

CERTIFICATE

This to certify that the project entitled **Traumatic and Harrowing Experiences: A Psychological Reading of Emma Donoghue's *Room*** is submitted to St. Marys' College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundarnar University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature and is a work done by Maria Deenu Steniza. A during the year 2020-2021 and that has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Traumatic and Harrowing Experiences: A Psychological Reading of Emma

Donoghue's *Room*

A project submitted to

St. Marys' College (Autonomous),

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARNAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

MARIA DEENU STENIZA .A

(REG.NO.19SPEN06)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARYS' COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

(Re accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

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APRIL 2021

MARIA DEENU STENIZA .A

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PREFACE

Emma Donoghue , the winner of the Roger Writers Trust Fiction Prize and the Irish Book Award in 2010. She was destined for literary success for she herself says “I’ve been writing full time since I was 23. I’ve been always thought of myself as a huge success!” Most of the Emma Donoghue’s novel can stand alone and can be read, appreciated and studied in isolation.

Donoghue impresses the readers mostly with her writing style. Some of her acclaimed works include *The Sealed Letter* (2008), *Slammerkin* (2000), *The Pull of the Star* (2020) and *Room* (2010). *Room* by Donoghue was shortlisted for Man Booker Prize and Orange Prize. Emma went on to write the screenplay adaptation of her own novel and it entitled as *Room* (2015). This film became an Oscar Winning Film and gained an Academy Award nomination for its script.

The project entitled **Traumatic and Harrowing Experiences: A Psychological Reading of Emma Donoghue’s *Room***, encompasses the life of Ma and Jack inside the Room and analyses their life after rescue.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the biographical details of Emma Donoghue, her contemporary writers, the film adaption of the novel and the awards and the honours won by the book and the film.

The second chapter **Captivity and Restlessness in Real and Reel** examines the solitude and abduction of reel Ma and Jack and real Elizabeth Fritlz and her children.

The third chapter **Motherhood- A Glorious Life Force** deals with the bond between Ma and Jack, even in the darker environment and Jack's relishing moments with Ma.

The fourth chapter **Trauma and Distressing Occurrences** brings out the life of Jack and Ma before and after their rescue from Room. It also analyses the traumatic effects of confinement both in Ma and Jack and their transformation as they start their life in the world, Outside.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important perspective that deals with in the preceding chapters and justifies the title **Traumatic and Harrowing Experiences: A Psychological Reading of Emma Donoghue's *Room***.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is a representation of human experience because it helps people to look back on their experiences and through expression they can recreate the memory or knowledge. Literature also helps individuals to share human experiences through their words through explanations and encourages individuals to learn through the skills of others. By reading the literature of other cultures, human beings can learn lessons about other people's lives, and they can see into the feelings and memories of other people. Literature is perfect because of its universality, since it is not concerned with the individual culture of a particular group, but rather with society as a whole or in its entirety. E.M. Forster comments about literature is "What is wonderful about great literature is that it transforms the man who reads it towards the condition of the man who wrote, and brings to birth in us also the creative impulse".

Literature changes due to the social changes that have taken place in society, so that one can read the literature of a specific period in history in order to understand the lifestyle of these people. Literature should not be confined to any genre and any work of art that represents reality. It becomes great literature if human beings are able to interact with the characters in that piece of work. Literature becomes the medium of the common man and working people's thoughts and feelings only if it is free from its class restrictions. Then it appears to become popular and public. Its human meaning is the primary importance of literature, so literature should consist of the many events of life put together. Its importance depends on its depth and width of life. For historical treatment of various literatures within geographical regions, such as African literature, African theatre, Oceanic literature, Western

literature, Central Asian arts, South Asian arts and Southeast Asian arts. Some literatures are treated separately by language, by nation, or by special subject for e.g. Arabic literature, Celtic literature, Latin literature, French literature, Japanese literature, and biblical literature.

Irish literature is the old vernacular literature in the Europe after the literatures of Greek and Latin, dating from 4th or 5th century CE. It constitutes writing in the Irish Latin and English languages reminded the dominant language of the Irish literature till 19th century. Even after the Norman conquest of Ireland. However, there was a slow decline in between with the expansion of British Empire. The Irish society had been simultaneously a colonial one and an independent one. This hybrid nature of the Irish society was the root cause for the cultural tension in Irish writings, repeatedly amalgamated around the issues on land, religion, nationality and language.

The English language became the predominant language of Irish literature only in the 20th century. W.B. Yeats, James Joyce, John Millington Synge, Samuel Beckett, Flann O' Brien are some of the eminent writers of modern era. These modernist writers popularized almost all genres of literature. The Irish fiction began with the publication of Jonathan Swift *Gulliver's Travel*. The genre of Irish fiction has shifted to reflect the changes in the society that produces it.

Most Irish novels since World War II reveal their authors' preoccupation with political themes and the isolation and powerlessness felt by the country's inhabitants. The country's neutrality during the war often is blamed for the worldwide indifference to its literature following the war. That resulted in Irish writers producing what many critics perceive to be insular and parochial fiction. Many of these works contain stylistic similarities to the works of Irish novelist and short story writer James Joyce in their use of

interior monologues and stream-of-consciousness narrative style. Among the most critically appreciated novelists are Benedict Kiely, John Banville, John McGahern, and Brian Moore.

Irish poetry since the death of Yeats in 1939 was initially dominated by Louis MacNeice and, later, John Montague, Patrick Kavanagh, and Thomas Kinsella. In the 1960s poets from Northern Ireland, including Derek Mahon, Paul Muldoon, and Nobel laureate Seamus Heaney, ignited another renaissance in Irish literature. In the nineteenth century, the focus is the name of Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), whose play *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Lady Windermere's Fan* has been a huge success on the London stage. But it is also very famous for his fantasy novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) studied Anglo-Irish dilemma in his newspaper articles and in his play *The Other Island* of John Bull. It explores the contradictions of English society in *Pygmalion*. Majority of the author in Ireland used the theme of nature in order to express their feelings to the society.

Colm Tóibín, born in Wexford, he learned to read at the very young age, but after falling in love with the writings of Ernest Hemingway in his late teens. He has gone on to become one of Ireland's most flourishing contemporary authors. Exploring themes of Irish society, imagination, personal uniqueness and the Irish Diasporas, his books have been translated into more than thirty languages. In 2006, his novel *The Master* won the International Dublin Literary Award, and his work has been shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize three times. Last year 2009 his novel *Brooklyn* was made into a film that earned three Academy Award nominations.

Anne Enright, a former producer of the popular Irish comedy show *Nighthawks*, is an Irish author and a fellow of the UK's Royal Society of Literature. She started writing at the age of 21 when given an electric typewriter as a birthday present from her family. In 2007,

her fourth novel *The Gathering* won the Man Booker Prize. Her novels include the themes of Irish history, Catholicism and family relations, as well as love and sex. Her writings have appeared in publications like *The New Yorker*, *The Paris Review* and the *London Review of Books*.

John Banville, another County Wexford native, was Literary Editor at *The Irish Times* from 1988 to 1999. John published his first book a short story collection entitled *Long Lankin* in 1970, before going on to write 17 novels. In 2005 his book *The Sea*, a story of love and loss written in the style of a thoughtful journal, won him the Man Booker Prize. *The Washington Post* has called him ‘one of the most imaginative literary novelists writing in the English language today.’

Louise O’Neill, a writer of feminist fiction for young adults. He won several awards for her best-selling debut novel *Only Ever Yours*, in which she imagines a future where women are playthings created exclusively for the pleasure of men. Her second novel, *Asking For It*, explored questions about rape culture and authority. It was named the young adult book of the year at the Irish Book Awards 2015 and described as ‘riveting and essential’ by the *New York Times*. The *Guardian* newspaper has called Louise ‘the best young adult fiction writer alive today’.

Paul Murray, born in Dublin is the author of three successful novels. In 2003 his book, *An Evening of Long Goodbyes* tells the story of a lazy Trinity College dropout. It was shortlisted for both the Whitbread First Novel Award and the Kerry Group Irish Fiction Award. His tragicomic second novel, *Skippy Dies*, was long listed for the Man Booker Prize in 2010 and ranked figure three on *Time* magazine’s top ten works of fiction from that year.

Paul's most recent work, entitled *The Mark and the Void*, featured on the same Time list in 2015.

Eimear McBride, born in 1976 in Liverpool and grew up in the west of Ireland. She studied acting at Drama Centre London and travelled widely before writing her debut novel at 27. Her work *A Girl Is a Half-Formed Thing* is about a young woman and her complicated relationship with her brother, who had a brain tumour in childhood. Achieving common acclaim, it was awarded the initial Goldsmiths Prize for groundbreaking fiction in 2013, the 2014 Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction, the Kerry Group Irish Novel of the Year 2014 and several other great compliments. Her second novel, *The Lesser Bohemians*, has just been published in 2015.

Emma Donoghue, the 21st century Irish- Canadian writers, was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1969 to Frances and literary critic Denis Donoghue. Emma Donoghue named in homage to Jane Austen's Emma, was exposed from childhood to a wide range of literature and the dynamics of a literary career. After her education at Catholic Convent Schools, Donoghue received a first- class honors, Bachelors of Arts Degree from the University of Dublin and a PhD, in English from Griton College, Cambridge. Now, she has settled in Canada with her female partner Christine Roulston. The couple's live as an open lesbian couple in the city of London, Ontraio. Donoghue wrote poetry during her teenage, which was her original interest and preserved records of her writing in series of books, titled, *EMMA DONOGHUE: THE WORKS*. She destined for her literary success for herself says "I've been writing full- time since I was 23. I've always thought of myself as a huge success!"

The themes of her writings are often inspired by actual historical events and personage. *Slammerkin* (2000), her first historical novel, is inspired by an 18th century newspaper about a young employee who killed her employer and it was awarded the 2002 Ferro- Grumley Award for lesbian fiction. *The Sealed Letters* (2008), another work of historical fiction, winner of 2009 Lambda Literary Award, is based on Cordington affair, a scandalous divorce case that gripped Britain in 1864. *Frog Music* (2014) has its inspiration on a true story of an unsolved murder of a 19th century female sex worker and female - male - male cross – dressed frog catcher. Her recent novel *The Pull of the Star* (2020), speaks about the influenza pandemic in 1918 at Dublin, Ireland. All the characters were fictional except Kathleen Lynn. This novel received strongly positive review from critics and was long listed for Giller Prize in 2020. One of her most spectacular and popular achievements is *We Are Micheal Field* (1998), the first historical and literary biography since the 1920s of the Victorian collaborative writers and lovers, Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper, who presented themselves in print under a united pseudonymous identity, Micheal Field.

Room, Donoghue's fourth novel, published in 2010, earned her a near universal acclaim. *Room* was awarded the Rogers Writers Trust Fiction Prize and the Irish Book Award 2010. With this novel, Emma steps out of comfort zone. The story bears surrounding Austrian Josef Fritzl who caged his own daughter in a sound proof bunker in his basement for 24 years, fathering seven children by her. It was Felix Fritzl, one of the seven captive children, who was five years old at the time of their rescue, grabbed Donoghue's attention. Donoghue says

“The newspaper reports of Felix Fritzl, aged five emerging into a world he didn't know about, put the idea into my head.

That notion of the wide – eyed child emerging into the world
like a Martin coming to earth: it seized me.”(Weblog)

Unlike the actual horrific incidents, Donoghue wanted her novel to be a fairy- tale narrated by a little boy in his childish language. So, she uses child’s vocabulary, intentionally throughout the novel. She has written the novel from the perspective of a five- year- old boy, for she believed that a child will be very fresh and see not only the interesting things in the world but also will be authentic. “We do tickles and Bouncy Bouncy and jaggedly shadows on bed wall” (*ROOM*, 44), “Now he’s three egg longer, I extra gently wind him again so all of him fits in Under bed(R,27), “I jump on Bed and teach Jeep and Remote to shake their Booties”(57).

Donoghue remarks that five is the perfect age for a child to have a very strange sense of world and to be old enough to question. They grasp things around them even if they don’t understand the basic principles, but they just know them as tiny puzzle piece. Donoghue has borrowed many details of the novel from her son who was four and a half years old (games, cartoons, idioms, observations) especially the strange grammar. For instance, Jack says “I eated!”, “I wined!” “Brung them here”. The unusual verbage of Jack in the novel is because of Ma’s training to him. Ma plays ‘word sandwich’ with him and the ‘parrot’ game which she uses to teach Jack, vocabulary and pronunciation is an extraordinary method of teaching.

Shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, and the Governor General Awards (Canada), *Room* was adapted to Film in 2015 with Emma Donoghue writing the screenplay. The movie was cast by Brie Larson as Ma and eight years old Jacob Tremblay as Jack, directed by Lenny Abrahamson an Irish director. The film had its world premiere at the Telluride Film Festival on September 4, 2015; it was selected for the special presentations section of the

2015 Toronto International Film Festival. *Room* has grossed a total of \$35.4 million worldwide on a \$13 million budget. Lenny Abrahamson hired the production designer Ethan Jobman to design the set for *Room*. He made it to create an authentic experience for Jacob Tremblay (Jack). Danny Cohen, the cinematographer fixed the lenses inside the set the rest of the camera outside. Tremblay and Larson met each other for over three years to build ‘a very close, intimate relationship’, says Joan Allen who casted as the mother of Ma. Larson went on ‘restrictive diet’ and sunlight and took pains during filming, for she says that she wanted it to be a ‘story of love and freedom and perseverance’, instead of a crime story. All these untiring efforts by the crew have earned those \$35.4 million and also many accolades (63 awards and 113 nominations).

Due to the book’s delicate subject matter and its unusual two-part structure, there are certain changes or differences in the film adaptation. Donoghue carefully drafted the screenplay beautifully that all the childlike artlessness and wonder wouldn’t become mawkish. For instance, Jack’s trip to beach with his grandparents, the stinging of bee in the hands, his question to his grandma about the pollen grains, his play in the hammock and the park are not included in the movie.

Donoghue has done too much research for the book. She says she had read every case in the websites which gives detailed information about the effects of abduction and isolation in children, researched births in concentrated camps. She also read about the children conceived through rape, children living in prison, people who are kidnapped and the mind-breaking solitary confinement of approximately 25,000 American prisoners. She adds that, in order to make the room to be a perfect for captivity, she designed it in a home design website with all the basic things inside it. Regarding child narration, Donoghue, in an

interview to Boyd Jonkin, says “ I was very aware of good child’s eye fiction I’d read- LP Hartley’s *The go Between*, Roddy Doyle’s *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* and Joyce’s *Portrait of an Artist*”(web). The king of confinement novels, John Fowles’s *The Collector* was very much helpful for her.

Ann Cvetkovich states in her essay, *An Archive of Feelings*, Trauma is ‘the subject of a discourse that has a history’ (*An Archive of Feelings*, 20). In fact, in the nineteenth century trauma referred to a physical wound and later on when centuries pass on again it is associated to mental and physic distress. Today, because of the development of different ways of divulgating knowledge and much larger freedom of speech, the matter of trauma has become increasingly discussed in public sphere within fields and domains. Donoghue’s *Room*, representing various aspects of trauma, fit perfectly in what Ann Cvetkovich calls trauma culture.

This project deals with life of Ma and Jack inside the Room, Ma’s ability to bring up Jack as a healthy child, in spite of molestation and alienation, the effects of isolation and captivity, the representation of trauma revolved in the novel and their transformation when they move with people in the world.

Chapter Two

Captivity and Restlessness in Real And Reel

Room is based on a book *Room* inspired by the real-life case of Elisabeth Fritzl. Emma Donoghue, the author of the book said in an interview “The one line notion of a childhood in a locked room. I got that from the Fritzl case”. The main reason the case struck a chord with her, she explained, is that she had young children of her own and she imagined what it would be like trying to be a good mother in a locked room. The fiction shares many parallels with Elisabeth Fritzl and her children so much, so that it is hard to dismiss the film as complete fiction.

Room is a 2010 novel by Emma Donoghue, an Irish-Canadian poet. The story is told from a five-year-old boy's viewpoint, Jack, who along with his mother is being kept hostage in a small room. After reading of five-year-old Felix in the Fritzl case, Donoghue invented the plot and a 2008 court case in which an Austrian mother and her children are held hostage in a small room similar to the one in the book for eight years. Jack believes that those inside the room are the only real things. Ma tells him that everything on their TV only exists on TV. She's not ready to disappoint him with the life that she can't give him. To keep her son happy and healthy, Ma does the best she can.

She instigates both physical and mental exercises, they maintain a healthy diet, limit the time spending on watching TV, and maintain strict body and oral hygiene levels. The entire world of Jack is this room and his mother. Old Nick, who only comes to see Room at night, is the only other person Jack has ever seen in his life. Jack is sent to hide in a wardrobe when Old Nick visits, and is sleeping by the time Old Nick comes. Food and necessities are brought by Old Nick. For the past seven years, since she was nineteen.

He has been Ma's captor and rapist. Jack is the result of one of those rapes that continues on a regular basis.

It is now a week after the fifth birthday of Jack. Ma has just learned that for six months, Old Nick has been unemployed and might be about to lose his foreclosure home. Ma feels certain that before letting them go, Old Nick would rather kill the two of them; she starts to make an escape plan. Ma tries to explain to her son that he must pretend to be fatally ill, and although it is very difficult for Jack to imagine anything outside of the room, he is finally convinced. Old Nick refuses to take Jack to the hospital, and then Jack pretends to die for Old Nick. Jack lies still, wrapped in a rug, and he's taken out of the room by Old Nick. Jack flees and succeeds in finding a friendly stranger who calls the police. Jack struggles with interaction, but succeeds in directing the police to Ma.

Ma and Jack are being taken from their room to a mental hospital. Here they get medical assessments and a temporary home. Old Nick is discovered, and will face numerous charges of abduction, rape, and danger to children. He will most likely be found guilty, resulting in a lifetime of twenty-five years in prison. Ma is reunited with the rest of her family and re-learns how to communicate with the entire world. Nevertheless, Jack is completely overwhelmed, and wants nothing so much as to return to the security and predictability of space. Like a cat to a mouse, the media has been attracted to this case, which makes starting a new, normal life even harder for Ma and Jack. Ma takes part in a TV conversation, which goes very badly. She is facing a mental breakdown. She tries to commit suicide and is put in the hospital again. Jack is brought to his grandmother and her new partner to live with them. He suddenly does not even have his Ma around him; his environment makes Jack extremely confused and frustrated.

His new extended family is well-meaning and loving, but in order to raise Jack properly, they don't have the right understanding or experience. They do not know how his limited life experiences and personal boundary concepts affect his odd behavior. Ma recovers, eventually, and returns to Jack. She and Jack move together into an independent living residence, where they start making plans for their future slowly. Ma is growing more independent, like she used to be in the room. As he grows and the world around him becomes bigger, Jack is also growing and learning and changing. Jack asks about visiting the room one day. He and Ma go back so long ago to the place they were held captive, but Jack doesn't feel the same emotional attachment to it. He can say his farewells and leave, moving on for good.

A checklist of realities Donoghue pointedly removed from *Room* shows similarities with the Fritzl case and any number of similar horrors. Jack, the teenage narrator, never gets sexually assaulted or battered. The cell he shares with Ma, abducted by a mysterious man known only as Old Nick, at age 19, is well ventilated, and the food is ample. Even the daily night visits of Old Nick take place offstage, their mysterious intent only revealed to Jack by the creaking of the bed he hears while hiding in a nearby closet.

In an interview with *The New Yorker's* Book Club in 2011, Donoghue said that the inspiration for the novel was, in part, the Fritzl case, which came to light in 2008. An Austrian man named Josef Fritzl held his daughter Elisabeth captive in the basement of his home for twenty-four years, repeatedly raping and abusing her. Seven children were produced as a result of the sexual abuse, the youngest of whom was five at the time that their imprisonment was discovered. One of the strangest aspects of the case was the

division of the children. Three were confined to the basement with Elisabeth, while three were allowed to live in the main house with Josef and his wife, and were passed off as foundlings.

On August 28, 1984, 18-year-old Elisabeth Fritzl went missing. Her mother Rosemarie hastily filed a missing-persons report, frantic over the whereabouts of her daughter. For weeks there was no word from Elisabeth, and her parents were left to assume the worst. Then out of nowhere, a letter arrived from Elisabeth, claiming she had grown tired of her family life and run away. Her father Josef told policeman who came to the house that he had no idea where she would go, but that she likely joined a religious cult, something she had talked previously about doing. But the truth was that Josef Fritzl knew exactly where his daughter was. She was about 20 feet below where the police officer was standing.

Josef called his daughter to the basement of the family's home on August 28, 1984. He was re-fitting the recently renovated cellar with a door and required support to move it. Josef set it in place while Elisabeth kept the door. He swayed it open as soon as it was on the hinges, pulling Elisabeth inside and knocking her senseless with an ether-soaked towel. For the next 24 years, the last thing Elisabeth Fritzl will see would be the inside of the dirt-walled cellar. Her father would lie to her mother and to the authorities, telling those tales on how she would run away and enter a cult. The police inquiry into her whereabouts would finally run cold and the world still wouldn't forget Josef Fritzl. And he'd make it very clear to his daughter for the next 24 years. Josef will go down to the basement every morning at 9 a.m., as far as the rest of the Fritzl family was

concerned. To draw up designs for the computers he was marketing. He would spend the night sometimes but his wife wouldn't worry.

Josef Fritzl was a hard-working man who devoted himself completely to his job. Josef was a monster as far as Elisabeth Fritzl was concerned. He will visit her in the basement three days a week at the very least. It was usually every day. He left her behind for the first two years, holding her prisoner. Then he began to torment her, starting with the weekly visits that he had started when she was just 11. Elisabeth became pregnant two years after her captivity, but she miscarried 10 weeks into her birth. Two years later, though, she became pregnant again, bringing it to term this time. A baby girl named Kerstin was born in August of 1988 would forget about the lost Fritzl kid before long.

Another baby was born two years later, a boy named Stefan. For the period of her prison, Kerstin and Stefan remained in the cellar with their mother, and Josef brought weekly rations of food and water. With the simple education she herself had, Elisabeth tried to educate them to give them the most natural life she could under her horrible circumstances. Elisabeth would give birth to five more children over the next 24 years. One was allowed to stay with her in the cellar, one died soon after birth, and the other three were taken to live with Rosemarie and Josef upstairs. Josef did not only pick up the kids to live with him, however. He staged elaborate discoveries of the children in order to hide what he was doing from Rosemarie, frequently including putting them on bushes outside the home or on the doorstep.

The infant would be swaddled neatly each time and followed by a letter supposedly penned by Elisabeth, saying that she was unable to take care of the baby and left it for safe keeping with her parents. Shockingly, the appearance of the children was

never questioned by social services and enabled the Fritzl to keep them as their own children. Officials were after all under the assumption that the babies' grandparents were Rosemarie and Josef. How long Josef Fritzl wanted to keep his daughter captive in his basement is not known. For 24 years, he had gotten away with it and all the cops knew he was going to keep going for another 24 years. However, one of the girls in the cellar became ill in 2008. Elisabeth asked her father to let Kerstin, her 19-year-old daughter, get medical treatment. She suddenly and seriously became ill, and Elisabeth was beside herself.

Josef decided, grudgingly, to send her to a doctor. He rescued Kerstin from the cellar and called an ambulance, saying he had a letter describing her condition from Kerstin's mother. Police have been interviewing Kerstin for a week and asking the public for more details on her relatives. Naturally, since there was no family to worry about, no one stepped forward. Eventually, the police became cautious of Josef and reopened the investigation into the death of Elisabeth Fritzl. They continued to read the letters supposedly left by Elisabeth for the Fritzls' and began to find contradictions in them. The world will never know whether Josef finally felt the strain or had a change of heart over his daughter's incarceration, but he freed Elisabeth from the cellar for the first time in 24 years on April 26, 2008. She then went to the hospital to see her daughter, where police were alerted to her unusual arrival by hospital workers.

She was taken into detention that night to be interviewed about her daughter's disease and the story of her father. Elisabeth Fritzl shared the story of her 24-year incarceration after making a police vow that she would never have to see her father again. She clarified that she was locked in the basement by her father and that she had seven

children. She explained that Josef was the father of all seven of them and that during the night he would come down and make her watch pornographic videos and then rape her. She clarified that ever since she was 11, he had been raping her. That night, the police had Josef Fritzl arrested. The children in the cellar were also released after the arrest and Rosemarie Fritzl left the house. It was alleged that she knew none of the incidents taking place right beneath her feet, and Josef accepted her claim.

Also the tenants who lived in the apartment on the first floor of the Fritzl home never realized what was going right under them and by blaming faulty plumbing and a loud boiler; Josef had explained away all the noises. Today, Elisabeth Fritzl lives in a secret Austrian village known only as Village X under a new code-named. The house is under continuous CCTV monitoring and every corner is patrolled by police. The family does not accept anywhere within their walls for interviews and refuses to offer any themselves. While she is now in her mid-fifties, when she was just 16 years old, the last picture of her was taken. In order to keep her background secret from the public and help her pursue her new life, attempts have been made to hide her new persona. Many say, though, the girl was kept as a prisoner for 24 years with her chilgren, they have done a better job of securing her immortality.

Felix, Elisabeth's younger son, who was five years old when the incident came to light, is Emma Donoghue's main inspiration. Jack, who has just turned five, is compelled to experience a drastic renovate in his entire moral system as he is rushed outside the room into the world. He is astonished, terrified and intrigued at the same time. He captures the attitude of kids who have encountered captivity like that. The reaction of Jack to open sky, dogs, space, and people is tugging at one's heart. The TV in the novel is

a portal to the outside of reality. Jack and his mother spent a lot of time watching television, and so did Elisabeth and her daughters. It was their only contact with the outside world. Until Ma informs Jack of the escape route, everything he sees on TV is not real. For them to be more familiar with their reality, Elisabeth gave her children the same reason. In the book titled *Monster* by Allan Hall who has extensively studied dungeon abuse writes,

Elisabeth accomplished paper and pens from Fritzl and taught the children to read and write. It is known that the children devoured nursery books and coloring books... In this extraordinary situation any mother would have had a stark choice to make: to tell her children the truth of what happened to her, or make up a story that they could stare in, and so be less curious about the world they had never seen. Elisabeth chose the latter option. (*Monster*18, 3-7)

The room in captivity is another resemblance. In the case of Elisabeth, it was the cellar at her parents' home. To make it habitable, Josef changed it. In *Room*, where the first half of the novel centers inside the shed where Jack and his mother were imprisoned, the allusion is not lost. The space is a world within a world, for the victims, determined by what they make of it. Joy makes it a point for them to construct a routine.

Both incidents depend on a readership that recognize stories like those in *Room* and Fritzl case from the wider set of true crime narratives covered by the readers. At one level, these stories are valuable additions to a broader discourse about gendered violence. With discussions about domestic violence and sexual assault on college campuses and in

the military gaining national attention, it is now, perhaps more than ever, important to give recognition to narratives of violence. It is also important to recognize that the true-crime media constructs these narratives not simply in the service of advocacy or justice, but entertainment. Analyzing the ideological implications of such narratives does not mean denying the actual accounts of violence.

These novels dislocate narratives of gendered violence, manipulating narrative perspectives so as to highlight mass media constructions of gender. It is critical, therefore, to study the interactions between narrative structure and gender constructs in these novels. Robyn R. Warhol describes feminist narratology in his book *The Look, The Body and The Heroine: A Feminist Narratology Reading of "Persuasion"* as "the study of narrative structures and strategies in the context of cultural constructions of gender" (39).

Instead, Donoghue narrates *Room* through Jack's perspective, keeping Ma necessarily distant from the reader and thereby creating a different narrative arc than the typical post-captivity empowerment. These moves, however, is key to the strangeness of *Room*, as Ma's actions during and after captivity have less to do with her own empowerment than with the preservation of Jack's innocence. Because he was born in captivity, after Ma was impregnated by her captor, Jack has no concept of the outside world; in fact, Ma has taught Jack that the woodshed where they are held is floating through Outer Space. Although the two are confined together, Jack experiences this small space much differently than Ma. His limited knowledge of the complex workings of the world when he is captive and freed simultaneously reaffirms and disrupts the conventions of captivity.

However, the more powerful Ma seems, as her strength is rendered by the unintelligibility of Jack's narrative. Jack does not have the perspective capability to view Ma as anything but his mother. He is, in a sense, free from the conventions that shape Ma's identity as a captive, his ignorance reveals the narrative constructions of captivity when he experiences them anew, once he and Ma escape Room. Jack's perspective, then, allows Donoghue to narrate Ma's kidnapping and captivity without the context of true crime conventions.

Thus the book is particularly strong on the corruption of the family and the domestic. Home is not a place of safety, but a torture chamber; father is not a parent, but a monster. Donoghue is also very effective at conveying the grueling monotony of imprisonment and the way that the hopelessness of the situation permeates even the most mundane aspects of such a life. They cook, read, watch TV, and exercise to pass time. More importantly, it's Joy's way of creating a life for her son within the confined frame. By admitting her confusion and forcing readers to experience it with her, she exposes the tension of navigating such a messy narrative, rejecting a role as victim.

Chapter Three

Motherhood- A Glorious Life Force

Room brings out the impenetrable bond between the mother and the child, which endures under the most unbearable circumstances. Throughout the novel, Ma and Jack relishes each and every moment together in spite of misunderstanding and conflicts, and crave for each other when they are separated. In the room, both Ma and Jack make their world on their own. They play games, read books, watch TV, do exercise, etc.

Ma, in spite of being traumatized by her captor through repeated sexual assault, put her effort in totality to bring up Jack as a healthy, bright, and energetic child. She doesn't let Jack to know their state as captives, instead, she creates, a colorful world for Jack keeping him occupied with vocabulary games, books, TV, craft book and even cooking. Ma loves so much that her only focus is Jack's well- being and not her own. Emma Donoghue in an interview says,

“Ma and Jack have a healthy intense relationship, but always meant to be a healthy one. It's got lingering elements of the mother- baby bond as well as aspects of alliance and friendship. For me, *Room* is a universal story of parenthood and childhood, and in Jack and Ma relationship I wanted to dramatize the full range of extraordinary emotions, parents and feel for each other: to put mothering in a weird spotlight and test it to its limits. *Room* celebrates mother- love but it also painfully calculates those moments Ma has to recognize that Jack needs something other than her protection”. (Weblog)

In the opening pages of the books we find that, Ma like every mother in the world takes a very good care of her son. She gives presents to him on his birthday, plays with him by getting down to his level, does physical exercise with him. She also helps him to read rhymes book for him, sings beautiful songs for him, watches TV with him and teaches him to speak, read, write, listen and draw. Ma, through all these activities, prepares Jack for the world, for which she prays and hopes that they will enter one day. Ma uses each and every limited resource around her to improve the auditory and articulation system in Jack. She uses TV as an entertainment and an educational tool. She is very watchful that Jack watches only two shows per day on TV and makes him repeat the conversation of people to enhance his listening skills and also vocabulary.

