics. It is read, but basically, it is composed to be performed, so the ultimate aim of dramatic composition is for it to be presented on stage before an audience. This implies that it is a medium of communication. It has a message to communicate to the audience. It uses actors to convey this message.

Henry in his work also includes various definitions of drama. John Dryden defined drama in his *An Essay on Dramatic Poesy* as,

A play is a just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humor and the changes of fortune to which it is subject for the delight and also for the instruction of mankind. (Dryden 46)

Hari Ram Shankar, a Sanskrit scholar defines drama as,

Drama is the representation by actors put up for a show at a certain place before spectators in the form of imitations of conditions and situations in which persons are placed from time to time by certain means, leading to the enjoyment of particular pleasure. (Shankar 99)

M. H. Abrams defined drama as, “[d]rama is a composition designed for performance in which actors take the roles of the characters, perform the action and utter the dialogues” (Abrams 3). Henry’s work also includes a detailed account of the genre of drama. From the origin of drama to its definitions, elements, and types it explains various aspects of the genre of drama. The study is fruitful in this regard as it can help to track the history of drama. This study is related to the present study as in the present study the researcher has analyzed the postmodern dramas keeping in view that how the postmodern drama departs from the convention drama in terms of plot and characters for which the history of the genre of drama should be kept in mind.

The debate on the relative significance of plot and characters has been going on since Aristotle’s theorization on this issue. José Angel García Landa’s in his research work *Aristotle’s Poetics* (2001) explains that according to Aristotle’s *Poetics*, the plot is the most important component of a drama as it is the underlying principle of tragedy. This work provides a comprehensive review of Aristotle’s *Poetics*. The review of this Landa’s research work is significant for this study as it provides the basis for the understanding of the origin and history of drama.

Adam Burgess’ research work *Overview of British Literary Periods* (2004) provides an overview of the history of drama and the various forms it took over the period of time. Burgess’ work highlights that in 16th and 17th-century Elizabethan plays, the characters assume infinite variety and the plot is not subservient to the characters rather it has its significance. Some of the most important playwrights of the Elizabethan era are William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Christopher Marlowe, etc. These playwrights wrote plays that were patterned on numerous previous sources, including Greek tragedy, Seneca’s plays, Attic drama, English miracle plays,

morality plays, and interludes. In Shakespeare's dramas, character assumes infinite variety, and contradictory elements are brought together. Shakespeare, while deepening the subjective personality of man, does not lose sight of the "objective ends of life and corresponding phases of character" (Burgess 14). He maintains a balance between these two sides of human experience. He does not permit the dramatic action to become subservient to the portrayal of individual characters.

Burgess' study points out that in 19th and 20th-century realist plays, the plot appears to be at a privileged position in comparison with characters. The realists' laid too much emphasis on external reality instead of focusing on the inner state of the characters. The characters act on their environment rather than simply reacting to it. In realistic drama, characters are lifelike and are mostly relatable. They are more or less an accurate reflection of the human condition and contemporary life with no stereotyping. The prominent realist writers are Henrik Ibsen, Anton Chekhov, George Bernard Shaw, Eugene O'Neill, and Tennessee Williams, etc.

In Modern plays, individual characters are given central positions. These plays lay stress on the delineation of the characters. Action in modern drama takes place more within the minds of the characters hence, the relative position of the plot seems to be reduced. In modern drama, a richer and more varied inner life is opened up to the reader. The sense of personality is deepened. Modern dramatists try to explore the hidden recesses of human nature, reproduce the rarer and more abnormal states of feeling. The mystery of the human personality becomes of supreme interest in modern drama. Modern dramatists celebrate the frustrated and unarticulated hero. Characters become more complex and a sense of personality is developed. Actions tend more and more to take place within the human mind itself. The frontier between action and passion threatens to fade away. In this kind of drama, the dramatic theme often encompasses the whole process, beginning at the moment when a deed is dormant in the mind until it has developed into action and brought about its consequences. The period encompassed by the action is enlarged. Whereas, in the most recent form of drama i.e. postmodern drama, the notions of absolute truth and knowledge are questioned and the conventions of conventional drama are bypassed.

Burgess' work provides a comprehensive review of the multiple trends in drama during various ages. This work is significant for this study as it provides the basis for the understanding of drama. The study includes the commentary on drama and its trends including postmodern drama just like the present study but the current study is unique as it provides a

detailed analysis of selected postmodern plays and shows how selected postmodern dramas depart from the set traditions of the conventional drama.

Language, Character, and History in Postmodern Drama: Towards Formulating a Poetics (2010) by Mufti Mudasir is a commentary on the poetics of postmodern drama with respect to the theoretical insight of leading postmodern theorists and dramatists i.e., Jeanette Malkin, Linda Hutcheon, and Deborah Geis. Mudasir's work explains that postmodern drama breaks the conventions of character, plot, dialogue, and history. The postmodern drama challenges the idea of drama as mimesis and claims that drama has unique characteristics and is unlike other forms of art and literature. Mudasir's thesis also includes commentary on the plays of Brecht. It is explained that his plays strongly contradict the idea of essentialism attached to human subjects. According to Brecht, human subjectivity is shaped by social and historical forces.

Mudasir's work also includes J. Malkin's views on Linda Hutcheon's theorization of postmodern drama. Malkin asserts that Hutcheon's idea deprived the drama of its representational value by claiming that postmodern drama is self-reflexive. J. Malkin's below-mentioned comment on postmodern drama is important in this regard:

[...] postmodern drama has no psychologically brilliant characters who can act as the locus of information. For postmodernism, individual recall is not a pertinent paradigm because the rooted, unified, autonomous self, the subject-as-consciousness, is no longer available. In Beckett's plays, this recall arises from a specific subject, which is him/herself fractured, falling to pieces. The connection between an experiencing subject and articulated recall is disconnected, as is the belief in memory to find the truth, discover origins, or heal. (Malkin 7)

Malkin comments that in postmodern drama the individuals are decentered, fragmented, and have no core or past. Malkin's research also includes Stephen Watt's views on postmodern drama. According to Watt, postmodernism rejects the mimetic nature of drama hence it attacks its roots of representation. Stephen Watt in *Postmodern/Drama: Reading the Contemporary Stage* (1998) used a slash between postmodern and drama in the title to point out that the relation between these two is oxymoronic. As Watt said,

Postmodern drama is an empty intellectual marker and the term postmodern drama has failed as postmodernism challenges the privileging conventions of the play and

overlooks the essential difference of drama from other forms of art and literature. (Watt 25)

Mudasir's research work also explored Philip Auslander's views on postmodern drama. According to Auslander, postmodern drama critically reflects on contemporary human condition, politics, and culture. Mudasir's research work is overall a commentary on the critical insights of postmodern theorists on drama. The present study is also a reflection on postmodernism and postmodern drama with a prime focus on the selected plays of Megan Terry and van Itallie, unlike Malkin's study which is more theoretical.

Kerstin Schmidt's *The Theatre of Transformation Postmodernism in American Drama* (2011) is a commentary on the postmodern condition of drama. The study shows that postmodern philosophy has a profound impact on theatre as well. Schmidt's study includes Lyotard's theoretical ideas on postmodernism. Jean Francois Lyotard defines postmodernism as an "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard 09). Postmodernism, according to Lyotard, is an activity "on the boundaries of what is feasible" (Lyotard 12), emphasizing postmodern drama's meta-dramatic orientation. Postmodern drama, according to Schmidt, addresses the fragmentation and constructed-ness of every version of reality. In such dramas, the relevance of the plot/story is diluted. These plays appear to be deprived of characters in the conventional sense. Hence, neither the plot nor the characters gain privilege over the other rather both play a significant role in the formation of unconventional plays.

Schmidt comments that while modernist and modern plays propagate that reality is extremely complex but singular, the postmodernists are interested in showing how realities are constructed or shaped and how they collide. Postmodern drama does experiments on the limits of drama and theater, and postmodernism has provided the necessary tools and theoretical framework for such endeavors. The postmodern drama takes up the postmodern fondness for the exploration of boundaries and advances dramatic experiments on the margins of possibility.

Schmidt's study explains that the postmodern technique of transformation is a key movement of postmodern drama. In Postmodern drama, when traditional techniques of making plays are called into question, transformation takes up the role of connective in it. Transformation drama challenges the prevailing realistic theatre characters. Schmidt's study gives a comprehensive account of the postmodern condition of drama. This study is connected with the present study as the present study also shows the impact of postmodern philosophy

on the genre of drama using selected postmodern plays. The review of related researches shows that the genre of drama observed several trends overages. The transformation drama which encompasses the postmodern philosophy is the most recent form of drama that breaks all the set conventions of drama and gives rise to an air of chaos and uncertainty.

SECTION-II

2.3 Literature Review of Selected Postmodern Plays

The selected plays: *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* by Megan Terry and *Interview* and *Motel* by Jean-Claude van Itallie all follow the patterns of transformation drama. Although there is not much secondary literature available on the selected plays, the researcher has done the following review of the past literature on these plays.

The Theatre of Transformation Postmodernism in American Drama (2011) by Kerstin Schmidt is a critique of the postmodern condition of drama. It discusses the various aspects of transformation in postmodern drama and highlights on what grounds postmodern drama is similar or different from historical avant-garde, Epic Theatre, or the Theatre of the Absurd. The study examines how postmodernism has shaped and affected fiction and how it disturbs and subverts the features and constituents of conventional drama by transforming them. Schmidt notes that the plays of Itallie show concern for social criticism.

The study explores how Itallie's play *Interview* reveals strains of expressionistic and absurdist drama by conveying a perfection of the precarious position of humanity in the world. Itallie says that his plays are an "attempt to crack some kind of barriers in theatrical style" as well as an "attempt to break in the audience's notion of what a play is" (Itallie 2). His plays are a commentary on drama. The researcher explains that how Itallie could be called a political playwright as he does not seem to be a believer in art for art's sake. He expresses strong concern for social critique, which he ties into his formal innovation interests. His method blends an examination of the visual arts with a heavy undercurrent of social criticism.

Itallie's play *Interview* frequently conveys an idea of the insecure position of humanity in the world. It depicts humans' absurd state. The researcher highlights that Itallie in his play *Interview* has split the entity previously known as a character into inside and outside, expressing the difference between internal feelings and outward appearance in the process

hence, it displays the postmodern concept of the fragmented self. Also, the characters are not perfect people rather they are first fools (Schmidt 94). The study highlights how the play *Interview* graphically depicts performance aspects of drama that have come to overtake textual aspects.

Although Schmidt talks about the transformative selves presented in the *Interview* and claims that it is a depiction of the postmodern condition of society yet the main focus of his study is to show that how the postmodern self is dominated by the overwhelming influence of the media and how people's desires seem to be shaped by what they see on television. According to this research, Itallie has thoroughly adapted cinematic techniques such as slow-motion, close-up, and freeze, whereas the focus of the current study is how the disintegrated characters and plot are a lifelike depiction of the postmodern man and his schizoid state of mind.

Kerstin Schmidt's *The Theatre of Transformation Postmodernism in American Drama* (2011) is a critique of the postmodern condition of drama. It discusses the various aspects of transformation in postmodern drama and highlights on what grounds postmodern drama is similar or different from historical avant-garde, Epic Theatre, or the Theatre of the Absurd. The study highlights how dramatic writing has been influenced and transformed by postmodernism. It discusses how *Motel* by Itallie is a startling play of postmodern transformation. The study highlights that the play's monologue is adapted to the postmodern sense of self, and it is unsettling, dislocated, and fragmented. The author comments there is fragmentation in the language, communication, material culture, and human experiences presented in the play. The characters in *Motel* are more like postmodern cyborgs instead of being normal human beings. The study explores how Itallie used transformation in the play *Motel*, both as an acting technique and a tool for voicing the larger concerns of his postmodern dramatic agenda. Although Schmidt's work highlights that the play *Motel* has postmodern fragmented subjects yet the focus of his study is more on how the postmodern self operates largely in simulated versions. It shows the impact of media, the surface structure of the screen, and technology on contemporary life. The study discusses how the element of violence lurks throughout the play and reflects the political and social climate of the early 1960. Although, the present study is similar on some grounds with Schmidt's work yet it is also different as its primary focus is the impact of postmodern temperament on the human mind instead of focusing on the impact of technology on human beings.

Jean-Claude Van Itallie and the Off-Broadway Theatre (2013) by Gene A. Plunka captures the essence of Itallie's plays, stating that "van Itallie's quest for form and dramatic structure is his theatre" (Plunka 36). Itallie is concerned with the theatre itself, according to Plunka, and his plays are primarily a commentary on drama and its constituents; they are thus meta-dramatic in a postmodern sense. Plunka comments that Itallie is himself quite aware of his experimental agenda and his plays *Interview* and *Motel* are both attempts to break down barriers of theatrical form as well as to bypass the audience's preconceived notions of what a play is. Van Itallie does more than just breaking down barriers and concepts; he transforms them. The research highlights that Itallie is concerned with social critique and does not believe in art for the sake of art. Although Plunka's criticism is closely linked to this particular research yet the present research is unique. The present research discusses in detail that the transformative agenda of Itallie is not just a way to transform drama but it aims at depicting truly the postmodern sense of the self and its impacts on different mediums of expression including drama.

The second pair of texts that the researcher has selected to conduct the research are *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* by Megan Terry. Kerstin Schmidt's *The Theatre of Transformation Postmodernism in American Drama* (2011) investigates the writings of Terry and claims that it is grounded in postmodern feminist theory. According to Schmidt, Terry first focuses on the technique of transformation, popular culture, and their importance for the postmodern sense of self in her plays and then places this debate in the larger context of postmodern feminism. In this research, Owens' writings are examined in terms of their thematic, formal, and stylistic characteristics. The researcher argues that the transformation technique is used by Terry in the play *Calm Down Mother* to reveal the concealed inner nature of a dramatic character. It serves as the method to promote the process of generating multiple, changing, and fragmented selves. Some transformations are depicted in the play as a tableau, which retains the end of a scene for a brief moment before releasing it into a new one. This research is related to present critical inquiry but the current research is not limited to exploring just the fragmented characters in the play *Calm Down Mother* but it aims at showing how the transformation is also used in the plot of the play.

Kerstin Schmidt in the above-mentioned work also explores Terry's play *Comings and Goings*. The research discusses how Terry has changed dramatic form in the selected play to express a transformative sense of self in postmodernity. Also, it probes Terry's use of the transformation technique in postmodern drama as an instrument to stage the political

agenda of feminism. The study highlights that *Comings and Goings* investigate the relationship between social and gender roles and shows how these constitute the power relationship between genders. In *Comings and Goings*, Schmidt points out that any ensemble actor can be directed to perform any role at any time during the play, and their transformations drive the play forward. Although Schmidt's research revolves around the use of the transformation technique used in the play *Comings and Goings*, it only points out that this technique is used to move the plot of the play. The present research not just focuses on this particular aspect pointed above but also investigates the use of transformation technique to convey the essence of the postmodern sense of the self. The research investigates critically how the selected plays exhibit a form of the rhizomatic structure by depicting fragmented plots and disintegrated characters, who could be called schizoids.

June Schlueter in his research article *Megan Terry's Transformational Drama and the Possibilities of Self* (2014) discusses how Terry's transformational dramas challenge the prevailing realistic theatre's characters, which reinforced social and theatrical expectations. Terry plays her role in dismantling stereotypes, neutralizing predetermined assumptions, and reevaluating social hierarchies. Schlueter's study deduces that Terry's transformational drama is a theatre of discovery, in which all things and joy are possible. The researcher comments that Terry has redefined the definition of self through this play. Randomly chosen characters/actors replace other characters/actors in the middle of a sentence in *Comings and Goings* and are then replaced. It constantly subverts the distinction between actor and character. Schlueter comments in *Comings and Goings* the shift between role-playing and transformation is subtle and ill-defined, a tactic that requires the audience to think hard to recognize the characters. This study focuses more on how the play is acted on stage and the use of transformation technique on stage but it does not investigate how the transformation technique leaves the stage and depicts the state of mind of the postmodern disintegrated human beings and their rhizomatic world. The present research is an attempt to fill these gaps.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter includes the reviews of literature related to the current study which helps to form the rationale of the study. The first section of this literature review includes a comprehensive account of the development and evolution of drama. It shows that over the period of time drama has taken various forms. In various ages, drama changed its nature as the conventions of plot and characters changed and evolved. The chapter specifically focused

on the researches that have been done to explore and understand postmodern drama especially in terms of plot and characters. The reviews show that postmodern philosophy has a profound impact on theatre and shows that postmodern drama breaks all the set conventions of drama and gives rise to an air of chaos and uncertainty.

As this research critically engages with the postmodern plays *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* by Megan Terry and *Interview* and *Motel* by Jean-Claude van Itallie. In the second section of this chapter, the researcher has also explored the researches that have been done on the selected postmodern plays to date to trace the gaps that this research aims to fulfill. An examination of these literary pieces has provided a better understanding of the area of interest. It has helped to obtain valuable insight into the chosen field of research.

CHAPTER-3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Critical Framework

The following research is based principally on the theoretical concepts of rhizome and schizoid Individuals given by Gilles Deleuze, a French philosopher, and Félix Guattari, a French psychoanalyst, and political activist. The concepts are given in their works *Capitalism and Schizoanalysis* and *Chaosmosis*. In these works, they proposed novel ways to produce and understand subjectivity that is conducive to the refoundation of politics in a broad sense. To conduct this study, the schizoanalysis research method proposed by Deleuze and Guattari is used. They suggested that the schizoanalytic subjectivity modeling is an alternative to psychoanalysis and its reductional fixations on the family, structure, and language.

