



## Silencing the Metanarrative: Personal Memory Avenging History in Romesh Guneseekera's *The Sandglass*

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### Abstract:

Romesh Guneseekera (1954—), the Sri Lankan British diasporic writer in his second novel *The Sandglass* (1998) captures the diverse aspects of Sri Lanka with its essence, sentiments, nostalgia, its smugness and tenderness in the characters of Jason Ducal and his wife Pearl Ducal. While Jason, a patriarch vaunts in the luxury and glory of a massive house, Pearl fails to adhere her feelings to the same, and instead seeks joy in the intermingling of her self with her children. Jason carves his own world around his house, which in a way becomes symbolic of the nation under strife but Pearl feels trapped in her husband's ego. After Jason's death Pearl escapes to London, where in a flat at Almeida Avenue she recreates the essence of her land in shoring her children, and sheltering her granddaughter, and Chip, a reporter whom she had called son. However in spite of her attempts at preserving the core of her existence in her children, she fails to guide them out of their personal loss or longing. Her younger son Ravi is devastated by the discrimination he had faced in the homeland and almost similar racial bias in his place of work in America; while the elder son Prins retrieves his father's dream of erecting a big house. As the characters evolve out of their grief and metaphorical deaths, the Ducals meet their death one after the other symbolizing the spiritual death of Sri Lanka in diverse aspects. Jason buys a house in 1948 and is shot dead in 1956, the two significant years in the nation's history. Memory dies as Pearl is left heart-broken with the agonies of her journey; Ravi commits suicide in an alien world and Prins returns to Sri Lanka and enters his father's dream of mansion only to meet his death.

**Keywords:** diaspora, homeland, memory, national history, racial war, migration.

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Romesh Gunasekera (1954— ), a South Asian British diasporic writer was born in Sri Lanka and migrated to England. In spite of his long stay in Britain, his novels are mostly set in Sri Lanka or memories of Sri Lanka. Whether located in the West or characters traversing on the very land of his dreams and spiritual existence, the characters are nowhere thoroughly unconscious about Sri Lankan life. The mooring ever remains and a deep longing penetrates too deep for the homeland Sri Lanka. Romesh Gunasekera in his highly lyrical writing captures the heart of Sri Lanka, its very essence, its spirit and the feel which throbs in its nature and inmates alike. In his novels his homeland comes alive in its dazzling colours, fraught with butterflies on the one hand and on the other, gone into shreds by the attacks of the gunners and agitators. Throughout his oeuvre is an attempt at retrieving the past, and at times actual attempts at rebuilding the connection. Gunasekera lives, loves and conjures Sri Lanka up from his meditated existence, crystallized through his painful separation.

Unlike writers like Ambalavaner Sivanandan, whose *Memories of Rain* is thoroughly set in Sri Lanka with hardly any reference to London, where he had been living with respect and autonomy as the Director of Race Relations (in Britain), Romesh Gunasekera's characters in his novels either travel to Britain (*Reef*), are settled in Britain and return to Sri Lanka either to find out the missing link, lost history or resolve the fudge (*Sandglass*, *Heaven's Edge* and *The Match*). In every case it is the homeland nation which ultimately cures the rift and relieves the scar that had remained through the journey from this land to that.

Romesh Gunasekera's *Reef* and *Heaven's Edge* elaborately portray Sri Lankan nature in its intricate beauty and diversity. The urge for preservation of Sri Lankan nature and culture acts as the leit-motif in almost each of his texts. Whether invoked as a symbol as the reef or as emerald doves released by Uva, the eco-warrior in *Heaven's Edge*, there is always a reliving of the nation as a symbol, a spirit, as if a *chi* moving through space and consciousness. In *Sandglass* the approach to nation becomes so replete with the self that personal history merges with national history at once complementing and contesting. The history evolved is an enmeshed history engrossed in the nation, self and lineage. The nation acts as a life spirit moving through time and sprawling over time and history. On the human front Pearl the protagonist is the extension of the same life force; though she is separated from her homeland, she remains engrossed in her native place. Her identity is replete with the devastations of her past life which curiously enough matches with the massacres of the nation's life. The house as a trope in this novel gets remodelled as the ego perishes, but the essence remains the same; the nation continues to exist in its rootedness in tradition and hybridity alike. In Romesh Gunasekera's texts far from acculturating in the hostland the characters seem regardless of their physical presence in their new place of existence. Instead the characters are happy to ruminate upon their past existence. In this regard William Safran's six criteria in his article titled "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return", which he applies to the 'expatriate minority community' needs to be mentioned —