Orchestra is a game through which Ma teaches Jack the differences of the sound and noises around them. She makes Jack to do physical exercises such as running, karate and yoga to maintain good health. Jack's emotional bond with his mother is seen, when Jack cries after hearing the story of a Mermaid mother and her baby. Ma's motherly instinct is best displayed in her repeated reading of *The Runaway Bunny* for Jack. The story is about a mother bunny and a baby bunny.

Ma is attentive in keeping Jack unaware of the outer world. She allows Jack to watch but mutes the commercials and also only shows per day. She makes him to measure each and every object in the room and also the room, but is watchful that she never says the room, which they measure, is only a tiny apart of the world. She doesn't talk about their captor Old Nick and from being the "Sunday treat"(5). She is very tactful in answering his questions for she doesn't even give a hint about their captivity. She distracts him when she can't explain things which would definitely make her to let Jack to know about the Outer world. For

instance, when Jack pronounces the word labour law as a label law, in their vocabulary game, Parrot, she hesitates and manages to divert Jack.

The man who had kidnapped Ma builds a room, which is originally his shed, with a fence neatly installed in every corner: “When he was turning the shed into Room,” says Ma, “he hid a layer of fence under the floor joists, and in all the walls and even the roof, so I could never ever cut through” (106). The existence of a fence in every corner implies that a woman cannot run anywhere. She is shaped and structured to please a man without any resistance. It is also quite depressing where she has to stay in the Room without seeing the outside, but she can only see a glimpse of the outside from a skylight. This situation is similar to the story of Rapunzel from children’s fairy tale where she is imprisoned in a very high tower and can only looking the outside from a window.

After facing the sexual exploitation in Room, she faces the bigger society where she had been left for seven years. She confronts a smaller range of a patriarchal society in the Room and also a bigger patriarchal society in Cumberland Clinic. As the media, the TV plays a big role in how the society sees the female protagonist.

And we're honored that you've chosen this show to tell it. Now, without necessarily putting it in terms of, say, Stockholm syndrome, many of our viewers are curious, well, concerned to know if you found yourself in any way . . . emotionally dependent on your captor
 .(260)

In the first half of the twenty-first century, TV is very much influencing how people act, as well as newspapers. It is also an implication of capitalism in which society is controlled by those who have power.

As a result, the female protagonist cannot have her normal life back because people have seen her in newspaper and TV as somebody. This also gives burden to the female protagonist that she is being socially alienated because she is different. It makes her unable to cope with the society and feels humiliated. The patriarchal system followed with the portrait of capitalism makes the female protagonist experience oppression. Nevertheless, she does not give up and empowers herself to face society and gets up on her own feet to oppose the oppression and no longer become the kind of mentally ill woman.

Ma is a resourceful person, she uses toilet paper for her writing, drawing and doing calculation. She makes use of the toilet papers that are used up for writing to make a ball, she saves chocolate, purple ribbon from the Christmas gifts and presents a drawing to Jack in a ruled paper on his birthday, recycles a cereal box and uses measuring tape, saves all the eggshells and makes it into an Eggsnake, a toy for Jack and knits puppets out of his worn out socks.

Ma is also religious for she says stories from Bible to Jack and sows the seed of hope and faith in religion by teaching him The Lord's Prayer, the shepherd prayer. Ma also teaches Jack to thank Mother Mary and Baby Jesus before taking food and also at times of need. The author says in an interview, that prisoners generally "cling to whatever tatters of faith they've got". Ma she says,

... would have taken the vague Christian framework she had and offered it to Jack as a part of her system for making meaning of their days, and keeping hope alive.(weblog)

Because of room's controlled environment, Ma's entire focus is in Jack and his health. So, Jack grows up into a studious, vibrant and brilliant child. He has got good

memory power that he even remember the menial things Ma tells and he can recall incidents that had taken place when he was three and four years old. He believes the object around him to be real and consider them as living things, for he says Good Morning and Good Night to every object in the room.

Jack describes their routine work in the room with the sweetness of a child and makes the dull and gloomy environment of room into a cheerful one through his innocence and kinder garden language.

“We have thousands of things to do every morning, like give Plants a cup of water in Sink for spilling, then put her back on her saucer on Dresser. Plant used to live on able but God’s face burned leaf of her off. She has nine left, they’er the wide of my hands with furriness all over, like Ma says dogs are. But dogs only TV. I don’t like nine. I find a tiny leaf coming, that counts as ten”. (10)

Jack’s voice with all its naivety penetrates into the reader’s mind for it takes the reader into the room and makes them feel as if they are with Ma and Jack. As Aimee Bender, in the New York Times Book Review, rightly puts in “Jack’s voice is so persuasive that I could hear him chatting away during when I wasn’t reading book”.

Jack is very much attached to Ma because she is the world to him. In spite of little disputes between them, Ma and Jack understand each other, manage to adjust and show love and affection to each other. Jack never talks about Old Nick to Ma for he knows that she doesn’t like him and he’s is able to sense the mood of Ma through her facial expression, “Her face has gone flat, that means I said a wrong thing but I don’t know which”(17).

Ma comprehends the emotions through the limited resources available in the room. She manages to pacify Jack when he carves and cries for things, though she shouts at him at times. For instance, Jack's expectation of having candles for his birthday cake, the rat which Ma chased out and to have a dog called Lucky makes them to engage in small little brawls.

Though, Ma brings up Jack without knowledge of the world outside till the age of four. She finds it difficult to manage when he grows into five and asks certain witty question. Ma also comes to know that their captor has lost and is now in debts. These circumstances push Ma to devise a plan to escape from the room. It should be noted that Ma doesn't makes the escape plan all by herself and she also doesn't talk about it all on a sudden to Jack. She, patiently and also wisely, proceeds in her plan of escape. First, she tries to make Jack know that there is a world outside the room, in which people like her and him live in million. She also says about her family living in the world outside and how Old Nick had abducted her when she was just nineteen years old and imprisoned her in the room, which is a converted garden shed.

It is harder for Jack to get the reformation because for him Room is the World, Ma is the mother and everything outside the room is only 'Outer Space which things float'. So, he, at first, resents and shouts at Ma to say some other 'story'. He couldn't cope with the dizzying revelation of the world outside of the Door, because it is very well fixed in his memory that he and Ma is the only human beings in the world, which is room. So, he finds it to be a herculean task to cram into his head, the reality of the world, Outside.

Ma puts her entire efforts to teach everything about the world and life in it. But everything told by Ma, appears only to be a story to Jack. He gets tired by the names of the persons, things and the life in the world. He finds hard to accept all these things as real,

however, in order to console Ma, he pretends as if he is listening to her. As he comes to know through Ma that the persons and things which he thought to be TV are pictures of real persons and things, he gets confused. He begins to imagine how world would be with so much people and things in all his infancy.

On one fine day, he finds a real airplane through the Skylight. He is amazed by the movement of the tiny airplane in the sky and the mark laid by it on the sky. This makes him excited and he starts to believe Ma's words about the world without any objection. In spite of their different opinions, mutual dependence, understanding and co- operation has helped them to succeed in their 'great escape'.

Despite her amazing strength as a mother, the writer gives room to some weaknesses to Ma because of her abduction and incarceration. One of the first feelings that Ma unveils above all is fear, mainly when facing Old Nick. The reader can really perceive terror within the character when talking to the kidnapper in an extremely apologetic way. For example, when he enters the door and room smells of food she promptly answers "Mmm, sorry about that ...we had curry"(85). In the same passage, she asks Old Nick to put an extractor fan on and when he states that they will be discovered if he does, she apologizes again.

Ma is rather powerless in the Room. She will do everything only to make her and her son safe and alive. The important thing is, as she confesses to the interviewer from a TV, she becomes a Stepford wife. The term Stepford wife originally comes from Ira Levin's novel, *The Stepford Wives* written in 1971. Different from the Levin's novel, the female protagonist in this story is not comfortable being dependent on her man.

Ma as the female protagonist consciously faces the oppression and unable to act on her own. As a woman, Ma is forced to become a Stepford wife in Room to serve man

willingly and without resistance. However, this makes sense because she wants to survive and wants to protect her son. She really becomes a Stepford wife who is flawlessly arranged. It can be seen that she makes everything organized. She takes the house chores in the Room like nursing, cleaning, laundry, and cooking.

This sort of panic that experiences on the one hand is due to Old Nick's violent behaviour towards her, on the other hand it hides a little hope in the deep inside of her that one day she will manage to get out of that cellar. She personally tells Jack that Old Nick scared her and describes to him a few cases where she was attacked and beaten. She even tells him about the time she tried to escape but Old Nick assailed her again, "He jumped up and twisted my wrist and got the knife" (121). She knows perfectly that if she ever tried a stunt to escape he could go away anytime and let them starve. The effects of her trauma caused by the captivity can be perceived apparently after her rescue from the room.

Donoghue, through the naïve unconsciousness of Jack, describe the details of the effects of trauma in Jack's mother. Jack, by sleeping in the wardrobe, counts the number of creaks made by Old Nick while abusing his mother, without even knowing what is happening. According to some research conducted and reported by the National Violence Women Prevention Research Center of the Medical University of South Carolina, the depression is a common mood disorder within rape victim that occur when feelings associated with sadness and hopelessness continue for long periods of time: 30% of rape victims had experienced at least one major depressive episode in their lifetimes, and 21% of all rape victims were experiencing a major depressive episode at the times of assessment.

The author also takes the advantage of Jack's voice to make the readers understand the trauma of Ma. Jack says, "Today is one of the day when Ma is Gone. She won't wake up

properly. She is here but not really ... Ma's like a zombie today" (74). Though, Ma is traumatized both physically and psychologically, yet she manages to overcome her trauma through faith and hope that they will be rescued one day.

Room is a novel which continuously compares the difference between freedom and captivity. This significant motif is portrayed in the skylight, the only part of the *Room* that offers Ma and Jack a view of the outside world. The skylight proves that there is always an outside world, but it is still out of control. It acts as a constant reminder of Ma's imprisonment and the dreams that are just out of sight. The skylight then becomes an important metaphor for Jack, when he sees the leaf land on the skylight, he starts to show that trees live in the outside world, too not only on TV.

Donoghue, instead of sentimentalizing imprisonment, explores the way which some people manages to rise above such hardships. Jack expresses a poignant mixture of wisdom; love and naivety that will make even the reader ache to save him. Though sunlight enters into the room through the Skylight, it is no doubt that Jack is the actual sun to the room.

Chapter Four

Trauma and Distressing Occurrences

Trauma or stress means a traumatic event involving a single event or experience. It includes the emotions and feelings. In addition, the trauma of psychoanalysis has serious long term negative consequence. Previous trauma and traumatic memories ultimately influence the character's mind with confusion or insecurity. The typical cause of psychoanalysis includes sexual abuse, job discrimination, police brutality, harassment, domestic violence and in particular childhood experience. The field of trauma studies in literary criticism gained significant attention in 1996 with the publication of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* and Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. Early scholarship shaped the initial course of literary trauma theory by popularizing the idea of trauma as an unrepresentable event.

The study of the traumatic origins of emotional distress started during the last decades of the 19th century. At the Hôpital de la Salpêtrière in Paris, Jean Martin Charcot in 1887 first proposed that the symptoms of what was then called "hysterical" patients had their origins in histories of trauma. Trauma theory emerged in the 1990s when a group of critics began to study the cultural effects of trauma. Cathy Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) became prominent, combining the essays and interviews of professionals in several disciplines, such as psychiatry, literature, film, and sociology. Nowadays, trauma "is understood as a wound inflicted ...upon the mind"(*Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 3). A theoretical trend was introduced by scholars like Caruth, who pioneered a psychoanalytic post structural approach that suggests trauma as an unsolvable problem of the unconscious that illuminates the inherent contradictions of experience and language.

Sigmund Freud, was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis. He finds clinical method for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst. In founding psychoanalysis, Freud developed psychological methods such as the use of free association and the exploration of transference, defining its central position in the analytical process. Freud's redefinition of sexuality to incorporate its infantile forms prompted him to make the Oedipus complex the core tenet of psychoanalytical philosophy. His study of dreaming as wish-fulfillment presented him with templates for the psychiatric analysis of symptom development and the fundamental processes of repression. Freud postulated the presence of libido, a sexualized force in which mental mechanisms and systems are invested and which produces romantic attachments and destruction, a cause of compulsive repetition, anger, violence and neurotic remorse. In his later writing, Freud established a wide-ranging view and criticism of religion and society.

Childhood trauma can significantly lead to violent behaviour. Trauma according to psychoanalysis is caused by catastrophic events, war, treason, betrayal and sexual abuse. The main point is that the different people will react differently to similar happenings. In other words, not everyone experiencing the same traumatic event will get traumatized with psychoanalysis. Inter disciplinary trauma has a close relationship to other disciplinary such as neuroscience anthropology, culture conflict, politics and literature in the significant way. The traumatized female is at the novel's centre. The feminine characters are apparently dominated by patriarchy. At present, it is important to reflect the opposite position of executer and defeater to achieve a continuum of self- awareness and self- actualization.

In *Room*, a book published by Emma Donoghue, the protagonist points out how the feminist philosophy is portrayed. *Room*, tells a story about a woman and her child, in

patriarchal society fighting oppression. Prison and associated trauma are the most dynamic and unique elements of *Room*, since both Ma and Jack are facing the same situation, but in two entirely different ways and with different results. The experience of the two characters is, beyond the shadow of a doubt, horrific and traumatic at the same time.

Emma Donoghue points out to the close connection of mother-son duo. This condition builds up and strengthens this unique topic in particular. Considering Jack's experience of their imprisonment, he never understands their condition as Ma never reveals to him that they are captives. Since she doesn't want him to grow up knowing he's being kept in captivity, and she makes him see the world in a meaningful and mystical way within *Room*. For this cause, Jack spends his first five years thinking that something that isn't inside the room exists. He makes mates with all the items inside the cellar, and they all become true gender characters, such as Door is male and Plant is female.

The female protagonist will face another form of oppression in every room, makes her unable to be her own personality and imprison her. Oppression which leads to traumatic expression originates from different background within the society. Subjugation, according to its cause has many different forms and classification. Another serious problem of injustice is the disruption of systematic violence to psychological effects. The person who is a victim of violence will be shamed and lose self esteem. It will make the victim incapable of handling society.

Ma is the leading female character, protagonist and the focus of discussion. She is classified and dynamic in character, because during the story, her character changes. People around her, influences and the way they treat her the change in her character. Before her captor, locked up in a place called *Room*, Ma is just an ordinary 19- years old college girl.

“Old Nick- I didn’t even know him, I was nineteen, He stole me” (116). Old Nick had fooled her when she’s in the college library. In this novel, the writer does not mention her real name until the end of the story. Ma is locked up in the Room, she does not look depressed and appears to a normal mother to her child and a lady who is loyal to man. Ma is also caring and compassionate to Jack. She doesn’t allow anyone to take him off her, even for a minute. She does not give up on the guy quickly.

She is very courageous about confronting her captor and surviving at Room. She is very responsible as a mother and dedicates her life to her son. She plays with her son in room, educates him and breastfeeds him even more. In Room, she is too barely angry. The change in the character happens gradually when she is out of the room and is meeting other people. Ma starts having problems in managing her anger and becomes angry very quickly at other people when treats her like a sick person. She becomes depressed later and it attracts her becoming rude, which puts her son as the objects of her anger.

The first psychological influence of this novel is social anxiety disorder, which is a disease in which a person has trouble in communicating and social interaction with others or with their surroundings. Likewise, in the book, it is also mentioned that Jack only knows his mother, Joy or the so called 'Ma'— the only person alive in this universe. He never knows how many people are outside the building. As a result, when Jack leaves the room by running, he is astounded and cannot imagine that Ma is not the only one in the world. Like what he's been planning for the past five years, it makes him appear strange and difficult to interact with a large number of people. He seems to shut down and is also confused by the fact that the universe is not just about him and Ma. This is relevant to the situation in the following quotation, “My ears are tired from all the talking. When they’re gone I thought we

were just us two again but Grandma comes in and gives Ma a long hug and blows me another kiss from just a bit away so I can feel the blowing” (239).

Ma's shoving so hard, I suddenly come loose, her shove hits my head
on little table craaaaaack. She has
her hand on her mouth. I'm
screaming. “Oh”, she
says “oh Jack, oh, Jack, I’m so__”. (287)

Ma is described as having multiple conflicts and stress within her. The story’s internal conflict concentrates on Ma, as a female protagonist. The female protagonist’s inner struggles are the tension between Ma and Ma’s history of injustice. No one requires culture to decide and evaluate. No one requires culture to decide and judge. While getting into a TV interview with the interviewer, she gets from the reporter a number of inquiries and judgment. This unexpectedly leaves her in pain, during the interrogation session.

Why does everyone go on about fairs? Ma's voice is all hoarse.
“When I was a kid I hated fairs”.The woman does a little laugh. Ma's
got tears coming down her face; she puts up her hands to catch them.
I’m off my chair and running at her falls over smaaaaaach, I get to Ma
and wrap all up, and Morris is shouting, “The boy is not to be
shown__”. (297)

The first external conflict is between men and society. Ma faces conflicts with the society which she sticks to. She lived in 11 by 11, where she was locked up for years. Ma meets with the larger society, as she expects to be free after Room. The fact that she continues to nurse her son is different from surrounding. Today’s society is the society,

where the parents put their kids into day care while they get to work. The society is starting to know Ma and Jack as paparazzi are beginning to follow them and make them famous. They are on newspaper and television. The other scene of conflict comes when the interviewer asks her if she likes being behind the locked door and eventually answers the interview with the comment like “Is she allowed to ask me such stupid questions?” (299).

The ideology of social feminist centers on the link between women’s oppression and other discrimination within culture. The democratic feminist however assumes that the origin of injustice in the patriarchal society. In this case, Ma as the character of a female protagonist faces oppression in many different forms. She is the victim of false imprisonment, when a man fulfills his sexual desire in kidnapping her and raping her. Where she has to stay in the room without seeing the outside, it is also quite depressing. She can only see the glimpse of the outside from the skylight. This situation is similar to Rapunzel’s story from the child fairy tale, where she is imprisoned in high tower and can only look from a window to the outside. She faces the bigger society, where she had been left for seven years, after facing sexual exploitation in *Room*. In the Room she confronts a smaller change of a patriarchal society and a larger patriarchal society in the Cumberland Clinic as well. As the news, the show plays a major role in how society views the female protagonist. Television is very much affecting people’s act in the first half of the twenty first century as do news paper. It’s also an implication of capitalism in which those who have power to control the society.

After dinner Ma tells me *Hansel and Gretel* and *How the Berlin Wall Fell Down* and *Rumpelstiltskin*. I like when the queen has to guess the little man’s name or else he’ll take her baby away. “Are stories true?”

“Which ones?”

“The mermaid mother and Hansel and Gretel and all them.”

“Well,” says Ma, “not literally.”

“What’s—”

“They’re magic, they’re not about real people walking around today.”

“So they’re fake?”

“No, no. Stories are a different kind of true.”(45)

When Ma and Jack are both in Room, Ma tries to expose Jack's mind to as many diverse stimuli as she can. As a result, when he asks her questions about the universe that she is reluctant to respond, she often lies to him, distracting him from the fact that they are prisoners. When she is asked to tell Jack the truth, he does not grasp the distinction between truth, deception, and literary fiction. Ma must therefore formulate an interpretation that would not threaten anything she has learned to teach Jack about the world from an 11x11-foot space. Stories that are ‘a different kind of true’ imply that there is no single, eternal fact; rather, ‘truth’ comes in a variety of ways. Ma suggests that the truth that stories exhibit may be based on the values and messages they express rather than whether they are fiction or nonfiction. The stories they read involve fictitious representations of actual people, but they are like “half-truths”: a means of exposing Jack to the truth of the outside world without overwhelming him.

One of the most important reason, Ma wants to get out of *Room* is because she wants to be free, but after *Room*, Ma is confronted with a bigger patriarchal society which makes her to attempt suicide. She couldn’t express herself to discover her new environment and

wouldn't allow her to be free. She encounters Dr. Clay, a psychiatrist who supports her recovery at Cumberland Clinic. Dr. Clay appears to be the embodiment of a man who has a status I society. In this situation, he is a mental health patient's psychiatrist. In addition, as a doctor his task is to assess his patient's condition. As a patient with mental health, Dr. Clay often makes a judgment to Ma. So she is not able to heal easily, but she gets oppression. As a Cumberland Clinic patient, Ma needs to obey what the doctor says. She is treated like a penon, who is mentally ill, which she refuses to be treated like that. This situation places the female protagonist as being weak and unable to do anything. Undergoing treatment in the clinic, the doctor also limits the activities of the female protagonist. The doctor prohibits Ma from meeting too many people and thus becomes isolated from the outside world.

Physically, the garden shed in which Ma and Jack are kept is just an 11x11-foot room yet, symbolically, it's a lot more. Room is a personal hell for Ma, and her imprisonment means that her life has been forcibly removed from her. This is emphasized by the fact that there is a door that Ma might try to get through, but her anxiety prevents her paralyzed from trying. Jack, on the other hand, spent his whole life in Room; it's his home. He assumes these four walls are as wide as the universe is ever going to be. The symbolic connotations for him, however, are not negative, providing a contradictory paradox between what Room means for the two main characters. At the end of the book when Jack and Ma return to Room and they find that they have lost all symbolic meaning are they completely free from it.

In the world I notice persons are nearly always stressed and have no time. Even Grandma often says that, but she and Steppa don't have jobs, so I don't know how persons with jobs do the jobs and all the

living as well. In Room me and Ma had time for everything. I guess the time gets spread very thin like butter over all the world, the roads and houses and playgrounds and stores, so there's only a little smear of time on each place, then everyone has to hurry onto the next bit.

Also everywhere I'm looking at kids, adults mostly don't seem to like them, not even the parents do. They call the kids gorgeous and so cute, they make the kids do the thing all over again so they can take a photo, but they actually play with them, they'd rather drink coffee talking to other adults. Sometimes there's a small kid crying and the Ma of it doesn't even hear. (251-252)

Since he is a boy who grew up in a phenomenally unorthodox manner, Jack's observations and actions outside of Room are often totally off-base, ignorant, and inexperienced. However, since he is a genuine novice, his insights can be insightful and astute because they are uncoloured by age or experience. He expresses a few ideas in this quote. One is that people are exhausted and have little time, which comes from his experience in Room, but also from his knowledge that people overburden their days and stress themselves out. Secondly, he observes that people do not seem to like children, including their own, and are rude with them because they would rather engage with other adults. This is really real, because only a kid like Jack will make such an inference. As a result, remarks like these encourage the reader to reflect more closely on their own lives and relationships.

The subjective oppression is centered on the judgment, the female protagonist receives as the oppressed and concerns about the feeling she felt. Ma feels very scared when

she arrives for the first time at a place where she called *Room*. She can't cope with the room situation and is trying to escape until it hurts herself. She can recognize her sensation of being imprisoned easily. She wants to discover *Room* but it makes her 'crazy' and she tries everything to overcome her feeling, and it can be seen that she uses television as her companion. Yet, for her, all she couldn't get is becoming such an illusion and she can only eat what her captor brings.

You're a basket case, you know that?"I can be quiet, she says, she's nearly whispering, I hear her breath all scratchy. You know how quiet I can be, so long as you leave him alone. It's all I've ever asked.Old Nick snorts. You ask for stuff every time I open the door. It's all for Jack. (102-103)

The question above indicates that Old Nick is harassing Ma and he calls her 'a basket case'. A basket case means, something that is four legged and does not work well or is disabled. As a woman in this case, she has no freedom for herself and is underestimated. She is a basket case for Old Nick, who then puts her as someone who is incapable and who is unable to do anything because she can only surrender herself to the situation, her position as a woman who is undesirable and is aligned within an object. Another restrained source of material is limiting the daily needs. One can see that in a Sunday treatment, Old Nick brings their daily needs. They only have several goods to purchase or they have no treatment if the goods not easy to find "I just mean, he might have to go to two or three stores, and that would make him cranky. And what if he didn't find the impossible thing, then we probably wouldn't get Sunday treat at all" (29). They cannot get what they really want to eat. Even for their physical health they cannot get the medicine.

Society and culture makes the female protagonist express her psychological burden. After 7 years, the first scenario is represented from the first moment that Ma encounters her adopted father. His father could not accept Jack as Ma's son in this case, as Jack will remind him of a person who has kidnapped and jailed Ma in the *Room*. As a mother she feels that she has not been accepted and supported by her closest person. In a situation, where she should be encouraged to adapt to the new environment, the fact that her parents are divorced and her father is not able to accept Jack as her son, gives her psychological burden. As a result, the female protagonist is marginalized, diminishes her own identity and sense of existence. The female protagonist suffers as the result of injustice.

From the psychiatric illness, psychological well being, a post traumatic disorder which causes her to commit suicide. Ma commits suicide in Cumberland Clinic. There are several factors that influence a person to commit suicide in accordance with what Loue and Sajatovic says in the "*Encyclopedia of Women's Health*". Aside from the forced treatment, Ma also gets from society a false judgment. Denial of Jack as her son by people around her, affects her psychological health. Ultimately, she starts showing a depressed attitude and losing control. Ma undergoes a time of recovery after witnessing the suicide, where she's far away from people like her family. The element of being alone is the time she is seeking to recover and redefine her. She refuses to stay any longer in Cumberland Clinic and she doesn't want to stay with her mum. The stage I which the female protagonist opts to live in independent living shows she objects to being a victim of oppression.

At a certain point in *Room*, the illusory pleasant place, where Jack has lived for five years, unexpectedly becomes a terrifying nightmare as soon as Ma tries to tell him the 'real tale' as he calls it, revealing the mystery of the outer world and its abduction. Jack finds

himself face to face with a fact he's never met and doesn't comprehend, he's disoriented, and when Ma attempts to explain to him why she's staying in a house with her parents, his first impression is, "A house in TV? That is ridiculous, Ma was never in Outside"(104).

Jack spent his whole life in the room. "When I was a little kid I thought like a little kid, but now I'm five I know everything"(5). Therefore, this quotation aptly encapsulates both the child's mind as he grows up, and the dramatic absurdity of how little Jack really understands. Because of the disparity in his age, Jack is able to self-consciously recognise the difference in his persona. He no longer sees himself as a "little boy," and this is partly true. Although he still has the dependency and temperament of an infant, it's at this age that Jack really starts to learn more about the world, because Ma knows he's ready for it. It is also ironic that he seems to know 'more' at this point in time, for it foreshadows all the harsh realities he has yet to fight for.

Jack has trouble with this process as he does not understand the real world. At first, he wants to stay in his old world as long as possible and does not want to escape from Room. Eventually, he does start to consider her and when he experiences the outside world for himself, he tries to adapt although he does have trouble with modifying to this new reality. For occurrence, near the end of the novel, Jack remarks that he is always confused and asks his mother if she wishes that they had not escaped. It thus takes some time before Jack fully understands this new world and this feeling of being confused and experiencing a shattered reality are symptoms of his trauma. Jack has other symptoms of trauma besides his sense of a horrified reality. Like Oskar in *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*, Jack has trouble sleeping, has nightmares, and often "wake[s] up crying" (284). Jack also wets the bed and gets panicky when he is doing new things. Moreover, Jack has trouble adjusting to

the world physically. He keeps knocking into things because of his limited spatial awareness. Furthermore, Jack finds it difficult to interact with other people than his mother and he is afraid of many things as well, such as the wetness of rain and particular sounds as they keep making him “jump” (240). These examples all clarify that Jack has many symptoms of a trauma victim other than a shattered sense of truth, such as panic attacks and having trouble sleeping.

The last psychological effect is post traumatic stress disorder. It is a mental disorder that can develop after a traumatic event, such as sexual assault, warfare, traffic accidents, or other threats to one's life. The psychological effect to be examined in this section is concerned with his successful escape from Old Nick, despite the fact that it ultimately causes enormous trauma. Nonetheless, the escape process he goes through is difficult and frightening for him. Even after learning about the outside world, Jack felt at home in that space. But he doesn't want to go out there. However, Jack is afraid that he and his mother will return to that small room one day. As seen in the quote below, “Ma?” “What?” “Are we locked in?” “No.” She nearly barks it. “Of course not. Why, are you not liking it here?” “I mean but do we *have* to stay?” “No, no, we’re free as a bird” (214).

In the novel, one of the ways through which Jack's trauma is demonstrated is through the fact that he finds it difficult to adjust to this new reality. Because Jack needs to get used to this new world, he finds everything scary at first. Jack's panicked breath is heard alongside these noises, exemplifying that he is scared. As in the novel, Jack wants to go back to Room, which he tells his mother a couple of times, because he feels safe there and, contrary to what his mother believes, “Room's not stinky” (186), which is a direct quote from the book as well. Because Jack feels panicky, he has wet the bed and he has a hard time

doing certain things, such as going up the stairs, as was the case in the novel. Jack's sense of a shattered reality and his difficulty with adapting to this new world is well portrayed in Donoghue's work.

There's a woman too. "But surely, at a symbolic level, Jack's the child sacrifice," she says, "cemented into the foundations to placate the spirits." Huh?

"I would have thought the more relevant archetype here is Perseus — born to a walled-up virgin, set adrift in a wooden box, the victim who returns as hero," says one of the men. "Of course Kaspar Hauser famously claimed he'd been happy in his dungeon, but perhaps he really meant that nineteenth-century German society was just a bigger dungeon".(258)

This overly-intellectualized analysis of Jack's trauma, provided by a TV personality dissecting the kidnapping and captivity, exemplifies how the media and the public fail to recognise that the people they are discussing are, in fact, just that: real people who had to endure something that no one should ever have to endure and who should not be used as fodder for those seeking approval or confirmation. This scene illustrates that Jack's apparently alien problem—his failure to differentiate between fact and fiction—is actually a profoundly relatable and human problem, it is tragically easy to see real victims as mere characters, particularly in the current age of mass media.