These theoretical concepts are used by researcher to describe the plot and characters of postmodern plays, which appear to defy the traditions of conventional drama. Deleuze and Guattari took the term rhizome from horticulture. The rhizome is a continuously growing stem that has multiple roots without any fixed order. In literary theory, the rhizome is a concept that allows multiple meanings, structures, and ideas. Cuddon and Anthony in their *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* explain that rhizome as a term is derived from the field of Botany. Rhizome “refers to kinds of plants whose roots grow horizontally and may spread across the ground to develop new plants from several points rather than from a single root” (Cuddon and Anthony 45). The term ‘rhizome’ is used by Deleuze and Guattari to describe theory and research that allows for multiple representations and interpretations of the data. They showed, through this concept how the postmodern world favors chaos and mess over order. They stressed that instead of thinking that ideas and concepts are vertical, arboreal, and have a fixed center we should take them as horizontal, poly-dimensional with no fixed center. Rhizome is a structure without any certitude and they believe that in Post-modern times there is no fixity as in a rhizome and hence, there can be no authority or agency.

As Deleuze and Guattari explained, a rhizome is more like a map and not a tracing. They gave the example of wasp and orchids to explain the concept of rhizome. In a rhizomatic

structure, the orchid does not reproduce the tracing that the wasp makes rather it creates a map with the wasp. A map is different from the tracing as it does not copy the original rather does experimentations with the real while being in contact with it. This map does not intend to recreate an unconscious that is closed even for itself rather it aims at the construction of the unconscious. It cultivates field connections, the expulsion of blockages on bodies without organs, and the greatest opening of bodies without organs into a consistent plane. This map is itself rhizomatic.

The map is connected to all of its dimensions and is free. It's detachable, reversible and prone to constant shift. It can be ripped, modified, reversed, adjusted to any type of mounting, and modified by a single person or a group of people. It can take the form of a painting on the wall, a work of art, a political action, or a meditation. To understand the idea of rhizome, it is crucial to keep in mind that there are no beginnings or endings in a rhizome as it is connected in multi-dimensions without any fixed order hence, there are only middle spaces in-between that in return may connect to any other point. As, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) said in *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*: “A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing” (Deleuze and Guattari 25).

In a *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari explained that “the structure of rhizome cannot be explained as it is made up of lines only unlike other structures which have properly defined points and positions” (Deleuze and Guattari 21). It is different from conventional lines of thought that are linear in structure as it has the tendency of taking flight from linear thinking and has the tendency of being transformed. It constantly diverges and makes violations. It diverges and converges on its own without any fixed order or pattern in ways that free up things and end up becoming altogether different from its original state. The rhizomatic structure takes very diverse forms “from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers” ((Deleuze and Guattari 21). The rhizome works like rats. They take bites of whatever comes in their way no matter they are potatoes and couch grass, or the weed. Its working is indistinguishable and gives a sense that it cannot be conceived.

The rhizomes are not like trees or roots rather in a rhizomatic structure any point can connect to any other point and in doing so it changes its nature as well. It brings into play altogether different systems of signs and even non-sign states. The rhizome cannot be reduced

to one or its multiples. It is not the one that becomes two or even directly three, four, five, etc. It is not a multiple of one or to which one is added according to the $(n + 1)$ formula. It has various dimensions and directions that are always in flux. It has neither start nor end, however consistently a center (milieu) from which it develops and which it overflows. It is comprised of linear multiplicities with 'n' directions having neither subject nor object, which can be spread out on a plane of consistency, and from which the One is constantly deducted $(n - 1)$. At the point when an assortment of this sort changes its dimensions, it fundamentally changes in nature also hence, experiences a transformation.

In contrast to a structure, which is characterized by a lot of positions and points, with parallel relations between points and bi-univocal connections between the positions, the rhizome is made distinctly of lines: lines of segmentary and delineation as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the stage after which the multiplicities experience transformation. These lines, or lineaments, ought not to be mistaken for lineages of the arborescent kind, which are only localizable links among various points. In contrast to the tree, the rhizome is not the object of multiplication. It neither reproduces as a tree from inside nor from outside. The rhizome is an anti-genealogy. It is a transient memory or anti-memory.

The rhizome works by variety and development and forms branches. In contrast to realistic expressions, drawing, or photography, in contrast to tracings, the rhizome relates to a map that must be created, developed, and is separable, connectable, reversible, and modifiable and have different gateways and exits. It is tracings that must be put on the map, not the opposite. As opposed to polycentric frameworks with hierarchical methods of correspondence and pre-defined ways, the rhizome is an acentered, nonhierarchical, nonsignifying framework without an arranging memory characterized exclusively by a flow of states. The connection to sexuality is under question in a rhizome yet additionally to this all the creatures, the vegetal, the world, governmental issues, the book, natural and artificial things are also under question as they are different from the arborescent connections: all ways of becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 44).

The general principles of rhizome are following connection and heterogeneity, multiplicity, asignifying rupture, cartography, and decalcomania. The first two principles of rhizome are connection and heterogeneity. It means that in a rhizome any point can be and should be connected to other random points. (Deleuze and Guattari 7).

The third principle of the rhizome is multiplicity. The rhizome multiplies itself to a point that it cannot be identified as one solid definable entity. It has no longer any connection

to one reality be it is natural or spiritual, or with a subject or an object. Multiplicities are themselves rhizomatic and they reveal the arborescent false multiplicities for what they are. These multiplicities have various determinants, magnitudes, and dimensions and with the increase in number, the multiplicities also change in nature (Deleuze and Guattari 8). Unlike a tree or its roots which have certain positions or points, the rhizome has no such points, a rhizome has only lines (Deleuze and Guattari 8). The rhizome or multiplicity as it is called often never permits itself to be over-coded. These multiplicities are flat and they occupy all of the directions and dimensions. It is a plane of multiplicities that are consistent although the dimensions of this plane keep on increasing with the increase in several connections that it makes. Multiplicities are not defined by inside rather they are defined by outside: by the theoretical line, the line of flight, or deterritorialization as per which they change in nature and associate with different multiplicities. (Deleuze and Guattari 9)

The fourth rule of the rhizome is asignifying burst: against the over signifying breaks isolating structures or cutting over a single structure. A rhizome might be broken at a given point yet it has the tendency to make connections with one of its old lines, or on new lines. Rhizome has segmentary lines according to which it is delineated, territorialized, sorted out, signified, implied, etc. as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it continually escapes. There are cracks in the rhizome from where multiple lines of flight emerge however these lines of flight are also a part of the existing rhizome. These lines consistently tie back to each other.

The fifth and sixth principles of rhizome are map-making and decalcomania. A rhizome is not amiable to any generative model. It does not comply with the idea of the hereditary hub or organized structure. A hereditary hub or genetic axis resembles a target unity whereupon progressive stages are sorted out; a profound structure is increasingly similar to a base grouping that can be broken down into quick constituents, while the unity of the item goes into another, transformational and subjective dimensions. This does not mean that its model takes a break from the delegate model of the tree or a root. This concept takes a departure from the previously established thoughts. The hereditary hub or genetic axis and structures reproduce on the principles of tracing.

Deleuze and Guattari proposed the idea of schizoid individuals in their book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizoanalysis*. They described the schizoid person as a free man who is solitary, irresponsible, and does things the way he /she wants without asking

for permission from any sort of authority. He overcomes all kinds of barriers and codes. He is not afraid of being mad. He experiences his being in a state of sickness that no longer affects him (Anti Oedipus 131). According to them, schizoid individuals question the set standards by inheriting multiple identities and resist any form of authoritarianism.

Biddle also explored Deleuze and Guattari's six fundamental principles of a rhizome: connection, heterogeneity, multiplicity, assignifying rupture, cartography, and decalcomania (the condition of infinite flexibility, adaptability, and resistance to rigidity). According to Biddle, when used as a research tool, the rhizome allows for several nonhierarchical interventions in data representation and interpretation, where no one is the subject and everyone is a subjectivity. Biddle's work significantly contributes to understanding the essence of the schizoanalysis method and also explains the idea of rhizome by Deleuze and Guattari.

Marg Seller in working with (a) rhizoanalysis...and working (with) a rhizoanalysis (2009) discussed the concept of rhizome. He explains that a rhizome is not a single object or condition, but rather a set of inseparable parts that make up a fragmentary whole. This fragmentary concept is multiplicitous and complex, constantly conflicting with other concepts and resulting in a non-totalizing project of different thinking. Seller explains that understanding the idea of rhizome (what it is and how it functions) in rhizomatic ways (processing with/as rhizome) invites an awareness that there are no beginnings or endings, just middle spaces in-between as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) put it:

There is no beginning or end of a rhizome; it is always in the middle, between things...proceeding from the middle, across the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing. (Deleuze and Guattari 25)

According to Seller, Deleuze, and Guattari's definition of the rhizome is a free-flowing, dynamic system that constantly (dis)connects ideas inside the multiplicity and draws any assemblage together through constant change. According to Seller, unlike a structure that is determined by a set of points and positions, a rhizome is made entirely of lines. It differs from the traditional grooves of thought represented by linear thinking. Rhizomes are lines of flight that are continually digressing and transgressing, diverging and converging in ways that allow for the emergence of things that are incipiently different. Seller's study explains the fragmentary nature of rhizome and how it can be used as a research method.

Rhizomatic Research Cultures, Writing Groups, and Academic Researcher Identities (2013) by Cally Guerin analyze the rhizomatic model of research. It explains that, rather than finding a single, coherent truth as we do in an arboreal model of knowledge, the rhizome model forces an awareness of the provisional and momentary existence of what is explored at those nodal meeting points, forces understanding that what we learn continues to shift in new, sometimes unexpected directions, and forces asking where else our thoughts can go. In effect, this alternative model gives a green signal to experiment with new concepts. The author explains that heterogeneity, multiplicity, proliferation, versatility, non-linearity, connection, and non-hierarchical networks are all characteristics of rhizomatic research culture. It opens ways for heterogeneous ways of knowing, becoming, and telling. Guerin's study probes the idea of rhizome, its nature, and mode of working in research culture. Michelle Renae Koerner's research work *The Uses of Literature: Gilles Deleuze's American Rhizome* (2018) discusses the concepts of rhizome and schizoanalysis proposed by Deleuze and Guattari. Koerner comments that schizoanalysis is unlike Marxist theory as it defines society and individuals by their lines of flight instead of their contradictions. The study probes how these literary theorists challenged the totalizing and pre-defined concepts in politics, arts, and literature, etc. in favour of the rhizomatic model of working.

The study specifically probes the concepts of rhizome and schizoid individuals concerning their application to literary works. Koerner comments that Deleuze and Guattari's perfect individuals in literature and life are those who constantly deny their own identity and keep on exchanging their identities. The study shows that an analysis of a literary piece using the lens of rhizome and schizoanalysis disrupts the idea of coherence in its composition. Such analysis deviates the readers' attention from actual operations in the text. These concepts help the researchers to do experiments with the text. Koerner says that the essential task of schizoanalysis is destruction and in its favor, Deleuze and Guattari declined the structuralist understanding of society and the self which reinforces the idea of language having fixed meanings and transcendental nature.

The present research is an attempt to show how the characters in selected postmodern plays have rhizomatic, fragmented, or disintegrated identities and how they appear to overrule the unified, autonomous, and transcendental subjects of the pre/modernist world. Brian Phillips in "Character in Contemporary Fiction", highlights the "the decline of character" (Phillips 636) in postmodern fiction by saying that: While character remains central to every idea of fictional narrative, and interest in character remains the signature pleasure of literature,

the character is not precisely what one finds while reading the contemporary fiction (Phillips 635). The lack of character arises from the fact that the postmodern character disintegrates the traditionally representational character identified about its ability to mirror the person, human itself. The research shows that these schizoid characters appear to be apt representatives of the contemporary human condition.

Deleuze and Guattari are influenced by Marxist approaches to politics. They proposed that schizoid individuals can act as the agents for revolutionary social change. They can play their part in the construction of a society based on a fair system of cooperation among its members. However, in contrast to traditional Marxist politics, they are less interested in the capture of state power instead they stress the qualitative changes in individual and collective identities that occur alongside or beneath the public political domain. They insist that the schizoid individuals are nomadic war machines or desiring-machines (Guattari 243) that can act as the agents of social and political transformation. They proposed that the impetus for social change is provided by movements of deterritorialization and lines of flight i.e., schizoanalytic mode of working. This concept shows the multiple ways in which individuals and groups deviate from the majoritarian norms and determine their rights as citizens.

3.2 Research Methodology

In the light of the theoretical framework outlined, the research employs a qualitative approach to analyze the selected literary works; and the research is largely interpretative and exploratory. The researcher has used the schizoanalysis research method to analyze the selected texts. Schizoanalysis is a method that deconstructs binaries and breaks with the traditional theories of the subject, representative modes of thoughts, and totalizing practices. It aims at destructions of all sorts of traditions, norms, fixed assumptions, etc. It rejects any idea of pre-traced destiny whether it is divine, historical, economic, or structural, etc. Its ultimate aims are to destroy. It goes by the destruction, by the scratching of the unconscious it completes its task of pious destruction.

Schizoanalysis is a form of analysis developed by Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze. In *Chaosmosis*, Guattari explains that “rather than moving in the direction of reductionist modifications which simplify the complex” schizoanalysis “will work towards its complexification, towards the consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity” (Guattari 46). They believed that psychoanalysis has attempted to control or suppress human desire as it requires human beings

to conform to sociopolitical systems. Psychoanalysis is “a form of politically inspired social control” that has helped in “perpetuating an authoritarian system” (Sim 355). That is why Deleuze and Guattari prefer schizoanalysis as it questions the set standards by resisting all forms of authoritarianism.

Deleuze and Guattari are influenced by Marxist approaches to politics. They proposed that schizoid individuals can act as the agents for revolutionary social change. They can play their part in the construction of a society based on a fair system of cooperation among its members. However, in contrast to traditional Marxist politics, they are less interested in the capture of state power instead they lay stress on the qualitative changes in individual and collective identities that occur alongside or beneath the public political domain. They insist that the schizoid individuals are nomadic war machines or desiring-machines (Guattari 243) that can act as the agents of social and political transformation. They proposed that the impetus for social change is provided by movements of deterritorialization and lines of flight i.e., schizoanalytic mode of working. This concept shows the multiple ways in which individuals and groups deviate from the majoritarian norms and determine their rights as citizens.

Schizoanalysis is an attempt to make a decentralized and fragmented analysis of the unconscious mind. As per the schizoanalysis principles, the unconscious is an acentered system that resembles a rhizome. It aims at showing the lines of flight and the complete cleansing of the unconscious by deterritorialization of a human’s mind. In literature, the ultimate aim of schizoanalysis is to turn the theatre of representation upside down into the order of desiring-production. In the present research, while using the schizoanalysis method of analysis the researcher has explored differences, complexities, and bifurcations produced by entities that are mutually present in the plot of the plays. Such complexities help to understand how the plots and characters of the selected plays bypass the set patterns of conventional drama.

In literary analysis, the first positive task of schizoanalysis is to turn theatre of representation upside down into the order of desiring-production. The task of schizoanalysis is also learning what the desiring-machines in a subject are, how they work, with what amalgamations, what are the explosions of energy in the machine, what constituents fall through, with what flows, what chains, and what it becomes in each case. In addition, this positive task cannot be detached from essential destructions, the destruction of the molar

wholes, the organizations, and the representations that keep the machine from proper functioning.

Deleuze and Guattari through schizoanalysis resist all statements of credibility. Schizoanalysis rejects all kinds of authority and tradition of method “the received view of the world”. It is against the application of a finite and structured way of doing things. Schizoanalysis as a research method has the potential to produce warm bodies out of data under inspection as it is not just a contemplative and theoretical analysis of data rather it is a form of experimentation that gives rise to the new self-organization. It gives rise to endless possibilities that in turn give way to new productive constellations that fade away the distinctions and boundaries. Schizoanalysis works from the inside-out rather than the outside-in. Schizoanalysis is an open system as there is no end or final word in it.

In schizoanalysis, there is no room for acceptance of things as they are rather it always strives for change. It works like a virus, just like viruses which are not living beings and could only act as living organisms when they insert themselves into any living cell, schizoanalysis as a research methodology takes hold of a text and multiply endlessly. Schizoanalysis aims at the deconstruction of all kinds of modern binaries and rejects all totalizing practices, rejects all modern theories.

Schizoanalysis dismisses all ideas of pre-defined fate, whatever name is given to it: divine, historic, anagogic, economic, inherited, structural or syntagmatic. It destroys all sorts of fixed assumptions, traditions, and norms. It gives way to subjectivity and highlights complexities and differences. It aims at the deterritorialization of a human mind and crossing the boundaries of non-sense to reach the heart of subjectivity. Schizoanalysis does not aim at mimicking schizophrenia rather it aims at going beyond the barricades of non-sense which forbids access to a-signifying foci of subjectivities. It is similar to schizophrenia as it has no ultimate end to achieve rather it is always in the process of becoming. As Ginsberg destroyed the norms of sexuality similarly schizoanalysis destroys norms of analyzing literature. It crosses the boundaries of normality by turning things upside down. It leads to an interconnected state of things where we no longer distinguish between the original and the extensions.

Schizoanalysis has the political ability to offer consistency to new and unheard organizations by influencing language overall. The key principle of schizoanalysis is that desire is productive and the whole world is a product of desire and desire is the nucleus of all

material infrastructure. Schizoanalysis aims to give rise to an atmosphere of undecidability and unpredictability which carries us to a place where we can no longer differentiate between thought and action, statement and intention. Schizoanalysis saves itself against all kinds of interpretation. Schizoanalysis disrupts the division of labor that separates authors, critics, and theorists insisting on the disparities in the system yet not on their distinction in nature. Schizoanalytic criticism insists readers deny the conventional and disciplinary groupings giving rise to the possibility of making new sorts of hybrid discourses proposed by Freud in psychoanalysis there is always a general, a center, or a leader. On the other hand, Schizoanalysis regards the unconscious as an acentered framework, as a mechanic system of limited automata (a rhizome), and consequently reaches to altogether an altered state of the unconscious (Ian Buchanan, Tim Matts and Aidan Tynan 18).