1. They or their ancestors have been dispersed from a specific original "centre" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign regions.
2. They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland — its physical location, history and achievements
3. They believe that they are not— and perhaps cannot be fully accepted by their host society, and, therefore, feel partly alienated and insulated from it.
4. They regard their ancestral homeland as the true ideal place to which they or their descendants would or should eventually return — when conditions are appropriate.

5. They believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and
6. They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a scholarship (Safran 83-84).

Pearl in the absence of her husband and of the feel of oneness with the native land is in a state of loss where every inch of her thought is preoccupied with notions of past. Chip, whom she calls "putha" son scripts the living record of her memories and in several ways becomes the arbiter of her dreams. Chip along with her son, Prins returns to Sri Lanka to retrace the connection between reality and dream, between myth and memory. Both the nation and the personal lives of the characters, Pearl, Chip and Prins, lie in a spatio-temporal continuum, transcending border-lines and negotiating between lands.

As in *Reef* Ranjan Salgado, the bourgeoisie bachelor and marine biologist fails to accommodate in London and returns to Sri Lanka, similarly in *Sandglass* Pearl, the aged matron and the embodiment of a sense of loss remains glued to her room in which she watches television where everything is Sri Lankan and memories are all Sri Lanka. As Chip, the narrator reminiscences:

Most evenings during that first cold year I would sit on a brown leatherette armchair opposite pearl, sipping sherry and listening to her stories, while she knitted shawls or cardigans on the sofa, between scenes of vintage movies and episodes of Kojak on TV. Even then I was looking for a way to shape my life in the wake of her own effervescent trail. (Gunesekera *Sandglass* 9-10)

Her memories of home and her past history not only took her entire substance but through her the young people as Chip, and her elder son Prins Ducal too got emotionally connected to their homeland. Though both Chip and Prins had been first generation diasporic subjects, initially their feeling for homeland had never been intense. The young generation would have never have tried to retrieve history, but for Pearl, their mother whose death stirs them and hurls them to their homeland front. History is unravelled before the eyes of Chip and Prins only through their participation in Pearl's mental journey that had initially traversed half the way.

Prins, unlike Pearl who had lived in London, concentrating on her past memories, had returned way back for he had found England not soaring up to his spirits. Instead he had decided to seek his dreams in the homeland which however had not been fruitful. As Chip records,

Prins had gone back to live there nearly ten years earlier when he'd chucked his striped shirts and kitsch-links in a black bin-liner for Oxfam and set off to find his true self in the sun. 'My destiny is not in this place,' he had grumbled, aping Marlon Brando. It was easy in those days to have heroes who were not like us, to borrow icons even as we smashed our own. (Gunesekera *Sandglass* 6)

Chip observes Prins was a "misbegotten coconut tree in search of the sun" (7). Every Sri Lankan diasporic character in London in Gunesekera's works finds him off his place and eternally searches for his centre in vain. The characters in *Sandglass*, whether Pearl or Prins, Chip or Ravi, Pearl's younger son, are all embodiment of loss and a sense of hopelessness; each of the characters are deprived of the pith of their existence. While Ravi had committed suicide, Pearl had etiolated; Prins had returned and so had Chip, after ten years, traversing the milky way of Pearl's memories.