Ma makes every effort to persuade her son to flee the location where they are treated as prisoners. Jack, a five-year-old boy, is deeply encouraged by his mother Joy to learn to run away. Ma does all of this for their own benefit. Jack tries to recall what Ma has said so

that he can leave the room. However, because their attempt to flee does not go as well as Ma predicted, Jack experiences a great deal of trauma. It reminds him too much that he is afraid to communicate with others. Even though it is not easy, Jack finally manages to free himself and Ma from the room they have been living in.

...Oh, I have to *Wriggle Out*, I was forgetting. I start to do like a snake, but Rug's got tighter I don't know how, I'm stuck I'm stuck. *Ma Ma Ma...* I can't get out like we practiced even though we practiced and practiced, it's all gone wrong, *sorry*. Old Nick's going to take me to a place and bury me and *the worms crawl in the worms crawl out...* I'm crying again, my nose is running, my arms are knotted under my chest, I'm fighting Rug because she's not my friend anymore. I'm kicking like karate but she's got me, she's the shroud for the corpses to fall in the sea.... (155-156).

Near the end of the novel, Jack has healed much more and a mixture shows him talking to the neighbour and playing with toys. Even so, because Jack has not fully recovered yet, it is made clear that he thinks back to Room through showing a shot of the skylight in Room together with a shot of him and his mother in Room. Hence, Jack is not fully recovered yet and still idealizes Room, as he does in the novel as well. At the end of the film, Jack has recovered much more when he starts talking about what he has learned, e.g. about streets, cities, and countries, and Jack's character reveals that he will now live in the world "forever and ever" (265). In the meantime, a montage is shown of Jack watering a plant, ice skating, and eating hamburgers with his mother as they promised to try everything at least once, which happens in the novel too.

....I say, "Want to go to Bed."

"They'll find us somewhere to sleep in a little while."

"No. *Bed.*"

"You mean in Room?" Ma's pulled back, she's staring in my eyes.

"Yeah. I've seen the world and I'm tired now". (174)

If Jack returns to the soundproof room after seeing how vast and open the world outside the room is, he seems to have a very traumatic experience. He doesn't want to be tied up and has to lie in the Wardrobe. Furthermore, the second trigger is when he eventually leaves the room. He looks out at the vast world; many humans, many trees, the stars, and other things cause him trauma. In this situation, Jack often feels it's easier to be safe in his room with his Ma than to wander about outside, which leaves him exhausted and frustrated.

After this scene, Jack and his mother says goodbye to Room, which is identical to the last scene in the book, and the audience sees from Jack's perspective how small Room really is. These scenes expose Jack's healing process and it becomes clear that he can finally understand the world and see Room for what it really is, which is identical to the novel in which Jack also says goodbye to Room and starts to adjust to his new reality.

"Good-bye, Room." I wave up at Skylight. "Say good-bye,"

I tell Ma.

"Good-bye, Room." Ma says it but on mute.

I look back one more time. It's like a crater, a hole where something happened. Then we go out the door.(282)

Room is partly a novel of returning home. While Ma wishes to never return to Room, Jack invites them to go because it reminds him of the comfortable confinement of his youth. When they come to play, it is no longer a jail and they will escape wherever they wish. In this moving quotation, Jack observes that the Room no longer exists as a structure, but rather as a 'crater'. This indicates that it has devolved into an artifact rather than a habitat: a location where 'something happened'. This return to Room acts as an odd form of "homecoming," stressing the process of healing trauma: only by revisiting the site of their nightmare and feeling like it no longer has any control over them. Finally, Jack and Ma move on.

Jack has a hard time adapting to the world, which is made evident in this novel. Furthermore, the version presents Jack's recovery process similar to how the novel describes it. As a result, the focus does not lie on the traumatic event itself but on the victim's traumatic experiences and recovery process. Ma demonstrates power determination as a woman and stands up against patriarchal system and oppression. Through Ma's struggles, Donoghue highlights several ways for moment to solve their problems. Moreover, Ma's has an important significance for gaining her own independence and a best partner for her son, Jack.

Chapter Five

Summation

Room encompasses the theme of imprisonment and freedom. It portrays the bitter life of Ma and Jack inside the Room. Emma Donohue's intension is to avoid the 'True Crime Genre' is indeed to be applauded. She has brought in the pathos the confinement through the simplicity of a five years old child. Donoghue's characterization of Ma and Jack, convey the effect of long imprisonment, superficially as a fairy tale of little boy, but in depth as a horror story. She, in order to divert the theme of the novel from crime genre, makes the character of Old Nick to fade away in the novel. She says that her only focus in writing the novel is to elevate the character of Ma and Jack, and to make the narrative poignant through the perspective of the five-years-old. But the voice of Jack makes the readers to ponder over the seriousness of confinement.

Room, fits perfectly into a century where woman are increasingly denouncing acts of violence against them, finding more space and ears ready to make their known thanks to mass medias. Through they are designing a growing popular interest in sharing traumas. According to Sarah Blackwood, 'Room is a formally inventive story about domesticity and sexuality'. She adds that '(it) asks us to perform the politically important task of closely examining women's experience of all those topics'.

Ma can be compared to Barathi Mukerjee's heroine, Jasmine and also John Galsworthy's hero, Falder. Before the birth of Jack, Ma, for two long years, is in solitary confinement. We can find the impact of solitary confinement in her when she says to Jack that she used to sleep for hours together, talk, scream and watch TV for a whole day which even made her to behave as mad sometimes. Along with solitary confinement, the major

assault she undergoes is the crudest sexual abuse almost every day in the room. Thus, the solitary confinement and the cruel sexual abuse, has made her feel alienated and suffer stronger physical and psychological trouble like Jasmine and Falder, in Jasmine and Justice respectively.

Jack's pungent and percussive language grabs hold of his constricted life with startling force and zest. Donoghue fuses artistry and credibility with the five-years-old Jack, for a child's perspective will be always fresh and packed with innocence. Jack tells the reader everything that goes on in his room, things that are harmless and normal enough to him, but unwittingly shows as the horrific truth for instance, the scenes where Jack has to hide in the wardrobe and count the creaks Old Nick makes on the bed with Ma or his off – the – cuff descriptions of Ma's bad wrist and rotted tooth, or the days where she simply lies in bed all day, acting gone. Donoghue, through the character of Jack pours light and air into a prison cell, and transforms his story from a prudent horror story into a redemptive tale of resilience and salvation.

The difference in perspective lays the foundation of the novel's conflict and story. Ma's heroic and selfless attempts to create a semblance of normal life in Room helped preserve Jack from the true horrors of their situation. But Jack's room is not same as Ma's room something that grows even more apparent in the novel, after they escape and learn to adjust the world outside. The outside world frightens Jack, and he wants to go back to Room. It is where he feels safe; it is where the world behaves as it should. Adjusting his perspective is a constant struggle, particularly when no one on the outside even his Ma appears willing to understand his longing for Room.

The story is told from 5 year old Jack's point of view as we learn about his everyday life in the *Room*, which is a proper noun because Jack doesn't know of living Outside Room. All of Room's filling including Wall, Bed, Rug, Melted Spoon, etc. are all exclusive living beings just like himself in Jack's world. It isn't until he turns 5 that his Ma tells him that there is more than just Room. There is an outside where a lot of what he sees on TV is actually real. Ma also reveals what Room actually means to her, a 7 year old jail that has kept her from her family and associates since the day she was kidnapped at 19.

Harmonizing two very different sentiments about *Room*, Donoghue unites an entirely imaginative tale about survival, escape, and readjusting in a new world. Donoghue impresses the readers most with her refined writing style. There are no pointless details when she sets up new situations and she doesn't spend long paragraphs describing environment with visualize language. In this case, she could have easily used young language in expressions of fright from Jack, but she doesn't. Instead, Jack's voice serves as the reader's guide as we move through our everyday world through the eyes of a secluded child living through all of it for the first time.

Thus, theme of the novel *Room* is how a mother's love will still keeps on. Throughout the novel, we know that Ma is going to do something for her guy and that she loves him. By reading the novel all know that there was a plot to give Jack a better life, and it succeeded. Mothers' devotion to her child is the theme of this novel.

A film with a similar theme, is stolen looking at Halie Berry, for example, she went through everything she could do to get her child back after he was taken to a nearby park. The film uses suspense to show how a mother's love can destroy anything that hurts her child.

Even though, Ma is depicted completely through the eyes of her son, Ma is just as compelling a character as Jack – perhaps even more because her development is only shown, and never told. One can figure it out for us because Jack’s unable to understand the context of the nineteen years, old girl taken from everything she knows, only to return seven years later to find a world that’s changed without her.

As Micheal Cunningham, in review of *Room* says, “*Room* is that rarest of entities” which is “potent, darkly beautiful and revelatory”. It is a novel to be read through countless lenses, psychological, sociological, and political. It presents an utterly unique way to talk about love Donoghue herself says,

I would have never written *Room* if I hadn’t glimpsed way to make the strangeness of Jack’s *Room* somehow universal- a sort of microcosm of our world... We all start in a small place (the womb) and emerge into a bigger one, then again in childhood we gradually move from a narrow social setting to a bewildering complex, even international one. So, Jack’s journey is everyone’s journey, just speeded up. (Weblog)

The *Financial Times*, rightly reviews on *Room* as, in filling this book with things that are both truly horrific and rather lovely, Emma Donoghue has achieved a work that is deeply unsettling on every level.

The fact that Emma Donoghue adds the part of sharing the trauma within the public sphere into her novel is a really clever choice to represent popular response to trauma. As Emma Donoghue underlines the representation of trauma in Ann Cvetkovich’s *An Archive of Feeling*, as “we living in a trauma culture” (*An Archive of Feeling*, 50). In fact, she

highlights how people are becoming more and more interested in violence cases as they get emotionally involved. She reports Mark Seltzer's quotes about what he calls 'a wound culture' and describe the cultural obsession with serial killings and other cites of violence that produce the pathological public sphere. Therefore, it is necessary to understand if and how the divulgation of trauma experiences is beneficial to the contemporary popular culture. According to Ann Cvetkovich, trauma constitutes an archive of feeling made by many forms of love, rage intimacy grief shame and more.

Anna Rothe's *Popular Trauma Culture* deals with the rise of popular psychology helped by the strong American individualism that suppresses the role of social institution and defines people as free agents of their action and destiny. Ann Rothe defines the Oprah Winfrey shows as the starting point for a new and widely known TV genre that disseminated popular psychology through the production of talk especially on violent and sexual victimization experiences. The purpose was mainly to simulate a group therapy followed by millions of spectators.

Steve Almonds on New York Times explains that in order to sell a book nowadays:

"It's no longer enough simply offer besieged publishers a nuanced work of imagination. [Publishers] need an aspirational figure the marketing people can dangle as interview bait. They need a pitch dramatic enough to resonate with the frantic metabolism of our perpetual new cycle. Because [those] books are about 100 times more likely to get reviewed and featured on National Public Radio and anointed by Oprah." (Web)

Nevertheless, as the writer herself admits, the novel was not meant to be a crime novel but it is supposed to be focused more on Jack, the superhero character and mother - child relationship. At this point of perception, *Room* acquires a subtle ambivalence. It is clear that *Room* was written following the popular demand of the trauma culture characterized by the denunciation of sexual abuses, violence against women and children with a sophisticated allusion to feminism. Therefore, *Room* is a misogynistic exploration of suffering misogyny causes women which still preserves some characteristics typical of a fairy tale.

To conclude, though *Room* is an ultimate story of love between the mother and child, it is an obvious representation of trauma culture as it throws light on darkness of rape, abduction and captivity.

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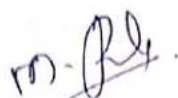
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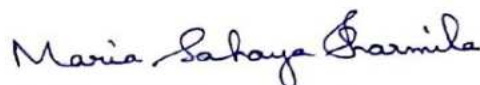
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Journey for Self Exploration** in **Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature and is a work done by Maria Alphonsa. J during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



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Journey of Self exploration in Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises*.

A project submitted to

St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

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in partial fulfilment of the requirement

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

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(REG. NO. 19SPEN05)



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST.MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

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WORKS CITED

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Journey of self exploration Jaishree Misra's** *Ancient Promises* is submitted to St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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MARIA ALPHONSA.J

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PREFACE

Jaishree Misra's first novel *Ancient Promises* beautifully portrays about a woman how she thinks and behaves when it comes to love and marriage. Misra's protagonist are liberated women, they are educated and able to live individually they do not depend on men. She is not against marriage but against the compulsion of marriage. This book depicts how Janu struggle after her marriage. She demands for an equal importance and some freedom in man and woman relationship. Misra wants men should treat their wives as their betterhalf not bitterhalf.

The first chapter focuses about Indian Literature, about the Indian women writers and their works. Biography of Jaishree Misra concise abstract of the novel *Ancient Promises*.

The second chapter entitled **Female Emancipation** examines the feministic view and also it depicts ups and downs , success and failures in protagonist life.

The third chapter entitled **Noteworthiness in Parenthood** shows that Janaki's parents restriction towards her life and make her to follow their tradition throughout her life.

The fourth chapter highlights **Self forage through parenthood** brings out the bond between Janaki and Riya, even in the lightless surroundings.

The fifth **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Indian Writing in English is defined as literature originally in English written by writers who are Indians by birth, heritage or nationality. It has developed into an important part of world literature in English. This achievement of worldwide stature becomes all the more laudable and significant because of the miscellaneous limitations under which the Indian English writer has to write. Apart from the ethical pull of all literary practice in which the external characteristic of reality has a secondary task, the Indian English writer is also faced with a distinctive socio- linguistic setback. It is because of the fact that, English is not a foreign language in India; it is only the language of scholarly make-up and not of emotional make-up.

In shaping Indian writing in English the role of English is very central. Though English is not the native language it practically outsmarted other Indian languages. Hence English has become an essential part of Indian life. It is as an outcome of its association with England, Indians started writing in English which lined the way for the surfacing of Indian Writing in English. Today we see that Indian Writing in English is striding towards advancement by leaps and bounds. It is being taught as a separate discipline in almost all the universities of India. It is also being read and enjoyed in every nook and corner of the country.

At present, Indian writing in English has fascinated the scholarly and critical consideration in Indian and foreign universities. It figures as a paper in many universities in India and syllabi of Indian Writing in English are given in many American and

Commonwealth Universities. The constructive development in the dominion of Indian Writing in English is the increasing interest of Indian English writers in the Indian literary and critical tradition. What finally establishes Indian Writing in English is not just an overflow of English Literature rather it is the feeling of Indians – in the choice of subject, in the quality of contemplation and the presentation of emotions and above all the innovative application of the language.

Indian writing in English is chiefly a phenomenon that arises out of the British arrival in India. The scope of the Indian Writing in English is an outcome of the urgencies ensuing from this encounter. Indian Writing in English is no longer a follower following the course of its British counterparts, but it has engraved a new lane of its own and a new image that is replete with constant trust and anticipation, myths and traditions, customs and rites, that our enormous country has preserved in her bosom since time immemorial. It has come out of its prime and started yielding fruits of Indian outlook.

Indian writing in English has come a long way ever since it commenced its journey. It is being increasingly recognized as one of the authentic voices of India. Srinivasa Iyengar elaborates in *Indian Writing in English* that “Indian Writing in English was once ‘a tool’ in the hands of the leaders of the Indian renaissance ‘to rouse the prostrate nation’, to ‘protest against the evil of foreign domination’, has grown ‘into a creative akshay patra, amuda surabhi’” (703). The works of great masters are not a replication of English literary pattern but very much original and intensely Indian in both theme and spirit. They have given a new facet to English Literature. Their permanent impression on the pages of history is powerful and stable.

The Indian English writers have been giving expression to their innovative spirit in the choice and implementation of narrative technique. Conscious efforts have been persistently put in, mainly by major Indian poets and novelists, in shaping Indian Writing in English into a fit vehicle to express the vital creative urge, impact of the West and present intellectual tradition of literary theory. Indian Writing in English has been triumphant in reflecting a realistic image of the Indian narrative tradition, a portrait coloured neither by an exaggerated sense of native attachment nor by unjustified cynosure.

Indian writing in English has been highly praised around the world for its novelty, radical approaches to the skill of storytelling and reworking of language. While the older generation continues to create literary masterpieces, a newer generation of writing talent has emerged, making sure that the wellspring of imagination in the country has not run dry.

New writers are continuously budding. This suggests that English has come into the soul of India. After independence, works of several Indian writers are published and commended abroad and are winning awards in full competence with native English authors. Indian Writing in English reflects India's extended and dreary journey from the traditional, secure, stationary island to turbulent vibrant ocean of modernity.

Post-independence writing in English has stood the trial of the moment and the test of time. It has got ample significant applause and quite a share of critical condemnation. It flourishes in novelty, glamour, humour, satire, hybridization, slangs and new coinages. The acknowledgement of Indian writers abroad gave them greater self-scrutiny. The Post-independence writers wrote about the quick, communal and political changes that took place. Such changes evoked a diversity of reaction from writers. M.K. Naik aptly describes this in his *A History of Indian Literature* as:

Writers included nostalgic idealization of the immediate past of the days of freedom struggle, a strong desire to re-discover one's roots in the ancient Indian ethos as also to examine this ethos afresh in the light of westernization and satirical comments, both on darker side of the freedom movement and its aftermath and the decline of values in all spheres of life in the present. (191-192)

The Indian experience of life is articulated variously by different writers through different genres – poetry, prose, drama, fiction and short stories. No writing develops in a void. Themes, forms, suppositions, outlooks, and even rhetorical techniques are determined and given direction by the socio-cultural forces that form the environment in which the writer lives, and to which he or she reacts.

Ample number of novelists, on the literary sphere, have given vent to their artistic urge in no other language other than English and earned credulity to create Indian fiction as a major force in the world of fiction. Of all the genres, fiction is considered to be the most socially-oriented because it represents human associations in its diverse aspects. It is the readiest and most suitable way of representing experiences and thoughts in context of time. It articulates broadly the cherished social awareness of the society in which it is born and evolved.

Indian writing in English in general and the Indian English fiction in particular made its making voices on the native soil, which lead the progressive thoughts and experiments in the novel writing. The Thirties has been an era of experiment and expansion of Indian English fiction. This is the period when Indian English fiction acquired autonomous

existence in the intricate body of Indian Writing in English, providing as it were a direct access to the Indian mind and heart.

Indian fiction during the early period mainly dealt with the problems in India at that time. They focused upon the National Movement for political independence. This was unavoidable because of the long years of struggle and sacrifice. Some novels emphasized on the subjugation of the individual in a merciless society. They brought out the misery of the lower castes and classes of India and made an appeal for social change. Professor Iyengar speaks about Indian English novelists' preoccupation with social life as: "Social life in a country of the size of India is so full of vagaries and varieties that the novelist with an observant eye and an understanding heart will find the material spread out before him to be literally inexhaustible" (327).

After independence the Indian writers looked at the Indian panorama from the post colonial point of view. There were new anticipations, but the social, economic, religious, political, and familial tribulations that were submerged in the flood of the national movement appeared and attracted notice of the creative writers. The partition, the communal riots after partition, the problem of casteism, the suppression of women and the poverty of the illiterate masses became the main issues to be dealt with. Slowly the focus moved to an individual's exploration of identity that is pitted against unpleasant social conditions.

The literary giants of early Indian Writing in English are Raja Rao, R.K.Narayan, and Mulk Raj Anand. They presented caste system and its demerits. They highlighted the injustice done to the subjugated and the margins. After them, writers like Bhabani Battacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, and Khuswant Singh have added more to the Indian novels in English. G.V.Desani, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Vikram

Seth, and Upamanyu Chatterjee are a few novelists who have contributed further to the corpus of Indian novels. They have set an innovative style in Indian Writing.

A study of the woman in Indian fiction reveals that much of what has been said of the image of woman in Western literature is true of her Indian counterpart. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a popular social and educational reformer who paved the way for progress of women in colonial India. Roy is known for his efforts to abolish sati and child marriage. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, along with Dwarkanath Tagore founded the Brahmo Samaj, an important socio-religious reform movement in Bengal in 1828. It was through the Brahmo Samaj that many social evils prevalent at that time were done away with, such as polygamy, untouchability, infanticide, purdah system and discrimination against women. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the pioneer of this movement promoted education for women as he thought it was the best way for society to move while the works of Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay sensitively portrayed the plight of the Indian women and explored their confines well ahead of time, they also gently encouraged them to break free of society-created shackles. In recent times, there are vocal women like Urvashi Butalia focusing on women-centric literature with her publishing house, '*Kali*.'

Women writers of the mid-nineties have had considerable success in portraying woman as protagonists in plots centered on issues such as female marginalization, marital discord, sexual suppression, alienation and search for identity. In Kamala Markandaya's early novels, the women battle with existential problems such as poverty and illness. These are replaced by a quest for autonomy and self-realisation in later works. Most of them are conformists who face calamities courageously and see wisdom in adjustment and compromise. Cast in the mould of the mythical Sita and Savitri, they are symbols of sacrifice,

suffering and tolerance. “Rukmani’s traditional mindset is revealed when she bewails the fact that her first-born is a girl (Markandaya 2010). Her life exemplifies the passive acceptance which is a characteristic of majority of Indian women. Malini’s life in *A Handful of Rice* reflects the same stoic acceptance of adversity. She bears the vagaries of life uncomplainingly, as she struggles for survival. The women are economically better off than their predecessors but they too suffer due to no fault of theirs. Markandaya turns away from the conformist mould in her delineation of Roshan. Separated from her husband, unconventional in speech and behaviour and a born leader, she is yet held up as a role model for the other women. Despite reservations, they are attracted by her. In her, Markandaya strikes perfect balance between personal freedom and public concern. The estrangement of Premala and Kit draws attention to the pitfalls in a traditionally arranged marriage. The novel also brings to the floor, the problems of adjustment a woman faces when thrown into an alien milieu. Markandaya demystifies marriage, motherhood and the traditionally dependent woman but advocates the need for love and family in a woman’s life.

Mahasweta Devi, as a social activist, with an acute sense of Indian history, has interrogated into the intersection of politics, gender and class. She is incessantly engaged in portraying the inner lives of the tribal communities and landless labourers in her novels, short stories and plays. In *Draupadi*, Devi’s venture of rewriting an episode from the great epic, the Mahabharata is a feminist response to the myth of Draupadi. The force of the story lies in its grounding in the subaltern’s body, the female body which is only exploited. In the reinvented mythic image of Draupadi, the body of Draupadi figures forth the unutterable ugliness and cruelty as she articulates a truth that speaks of her situation.

Nayantara Sahgal's novels present the impact of cultural upheaval upon man-woman relationship and the institution of marriage. Independent-minded women suffer fractured relationships in a society that sets double standards for men and women. Her women characters rebel and opt for an unrestrained, unconventional life governed by a more acceptable moral code. Sahgal's novels, in effect, register the protest of her women protagonists. Sarojini in *Storm in Chandigarh* makes an honest admission of her premarital affair to her husband expecting acceptance from him. But Inder, the husband, not only does not understand, but contracts a relationship with another woman. Finally, Sarojini rebels against her husband's double standard and walks out of her marriage in search of the companionship she could not find in marriage.

Geeta, in Rama Mehta's *Inside the Haveli* represents the modern, educated woman caught between tradition and modernity. She fights the Haveli culture, a symbol of oppression and tyranny of custom. However, the sincere affection, sympathy and understanding she receives from her husband's family in Haveli arouses in her a spirit of compromise. She compromises on her individuality and self-assertion and contents herself with working a slow change in her tradition-bound husband. Furthermore, she derives satisfaction from freeing the servants of their ignorance and superstition, by initiating them into the rudiments of modern education. She sends the servant girl, Seetha to school and opposes her own daughter's early engagement. The novelist appears to be conveying the message that age-old traditions and practices cannot be jettisoned overnight. Change must be wrought at a steady and acceptable pace. The twenty-first century is likely to witness the richest vein of women's literature. It will be based on the richness of female experiences. The copious outpouring of contemporary

women has shown the frustrations, struggles, sufferings, and also their successful experiences.

The Modern Indian women Novelists in English like Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharathi Mukherjee, Shobhaa de, Meena Alexander, Arundhati Roy, Anita Nair, Manju Kapur, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni and Jaishree Misra have made their permanent mark in the field of English fiction. In their writings, they have tried to free women from the age long control of male domination. A woman writer is a writer who writes about woman as a woman. Their writing comes out of their consciousness of the conflict between their idea of themselves as human beings and the idea that society has of them as women. All this makes their writing very clearly a woman's writing. Anita Desai enjoys a special place in Indian English fiction as the first writer to introduce the element of psychological realism in the genre of novels. All her early novels are centered on women novelists who protest against the monotony, drabness, injustice and humiliation of their lives. Through them, Desai expresses a woman's sensitive state of mind. She delves into the disturbed psyche of the modern middle class Indian woman and shows how societal pressure coupled with her deep sense of alienation can drive a woman to a state of mental crisis. In *Voices in the City*, Anita Desai presents the plight of a sensitive and independent woman, Monisha caught in the web of a hostile society. The character of Monisha is the representative of many young women who are trapped in society. She is the mouth-piece of Anita Desai in projecting her point of view that the existing social ills are the causes of disintegration in the family life and disillusionment in the personal lives of modern Indian women. By portraying the mental agony of Monisha, Anita Desai emerges as a sincere champion of women's causes. Shashi Deshpande is one of the prominent voices to arrive on the scene of Indian Literature in

English. She has, nevertheless, created a place for herself in the galaxy of Indian Women Novelists in English. She excels in projecting a realistic picture of Indian Middle-class educated women, who though financially independent, are confronting the dilemma of existence – a phenomenon that shows itself. In this regard, she is a phenomenologist, trying to understand in her fiction, the relationship of sexes from the phenomenological standpoint. Shashi Deshpande's remarkable novel, *That Long Silence* portrays the dilemma of a woman writer who seeks self-expression through her writing while remaining a passive housewife in real life. Through Jaya, the protagonist, Deshpande examines woman's own role in her victimisation and voices the need to break the long silence of one half of humanity. Being a woman herself, she sympathises with women. In one of the interviews about feminist approach, an author states: "If others see something feminist in my writings, I must say that it is not consciously done. It is because the world for women is like that and I am mirroring the world" (Deshpande 1998).

Bharathi Mukherjee is one of the most widely known immigrant writers of America. She has tried to create a new relationship between man and woman based on equality, non-oppression, non-exploitation so that the creative potentials of both are maximised as individuals and not as gender dichotomies. The male, as a representative of the patriarchal society has, at last, been jerked off the center of woman's gravitation. The woman is preparing now to be her own gravitational force, beyond the fullness of patriarchy. In *Desirable Daughters*, Mukherjee examines the stubborn potency of myth in the face of overwhelming change in the lives of the three desirable daughters, Tara Lata, Parvati and Padma. Tara struggles to unravel the secrecy surrounding her past, to discover the truth behind her sisters' prevarications and fragmented stories.