Ian Buchanan, Tim Matts, and Aidan Tynan's book *Towards a Schizoanalytic Criticism* (2000) present a critical analysis of the idea of schizoanalysis in literature given by Deleuze and Guattari. In this book, they put schizoanalysis to work in the field of literary studies and mapped out new ways of thinking about the theory and practice of literature inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's work. The authors comment that schizoanalysis has the political capacity to give consistency to new and unheard agencies by affecting language as a whole. The key premise of schizoanalysis is that desire is productive, that the world as it exists is a product of desire and that desire composes the material infrastructure. The aim of schizoanalysis is to create unpredictability and undecidability which carries us to a place where we can no longer distinguish thought and action, statement and intention. The schizoanalysis formula immunizes itself against interpretation. Schizoanalysis disturbs the division of labor separating author, critic, and theorist, insisting on their differences in the regime but not on their difference in nature. Schizoanalytic criticism exhorts readers towards a traversal of these generic and disciplinary classifications making possible new kinds of hybrid discourse.

Schizoanalysis is itself a practice that operates alongside other practices to help readers better understand and in some cases to challenge and transform the relations between theory and practice in any given field. The authors argue that when Deleuze and Guattari write that "meaning is use" (43), they are saying that whenever we find ourselves pondering the meaning of something we are using it in some way hence meanings are not important but because they arise from uses or practices. In a schizoanalytic reading, language and event,

word and world, are no longer distinguishable. Sense is identifiable via nonsense or similarly anomalous points in a language where meaning is stripped away.

In a schizoanalytic reading, the symbol does not symbolize and meaning does not mean. This is the fulcrum of schizoanalytic poetics, which dispenses with the empire of signs and the idea of the text as a tissue of signifiers in favor of a vision of the literary work as a machine or practical object composed of asignifying or non-representational particles discernible in blocs, traits, and figures.

Paul Patton's *What is Deleuzian Political Philosophy?* (2011) discusses Deleuze's concept of schizoid characters and Deleuze's political philosophy. The study probes that how Deleuze and Guattari are inspired by the Marxist political approach. Patton's work discusses various concepts like nomads, lines of flight, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization, etc. proposed by Deleuze. As per Deleuze, these concepts help schizoid individuals to bring about transformation in the political system.

The study gives an insight into the roles that schizoid individuals should play according to Deleuze to bring revolutionary social change. These individuals can play their part in the construction of a society based on a just system of cooperation among its members. Deleuze and Guattari, in comparison to conventional Marxist politics, are more concerned with qualitative changes in person and social identities that arise alongside or underneath the public political domain rather than the act of capturing the power of the state. They insist that the schizoid individuals are nomadic war machines or desiring-machines (Guattari 243) that can act as the agents of social and political transformation. The concept of self, which is one of the most critical issues in Western philosophy, has "become an essentially disputed category, constantly updated, devised, supervised, or denied in postmodern literature and theories" (Hassan 428).

Patton's study concludes with the idea suggested by Deleuze and Guattari that the movements of deterritorialization and lines of flight could provide the catalyst for social change i.e., schizoanalytic mode of working. Paul Patton's research comprehensively explains the political agenda of Deleuzian philosophy. Using these concepts that Deleuze proposed and Patton outlined in his work, the present research explores the selected postmodern dramas to explore the role of schizoid individuals in the postmodern world and how they appear to overrule the unified, autonomous, and transcendental subjects of the pre/modernist world.

Schizoanalysis and collaborative critical research (2004) by Erika Biddle says that in comparison to traditional research methodologies, schizoanalysis is overtly political. It's a power-knowledge critique in the tradition of Michel Foucault, who revealed the power structures that pervade knowledge as capitalist production processes. Knowledge, rather than being something to possess, is lived in schizoanalytic criticism. Schizoanalysis practitioners are involved in the development of a reality that is never static but always changing. The observer/observed hierarchy is obliterated in schizoanalysis. Schizoanalysis, rather than being a methodology can be seen as a means of subverting or perverting conventional methodologies for critical engagement.

The authority and tradition of the method, the received view of the world, or the implementation of a finite and organized way of doing things are all denied in the schizoanalysis technique for progress and movement to occur. In schizoanalysis, there are no hierarchical dyads or reductionist comparisons; only differences which are generated by individuals that are mutually embedded in a network. Each individual participates in the enactment of mutable component entities and is always becoming. In schizoanalysis, the possibility of change is always imminent. It allows the researchers' voices to be heard and is more concerned with rendering visibility than reproducing visibility. Schizoanalysis prefers the experimental development of ideas, which Deleuze and Guattari refer to as "lines of flight". According to Guattari, "no single schizoanalysis model is transposable." (Guattari 56). Schizoanalysis is based on the premise that knowledge is more than just words on a page; it is a state of becoming or being.

Deleuze and Literature (2005) by Ian Buchanan and John Marks is a collection of essays that are devoted solely to Deleuze's work on literature. The authors mention that as per Deleuze "the final aim of literature... is the passage of life within language that constitutes ideas" (Deleuze 41). The true subject of schizoanalysis is social production. The author elaborates that the clinical entity of the schizoid is identical with society and the world itself is the set of symptoms whose illness merges with man and using this process literature is health. The aim of schizoanalysis is to complexify things and to reject what is dominant. Buchanan and Marks' essays are an attempt to probe the idea of schizoid individuals given by Deleuze and Guattari.

Gürhan Özopolat's Revolutionary desire in Deleuze and Guattari (2018) comments that schizoanalysis, as an alternative to psychoanalysis, aims to analyze all of the

society's unconscious investments in a decentralized and fragmented manner. It challenges the logic of the flow of desires and explains how subjects are deeply involved in hierarchical systems that repress their desires. Schizoanalysis is a weapon that breaks down modern binaries and deconstructs modern subject theories, representational modes of thought, and totalizing practices. Furthermore, schizoid individuals cannot differentiate between personal and social experiences, assuming that to say and to behave are the same thing. The study highlights how the schizoanalysis research method makes an unconventional and fragmented analysis of the texts.

Deleuze and Guattari while theorizing postmodernism reinforce multiplicity and present ideas and concepts which dismantle the traditional norms and ideas. They dismantle authority by rejecting linearity and hierarchy and reject the set standards for self-identity by asserting that it is the schizoid individual with multiple identities which is the ideal representation of human consciousness (Sim 7). Both of their concepts i.e. rhizome and schizoid individuals resist authority and are antifoundational in nature. As postmodernism resists authority in all its manifestations, these concepts of rhizome and schizoanalysis go hand in hand with postmodern thought and its impact can be seen of postmodern drama as well.

The above-explained theoretical concepts are used by researchers to describe the plot and characters of postmodern plays, which appear to defy the traditions of conventional drama. The research identifies how the selected plays exhibit a form of rhizomatic structure and how the characters are schizoid unlike the characters of the pre-modernist times who used to be autonomous, unified, and transcendental.

CHAPTER-4

**RHIZOMATIC PLOT AND CHARACTERS: A
SCHIZOANALYSIS OF PLAYS *CALM DOWN MOTHER* AND
COMINGS AND GOINGS BY MEGAN TERRY**

4.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises a comprehensive analysis of the postmodern transformational plays *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* by Megan Terry. In this chapter using the theoretical concept theoretical concepts of rhizome, schizoid individuals, and schizoanalysis research method presented by Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, the researcher shows that the selected postmodern plays exhibit a form of rhizomatic structure and defy the traditional notions of plot, character, and dramatic composition. The plot is fragmented and rhizomatic whereas the characters' identities are also fragmented or disintegrated unlike the unified, autonomous, and transcendental subjects of the pre/modernist world. The rhizomatic strains in the characters make them schizoid as schizoid characters are defined by Deleuze as free, solitary, and irresponsible. As characters' actions make up the plot of a play so, in this research, schizoid characters are probed to see how they contribute to the formation of a rhizomatic plot. The Schizoanalysis method is useful to explore this study as it helps the researcher to explore differences, complexities, and bifurcations produced by entities that are mutually present in the plots of the plays. The aim of schizoanalysis is to give rise to an atmosphere of undecidability and unpredictability which carries us to a place where we can no longer differentiate between thought and action, statement and intention. In the present research, the researcher has aimed to highlight the unpredictability in the selected plays using this schizoanalysis method. This chapter also includes a detailed discussion on how the postmodern temperament opened avenues for the rise of transformational drama and became its driving force. The postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency exhibited by the selected transformational drama are also discussed in the following chapter. The chapter is segregated into two sections. Each section is further divided into two sub-sections, which deal in detail with plots and characters of the selected plays respectively.

SECTION-I

4.2 Plot Analysis: Use of Transformation Technique in Terry's plays *Calm Down Mother* and *Comings and Goings*

In *Calm Down Mother* and *Comings and Goings*, the postmodern transformation technique is used by Terry. In this technique, characters and circumstances continuously change throughout the play. Megan Terry not only practiced but introduced this term in theatre. While watching or reading the play whenever the audience is comfortable with one situation and setting, the scene changes, and both the characters and circumstances additionally change and become something entirely different from what they were before. In both selected plays, there are no fixed points or positions on which the audience may rely to build an understanding of the situation. Throughout the plays, the scenes and the characters and circumstances keep on changing and become something entirely different from what they were before.

Transformation of the dramatic structure is the central feature of Terry's plays. In *Calm Down Mother*, throughout the play, the three women perpetually change roles one after another without any intimation. When the play commences, all three characters or women are clustered together and they are listening to a tape. Woman one informs the audience that her name is Margaret Fuller, a nineteenth-century transcendentalist who began the feminist movement in the United States. The identities of the remaining two women remain unknown. Then, the scene shifts, and the three women are in a store setting and their identities have been transformed. Woman One's denomination is Sophie and Woman Three's denomination is Esther. They are sisters who work at the store. In this way, the characters and situations keep on transforming and leave the audience and the readers bewildered. As Peter Feldman, a critic puts it, "Any realities that are established at the start are erased after a few minutes and replaced by others. These are also later eliminated and replaced" (Feldman 11). The transformation techniques assist here in the creation of a rhizomatic plot by fabricating characters with multiple identities.

The play appears to be in a process of becoming. The focus of the playwright is on the production of a play that gives the impression of something that is always in process of becoming in contrast to a being. Terry aims to present before the audience play that does not appear as a final product, that is the fruit of a writer's efforts rather it appears to be a result of

a more creative and dynamic process. Throughout the play, *Calm Down Mother* the characters assume multiple roles in continuously changing scenarios and the play ends in the middle of a situation. In the last scene of the play, the three women characters are named Sue, Sak, and Ma who are arguing against the use of birth control pills. Sue commences by verbalizing about birth control and they start fighting and Ma tells Sue to pack her things and move out of their home. The play ends in the middle of this situation without proper closure when the three women together address the audience by asking a question:

Together (Three Women)

(They place their hands on their bellies)

Our bellies

Woman Two

Our bodies

Together

Our bellies

Women Three

Our bodies

Women One

Are enough

Woman Two

Are enough

Women Three

Are enough

Together

(Turn their back on the audience)

Aren't they? (Terry 3)

Unlike a coherent plot that has a proper closure, the play understudy has no proper closure and it ends in the middle of a conversation. In this way, the plot is rhizomatic. The

transformation technique is used by Terry in this play which has changed the conventions of a dramatic plot and has also surpassed the formal techniques of making plays. Terry has used an altogether different technique for making this play. The play is architectural as in play various components arrange and rearrange in multiple forms to gain a particular shape that may change its appearance instantly. Because of these tendencies, Richard Schechner calls Terry “playwright as wrighter” (23). She appears as a playwright who is continuously engaged in making, breaking, re-making, and repairing her work just like a craftsperson.

In *Calm Down Mother*, there is no single linear plot and reality rather there is an atmosphere of uncertainty everywhere e.g., the first scene of the play transforms and the three women shed their previous identities and adopt new identities. Women one and women two become sisters: Sophie and Esther who work in a superstore and the third woman becomes a customer. Esther tells the audience that everyone must write the details of their lives. The two other women approach her and beat her down to the ground, where she remains throughout the scene until the other two women change their roles again and become sisters. Here unlike the previous scene women one and three are sisters named Nancy and Sally and Woman Three (Esther) who has been lying on the stage floor throughout the preceding section, elevates and her character alters as she becomes a nurse living in a nursing home. In this way, the play presents a fragmented sense of reality without any coherence. This reinforces the idea that in the postmodern world as well as in postmodern plays whatever realities are constructed or shaped, they keep on colliding, unlike modern plays which propagate that reality is extremely complex but singular. In the selected play, the situations keep on transforming to give rise to a sense of complexity.

The transformation technique is also widely used in the play *Comings and Goings* which helps to depict characters with multiple identities. The play is full of repetition of absurd dialogues that the characters keep on delivering one after another. The characters keep on taking each other’s roles while repeating the same situation. In one scene, the female character is shown as a waitress later, she starts acting like a master and the male character becomes the waiter who takes orders from her just the way she was taking orders from him a few moments ago. Then, the nature of their relationship changes again and they become Master and Slave. But soon they start acting as pre-programmed robots and start repeating the breakfast ordering scene. They are shown having an ecstatic relationship between them and then all of sudden it is portrayed as if he has returned from somewhere after a long time and

she seems happy about it. Then at once, he starts acting like a rich man who is under torment in hell. He addresses her as Father Abraham and seeks redemption and she acts like God.

The actors transform again as the male character acts like a police officer who interrogates the lady, who has committed robbery. Then these characters meet in a nightclub where he is a comedian and she is a random lady in the club. They start fighting and abusing each other. Then they again assume the role of husband and wife and the situation keeps on shifting until they start chanting the lines 'Into the love time' hoping to be together in a better place and situation with great love between them. The play ends in the middle of this situation without proper closure.

This drama is infused with the spirit of postmodern philosophy. Postmodern dramas address the fragmentation and constructed-ness of every version of reality. In *Comings and Goings*, the plot gives a sense of fragmented reality. There is no single linear plot and reality rather there is an atmosphere of uncertainty everywhere. While modernist and modern plays propagate that reality is extremely complex but singular, the postmodernists show how realities are constructed or shaped and how they collide. In the selected play, the situations keep on colliding as the characters keep switching their roles while repeating the same situation for example, in one scene the female character is a waitress later she starts acting like a master and the male character becomes the waiter who takes orders from her just the way she was taking orders from him a few moments ago. This creates a lot of confusion and a sense of fragmentation.

In this play, Terry has rejected the principles associated with conventional plot and characters as observed in a normative, realist play. In *Comings and Goings*, not only do characters' identities perpetually transform but the situation additionally keeps on changing. The plot is not coherent at all rather the plot of this play appears like a series of episodes with no coherent connections. There is no proper beginning or ending in this play. As the play starts, we can observe that the two characters are conversing with each other and they keep on repeating the same dialogues:

He: (alert and threatening) Touch me

She: In a minute

He: Now

She: In a minute

He: It's morning

She: In a minute

He: I am leaving

She: In a minute

He: Touch me

He: Minute's up

She: No

He: Now. (Terry 115-116)

Even it is mentioned that the scene should be repeated three times. The conversation is not logical or linear rather it has a repetitive structure just like a rhizome. While the conversation is going on transformation occurs and the scene slips into another scene without any pause or intimation:

“She: Put down the gun and help me with the dishes

He: I am not finished cleaning it...” (Terry 116).

This way scene changes abruptly. In one moment, they are conversing and repeating dialogues and scenes absurdly and the other moment they appear to be busy in some household chores and it seems that they are some different people, not the characters that were there a few moments ago. This gives rise to a sense of disintegration in the plot of the play.

4.2.1 Plot Analysis: *Calm Down Mother and Comings and Goings* as Rhizomatic Structures

In the play, *Calm Down Mother*, there are multiple actions and scenarios. There is an atmosphere of chaos and uncertainty that reflects the postmodern spirit and shows how the postmodern world favors chaos and mess over order. The presence of multiple scenarios in the play gives rise to a rhizomatic atmosphere as in the case of rhizome, anyone point or circumstance can be connected with any other point or circumstance. There are many rhizomatic strains in *Calm Down Mother*. A rhizome is always connected in multiple directions without any fixed order or defined structure rather there are always middle spaces in it that may connect to any other point and it always keeps on growing. This is evident

throughout the play for instance, in the first scene of the play, Women One is Margaret Fuller who is conversing with other two women;

Women One: I'm Margaret Fuller. I know I am because ... "From the time I could speak and go alone, my father addressed me not as a plaything, but as a living mind." I am Margaret Fuller. I am Margaret Fuller and I accept the universe! (Terry 1)

The woman talks haphazardly as she switches from one point to another. She does not seem to be a normal individual who is in her full senses rather her mind seems to be occupied with something. After the haphazard introduction by the woman one, there is a momentary freeze in the play and then the scene shifts as the woman one switches her role in the middle of the situation and becomes Sophie. The other two women also assume new roles. Women three becomes Esther, both women one and women three work at a superstore, and woman two is a customer (Terry 3). In this way, the plot is fabricated on the model of rhizome and the characters connect in multiple directions without any fixed order or defined structure. There are many loose ends in the plot from where the extensions arise and the plot keeps on progressing though the progression is not linear or logical.

Rhizome, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is more like a map that is open and is connected to all of its dimensions, the same is the case with *Calm Down Mother*. The characters and plot are vulnerable to consistent change just like a rhizome. As it is depicted in a scene that woman two is a subway door while woman three is playing the role of a nurse. Women one and women three try to open the door and as women, one breaks through the door all of the three women become call-girls who live in a lush apartment and are applying make-up. Their designations are Momo, Felicia, and Inez. Just like a rhizome which is separate-able, reversible, and can be torn, modified, reversed altogether, adjusted to any sort of mounting, and can be modified by a person the plot of the play under investigation continually takes new forms, grows in multiple directions, sometimes reverses back and forth in short, does not follow any logical pattern for the progression of the story. It remains unpredictable all the time.

Connection and heterogeneity are chief principles of a rhizomatic structure. These are the characteristic features of the plot of the play under study. Just like a rhizome, any one point in this play can be connected to other random points. The plot is rhizomatic as it does not have a linear structure. It is totally different from conventional lines of thought as Terry has taken flight from the set traditions of drama while composing *Calm Down Mother*. It has

the tendency of taking flight from linear thinking and makes the readers uncomfortable rather than providing them the pleasure of reading the linear progressive story. The plot of this play constantly diverges, transforms, and makes violations to give rise to the rhizomatic structure.