The diasporic subjects in most of Gunesekera's texts fail to acculturate and though the characters successfully continue in their hostlands, images of the present land of stay hardly limn their imaginings. Instead the craving for homeland remains as "impossible

mourning" (Vijay Mishra). The absent presence of Sri Lanka is felt through and through, whether in the reference to the sun or the coconut palms, whether in mention of "episodes of Kojak on TV" (10), or in Prins' aspirations to go "hirivatuna" (6), everywhere is Sri Lanka pieced and collaged similarly as memories congeal to rejuvenate the history dead and buried. James Clifford, a prominent diasporic critic observes that diasporic subjects are, "always entangled in powerful global histories" (Clifford 302). On the other hand in his editorial *Preface* to the first issue of *Diaspora*, Khachig Tölölyan writes, "Diasporas are the exemplary communities of the transnational moment" (Tölölyan 4-5). In this novel too the locked history is let loose and nowhere does life attempt to build connection with the present. A continual mooring for the past land and existence, bites into the entails and gradually kills.

Death forms the crux of this novel and different natures of death pile to form a series. While Jason Ducal's mysterious death remains an enigma even after the mystery is solved, Pearl's life gradually evades her as memory is unburdened. Ravi commits suicide and Prins returns with a void toning his existence. Chip follows Prins and carries the dead mother within him, burdened with the released burden of Pearl. Chip is befriended by Pearl in London as she calls him *putha* (son), while Ravi locks himself up in the blackest room of the flat alienated and estranged from the mother until his death. Here affiliation versus filiation, an important subject of diasporic existence is hinted at as Pearl becomes the symbol of congealed pain and loss of diasporic existence. Chip takes up the baton of memory brought in by Pearl, while Ravi ceases to be one with his mother.

A strong symbolic connection between personal history and national history is consciously maintained throughout the text. As the numerous deaths hint at Sri Lanka's bleeding out for twenty-six years as Civil wars tore at the essence of the nation, similarly Jason's buying his massive house in 1948, the year of Sri Lanka's freedom, followed by his death in 1957, the year which had seen terrible unrest in Sri Lanka, conflates the histories at dual planes.

As death looms large throughout the text, life is never happy or comfortable in spite of Pearl's high spirits or Jason's smugness. Their eldest child Anoja had borne a foreboding of gloom in her eyes and like her father Jason would never smile. But Anoja's look of sadness had devastated Jason for he had "felt helpless against the sorrow of the world that would seep into her new life and drown its innocence" (*Sandglass* 20). Her sage-like prognostication which ultimately reveals the doom, with a series of grief piled heralds the disruption that awaits. The characters are guided to their lot which is in line with the state's devastation.

Jason and Pearl's wedding puts Jason ablaze and he seeks newer avenues for making money to support his family. Jason's aspiration to rise up to higher prospects brings about his doom which goes in line with the nation's ruin with the Civil wars which begin with the nation's Independence. With what could have been the real worthy rise for the nation turns out to be its own death and similar is the case with Jason who fails to handle good prospect— "Then, in the heady rush of 1948, while the pundits argued about the colours of a free flag, Jason Ducal bought a house where no Ducal before him had ever dreamed of owning one" (*Sandglass* 22).

However this house sprouts tension and through a series of conflicts Jason Ducal ultimately reaches the acme of success only to meet his death. House here becomes a layered symbol which directly addresses the issue of home/ homelessness and the conflict of homeland and the hostland. As Susheila Nasta quotes in her exploring work on South Asian writers in Britain:

On first reading, as many critics have pointed out, *The Sandglass* seems to 'fit' with a number of features characteristic of the late twentieth- century novel of diasporic

reclamation. For it is a novel which painstakingly charts the history of life knitted together by the fragments of memory and the previously 'untold' stories of a diasporic past. It is a past which is meticulously reconstructed, covering two countries, the dynastic histories of two families, and stretching by the end across three generations. (Nasta 228)

This novel is in a way a dramatization of the disruption of the state and the tottering that is heard in the rubbles of diasporic existence. The characters are all in one way or the other representations of the bigger history which was being enacted at the higher plane. Diasporic existence is tinged by the memories of home and the reality of existence is corrupted by disturbances which lie at the core of diasporic shift. This memory of home and the crises with the lapse of a single home is captured in the image of a house, Jason's one time pride and his death bed.