Shobhaa De is essentially a feminist writer. She concentrates on women's problems and gives a new approach to them. She recognises the displacement and marginalisation of women and tries to bring about a healthy attitude towards women through her writings. The main concern of Shobhaa De as a writer is women and the problems faced by them in the present day phallogentric society. In her novels, she examines the position and condition of Indian women. Though her women are Indian, she limits her women by choosing them from the elitist urban class of Mumbai. Unlike the ordinary rural women, Shobhaa De's protagonists, the neo-rich women are particularly, "Educated and attractive, confident and assertive socialite women" (Pathak 1991). Shobhaa De's novel *Second Thoughts* (1996) deals with the story of a young middle class Bengali named Maya. Maya marries Ranjan, Mrs. Malik's only son who is a Mumbai-based foreign-retained Bengali. Maya, the newly-wed bride is more fascinated by her love for Mumbai than the prospect of having married Ranjan. After the marriage, Maya's disillusionment begins. Ranjan does not have faith in her and considers her to be a rival in his love for his mother. However on second thought, she learns to compromise with and survive the sordidness of not only Mumbai but also her marriage. The images of women and the female experience abound in Meena Alexander's works. The feminine images in Alexander's works tend to centre on strong and independent women who defy culturally imposed conventions as they strive to discover and make heard their voices. But, "the discovery does not take place in a flash; it involves a gentle evolution-gradual emergence-a sense of growth" (Dutt 1994). Meena Alexander draws on the influence of family in order to create an artistic vision: the grandmother figure, or the older woman, holds a prominent position in her works. Alexander's feminism, and the diasporic consciousness that characterises much of her writing, is deeply rooted in India and in her childhood travels:

it is the consciousness of being ‘othered.’ Of being cut from, or being set apart from, in her own particular version of dislocation that has constantly surfaced amidst the external civilian struggle in *Nampally Road*. The female protagonist, Mira Kannadical, suffers from the pain and violence of dislocation. The other famous and renowned novelist is Arundhati Roy. She believes that, “A feminist is a woman who negotiates herself into a position where she has choices” (Roy 2005). Arundhati Roy has never admitted that she is a feminist but *The God of Small Things*, reveals at many places her feminist stance and her protagonists represent feminine sensibility. Arundhati Roy’s mother says, “Arundhati is a born talker and a born writer. While, she was studying in school, it was a problem to find a teacher, who could cope with her voracious appetite for reading and writing. Most of the time, she educated herself on her own. I can remember our vice principal, Sneha Zaharias resorting to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* as a text for the little fourth grade” (Roy 2005). *The God of Small Things* is basically a saga novel that depicts the problems of patriarchal domination and female subalternity and the clash between the two rooted in the specific geocultural reality of Ayemenem. It is a feminist novel in the pity and terror that it evokes for the condition of women in a particular cultural milieu. The enclosure of marriage is analyzed from the angle of woman’s point of view. The horrors of self-willed, the failed or the successful endeavors of escape are recorded authentically. Female preoccupations with specific roles and images are carefully diluted. The major issue of feminism discussed in this novel is the struggle engaged by women for the establishment of their identity, their economic and sexual freedom. Ammu is a valiant fighter for these causes, though the options open to her in the male-dominated order are not viable at all. Anita Nair is one of the most promising writers to reckon with. In *Ladies Coupe*, Anita Nair deals with the concept of patriarchy and signifies a

relationship of inequality. The story is an attempt to show how in life, suppression and oppression do not always come in recognisable forms, but often under the guise of love, protection and the assurance of security. Though patriarchy is a common concept in every woman's life, Anita Nair depicts carefully the diversity within each woman, as she did not want to put the lives of women to one ideal. The other noted novelist is Manju Kapur. She is a popular novelist with a considerable impact of her writing on society. Kapur has taught English Literature in Miranda House, Delhi University for fourteen years and took voluntary retirement to devote herself completely to creative writing in English. Kapur's *Difficult Daughters* presents the image of suffering women. In her writings, the author has emphasized on the issues in the context of patriarchy, inter-religious marriage, and family bond, and male-female bond, co-existence of past and present. She has narrated her women protagonists as a victim of biology, gender, domestic violence and circumstances. Kapur thinks that there is a man within every woman and a woman in every man. She also adds that when manhood is questioned, womanhood is fragmented. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, in her novel *Sister of my Heart*, presents her female protagonists; Sudha and Anju live in a female universe. The idea of female bonding is explored, though there is a greater focus on the theme in the novel. Female bonding is definitely different from male bonding. Women also relate to each other in a manner quite unlike the way they relate to men. Divakaruni has expressed her ideas about female bonding in her article for Bold Type

In the best friendships ... with women, there is a closeness that is unique, a sympathy that comes from somewhere deep and primal in our bodies and does not need explanation, perhaps because of the life-changing experiences we share-menstruation, childbirth, menopause. The same tragedies, physical or

emotional, threaten us. ... We take joy in the same small, good things of life. ... Oh, we fight too. We're sometimes furiously competitive and bitchy and exasperated. But ultimately we can be ourselves with each other. Ourselves with all our imperfections. Ourselves uncomplicated by all the emotions that complicate our other relationships: duty, lust, romance, the need to impress or control. We can be women and that, as women, we are understood. (Divakaruni2013)

Jaishree Misra has joined the growing number of women writers from India, on whom the image of the suffering but stoic woman eventually breaking traditional boundaries has had a significant impact. They invigorated the English language to suit representations and narration of what they felt about their women and their lives in postmodern India. In culture, where individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas, marital bliss and woman's role at home is a central focus. Jaishree Misra was born in 1961 to a Malayali family in New Delhi. Misra's life is as dramatic as her books. As a Keralite, growing up in an army family in Delhi, Jaishree Misra lived an apparently Western lifestyle. She fell in love as a teenager, but was directed into an arranged marriage. The marriage was a disaster, and worsened with the birth of a mentally challenged child. Her daughter led Misra to the world of Special Education. In 1990, she left for England again, this time to do a post-graduate diploma in Special Education at the Institute of Education in London. It was here where she came into contact with her childhood sweetheart, who had never married. Eventually she filed for divorce, and after a bitter battle gained custody of her child, and remarried. Indian women writers usually dwell too much on domestic concerns, the limited sphere of home and heart. But Jaishree Misra, who started up her writing career in 2000, proves to be different

from the rest of the contemporary writers and thinks out of the box. Jaishree Misra explained, “I took to writing in 1999. Basically, I was working as a radio journalist in BBC, but they put me on the early morning shift. Since, she (my daughter) was young, she needed me. I gave up my job and started to write a memoir because I was bored”. It became my first book, *Ancient Promises*. Then events overtook me. (2012) Her works include *Ancient Promises* (2000), *Accidents like Love & Marriage* (2001), *Afterwards* (2004), *Rani* (2008), *Secrets & Lies* (2009), *The Little Book of Romance* (2009), *Secrets & Sins* (2010), *A Scandalous Secret* (2011), *Of Mothers & Others* (2013) and *A Love Story for My Sister* (2015). Jaishree Misra’s phenomenal works acquire a significant new meaning when read in the point of view of crisscross dogmas of cultural critical thinking. In a few of the novels, the readers can find the portrayal of a meek, submissive woman who plays a subservient role to father, husband, or son. On the other hand, Jaishree Misra also pictures the really bold woman, who breaks the clutches of patriarchy and leads an independent life.

Jaishree Misra’s first novel, *Ancient Promises*, published in 2000, is semi-autobiographical. It is about her unsuccessful arranged marriage followed by a divorce ten years later. Janu, young and vulnerable, gives up Arjun, her first lover, to enter into an arranged marriage. Many years later, she is gradually shut out by the coldness of her husband’s family and her husband’s indifference to her and her daughter’s needs. Janaki leaves for Delhi to give a scholarship interview and chances to meet Arjun. Old passions are aroused and the couple realizes they still feel deeply for each other. Janu promises to file for divorce to end the miserable marriage flees with Riya to England and restarts a new life with Arjun. As if by magic, Suresh reconciles himself to a divorce, hands over Riya and all’s well that ends well. It is a moving story about marriage, divorce and motherhood.

Chapter Two

Female Emancipation

Feminism includes a variety of movements, ideologies and moral philosophies dealing with gender inequality and equal opportunities for women in social, cultural and political terms. Feminists have split the past of feminism into three 'waves.' So many feminists and feminist movements are on the rise in many ways to pull up women from many kinds of suffering and social issues. Of the numerous feminine forms, Among the various forms of feminism, in all social and economic ways, we focus deeply on radical feminism, which is a radical reordering of society in which male dominance is abolished. Radical feminists, rather than by a strictly democratic method, aim to dismantle patriarchy by questioning current social norms and institutions. This includes challenging the notion of traditional gender roles, opposing the sexual objectification of women, and raising public awareness about such issue as rape and violence against women.

Jaishree Misra, prominent Indian contemporary writer depicted the gulf between the husband and wife and the daughter in law with other in- laws in “*Ancient Promises*”. Jaishree Misra is one among them. In *Ancient Promises* Jaishree Misra reveals how Janu, the protagonist suffers from teenage love, parent’s pressure for marriage, cultural variation, conflicts in marital life. Through Janu’s character the author reveals feministic views and shows how patriarchy changes the mind of women. when Suresh of Maraar family and Janaki (janu), Delhi brought up teenage girl whose roots are from Kerala. Like all teenage girls she also falls in love with Arjun a handsome young boy of next boys school in Delhi. She absolutely forced to move from jeans to sari after marriage, from her free-speaking

English to little-known Malayalam; striving to handle her in laws and above that she managed to survive with a husband who was still with the mind of escape and more than that able to make her mentally challenged child Riya comfortable.

Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises*, is full of keen emotional observations and culminates in a sane and balanced view of life. Janaki alias Janu, the protagonist of the novel is a Delhi brought up teenage girl but her roots are from Kerala. At the age of eighteen she is married to a Maraar family in Kerala through the alliance brings from her grandmother whose native is there. The novel begins with the line of "My marriage ended today" that is the divorce of Janu from Suresh Maraar whom she married to. Janu's mother Mani worried about her daughter's life and her granddaughter Riya who is mentally disabled. The base for the above incident is matched marriage, cross culture and the parent's immediate and instant decision about the marriage of their daughter who is only in the age of eighteen.

Jaishree Misra is an eminent writer who brilliantly depicts how she thinks and feels and acts in love and marriage when it comes to a woman. The heroine of Misra is free woman, educated and willing to survive independently, not dependent on men. She is not against marriage, but against the compulsion of marriage that leads to the tragic end of many women.

Love is the promised goal of a traditional culture. Marriage inhibits the drive toward a conception of oneself as an autonomous human being who is not influenced by circumstances or societal prescriptions. A family consists of members connected both by blood and by marriage. Family arrangements and partnerships and responsibilities vary from one group to another. In favour of promoting patriarchal ideals were the family responsibilities and the established rules of ethics. Man has been . linked to force and

strength since the dawn of time. Man governs, subjugates, and his pre-eminence is still enjoyed. Without seeking some acknowledgment, a woman carries out her duties. Values, customs, rules and social roles reflected the roles and actions that were thought suitable for the sexes.

The gender gap is the product of the dynamic functioning of fiscal, political, social and other influences. She is also not fully emancipated, considering the major shifts in the role of women in society in the post-independence period. By analyzing the Indian social system that involves structures such as caste, common family and religious traditions and rituals that consolidate the inferior status of women, these inconsistencies can better be understood.

In her "*Ancient Promises*," Jaishree Misra highlights the ongoing struggle between the heroine Janu and her parents because of her love affair. It is a novel that gives equal attention to the fear that a young girl's parents feel and the desperate need for their parents to consider girls like Janu.

Janu's first meeting with Arjun took place with her classmate, Leena. After a few weeks of their introduction, Janu and Arjun began holding informal meetings. They had similar interests. Janu was concerned that she, a sixteen-year-old, was prepared to feel that beautiful feeling called "love." She wondered of her parents when she was a cat on the wall, unable to identify whether it was love or not. Never before had she hidden an unknown mystery from her friends. Today, though, the secret of loving Arjun and shielding her from her parents was pure excitement.

Janu's father was absolutely resistant to the idea of love marriages. He never liked young people falling in love, nor did he want his daughter to be harmed by all the thoughts of

"love" surrounding her. The parents of Janu lived a traditional life and wished their daughter the same. It was incomprehensible to them the thought of a child having a decision on her potential husband. They believed in children settling for their parents' most chosen gifts in life. Both Janu's mother and father had The most critical decisions of their lives were left for their parents to make. They felt deeply that their parents understood what the best would be for them.

Janu's love develops in her friend Leena's house. A lover of Janu, he leaves for England for his greater Study. He reveals that he plans to visit his mother in England. Actually, Janu is put under Domestic-arrest. She was taken to Kerala by her parents. She was taken to Kerala by her parents. With her boyfriend, she feels uncertain about her prospects, Arjun. She's got no options. She's convinced that her long wait for him is pointless. She is with her, and with her, From ancestors. Her parents are involved in having her married. Janu writes a letter to Arjun explaining this:

I'm sure we both knew this was coming, so here it finally is. I'm getting married in two weeks's time. To a businessman who lives in Kerala. I've met him once, he seems pleasant enough. I don't suppose you want to know much more about him, and there's little more I can add to that description anyway.

(63)

Janu agrees to marry according to her parents' wishes. She marries into the Maraar family. 'The Maraars are an old and gracious family; half the families would have died for an alliance like this' (66)

Janu wants to complete her B.A degree. The Maraars promise to allow her to complete her studies. Unwilling to hurt the feelings of her parents, Janu gets married to

Suresh at the age of eighteen. Her husband belongs to a socially respected Maraar family. She makes a sacrifice for the sake of the family. Janu has to now ensure that she fits into the mould of the ideal wife the Hindu Pativrata (Chasteful woman) taking into account the complexity of life, different histories, cultures and different structures of values, the women's question, despite basic solidarity, need to tackled in relation to the socio-cultural situation. Patriarchy's influence on Indian society. It differs from the west and hence the novelists of Indian women such as Jasishree Misra. They sought to evolve their own stream of reality-based feminism. In a loveless engagement, the heroine discovers herself from where she makes a painful. A quest to explore her full ability. The husband of Janu is a spineless one with no personality of his own, perhaps. With his wife, he shows no concern. He, under several pretexts, He's extending his time outside the building. Janu is trying to fit into the mould of a real, meek and meek guy wife submissive. Maraar family never welcomed her wholeheartedly. They are asking her to comply a road trodden by a diligent Hindu wife and a compliant daughter-in-law. She's finding herself with no sense of family ties, alone.

Janu gives birth to a little baby girl Riya. Sadly, Riya is a mentally-challenged teen. She wants extra care and attention rather than specific attention. Standard kids do. Misra claims she has Riya of learning difficulties too. The husband has little interest in Janu's daughter. When Riya was born, the only hope Janu had for her was Happiness has been broken.

‘This child is deffinnitely mentally handicapped. There is no doubt, see she has all the features, high arched plate, tongue-thrust’ conducting with a flourish, ‘in fact I think that she will never even speak.’ Amma nodded her

approval and Dr Sasi-the famous-nephrologist congratulated his friend on her expert diagnosis. (127)

Janaki decides to take Riya to Arizona where she can admit her to a specialist school for children like Riya. She wants to continue her education by getting admission for M.A in special education. She needs much money for the treatment of Riya and for her education. She applies for scholarship. She leaves for Delhi to attend a scholarship-interview. Now she is eager to see her lover Arjun in Delhi. Old passions arise and she realises the need to meet him. She visits Leena, her friend in Delhi. At Leena's residence Janu meets Arjun. Janu tells her husband that she wants to file for divorce to end their miserable marriage. Their conversation reflects their mind:

‘Suresh, I have to ask you please, I don't want to hurt you . . .’ I knew I was sounding weak and pleading and not firm and assertive as I'd planned.

‘Suresh ’ It was coming out now, all in a rush, nothing could stop it now,

‘Suresh-I want a divorce.’ He looked at me with a kind of pretend surprise on his face. He wasn't shocked, but I could see he felt obliged to have shock, hurt, horror....We're not happy together. That's the point. I'm not happy with you, I suppose I've never been. It's not your fault, I suppose we are just different. We seem to need different things from life.’ (p.217)

Suresh attempts to encourage her to stay behind. Janu sees this as a profit and exposes her love affair. Arjun with. She is sticking to her decision to go overseas. Suresh is trying to pretend to Janu that he is trying to. She's able to forget her past and forgive her, because she's his mom, after all. She is mindful of her husband's tricks. She walks to Arjun's house, And she succumbs to her passion for Arjun there. Janu starts reacting to every step she makes,

lover's creation. We met again after ten-year period of silence in circumstances not dissimilar to those described in the book effectively ending my marriage (307).

Janu made up her mind to leave for England. Her husband and her in-laws have created many obstacles to prevent her from going abroad. Her husband's ego got deflated as his wife was leaving him. No one in the Maraar family had gone through such kind of experience before. The Maraars admitted her to an asylum. Janu's mother helps to come out of that dungeon. Suresh played another trick by taking away Riya with him. He thinks that Janu cannot live without her daughter. Her life without Riya is incomplete.

At last in the legal fight Janu wins. Suresh had to reconcile himself to the divorce and handed his daughter to her mother. He nods for divorce. Janu is not ready to suffer and sacrifice as the traditional Indian women do. She wants to project her image as an individual, free from all kinds of conservative thinking which seeks to overthrow. She is ready to fight her way against all odds coming in her way in fulfilling her aspirations. She rebels against the existing patriarchal quotes and social norms which either in theory or in practice tends to relegate the woman to a secondary place in society.

To protect herself and her daughter, she starts revolting against the snobbish conventions of the Hindu patriarchal society. In England Janu meets Arjun and they spend all most every weekend together. Her studies also progress. On her return Janu's mother informs her that Suresh is ready for the divorce and also to return Riya. In search of true love and self-preservation she takes an unconventional step to create her own space and make humaneness triumph over mere customs and traditions. Through her revolutionary decision Janu paves a path to emancipation and establish the right balance between duty and human dignity. Whether Arjun can adjust with Riya or not now no longer seems important. She

would go to England with Riya and admit her to the special school for mentally retarded children like Riya. She would give Arjun a chance to accept Riya as his daughter. This is her promise to her Riya. It is an ancient promise every mother makes to her children. It is a kind of ancient dues that she pays. Janu says:

Somewhere in my distant past, perhaps even a thousand years ago I had done something that committed to dedicating this life to Riya's care. Had I been a thirsty traveller at her door and had she taken me in, washed my feet, fed and watered me? I would never know what ancient promise I had made to her, just as she would never what deed had robbed her of words in this life. (160)

Feminism as such has to attempt a new definition of woman's role in the wider social frame. The feminist literary tradition is grown out of the anxieties of woman's life. It is true and we come to know that from the novel "Ancient promises" which portrays the life of Jaishree Misra partly.

Jaishree Misra did not argue against marriage but she demands for an equal importance and some freedom in Man – woman relationship. According to our Indian culture, a woman leaving home with her boyfriend is a huge offense, particularly after marriage. She knows that very well, but when she comes to the realization that she might not be content staying in this place, she crosses the ethical rules and it also spoils her child's life, so she decided to leave for England after some ten years of struggle.

Jaishree Misra argues that life is given by God and that even her mother has no ability to bring an end to it. So she drives her foot forward as a modern writer and shakes the fence around her to launch her new quest towards a new life.

Ancient Promises is a novel which can be prescribed as a sincere effort of Jaishree Misra. It depicts up and down, success and failures in her life as she strives to take the reins of her life into her own hands. The novel holds the readers' attention and the curiosity mounts with every page. Misra says:

While I had, obviously, a husband and in-laws in my first marriage, I wish to state quite clearly that they bear no resemblance what so ever to the corresponding characters in the book. For those of you looking for a sequel, here's one of sorts. I married my Arjun eventually and Riya, happily lives with us. The songs are deeper, certainly. Sometimes sweeter. I hope I remember always to be grateful I had another chance to rebuild that tower in the sky. (308)

Chapter Three

Noteworthiness in Parenthood

Misra's protagonists is educated woman who does not has to depend on men to live. She is not against the institution of marriage, but appears to be against compelling one to get married. Feminist movements aim at empowering the position of women in the society. Jaishree Misra's novel *Ancient Promises* is a typical example of the way a woman is treated in the Indian society. There have been significant changes in the roles of women. Despite all this, she is still not completely emancipated. Women are supposed to behave in a particular way according to certain rules and codes of conduct fashioned by society. In an ordinary Indian family, the birth of a boy is preferred to that of a girl. He is considered an asset and she, a liability. This is from where a system of patriarchy originates. An image of the so-called ideal woman is constructed by the society. In order to reach this rank, a woman should control her speech, wear only saree and other society -permitted clothes, restrict her movement, and finally reduce her identity to the subaltern status of the 'other'. It is the general tendency of man to control, suppress and enjoy his power and authority over anything and everything. These particular roles of man and woman are expressed through values, customs, laws and social duties in Indian society. A girl has a lot of restrictions and a boy, on the other hand, has none.

The social structure in India consists of institutions like joint family, caste, religious practices and values where women have only subordinate position. The institution of marriage restricts the movement of a woman as an independent person. Her status changes from a 'woman' to a 'wife' and later to a 'mother'. Her roles change. She is no more

considered an independent individual, but depends on others. The purpose of her life also changes and others would give no importance to her individual freedom. Later she gets confined to the four walls of her kitchen. The familial roles favor and promote patriarchal values and codes of behavior and a woman is always subordinate to man who rules the family.

Janu's father was totally against the concept of love marriages. He had never liked young people falling in love nor wanted his daughter to get influenced by all the 'love' ideas that go around her.

I was fairly sure my parents would disapprove; I'd heard Dad harrumph loudly at love scenes in films, worried they would fill my head with silly notions.

Love, for him, had been the stirring in his heart when his mother had shown him the picture of a fresh-faced girl she'd chosen for him to marry eighteen years ago. This running-around-trees business was for film stars and fools, he often said. (24)

Janu's parents led a conventional life and wished the same for their daughter. The idea of a child taking a decision regarding her future partner was unimaginable to them. They believed in children settling in life with their parents' choicest blessings. Both Janu's mother and father had left the most important decisions in their lives to be taken by their parents. They firmly felt that their parents knew what would be the best for them.

As Janu's parents had fixed beliefs and values, Janu's world was an enigma to them. The kind of comrades and experiences Janu had was totally unheard of by her parents:

My world was a confusing one for them. They were so sure that I would be safest among my own people, marrying eventually into my own community.

But I had all kinds of friends and all kinds of experiences that were alien and that couldn't be stopped. Arjun, unfortunately, would fall firmly into that category he was the wrong age (too young), wrong community (not Malayali), and came at the wrong time. (p 26)

Jaishree Misra, apart from giving attention to Janu's parents, also picturizes Leena's and Arjun's parents in a different angle.

Leena's parents were open-minded people and they gave her permission to invite boys for her birthday bash. As the daughter of a pilot and an ex-stewardess, Leena enjoyed much freedom. All her friends really envied her because she was the only one who was allowed to have boyfriends and boys at her parties. Janu's parents gave her permission to attend Leena's birthday bash and to stay at Leena's place that night. This gesture by Janu's parents revealed their trust and love for their daughter. They too gave the necessary space and liberty that a daughter needs.

Janu and Arjun started to meet at Chor Minar. The excuse that Janu gave at her home was 'drama practice' and 'Mathematics tuition.' Soon, Janu was caught red-handed by her parents and it was here that she lost the trust and love of her parents, especially her father's. She had said that she had gone for a special Mathematics tutorial class when her father's friend saw her with Arjun sharing a bowl of soup noodles. Her father was enraged when Janu lied:

In blind, raging confusion that his little girl had become a woman without anyone bothering to tell him. All the anger at having ever left Kerala, at having carefully attempted to bring up a daughter in a thankless place like Delhi, at

having been deceived by the thing he most loved in the world all seemed to be coming out at me, with that horribly swishing cane. (48)

She is then taken to Kerala and her wish to continue her education after Schooling is not fulfilled. During her visit to Kerala, fate plays rather a cruel game with her when Maheswari Maraar comes with a proposal for her when she has seen her in the temple. She does not completely disagree to her parents' wishes as she wants to compensate her secretive behavior which once upset them. However, she puts forward petty reasons for not getting married. Arjun has secured admission at Hull University by that time and has decided to join his mother in England. She sends a letter to Arjun informing him about the proposal and gets married to Suresh at Guruvayur temple with the blessings of the members of the family. She has sacrificed her love for Arjun. Her decision to comply with the decision of the family members shows how patriarchal indoctrination has corrupted the rationality and objectivity of even educated women. She is not bold enough to tell her parents about her love and to say 'no' to marrying Suresh as it would damage the good name and reputation of her family. Her mother says "The reputations of families were carried on the shoulders of their daughters"(46)

Janu would have kept this in mind when she had got the marriage proposal. This Silent acceptance shows that Janu is born and brought up in a family which compels women to accept and internalize feminine virtues of meekness, obedience and modesty. There is a clash between traditional values and the modern concept of freedom. Even though Janu is a modern girl, she decides to become a meek and obedient daughter when she decides not to go against her parents. A woman is always allowed to stand behind the man, never in front of him to voice her opinions. Her expectations, when she enters the Maraar household, are

shattered with a list of do's and don'ts. On the first morning, she wakes up early and enters the kitchen only after taking bath as her mother has instructed her to do so. As she is not fluent in Malayalam, she speaks in English to express herself. Her courteous exchange of "please" and "thank you" in return of every dialogue results in her getting snapped by her mother-in-law. She said: "Look, you're not in Delhi any mo Like it or not, you now live in Kerala, so I suggest you drop all these fashionable Pleases and Thank Yous. Here we don't believe in unnecessary style"(80).

She feels odd even on the day of her marriage, being covered up in the Traditional Dress. The many regulations that a girl is supposed to follow after marriage teach her about the submissive role she has to play once she becomes a wife. Janu says:

"While walking around the flickering vilakku [lamp]at the temple with my head bowed, I'd plenty of time to observe his feet as he walked ahead of me. I'd felt a sudden lurching realization that I was getting more time to familiarize myself with the feet of the man I was marrying than his face!" (84).

Suresh married Janaki only for the name sake. He had no time to spend with her and not words to enquire about her life with his family members. This shows that he has no individuality of his own. The family was a typical, traditional matriarchal family, where everyone was fighting for affections and acceptance. She was forced to resent her Delhi background. They out casted her from all household duties and discussions. A few years rolled by and the family remains the same. She hoped that the arrival of child might change the family's attitude towards her. Nevertheless, the misery piles on her as she delivered a mentally challenged baby girl Riya.

She is brought up in Delhi, she cannot adjust to the atmosphere in the Maarar family. Janu never raises her voice against the injustice imposed on her by others and by the strange beliefs of a conventional society. She tries to be a good daughter-in-law and wife but all her efforts are in vain as she does not get what she has deserved.

Janu's family is not as financially sound as her husband's. Because of this she is many a time humiliated by her in-laws. Padmaraja Maarar, her mother-in-law, tells her daughter Sathi, "Oh look! Sathi, have you ever seen such tiny ear rings? They've liked your jumikis, only ten times smaller"(91)

Life of Janu and Suresh is one of monotony and boredom as it becomes a matter of ritual and habit resulting in disharmony in their conjugal life. Suresh considers his wife only as a homemaker to be possessed as a private property. So he automatically and systematically controls her sexuality, mobility, speech, and indirectly, her identity. She remains invisible and silent in the Maarar household. Her indifferent husband is too busy to notice the struggle she undergoes to adjust herself with the customs and traditions of the family. He barely notices her and she feels insignificant. She feels lonely even in the midst of a crowd. However, she hopes that motherhood would improve her status. Unfortunately a mentally retarded child is born to her. She does not get any support from her husband; he wants to escape from the suffocating conditions in the household. She contemplates, "If I did leave Kerala with a baby and no education to speak of, how far could I go?"(123)

She evolves and uplifts herself as a person. Her mother-in-law says, "I'm not having people pointing at us and pitying us, our family is always admired in this town"(133).

Suresh did not dislike her, and it gladdened my heart to watch on the rare

occasions that he took her into his arms and threw her into the air making her gurgle with pleasure. Suresh a terrible disappointment and a inconvenience needed to taken to doctors and specialists. It was inconvenient that this mther was not fond of her. It was inconvenient, mos of all, that he could make no sense of the future with a child her. Most other men knew their daughters would require scholling and mui lessons and marriages into good families. But what Riya would need was unknown and far too frightening to contemplate. It was easier to pretend the problem simply didn't exist .Janu says, 'Oh Suresh, how can you be so old-fashioned, children like Riya are not kept locked up any more, whatever your mother might think. There must special schools and specialist centers in Kerala'(135).

Janu does not leave her daughter even after the many pricking comments of her mother-in-law. As a mother, she understands that a child like Riya, if left uncared for, would perish. Thus Riyagives her the strength to raise her voice against the rules and conventions and to fight back. Riya's schooling ends in a disaster as she gets expelled from her school for the reason that she is weak in studies. This problem gives her an idea to take her abroad for education. Unknowingly, Janu takes her destiny in her own hands and designs her future. She then offers to help the early intervention group at the under -staffed school. This was partly to keep an eye on Riya and to escape from the Maraars' control, and also to equip herself better to deal with Riya's problems. Sheela Kuriakose advises her to go abroad to do a course in special education, and to take Riya with her. As startled as I was, Ma turned to Ammumma at this unexpected response. There was still a quaver in her voice, 'You didn't hear her properly, Amma, JANU wants to go to AMERICA with Riya and WITHOUT SURESH!'(159).

She leaves for Delhi to give a scholarship interview and chances to meet Arjun. Old passions are aroused and the couple realize they still feel deeply for each other. Janu promises to file for divorce to end the miserable marriage, flee with Riya to England and restart a new life with Arjun.

‘Arjun, what exactly are you suggesting?’

‘I’m telling you not to go back to kerala tomorrow .stay here with me,
my parents will not mind.

I’ll get you a visa for Engln..’

‘Not go back..at all?Arjun, you’re forgetting... I can’t abandon Riya...’

‘Bring her, send for her, we’ll take her with us.’

‘But I’m still married...’

So what! We’ll live together. As long as Riya’s with us, you don’t really
need anything else do you?’

‘There must be some laws against people doing that kind of think, Arjun...’

‘Who cares! All I want is neer to lose you again.’(195)

She makes up her mind to get a divorce from Suresh and decides to tell him after reaching home. Janu reveals her plans to Suresh. He becomes angry on hearing this and considers it an insult to his manhood. In order to stop her from going away, he decides to spread a rumor that she is mentally unstable. She is taken to Chottanikkara in order to get rid of the so called evil spirits from her body. ‘‘Somewhere in dark place of Chottanikara, my mother and grandmother accepted sorrowfully that my marriage to Suresh had to come to an end’’(235).

She is emotionally tortured by the Maraar family. When her mother comes to know about the torture in the Maraar household, she decides to take her home and get a divorce. ‘I hope Suresh has told you, I’ve asked him for a divorce’. You might have thought I’d been saying that I’d asked Suresh for something as innocuous as a suitcase if you weren’t listening closely to the words(240).

Suresh does not agree for a divorce as it would mar the reputation of the family. He takes Riya with him and since she has no other choice Janu leaves for England with Arjun. After staying a few months there, she realizes that her daughter is her first priority. She returns to India and this time she gets a divorce and is allowed to be with her mother. Arjun had brought with him the kind of chances every life must be offered at least once(304).“Tomorrow, the next chapter would begin” (305).which is rather a hopeful note that someday Janaki would marry Arjun.

Chapter Four

Self Forage Through Parenthood

Gender and disability intermesh in Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises*. A double standard between men and women has still been preserved by social law. Womanhood is considered a disability, women and the disabled are typically faced with distinct biases and stereotypes. In Jaishree Misra's, the intensity and durability of her characters shine. In *Ancient Promises* the author portrays in this novel that women are equal to men. It's a captivating story about the heroine, Janaki.

Janaki is drawn into a painful marriage, resulting in war. The frisson of the death of her father and her worry for Riya, her daughter, goaded. To make her speak up for her freedom. Society's view point is still based on men who are just a family would be able to raise. Women are seen as slaves who, without rest, have to work every minute. Misra confesses that each person has the right to build the means to achieve their happiness and breaks the disparity between men and women.

The male centered view of human life, which goes on to privilege one gender over another, has led to an inability to work towards a holistic development. An increasing awareness of the injustices done to woman gradually gave rise to the feminist movement. Wherein the women raised their voice against marginalization's and patriarchal oppressions.

A woman becomes the family's pillar. However, without women, men receive a family for the, which is incomplete. Women have always been subjugated under male superiority and social laws in India. Women make decisions in their own futures, and often

those choices will vary from those made by men for several different reasons , because they are indoctrinated from young age by societal expectations of gender-specific roles. While women of the twenty-first century are granted the right to go to work, they are required to resolve several challenges in order to continue their work. If they condemn it, they are put to shame by sexual harassment in society.

Justice is deferred and only concern for the survivor persists. The women were not given sufficient schooling beforehand. In the four walls that were their universe before they fled from this world, they have always stayed. They are denied equal rights and they have been assigned the role of cooks and child minders. Women are now given the right to move out and to be trained. Women still have not achieved much independence. They became the subjects of sexual harassment.

Feminism is a theory in which women and their contributions are respected. The feminist movement is a diverse one and there is a diversity of feminists. Feminist literature represents the female protagonist's desolate situation, her feelings of estrangement and lack of identity, her socio-cultural sense of inferiority, and her patriarchal authority.