There are many rhizomatic strains in *Comings and Goings*. A rhizome is always connected in multiple directions without any fixed order or defined structure rather there are always middle spaces in it that may connect to any other point and it always keeps on growing. This is evident throughout the play. It is evident in the play that one personality takes over a role that is begun by a different personality in the middle of situations and this is a never-ending phenomenon in *Comings and Goings*.

Deleuze and Guattari explain that a rhizome is open and is connected to all of its dimensions and can be torn, modified, or reversed all together by a person or social group. This is the case with the plot of this play as well. For example, in one scene of the play (though a clear distinction between the scenes is not made) the two characters are shown as spouses:

He: Can you give me more juice

She: Don't be unintelligent

He: Can't u do anything

She: I can be constant, that's something. (Terry 117)

The characters are shown in the above scene as spouses who are engaged in day-to-day conversation, then all of a sudden, they start acting like strangers who get into a road accident. This scene shows a typical instance of transformation. The male character abuses the female character as she has hit his car that leads to the death of his mother.

(He starts shaking her and pulls her out of the car and it's raining and they are standing on a highway curve at night) He: You stupid woman driver, do you know what you have done to my car. What are you- drunk or something? Do you know what's under the crushed door of the suicide seat of my car? I was out with my mother.....by the time I get through with you, you will be behind the bars for the next ninety years. (Terry 118)

And in response to all this, the woman starts mentioning that it's her birthday. Hence, this way random series of events keep on connecting without making any sense. This way the plot just like a rhizome is separate-able, reversible, and vulnerable to consistent change. It is torn, modifiable, and reversed all together at various instances. Also, it can be modified by

any character or situation. This modification is vivid at another instant as well when the male and female characters start behaving like galaxies in an orbit who are a moment ago two strangers fighting in a dance club.

She: (Drunk) Bastard, bastard.

He: (Comedian) Beast, beast.

She: Bugger

He: Bug

(They become galaxies sending radio waves to each other)

She: Bleep, bleep. (She moves in steady orbit)

He: (Moving in an irregular orbit) Blink blink blink

She: Bleep blink Bleep blink Bleep blink Bleep blink blink...

(They come abreast and salute. They are members of the cub-scout troupe).

(Terry 141)

The characters exchange absurd dialogues and do nonsense actions. Also, there is no logical and productive progress in the plot as it is evident in the dialogue above. Hence, the audience gets a strange sense of unrest and it is a perfect example of a rhizomatic plot that can be torn, modifiable, and reversed at any point in time.

A rhizomatic plot like that of *Comings and Goings* does not have a linear structure and is different from conventional lines of thought as it has the tendency of taking flight from linear thinking and has the tendency of being transformed. It constantly diverges and makes violations. In *Comings and Goings*, the plot takes an unexpected turn when the characters shed off their human identity and become non-living things instantly. From being strangers who are having an abusive encounter after a car accident the characters become pencil and list. The male character becomes a pencil writing a list and the female character is the list on whom he is writing with his body:

She: Take car to be greased

Pick up shirts

Check on George

Go to Joe's workshop

Plan the next five years.

This scenario does not appear to make sense and then this scene abruptly bounces back to the situation of the first scene where characters are shown as spouses:

Situation (In bed in early morning)

She: Honey

He: Arrrrrrggghhh

She: Alarm

He: Grrrrrr. (Terry 119)

As shown in the dialogues above, the characters in the play perform randomly multiple roles encompassing various situations which have no logical connection with each other but still they are placed together. It appears to have a rhizomatic structure. As Deleuze and Guattari said, the rhizomatic structure takes very diverse forms “from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers” (Deleuze and Guattari 21). The rhizome works like rats. They take bites of whatever comes in their way. This seems applicable in the case of *Comings and Goings*. Connection and heterogeneity are important principles of the rhizome. These principles are followed by the plot of the play under study. Just like a rhizome, any point in this play can be connected to other random points.

Another important principle of the rhizome is asignifying burst against the over-signifying breaks isolating structures or cutting over a single structure. A rhizome might be broken at a given point yet it has the tendency to make connections with one of its old lines, or on new lines. The play under investigation is loaded with such instances where the characters break away from one situation but later build ties with it again by using the repetition technique. This is evident in the scene shown below:

He: Where are you going?

She: To wee-wee

He: Good girl. When will you be back?

She: When I finish.

He: Good Girl. Bring me a cigarette

(They change exact positions)

She: Where are you going?

He: Bowling with the boys.

She: Good Boy. When will you be back?

He: When I finish

She: Good Boy. Bring me a cigarette.

(Repeat above scenes three times). (Terry 122)

The characters repeat the same dialogues by changing their positions they break away from one situation but later build ties with it again just like a rhizome which might be broken at a given point yet it has the tendency to make connections with the same stem again. This is achieved through the use of repetition technique in the transformation plays which performs the role of the connective. It helps to bind various segments of the plot that apparently cannot be one assemblage.

4.2.2 Plot Analysis: Postmodern Spirit of Non-conformity in *Calm Down Mother and Comings and Goings*

The postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency are exhibited by the plots of the selected plays at various instances. Unlike the plot of a conventional drama which consists of five parts or dramatic arc i.e. exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and catastrophe, the plot postmodern drama does not have any defined structure rather the structure is amoeba-shaped and is prone to change. The plot is loaded with repetitive structures, which were considered a violation of the dramatic norms in the classical drama e.g. In the third scene of the play, the Women two becomes a subway door, and the other two women close and open the door time and again that leads to the repetitive chanting of these lines:

Two Women

Please keep your hands off the doors.

Please keep your hands off the doors.

Please keep your hands off the doors.

Please keep your hands off the doors.

Please keep your hands off the doors.... (Terry 11)

The repetition of the same dialogues frustrates the readers/audience as it does not contribute to the progression of the plot. Such repetitions are considered anti-dramatic in the conventional drama and these repetitive dialogues do not move the plot forward. The repetition of the dialogues and absurd switching of roles and situations create an air of uncertainty and this way the conventions of a dramatic composition are bypassed. This is also evident in the example quoted below:

In *Calm Down Mother*, neither there is a coherent plot nor is the identity of the characters stable. Rather the plot of this play appears like a series of episodes with no coherent connections. The play has several scenarios encompassing three characters but there is no progress in the plot. The actions do not lead to climax or resolution rather they keep moving around and around. In the selected play, Terry has rejected the principles associated with conventional plot development as observed in a normative, realist play. A traditional dramatic plot consists of interconnected narrative elements, where one scenario gives rise to another and in the end, the audience is presented with a proper closure without any loose ends in the narrative. However, in the selected play not only do characters' identities perpetually transform but the situation additionally keeps on changing. This is a salient feature of postmodern dramas as J. Malkin comments that postmodernism rejects the idea of the progress of modern literature. Progress suggests linear and causal development through time. Postmodernism dismisses the ideals of progression and objective history, which have been corrupted beyond repair by this century's ideological excesses, and the concepts like plurality and repetition have taken their place (Malkin 10).

The postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency are strongly exhibited by the plot of the selected plays at several instances. Just like *Calm Down Mother*, the plot of *Comings and Goings* does not have any defined structure. In these postmodern dramas, the postmodern writers have done experiments on the limits of drama and theatre. This temperament of non-conformity is the essence of postmodern drama which creates unrest among the audience as well and leaves them confused. For instance, in *Comings and Goings* at a moment in time, the male and female characters perform the role of Master and Slave respectively. She is a slave and waitress taking breakfast orders from the male character:

He: Orange juice

She: Yes

He: Squeeze yourself?

She: Yes

He: Two fried eggs?

She: Yes

He: Sunny-side up?

She: yes

He: Bacon

She: yes... (Terry 122)

Later they reverse their roles as the waitress start acting as master and the master start acting as a waiter:

She: Orange juice

He: Yes

She: Squeeze yourself?

He: Yes

She: Two fried eggs?

He: Yes

She: Sunny-side up?

He: yes

She: Bacon

He: yes. (Terry 122)

This absurd reversal of roles creates an air of confusion among the audience and makes the plot series illogical dialogues. A traditional dramatic plot consists of interconnected narrative elements, where one scenario gives rise to another meaningful scenario but here it is not so. In the play, after the scene mentioned above, the characters start acting like pre-programmed robots and repeat the same dialogues:

She: Orange Juice

He: Yes. Squeeze yourself?

She: Yes. Two fried eggs.

He: Yes.

She Sunny-side up.

He: Yes. Bacon. (Terry 123)

Now apparently, they are repeating the same dialogues but here both of them are simultaneously asking questions and giving replies unlike before where one person was asking questions at one time and the other was replying. Such repetitions and abnormal shifting of roles disrupt the concept of a coherent plot. Postmodern theatre, according to Pavis, is a dramatic “text [...] that can no longer be recapitulated, resolved, or proceed to action” (Pavis 24). It emphasizes the postmodernist revolutionary’s self-dedication to the pursuit of dramatic possibilities rather than writing plays with a high chance of success. This seems to be the case with *Comings and Goings*. The play has several scenarios encompassing two characters but there is no progress in the plot. The actions do not lead to the climax or resolution rather they keep moving around and around. It is a perfect example of a rhizome which is a continuously growing stem having multiple roots without any fixed order. Similarly, in the play under study, there are multiple actions and scenarios which show how the postmodern world favors chaos and mess over order.

According to Lyotard, postmodernism has an experimental agenda and it is a transformative process that is continuously engaged with developing new forms. This tendency

of reproducing new rhizomatic forms and situations is apparent in the selected play as well. For example, at one instance in the play, the characters are behaving like spouses but then the female character starts acting like God and the male character acts like a rich man who is undergoing torments in hell:

She: You're here, all of you!

He: You've waited?

She: What else.

He: Embracing her (We're here)

She: I want you all around me.

(He picks her up and holds her aloof)

He: (The rich man, Luke 16:19. In hell in torment): Father Abraham, have mercy upon me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

She (As God): Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously everyday... (Terry 133)

They raise their hands above their heads and study them. Then they move their hands apart. He pats his shoulder and then the third narrative voice reports that the characters are now in a police station, where she is a criminal accused of robbery and he is a policeman. Here the plot is continuously undergoing a transformative process and developing new forms but it is segmentary just like a rhizome which has segmentary lines according to which it is delineated and territorialized. The play ends in the middle of a situation when he keeps on asking her (who is a maid) that where they first met and then they start chanting the lines:

Together: Then we will dip.

We'll slip,

We'll glide,

We'll hide,

We'll slide,

Into the love time

Into the love time

Into the love time. (Terry 150)

When the play ends, they are hoping to be together in a better place and situation with great love between them. In this way, the play ends without a meaningful closure. There is no climax, conflict, or resolution in the play and it starts and ends aimlessly. In this play, Terry has utilized the transformation technique, in which characters and circumstances perpetually change. While watching or reading the play whenever the audience is comfortable with one situation and setting, the scene changes, and both the characters and circumstances additionally change and become something entirely different from what they were before. Over the course of the play, the characters take on different roles, different names, and bear different relationships with one another. They are not given any designations.

In this play, Terry rejects the principles associated with conventional plot development as observed in a normative, realist play. A traditional dramatic plot consists of interconnected narrative elements, where one scenario gives rise to another, and in the end, the audience is presented with a proper closure without any loose ends in the narrative e.g., In the last scene of the play, *Comings and Goings*, from being strangers who meet in a night club to the abrupt changing of roles as husband and wife the play ends in the middle of this situation without proper closure. The plot keeps on transforming. In this way, the concept of coherence and linearity in a play is bypassed. By dismissing the idea of linearity, this postmodern drama also dismissed the related concept of progress.

SECTION II

4.3 Modern VS Postmodern Characters: An Analysis of *Calm Down Mother and Comings and Goings*' Characters

During the mid-1960s there was a paradigmatic shift in dramatic discourse with the beginning of a new form of theatre named postmodernist. The eminent scholars comment that

during this time drama came under new pressures resulting in what Elinor Fuchs called “the death of character” (Fuchs 43) and Lehmann Berton named as “Post-dramatic theatre.” (Berton 12). Jean Francois Lyotard defined postmodernism as a break with modernism as he said “since we are beginning something completely new, we have to re-set the hands of the clock at zero” (Lyotard 6). For Lyotard Modernism “is an aesthetic of the sublime” (Condition 79) in which “the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer to the reader or viewer matter for solace or pleasure” (Condition 79). Postmodernism on the contrary “denies itself the solace of good forms” (Condition 81).

Postmodern drama is different from modern drama as it makes its readers conscious of their inability to see and experience the world around them as a unified whole. Therefore, they are not entertained with the ‘sine qua non condition which steals from them the liberty of detached perspective. Hence, they cannot get coherent meaning out of the work as they have not experienced it as a single unit. In such a chaotic state, the meaning cannot play a significant role that’s why postmodernism is called an “art of the surface, the depthless, even the immediate” (Callinicos 21).

In modernist drama, characters are subordinate to the plot and the actions of the characters are considered unavoidable as they are the manifestation of the character’s inner state of mind. The postmodernist drama has disrupted all such norms. It has taken both characters and the plot to another extreme by dissolving both of them. According to postmodern writers and theorists, these constructs are not the crucial elements for theatrical communication. As a literary scholar, Elinor Fuchs comments, ‘modernist characters come to a stage of partial de-substantiation’ whereas in the postmodern theatre, ‘the burden of signification (the answer to the question, what are we following?) (Fuchs 5) shifts from unfolding of character and plot to the more abstract interest of the play of ontological and ideological levels’

Conventionally a character is defined as a person represented in a drama or a story, etc. who performs a role. Character has distinct personality and traits in terms of his/her manners, language, and physical appearance. Foreman in *Foundations of Theatre* (1993) explains it as:

Character... [this is] a straightjacket imposed on impulse so it can be dressed up in a fashion that is familiar, comforting, and reassuring for the spectator. But I want a theatre that frustrates our habitual way of seeing. (Foreman 4)

As mentioned in the quotation above, the postmodern writers infuse the spirit of rejection in themselves. They reject the basic components of theatre including character. The postmodern writers adopt new models to bypass the narrative conventions of plot and character. The postmodern writers aim at freeing all sorts of social practices from the shackles of conventions (Malkin 14). The role that is assigned to postmodern characters in drama is that of narration. Characters become the source of narration and the theatre becomes the site of the narrative act as Hans-Thies Lehmann calls it. Lehmann comments that while watching postmodern plays the audience does not get the sense of watching a scenic theatrical representation rather feels that a narration of the play is being presented. In postmodern plays, the existence of a stable individual identity is in question. The postmodern characters are in fact non-characters who are de-individualized and deprived of a stable personal identity.

The postmodern drama challenges the prevailing realistic theatre characters which reinforce social and theatrical expectations by defying the concept of unified and autonomous characters in a play. It neutralizes fixed assumptions, dismantles stereotypes, and reevaluates the hierarchies in the institution of theater. It acknowledges the multiple and ever-shifting selves that at any moment constitute a developing self, placing that composite in a context that shifts itself. It prefers individuality and the idea of the disintegrated subjects over grand narratives of the past. The consequence is a drama of perception similar to a Picasso painting of a woman's profile seen in the same canvas as the woman's frontal view. Neither has priority over the other nor does anyone negate the other rather, both indicate the complexity of the dynamic process that we can only tentatively call as the self.

The postmodern writers are not concerned with the in-depth psychological characterization rather they seem to be more interested in presenting to the audience multiple possibilities and perspectives of the postmodern self so, the situation, as well as characters, keep on transforming. They leave it to the audience how to perceive the characters and situations presented in their plays as per their own creative and imaginative abilities. In the case of Terry, the postmodern drama becomes a "drama of perception" (Schechner 168) where the audience plays an active role in the process of meaning-making.

In both plays, *Calm Down Mother* and *Comings and Goings*, Terry has deconstructed the classifications that were previously followed to write plays and replaced them with ideas of text and language that increasingly act as performers and assume the function of traditional characters. In other words, the characters' identities get lost in the process of writing. The

haphazard and continuous shifting of characters' roles and the situations highlight the idea of the text as a fiber of quotations, a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings blend together but not homogeneously rather always incoherently (Schmidt 163).

In both plays, Terry has bypassed the conventions of coherent characters as the characters shed off their human identity and become non-living things instantly e.g., In *Calm Down Mother*, one character referred to as women two becomes a subway door, and the other two women open and close it time and again. Also, once the women become two chairs in a nursing home. Such characters are the negation of the very concept of 'character', who has mortal existence and particular traits on the basis of which the audience or readers build perception about him/her. The characters in the selected play not only transmute their roles but also take up the role of non-living beings, this shows the extent to which the dramatic conventions are bypassed in postmodern plays.

4.3.1 *Calm Down Mother* and *Comings and Goings*: Identity Transformation of Schizoid Characters

The characters presented in the plays *Calm Down Mother* and *Comings and Goings* are schizoid. To depict the schizoid state of mind of postmodern characters Terry has made use of the transformation technique. It helps to generate characters with fragmented, disintegrated, and pluralistic identities. The transformation technique assists the writers to infuse the postmodern spirit of inconsistency in the characters. Terry during an interview with Helen Keyssar said that the transformation technique reveals to humans an efficient universe in which nothing is lost but everything is transformed. This transformation that the characters undergo reveals the hidden and complex state of the characters and marks transformation as an expressionistic technique.

In *Calm Down Mother*, the transformation technique also reflects the various aspects of a postmodern self who lacks coherence. The characters have no particular traits and at times it seems as if all the characters are one and the same as if they represent different aspects of the same person. Also, the characters keep on evolving and are bound to transform by fate. At various instances, they transform into various other versions and shed their previous identity completely. Unlike the characters of the conventional plays where characters used to have distinct traits, the postmodern characters do not own particular traits rather they have multiple identities. So, we cannot say that the play is about particular people or characters who have fixed motifs and dispositions.