With this sense of house is also associated the male ego that prides in becoming the man of the house and the lord of it. This urge to rule and become the master puts the man on a different front than the woman. The woman being a mother feels rooted in her life for she becomes one with any land, wherever her children feel comfortable. She creates a home for herself in whichever place she finds love and motherhood. If the man is for the house, the woman is for the home. Far from being embedded in a locale (house) the woman senses her life in the feeling of being one with the other part of her self which remains dissipated in her numerous selves who are her children. The difference in the perspective of the man and wife is revealed in Jason and Pearl's different approaches to the house which had become the core of their existence and the point from which doom had emerged:

She said she felt reluctant to challenge Jason's well-being with her unease, but she knew she did not want to die in this house of his. 'I could feel something pushing me or pulling me out of his Arcadia. But looking at Jason, I could see that he felt the opposite. He wanted that house to be his whole life: the place where *he* would die.' (Sandglass 25)

Instead Chip more appropriately imagines Pearl as a "young mother ...on the veranda brushing her first-born daughter's hair, watching the air turn to metal in the dying sun. She sinks her nose into her child's hair to breathe in the heat of her life and to hope for luck"(Sandglass 24-25). The use of italics in both the above excerpts is meticulously worked out by the author as the emphasis given is on the sense of pride on both the end. While for Jason it is "he" and his own liking which is important, for Pearl it is her children; with her it is lyricism embossed in the softness of the little selves, while Jason remains stiffened in his personal ego.

Moreover as house becomes the leit-motif of *Sandglass* the title of the text connotes the ephemeral nature of life, including home. The motif of home-homelessness becomes so acute that home itself grows and through a series of accretion home becomes the nation itself. The year of Independence of nation also becomes the year in which the imperial house is bought by Jason Ducal. The contestation between two big families is also over the house, which is seen as the cause of Jason's death, though other options for the possible accident/murder of Jason remain spilled over the text. The two fronts warring over a single house echoes the conflict of the two linguistic groups, the Sinhalas and the Tamils waging to keep their power intact over the subtle tear-drop island that "Serendeeep" (Sri Lanka) is.

The beauty and diversity of the land along with a dire urge at keeping the heritage and the nation's sanctity intact remains an important subject for Romesh Gunsekera. Whether in the release of a pair of emerald doves by the eco-warrior Uva in *Heaven's Edge*, or in the butler Triton's speech who decides to stay back in London in *Reef*,

everywhere is a dire urge at finding the centre. Triton firmly studies his situation as he remarks:

But are we not all refugees from something? Whether we stay or go or return, we all need refuge from the world beyond our fingertips at sometime. I was learning that human history is always a story of somebody's diaspora: a struggle between those who expel, repel or curtail— possess, divide and rule— and those who keep the flame alive from night to night, mouth to mouth, enlarging the world with each flick of a tongue. (Gunsekera *Reef* 174)

Throughout Gunsekera's oeuvre whether in the use of reef as symbol or the imperial house as the towering presence of the nation's upright stature, everywhere is a claim brewed of faith, that faith which rejuvenates itself and resuscitates life in its numerous forms, natural, human, animal or mineral. As Ranjan Salgado mentions in *Reef*— "You see, it is only the skin of the reef that is alive. It is real flesh: immortal. Self-renewing" (Gunsekera *Reef* 58). As I have already mentioned in the book titled *Diasporic Identity* (2013)—

Gunsekera recreates this conscious or unconscious projection of parentlessness and statelessness as a symbol of the diasporic subject. In *Sandglass* Jason rises to prospects and fulfils his dream of buying a house in the year of the nation's Independence in 1948, and lies shot on his office floor in 1956, the same year in which Sri Lanka is wrenched apart by linguistic war. Contrastingly in the *Reef* we find that in spite of being an orphan, Triton possesses an indigenous spirit and a deep rootedness. Though outside the land, these unique characters harp on the spirit "Sri Lanka" in their calling back to tradition and universal acceptance. (Guin 267)