The novel can be understood as an indictment on oppressive patriarchal culture which was prevalent in Kerala in the twentieth century and to a certain extent still exists. A woman seeking her fair share of happiness and how she does it through education, in view of an appalling image of the struggle of a woman continually in pursuit of her identity. As a product of migration and uprootment by marriage, The thesis addresses feminism, gender inequality and disorientation.

It is a delicate depiction of Janu's life rather than a transparently personal tale. The whole story focuses on the bold movement of Janu towards the formation of a new family

order. In a private way, the troubled lovely soul of the deeply creative Janu finds love and solace. In a marriage that does not owe its identity much value, she lost her lively self.

Janu is identified as an individual with hybridity. The interaction of culture creates blended ones. A mixture of native and other is a process called hybridity. Janu is a hybrid individual because of the mixture of her native culture and the culture of Delhi. In patriarchal culture, Janu becoming a hybrid person causes tension. Janu's parents are immigrants of the first generation and Janu is an immigrant of the second generation who sees little obstacle in transitioning to the second society. As they are family rooted in the age-old customs of their ancestral soil, her parents did not suffer from mixed interests. For her friends, Janu's world is confounding when little kids respond to the modern society and its Easier activities than the elders.

The psychology of modern intellectual women of the twenty-first century is more or less reflected in the book, and it is her statement on the world and what she faced from her environment. The passive women in the past have stopped living. We have highly intelligent, emotional women in her position who challenge her rejection of independence and refuse to acknowledge the shackles and binds that hold her subjugated. Misra offers an impression of the contemporary women who are rebelling in their lives against the chains in order to explore their potential and to self-actualize and live in their own words, irrespective of the effects that such uprising may have on their existence.

Janaki had a vibrant, confident personality as a teenager and a youthful, creative, stunning, self-actualized spirit. She is a modern girl with her own beliefs and thoughts on life and herself. Like a rainbow, Passion irradiates her mates. As the only child, she embraces her parents' warmth of caring, care, and consideration in full swing. She shared her life with her

mother at all times and never kept any lies from her. She had always wanted to be with her beloved parents at home. In defining her personality, she witnessed this pleasure and comfort in her childhood.

She belongs to a conservative Hindu Nair family that has its own true personality and Janu has absorbed this in herself consciously or unknowingly. While she was born and raised in the metropolitan city of Delhi, her parents kept her apart from the community of Delhi and taught her the family tradition. Her family is a traditional patriarchal family, entirely submerged in traditions teaches women to be submissive. So, women in the family are rather responsive to men. The feminine values and graces, right from her childhood, are so instilled in her that she forgets that as a woman she has an independent identity. The mother and grandmother of Janu are specific instances of this feminine category. But Janu belongs to contemporary society and has a well-developed personality and place. While her worldview is new, she is often reminded of her Keralite heritage and of traditional traditions that make her identity indelible.

With the emergence of Arjun, Janu's life moves to a new phase, they have an awkward beginning but soon become really good friends. In life, their relationship blossoms. A profound and confounding passion between two teens who know simply that they are in love, not what to do with it. Her father is unconsciously aware of their friendship and beats her for the moment. Her conservative parents discourage her from learning, and her education comes to an abrupt end. Her furious and disapproving parents believe that getting her married is the only thing that remains to be done.

Janu has to ignore her passion for Arjun as a girl in the conventional patriarchal culture. So she surrenders to her parents and denies her fledgling love for him. And here, she

is losing her identity for the first time in her life. While Janu knows who she is and what is right for her, her reluctance to injure her dear parents, who brought her up with a great deal of affection and security, urges her to take back her own whims. Here, Janu loses her lively self and the second stage of her life starts there. It is the beginning of her life's solitary path. In this case, Janu enters into an existential dilemma, a question of identity. As a modern girl, Janu has lost her past. Outside of herself, she consumes truth, the reality of her parents, the reality of her family. She gives consent to a marriage which she dislikes because of this assimilation of reality.

The patriarchal structure overshadows women's very existence. It is believed that if women are to achieve satisfaction, their relationship with their husbands and their families should be within the framework of their work. Even the weakest of such concepts, that all human beings exist primarily for the realisation of oneself, is considered preposterous. Her marriage to Suresh ends in a catastrophe in Janu's care. The family of her husband sees her as an outcast with her excluded from household activities and conversations. Janu is constantly delayed by her snobbish mother in law and sister in law.

Janu tries desperately to fit into the mould of a true meek, submissive wife, as a typical Hindu wife, schooled in the patriarchal ideas of the holy contract of a marriage that was an eternal union. Brought in faraway Delhi, this new bride and young girls are suddenly caught in the throes of the traditionalist orientation. She seems to want to accept and believe in the age-old ideas laid down by Stridharma in the epics that married life. The Maraar family expects her to follow a dutiful wife's trodden path, an obedient daughter in law, a respectful sister in law.

Marrars family could not accept Janu whole heartedly. The reasons are difficult to pinpoint, one among the reason is she is considered as Delhi brought up with broken Malayalam and modern ways of living against their tradition. Even using the words like thank you and sorry is considered as fashion and a Delhi usage in the Marrar family.

Misra raises about, in a moving depiction of the lonely, alienated young bride, the very institution of marriage in which a woman is uprooted from her family setting in which she has grown up and forced into a radically different, foreign, unfriendly and almost hostile environment.

This silent, but definite eroding of identity that leads to a complete negation of self and the disappearance of an actual identity gradually. The modifications that are demanded of her are numerous and sometimes unlikely too. Whether she prefers to wear a certain style of jewellery in addition to the other type of jewellery, whether it is in the way she spoke Malayalam, dried out the clothes or dressed, each one was cause enough for a snide remark or a direct criticism. Janu married against her will, it is real, but she is never an uncompromising girl. She places the memory of Arjun behind herself and transfers all of her resources into her new life.

The *Ancient promises* that have to be accepted and lived up to as a part of the societal expectations do not succeed in Janu's case. Within the defined boundaries of family and marriage, a clash of patriarchal expectations and social constraints compounded by ancient religious traditions and values completely annihilates all possibility of success or self-fulfillment.

The pathetic state of their being brings to the fore a sharp observation of the role of women in our society. When their tolerance has been taxed for so long, women appear to

become stubborn. There has always been the need to discover themselves behind the facades that have been put upon them to find their face. While at times they have accepted their roles as mothers, wives, daughters and subordinates of men willingly and at other times reluctantly, the aspiration to find and discover their identity has not died down. They were held in their fantasies of liberation by this quest for self-hood.

In the second part of the novel, Janu's attempts at her identity are revealed, when she learns that if she stays mute, struggling, compromising, traditional women, the lives of both of them will be at stake. Janu's drive for self-actualization allows her superior capacity to think, to see the reality, and to behave objectively and efficiently. Janu recognises the fact that Riya, her daughter, Place in the life of her husband and his family, so that among them there will be a fight for the approval of herself and Riya. Only the one who strives hard will survive when a living being confronts the issue of existence. Finally, Janu stands up to her and refuses to leave Riya under a servant's care.

Janu realises that she was free and that she didn't have to fight for their approval to put Riya through the same hopeless loop any more. She then empowers the beliefs and religions of herself and of her own beliefs and values, making the right choice for parenthood. This will probably give her strength for the first time to fight back. Breaking up illusions and learning is not only part of discovering what one is, but also of self-realization, what one's possibilities are. Janu, in herself, is true to the best. As never before, she emerges strong and autonomous. She plucks up in her own peculiar way.

Riya changes Janaki's life. The desire to make Riya accepted in the family provides increasing pressure to the young mother till she realizes the futility of her attempt. The walls of prejudice that encircled her now encircled her daughter and there was no refuge outside it.

This realization hardens her and strengthens her to become another person. “My own rights had not seemed worth fighting for, but Riya needed me to be her voice and a battle on her behalf would be far more satisfying.” (133)

Riya plays a crucial role in Janaki’s transformation into a hardened mature person who unflinchingly tries to create a space for herself and her daughter in contrast with the earlier demure person who willingly let herself be pushed about. It is for Riya that her mother starts to fight the battle and through her that she reaches self-sustenance.

Her way out of marriage, into which she unintentionally stepped, is worked with confidence and step by step. She begins to connect more with other entities and this gives her some tips to better her plight. She is finding a new way of coping with harsh working environments or successful ways of transcending situations in her life. She is more aware of multiple levels of human encounters that go beyond survival. She definitely starts to continue her bachelor's degree and gains some more guts in the advancement of education and it makes her learn more about life. It steadily grows its potential and more correctly accesses the criteria of a full life without any assistance to Riya and at the same time pursues her education with a vengeance.

Her positions are becoming more fluid as she reinforces her personality. She understands that in the Marrar family, she is not supposed to be a possession. She learns that in her own right she is a human being and not an item of property belonging to the Marrar family. She starts to view positions, relations with others and desires more generally instead of describing her in specific conventional ways. Her newly awakened sense of identity dominates herself and swamps her previous conventional notions of the duties of a woman

and a wife in life completely. She has always been passive and submissive in the past, but she rises to the occasion and declares her independence when faced with reality.

Ideas and ideals for women's satisfaction have a rational or realistic function. In her, the ideal of equality contributes to new possibilities and erective behaviour. Despite all the challenges and struggles of her life, Janu looks up and ahead to values she has chosen to align herself with. She acquires the ability to do something for the good of her and her child.

Janu is so strong that she finds herself a spot among the highly trained, elite and edified fellow interviewers for the acceptance of her true self. Self-realization is the completion of the possibilities of one's identity or character. The highest happiness for man typically consists in understanding or achieving himself on the basis that his true or ideal self is constituted by those inherent activities: a self-actualized person has the motivation to understand his own maximum, ability and possibilities.

According to the tradition, a woman's job was to keep the family intact and reach out to every member. But every woman will learn that, like what Janu knew, she herself is a target of all manner of taunts and derisions. It's about self-discovery for her. She has discovered an outlet for her suppressed emotions by her self-revelation and is on the verge of self-discovery.

Almost all women only manage to have a glimpse of pleasure as they become aware of it. Only when one looks at oneself is this consciousness generated. Females are powerful. Women will do it all as well as anyone. Women can do much more, but in herself, a woman needs to look for the vein of determination, it doesn't automatically reveal itself. By education, Janu's way of joining the brave new world was. She wanted to finish her degree and placed a lot of attention on it. Motherhood presented Janu with a fresh confidence that

was hidden in an unfathomed depth until then. Janu had learned to discard the insignificance displayed by the Maraar family to her education. "I tried not to mind because I had a wonderful secret lodged away carefully in the bottom drawer of my desk. My letter of acceptance had arrived"(152).

Nothing is wasted; nothing is meaningless. She had to sacrifice ten years of her life, ten long years to pay an undisclosed debt to the Maraar family from her previous birth, and that's the price at which she will buy her future happiness with Arjun. Her forty-eight weekends at Milton Keynes with Arjun are 'stolen' or 'borrowed' and she has to get her daughters to start a new life of her own.

Janaki is an epitome, a representation of the tens of thousands of women who aspire for liberation. Janaki, being a rarity, trespasses the society-drawn contours to shun the definite dogmas every emancipated woman would aspire for. The uninvoked and most dedicated inner feelings of a woman are summoned by Janaki. In multifaceted forms, the desire to convey her personality was revealed. With a fierce resolve that has always been lurking beneath her mind, she faces all odds and obligations. As a genuine amalgam of a free soul, she will certainly be coronated. This is vividly exemplified in the portrayal of Janaki. By the minute details that form the essence of the narrative, the quintessence of her own self is exemplified.

Ancient Promises its mark with astonishing consistency and strength, largely through the frank approach of the writer to life and as a woman. Janu has battled her battles with relentless resolve, and she has never been greedy or cruel for a moment in the course of the entire novel. she has never deceived her true self. And it is not something that many people would claim for us.

Chapter Five

Summation

Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises*, a sensitive account of a girl's efforts to find her destination in life, is full of keen psychological observations, and culminates in a sane and balanced view of life. According to the categorization of women's literature as feminine, feminist, and female by Elaine Showalter in her paper 'A Literature of Their Own: British Novelists from Bronte to Lessing' *Ancient Promises* would come somewhere between feminist and female. It is all about the self-discovery of a woman by herself. Janu finds the ray of happiness only when she becomes aware of and the awareness is created only when one looks at one's self. She is empowered to reclaim her lost love and releases herself from the hold of conventions and family expectation. She comes finally to her conclusion and feels at peace with herself and her world.

Janaki is an epitome, a representation of the tens of thousands of women who aspire for liberation. These representations like many from time immemorial have passed into oblivion. Janaki, being a rarity, trespasses the society-drawn contours to shun the definite dogmas every emancipated woman would aspire for. She in turn becomes the spokesperson as well as the torchbearer of the so-called womenfolk. Instead of sitting back in a complacent manner courting the routine chores of domestic circle, Janaki summons the uninvoked yet most devoted inner feelings of a woman. The urge to express her identity has been revealed in multifaceted ways. She faces all odds and responsibilities with a fierce determination that has always been lurking beneath her mind. She can be undoubtedly coroneted as the true

amalgam of a liberated soul. This is vividly exemplified in the portrayal of Janaki. The quintessence of her very self is exemplified through the minute details which form the crux of the novel.

Chapter one deals with the origin of Indian writing in English. Indian Literature refers to the literature produced on the Indian subcontinent until 1947 and in the Republic of India thereafter. The republic of India has 22 officially recognized languages. The earliest works of Indian Literature were orally transmitted. Sanskrit literature begins with the oral literature of the Rig Veda a collection of sacred hymns dating to the period 1500-1200 BCE. The Sanskrit epics Ramayana and Mahabharata appeared towards the end of the 2nd millennium BCE. Classical Sanskrit literature developed rapidly during the first few centuries of the first millennium BCE, as did the Tamil Sangam Literature, and the Pali Canon. In the medieval period, literature in Kannada and Telugu appeared in the 9th and 11th centuries respectively. Later, literature in Marathi, Odia and Bengali appeared. Thereafter literature in various dialects of Hindi, Persian and Urdu began to appear as well. Early in the 20th century, Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore became India's first Nobel laureate. In Contemporary Indian literature, there are two major literary awards; these are the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship and the Jnanpith Award. Eight Jnanpith Awards each have been awarded in Hindi and Kannada, followed by five in Bengali and Malayalam, four in Odia, three in Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu and Urdu, two each in Assamese and Tamil and one in Sanskrit. Hence, English has become an essential part of Indian life. The role of English is very central. English language in India is only the language of scholarly make-up and not of emotional make up. At present Indian Writing in English are given in many American and Commonwealth Universities as syllabi. Indian Writing in English is chiefly a phenomenon

that arises out of the British arrival in India. Now, it is recognized as one of the authentic voices of India. Indian Writing in English has been highly praised for its novelty, radical new approaches to the skill of storytelling and reworking of language. Indian Writing in English reflects India's journey from the traditional, secure, stationary island to turbulent vibrant ocean of modernity. The thirties has been an important era of Indian English fiction. This is the period when Indian English Fiction got autonomous existence in Indian Writing in English. The main purpose of writing in English at the early period was the National Movement for political independence.

Chapter two deals with the Female emancipation. A feminist of Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises*. In doing so the novel can be understood as an indictment on oppressive patriarchal culture which was prevalent in Kerala in the twentieth century and to a certain extend still exists. The present analysis puts in perspective an appalling picture of the struggle of a woman constantly in search of her identity, a woman pursuing her rightful share of happiness and how she achieves it through education. The study discusses feminism, gender discrimination and disorientation as a result of displacement and uprootment through marriage.

Chapter three Noteworthiness of parenthood. Janaki of *Ancient Promises* represents a new woman who rebel against the patriarchal society by breaking the age old traditions and beliefs whereas life represents conflicts that arise when women try to struggle for independence and self-determination. Misra has tried to highlight the struggles of an Indian new woman who breaks the traditional norms and rebels against the general mindset of the patriarchal society. Her protagonists represents the large group of women who revolts not for

equality but for the right to be acknowledged at home and social sphere. By providing the ability to speak Misra subverts the age old stereotypical beliefs of a woman. She questions those who suppress and ignore the female articulations by giving voice to her protagonists, by making their voice heard out loud to the world around her.

Chapter four deals with the Misra's Self forage through parenthood. The novel can be understood as an indictment on oppressive patriarchal culture which was prevalent in Kerala in the twentieth century and to a certain extend still exists. A woman seeking her fair share of happiness and how she does it through education, in view of an appalling image of the struggle of a woman continually in pursuit of her identity. As a product of migration and uprootment by marriage, The thesis addresses feminism, gender inequality and disorientation.

It is a delicate depiction of Janu's life rather than a transparently personal tale. The whole storey focuses on the bold movement of Janu towards the formation of a new family order. In a private way, the troubled lovely soul of the deeply creative Janu finds love and solace. In a marriage that does not owe its identity much value, she lost her lively self.

Janu is identified as an individual with hybridity. The interaction of culture creates blended ones. A mixture of native and other is a process called hybridity. Janu is a hybrid individual because of the mixture of her native culture and the culture of Delhi. In patriarchal culture, Janu becoming a hybrid person causes tension. Janu's parents are immigrants of the first generation and Janu is an immigrant of the second generation who sees little obstacle in transitioning to the second society. As they are family rooted in the age-old customs of their ancestral soil, her parents did not suffer from mixed interests. For her friends, Janu's world is

confounding when little kids respond to the modern society and its Easier activities than the elders.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Thematic Study of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature and is a work done by Lavaniya. X. during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Thematic Study of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*

A project submitted to

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for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Thematic Study of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2021

LAVANIYA. X

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SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

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PREFACE

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the evolution of Children literature in general. A short biography of Frances Hodgson Burnett's and the general characteristics of her works are discussed.

The second chapter **Delineation of Characters** deals with major and minor characters of the novel.

The third chapter **The Omnipotent Motherhood** elaborates the thematic content of nature, healing, friendship, and it intensely focuses on the pursuit of 'Motherhood' showing the optimistic belief of life.

The fourth chapter **Emblematic Representations in *The Secret Garden*** elaborates the images and symbols highlighting the narrative process reinforcing the central idea of the novel.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects of the preceding chapters. Summing up the thematic perspective of the novel.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed in MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Children's literature is the body of written works and accompanying illustrations produced in order to entertain or instruct young people. The genre contains a wide range of works, including acknowledged classics of world literature, picture books and easy to read stories written exclusively for children, fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folk songs, and other primarily orally transmitted materials. Children's literature emerged as a distinct and independent form of literature in the second half of the 18th century, before which it had been at best only in an embryonic stage.

During the 20th century, however, its growth has been so luxuriant as to make defensible its claim to be regarded with the respect though perhaps not the solemnity that is due any other recognized branch of literature. All potential or actual young literates, from the instant they can leap with joy as they leaf through a picture book or listen to a story read aloud could be called children. Thus "children" includes "young people". Two considerations blur the definition. Today's young teenager is an anomaly their environment pushes him toward a precocious maturity. Thus, though they may read children's books, and also increasingly reads adult books. Second, the child survives in many adults. As a result, some children's books were also read widely by adults. Well known authors of children's literature included Lewis Carroll, Edith Nesbit, Alison Lurie, Roald Dahl, J.K. Rowling and Dr. Seuss, These are the authors who have stolen the imaginations of millions of kids through their novels, poetry, and stories. This is a list of the best children's book authors, ranked by both kids and former-kids. Some of the most popular children's authors also do

their own illustrations for their books, like Shel Silverstein and Eric Carle, that have their work translated into multiple languages for children to enjoy the books all over the world. In this lineage of writers comes Frances Eliza Hodgson Burnett, a renowned writer of children's literature.

Frances Eliza Hodgson Burnett was born on Cheetham Hill Road in Manchester, England, in 1849. She was the third of five children. Her parents, Eliza Bond and Edwin Hodgson, both came from solid Lancashire families. Edwin owned his own firm which supplied brasses, chandeliers, door handles and decorative ironworks for houses. At the age of thirty-eight, he suffered a stroke and died several months later in September 1853. After her husband's death, Eliza was still pregnant with their last child, but made the brave decision to take over the family business herself. Her daughter Frances had an innate talent and passion for writing and storytelling. She kept all her young friends amused by making up episodic stories, she loved her audience. She was a great reader, and began composing poems at the age of seven, and stories at the age of twelve. Although her mother Eliza worked very hard to maintain the business, she could not compete against the economic downturn of the early 1860's in Manchester. The city had been affected mostly because the shipments of cotton needed by its textile industry were blockaded, during the American civil war.

When Frances was in her early teens, Eliza finally sold the company and soon after decided to move the family to Knoxville. When Frances was eighteen, she attempted to supplement the family's income with her writing. Her first piece, entitled "*Hearts and Diamonds*," and "*Miss Carruthers' Engagement*," were published in June 1868 and October 1868 respectively, in

the Godey's Lady's Magazine under the pseudonym, 'The Second'. She continued to support her family writing five or six stories each month, for ten dollars each. In her second group of published stories, Frances showed female protagonists learning to fulfil social expectations for a woman, especially a wife and mother, and her next several stories portrayed the dark side of the convention of romantic attachments across class lines. Frances was twenty years old when her mother died in 1870, leaving Frances in charge of the family. Her writing now became their primary source of income.

Her most successful work was *The Secret Garden* (1911). In addition, the famous actress Mary Pickford starred in the film version of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* in 1921. Frances died in the morning of October 29th, 1924. She was buried in Roslyn Cemetery. Her son Vivian was buried in Roslyn Cemetery nearby his mother when he died in 1937. Nassau County, New York State and a statue of Lionel stands nearby. In 1935, her family and friends, including Kitty Hall Brownell, dedicated a fountain sculpture to her in Manhattan's Central Park, featuring Mary and Dickon from *The Secret Garden*. Her work influenced such writers as D. H. Lawrence and T. S. Eliot, and it continues to be wide-read and praised throughout the world. Clearly, Frances's life influenced her work on many levels. Among other things, her son's death, and her own battle with illnesses found their way into her art through the psychological and physical illnesses confronted and resolved by some of her characters. In life, she tried to maintain both her family and professional life despite all her struggles. In fact, what I found most admirable in her work is its positive spirit, especially in *The Secret Garden*.

Burnett is best known for the three children's novels *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (published in 1885–1886), *A Little Princess* (1905), and *The Secret Garden* (1911), *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1886). Her works are commonly based on childhood.

In the novel *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnet, the protagonist is Sara Crewe. Sara is a unique and interesting girl. Sara always thinks like an adult even though she was only seven years old. Her mother's death when Sara was still a baby makes her close and love her father very much. Sara is a realist and imaginative girl. She knew that her father had died and she has nobody as her family, she realizes that she has to face her needs on her own. But in that situation, she still has imagination and hope, that help her to face her sufferings.

The author focuses on the differences between upper-class and lower-class individuals respectively. A major aspect of the social aspect is the relationship that will embody the social class that raises two main classes based on the type of property that affects and expenditures for the purposes of life, the author sees the difference between the student who is wealthy because of their parents and students who become poor workers and work as janitor of the school. It shows that there are two classes in the school. In the novel, poor students are paid low wages and wealthy students who can afford all facilities in the school are paid higher wages and get special treatments.

Meanwhile, according to the development of industrial capitalism structure divides the two kinds of classes, there are bourgeois and the proletariat, the wage of the working class is classified as a proletariat. Frances describes Cedric's personality in the novel and to reveal the moral values from Cedric's

personality. An American boy turns out to be the long-lost heir of a British fortune. He is sent to live with the cold and unsentimental lord who oversees the trust. After the death of Cedric's English father, he and his mother live together in Brooklyn. Cedric's grandfather, the Earl of Dorin court, had disowned Cedric's father when he married an American, but when the Earl's remaining son dies, he accepts Cedric as Lord Fauntleroy, his heir, and the Earl sends for Cedric and his mother. Cedric uses the first of his newly found wealth to do some favours meant for his old friends, and then heads to England, where he must try to overcome the Earl's dislike for Cedric's mother. The writer found two things; firstly, Cedric is characterized as a boy who has good personalities such as honesty, kind-heartedness, friendliness, humbleness, wisdom, sympathetic and responsibility. Secondly, the moral values that can be taken from the novel are honesty, kindness, hospitality, modesty, wisdom, empathy and responsibility.

The Secret Garden is a book of great transformation. It is a memory of a delicate childhood and marvellous characters, a sweet tale with a charming writing and mysterious atmosphere. The novel revolves around two orphans born and live-in loneliness, deprived of affection, abandoned by their respective parents, and not loved by the people surrounding them. Suddenly, a change in circumstances occurs with the discovery of a mysterious garden. Most holistically, the great part of the novel takes place in the heart of the secret garden when the main characters of the story learn to respect, love and care about each other. In a positive contradiction, they move from being unbearable, capricious, selfish and uncontrollable to the most enjoyable and pleasantly happy children ever seen.

The novel was first published in a serial form in 1910. The novel centres on Mary Lennox, who is living in India with her wealthy British family. She is a selfish and disagreeable ten-year-old girl who has been spoiled by her servants and neglected by her unloving parents. When a cholera epidemic kills her parents and the servants, Mary is orphaned. After a brief stay with the family of an English clergyman, she is sent to England to live with a widowed uncle, Archibald Craven, at his huge Yorkshire estate, Misselthwaite Manor. Her uncle is rarely at Misselthwaite, however, Mary is brought to the estate by the head housekeeper, the fastidious Mrs. Medlock, who shuts her into a room and tells her not to explore the house. Mary is put off when she finds that the chambermaid, Martha, is not as servile as the servants in India. But she is intrigued by Martha's stories about her own family, particularly those about her twelve-year-old brother, Dickon, who has a nearly magical way with animals. When Martha mentions the late Mrs. Craven's walled garden, which was locked ten years earlier by the uncle upon his wife's death, Mary is determined to find it. She spends the next few weeks wandering the grounds and talking to the elderly gardener, Ben Weather staff. One day, while following a friendly robin, Mary discovers an old key that she thinks may open the locked garden. Shortly thereafter, she spots the door in the garden wall, and she lets herself into the secret garden. She finds that it is overgrown with dormant rose bushes and vines, but she spots some green shoots, and she begins clearing and weeding in that area.

Mary continues to tend the garden. Her interaction with nature spurs a transformation: she becomes kinder, more considerate, and outgoing. One day she encounters Dickon, and he begins helping her in the secret garden. Mary

later uncovers the source of the strange sounds she has been hearing in the mansion: they are the cries of her supposedly sick and crippled 10-year-old cousin, her uncle's son Colin, who has been confined to the house and tended to by servants. He and Mary become friends, and she discovers that Colin does not have a spinal deformation, as he has believed. Dickon and Mary take Colin to see the garden, and there he discovers that he is able to stand. The three children explore the garden together and plant seeds to revitalize it, and through their friendship and interactions with nature they grow healthier and happier. When her uncle returns and sees the amazing transformation that has occurred to his son and his formerly abandoned garden now in bloom, he embraces his family, as well as their rejuvenated outlook on life.

Chapter Two

Delineation of Characters

Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* is considered to be one of the most delightful and enduring classics of children's literature. In the beginning of the story, Mary Lennox, a young English girl who returns to England from India, having suffered from immense trauma by losing both her parents in a cholera. However, her memories of her parents are not pleasant, as they were a selfish, neglectful and pleasure-seeking couple. Mary is given to the care of her uncle Archibald Craven.

Mary Lennox, a sickly, foul-tempered, unsightly little girl who loves no one and whom no one loves. At the outset of the story, she is living in India with her parents dashing army captain and his frivolous, beautiful wife but is rarely permitted to see them. They have placed her under the constant care of a number of native servants, as they find her too hideous and tiresome to look after. Mary is described as ugly, ill-tempered, and viciously demanding. At the same time, the reader is given to understand that the source of Mary's hatefulness is not precisely in her, the blame lies with her parents particularly her mother. Disappointed by her daughter's ugliness and sickliness, Mary's mother cruelly refuses to see her, instead leaving her in the care of a retinue of Indian servants who care nothing at all for the child.

"I am Mary Lennox", the little girl said, drawing herself up stiffly. She thought the man was very rude to call her father's bungalow "A place like this!" "I fell asleep when everyone had the cholera and I have only just wakened up. Why does nobody come?"

“It is the child no one ever saw!” exclaimed the man, turning to his companions. “She has actually been forgotten!” “Why was I forgotten?” Mary said, stamping her foot. “Why does nobody come?” (TSG 11)

The servants must, however, obey her every impulse, in this can be found the source of her imperiousness. Mary’s only pleasure, even at this early point in the novel, is play-gardening, she sits beneath a tree and idly places cut flowers in mounds of soil. After the death of her parents in the cholera epidemic, she engages in the same activity at the house of the clergyman and his family. Throughout the first part of the novel, Mary remains unfriendly and rude however, the omniscient narrator consistently makes it clear that Mary is only so awful because of the wretched circumstances of her early childhood. The reader has access to the loneliness and displacement that Mary herself is not able to express, but feels deeply Mary’s circumstances are cast into complete upheaval when an outbreak of cholera devastates the Lennox household, leaving no one alive but herself.

The first few chapters of *The Secret Garden* emphasize Mary’s loneliness and boredom, especially when she moves to Misselthwaite Manor, She is found by a group of soldiers and, after briefly living with an English clergyman and his family, Mary is sent to live in Yorkshire with her maternal uncle, Archibald Craven. Misselthwaite Manor is a sprawling old estate with over one hundred rooms, all of which have been shut up by Archibald Craven. A man whom everyone describes as “a miserable hunchback” (TSG11) Where she finds the garden, she no longer feels the sense of isolation for the first time she feels that she is in a magical place, full of life, where she may be alone but not lonely.

The instant her circumstances improve that is, the instant that Mary arrives at Misselthwaite, she too begins to improve. She becomes active and interested in the world around her in India, she was always “too hot and languid to care about anything” (TSG 60) The reader thereby recognizes that there is nothing *innately* cruel about Mistress Mary, she is a victim of her own isolation. Mary develops real affection for her maidservant, Martha Sowerby, and for the robin redbreast that lives in the secret garden. She falls thoroughly in love with Dickon, and befriends Colin and Ben Weatherstaff in short, she becomes utterly engrossed in the world around her. The English landscape and her work in the secret garden have a miraculously restorative effect upon her by novel's end, Mary is no longer bitter and friendless, but is instead an ordinary playful ten-year-old girl surrounded by her intimates.