It is evident through the play that the transformation of the dramatic structure is the central feature of Terry's plays. In her plays, there are no fixed points or positions on which the audience may rely to build an understanding of the situation. The situation transforms continuously which gives rise to a great degree of uncertainty and posits the question about the frame of reference such theater might have. This theater endlessly crosses the barriers and questions the fixed assumptions. This gives rise to the problem of defining postmodern drama as such plays do not hint at a point from where to start and make progress. As these plays have great potential for change, they offer nothing on which to rest.

Although the transformation technique in the play under investigation assists in building an understanding of the nature of the characters and their motivation unlike the techniques of expressionism, they do not reveal the internal state of any particular character. The characters are portrayed too much light-hearted and ambiguous in style and intention for that matter. These characters only stress transformation and movement and do not intend to convey any deeper meaning, or as Schechner said, they "do not attempt to represent the mind" (Schechner 13). Transformation takes part in the endless process of changing forms of the self. It is used as a blunt dramatic technique that helps to depict the disintegrated postmodern self.

Characters appear to be exploding in Terry's plays that lead to the denial of the concept of coherent and stable self in a dramatic composition. The non-linear and rhizomatic plot and characters present the audience with a fragmented sense of reality. As discussed earlier the play has a rhizomatic structure that takes very diverse forms 'from ramified surface extension in all directions to concretion into bulbs and tubers' (Deleuze and Guattari 21). The rhizome works like rats. They take bites of whatever comes in their way. This seems to be the case with the characters of this play. These characters perform randomly multiple roles encompassing various situations which have no logical connection with each other but still, they are placed together. So, we can say that the playwright is questioning the conception of a fixed, objective truth by leaving the audience baffled through presenting constantly fluctuating circumstances. The sense of reality that the author is trying to depict also follows a rhizomatic structure with the presentation of multiple scenarios and circumstances.

In *Comings and Goings*, the characters are rhizomatic and have disintegrated identities who keep on transforming the subjects of the pre/modernist world who used to be unified, autonomous, and transcendental. The play shows multiple situations encompassing different

relationships between two characters which are simply called as he and she and are not given any designations throughout the play. The characters' personalities in the play are dissolved and the subjects appear to be displaced. In the play not only do characters' identities perpetually transform but the situation additionally keeps on getting changed. It can be visually perceived how these characters possessing multiple identities are like schizoids. As the characters fluctuate not only their appearances but also their personalities alter, this constant shifting challenges the clear, sharp delineation of a character in the realist sense. Through comfortably displaying characters without a stable identity Terry has deconstructed set tradition and authority. According to Deleuze and Guattari, schizoid individuals can act as agents for revolutionary social change. They can play their part in the construction of a society based on a fair system of cooperation among its members.

Comings and Goings is full of repetition of absurd dialogues that the characters keep on delivering one after another. The characters constantly transform. Also, the characters keep on taking each other's roles while repeating the same situation. In one scene, the female character is a waitress later she starts acting like a master and the male character becomes the waiter who takes orders from her just the way she was taking orders from him a few moments ago. Then, the nature of their relationship changes again and they become Master and Slave. But soon they start acting as pre-programmed robots and start repeating the breakfast ordering scene. Then the scene transforms again abruptly and they are shown having an ecstatic relationship between them. It is shown that he has returned from somewhere after a long time and she seems happy about it. Then at once, he starts acting like a rich man who is under torment in hell. He addresses the female character as Father Abraham and seeks redemption and she acts like God. In this way, even within a dramatic code, parallel activities and generic shifting cancel out any possibility of stability. The play's frame is provided by the postmodern rejection of essence and the existing basis of "meta-concepts", which Jean-Francois Lyotard refers to as "master narratives." (Malkin 117)

In this play, there are definite symbols of pressures under which the characters seem to be losing their sense of concrete self. In this play, random actors replace other actors often in mid-sentence. The play encompasses continuous subversion of identities both of actors and characters. The play highlights gender roles and social roles that the two characters bear with each other and shows how these constitute power relationships between genders. The characters he and she are shown in the beginning as husband and wife who keep on switching roles on various instances without any intimation. At one instance, they are shown spouses

who are quarreling with each other and after some moments without giving any clue to the audience they assume the role of master and waitress.

4.3.2 *Calm Down Mother* and *Comings and Goings*: Schizoid and Rhizomatic Characters

In the plays, *Calm Down Mother* and *Comings and Goings*, the characters possess disintegrated multiple identities. The characters have strong postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency. In these plays, the situations keep on colliding as the characters keep switching their roles. The characters presented in these plays can be called schizoid as they exhibit before the audience rhizomatic identities which do not conform to the pre-existing sense of unified, coherent selves in a play. While describing the schizoids, Deleuze and Guattari assert that schizoanalysis does not conform to tradition hence, rejects authority by presenting several identities. For them, humans are desiring machines who are not as unified and coherent as they seem but rather their desires are being suppressed by socio-political authority (Sim 355). Thus, the identities of schizoid individuals ideally represent the human consciousness, possessing not a coherent sense of self-identity but rather giving way to multiplicity and rejecting authority. In *Calm Down Mother*, the characters lack coherence and keep on transforming. The multiple transformations that the characters undergo can be traced e.g., Women one throughout the play assumes the following roles,

- At the beginning of the play, she is Margaret Fuller, a nineteenth-century transcendentalist.
- Women one sheds the role of Margaret Fuller and becomes Sophie, a young girl who works at a superstore with her sister and laments the loss of her mother throughout the scene.
- Transformation occurs again when she assumes the role of heartbroken woman Nancy who arrives at her sister Sally's apartment in New York City.
- Later becomes Mrs. Tweed who discusses the passing of time with Mrs. Watermelon.
- Then, she transmutes her role again and comes up with an altered role of a prostitute named Momo, who argues with another prostitute Felicia.
- Finally, she becomes Sue who is furious over a magazine article that says that it is unethical to utilize birth control pills.

In this way, just one character assumes multiple roles throughout the play and the same goes for the other two characters. As the characters fluctuate not only their appearances but also their personalities alter, this constant shifting challenges the clear, sharp delineation of a

character in the realist sense. In this way, through comfortably displaying characters without a stable identity Terry has deconstructed set tradition and authority.

Deleuze and Guattari described the schizoid person as a free man who is solitary, irresponsible, and does things the way he /she wants without asking for permission from any sort of authority. He overcomes all kinds of barriers and codes. He is not afraid of being mad. He experiences his being in a state of sickness that no longer affects him (*Anti Oedipus* 131). The characters in the play under study have these tendencies. They experience emotional upheavals and traumas and this appears to be their normal state. They reject the established authorities and norms without any fear or moral burden e.g., In the last scene of the play, the three women characters Sue, Sak, and Ma argue for the use of birth control pills. Sue openly condemns a magazine article that verbally expresses that it is unethical to utilize birth control pills and even condemns the religious authorities, “Sue: Who the holy hell are all those priests and magazine writers to say it’s wrong? Who the hell are these guys on platforms to say that you can’t take a birth control pill” (Terry 22)? This depicts the state of mind of schizoid individuals who do not conform to the institutions and norms and openly criticize the established authorities.

The very start of the play with the monologue of a woman marks the unmarked journey of the characters in the play. The voice tells the audience about three one-celled creatures that are under the sea floating with the water waves aimlessly. This hints towards the three women characters of the play who perform various roles encompassing multiple situations aimlessly. The description of the creatures is given as follows:

Woman’s Voice: Three one-celled creatures float with currents under the sea. They are propelled at different rates of speed depending upon which current surrounds them. From time to time, they reach a byway in the current and float aimlessly. They engulf food whenever they can. When the current changes they are swept into one water force... (Terry 2)

These creatures float wherever the water current takes them without the will of their own which projects that throughout the play the three women characters take various courses according to the situation. By depicting such state of the characters Terry has shown the state of the postmodern men/women who appear to have lost their sense of concrete self. They are schizoids whose identities keep on dissolving. As these characters fluctuate not only do their appearances but also their personalities alter. These characters could be called schizoids as

they have no ultimate end to achieve rather, they are always in the process of becoming. These schizoid characters make the plot rhizomatic.

Terry through her play has depicted the frustration, dissatisfaction, and restlessness of the postmodern schizoid characters by using the repetition technique. The repetition technique in this transformation plays not only performs the role of the connective to bind the various segments of the plot that apparently cannot be one assemblage but also reflects the frustrated state of the mind of the characters. The example quoted below shows the schizoid state of characters. Their speech reflects their resentment at the current state of the world and the people around them:

Woman One

I want to hit.

(She doubles her fist.)

I want to hit!

(She brings her fist up and shows it to the audience.)

I want to hit! I WANT TO HIT!

(She paces back and forth slamming her fist into the other open palm.)

Hit, hit, hit, hit, hit, hit! Bang, Screw! Screw this hitting. All this side of me is aching to hit. It's like a stroke. My left side has nothing more to say. (Terry 5)

This shows the frustration of the schizoid individual towards society. The sense of lack of communication is another dilemma of the postmodern schizoid man/woman. They are unable to find answers to the questions that pop up in their heads and nothing makes sense to them. This is evident in the speech of Woman three quoted below:

Talk ... Talk ... talk ... lay bare every part of your limited life. Maybe you could force your life to grow into lives. Facts. Add up all the desperate facts, pitiful few facts as they are — add them all up to enter on the human record, short as it is. Keep writing. Maybe if I keep talking and writing, listing all the facts of my life, I won't seem so small, at least not so small to me. When I get scared, I can pick up all the lists — all the long lists of the facts of my life and read them out loud to myself, and maybe then I

won't feel so crippled, so unconnected — at least not to myself ... A lot of people must start writing with the absurd conviction they are talking to or will contact someone. SOMEONE! SOMEONE! SOMEONE! (Terry 6)

Such schizoid individuals feel that the world is a suffocating place where they can no longer express themselves or find relief. They pity themselves as they feel they are insignificant in this world and they have nothing to feel good about. Nothing gives them a sense of being significant to others and that's why they feel disconnected from the world around them. This gives rise in them a wish to create a world order of their own. These characters are like schizoids as they have no ultimate end to achieve rather, they are always in the process of becoming. These nomadic wanderings of desire are characteristic of a schizoid person. As Guattari said that desire is productive and it does not seek acquisition but free lines of escape, passages, and process. The women in the passage above have the desire of recognition, of being significant but not for the world but themselves. Writing down the facts of her life will make her feel connected with the world and the people around her. It will help her to build multiple connections with the people and things around even if they are disintegrated in nature just like a rhizome.

The characters' identities in the play are rhizomatic. An important principle of the rhizome is signifying burst against the over-signifying breaks isolating structures or cutting over a single structure. A rhizome might be broken at a given point yet it has the tendency to make connections with one of its old lines, or on new lines. The play under investigation is loaded with such instances where the characters break away from one situation but later build ties with it again e.g., at one instance in the play, Women one and Women two are sisters: Sophie and Esther who work in a superstore and the third women becomes a customer. The two other women approach Esther and beat her down to the ground, where she remains throughout the scene until the other two women change their roles again, and now, they become sisters. Here unlike the previous scene women one and three are sisters named Nancy and Sally and Woman Three (Esther) who has been lying on the stage floor throughout the preceding section, elevates and her character alters as she becomes a nurse living in a nursing home. In this way, the characters break ties with one situation but then reconnect with the plot at another point in time just like a rhizome that builds multiple connections in various directions without any fixed pattern.

The characters presented in *Comings and Goings* are schizoid as they have rhizomatic identities. Conventionally a character performs a specific role and has distinct personality and traits in terms of his/her manners, language, and physical appearance but the postmodern characters are schizoid and exhibit the postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency. In *Comings and Goings*, the characters have dynamic roles and personalities. Two unnamed characters he and she perform various roles throughout the play. None of the characters in the play have fixed identities, rather throughout the play these characters keep transmuting their identities. By establishing characters with multiple identities. Terry has challenged the traditional realistic character, which in a way reinforced certain set standards of theatrical expectations and has dismantled the stereotypes affixed with dramatic composition.

The characters presented in *Comings and Goings* can be called schizoids. These characters do not have a stable, coherent identity rather they possess multiple identities. Their identities even dissolve into each other. The disintegrated identities of these characters defy the traditional notion of the normative, realistic, cohesive selves in a conventional play. Throughout the play, the audience remains perplexed as the characters do not acquire one stable identity and keep on performing multiple roles.

These characters are schizoid and have no ultimate end to achieve rather they are always in the process of becoming. They cross the boundaries of normality by turning things upside down which leads to an interconnected state of things where we can no longer distinguish between the original and the extensions, the character and the actor so on and so forth. These tendencies show that how in multiple ways individuals and groups deviate from the majoritarian norms and determine their own identity which is always in process of becoming. In *Comings and Goings*, the plot takes an unexpected turn when the characters shed off their human identity and become non-living things instantly. From being strangers who are having an abusive encounter after a car accident the characters become pencil and list. He becomes a pencil writing a list and she is the list upon whom he is writing with his body. In this way, the characters are always in the process of becoming and cross the boundaries of normality. A character is a mortal being and has certain fixed traits but here the characters assume multiple roles and traits and even non-living things become the characters.

While describing the schizoids, Deleuze and Guattari assert that schizoanalysis does not conform to tradition hence, rejects authority by presenting several identities. For them,

humans are ‘desiring machines’ who are not as unified and coherent as it seems but rather their desires are being suppressed by socio-political authority (Sim 355). Thus, schizoid identity ideally represents the human consciousness, possessing not a coherent sense of self-identity but rather giving way to multiplicity and rejecting authority (Sim 21). According to Deleuze and Guattari, the schizoid characters reflect the state of mind of the postmodern disintegrated human beings and their rhizomatic world. They provide the impetus for social change by movements of deterritorialization and lines of flight i.e., schizoanalytic mode of working.

Deleuze and Guattari proposed that schizoid individuals can act as agents for revolutionary social change. They can play their part in the construction of a society based on a fair system of cooperation among its members. They stressed the importance of qualitative changes in individual and collective identities of humans that occur alongside or beneath the public political domain. They insist that the postmodern schizoid individuals are nomadic war machines or desiring-machines (Guattari 243) that can act as the agents of social and political transformation. The schizoid characters in the plays under investigation are the apt representation of the postmodern self who is a product of their desires. They break the shackles of the conventions to reveal their inner complexities. The representation of such incoherent characters has transformed the theatre as well as they bypass the conventional theatrical codes.

The key principle of schizoanalysis is that desire is productive and the whole world is a product of desire and desire is the nucleus of all material infrastructure. The characters in *Comings and Goings* and *Calm Down Mother* act according to their impulse without following any coherent identity or plan of action. For example, in *Comings and Goings*, throughout the play, the situations keep on colliding as the characters keep switching their roles while repeating the same situation for example, in one scene she is a waitress later she starts acting like master and he becomes the waiter who takes orders from her just the way she was taking orders from him a few moments ago. This creates a lot of confusion and a sense of fragmentation. They give rise to an atmosphere of undecidability and unpredictability which carries us to a place where we can no longer differentiate between thought and action, statement and intention, and hence just like schizoid individuals they save themselves against all kinds of interpretation.

Bigsby has explained the state of Terry's characters as: "unable to act, to commit themselves to the causalities of a moral existence, the characters allow their impulses to be deflected into a language which must then carry the weight of their blunted aspirations" (Bigsby 266).

4.4 Conclusion

To carry out the schizoanalysis of the plays under study, the researcher has made its decentralized and fragmented analysis. The investigation shows that the plots and characters of both plays resemble a rhizome. The theatre of representation is turned upside down into the order of desiring production by the playwright. While using this method of analysis the researcher has probed the differences, complexities, bifurcations that are produced by various entities in the plays. The Schizoanalysis method is helpful as it has assisted the researcher to explore various ways by which plot and characters in selected plays have bypassed the patterns of conventional drama. Schizoanalysis has helped the researcher to trace the development of a reality in the selected plays that is never static rather continuously in flux. A schizoanalytic reading of the plays has shown that everything is decentered in the plays and there is no culmination point. Schizoanalysis has no concern with what a book means and it does not look for any signifier or signified or anything else to understand a text as schizoanalysis rejects all kinds of overcoding systems. Instead, this form of analysis is interested in the function that a text performs, how it creates multiplicities and undergoes a metamorphosis. The schizoanalytic study of these plays shows that there are numerous multiplicities in these plays that open up into other multiplicities and the notions of unified text, characters or individuals are all challenged.

There are various rhizomatic strains in *Calm Down Mother* that reflect the incoherence in its structure. There is no single linear plot rather the plot of this play appears like various pieces of a jigsaw puzzle which connect in multiple ways to form an amoeba-shaped structure that keeps on changing its shapes. The sense of reality that the author has depicted in this play is rhizomatic as it is loaded with multiple scenarios and circumstances. In *Comings and Goings*, neither the plot nor the identities of the characters are coherent. The plot of this play appears like a series of episodes with no coherent connections because of the disintegrated and schizoid characters. It is an example of rhizomatic structure as in the case of rhizome, anyone point or circumstance can be connected with any other point or circumstance and it is evident in the play. The non-linear plot presents the audience with a fragmented sense of

reality. It appears that the playwright has questioned the conception of a fixed, objective truth by leaving the audience baffled through presenting constantly fluctuating circumstances.

The characters presented in *Calm down Mother* and *Comings and Goings* are schizoid. They do not have a stable, coherent identity rather these characters keep transmuting their identities. They possess multiple identities and hence, defy the traditional notion of the normative, realistic, cohesive self and identity. Throughout the play, the audience remains perplexed as the characters do not acquire one stable identity and keep on performing multiple roles. By establishing characters with multiple identities Terry has challenged the traditional realistic character, which in a way reinforced certain set standards of theatrical expectations. In this way, Terry has dismantled the stereotypes affixed with dramatic composition.

The characters possessing multiple identities are just like schizoid individuals and their identities dissolve into each other. The characters presented in these plays appear to be caught in the middle of a situation where there are no proper beginnings or endings. The schizoid characters presented in the selected plays appear to be apt representatives of the contemporary human condition. The characters in the selected transformation plays make the plot rhizomatic and defy the set traditions of the conventional drama which shows the impact of postmodernism on theatre.