Through Pearl's memory Chip enters into the racial memory and the collective uncounscious of a people and a nation. He realizes himself and through the retracing of Pearl's personal history retrieves his roots that go deeper than his life or his present. Chip looks into the journal jottings related to Prins' father's death mystery in Sri Lanka and perceives them as, "the orphaned fragments of my aborted past" (*Sandglass* 2). Gunsekera himself in one of his non-fictional writings, "A long slow descent into hell" mentions:

Sri Lanka is an island that everyone loves at some level inside themselves. A very special island that travellers, from Sindbad to Marco Polo, dreamed about. A place where the contours of the land itself forms a kind of sinewy poetry. Even those who plant landmines, blow up innocents, destroy villages or ravage the jungle, still love the place. They love the sight of it, the sound of it, the smell of it, the taste of it, the memory of it, the dream of it. Whether they carry coconuts or grenades, poems or bombs, cyanide or charms, there is a deep affection for the place which is an unbreakable common bond. (Gunsekera 'A long slow...')

Gunsekera's lyrical style is enticing enough to enrapture the readers silently guiding them to the land of bliss. This enamouring is not given in words though, but the symbolic appeal lingers— the house is in danger, but the house is still the centre; the locale is indeed functional, the house is the core.

Throughout literature and culture the house has shored different meanings. House/home is an archetype incorporating Jungian psychology where house has been seen as one of the most predominant dream symbols. This symbol through numerous different connotations as mother's womb, cave or palace creates a host of meanings which suggest the house/ home is paradise, a sanctified, safe zone. As explored in this novel, the house is seen as a mark of pride, and its magnanimity is often used to refer to the larger than life stature of the dweller. It is the seat of emotional power and hence the torrential zone of

crises. The house at once shelters and tortures; secures and strangles; preserves and destroys. As Susan Naramore Maher writes in her review of the children's classic *The Lion and the Unicorn*, titled "The House as Setting, Symbol, and Structural Motif in Children's Literature (review)":

Houses are omnipresent constructs in our literary traditions, so essential to human identity that the house itself can define a story: *Mansfield Park*, *Bleak House*, *The House of the Seven Gables*, *Howard's End*. "House" and its attendant "home" embrace a complex of experiences, myths, political realities, and desires. Within the house, one gains a mythos of origin, one measures one's development, one experiences justice or injustice, healing love or its opposite, and one steps into new social roles, some desired and others imposed. In its deepest sense, the concept of the house roots itself in spiritual soil. In the human imagination, the sense of home can expand to include the entire earth, even the universe, or contract into the smallest spaces. Its reach is material and immaterial. As concept and symbol, then, the house or home proves enormously variable. That is its power as archetype. Across cultures, the idea of home stands as a central motif and human obsession. (Maher)

Home however speaks of longing and desire, a deep sense of nostalgia as against the practical day to day affairs suggested by the word house.

Pearl's notion of home is immensely different from Jason's understanding of house. While Jason remains strongly rooted in his space, Pearl, immediately after Jason's death escapes to England, since London had been the place of their honeymoon, their conjugal romance. This act of Pearl is an attempt on her part to reverse 'the sandglass', to count time backwards. She feels a sense of release, a mysterious getting back to her seclusion and privacy. In spite of her strong urge to keep her family intact, she had failed to keep her children with her for most of the time. She had been the first to migrate to England and later had procured her children one by one. Her desire to make a home of her own and be free with her children around proves futile for lack of money. It is the money which permits Jason to make his own world and home, but for Pearl the lack in cash had crippled her life. Lack of penny had made her all alone. But still she was in a better state in England than in *Arcadia*, their house in Sri Lanka, which she felt was driving her mad (*Sandglass* 242), during the last phase of her life with her husband.