Master Craven has been in a state of inconsolable grief ever since the death of his wife ten years before the novel begins. Shortly after arriving at Misselthwaite, Mary hears about a secret garden from Martha Sowerby, Mary's friend and maidservant, Martha is distinguished by her charming frankness and level headed approach to all aspects of life. Her simplicity, good natured and kindness are a great help to Mary upon the latter's arrival at Misselthwaite. In her very ordinariness, Martha represents the goodness of all the people of Yorkshire. This garden belonged to the late Mistress Craven after her death, Archibald locked the garden door and buried the key beneath the earth. Mary becomes intensely curious about the secret garden, and determines to find it. This curiosity, along with the vigorous exercise she takes on the moor, begins to have an extremely positive effect upon Mary. She almost immediately becomes less sickly, more engaged with the world, and less foul-tempered. This

change is aided by Ben Weatherstaff, a brusque but kindly old gardener, and a robin redbreast who lives in the secret garden. She begins to count these two people, along with Martha, Dickon Sowerby, and Susan Sowerby, as the friends she has had in her life. Her curiosity is whetted when she hears strange, far-off cries coming from one of the manor's distant rooms.

Mrs. Medlock seems to be the antagonist of the story. From an actor's point of view, it is imperative that a convincing villain be given characterization that makes her motives for doing wrong believable, and even understandable. Mrs. Medlock perceives herself as evil, the purpose to find in this is the role justifications for her actions which are taken ultimately to keep her job at Misselthwaite Manor.

On the surface, Medlock appears to be a very strict English housekeeper who makes Mary Lennox's life miserable from her very first day at the Manor. She is extremely cross with Mary and throughout the play threatens her as well as the servants in the house. Underneath her icy exterior, however, Sarah Anne Medlock is a woman desperately trying to keep order in the house and in her life. From the particulars presented in the original novel as well as in the play, including the instants of tenderness with Mr. Craven and with the Garden Tree and the occasional slips into her native common Yorkshire dialect.

Mrs. Medlock's behaviour consists of making masks for herself to keep up an appearance of total control. These pictures and enjoy the challenges of finding the humanity and vulnerability and humour in her character. Exploring such topics as social standing and class structure, the significance of her everyday relationships with others. Finally, the evolution of her character and

exploring the production history of the play, as well as the life of the author, Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett.

Mrs. Medlock the head of the servants at Misselthwaite, absolutely forbids her to seek out the source of the cries. She is distracted from this mystery when she discovers, with the robin's help, the key to the secret garden. She immediately sets about working there, so that the neglected plants might thrive. The evolution of her character and exploring the production history of the play, as well as the life of the author, Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett.

Dickon Sowerby is, in some sense, the spirit of Missel Moor. His eyes are described as looking like "pieces of moorland sky" (TSG 94) and he smells of "heather and grass and leaves...as if he were *made of them*" (TSG 96) Dickon, who brings her a set of gardening tools and promises to help her bring the secret garden back to life, vastly aids her in her endeavour.

I've got th' garden tools. There's a little spade an rake an 'a fork an' hoe. Eh! they are good 'uns. There's a trowel, too. An' th' woman in th' shop threw in a packet o' white poppy an' one o' blue larkspur when I bought th' other seeds. "Will you show the seeds to me?" Mary said. She wished she could talk as he did. (TSG 97)

When the reader first encounters him, he is sitting beneath a tree charming animals with the music of his wooden pipe. This immediately conjures the image of panpipes, and serves to associate Dickon with the god Pan. He therefore is presented as having an uncannily close relationship with the wilderness and with wild things. He tells Mary that

I think I do, and they think I do, he said. I've lived on th' moor with 'em so long. I've watched 'em brake shell an' come out em'. Sometimes I think

perhaps I'm a bird, or a fox, or a squirrel... and I don't know it. "See here," he said suddenly, turning round to look at her. I'll plant them for thee myself. Where is tha' garden? (TSG 99)

Mary compares Dickon's pipe playing with the way natives charm snakes in India. Throughout the novel, Mary and Colin perceive Dickon as thrillingly strange and exotic like the Indian natives, he speaks a different language (his Yorkshire dialect). Also like the Indians, he is visually marked as different from Mary and Colin; his difference is one of *class*, however, rather than of race. Mary comments several times upon Dickon's patched clothes and rough hair, as well as on the coarse simplicity of his food. This class difference is an extremely provocative one for Mary: she is instantly drawn to Dickon, and her revelation of the garden to him is full of implicit eroticism. It's as though she were displaying *herself* to him, on the one hand; on the other, it is underwritten by the extremely charged notion of letting him inside. "Mary describes him as 'beautiful,' and as 'a Yorkshire angel'" (TSG 96)

Dickon is, in some measure, above mere class distinctions, because he is the representative of divine nature. He, as much as the secret garden, is the agent of both Colin and Mary's transformations. He himself, being already ideal, does not change at all. One night, Mary hears the distant cries and, flagrantly disobeying Mrs. Medlock's prohibition, goes off in search of their source. She finds Colin Craven, Master Craven's invalid son, shut up in an opulent bedchamber. Colin was born shortly before his mother's death, and his father cannot bear to look at him because the boy painfully reminds him of his late wife. Colin has been bedridden since his birth, and it is believed that he will

become a hunchback and die an early death. He was born in the same year in which Mary was born and the secret garden locked shut.

My mother died when I was born and it makes him wretched to look at me. He thinks I don't know, but I've heard people talking. He almost hates me. "He hates the garden, because she died," said Mary half speaking to herself. "What garden?" the boy asked. "Oh! just—just a garden she used to like," Mary stammered. "Have you been here always?" (TSG 127)

Archibald Craven is ashamed of how sickly Colin is, and has forbidden the servants to speak of him. Everyone fears that he will become a hunchback and die before he reaches adulthood. Colin himself hates to be looked at, because he despises the pity and morbid fascination he inspires. He refuses to leave the manor house, and spends all his time shut up in his grand gloomy room. Like Mary, he has become fantastically tyrannical, since all his servants have been instructed to obey all of his commands without question. Mary's meeting with Colin is extremely good for him, because she is bold enough to contradict him when he says that he is going to become a hunchback and die an early death. It is essential he have his negative thoughts contradicted, so that positive ones may be put in their place; this is one of the central tenets of both New Thought and Christian Science. Underlying this idea is the belief that nothing truly ails Colin's body his disease is entirely a product of his mind. The repeated description of Colin as a 'hysteric' indicates that Hodgson Burnett's preoccupation with psychosomatic illness may have another source.

In 1896, the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud and the neurologist Joseph Breuer published the *Studies on Hysteria*, the book was soon translated into a number of languages and gained in popularity all over the world. For Freud and

Breuer, hysteria referred to a psychological disorder in which an idea or fantasy that had been repressed by the mind found alternative expression in the body. While it might appear that the hysteric had an organic illness, Freud and Breuer maintained that its real source was in the hysteric's unconscious. For Freud, the hysteric's repressed fantasy was always sexual in nature; furthermore, he contended that the overwhelming majority of hysterics were women.

Colin a hysteric therefore feminizes him he is weak, and frightened, and bedridden. Colin is positioned as Dickon's opposite Dickon is extremely strong, masculine, and vigorous he is of the moor, while Colin is often compared with the feminized Indian Rajah. His contact with Mary and Dickon, as well as his work in the secret garden, masculinises and redeems Colin he becomes as strong and as straight as any boy in Yorkshire. It also reunited him with his father, who immediately embraces his son when he finds that he is healthy.

The elderly and cantankerous gardener at Misselthwaite Manor. Mary meets him on her first day outside, and the two initially don't like each other much. Despite this, Ben Weatherstaff introduces Mary to his friend the robin. Ben Weatherstaff has no qualms about hurting Mary's feelings or telling her to go away, which helps Mary to learn how to earn someone's friendship and attention. She eventually resorts to sneaking up on him, and the two decide they like each other. He introduces Mary to the basic principles of gardening and later, it is revealed that he has been pruning the roses in The Secret Garden for the last ten years, though his rheumatics has kept him from scaling the wall for the last two years. On the first day that Colin spends time in the garden, Ben Weatherstaff catches the children in the garden and is initially angry with them for the intrusion.

However, Colin uses his power as the master of the manor to make Ben Weatherstaff come into the garden, pledge to keep the children's presence in the garden a secret, and promise to help them restore the garden to its former glory. Ben Weatherstaff is an instrumental figure in Colin's recovery, as sharing the various rumours circulating about Colin's poor health that he has crooked legs, is mentally disabled, and actually has a hunchback makes Colin angry enough to stand and prove Ben Weatherstaff wrong. Though he is open about not being able to stay awake through a conventional church service, he participates fully in Colin's prayer circles and even suggests that they sing the Doxology.

His servants have been commanded to obey his every whim, and Colin has become fantastically spoiled and imperious as a result. Colin and Mary strike up a friendship, but Colin becomes furious when she fails to visit him because she prefers to garden with Dickon. That night, Colin throws one of the infamous tantrums. Mary rushes to his room in a fury and commands him to stop crying. He tells her that his back is beginning to show a hunch; when Mary examines him, she finds nothing whatever the matter with him. Henceforth, she will maintain that Colin's illness is only in his mind: he will be well if only he makes up his mind to be.

Dickon and Mary secretly begin bringing Colin out into the secret garden. On the first of these outings, the children are discovered by Ben Weatherstaff, who is a gruff elderly gardener who is only permitted to stay at Misselthwaite because he was a favourite of the late Mistress Craven. He introduces Mary to the robin redbreast, and helps the children keep the secret of the garden. Ben himself clandestinely tended the garden during the ten years in which it was locked, out of love and loyalty for the Mistress Craven. Although

he is rather rough, Ben's essential kindness is fundamental to his character. Ben refers to Colin as the poor cripple,

Who tha' art? he said. Aye, that I do—wi' tha' mother's eyes starin' at me out o' tha' face. Lord knows how tha' come here. But tha'rth' poor cripple. "Colin forgot that he had ever had a back. His face flushed scarlet and he sat bolt upright."

I'm not a cripple! he cried out furiously. I'm not! (TSG 214)

In the world of *The Secret Garden* heavily influenced as it is by Christian Science and New Thought, one need only fill one's mind with positive thoughts to change one's fortunes. Divine nature, in the form of Dickon and the secret garden, makes this possible for both Mary and Colin.

Colin, made furious by this question, forces himself to stand up on his own feet for the first time in his life. After this feat, Colin's health improves miraculously the secret garden, the springtime, and Dickon's company have the same rejuvenating effect upon him that they did upon Mary. The children determine to keep Colin's improvement a secret, however, so that he can surprise his father with his recovery when Master Craven returns from his trip abroad.

The three children, along with Ben Weatherstaff, spend every day of the summer in the secret garden. Only one other person is admitted into the secret. Susan Sowerby The mother of Martha and Dickon, she functions as a symbol for the concept of motherhood itself. She is all-nurturing, all-knowing, and appears dressed in a hooded blue cloak like that of the Christian Virgin Mary. Both Mary and Colin express the wish that she were their mother.

Susan Sowerby, equates magic with the great force of life, perhaps God. In her perspective, this central goodness is not bound by any name or definition but is something that everyone can perceive in their own way. Her statement here is an encouragement for the children to keep believing in magic, making her one of the rare adults who encourage them to embrace their natural wonder and awe for life. Because Martha refers to her only as mother when she speaks about her to Mary, Mary also uses mother to talk about Mrs. Sowerby until she meets her months later. Martha admires her mother, as she's an exceptional baker and a loving parent to her twelve children. This admiration is shared with both Mrs. Medlock and Colin's nurse discuss how skilled Mrs. Sowerby is at raising children. They specifically latch onto her insistence that a girl like Mary should be allowed to run outside and develop independently, rather than be put in the care of a nurse or governess. She even writes to Mr. Craven saying just this, and he takes her advice seriously. In her conversations with Dickon, Mrs. Sowerby shows herself to be kind, curious, and respectful of the private world that Dickon inhabits. She takes a keen interest in Colin and Mary's development and begins sending along baked goods and fresh milk.

This allows Colin and Mary to pretend they are not hungry for their meals at the manor, thereby throwing their caregivers off the scent of Colin's dramatically improving health. Eventually, Colin and Mary invite Mrs. Sowerby to the secret garden, where she shows them how a mother would care for them by hugging them, listening with interest to what they have to say, and feeding them nourishing foods. She is taken with Colin's understanding of Magic and she agrees that regardless of what a person calls it, it represents a belief in the divine and is therefore good. Following this, she writes a letter to

Mr. Craven and encourages him to come home so that he might see his son. She does not, however, specify why, in deference to Colin's secret. Master Craven complies, and returns immediately to Misselthwaite. His first act is to go into the secret garden, he does so at the request of a dream in which the voice of his late wife told him that he might find her there. Just as he lays his hand to the doorknob, Colin comes rushing out and falls into his arms. Father and son are reconciled, and the miracle of Colin's recovery becomes known to all.

We never see Susan Ann Sowerby directly, but she comes up in conversation every once in a while. She's the youngest Sowerby girl, at four years old. When Martha first meets Mary, she thinks that it's ridiculous that Mary has been so coddled that she doesn't even know how to dress herself. She scolds, "Our Susan Ann is twice as sharp as thee an' she's only four year old" (TSG 57). This comparison is unflattering enough to get Mary to put on her own darn shoes. Like Susan Ann, Elizabeth Ellen is another one of Martha's sisters who come up in conversation with Mary. When Mary thanks Martha stiffly for the jump rope that she brought her, Martha laughs a little at her formal good manners. She tells Mary that "If tha'd been our 'Lizabeth Ellen tha'd have given me a kiss" (TSG 73). As Mary begins to grow healthier and less weird, though, she gets more like Elizabeth Ellen. Mrs. Sowerby tells Mary, "Tha'rt grown near as hearty as our 'Lizabeth Ellen" (TSG 26).

Mrs. Medlock is Archibal's housekeeper. She brings Mary to Misselthwaite Manor for the first time, and she doesn't think much of her. In fact, Mrs. Medlock thinks Mary is as sour and unpleasant as they come. And since Mrs. Medlock is in on the secret of Colin Craven's existence, her standards for bratty kid behaviour are probably pretty high. Mrs. Medlock may not think

much of either Mary or Colin, but she doesn't want anything bad to happen to either of them, she just doesn't want to manage their moods and deal with their weird tantrums. Once the kids start visibly improving in health for no reason, she becomes totally confused. On the other hand, we notice that she doesn't make much of an effort to figure out the mystery, since that would be too much trouble. Mr. Pitcher is Archibald's personal servant. We don't know much about him except what Mrs. Medlock says to Mary that "Pitcher's an old fellow, but he took care of Archibald when he was a child and he knows his ways" (TSG 21).

Dr. Craven is Archibald's younger brother and Colin's primary doctor. Dr. Craven has often said that it would do Colin some good to get outside into the fresh air, but he always folds in the face of Colin's intense tantrums. None of Dr. Craven's medical recommendations good or bad seem to matter much in the face of Colin's bad behaviour. Since Colin doesn't trust Dr. Craven at all, Dr. Craven also doesn't have any idea why Colin is suddenly getting much better—he's certainly kept out of the Secret Garden. Like Mrs. Medlock, Dr. Craven doesn't fuss too much about investigating Colin's physical and emotional improvement. After all, his new health is keeping Colin out of Dr. Craven's hair.

There's one weird conflict of interest in Dr. Craven's treatment of Colin: If Colin dies, then Dr. Craven would be his brother's only surviving heir and the potential inheritor of Misselthwaite Manor. Still, the book acknowledges that Dr. Craven is not a complete jerk, He recognizes that Colin's recovery would mean that he would lose all chance of inheriting Misselthwaite, but even so "he

did not intend to let run into actual danger” (TSG 191). Dr. Craven may be a weak person but he is not a villain.

Barney is the name of one of the two English officers who find Mary all alone and forgotten in her parent’s house once they have both died of cholera. He seems more freaked out by Mary’s lonely wait than she is; Mary sees him with a tear in his eye. Little does he know that Mary is about to head to a much better place than her parents empty house and do not mean heaven mean Misselthwaite Manor.

Basil is the kid who comes up with the nickname of “Mistress Mary Quite Contrary” for our heroine. He is also the one who makes fun of Mary for not knowing that, when he says “home,” he means “England” (TSG 19). But it is totally weird to think of a country you have never seen as more *home* than the country you have been living in your whole life. Since Basil, like Mary, has grown up in India, we think this home business is a bit weird. The Crawfords are an English family living in India who look after Mary until she can set sail for England and Misselthwaite Manor. They don’t appear in the novel for long, but they do give us some insight into Mary’s behaviour. While Mrs. Crawford admits that she can see why her kids call her “Mistress Mary Quite Contrary,” Mr. Crawford also notes

Perhaps if her mother had carried her pretty face and her pretty manners oftener into the nursery Mary might have learned some pretty ways too. It is very sad, now the poor beautiful thing is gone, to remember that many people never even knew that she had a child at all. (TSG 19).

Mr. Crawford is quite right and lot of Mary’s bad manners come from her mom’s total neglect. Mr. Roach the head gardener, whom Colin commands

to keep out of the way while he is out in the garden with Mary and Dickon. Mr. Roach is a nice guy who laughs at Colin's high-handed behaviour and obeys his orders. Mr. Roach is an easygoing attitude toward Colin's bossiness helps the kids to keep their work in the Secret Garden.

Chapter Three

The Omnipotent Motherhood

A mother is someone who gives birth to a child, so defining a mother often starts with genetics. It's not quite that straightforward culturally, and basing the definition merely on biology ignores the complexities of motherhood's social construction. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a mother is the female parent of a human being, a woman in

relation to a child or children to whom she has given birth, and a woman who assumes the parental responsibilities towards a child.

As this definition suggests, in its most basic form motherhood is a biological act. In addition to biology, however, the role of mother has been extended to include any woman who takes responsibility for a child, as well as qualities considered as maternal, such as affection and nurture. Social meanings have taken a simple biological act and created a complicated construction. Expressing this complexity.

Motherhood is one of the most universal and reassuring of human institutions, yet at the same time it is one of the most exclusive, even mysterious, Motherhood is universal so far we all began life with a mother. However, like the definition, when we begin to consider the construction of motherhood, it is far from simple. Conflicts in the understanding of motherhood further arise because our social scripts of motherhood encode even our understanding of the biological act of giving birth. Such that our personal and social scripts about mothering is complicate.

In *The Secret Garden*, Burnett creates a diverse cast of characters who mother or nurture their children, reflecting a more practical approach to meeting a child's full range of needs. Mrs. Lillas Craven (Colin's mother), Mrs. Lennox (Mary's mother), and Mrs. Susan Sowerby (Dickon and Martha's mother) are the biological mothers in *The Secret Garden*. Mothers in novels, particularly in eighteenth and nineteenth century novels, are usually only addressed as 'Mrs' indicating a lack of a definite identity strengthened by the absence of a personal name.

The identity of a mother as an individual tends to be considered by her identity as a mother. It is interesting, then, that Mrs. Lennox is the only mother in *The Secret Garden* not given a first name, reflecting the flatness of her character. While all three women are mothers, each of the biological mothers are quite different from one another and respectively is associated with a different space. Mrs. Lennox is an example, only makes a brief appearance in the novel at the house in India. Although we encounter Mrs. Sowerby in a number of spaces, including the garden, the manor, and her own home, she is most strongly associated with the moors where most of her mothering work occurs. The space associated with Mrs. Craven is the secret garden at Misselthwaite, lovingly created for her by her husband. This garden was the site of her death, and has been locked up ever since.

Susan Sowerby is the mother of Martha and Dickon. Because Martha only refers to her as “mother” when she speaks to Mary about her, Mary also refers to Mrs. Sowerby as “mother” until she meets her months later. Martha admires her mother, who is a fantastic baker and a wonderful mother to her twelve children. Mrs. Medlock and Colin’s nurse both express their admiration for Mrs. Sowerby’s ability to raise children. They take issue with her insistence that a girl like Mary be allowed to run around outside and grow independently rather than being placed in the care of a nurse or governess.

Mr. Craven even receives a letter from her stating this, and he takes her advice seriously. Mrs. Sowerby demonstrates kindness, curiosity, and respect for Dickon’s private world during her conversations with him. She becomes enthralled by Colin and Mary’s progress and begins sending baked goods and fresh milk their way. This makes Colin and Mary to act as if they

aren't hungry for their meals at the manor, fooling their caregivers into thinking Colin's health is improving. Mrs. Sowerby is eventually invited to the secret garden by Colin and Mary, where she shows them how a mother would care for them by hugging them, listening intently to what they have to say, and feeding them nutritious meals. Colin's interpretation of Magic appeals to her, and she acknowledges that whatever one calls it, it represents a belief in the divine and thus is good. She then writes to Mr. Craven and asks him to return home.

In "*Domesticating Brontë's Moors: Motherhood in The Secret Garden*," Anna Silver connects the dead Lillias Craven with the ideal mother as she mothers both Mary and Colin indirectly through the Magic of the garden. This argument works for Mrs. Craven but is problematic when we consider Mrs. Lennox, who also dies in the novel. Although upon initial examination Mrs. Craven and Mrs. Lennox appear to be the positive and negative natures of the mother figure - one kind and gentle while the other is selfish and oppressive. Mrs. Lennox represents upper-middle and upper-class Victorian women who saw children as an annoyance that should be kept from interfering with their mothers' pleasures and fascinates. When Mrs. Crawford criticizes Mrs. Lennox for being far too concerned about her appearance and social schedule to teach Mary appropriate behaviour. She is pointing to the problem of uninvolved mothers. Where class and absence align Mrs. Craven and Mrs. Lennox, Mrs. Sowerby differs as she is from a lower social class and therefore does perform the work of mothering. Foster and Simmons describe Mrs. Sowerby as an earth mother, who, in contrast to Mrs. Lennox

and Mrs. Craven, demonstrates the positive effects of the mothering experience (7).

Mary's mother was a lovely lady who preferred to spend her time at parties and conversing with other lovely, happy people. She didn't want to have a child, so when Mary was born, she gave her to an Ayah and went back to her carefree lifestyle. Despite the neglect she showed Mary, Mary enjoyed seeing her mother, who was always well-dressed. When cholera spreads through the home, she dies.

The narrator attributes Mary's nastiness and poor health to India, and then to her upbringing. This suggests that if Mary is ever going to be a fair or good child, she will need to leave India (which was then a British colony). The novel also implies that hired help like this can't adequately raise a child by blaming Mary's parents' neglect and the Ayah's requirement to give Mary her way.

...about the names she's going to call her Ayah. Is it so very bad? Oh, is it? Mary heard her say. "Awfully," the young man answered in a trembling voice. "Awfully, Mrs. Lennox. You ought to have gone to the hills two weeks ago". The Mem Sahib wrung her hands. "Oh, I know I ought!" she. I only stayed to go to that silly dinner party. What a fool I was! (TSG 9)

As Mary is absorbed in this, Mary's mother comes onto the veranda with a young officer. Mary's mother seems scared and upset. Even though Mary is spoiled, no one tells her what is going on because she is a child, and thus unimportant and undeserving of information in everyone else's eyes. The fact that Mary never thinks to ask either indicates that she does not trust the adults in her life and does not believe they will assist her in learning these

skills. Mary is make-believe garden demonstrates that she has the potential to be interested in nature and growing things, but that she is unable to fully embrace this passion in India.

Dickon Sowerby is, in some sense, the spirit of Missel Moor. His eyes are described as looking like pieces of moorland sky, and he smells of heather and grass and leaves as if he were made of them. When the reader first encounters him, he is sitting beneath a tree charming animal with the music of his wooden pipe. This immediately conjures the image of panpipes, and serves to associate Dickon with the god Pan (the Greek god of Nature, Laughter, Passion, and Music). He therefore is presented as having an uncannily close relationship with the wilderness and with wild things. He is able to whisper flowers out of the earth, and inspires Mary's instant and unquestioning love. The contradiction in terms represented by the phrase Yorkshire angel arises out of the opposition between heaven and earth. Here, of course Yorkshire represents earth, and is evidenced by Dickon's common appearance. He transcends such class distinctions, however, because he is in some sense a heavenly creature. The question of how Dickon can be both absolutely of the earth and absolutely of the heavens (even his eyes are like bits of sky) is easily resolved when the reader recalls that, in the world of *The Secret Garden*, the world of nature is itself divine. Thus, Dickon can be, even in the Christian economy of the novel, the god of nature.

In addition to biological mothers, *The Secret Garden* has a number of characters who display qualities often associated with mothering or provide alternatives to existing mothers. The two characters who act as alternative to the biological mother include Mary's Ayah in India and Martha Sowerby, at

Misselthwaite. Thaden reminds us that unlike current society, the Victorian upper-middle class and upper-class mother did not attend to the practical needs of the child, but rather this was usually the work of a nanny. From the moment of her birth, Mrs. Lennox delegates her parental responsibilities to the extent that, under Mrs. Lennox's orders, the Ayah goes to great lengths not to involve Mrs. Lennox in Mary's care. While Martha Sowerby cares for Mary, her responsibilities align more closely with those of a servant rather than a mother (Thaden 18). Martha does instruct Mary using the sage advice of her own mother, Mrs. Sowerby, as in this example, "but mother says you ought to be learnin' your book by this time an' you ought to have a woman to look after you" (TSG 53).

Other characters in the book possess nurturing qualities that cross gender and space boundaries. Phyllis Bixler argues that Burnett often placed male figures in nurturing roles usually held by women. In *The Secret Garden* Ben Weatherstaff and Dickon reinforce the argument that nurturing power can transcend gender. Ben Weatherstaff, the gruff estate gardener not only nurtures the plants, but also keeps the children's secrets and helps them restore the secret garden to its original beauty (3). Similarly in Burnett's work includes multiple mother figures, including men, in effect demonstrating that "motherhood is not an essentially female activity but a human one" (TSG 196). Foster and Simmons note that Dickon is truly his mother's son emulating her empowering motherhood style when he acts as a surrogate mother "rescuing and sheltering animals" (184). Druley also sees Dickon as a mother figure who "chooses the work of mothering, discovering a great deal of joy from the work. He mothers the earth, and through the earth, he mothers

both Colin and Mary back to health” (63). Dickon’s capacity for nurturing can be seen as Mary recounts the following story for Colin,

The new-born lamb Dickon had found three days before lying by its dead mother among the gorse bushes on the moor. It was not the first motherless lamb he had found and he knew what to do with it. He had taken it to the cottage wrapped in his jacket and he had let it near the fire and had fed it with warm milk. (TSG 140)

Dickon knows exactly what the little motherless lamb needs just as he instinctively knows what motherless Mary and Colin need. Finally, much of *The Secret Garden* scholars identifies Mary as a mother figure. Bixler argues that Mary’s treatment of Colin places her in a mothering position. As a mother figure, Mary is interesting insofar as she does not possess the traditional image of calm, gentle motherhood, but rather is effective when she confronts Colin mirroring his boisterous manner. His face looked dreadful, white and red and swollen, and he was gasping and choking; but savage little Mary did not care an atom (9).

If you scream another scream, she said, I’ll scream too — and I can scream louder than you can and I’ll frighten you, I’ll frighten you!. “I can’t stop!” he gasped and sobbed. “I can’t — I can’t!” “You can!” shouted Mary. “Half that ails you is hysterics and temper — just hysterics — hysterics!” and she stamped each time she said it. (TSG 125-126)

Mary is successful in mothering Colin precisely because she confronts him on his own terms and in a like manner. Finally, even space plays a role in mothering as many scholars note the power of the garden to “mother” or

play a role in Mary and Colin's development. Bixler sees the garden as synonymous with motherhood, both as a metaphor for the mother and as a space that falls within the traditional sphere of a woman's agency. Similarly, there was a renewal of the idea of woman as nature and a reinforced identification with Mother Nature. Bixler, Foster and Simmons, believe that the garden is a manifestation of Lilius Craven's spirit, either as her haunting the garden or as the Magic contained within it, respectively. On a final note, the book has two peripheral associations with the idea of motherhood.

“What an unhappy face he had! His black eyes seemed as if they scarcely saw her, as if they were seeing something else, and he could hardly keep his thoughts upon her” (TSG 141). At their first meeting, Mary makes an astute observation of her uncle. Her description of his face reflects the deep sadness he carries, which makes it nearly impossible for him to communicate with other people. Archibald's focus is still mostly in the past, as evidenced by his inability to fully see his niece seated in front of him. The author draws a link between having a healthy mind and having a healthy body, claiming that people who continually think of themselves as sick or disabled will suffer from poor health. Colin was constantly reminded of his vulnerability as he grew up. He begins to make the connection between mind and matter after meeting Mary and seeing the garden, and by the end of the storey, he is healthy and strong.

As a colonial text as well as a book written by a mother author. While, the colonial relationship between England and India demonstrated in the book is not a focus, it does highlight the idea of England as a Mother Country. The idea of Queen Victoria as the mother to the colonies was prevalent during the

Victorian period. The final connection between motherhood and *The Secret Garden* is Frances Hodgson Burnett herself, as a mother and an author.

“Mary had worn her contrary scowl for an hour after that, but it made her think several entirely new things” (TSG 65) After Martha points out that Mary is far too old to be dressed by a servant, this happens. Mary has been likened to Martha’s four-year-old sister, Susan Ann, who can already dress herself, according to Martha. This forthright honesty makes Mary irritated at first, but the truth of Martha’s statement cannot be overlooked. As a result, we see a turning point in Mary’s life, where she is slowly beginning to recognise her flaws and grow as a person.

Noting that Burnett was writing in the same period *The Secret Garden* was set, Gerzina shows that Burnett's life demonstrates the complexities associated with late Victorian motherhood. Similarly, Keyser observes that Burnett had her own concerns about being a good mother, which were played out in *The Secret Garden*. Therefore, I think it is important to connect the mothers in the novel to the role of Burnett herself as a mother. From the age of seventeen, Frances Hodgson Burnett wrote professionally and was the sole breadwinner of her family both as a daughter taking care of her mother and siblings, and as a wife and mother, taking care of her husband and two sons.