CHAPTER-5

**RHIZOMATIC PLOT AND CHARACTERS: A
SCHIZOANALYSIS OF PLAYS *INTERVIEW* AND *MOTEL* BY JEAN-
CLAUDE VAN ITALLIE**

5.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises a comprehensive analysis of the postmodern transformational plays *Interview* and *Motel* by Jean Claude van Itallie. In this chapter, using the theoretical concepts of rhizome, schizoid individuals, and schizoanalysis research method, the researcher shows that the selected postmodern plays exhibit a form of the rhizomatic structure by defying the traditional notions of plot, character, and dramatic composition. The Schizoanalysis research method is particularly helpful to explore the selected plays. It is grounded on the idea that knowledge is not just words written on a page rather it is a state of being or becoming. This idea helps to analyze the characters and plots of the selected plays which are all in a state of becoming or being and never static. This chapter also demonstrates that how the postmodern temperament opened avenues for the rise of transformational drama and became its driving force. The postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency exhibited by the postmodern transformational drama are also discussed in the following chapter. The chapter is segregated into two sections as two plays of van Itallie are discussed here. Each section is further divided into two sub-sections, which deal in detail with plots and characters of the selected plays respectively.

SECTION - I

5.2 Plot Analysis: Rhizomatic Strains and Use of Transformation Technique in *Interview* and *Motel*

The plots of the plays *Interview* and *Motel* are rhizomatic. A rhizome has multiple roots and it endlessly makes connections in multiple directions without any fixed order. Just like a rhizome, the plot of the *Interview* under study has multiple extensions. The model of the play is dual in nature as it includes the scenario of a formal job interview along with the model of dance as an equally important part of the plot. Both of these go on side by side, they

are apparently connected yet there is no logical connection between these two activities. When the play starts, all four applicants and four interviewers join the stage to perform the interview scene. At that time, the speed of the action accelerates and is accompanied by dance-like movements with the background of party music. All the applicants and interviewers speak at the same time and while talking also perform a square dance. Absurdly at the end of the interview, the applicants jump on the back of the interviewers and then jump off. The simultaneous activities of dancing and interviewing give rise to the atmosphere of chaos. It shows that just like a rhizome which always has middle spaces in it that may connect to any other point, in this play multiple scenarios are interconnected.

In the Interview, multiple things and scenarios are placed right next to each other which have no logical connection between them. Connection and heterogeneity are important principles of rhizome that the plot of this play also follows where random situations are connected with each other. In the first half of the play, four interviewers for an employment agency interview four job seekers; there are two men and two women in each group. The interviewers are wearing clear plastic face masks. This scene is based on multiple sessions of questioning but the questions are not specific for certain kinds of jobs rather the questions are asked from all four applicants who have applied for different posts i.e., as a scrubwoman, a house painter, a banker, and a lady's maid.

First Interviewer: What are you applying for?

First Applicant: House painter.

Second Applicant: I need money.

Third Applicant: Bank President.

First Interviewer: How many years have you been in your present job?

Third Applicant: Three

Second Applicant: Twenty

First Applicant: Eight. (Itallie 18)

In this way, the interviewer asks a general question and the interview does not revolve around specific details of a candidate's capability or list of references. It is rather engrossed with its own ritualized structure and accordingly produces a theatrical meta-discourse. In this way randomly multiple interviews are put together which sounds unreasonable. Here multiple

characters respond to one man simultaneously, just like a rhizome which builds multiple connections randomly.

The rhizomatic ability to build heterogeneous connections is evident in the play at another instance as well where random scenes are connected with each other e.g., In the play, the third interviewer suddenly switches her role from being a random girl on a subway situation to a telephone operator. Her conversation with a customer over the phone is also rhizomatic. As she speaks to the customer, she switches her voice and talks simultaneously over the phone to the customer as well as her friend Roberta, who is also a telephone operator. It is shown in the play as,

(The Telephone Operator alternates her official voice with an ordinary voice as she talks to her friend Roberta...)

Telephone Operator: Just one moment and I will connect you with the information. Ow! Listen, Roberta, I said, I have got this terrible cramp. Hang up and dial again, please. You know what I ate, I said to her, you were here. I am sorry, the no you have dialed cannot be reached. (Itallie 33/34)

In this way, random situations are put together. In this play, Itallie has made use of the transformation technique, which defies the principle of coherence followed in the conventional plot. Using this technique, the postmodern writers challenge the prevailing realistic theatre characters which reinforce social and theatrical expectations. In Itallie's play *Interview* the characters unexpectedly, and randomly change settings and contexts and their transformation acts as a connective between various scenes that generally cannot be connected. For instance, various characters in the play, for example, people on Fourteenth Street, in an exercise class, on a train, in a telephone booth, at a dance, at a psychiatrist clinic, and in a meeting with a politician, all appear in scenes that come one after another without any pause or delay. Only through understanding the transformation technique, these scenes can be comprehended. A series of specified transformations are used to achieve evolution in the play: The sounds of passengers on a moving subway train become the rapid movements of the gym class...They make subway noise, a kind of rhythmic hiss..." (Itallie 42-43) Itallie actively plays with the combinational possibilities of such fractured and incoherent fast-moving scenes and transforms these scenes into an irregular example of simple surface activities. The viewers are robbed of any sense of plot growth and characterization due to the quickening speed and transient introduction of the scenes.

Similarly, in the play *Motel*, Itallie has challenged and transformed various theatrical conventions. The characters' identities are fragmented and disjointed and they make the plot rhizomatic. It has multiple connections in various directions and has no fixed order or defined structure. In the play, multiple scenarios are placed side by side although they have apparently no logical connection between them. For example, during the course of the play, on one hand, the Man doll one by one destroys everything in the room, on the other hand, the Woman doll throws things out of the toilet meanwhile, the Motel keeper's doll keeps on talking about the room without taking notice of the destruction and chaos:

Motel keeper voice: All folks everywhere sitting in the very palm of God. Waiting, whither, whence.

(The Man doll pulls the bedspread, blankets, and sheets off the bed, tearing them apart...)

Motel keeper voice: Any motel you might have come to six sixty-six. Any motel.

(The Man doll rummages through the suitcase, throwing clothes about the room)

The world arrives to me, you'd say. It is a small world. These plastic flowers are here: Made in Japan on the model. Got them from Cat-al-ogue.

(The Man doll pulls down the curtains. Objects continue to be thrown from the bathroom). (Itallie 140/141)

In this way, random situations which have no logical connection between them are placed together. The plot appears to have multiple extensions which keep on growing in various directions without a fixed order just like a rhizome.

Just like a rhizome which is separate-able, reversible, and can be torn, modified, or reversed, the actions performed by the doll figures are disjointed, reversible, and fragmented in nature. They have no correspondence between them rather all the characters keep on performing their incoherent roles to weave the plot. The very first scene of the play indicates this lack of rapport between the actions of the characters:

Motel keeper's voice: It's nice, not as fancy as some, but with all the conveniences. And a touch of home. All modern, up-to-date. Go look, then talk me a thing or two.

(The woman doll enters; she puts down her purse and inspects the room. Then she takes off her dress, revealing lace panties and bra.)

Motel keeper's voice: All modern here, as I say with the tang of home. (Itallie 137/138)

It seems that the motel keeper is passing general remarks without addressing specific people who come as guests in that motel room. He is totally indifferent to the actions of the man and woman dolls and just keeps on delivering the monologue assigned to him. It is also noteworthy that there is even no coherence in the speech of the motel keeper:

Any children? Well, that's nice. Children don't appreciate travel. And rooms don't appreciate children. As it happens it's the last one, I've got left. Twelve dollars, please. On a trip to see sights, are you? That's nice. (Itallie 138)

This also shows the postmodern rejection of the established systems and institutions including the institution of the family. The postmodern men prefer chaos and individuality over a life that has set patterns. When the woman doll comes to the motel room the motel keeper's voice inspects her children and gives the remarks quoted in the above paragraph.

In the play, the actions do not lead to the climax or resolution rather they keep moving in a circular motion. In this way, the characters and plot are vulnerable to consistent change just like a rhizome. Also, the play does not have a logical or proper ending. By the end of the play, the man and woman dolls simply leave the room after destroying it completely as if their sole purpose of coming to that room is fulfilled. This is a clear negation of the concept of plot in which logical events bring progression in the play and lead to the climax and then proper closure.

The play portrays the disorders which are a part of American life. The whole play comprises three sequences which are an explicit representation of America's sufferings and discontent. Depression, discontent, savagery, abhorrence, frenzy, madness, callousness, schizophrenia, and aimlessness, etc are shown as the essential part of postmodern American men. According to Deleuze and Guattari, this state of frenzy suits the postmodern men as through this they can turn the oppressing system upside down. Van Itallie through this play aims to stun his audience or readers by showing the postmodern condition of man.

The play has various components of absurdism and authenticity. No endeavor is made to give the crowd the impression of watching anything besides an arranged execution. By utilizing the absurdist characters, gibberish language, and illogical circumstances the catastrophic, rough, and obscene components in American life are underlined. The play shows that the American resident, once outside his territory of obligation, for example, home and

work, can turn into a creature of remarkably rough and damaging conduct. The absurd and vicious elements are presented as part of reality. Itallie has made use of various elements from the Theater of the Absurd for example, the use of satire and cliché dialogues, aimlessness, and absurd communication, etc. to reveal the absurdity that lurks in the lives of Americans.

The destruction of cultural norms as well as the theatrical conventions depicted in the play shock the audience as it reflects the American's potential for brutality and obliteration. The play's depiction of brutality strikingly communicates van Itallie's frustration and simultaneously deceives Antonin Artaud's Theater of Cruelty as the dramatic predecessor. A catalytic agent for writers of various ages, Artaud created a form of theatre that has an unsettling physical, mental, and moral impact on the audience. The play *Motel* has this impact as Itallie expresses it in the play that "the sensory nerves of the audience," are "not to be spared" (Itallie136).

The play voices the odd inconsistency between the sterilized neatness of American motels and the brutality predominant in American society. Likewise, the impression of a Motel keeper as a sensible and responsible being is completely demolished. The play *Motel* is a reflection of the anxieties of postmodern men who tend to challenge and ruin everything that was once considered important and absolute.

Through *Motel* Itallie challenged the audience's notion of a play by using the transformation technique, as in the play the situations continuously change without any logical order. It seems as if the actions of the characters are moving and transforming the play without the consent of the writer. Postmodern critic Malkin commented on the state of postmodern writers and their works in the following words,

The postmodern writers are like philosophers: the content they compose, the work they create are not on a basic level administered by pre-defined rules, and they cannot be judged by a fixed judgment...Those principles and classes are what their works are searching for. The postmodern writers work without rules to figure out the principles of what will have been done. (Malkin 81)

So, the principles that these writers formulate while writing cannot be judged before they start creating a work of art, and it can only be assessed once produced.

5.2.1 Plot Analysis: Rhizomatic Discourse in *Interview* and *Motel*

Itallie has challenged many established norms of drama while writing these plays. This challenging of norms is the essence of postmodern transformation drama as literary theorist Malkin comments:

Postmodernism denotes a primary shift in the manner memory works, gives a significant understanding of how postmodern dramatization treats the idea of the subject's connection with its past: Where once memory called up logical and consistent, advancing accounts of experienced life, or possibly revealed the importance of concealed memory for the movements of the present, this sort of enlightenment organization has shattered in postmodernism and paved way for disrupted, disjointed, fragmentary, repetitive patterns and fragments. This change in the model of memory is reflected in plays through fragmentation. (Malkin 4)

This disruption of memory and hence the speech is evident in the *Interview* as well. In the play, a single speech that should be assigned to one character at a time is divided among multiple characters. This disrupts the idea of linear and logical discourse as shown in the last scene of the play where all the characters gather on the stage and start chanting:

Second Interviewer: My

Fourth Applicant: fault.

Second Applicant: Excuse

Fourth Interviewer: me.

First Interviewer: Can you

Second Applicant: help

First Applicant: me?

Fourth Interviewer: Next. (Itallie 50)

Just like this, Itallie disrupted the conventions of a linear progression of story and dialogue delivery throughout the play *Interview*. Dialogues make up a plot but the fragmentation of dialogues in the play hints at its fragmented and rhizomatic nature. In a conventional coherent plot, the characters speak their lines while performing a defined role and one person holds the floor at one time. But in *Interview*, the characters speak at the same

time instead of taking turns e.g., at the beginning of the play, when the first Interviewer starts taking interview all four applicants speak simultaneously:

First Interviewer (pointing to a specific seat). There. Name, please?

First Applicant: Jack Smith.

Second Applicant: Jane Smith.

Third Applicant: Richard Smith.

First Interviewer: What exactly Smith, please?

Third Applicant: Richard F.

Second Applicant: Jack Ellen

First Applicant: Jack None. (Itallie 18)

Later when First Interviewer is joined by other three interviewers and all of them address the applicants at once:

First Interviewer: Will you be so kind to tell me a little about yourself?

Second Interviewer: Can you fill me in on something about your background, please?

Third Interviewer: It'd we be help to our employers if you'd give us a little for our files.

Fourth Interviewer: Now what would you say, say, to a prospective employer about yourself (Itallie 23)?

And all four applicants respond to these questions simultaneously. As Deleuze and Guattari explained, a rhizome is more like a map that is open and is connected to all of its dimensions. The questions asked by the interviewer and the subsequent replies of the applicants keep the plot connected and assist in its progression. These questions are not asked a specific applicant rather they are open for all just like a rhizome. The occurrence of speeches at the same time also drastically affects the importance of dialogues in drama. In the play, Itallie goes past dialogue as a mean of significant correspondence between the characters. All the communication takes place in a fragmented manner and gives rise to a sense of disconnectedness among the characters.

The play tends to rely on the evocation of dominant sign systems, pantomime, and body language in various instances. In the party scene, the actors spread on the stage and make the muted sounds of a cocktail party. They play various aspects of the party in slow-

motion muted sounds. The ‘Girl at the Party’ goes from person to person as if she were in a garden of living statues. Also, before the last scene of the play all the characters line up in diagonal form like marching dolls one behind the other and they move their mouths like fish without making any sound. The use of body gestures and sounds overturn the importance of dialogue which is not given a privileged position in postmodern transformation drama.

The play is full of absurd dialogues. The lack of logical discourse confuses the readers or audience and makes the plot meaningless mass of disjointed parts. The scene at the psychiatrist clinic shows the absurdity and emptiness of communication when he utters absurd expressions in the form of fragments,

Third Applicant (Girl at the party):Can you help me, doctor? I asked him.

Psychiatrist:

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, HOSTILE.

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, PENIS.

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, MOTHER.

(Holding out his hand)

Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, MONEY. (Itallie 47)

Communication in the play comprises only of stereotypical phrases, cliché expressions, and blanks as communicated in the blank marker ‘blah’. The concept of ‘Blank’ is also reflected in the setting of the scene which is depicted as similarly white and indifferent just like the blank responses of the major parts in the scene. These blanks signify that the characters lack depth and genuineness. As there are no proper characters or selves in the play so the following direction of filling the blank by the interviewer remains unfulfilled: “First Interviewer: Fill in the blank space, please” (Itallie 15). In this way, the importance of coherent dialogue in the making of the play and the significance of unified and autonomous characters are denied in the favor of incoherence and uncertainty. The domain of sense, which Deleuze investigates fastidiously in *The Logic of Sense*, a vital precursor of the schizoanalysis books is one in which language and occasion, word and world, are not distinguishable. Sense is recognizable via nonsense or likewise anomalous occasions in a language where meaning is uncovered. The non-sense words e.g., Blah are linguistic coalitions stripped of meaning as such and whose significance lies completely in their performative component, this being the mystery of sense.

Van Itallie also evidently entertains the concept of presence versus portrayal. One of his gadgets is to make prototypical circumstances as opposed to a logical story as the aftereffect of individual interaction. In the play, the conventional function of assigning discourse to characters is surrendered in an endeavor to create scenarios as the result of independent models of situational dialogues. Also, in the play, the characters use past tense and indirect speech to give a sense of deferred presence. So, the idea of dramatic presence is proved illusionary with the use of indirect speech and past tense. The notion of dramatic presence is undercut and exposed as illusory as the characters use indirect expression and the past tense in their present dialogues:

First Applicant: Thanks, I said.

Second Applicant: I said thanks.

Third Applicant: Thank you, I said.

Fourth Applicant: I said thank you. (Itallie 30)

Even though the characters deliver their lines in a given present time, their messages allude to past events, specifically the moment in which they say ‘Thank you’. This indicates the complexities which are generally innate in the postmodern idea of illusory characters. The example quoted above shows that although the action is happening at present time yet the use of past tense gives the impression that it happened in the past and hints that it is retrospective narration. Theatrical proximity is subsequently constantly challenged in the play. It proposes that the theatre is presenting actions of the past but does so by giving the illusion that it is happening in present. Hence, the theatrical performances appear to be contradictory in nature, and it is the condition that is exhibited and unfolded on the stage.

Van Itallie has used various cinematic techniques in the play to further carry out his experimentation with the dramatic forms. Close-ups, freeze and slow motion techniques are used by Itallie in the play. Itallie has used slow-motion technique in the party scene. In that scene, the actors perform a party scene mostly with the use of their gestures in slow motion. The particular snapshot of a prototypical scene uncovers the fragmentary nature of the social experiences in the postmodern world and theatre and also presents it as a spatial display.

Itallie further underlines the impression of a spatial display when he shows that the action in the play ends at once in a freeze: the girl in the party (as she is referred to) goes from one person to another “as if she were in a garden of living statues” (45). All the other actors

stay in a fixed posture. It appears as the time is paused and a moment is captured out of time and space causing one to notice only its pictorial portrayal that reflects upon itself. In this way, Itallie has made use of the freeze technique where the actors freeze in the middle of a very vibrant and lively conversation. It seems as if the activity is suspended for a few seconds. The actors while performing a scene freeze suddenly and then return to their action in slow motion. That's how the activity is exhibited in fragments and it appears like a rhizome that keeps on making new fragmented connections. This happens in the last scene of the play as well when all the actors gather on stage and start speaking again in characters: the gym instructor, the buyer on 14th street, the girl at the party, the telephone operator and the house painter, etc., and then they freeze, continue again and then freeze and then continue again with background music. This also hints at the fragmented nature of the plot of this play.