This notion of home-homelessness and urge to make a home for oneself is repeated in the fact that Prins had the right to reside in the hostland as he had Mastercard and a home in London. Many others like Chip were visa holders and were considered temporary residents with no home. Still Prins disregarded the status given to him and travelled back to Sri Lanka, his homeland, curiously once again in search of home. Though Pearl had always aspired for a home and never a house, she actually maintains one when she is in London, the ground floor of a flat at Almeida Avenue which was in "a large detached three-storey Victorian house" (*Sandglass* 60). Naomi, Anoja's daughter and Pearl's granddaughter later finds Pearl's flat a better place, a "real world: shabbier, poorer, sadder than her father's modern, conventional Wilmslow home, but somehow truer to her inner sense" (*Sandglass* 84). She acts as the saviour and the mother to both Naomi and Chip and acts as the blazing face of South Asian hospitality. She becomes her nation even in her stay in the foreign land. Gayatri Gopinath, the diasporic critic aptly quotes Deniz Kandiyoti's projection of the nation, family, woman, etc. as one —

Deniz Kandiyoti, following Benedict Anderson, explicates this conflation of "woman," "home," "family" and "nation" by pointing out that "nationalism describes its object using either the vocabulary of kinship (motherland, *patria*) or home (*heimat*) in order to denote something to which one is 'naturally' tied...The association of the women with the private domain reinforces the merging of the nation/ community with the selfless mother/ devout wife" (qtd. Gopinath 262).

However Pearl loses her home and the warmth of it as if in a compromise for her house where she not only had power to control but also harbour people of her choice as Chip. Her elder daughter Anoja was far off, Prins had returned to Sri Lanka in search of his dreamland, finding himself off the place in London; Ravi had returned from his stay in America as one who had lost himself. The loss of the lyricism that had been the essence of Pearl's life is hinted at in the loss of Ravi's "tinkerbelle tongue" (*Sandglass* 60), after his return from the so-called charismatic land of soaring dreams.

Ravi's defeat and he being relegated to the utmost corner of the flat and the decision to end his life erupts from his failure to find a home in America, the love and longing of home, its nostalgia and goodness. As Ravi confesses over the "fluted plastic tumbler" (*Sandglass* 63) of red wine:

I first discovered America in poetry...for me it was an enormous poem: *Hiawatha*, *Song of Myself*, *Howl*. I wanted to hear it and see it, be there. Find it. Discover it like the Inuit, or Alastair Cook. I thought that it would be where I would want to live forever. I had an idea like those immigrants in the films my mother watches all day, setting off from Sicily for New York. The New World. Except for me it was almost an old world I was looking for. A place I would recognize and feel I had arrived. Perhaps even come across myself already living there. Find my footsteps and think, this is where that sound I heard came from". (*Sandglass* 64)

America as a diasporic space failed to provide the immigrants like Ravi the warmth and security of home. For Ravi his presence in America was quite disparaging, he had never felt at home in the States, instead the racial bias and humiliation that he had faced before the people of the country had paralysed his spirits. For him he was not the sole victim of the indecisiveness of his generation. Host of people all had entered USA with colourful dreams that had disappeared into mist. It is the colour of the skin that gained prominence in the country and Ravi's existence got smeared in darkness as his complexion turned out to be the most visible factor of his existence. Ravi had proved self-defeating to his employers as the managerial team had been beguiled by his accent which had made him sound as an Englishman, but then as he stood before them, Ravi appeared blacker than he had even been. Almost similar experiences have been recorded by the important diasporic critic R. Radhakrishnan, who had felt something deeply disturbing in the experiences of second generation Indian diasporic young people in America. As Radhakrishnan mentions:

I was startled when they told me that they had grown up with a strong sense of being exclusively Indian, and the reason was that they had experienced little during their growing years that held out promise of first-class of American citizenship. Most of them felt they could not escape being marked by virtue of their skin colour, their family background, and other ethnic and unassimilated traits. (122)