She stopped and listened to him and somehow his cheerful, friendly little whistle gave her a pleased feeling even a disagreeable little girl may be lonely, and the big closed house and big bare moor and big bare gardens had made this one feel as if there was no one left in the world but herself. (TSG 43)

Mary's transition from her life in India, where she was constantly watched by servants, to her new life in England, where she is left to her own devices, is symbolised by this quote. Mary is initially terrified by the vastness of her newfound freedom, as she has never had to use her imagination before. Mary begins to shed her disagreeable behaviour and open up to the vibrancy of life around her thanks to the robin's voice, which helps her realise she is never truly alone.

Despite writing being considered a socially acceptable profession for a woman, Gerzina's biography of Burnett demonstrates that Burnett exercised a great deal of agency outside of what would have been expected in traditional patriarchal culture. Despite an unhappy marriage, having a husband lent Burnett an aspect of respectability and allowed Burnett to travel and conduct her affairs in a way that would not have been as easy for a single woman in the Victorian period. While her writing career afforded Burnett a certain degree of freedom, it also meant extended absences from her children, who were left in the care of a nanny. Despite professing her love for her sons, Burnett continuously spent long periods away from them, even when these absences could have been avoided and in spite of how desperately her children missed her. Therefore, the pressures and freedoms of her career were not without a cost to Burnett's health and family. One example of this was the death of her eldest son, Lionel, which deeply affected Burnett. A number of critics note the conflict Burnett experienced in attempting to balance her children and her career(6). Druley and Bixler argues that while Burnett valued motherhood, she challenged the representation of mothering roles in her writing of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *A Little Princess*, and *The Secret Garden*.

Coming to know Burnett through Gerzina's biography, *The Secret Garden* does reflect aspects of the author's life, including the love for her children, her lifelong love of gardens and independent nature, an expression of the grief over the death of her son Lionel after a lengthy illness, her personal view of motherhood and her exposure to ideas of activism, feminism, and spiritualism at Nook Farm. Burnett's love of gardens began as a young girl in Manchester when she would spend long hours in the garden behind the family home. Shortly before writing *The Secret Garden*, Burnett spent several years at Maytham Hall, whose grand gardens are the basis of the estate and gardens in the novel, and in Burnett's own words in *The Paris Review* was "the only place I ever felt was home Maytham is real home" (56).

Burnett's life is a living example of the divide between the ideal of motherhood and the reality of motherhood. As a social and cultural construction, society's idea of motherhood often fails to capture reality and places the ideal outside attainable limits, "the good mother is reinvented as each age or society defines her anew, in its own terms, according to its own mythology" (Thurer 334). While the concept of family has been in place for centuries, the Victorians sought to iconize its status hoping to stabilize a country transformed by massive change.

Chapter Four

Emblematic Representations in *The Secret Garden*

Burnett designs the plot of *The Secret Garden* in a very individual way, which is one of the key reasons for its incredible status all over the world. First of all, Burnett abandons the fixed plot pattern of the traditional fairy tales. In the traditional fairy tales, the heroine tends to be soft, kind or lovely, but also weak and helpless. When she is persecuted or faced with difficulties, she desperately needs the help of a heroic hero. This pattern of male superiority and female inferiority has been running through the plots of the traditional fairy tales and it can be said to be deeply rooted in the traditional fairy tales. In *The Secret Garden*, Burnett makes a bold attempt to endow the heroine Mary with the ability to save herself and even other people. In the process of conceiving the plot, Burnett also carefully crafts two secrets: the secret garden and the male protagonist Colin, both hidden for many years. It is not difficult to find that the plot of *The Secret Garden* is mainly built around the two secrets mentioned above. While revealing Mary's continuous exploration of the secrets, Burnett

also skilfully presents the readers with Mary's mental growth. At the same time, secrets effectively arouse the readers curiosity, It can be said that the application of secrets is a major innovation in plot designing.

The secret garden then becomes a symbol of motherhood, transformation, and healing. Mary and Colin are both motherless and have to mother themselves. The garden keeps them secure, just as a nest keeps baby birds secure, and they venture out at their own pace as they explore the world and develop their growing selves. In the garden, they learn what a mother would have taught had Mary's mother not neglected her and Colin's mother not died. Mary learns how to like people and be interested in things. Colin learns how to walk, run, and not be afraid to live. Both learn how to socialize, how to think of things other than themselves. They are transformed from physically ill, immature, and self-centred children into healthy individuals.

The roses in the secret garden are symbolic of children. Ben Weatherstaff tells Mary how Mrs. Craven "loved 'em like they were children" and would kiss them. After she died, the roses "was left to themselves." Like Mary, they were "orphaned". Mary excitedly asks, "Did they quite die? Do roses quite die when they are left to themselves?"(TSG 98). Although Mary has only recently been orphaned, she never received a mother's love and, like the roses, has been neglected for ten years.

Both Mary and the roses, however, can be tended so they will become fully alive. The same is true for her cousin, Colin, who also has been left to decline away, in his case, because of his father's grief over his mother's death. Ben Weatherstaff gets annoyed at Mary's insistent questions about how to tell if the roses are dead or alive; he asks why she is interested in roses all of a

sudden. Mary tells him she wants to play and have a garden of her own because “there is nothing for me to do. I have nothing and no one” (TSG 118) She views the roses as fellow children, something she can be with. They become her favourite plant in the garden, and she tends them with a motherly love so they can grow.

Ben Weatherstaff explains how Mrs. Craven told him before she died, “if ever I’m ill or if I go away you must take care of my roses”, (TSG 208) exacting a promise for the continued care of the flowers, as if they were children. When Weatherstaff gives Colin a rose bush to plant, it represents Colin planting himself in the garden. He becomes a child of the garden to be nurtured by his mother just as she once nurtured her beloved roses. The language of *The Secret Garden* is flowery. Not only are there tons of literal flowers in the novel forget-me-nots, roses, delphiniums, and so on but the novel also uses a lot of exclamation points and adjectives when it wants to convey something particularly beautiful or important.

Eggs and seeds symbolize the creation of new life, while bulbs symbolize rejuvenation. The most vivid example is which tells the story of the robins and their eggs. The chapter opens with the sentence, “And the secret garden bloomed and bloomed and every morning revealed new miracles” (TSG 252) One of those miracles is the miracle of life. Burnett capitalizes the E in “eggs” (TSG 249) to signify the sanctity of life and birth. The love a parent feels for the unborn child is described by explaining that if an Egg were taken away or hurt, the whole world would turn round and crash through space and come to an end. In this emotional description of a parent’s love for a child, Burnett’s love for and loss of her elder son, Lionel, resounds powerfully.

Mary asks if bulbs could “live years and years if no one helped them?” (TSG6) Martha reassures her they do, saying, “They’re things as helps themselves ... If you don’t trouble ‘em, most of ‘em’ll work away underground for a lifetime an’ spread out an’ have little ‘uns” (TSG 3) They do not need the careful tending of roses, showing Mary that not all living things have the same needs in order to survive and grow. Bulbs are self-contained entities and need little nourishment in order to grow and reproduce.

Seeds also represent the opportunity for new life, Mary explains why she wants to plant seeds, saying, “If I have seeds and can make flowers grow the garden won’t be dead at all—it will come alive” (TSG 107). The moment Mary steps into the secret garden for the first time, we are shown this magical space through her delighted eyes. The garden is painted as “the sweetest, most mysterious-looking place any one could imagine,” with a brilliant assortment of plants, such as “long tendrils” of “climbing roses,” a “hazy mantle” of branches, and “wintry brown” grass (TSG 89). Most importantly the garden is described as having a powerful stillness from the lack of human presence.

Frances Hodgson Burnett also uses plenty of short, direct words in this passage to vary the tone and to keep it from becoming *too* sweet and dense to tolerate. At the same time, *The Secret Garden*’s passages of description always include multiple adjectives to describe similar things, which makes the prose seem both highly decorative and, well, *flowery*. The book understates much of the difficult time Mary has had in her life prior to arriving in Yorkshire. The story focuses on Mary’s recovery and her interest in the garden rather than the fact of her losing her entire family overnight and moving to a completely different environment.

The author intensely portrays Archibald Craven's manor when Mary first arrives there. The entrance hall of the mansion is described in detail, the material the door is made with, what is situated on the walls of the hall, the way the floor is designed. These descriptions in their majesty are contrasted with the small, weak Mary who is not accustomed to such a place and is being led into an unknown chapter of her life.

The children witness a magnificent sunset during Colin's very first time entering the secret garden. The beauty of the darkening sky is made all the more glorious by the triumph of Colin leaving his routine to embrace something new. The sun is portrayed as "deepening the gold of its lances" (TSG 5) and the animals are personified as going home as the day slowly turns into night. Everywhere there is a peaceful stillness that makes the children pause and reflect on the magic of their day.

Environmental description is usually an indispensable part of novel writing. Basically, there are two types of environmental descriptions: the description of nature and the description of social environment. It is not difficult to find that Burnett gives a very detailed description of nature in *The Secret Garden*. Whether it is interesting, oppressive or dry and windy England; whether it is gloomy, desolate winter, or bright, warm springtime; whether it is the verdant grassland with energetic animals, or the lifeless garden locked for many years everything depicted by Burnett is so cheerful, giving the readers a feeling of actually being there, attracting them to keep reading.

In addition, the portrayal of nature plays an important role in characterization. The heroine Mary was born and raised in India, a place noted for hot and humid climate and troubled by mosquitoes. The harsh environment

deprived her of good craving and interest in anything, which gradually led to her physical weakness and bad temper. On the contrary, Dicken was born in England with a pleasant environment. He spent all day on the moor, breathing fresh air, bathing in the warm sunshine, playing with animals and surrounded by blooming flowers. The outdoor activities not only do wonders for Dicken's body, but also turn him into a nice teenager with a positive attitude towards life. The sharp contrast between Mary and Dicken brings a massive visual and psychological impact to the readers.

As mentioned above, the description of nature plays a significant role in character shaping, which is also manifested in the tremendous changes that Mary has undergone in different places. When she was in India, Mary was in poor health and didn't have the slightest interest in food. After arriving in England, due to frequent outdoor activities on the moor, she started to eat more. Gradually, her face became rosier, her dry hair grew glossier, and her body became stronger and stronger. Apart from that, the fresh environment of England gradually softened Mary's temper.

This tyrannical and selfish little girl began to pay attention to the people and things around her. She even started to care for others. Undoubtedly, the pleasant environment of England not only changed the appearance of Mary, strengthened her physique, but also changed her bad temper. The great change achieved in the more pleasant natural environment not only adds to the richness of the heroine, but also brings further psychological shock to the readers, creating more space for the readers to think.

Burnett's description of the social environment focuses mainly on the Misselthwaite Manor in Yorkshire. In the process of creating the manor,

Burnett adopts a strong Gothic style. Situated on the edge of the wilderness, the Misselthwaite Manor was an old and gloomy house with 600 years of history. Inside the manor, there were nearly 100 rooms filled with exquisite paintings and valuable furniture. However, most of the rooms were shut up and locked.

In the depths of the tortuous corridor, there were often vague cries, which made Mary feel uneasy and curious, inspiring her to explore. Through the description of Gothic architecture, Burnett successfully creates a strange and blurred dream atmosphere with strong Gothic suspense and mystery, which not only helps to reveal Mary's psychological activities, but also effectively promotes the development of the plot.

Environmental description plays a significant role in designing plot, building suspense, shaping character and presenting theme. Through the careful description of nature and the skill full use of Gothic factors in depicting the social environment, Burnett succeeds in arousing the readers' attention and willingness to continue reading. Through her fantastic skills in characterization, plot designing and the portrayal of environment, Burnett has farmed a gorgeous flower which is in full bloom in the garden of children's literature, bringing wonderful visual enjoyment and spiritual consolation to readers all over the world. It is beyond doubt that *The Secret Garden* is a classical literary masterpiece worth careful, repeated reading and study.

Colin Craven's absolute engrossment in the garden and its creatures fuses him absolutely with the stuff of life, and with the work of living he is now certain that he is going to live to be a man, and proposes that he will be the sort of scientist who studies magic.

“I shall stop being queer, he said, if I go every day to the garden.

There is Magic in there—good Magic, you know, Mary. I am sure there is”“So am I,” said Mary.

“Even if it isn’t real Magic,” Colin said, “we can pretend it is.

Something is there—*something!*”“It’s Magic,” said Mary, but not black. It’s as white as snow. (TSG 227)

The only kind of scientist who might study what Hodgson Burnett calls magic is a Christian Scientist throughout the novel, the idea of magic is heavily inflected by the tenets of both Christian Science and New Thought. One definition of magic that the novel provides is the conception of magic as a kind of life force it enables Colin stand, and the flowers to work out of the earth. It is also aligned with the Christian God, in that Colin says that the Doxology offers thanks to the same thing he does when he says that he is thankful for the magic. This Christian connotation is strengthened in a number of ways, among them in Mrs. Sowerby’s description of magic as a kind of creator, who is present in all things, and even creates human beings themselves clearly associating him with the all-powerful, all-knowing, and omnipresent Christian God. Christian overtones can also be found in the scene in which Mary throws open the window so that Colin may breathe in the magical springtime air. Colin’s half-joking suggestion that they may “hear golden trumpets” recalls the golden trumpets that are believed by Christians to herald the entrance into Paradise. Furthermore, Mary says that the spring air makes Dickon feel as though “he could live forever and ever and ever”; this idea clearly echoes the Christian belief that Paradise contains the promise of eternal life. Unlike conventional Christian myth, Paradise can be found on earth, in nature, as well as in heaven.

This shift mirrors that made by Hodgson Burnett's system of New Thought, which held that divinity could be found in the landscape, in all-natural living things. Colin again shouts that he feels that he will live forever directly before the singing of the Doxology. The children's magic circle is compared to both "a prayer-meeting" and "a sort of temple"; Colin is described as being "a sort of priest" (TSG 229). The chanting they perform to call upon the healing properties of the magic is very similar to the healing prayers of a Christian Science medical practitioner. The idea that one need only "say things over and over and think about them until they stay in your mind forever" (TSG 231) is also taken from the Christian Scientist emphasis upon the power and necessity of positive thinking.

Chapter Five

Summation

Children's literature is a series of written works and accompanying illustrations intended to entertain and teach children. Fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folk songs, and other primarily orally transmitted materials are all included in this category, as are acknowledged world literature classics, picture books and easy-to-read stories written specifically for children, and fairy tales, lullabies, fables, folk songs, and other primarily orally transmitted materials.

Frances Eliza Hodgson Burnett was an American novelist born in the Manchester suburb of Cheetham. Frances father died in 1853, when she was three years old, and the family was forced to immigrate to the United States in 1865, settling in New Market, Tennessee. Frances started her remunerative writing career there when she was 19 years old, publishing articles in magazines to help support the family. Her mother died in 1870. Swan Burnett, a medical practitioner, married her in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1873. Lionel, their first child, was born a year later. Before moving to the United States to live in Washington, Burnett spent two years in Paris, where their second son Vivian was born. Burnett then started writing novels, the first of which was released to favourable reviews.

Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* is a children's novel first published in 1911. Mary Lennox, a spoiled and obnoxious ten-year-old girl, who lives in India who has been ignored by her unloving parents and

spoiled by her servants. Mary is orphaned after her parents and servants are killed in a cholera outbreak. She is sent to England to live with a widowed uncle, Archibald Craven, at his vast Yorkshire estate, Misselthwaite Manor, after a brief stay with an English clergyman's family. Her uncle, on the other hand, is rarely seen at Misselthwaite. The fastidious Mrs. Medlock, the estate's head housekeeper, takes Mary to the estate and locks her in a room, telling her not to explore the land. Mary is put off when she finds that the chambermaid, Martha, is not as servile as the servants in India. But she is intrigued by Martha's stories about her own family, particularly those about her twelve-year-old brother, Dickon, who has a nearly magical way with animals.

When Martha mentions the late Mrs. Craven's walled garden, which was locked ten years earlier by the uncle upon his wife's death, Mary is determined to find it. She spends the next few weeks wandering the grounds and talking to the elderly gardener, Ben Weatherstaff. One day, while following a friendly robin, Mary discovers an old key that she thinks may open the locked garden. Shortly thereafter, she spots the door in the garden wall, and she lets herself into the secret garden. She finds that it is overgrown with dormant rose bushes and vines (it is winter), but she spots some green shoots, and she begins clearing and weeding in that area. Mary continues to tend the garden. Her interaction with nature spurs a transformation: she becomes kinder, more considerate, and outgoing.

One day she encounters Dickon, and he begins helping her in the secret garden. Mary later uncovers the source of the strange sounds she has been hearing in the mansion: they are the cries of her supposedly sick and crippled ten-year-old cousin Colin, who has been confined to the house and tended by

servants. He and Mary become friends, and she discovers that Colin does not have a spinal deformation, as he believed.

Dickon and Mary take Colin to see the garden, and there he discovers that he is able to stand. The three children explore the garden together and plant seeds to revitalize it, and through their friendship and interactions with nature they grow healthier and happier. When her uncle returns and sees the amazing transformation that has occurred to his son and his formerly abandoned garden now in bloom, he embraces his family, as well as their rejuvenated outlook on life.

The Secret Garden was its complicated nature. As a children's novel, seemingly innocent. It examines a complicated subject motherhood in a complicated way. Burnett is not telling a moral story or being didactic in an obvious way rather she is exposing the binaries, stereotypes, and caricatures of motherhood and slightly suggesting that society needs an alternative. This novel can be read as both subverting and enforcing patriarchy. Using the language of metaphor, Burnett discusses the topics of patriarchy, Victorian ideals, motherhood in a coded language. She uses metaphor the garden and gardening as a metaphor for motherhood in the same way the Victorians used floriography, botanical language, and even gardening literature to say something innocent.

The Secret Garden has represented motherhood. The subject of motherhood is almost universal. Burnett removes the stereotypical fairy godmother and evil stepmother attributed to Mrs. Craven and Mrs. Lennox, respectively, and demonstrates that neither of these motherhood roles are effective or ideal. The removal of these two mother characters opens space for

a more varied representation of motherhood including those with nurturing qualities, such as Dickon and Ben Weatherstaff, those who do the work of motherhood, such as Mary's Ayah and Martha Sowerby, the space to find the mother within ourselves as Mary does, and the garden itself. These motherhood representations are three-dimensional boundaries in the garden.

One of the most important setting by Frances Hodson Burnett in *The Secret Garden* is environmental description. Burnett divided into two categories: natural environment descriptions and social environment descriptions. It is not difficult to note that Burnett explains nature in the hidden garden in great detail. Whether It's exotic, sultry, and hot India, or dusty, windy England; whether it is rainy, bleak winter, or brilliant, warm springtime; whether it's the verdant grassland with energetic animals, or the lifeless garden locked for several years, everything Burnett depicts is so vibrant, giving the readers the impression of actually being there, luring them to keep reading.

As previously mentioned, nature descriptions play an important role in character development, as shown by Mary's dramatic transformation in various locations. Mary was in poor health and had no appetite to eat while she was in India. She began to eat more after arriving in England, owing to the regular outdoor activities on the moor. Her skin became rosier over time, her dry hair became glossier, and her body grew stronger. Apart from that, Mary's disposition was steadily softened by the fresh climate of England. Burnett's definition of the social setting is primarily focused on Yorkshire's Misselthwaite Manor. Burnett uses a heavy Gothic theme in the construction of the manor. The Misselthwaite Manor, located on the outskirts of the wilderness, was an old and gloomy house with 600 years of history. There

were nearly 100 rooms in the manor, each with beautiful paintings and valuable furniture. The majority of the rooms, however, were closed and locked. There were also faint cries in the depths of the tortuous hallway, which made Mary feel nervous and curious, causing her to investigate. Burnett successfully creates a surreal and blurred dream environment of strong Gothic suspense and mystery through the depiction of Gothic architecture, which not only helps to expose Mary's psychological activities.

Burnett's life exemplifies the difference between the concept of motherhood and the truth of motherhood. As a societal and cultural construct, society's conception of motherhood often struggles to capture experience and puts the ideal beyond reach. While the idea of family has existed for decades, the Victorians tried to iconize its status in order to sustain a world undergoing massive transformation.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Discord Between Culture And Time**
In Everything I Never Told You is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous) ,
Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a
work done by Subalakshmi. M during the year 2020 – 2021, and that it has not previously
formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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Discord between Culture and Time in Celeste Ng's

Everything I Never Told You

A project Submitted to

Department of English

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi.

Affiliated to

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University

Tirunelveli.

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award

Master of Arts in English

Submitted by

M. SUBALAKSHMI

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Under the supervision and guidance of

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS) THOOTHUKUDI.

(Re-accredited with 'A' Grade by NAAC)

2020 – 2021

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled DISCORD BETWEEN CULTURE AND TIME IN CCERTIFICATE

EVERYTHING I NEVER TOLD YOU is submitted to ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS),

THOOTHUKUDI, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the awards of MASTER OF ARTS IN

ENGLISH LITERATURE and is a record of work done during the year 2020 – 2021 by,

M. SUBALAKSHMI

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Signature of the SSC Coordinator

Signature of the Director

Signature of the Principal

Signature of the Examiner

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DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE

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Two	A Case of Identity Theft
Three	Symbol analysis
Four	Negotiating Identity
Five.	Summation Work Cited

Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled DISCORD BETWEEN CULTURE AND TIME in Celeste Ng's Everything I Never Told You submitted to ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), THOOTHUKUDI, affiliated to MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY, TIRUNELVELI for the award of the Degree of MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH, is our genuine effort and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar.

STATION : THOOTHUKUDI

M. SUBALAKSHMI

DATE :

SIGNATURE OF THE STUDENT

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are extremely grateful to the Lord Almighty for His guidance and grace in completing this project successfully during the year 2020 – 2021.

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We thank deeply grateful to Mrs. Hermina

Chapter One

Introduction

Where there are people there is literature. Literature is a record of human experience It is people's impression of life. People write it in the form of diaries letters, pamphlets, essays, poems, plays and stories. American literature began with the first English colonies in Virginia and New England. These colonists brought with them the literary wealth of their countries Most of these Americans were the English migrants. American Literature started in the 16th century.

American Literature is Literature written or produced in the United States of America and its preceding colonies Before the founding of the United States, the British colonies on the eastern coasts of the present day United States were heavily influenced by English Literature The American Literature tradition thus began as part of the broader tradition of English Literature.

The revolutionary period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Paine Thomas Jefferson's 'United States of Independence' proved his status as a key American Writer. It was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that the nation's first novels were published. An early example is William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* published in 1791 With an increasing desire to produce uniquely American literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged, perhaps most prominently Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe.

Identity Theft

Identity is a state of mind in which someone identifies their character traits that leads to find out who they are and what they do. In other words, it's basically who you are and what you define yourself as being. Theme of identity is often expressed in books or any piece of literature so that the reader can intrigue themselves and relate to the characters and their emotions, it's useful in helping readers understand that a person's state of mind is full of unbearable thoughts about who they are and what they want to be. People can try to modify their identity as much as they want but that can never change. The theme of identity is a very difficult topic to understand but yet very interesting if understood.

In psychology, the term identity crisis means the failure to achieve ego identity during adolescents are faced with physical growth, sexual maturity and integrating ideas of themselves and about what others think of them. Adolescents therefore form their self-image and endure the task of resolving the crisis of their basic ego identity.

The history of women in America serves to highlight the ironics and contradictions of the American Society. Although women comprise a majority of the population, they are often treated as a minority and grouped as if they are all like. The Individual activities and personal stories of white, black and

brown women, i.e. of European, African and Asian origin women are richly various shared concerns, interests and approaches give rise to feministic movement in the 20th century.

Chapter Three

Symbol Analysis

Undoubtedly the most important symbol in the book is the lake in which Lydia drowns. Located at the end of the Lees street, the lake represents mystery everything the characters cannot know and everything they do not tell each other. In many ways, Lake is a threatening presence; it is both the site and cause of Lydia's death, and the description of Lydia's water-logged body in the analysis report makes the lake into something of a atrocious figure, something that not only kills Lydia but also strangely disfigures her. At the same time, the Lee children are all drain to the lake: it seems to hold a strange power over them, pulling them toward it at critical moments in their lives. Shortly before Lydia's death, she identifies the time when Math pushed her into the lake as the moment in which everything in her life started going "wrong". She decides that she will be able to fix everything as long as she can jump in the lake again and swim back to shore. This desire evokes the Christian tradition of initiation in which believers are "born again" and symbolically washed free of sin by being submerged in water.

Swimming is also symbolically significant in the novel. Both James and Nath are strong swimmers, and when Nath is young James visualizes that he will grow up to be a popular star of the high school swim

team. However, rather than leading to popularity, swimming ends up reemphasizing Nath's marginalization of him. When James takes Nath to the Y, the other children abandon Nath in the

Chapter four

Negotiating identity

The topic of Chinese identity is discussed in a few novels, one of which is Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You*. It is her first novel, and it has earned numerous accolades, including New York Times Notable Book of 2014, Massachusetts Book Award winner, Amazon Best Book of 2014, ALA Alex Award, Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature, Medici Book Club Prize, and selection as best book of the year by over a dozen publications. Furthermore, the Ohioana Award, the John Creasey (New Blood) Dagger Award, and the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award nominated *Everything I Never Told You* novel was a finalist for many awards, including the Ohioana Award, the John Creasey (New Blood) Dagger Award, and the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award.

James Lee is a Chinese descent man who was born and raised in America in the novel *Everything I Never Told You*. His parents are Chinese immigrants who have settled in California. James and his family move to Iowa when he is six years old because James' father gets a new job at a small boarding school in Iowa. Not only does the school give James' mother a position in the kitchen, but there is also a special policy that allows employees' children to attend for free if they pass the entrance exam. After that, James

passes the exam and begins his days at an American academy. Because of his ethnic heritage as a Chinese descendant, he is often mistreated by his American classmates.

Since the in his class harass him, he is ashamed of his typical Chinese appearance. He is lonely, and he goes through various periods in his life in an

Chapter Five

Summation

Celeste Ng was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and moved to Shaker Heights, Ohio when she was 10 years old. Her parents were Chinese immigrants who moved to the United States from Hong Kong in the 1960s. Ng's father was a physicist who worked for NASA and her mother was a chemist who taught at Cleveland State University. Ng has an older sister, and she has explained that the character of Hannah in *Everything I Never Told You* was based on her own experience of being the youngest child. Ng attended Harvard University, where she studied English.

After graduating from Harvard, she earned an MFA in creative writing from the University of Michigan. She has published both short stories and essays in a range of literary journals, and *Everything I Never Told You* is her debut novel. Her second novel, entitled *Little Fires Everywhere* will be published in

September 2017. Ng lives with her husband and son in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she teaches fiction at the Grub Street creative writing program.

This story takes place in a small town named Middlefield. Middlefield is located in Ohio. The main focus of this story takes place during the late 1979's. However, James Lee and Marilyn meet in 1957 at Middlefield college where he was a professor and her, his student. Lydia, their daughter, dies on May 3rd, 1977.

Lydia was a Chinese -American because her mother was Caucasian and her father Chinese. Marilyn states that if Lydia had been a "white girl" they would

Chapter One

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In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson started an influential movement known as Transcendentalism. Inspired by that movement, Henry David Thoreau wrote *Walden*, which celebrates individualism and nature and urges resistance to the dictates of organized society: In the Mid 19th century, Nathaniel Hawthorne published his magnum opus *The Scarlet Letter*, a novel about adultery American's greatest poets of the 19th century were Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson.

American writers expressed disillusionment following World War I. The short stories and the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald captured the mood of the 1920s, and John Dos Passos wrote too about the war In the 20th century American drama was dominated by the work of playwrights Tennessee Williams and

Arthur Miller, as well as by the maturation of the American musical. Depression era writers included John Steinbeck, notable for his novel 'The Grapes of Wrath'. In this century women writers also get inspiration from the contemporary Literature and started to write novels.

Celeste Ng is an American author Ng was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 30th July 1980. Her parents moved to US from Hong Kong in the late 1960s. Her father died in 2004 He was a physicist who worked for NASA at the Glenn Research Center, while her mother was a chemist who taught at Cleveland State University.

When Ng was ten, her family moved from Pittsburgh to Shaker Heights, Ohio, and she attended the schools in the Shaker Heights City School District. At Shaker Heights High School, Ng was involved with the student group on race relations for three years, and was co-editor of the school's literary magazine, *Semanteme* She graduated from high school in 1998.

Ng attended Harvard University, where she completed her bachelor's degree in English in 2002. She then attended graduate school at the University of Michigan's creative writing program (now the Helen Zell writers program), where she earned a Master of Fine Arts in writing, while at Michigan, Ng won the Hopwood Award for her short story, "What Passes Over".

Ng currently lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with her husband and son while on a book tour for *Everything I Never Told You*, Ng stated that her favorite book was *Harriet the spy* and *The God of Small Things* by Arundhati Roy. Ng was a recipient of a Pushcart Prize in 2012 for her story 'Girls at play'.

Ng's fiction has appeared in one story, *In Quarterly* and *subtropics*. Her essays have appeared in *Kenyon Review Online* and *The Millions*. Ng taught writing at the University of Michigan, and she has also taught at Grub Street in Boston. Ng also was an editor of blogs at the website *Fiction Writers Review* for three years. Celeste Ng, author of the 2014 novel *Everything I Never Told You* and the 2017 novel *Little Fires Everywhere*, both New York Times bestseller and recipients of multiple awards. Ng has been named the 2018 Ambassador for Independent Book Store Day.

Her debut Novel, *Everything I Never Told You*, is a literary thriller that focuses on an American family in 1970s Ohio. The novel had four drafts and one revision before completion, which took 6 years. While working on her first novel, Ng stated that she pulled from her own experiences of racism as well as her family and friends. The book, which the *Los Angeles Times* described as an 'excellent first novel about family, love, and ambition', won Amazon book of the year in 2014.

Ng's second novel, *Little Fires Everywhere*, was released in September 12, 2017 and tells the story of two families in Shaker Heights, Ohio. The novel, which the *New York Times* has called 'ambitious and accomplished', is currently being adapted for a eight-episode series on Hulu, starring Reese Witherspoon and Kerry Washington. Amazon's best book and best fiction of 2017, and was named a

best book of the year by over 25 publications It was also the winner of the Good reads Choice Award 2017 in Fiction, and will soon be published overwhelmed in more than 20 countries In March 2018, "Entertainment Weekly" proclaimed that Ng the novelist of the moment.