The speech, action, and roles performed by the actors all negate the theatrical conventions. They are all disintegrated, incoherent, and rhizomatic. There is no single linear plot and reality rather there is an atmosphere of uncertainty everywhere. There is no proper progress or plot development in the play and it is open-ended. The play ends when one of the interviewers direct the characters to assemble in a line and while marching in a place like dolls, they repeat the lines:

My fault.

Excuse me.

Can you

Help me?

Next. (Itallie 55)

Itallie has also negated the conventions of a plot construction in the play *Motel* with the help of haphazard and fragmented dialogues. Unlike a traditional plot in which dialogues keep the story going in *Motel*, the dialogues are disjointed and fragmented in nature. Communication in the play is very direct and explicit. The play takes place inside its theatrical signs whether it is sound or action and it reflects upon its limitations. The dolls as well as the set defined in the play revolve around signs instead of verbal language. The verbal signs are taken away by the sign and clamor by the end of the play which even overpowers the voice of the motel keeper. Different types of sound, for example, that of alarm and music suffocate the motel keeper's voice. The play closes in the extreme destruction like Judgment day

situation as the man and woman dolls completely demolish the room, detach the motel keeper's arms and head and toss the body aside:

The wild music gets stronger and stronger. A common safeguard alarm, one long wail, starts to fabricate. The Man and Woman dolls continue efficiently to more prominent and more noteworthy savagery. They crush the TV screen and the pictures hanging on the walls. They pull down the rest of the shades, crush the window, toss pieces of apparel and bedding around, lastly detach the arms of the Motel-Keeper doll. (Itallie142-143)

This shows the savage instincts present in postmodern schizoid characters who have an impulse to destroy everything to create a world order as per their desires.

Instead of dialogue between the characters, Itallie has made use of monologue in the play. Unlike a traditional monologue in which the focus is on a single speaking subject and the speech gives vent to characters' inner feelings and contemplations, the monologue in *Motel* is fragmented and is adjusted to the postmodern sense of self and hence it is upsetting, disrupted, and fragmented. Instead of communicating the peculiarities of a character the monologue gives details of the Motel room and its furnishing. The room is described as "anonymously modern" with "homey touches," and with "aggressive combinations of oranges, pinks, and reds against a reflective plastic backdrop," and the TV set as "glaring viciously" (136). The homey touches of the room express the replicated homeliness of the postmodern world.

The man and woman dolls are themselves mute and the motel keeper doll speaks all the time whose voice comes from the loudspeaker. The mechanical voice gives rise to an artificial atmosphere and also shows the inability of the characters to communicate properly. Speech defines the persona of the characters but here the characters are devoid of speech.

There is a strong relationship shown between the condition of the Motel room and the sentence structure of the Motel keeper at various instances in the play. Both language and material conditions are continuously being dismantled in the play. Language, setting, and the dolls are distorted into parts. By the end of the play, the Voice no longer communicates total sentences instead utters names of the items from a mail-order catalog:

Motel Keeper's Voice. Complete Security, Security. While You Sleep Tight, Bury Your Troubles. At This Motel, Homelike, Very Comfy, and Encased In Lead, Every Room Its Own Set, Fourteen Day Emergency Supplies \$ 5.00 Extra.....

Inn KEEPER'S VOICE. In built Latrine Waters, Filters, Counters, Periscopes, and Mechanical Doves, Hooked Rugs, Dearest Little Picture Frames for Loved Ones. Made in Japan .through the index. Feline a-Logue. You can pick things and items: cablecackles. so pleasant. fingernail skin, twice-curved brushes with folded exercises, meat-blenders, fish-handles, bug bombs, toasted land cotta'd Tanganyikan switchblades, ochre storage rooms, ping-pong balls, didies, Capricorn and Cancer prognostics, wafers, totauppers, stick pins, treating tacks. (Itallie 142-143)

The list of the products from the mail-order catalog comprises senseless and useless devices with an intentionally homey touch and makes a vile condition of excessive utilization. All the products are disposable as well. This universe of a consumer culture comes full circle in the shallow tidiness of American inn culture and it is under criticism in this play. Language and material culture alongside humans are all fragmented just like the way the word cat-a-logue is mentioned in the play.

The plots of both plays have rhizomatic strains. According to Deleuze and Guattari, a rhizome contains components from conventional rationale which are continually destroyed. An artistic work resembles a rhizome that has de-centered and interconnected lines and it opposes linearity and meaning. Pretty much the same as a rhizomatic structure, these plays are based on repetitive patterns and it seems that they are comprised of plateaus that are “consistent, self-vibrating and whose region of intensities, whose development evades any direction towards a final point or end” (Deleuze and Guattari 102).

SECTION-II

5.3 Characters' Analysis: Fragmentation and Transformation of Identities in *Interview* and *Motel*

In the plays, *Interview*, and *Motel* the characters do not have defined traits and they lack depth and genuineness. Their speech is loaded with absurd, incoherent, and fragmented dialogues. In the *Interview* 'Blanks' are mentioned in the dialogues of the characters: “First Interviewer: Fill in the blank space, please” (Itallie 15). These blanks are significant as they reflect the state of characters who are also blank and lack depth. There are no proper characters

or selves in the play so the following direction of filling the blank by the interviewer remains unfulfilled.

The writer has attributed characters' dialogical fragments instead of individual dialogues to reinforce the sense of incoherence of the characters. This also shows how the conventional notion of character is negated by the writer. At various instances in the play, the dialogues are separated into their segment parts which are conveyed by the different characters who are a part of the action. So, the role of the character is reduced to the delivery of the free messages that are interchangeable:

First Interviewer: Have you

Second Interviewer: got a

Third Interviewer: college

Fourth Interviewer: education? (Itallie 31)

The characters in the play abruptly drop their roles and change them with other roles or they perform their role in fragments. This transformation of roles keeps on going throughout the play. The transformation technique which is associated with Open Theatre is widely used in the play. The transformation technique assists the writers to create characters who are interchangeable. This technique serves to sabotage the idea of unified and stable characters in fluctuating scenarios. In the play, Itallie has demonstrated the use of transformation technique as follows:

Every time the actors approach the audience they come up as a different character. The actor should create the vital vocal and physical characteristics of each character, perform them, and drop them instantly to assume another character. (Itallie 40)

It is hard to trace the multiple instances in the play where the actors transform. Some of the instances where actors transmute their identities are: at the beginning of the play eight actors perform the role of four interviewers and four applicants. Then the 4th applicant makes a siren sound and all the actors transform. They are shown as passersby on a street, whereas only one character i.e., the fourth applicant speaks. Then, their roles transform again and all of them are shown taking gym class where the second interviewer acts as a gym instructor. Then they become subway passengers and the third interviewer takes up the stage by performing the role of a sick telephone operator. The characters transform again when the first interviewer becomes a girl at the party and the rest of them act like statues. Then they

transmute their roles again as the fourth Interviewer becomes a psychiatrist and the ‘girl at the party’ is a patient. In this way, they keep on transforming roles until the last scene where the second interviewer becomes a politician who is addressing the audience. The rest of the characters firstly approach him individually and finally simultaneously where he lines up them like marching dolls one behind the other.

The transformation technique not only assists the actors in flexible acting but is also a basic tool to subvert the conventional idea of the unified self. The transformation technique often leaves the audience perplexed and it becomes challenging for them to understand the correspondence between the actor and the character he is performing. This foils the audience’s expectation of the presentation of unified characters before them. The gives rise to extreme de-familiarization and a break of the dramatic illusion.

The transformation plays of van Itallie truly encompass the essence of postmodernity. He has introduced innovations in plot development and characterizations. The comment of Donna Hoffmeister in her 1987 essay ‘Post-Modern Theater: A Contradiction in Terms?’ describes well the state of postmodern transformation plays including that of Itallie. According to Hoffmeister, the postmodern theatre has shed the most important elements of drama. The postmodern characters are not independent individuals as characters used to be in the past rather they face the issue of identity crises and express resentment toward society and the general state of the world. The postmodern plays attempt to overcome this distinction and offer to the audience or readers the characters which are simulacrum of individuality. The audience is expected to make sense of the characters on their own as the characters offer no nuclei of subjectivity that may help the audience to understand them. Even after all such efforts the audience remains baffled as the characters appear to be ‘expressionless statue’ and whatever plot lines are established at a moment they wither at the other moment (Hoffmeister 425).

This sense of loss that the postmodern schizoid characters experience and their general anguish and resentment against the society are evident in the play as well e.g., the fourth applicant experience this when she could not find her desired destination and keep on asking people about it:

Fourth Applicant. I couldn’t remember where I was going. I was going to “come and be saved,” it said, so I asked the man with the sign, won’t you tell me how to, dear Lord, anywhere, please sir, won’t you tell me how to. ...you’d think a person will help another

person. I said to a man, could you direct me to Fourteenth Street, please, I said. I seem to have lost my---I started to say, and then I was nearly run down, but he wouldn't answer. (Itallie 40/41)

It shows the general feeling of being lost and helpless in the face of the cruel world that is present in postmodern men. They are impulsive and anxious to find a way out of the world they are living in.

To manifest the idea of de-familiarization and breakdown of theatrical illusion in the play Itallie has made use of the transformation technique in various ways. The actors are directed to adapt to multiple roles and situations assigned to them throughout the play using their bodies only. They are not provided any stage props or any other gadget to portray a specific setting or scene. Their body movements are the only mean through which they can pass on the impression of a specific situation e.g., At the end of the play, all the characters line up in diagonal form like marching dolls one behind the other and they move their mouths like fish without making any sound just to impart the expression that the politician has taken the public under his spell.

Aside from the play's setting and discourse, the masks worn by certain characters boost up the idea of the impersonality of the characters. At the time of the interview, all the applicants are wearing masks that hide their unique individual identity and give a sense of artificiality. Also, the masks render the characters engaged in the activity replaceable and also point out their attitude e.g., the subway passengers "form their faces into frozen masks of indifference" (43). The act of wearing masks gives rise to an aura of artificiality and inhumane atmosphere in which the characters utter impersonal speech and keep on changing their roles. However, the masks are transparent which indicates that somehow the identity of the characters is not compromised rather we can see them through the surface of the concealed appearance of these postmodern individuals. These characters have multiple identities and show strains of abnormality which is the normal state of postmodern man according to Deleuze and Guattari.

Similarly, in the play, *Motel* Itallie has brought revolutionary changes in the category of characters. It is a frightening play of postmodern transformation in numerous ways. In *Motel*, artificial dolls take place of the proper characters. What was known in the past as the cast of characters here in this play comprises the Motel Keeper doll, Man doll, Woman doll, and the Motel Keeper's voice. The dolls in the play perform the role of destruction as they

destroy everything that is there in the motel room including the motel keeper doll. The dolls themselves are quiet, joined distinctly by the monologue of the Motel-Keeper's voice and by various types of non-verbal clamor.

In the play, the characters with fragmented personalities are divided into outside and inside and in this way, Itallie has communicated the difference between internal emotions and the outer appearance of the characters. It shows Itallie's endeavor to infuse the transformation technique in his play. Itallie has upheld the possibility of improvisation in the play by permitting the actors, to make changes. The play has a circular pattern as the actions of the dolls are repetitive. Although the scene shifts there is no progressive and linear development in the play and it appears as if the author does not intend to do so. The activities follow repetition instead of a sequential time design. The movement of the characters, as well as that of scenes, takes place in space rather than in time and the aftereffect of the activity is the formation of a spatial construct that constantly digresses, unlike the unified entities who were once in the past alluded to as character.

The play's subtitle, *A Masque for Three Dolls*, is also significant. It does not just cause the audience and readers to notice the prominent cast of characters yet, in addition, presents the play's musical pattern like that of the courtly masque. Just like the Renaissance form of entertainment, the courtly masque includes music, poetic form of drama, dance, extravagant costumes, and stage exhibition. Just like Renaissance courtly masque, the Motel offers to its audience more than its textual part the dancing and spectacle part. The characters in the play wear masks and remove them in the final dance.

This moving component is taken up in van Itallie's play by the Motel-Keeper doll who is portrayed as "fussing about the room in little circles" (Itallie 136) and by the Man and Woman dolls who while destroying the Motel room, move on the "rhythm of loud rock-and-roll music" (Itallie 142).

The bizarre violence depicted in the play is similar to another traditional structure i.e. anti-masque. It was formulated by Ben Jonson. The anti-masque portrays both characters and their actions equally wild and unusual. This structure presents characters that are by nature contra to the unified and proper characters of the Masque. For Jonson, the anti-masque gave him a "space in which he could articulate the disorderliness he observed in court politics" (Jonson 4). The play *Motel* also has the aim of showing the turbulent political atmosphere of the 1960s. It depicts the serious extent of savagery that was predominant in that decade. When

it was first presented by that time, the public fights against the Vietnam War were raising and the Civil Rights Movement was also rising. The murders of political figures like John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr., the revolt at Kent State University, and the cultural conflicts contributed to a great extent to the chaos of the decade. It seems that the violence depicted in the play are because of the political turmoil of that age. It also mirrors the developing attitude for viciousness and the serious extent of latent brutality typical for the political and social atmosphere of the mid-1960s

5.3.1 *Interview* and *Motel*: Schizoid Characters' Analysis

As discussed earlier in the plays *Interview* and *Motel* just like their plots, the characters are not unified and defined. In fact, there are not even characters in the conventional sense. The postmodern tendencies of nonconformity and inconsistency are strongly exhibited by characters in the selected plays. In the *Interview*, the classification of 'character' is deserted for schematic figures and types that are not recognizable by individual character attributes. The characters are not even given names rather they are called by their designation or role they are playing in the play e.g., Applicant 1, Applicant, Applicant 3, Interviewer 1, Interviewer, Interviewer 3, Priest, A party girl, and Psychiatrist, etc.

The characters are just put there to perform depersonalized roles. Through the depiction of such characters, Itallie has called into question the matter of individual identity. Because of such depersonalized characters, the readers or audience are not only unable to identify the characters but also, cannot build emotional ties with any of them. The example below shows that the actors in the play are not performing the specific roles, which has specific traits rather they take up each other's role:

First Interviewer: Do you

Second Interviewer: Speak any

Third Interviewer: foreign

Fourth Interviewer: languages?

First Interviewer: Have you

Second Interviewer: got a

Third Interviewer: college

Fourth Interviewer: education? (Itallie 31)

The characters in the play could be called schizoids as they have rhizomatic identities. Their personalities even dissolve into each other and the subjects appear to be displaced. Deleuze and Guattari described the schizoid person as a free man who is solitary, irresponsible, and does things the way he /she wants without asking for permission from any sort of authority. He overcomes all kinds of barriers and codes. He is not afraid of being mad. He experiences his being in a state of sickness that no longer affects him (*Anti Oedipus* 131). The characters in the play under study have these tendencies. For example, at the end of the interview, the applicants jump on the back of the interviewers and then jump off. These characters do illogical acts and leave the logical roles in favor of absurdity. The act of dancing while taking interviews, jumping off of applicants on the interviewer's back, taking each other's role all to show that the characters are not normal rather they are schizoid. They overcome the barriers of normality without a sense of doing anything abnormal.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, schizoid individuals have multiple identities. These characters are like schizoids as they have no ultimate end to achieve rather, they are always in the process of becoming. The transformation technique is used in the play to show this. These characters cross the boundaries of normality by turning things upside down which leads to an interconnected state of things where we can no longer distinguish between the original and the extensions.

The title of the play *Interview: A Fugue for Eight Actors* is also significant concerning the characterization. The word fugue has two meanings. In music, it refers to a contrapuntal type of composition which is started by one phrase or a subject and is then taken up by others. This happens many times in the play when characters take up each other's roles. In psychology, the fugue is a disorder that is associated with a sense of loss of identity, this meaning is also relevant to the play. The characters in the play have no proper or unified identities rather they perform depersonalized roles. The state of characters in this play exactly depicts what Deleuze and Guattari said about schizoid individuals:

It may be said that the schizoid individual goes from one code to the next, then he purposely destroys all the codes, by rapidly moving from one then onto the next, as indicated by the questions posed to him, never giving a similar explanation, never explaining the same event in one way (Deleuze and Guattari 15)

The characters in the *Interview* are incoherent and generic. The characters switch roles and even while performing one role the traits of their personalities alter. For example, in the

play, the interviewers are meant to ask questions and get information from the applicants but at one instance they start telling the applicants and the audience/readers about themselves:

All Interviewers: Do you smoke?

First Applicant: No, thanks.

Third Applicant: No, thanks.

Fourth Applicant: Not now.

(All Interviewers form a group)

First Interviewer: I tried to quit but couldn't manage.

Second Interviewer: I am a three-pack-a-day man, I guess.

Third Interviewer: If I am gonna go, I'd go smoking.

Fourth Interviewer: I am down to five a day. (Itallie 29)

And then all applicants start sneezing and absurd enough they ask interviewers for a hanky. This depicts that the characters have no individuality rather they have generic nature. Also, when the interviewers ask questions, all the characters speak at the same time which not only shows that they have no sense of individuality but also it gives the play a rhizomatic pattern:

All Interviewer: What is your social security number, please?

(Applicants do the next four speeches simultaneously.)

First Applicant. 333 dash 6598 dashes 5590765439 dashes 003.

Second Applicant. 999 dash 5733 dashes 699075432 dashes 11.

Third Applicant. I'm sorry. I left it at home. I can call if you let me use your phone.