The faulty appraisal that Ravi had received from the employers who had guessed him an Englishman, makes the *accent* a very important issue and specially for a South Asian diasporic, struggling in the first world English speaking nations from the third world bilingual or multilingual countries, where English is not the mother-tongue. It must be mentioned in this regard that Ravi's identity as an Englishman, a resident of Britain proves futile and he remains a part of his South Asian homeland in spite of the fact that he had entered through and almost completed the acculturation process. Ravi actually meets his doom in America, for he not only realizes that America is far from being a home, he further realizes that England too had failed to become the same for him. The contestation of language and accent that had remained the site of clash in Sri Lanka stretches its purview till England and America, corrupting his life. Ravi's crisis had known no bounds and his helplessness in the thought that "[t]here was nowhere else to



go, and no means of escape from the present" (68), had ultimately brought him face to face with his death. After his journey back from America Ravi had ceased to connect with the world around and instead had been in hiding till his death.

While for Pearl her memories of the past keeps her drifting from one land to another without much change in her life, her centre too remains undisturbed being most guided by thoughts and concern related to her home, hearth and homeland. Apart from the other characters as Anoja, Naomi, et al who have drifted to different locations and have tried to carve a niche for themselves, Ravi had collapsed under the burden to locate and name oneself, to find a house/ home for himself. Chip just as an authentic observer trails behind every thought and mostly gets led by Pearl's memories enamoured within the gossamer of her imaginings. Prins just like his father had coveted the house that as he believes had turned out to be a mausoleum during the mere eight years that his father had resided in his Arcadia. He believes he was born in a mausoleum but has the germ of his father brewing in him even under straightened conditions.

Prins in spite of his foreboding that the same fatal lot as his father might meet him some day at the end of his eighth year of land lordship or on his forty first year of his life, pursues his father's dream. He accepts the challenge— "I want to know how much we are the same" (*Sandglass* 80). This guiding instinct hurls him to another fantastical bungalow in the hills, a company bungalow for "the General Manager of Gold Sands Enterprises— a group of hotels" (*Sandglass* 79). If Ravi had been killed for his deep sense of shame, Prins rejuvenates out of his pride. Having promised never to return as an "emigrating immigrant" (*Sandglass* 82), the latter roots himself in this pride in the bungalow: he calls out to Chip— 'Look at this place... Just take a head-blast look at it. Can you imagine a more fantastical setting anywhere in the world?' (*Sandglass* 79). As Chip elucidates the beauty and the essence, "From his sitting room you could see the whole valley curdle with the misty milk of a mothering sky, coiling down around the uplands, feathering the whole world" (*Sandglass* 79).

However Prins' foreboding turns true and he too perishes leaving several questions unanswered. Probably before his death he had sensed an evil omen near his Arcadia, "The house was in shadow. The foxbats had started to fly. They came out of the trees behind Bellevue in their hundreds and passed over Arcadia. A line of ghouls flapping their oilskin shrouds and heading God knows where. Why do they fly so mournfully?" (*Sandglass* 271). Along with Prins Arcadia too meets its end as it gets transformed from the inner world of Jason, Pearl or Prins to " 'The New Arcadia, The proposed flagship hotel of the Great Sands Corporation' (*Sandglass* 277) that had employed Prins and towards the end of the novel run by Dino, a member of the Vatunases.

The personal pride in Arcadia that Prins had derived as a legacy from Jason and the world of Pearl and Jason's very own, bearing the plume of their oneness becomes the commercialized pride of the place as an elegant garden hotel. Prins had tried to come together with Lola, Dino's sister and had tried to rebuild his parents' world of dreams and longings. Chip harbours the dark recesses of the past in his heart while the future of the building stands out in

—...an artist's futuristic drawing of an elegant garden hotel, shimmering in glass, with bougainvillea cascading over every recessed balcony and a column of starred features in bold red letters: air-conditioned honeymoon apartments, fantasy love suites, an Eros cinema and a subterranean ice rink with a Japanese snow machine. (*Sandglass* 277)

Far from bearing personal histories the transformed New Arcadia would contain human feelings and histories in small rooms bound together under the aegis of its towering structure.

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