Fourth Applicant. I always get it confused with my Checking Account Number.
(Itallie 23)

Similarly, in the play, the characters continuously transform and have fragmented nature. This technique of transformation is an important element of postmodern theater that is used in the play. Instead of presenting unified characters before the audience, the postmodern writers create characters who are just there to perform roles that are not even

consistent. The characters are not normal and they do not fall in the category of conventional unified and coherent characters rather they appear to be mad and could be called schizoids. The characters have a strong impulse to destroy everything just like schizoids. Deleuze and Guattari defined a schizoid person as a free man who is solitary, irresponsible, and does things the way he /she wants without asking for permission from any sort of authority. He overcomes all kinds of barriers and codes. He is not afraid of being mad. He experiences his being in a state of sickness that no longer affects him (Deleuze and Guattari 131). The characters in the play under study have these tendencies. They experience emotional upheavals and traumas and take part in destructive activities. This appears to be their normal state and they keep on rejecting the established authorities and norms.

Motel is a metadramatic reflection upon drama and its elements and a reflection upon the postmodern condition of humans and its impacts. The play is full of brutality and violence. The doll-like figures are more like simulated human beings. For instance, the motel keeper doll is nostalgic, talkative, egotistical, and obscure. She has an enormous body with different hues in her hair mainly grey and brown. Her head is to be made of fiberglass so it will be sufficiently strong to withstand the harsh treatment that she faces later in the play. Her arms are like straight cushioned sticks with cushioned hands. Her face is old, wrinkled, and terrible yet despite ugliness it has a touch of kindness so that the audience may pity her.

The roles that the characters play change into other roles. The impacts are noticeable in the idea of a self that is divided and dispersed, its supposed solidarity lost in postmodern play. The postmodern selves presented in the play exist in simulations that show the impact of media innovations and the surface structure of the screen on contemporary life. The associated idea of the voice as the embodiment of oneself is also disrupted as it is deprived of a body and generally heard in its intangible structure leaving its origin muddled.

In the play, the exasperating appearance of the characters also adds to the threatening atmosphere. The doll-like figures presented in the play are bigger than human size, especially the dolls' heads are multiple times larger than normal heads. Motel Keeper doll wears a weird costume. She wears a "huge full skirt which reaches the floor," "has square-shaped breast," "the hair curlers on her head suggest electronic receivers," and she wears eyeglasses that work as mirrors (Itallie 136).

The outfit of the man and woman dolls, which they take off in the play, mirrors the shades of the motel room with its "savage blends of oranges, pinks, and reds" (Itallie 136).

The movement of the Motel Keeper doll is limited as it just moves its arms or its whole body once or twice. On the other hand, the man and woman dolls have great mobility. Also, there is no compatibility between the Motel-Keeper doll and the man and woman dolls. The play obliterates the fantasy of the presence of living human beings and the dolls wear masks throughout the play. So, there is no presence of human figures in the play.

There are no dialogues in the play instead there is just the ceaseless monologue of the Motel-Keeper's Voice. Even though the dolls are not machines, the limited movements, the electronic voice, the absence of collaboration and feelings, the statue-like bodies, and the mechanical acting gives the impression of in-humans, machine-like beings. This way, Itallie has adequately changed the idea of character into a postmodern cyborg. The cyborg is generally characterized as a "cyb(ernet)ic org(anism)" or a "speculative individual adjusted for life in an antagonistic or alien-like atmosphere by the replacement of fake organs and other body parts" (Donna Haraway 8).

The doll-like fragmented bodies of the characters hint at their artificial nature. This shows that how technology has made it possible for postmodern characters to surpass the boundaries of the body. The doll-like figures presented in the play have human-like characteristics but they have artificiality as well. Despite their mechanic movements and artificial gestures, the dolls have masculine and feminine features. This hybridity shows that the human identity in the postmodern world has transformed. The masks that the dolls are wearing hinder the human-like expressions and show their distortion. Because of wearing masks, the figures start resembling although they have gender differences which also hint that gender constructs are artificial and are man-made.

Itallie has made the audience a part of the play in a unique manner. The mirror-like eyes of the Motel Keeper Doll reflect the audience. The dolls address the audience through monologues. Just like a traditional masque where the actors gather before the audience at the end of the play, where the audience is made part of this whole act through their reflection in the mirror-like eyes of the Motel Keeper Doll. The replacement of original sight with mirror image again hints at the artificiality of the whole scenario. The distinction between actors and characters and the fragmented nature of the characters is also depicted in the play. When the Motel Keeper Doll takes off its costume before it is riffed off completely by man and woman dolls, it highlights the distinction between them. The distorted costumes of the dolls reflect

the fragmented nature of the characters. Also, the disharmony between the actions and the voices of the characters reinforces the idea of fragmentation.

The man and woman dolls are themselves mute and the Motel Keeper Doll speaks all the time on a loudspeaker. The mechanical voice gives rise to an artificial atmosphere and also shows the inability of the characters to communicate properly. Speech defines the persona of the characters but here the characters are devoid of speech. Itallie has made compromises on proper dramatic characters by formulating characters who are split up into mechanical voice and artificial body. The unity between actors and the characters and the idea of coherent selves fade away as the doll figures in the play split up into protagonist, exploiter, and doll. This shows Itallie's endeavor of transforming the theatrical conventions.

The distinction between the human and the material world is demolished in the play when the Motel Keeper Doll is crushed alongside the material items in the room. This activity is truly declared by the Voice at the start of the play when it claims: "I am this room" (Itallie 137). The voice subsequently affirms the interchangeability among items and human subjects, or, the breakdown of the differentiation among subject and object in the postmodern world. The emphasis on various dramatic signs also transforms the idea of a conventional plot. The plot is not coherent and it does not follow the model of a conventional drama. The non-verbal signs move forward in the play instead of the characters' dialogues. As the viciousness of the man and woman dolls expand, the light becomes harsher and more splendid just like the Motel Keeper's voice and tone, which takes on a "patronizing and petty" ring (Itallie 136).

The human dolls are given the status of objects in the play. Surprisingly, the Motel Keeper Doll relates her personality to the motel room. The identities of the dolls are converged with the material things: Motel keeper voice: "I am old. I am an old idea. The walls; that from which it springs forth. I enclose the nothing, making it the place where it happens. I am the room" (Itallie 137). Everything including the humans and the material things is destroyed and even the characters are not exactly human rather they are doll-like figures. The connection between the characters in the play drives Bigsby to presume that each character in the play identifies with the other just as an item.

Itallie's plays present the state of the human subject as basically de-centered, a thought integral to the poststructuralist. This de-centering is shown in two ways: by uncovering human subjectivity as a philosophical construct being continually reinforced by social and etymological codes, or by indicating it as fragmented, without a center, a self, or a past. Itallie

has composed plays with a solid conviction against the idea of essentialism of the human subject. The whole atmosphere of the play is uncertain and hence rhizomatic. The plot is non-linear and has no center and no proper beginning or end. It has various multiplicities that keep on interfacing with other multiplicities. These characters are like schizoids as they have no ultimate end to achieve rather, they are always in the process of becoming. As characters' actions make up the plot of a play, these schizoid characters make the plot rhizomatic.

5.4 Conclusion

A schizoanalytic reading of the play *Interview: A Fugue for Eight Actors* shows that the postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency are strongly exhibited by the plot of the play *Interview*. Just like a rhizome, the plot of the play is designed in a way that it is separate-able, reversible, and vulnerable to consistent change. It is torn, modified, reversed all together at various instances. Using a schizoanalytic model of working the research shows that there is no unity or coherence in the play. Schizoanalysis works from the inside-out rather than the outside-in and it is an open system as there is no end or final word in it. Using this method, the researcher has concluded that there are multiple actions and scenarios in the play which reflect the postmodern tendency of favoring chaos and mess over order. Schizoanalysis, as a research methodology takes hold of a text and multiplies endlessly the present research shows that there are endless multiplicities in the play that in turn give way to new productive constellations that fade away the distinctions and boundaries. There is no concluding remark in schizoanalysis and this idea applies to the plays under investigation as well. As in these plays, there are endless connections that various characters and situations have with each other.

The characters in this play are schizoid as they have multiple identities and show strains of abnormality which is the normal state of postmodern man according to Deleuze and Guattari. In the play, the characters are just put there to perform depersonalized roles. Through the depiction of such characters, Itallie has called into question the matter of individual identity. Also, the plot of the play is rhizomatic as it has no linearity or coherence and also it lacks meaningful closure. His play encompasses the non-conventionality that is the characteristic feature of postmodern plays. The theatre of Itallie could be summed up well in these words of literary theorist Plunka:

Van Itallie's search for form and dramatic structure is his theatre. His plays are transcendently a reflection on drama and its constituents; they are consequently meta-dramatic in a positively postmodern sense. (Plunka 16)

A Schizoanalytic reading of the play shows that in *Motel*, Itallie has rejected the traditional theories of the subject, representative modes of thoughts, and totalizing practices in the play. In *Chaosmosis*, Guattari explains that:

Rather than moving in the direction of reductionist modifications which simplify the complex schizoanalysis work towards its complexification, its processual enrichment, towards the consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity. (Guattari 46)

Using this research method, the research has probed the lines of flight taken by the plot and characters of the play to give rise to an atmosphere of chaos and uncertainty. The research reveals that the playwright has attempted to destroy the conventions of writing a play in *Motel*. The dialogues in the play are not proper and the story is not linear or coherent rather it is rhizomatic. The plot is divided into fragments and repetitive patterns and instead of characters, the dramatic signs keep the parts of the play intact. Connection and heterogeneity are chief principles of a rhizomatic structure. These principles are followed by the plot of the play under study. Just like a rhizome, any one point in this play can be connected to other random points. The plot does not have a linear structure. The language, the doll-like figures presented in the play, and the converging of one action and place with another all create an air of chaos and this infuses the postmodern spirit of uncertainty in the play.

These characters are like schizoid individuals as they have no ultimate end to achieve rather, they are always in the process of becoming. The actions of the doll-like figures reflect the ugly impulses that are present in all the postmodern schizoid men. According to Deleuze and Guattari, such schizoid individuals can act as agents for revolutionary social change. These individuals are nomadic war machines or desiring machines (Guattari 243) that can act as agents of social and political transformation. The impetus for social change is provided by movements of deterritorialization and lines of flight i.e., schizoanalytic mode of working. Such characters find an outlet for their anxiety in their actions. These schizoid characters have strong postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency. On the whole, in this play, Itallie has bypassed various dramatic conventions. C.W.E Bigsby summed up the theatre of Itallie in these words: Van Itallie's plays introduced a tension that discovered articulation

in ontological and epistemological inquiries and mirrored a condition where “the characters, social order, and language are depicted in a deteriorated condition” (Bigsby 12).

CHAPTER-6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Resolution of the Research Questions

This research aimed at probing the impact of postmodern philosophy on the genre of drama. The postmodern temperament opened avenues for the rise of transformational drama. The investigation of the first research question formulated to conduct the study shows that the characters in the selected plays have rhizomatic or disintegrated identities which make them schizoid. These actions of these schizoid characters make the plot rhizomatic. The postmodern tendencies of inconsistency and nonconformity are strongly exhibited by the plot and characters of the selected plays (Pg. 56-62, 63-66, 102-105, 106-109). They are not normal individuals rather they are schizoid individuals with the impulse of rebellion. The characters transmute their roles at various instances and leave the readers baffled. The plot of the selected transformation plays defies the set traditions of the conventional drama. There is no linearity or coherence in the plots of all the selected plays. The actions do not lead to climax or resolution rather the plots lack meaningful progression and closure.

The selected plays have rhizomatic structures. The unconventional incoherent plot and disintegrated characters present a sense of a rhizomatic world full of mess and chaos. This investigation explains the second research question which is about the rhizomatic nature of the postmodern world and drama in particular. Nothing is connected in a meaningful way in all the plays. There is an air of uncertainty encompassing the characters which gives rise to a sense of chaos (Pg. 50-56, 69-77, 80-96).

The investigation of the third research question shows that in all selected transformation plays, the technique of transformation is widely used (Pg. 44-49, 66-69, 80-87, 96-101, 105). This postmodern technique of transformation has assumed the role of connective in selected postmodern plays as the traditional techniques of making plays are called into question. The technique of transformation seems to have played its part in the fabrication of rhizomatic plots and schizoid characters. It seems that in these plays, the realistic theatre characters which reinforce social and theatrical expectations are abandoned

in favor of disintegrated characters. This type of drama appeared to have neutralized fixed assumptions, dismantled stereotypes, and have re-evaluated the hierarchies in the institution of theatre.

6.2 Analysis Findings

The investigation of the plays *Calm Down Mother* and *Comings and Goings* according to the research questions formulated for this study shows that there is no fixity in these postmodern plays. The plots and characters of the selected transformation plays defy the set traditions of the conventional drama. The selected plays have rhizomatic structures as they have incoherent plots and disintegrated characters. The selected transformation dramas have challenged the prevailing realistic theatre characters which reinforce social and theatrical expectations and defy the concept of closure in a play. The rhizomatic or disintegrated identities of postmodern characters presented in selected transformation play overrule the unified, autonomous, and transcendental subjects of the pre/modernist world. These schizoid characters appear to be apt representatives of the contemporary human condition. Through such plays, the American playwright Megan Terry has attempted to create a unique Postmodern American identity. Also, the plots of the selected transformation plays defy the set traditions of the conventional drama.

A schizoanalytic reading of Terry's transformation play *Calm Down Mother* has shown that everything is decentered in the play and there is no culmination point. The study shows that there are numerous multiplicities in the play that open up into other multiplicities and the notions of unified text, characters or individuals are all challenged. There are various rhizomatic strains in the play that reflect the incoherent nature of its structure. Due to the incoherent identities of the characters, there is no single linear plot rather the plot appears like various pieces of a jigsaw puzzle which connect in multiple ways to form an amoeba-shaped structure that keeps on changing its shapes. The sense of reality that the author has depicted in this play can be called rhizomatic as it is loaded with multiple scenarios and circumstances.

Similarly, in the play, *Comings and Goings* by Terry neither the plot nor the identities of the characters are coherent. The incoherent and schizoid characters' actions make the plot of the play rhizomatic. The plot of this play appears like a series of episodes with no coherent connections. It is an example of rhizomatic structure as in the case of rhizome, anyone point or circumstance can be connected with any other point or circumstance and it is evident in the play. The non-linear plot presents the audience with a fragmented sense of reality. It appears

that the playwright has questioned the conception of a fixed, objective truth by leaving the audience baffled through presenting constantly fluctuating circumstances.

The characters presented in *Calm Down Mother* could be called schizoid as none of the characters in the play have fixed identities, rather throughout the play these characters keep transmuting their identities. Deleuze and Guattari proposed that schizoid individuals can act as agents for revolutionary social change. They can play their part in the construction of a society based on a fair system of cooperation among its members. By establishing characters with multiple identities Terry has challenged the traditional realistic character, which in a way reinforced certain set standards of theatrical expectations and has dismantled the stereotypes affixed with dramatic composition. The characters possessing multiple identities are schizoid and their identities dissolve into each other. The characters presented in the play appear to be caught in the middle of the situation and there is no proper beginning or end. The schizoid characters presented in the selected play appear to be apt representatives of the contemporary human condition. The characters in the selected transformation play defy the set traditions of the conventional drama which shows the impact of postmodernism on theatre.

The characters presented in *Comings and Goings* are also schizoid. They do not have a stable, coherent identity rather they keep on adopting different identities. They possess rhizomatic identities and hence, defy the traditional notion of the normative, realistic, cohesive self and identity. Throughout the play, the audience remains perplexed as the characters do not acquire one stable identity and keep on performing multiple roles.

The current investigation shows that the postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency are strongly exhibited by the selected postmodern plays of Itallie. The plot of the play *Interview* is just like a rhizome. The plot is designed in a way that it is separate-able, reversible, and vulnerable to consistent change. It is torn, modified, reversed all together at various instances. Using a schizoanalytic model of working the research shows that there is no unity or coherence in the play. Schizoanalysis works from the inside-out rather than the outside-in and it is an open system as there is no end or final word in it. Using this method, the researcher has concluded that there are multiple actions and scenarios in the play which reflect the postmodern tendency of favoring chaos and mess over order.

Likewise, in the play *Motel*, Itallie has rejected the traditional theories of the subject, representative modes of thoughts, and totalizing practices in the play. It seems that in this play, the playwright has attempted to destroy various conventions of play development. The

dialogues, as well as the plot, are not linear or coherent rather they are rhizomatic. The plot is divided into fragments and repetitive patterns and instead of characters, the dramatic signs keep the parts of the play intact. Connection and heterogeneity: the chief principles of a rhizomatic structure are followed by the plot of the play under study. The plot does not have a linear structure. The language, the doll-like figures presented in the play, the converging of one action and place with another all create an air of chaos and this infuses the postmodern spirit of uncertainty in the play.

The characters presented in the play *Interview* are schizoid. These characters have multiple identities and show strains of abnormality which is the normal state of postmodern man according to Deleuze and Guattari. It seems that the characters are just put there to perform depersonalized roles. Through the depiction of such characters, Itallie has called into question the matter of individual identity. His play encompasses the non-conventionality that is the characteristic feature of postmodern plays. In *Motel*, the characters are schizoid as they have no ultimate end to achieve rather, they are endlessly caught in the process of becoming. The actions of the doll-like figures reflect the ugly impulses that are present in all the postmodern schizoid men. According to Deleuze and Guattari, such schizoid individuals can act as agents for revolutionary social change. These schizoid characters have strong postmodern tendencies of non-conformity and inconsistency. On the whole, it can be said that in the selected plays Itallie has bypassed various dramatic conventions.

Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of rhizome and schizoid individuals have been useful in probing all the four selected plays as they assisted the researcher to get fresh insight into selected postmodern dramas. Deleuze and Guattari while theorizing postmodernism reinforce multiplicity and present ideas and concepts which dismantle the traditional norms and ideas. They dismantle authority by rejecting linearity and hierarchy and reject the set standards for self-identity by asserting that it is the schizoid with multiple identities which is the ideal representation of human consciousness (Sim 7). Both of their concepts i.e., rhizome and schizoid individuals resist authority and are antifoundational in nature. As postmodernism resists authority in all its manifestations, these concepts go hand in hand with postmodern thought and its impact can be seen in selected postmodern dramas as well. This brief research has shown that the postmodern philosophy has revolutionized the genre of drama by setting new standards for the composition of drama.

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