The novel emerged, as most of her work does, when several seemingly unrelated things collided in her mind was connecting them. Her husband happened to tell her a story about his school days When he was about 8, he was at a friend's house One day the friend pushed his own little sister into a pond in the backyard, She was pulled out immediately by her parents. Ng thinks about this and wonders what happen if they hadn't been there? What was the relationship between this brother and sister, before he pushed her and what was it like after?

On that time, Ng was working on a story about two sisters whose mother has abandoned the family. That story eventually found a life of its own, but that idea of the absent parent, and the effects it might have on siblings, stuck her mind of her. That was maybe the tonal seed of the novel. When Ng was ten years old, there was three young women from the high school were murdered, including one who had been in her grade from her. Those deaths really haunted her, and she wondered if there was some way they could have been saved, as well as how their families could go on after losing them in such a sudden and tragic way. All of those things came together in her brain, and the novel grew from there.

She has always been drawn to writing things that scare her or puzzle her. In particular, she wonders if it's ever possible for any two people to truly understand each other, or if there's always going to be

some scrim of incomprehension between them. This plays out in so many ways: in a marriage, between parents and children, between siblings, between cultures. In the very early stages of the novel, she didn't really think about the races of the characters at all. If anything, she thought of them as white because that's so often default mode for their culture.

Then one of her advisors, Eileen Pollack, asked her about her characters' ethnicity, and she started to think about a racially mixed family, that tied into many of the issues they had to face and the concerns and misunderstanding they had with each other and with outsiders. Most of her stories deal with ethnicity focus on people like an adoptee who tries to connect with her Chinese heritage in College, a non-Chinese widow who finds comfort in Chinese grieving rituals, and so on.

Before writing this novel, she read about the history of interracial marriage- for example, books about Richard and Mildred Loving whose interracial marriage was at the center and the Supreme Court case that legalized interracial marriage across the United States. She hunted for academic studies on interracial marriages, particularly Chinese White marriages, and specifically marriages between Chinese males and White women.

She read books about interracial children, from parenting books like *Does Anybody Else look like Me?* A parent's guide to Raising Multiracial Children and Kip Fulbeck's *The Hapa Project*, which photographed Hapa adults and children along with their own thoughts on their identities. "I've been happy that the book seems to resonate with both Asian American readers and non-Asians. The problem is never being seen as

an Asian American writer; the problem is with being seen only as an Asian American writer “said, Celeste Ng.

Ng’s first novel won the Amazon Book of the year Award in 2014, beating out works by Stephen King and Hilary Mantel. It also received the 2015 Massachusetts Book Award, the American Library Association 2015 Alex Award, the Asian Pacific Librarians Association Award for Literature (Adult Fiction) and the Medici Book Club Prize, and was a finalist for the Ohioana Book Awards Ng won, The John Creasey / New Blood Dagger Award and the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award.

The book’s rights were optioned by LD Entertainment Oscar nominated producer Michael Deluca is attached to produce with Julia Cox attached to adapt the screenplay Julia Roberts will star in the film as Marilyn The story centers on a Chinese- American family in 1970s small town Ohio who suffer a tragedy when the teenage daughter’s body is found in the local lake The investigation of her death rips the family apart as the secrets they’ve kept from one another begin to emerge and demand to be reckoned with.

The novel, which explores alienation, achievement, race, gender, family, and identity, became instantly popular when it debuted in 2014. It was a New York Times bestseller for 47 weeks with 1.5 million copies sold worldwide and is available in 28 languages.

The novel *Everything I Never Told You* falls under the genre of Fiction. There are four different parts of fiction used in this novel. They are mystery, suspense, thriller, psychological fiction. Mystery fiction is a genre of fiction usually involving a mysterious death or a crime of suspects, each suspect is usually provided with a credible motive and a reasonable opportunity for committing the crime. Suspense is a state of mental uncertainty, anxiety, of being undecided, or of being doubtful. In a dramatic work, suspense is the anticipation of the outcome of a plot or of the solution to an uncertainty, puzzle, or mystery, particularly as it affects a character for whom one has sympathy.

Thriller is a broad genre of literature, film and television, having numerous often overlapping subgenres. Thrillers are characterized and defined by the moods they elicit, giving viewers heightened feelings of suspense, excitement, surprise. Anticipation and anxiety. Successful examples of thrillers are the films of Alfred Hitchcock. Psychological fiction is a literary genre that emphasizes interior characterization, as well as the motives, circumstances, and internal action which is derivative from and creates external action; not content to state what happens, it rather reveals and studies the motivation behind the action.

This emotionally debut novel explores themes of belonging. Using the story of the death of a teenage girl involving Lydia from a mixed race family in 1970's Ohio. Lydia is the middle and favorite child of Marilyn Walker, a white Virginian and James Lee, a first generation Chinese-American. Marilyn and James meet in 1957, when she is a premed at Radcliffe and he, a graduate student, is teaching one of her classes from her. The two fall in love and marry, over the objections of Marilyn's mother whose comment on their interracial relationship is "It is not right" (54).

Marilyn gets pregnant and gives up her dreams of and devoting her life instead to raising Lydia and the couple's other two children, Nathan and Hannah. Then Marilyn abruptly moves out of their sub-urban Ohio home to go back to school, only to return before long When Lydia is discovered dead in a nearby lake the family begins to fall apart. As the police try to decipher the mystery of Lydia's death, her family realize that they did not know her at all Lydia is remarkably imagined, her unhappy teenage life crafted with an ounce of Cliché Ng's prose is precise and sensitive, her characters richly drawn.

Everyone in this novel suffered from racial problems and identity crisis. In this novel Ng beautifully portrayed about the struggles in biracial marriages in America The novel based on the death of the protagonist and the circumstance which let Lydia to her death Expectation and disappointment are other major themes in this novel That means they expected something but they don't get it in their life James expected to become a professor in Harvard and Marilyn expected to become a successful doctor but neither of them reached their expectation and was disappointed at what life has to offer They were not complete failures considering the fact that they live an ordinary middle class life Due to James and Marilyn inability to accept disappointments, they both exerted the pressure on Lydia for her to achieve what they did not and in doing so, attempt to live through her.

To her parents, Lydia was not her own person, but more like a tool to correct the failures they have experienced Being rigid and inflexible in their expectations they cannot accept their children just the way they are and they cannot stand the way their life turned out to be. It was not until they finally faced the truth about Lydia's death and about James' affair that they are finally able to find contentment in their marriage despite all the existing imperfections.

Ng wrote about motherhood in both her novels *Everything I Never Told You* takes place in the 70's. *Little Fires Everywhere* takes place in the 90's Both these novels she talks about different character sketches in motherhood In the 70's women were just starting to get career opportunities and were getting ready to lead lives that were very different from their mothers' lives *Everything I Never Told You* based these ideas in motherhood. In *Little Fires Everywhere*, based on the idea that there are different kinds of mothering, and different kinds of ways and different children need different types of mothering. Ng's novels shouldn't base on the qualities of a good mother, but they were based on the personality of the mothers.

Both of Ng's novels start with a mystery. *Everything I Never Told You* starts with telling us that "Lydia is dead ". *Little Fires Everywhere* starts with "The house on fire "Because Ng wanted to let the reader know, were they are *Everything I Never Told You* started very differently in its early drafts It started with, the characters in this novel and the readers don 't know what happened to Lydia until fifty pages In the third revision, a friend of Ng tells the idea about the mystery It creates more suspense to the readers Through this method Ng wants the readers to think It increases the curiosity about the secrets in Lydia's death.

Mark Lawson said that *Everything I Never Told You* is an acute portrait of family psychopathology, This debut crime thriller is a surprise choice of Amazon's book of the year and New York Times Notable book of 2014 Although no literary prize can claim scientific objectivity for its judgments , one might be suspicious of a trophy given by Amazon In their list of the 100 best book of the year, in 2014 the editors

expressed hope that awarding the top slot to Celeste Ng's debut novel will help that salesability and marketing may be at least as important as literary quality.

The choice of 70's setting is an indicator of the damage that modern technology and ideological progress have done to the plotting options of crime writers. "Children of Mixed Backgrounds often struggle to find their Place" is a shocking headline in the news paper coverage of Lydia's funeral. Ng brilliantly depicts the destruction that parents can inflict on their children and on each other Lydia as we learn in scenes from her past. She cannot herself become the all- American physician of her folks' dreams. It is the pressure to do so that effectively kills her. Each of her family suffers some kind of identity crisis her brother Nathan is off to Harvard, where his reception will not be uniformly warm And does Nathan's conviction that their neighbor Jack knows how his sister died result from a belief that the boy is a murderer, or that he is a racist?

Robert Collison recalls the opening line in Leo Tolstoy's epic paean to neurotic marriage. Anna Karenina "Happy families are all alike, every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way". Well, Leo meet the Lees of Middlewood, Ohio, because the Kareninas have nothing on this perversely unhappy little Chinese American clan of father James- he's the Chinese half of this marital duo-mother Marilyn – she contributes the old – stock Virginia bit and their bi-racial progeny son Nathan and daughters Hannah and Lydia.

Emily May, “Before that she hadn’t realized how fragile happiness was, how if you were careless, you could knock it over and shatter it”. This book is a fantastic character portrait. It is a family drama with a focus on the everyday life in the Lee family. The book focuses on the dynamics between the members of an American family in the 1970s. The characters are so rich and well drawn. Celeste Ng has portrayed the intricate details of these people, of their relationships, of their complex web of contradictory emotions.

Ng opens with the statement “Lydia is dead. But they didn’t know this yet”. Then she delves into the lives of the Lee family as they learn of her disappearance and eventually have to deal with the loss of their beloved daughter and sister. The timeliness of the novel skips from past to present, weaving in a history of the characters. Gradually revealing the subtle ways this seemingly close-knit family do not know each other at all. It is subtle, which actually makes it more dramatic. It incorporates sexism, racism and miscegenation, without becoming a story about any of them. While reading this book Emily May felt emotional and then realized, they are only fake characters. She left with a lingering sadness and a want to read whatever Celeste Ng writes next.

One of Ng’s followers, John said that Celeste masterfully handles the verb tense in the book *Everything I Never Told You*. It was very effective. The sections of the book that take place in the past are in past tense. While the sections in the narrative present are in the present tense. Simple. But it cues the reader to where they are in time. Cassandra Campbell read the audio-book version of *Everything I Never Told You*. Another follower, Deb said that. He compared Hannah and Liza Lu. Liza Lu is a character from *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*. Hannah is a sort of ‘spiritualized image’ of Lydia.

Ng's follower Juliana said that Celeste always use the word Oriental "instead of Asian, when describing the characters It's the term that would have been used at that time She wanted to startle the readers using unrefined term, to remind readers that they are in an earlier and less progressive era, where people weren't seen as 'Asian but 'Oriental' Celeste Ng reads a lot as a kid, but as an adult, some of her influences include Toni Morrison, Elizabeth Strout, Ann Patchett, and Arundhati Roy Those are some of the authors Celeste read and try to emulate.

In the beginning of the book Celeste mentioned that Lydia had a copy of *The Sound and the Fury* .The book is one of Celeste's favorite books, and one of the think she liked about it is that there is a deeply complicated sibling relationship at the heart of it And it's a book she hugely admired. So she gave it that little cameo role in her novel as a nod to the complicated relationship between brother and sister-and also as a kind of good-luck talisman. In the rest of the chapters the themes of identity crises, issue of race, ethnicity bullying, survival instinct, fidelity and family in the novel *Everything I Never Told You* are discussed.

Chapter Two

Identity Theft

Identity is a state of mind in which someone identifies their character traits that leads to find out who they are and what they do. In other words, it's basically who you are and what you define yourself as being. Theme of identity is often expressed in books or any piece of literature so that the reader can intrigue themselves and relate to the characters and their emotions, it's useful in helping readers understand that a person's state of mind is full of unbearable thoughts about who they are and what they want to be. People can try to modify their identity as much as they want but that can never change. The theme of identity is a very difficult topic to understand but yet very interesting if understood.

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The history of women in America serves to highlight the ironies and contradictions of the American Society. Although women comprise a majority of the population, they are often treated as a minority and grouped as if they are all like. The individual activities and personal stories of white, black and brown women, i.e. of European, African and Asian origin women are richly various shared concerns, interests and approaches give rise to feminist movement in the 20th century.

The 1965 Immigration Act removed quotas based on national origin, thereby removing barriers to Asian immigration in the US. Hence, there is a watershed in the formation of Asian-American identities, and the identity is always in process. But the fact remains that Chinese-American and Japanese-American have a longer past in America than other Asian-American counterparts.

Even after a period of more than hundred years, and even after successive generations there are four generations of living in the US. Chinese Americans, as well as Japanese Americans, still remain an ethnic group retaining elements of their own native culture they live in the American mainstream. Gender and ethnicity are the two major themes of both Chinese American and Japanese American novels.

In American literature, an identity crisis is frequently occasioned by conflict. Conflict between a person or group and another person, group, or natural force is what drives one into change. To celebrate the diversity of American society is to recognize literary voices whose power is generated by writer's deep identification with their race and gender. Such voices call readers attention to the uniqueness of

experience. The works portray characters struggle in search of their ontological as well as cultural identity.

Identity crisis the condition of being uncertain of one's feelings about oneself. Together with love and death, the identity crisis has consistently demonstrated its thematic power in literature. Its portrayal challenges are readers to think about their own relationship with society, to elevate their self-awareness to a higher level, and to pursue and achieve self-realization with regard to character, goals, and origins, occurring especially in adolescence as a result of growing up under disruptive, fast-changing conditions.

Asian Americans are Americans of Asian descent. The term Asian American was used informally by activists in the 1960s who sought an alternative to the term oriental, arguing that the latter was derogatory and colonialist. Formal usage was introduced by academics in the early 1970s, notably by historian Yuji Ichioka, who is credited with popularizing the term. Today, Asian American is the accepted term for most formal purposes, such as government and academic research, although it is often shortened to Asian in common usage.

As with other racial and ethnicity based terms, formal and common usage have changed markedly through the short history of this term. The most significant change occurred when the Hart Cellar Act of 1965 eliminated highly restrictive 'national origins' quotas, designed to restrict immigration of those of Asian racial background. The new system, based on skills and family connections to U.S. Residents, enabled significant immigration from every nation in Asia, which psychological and moral characteristics

other than those of the early 20th century immigrants. They also tend to have different employment and settlement patterns in the United States. The Definition of Asian American has variations that derive from the use of the word American in different contexts. Immigration status, citizenship by birth right and by naturalization, acculturation, and language ability are some variables that are used to define American for various purposes and may vary in formal and everyday usage.

The growth of Chinese-American literature is itself a product of a specific historical moment. Just as ambiguities surround the term 'Chinese Americans', there exists no consensus on what properly falls within the preview of Chinese American literature; indeed, the boundaries of the field, as inferred from critical practice have fluctuated with changing historical conditions. The usage of 'Chinese Americans' currently accepted by a majority of the community and by the American political structure, to refer to persons of Chinese ancestry residing permanently in the United States regardless of nativity, is of recent coinage.

The major problem that emerged during this period was nativism. After the devastating war, the majority of Americans came to realize that the Progressive Era reforms had been useless. The old values of the American society had been terribly challenged due to those modern rapid changes, while constituting a real threat to the Americans. The increased flow of immigrants, coming with foreign radical ideas to big cities, caused a fear to the American society, as a reaction to these changes, a new sense of nativism emerged in many forms. Protecting states of native-born Americans while rejecting other non-American lifestyles.

Everything I Never Told You is the story of the Lees, a Chinese American family living in 1970s in a small town Ohio. The story starts with Lydia, the middle child is dead. The family however does not know this. The narrative focuses on the Lees, a middle class Chinese American family missing their family member, so there is palpable tension at the breakfast table due to her absence. Lydia's siblings Nath and Hannah discuss about Lydia and her previous day actions. Marilyn and James are determined that Lydia, the middle and favorite child, will fulfill the dreams they were unable to pursue. For Marilyn that her daughter becomes a doctor, for James, that Lydia is popular at school, a girl with a busy social life and the center of every party.

The issue of race and identity is central to understanding the conflicts within this novel. Under the context, which is set in suburban Ohio in the 1970s, bi-racial marriage is still unaccepted by many. For the main character Lydia, her bi-racial status made social life confusing for her as she struggles to find her identity. This is evident from the fact that she is not popular at school and barely has any friends.

This is also true for Nathan and Hannah, whom are still trying to figure out how to fit in and establish their sense of belonging. Nathan is often an observer, while Hannah fades herself into the background as the silent observer.

James is the son of Chinese immigrants. Before their deaths, both of his parents worked in Cafeteria of Lloyd Academy, a prestigious prep school which James attended for free after passing the entrance exam. Although James was born in the United States, he never feels like he fits into American Society. As an undergraduate and then graduate student in the history department at Harvard, he doesn't have

any friends. The subject of his research, cowboys, is rather ironic, considering that he feels racially marginalized and excluded from American culture.

At the time James meets Marilyn, he is hoping to be hired as an assistant professor in the Harvard History Department, despite being the best graduate student, James is rejected from the position, likely because of his race and social unpopularity. James' consistent experience of isolation affects his career, family, and personal happiness. While Marilyn relentlessly pressures Lydia to become a doctor, James projects his own deepest insecurities on to Lydia in the form of pressuring her to be popular at school.

Lydia's father James Lee faces many identity problems in his life. Marilyn's mother refuses to acknowledge their marriage due to the fact that he is Chinese. He always feels self-conscious about being different and harbors insecurities. James is an accomplished graduate student who was almost hired as an assistant professor at Harvard, but was not due to his race.

James has an intense fear of not being accepted by others and not being taken seriously due to his race, which in turn causes him to pressure Lydia to assimilate and conform. James, being Asian, has endured racism since the first day of school when he was asked, "What's wrong with your eyes" (43). From this day onwards, James would be the victim of racism in their school. People were confused when they see him teaching American subjects in Harvard University.

Marilyn, James Lee's wife loved him for his appearance because he is an Oriental. It took her by surprise because the standard was that Americans only teach American subjects. And Asians are not American.

He has an intense fear of not being accepted by others and not being taken seriously due to his race which in turn cause him to pressure Lydia to assimilate and conform. Furthermore, after Lydia's death, the cracks in his marriage with Marilyn begins to show, James starts an affair with his young Chinese American teaching Assistant in an attempt to find his own identity through her.

After her mother's death Marilyn became restless Due to Marilyn's restlessness, she decides she wants to continue with her studies, and so abandon her family to pursue her studies. James, after taking Nath to a community pool and watching him being bullied on account of his ethnicity, feels ashamed. Marilyn struggles between her role as a mother and a scholar.

At her times, it is still commonly expected for women to become housewives and look after the household. However, when Marilyn went to clean up her mother's house after Doris, her mother's death, she feels that Doris has not left anything behind and has accomplished nothing; there is no trace of Doris left except for some markings on a cookbook.

Having witnessed Doris's life, Marilyn is determined to never be like her mother. Marilyn was excelling as a Radcliffe undergraduate destined for medical school, so when she had to give up her aspirations to become a wife and a mother, she was seared and unsatisfied frustrated with the constraints this role

put on her life yet unable to break out. This also eventually led to her over pushing Lydia to become academically successful, pressuring, Lydia to pursue a career in the scientific field.

Ng creates empathy by showing how Marilyn dealt with the sexism she faced One day she h an interview with her high school Master. When she was questioned, "Why do you want to take physics?

And she explained shyly that she was hoping to become a doctor" Not a nurse? He'd said, with a chuckle "(25). Her shy response proves that she has been raised to never go against a man's word. The woman must be subservient to the man.

When Lydia's body is found in the local lake, the delicate balancing act that has been keeping the Lee family together is destroyed James, consumed by guilt, sets out on a reckless path that may destroy his marriage. Marilyn, devastated and vengeful, is determined to find a responsible party, no matter what the cost. Lydia's older brother, Nathan, is certain that the neighborhood bad boy, Jack is somehow involved But it's the youngest of the family Hannah who observes far more than anyone realizes and who may be the only one who knows the truth about what happened.

Although the novel takes place in the 1970s, many of the issues the character's face is just as relevant today. Those who are different racially, culturally, or in any other way still find themselves pressured to be someone they're not. Many more routes are open to women today, especially in medicine and science, but women still wrestle to balance careers and personal lives, trying to align what their families need and what they themselves want as well as society's expectations of what women, wives, and

mothers should be. Parents yearn to make a better life of their children while the children themselves often feel defined and confined by their parents dreams.

Lydia is declared dead and her family deals with her death in different ways Each of her family suffers some kind of identity crisis. Through flashbacks and multiple perspectives, each characters, reveal their motivations and the scars perpetrated on each of them as a result of feeling like outsiders in a world that doesn't accept biracial marriages.

Lee's family is represented as "a family with no friends, a family of misfits (112) To some extent, this family-wide social isolation of both James and Marilyn. When the two meet at Harvard, both are socially marginalized as a result of prejudice James because of his race and Marilyn because of her gender. They are attracted to each other due to a feeling of understanding created through their shared experience of isolation. As they get older, they fail to make any friends or truly participate in the middle wood community. Both James believes he was not hired as a professor at Harvard because he did not fit the social and racial profile required of Harvard professors, and Marilyn feels that she was denied the chance to have a career as a doctor due to the gendered pressure to become a housewife.

James and Marilyn pass on this experience of social exclusion to their children. Nath and Lydia are the only non-white students at school, and are socially marginalized on this account. Indeed, the experiences of the Lee family fit into the literary tradition of depicting mixed-race people as inevitably alienated from society at large. This is sometimes understood through the idea of the 'tragic mulatto', a

half white, half African American figure who is excluded from both communities because they are seen as not truly fitting into either. Although the Lee children are half Chinese instead of half black, their experiences nonetheless evoke this literary trope.

At the same time, James and the children's marginalization is also rooted in racist stereotypes particular to Asians and Asian Americans. Even though James was born in the United States, "he had never felt he belonged here" (40). The ban on Chinese immigrants meant that James and his family adopt false English names Henry and Wendy, in an attempt to assimilate into American society. Ultimately, this attempt to integrate fails, and both James and his children suffer from racist exclusion and hostility throughout their lives.

After their children are born, James struggles with loneliness more intensely than Marilyn. Where Marilyn projects her own failed dreams of becoming a doctor on to Lydia, James obsesses over Lydia's social life. He constantly asks after Lydia's friends, encourages her to pursue the same activities as her peers, and at Christmas buys her three books with instructions on how to win friends and be popular.

Ironically, the only real effect of this act is further estranging Lydia from her father. More than anything,

Lydia wants her father to accept her for who she is, but instead James exacerbates her feelings of loneliness and isolation by implying that she is a social failure. Jack, the one real friend that Lydia does have, suffers from fear of homophobic prejudice. When Lydia discovers that Jack is in love with Nath,

she threatens to tell everyone in school about Jack's feelings, a fact that suggests that experiencing prejudice herself does not necessarily deter Lydia from wanting to inflict it on others.

James' ongoing struggle with notions of social acceptance and popularity contrasts with Marilyn's acceptance of the inherent isolation and loneliness of life. Haunted by her own professional success more than popularity, yet despite having dedicated her life to being a housewife, Marilyn is also isolated from her family. After discovering James' affair and ordering him to leave the house, Marilyn thinks to herself, "you loved so hard and hoped so much and then you ended up with nothing left but you, alone, and empty space" (246). Although James and Marilyn's despair over ending up alone still resonates in the context of her inability to truly connect with Lydia before her death, Lee's family learns to accept one another and grow closer after Lydia's death, but this is inevitably tainted by the fact that Lydia herself is lost to them forever.

Hannah is James and Marilyn's youngest daughter. She is extremely quiet, so much so that sometimes her family forgets that she exists. She has a habit of stealing treasures that belong to members of her family and hiding them around the house.

Although she doesn't fully understand the events that take place around her, she is highly perceptive and is arguably the moral center of the novel.

Nath is the eldest son of James and Marilyn. Academically gifted, he enjoys studying and dreams of a career that involves outer space. Shortly before Lydia's death, he is admitted to Harvard and is excited about the prospect of escaping his hometown and family. Nath is convinced that his neighbor Jack Wolff is responsible for Lydia's death; he questions Jack aggressively and punches him at the end of the novel before being pushed by Hannah into the lake. He remains unaware that Jack had no romantic interest in Lydia and is secretly in love with Nath himself.

Chapter Three

Symbol Analysis

Undoubtedly the most important symbol in the book is the lake in which Lydia drowns. Located at the end of the Lees street, the lake represents mystery everything the characters cannot know and everything they do not tell each other. In many ways, Lake is a threatening presence; it is both the site and cause of Lydia's death, and the description of Lydia's water-logged body in the analysis report makes the lake into something of a atrocious figure, something that not only kills Lydia but also strangely disfigures her. At the same time, the Lee children are all drawn to the lake; it seems to hold a strange power over them, pulling them toward it at critical moments in their lives. Shortly before Lydia's death, she identifies the time when Math pushed her into the lake as the moment in which everything in her life started going "wrong". She decides that she will be able to fix everything as long as she can jump in the lake again and swim back to shore. This desire evokes the Christian tradition of initiation in which

believers are “born again” and symbolically washed free of sin by being submerged in water. However, Lydia’s decision to jump is highly risky and unfounded; it is the middle of the night, she is alone, and she cannot swim.

Swimming is also symbolically significant in the novel. Both James and Nath are strong swimmers, and when Nath is young James visualizes that he will grow up to be a popular star of the high school swim team. However, rather than leading to popularity, swimming ends up reemphasizing Nath’s marginalization of him. When James takes Nath to the Y, the other children abandon Nath in the middle of a game of Marco Polo and shout racist insults at him. The experience of being in water often reminds characters of their own isolation this happens when Nath swims at the Y, when he pushes Lydia into the Fake, and when Hannah pushes him into the lake at the end of the novel. There is also a connection between this isolation and the metaphorical concept of “drowning.” Shortly before her death, Lydia reflects that Nath has been “keeping her afloat.” When he goes to Harvard, she worries that she will permanently “sink” under the pressure of her parents’ suffocating attention and expectations. In reality, this fear leads Lydia to die in the literal sense.

James and Marilyn meet at Harvard, and Nath’s imminent enrollment there troubles the entire book. However, each of these characters has a very different relationship with the institution. Harvard represents James’ academic activities he completes both his undergraduate and doctoral degrees there but it also represents his failures of him. As a graduate student, James has no friends and he isn’t awarded a tenure-track position in the history department even though he is the most qualified candidate. Although James is intellectually skilled, he fails to meet the social criteria wanted by the

institution. As an undergraduate, Marilyn enrolls at Radcliffe, the women's college housed within Harvard. Marilyn shines academically, yet fails to be taken seriously by her male classmates and professors. Besides, she is haunted by Doris' hope of her that she marry a "Harvard man." Marilyn insists to herself that she wasn't there "to find a man" but "for something better." However, despite her best efforts, Marilyn does marry a Harvard man and, in doing so, exposes her own dreams of graduating from Radcliffe and continuing on to medical school. Although Marilyn tells herself that she will only take a few years off before returning to complete her degree, once she leaves Radcliffe, her dreams of becoming a doctor remain forever out of her reach of her.

To Nath, Harvard presents an opportunity to escape his family from him and achieve a kind of rebirth. Whereas in Middle wood Nath is socially isolated and troubled by the tensions within his family, he hopes that in college he will have the opportunity to remake himself as a more carefree, popular, and mature person. Attending Harvard also allows Nath to track his dream of studying outer space. At the same time, Lydia's death casts a dark shadow over what would otherwise be a joyous, liberating moment. Rather than being able to focus on the excitement of going to college like any normal 18-year-old, Nath must deal with feelings of shock, guilt, and grief even as he looks forward to moving into the next stage of his life.

Betty Crocker is, according to Marilyn, Doris' "personal goddess," and Doris reserves the red cookbook instructing housewives on how to create a happy home filled with elaborate meals and treats. When Marilyn goes to pack up her mother's house after Doris' death, she finds no trace of her mother among any of the photos or other belongings Doris left behind. The only thing that reminds Marilyn of her

mother is the Betty Crocker cookbook, and thus she decides to keep it while heaving away everything else. However, the cookbook comes to haunt Marilyn, reminding her of how greatly yet unsuccessfully she tried to escape the false and restrictive role of a housewife. Marilyn feels cynical about the cookbook's naïve promises of domestic happiness and harmony, given that her experience of familial life has been filled with disappointment, tension, and turmoil. When Marilyn runs away to Toledo, Lydia finds the cookbook and notices that it is stained with Marilyn's tears. Lydia hides it so Marilyn will never have to see it again, and later Lydia claims that she lost it. After Lydia's death, Marilyn realizes that Lydia's claim to have lost the cookbook was a lie and that in reality she was attempting to protect Marilyn from seeing it. It is this act that makes Marilyn realize how much Lydia both understood and loved her; ironically, therefore, the Betty Crocker cookbook is ultimately associated with an act of genuine love.

One of the sections of Doris' Betty Crocker cookbook that has the greatest impact on Marilyn is entitled "Basic Eggs." It instructs housewives to know all six "basic ways" to make an egg and to learn their husband's preferred style. Despite Marilyn's resistance to this whole concept, she does make eggs for a member of her family in her favorite style: "Sunny-side up for James. Hard-boiled for Nath. Scrambled for Lydia." Eggs thus represent the thoughtful and often particular work that goes into being a wife and mother work that Marilyn comes to resent as pointless and banal. When Marilyn "disappears" to Toledo, Nath is heartbroken that there is no one around to make him a hard-boiled egg, as this represents to him the care and stability that he craves. Indeed, eggs are a common symbol of reproduction, the family, and the future. In being so dismissive of the work of making eggs, perhaps Marilyn undervalues the importance of caring for her family.

For almost her entire life, Marilyn is obsessed with becoming a doctor, a dream she has harbored since childhood, and whenever she faces opposition it only makes her more fervently attached to the ambition. Yet after marrying James and giving birth to Nath and Lydia, what was once a plausible goal becomes further and further out of Marilyn's reach. Despite this change of circumstances, Marilyn remains obsessively fixated on the world of medicine, so much so that it leads her to strange and irrational behavior, such as driving to the Middlewood hospital for no reason. Upon learning that Janet Wolff is a doctor, Marilyn experiences a kind of emotional break, which eventually only makes her more fervently attached to the ambition. Yet after marrying James and giving birth to Nath and Lydia, what was once a plausible goal becomes further and further out of Marilyn's reach. Despite this change of circumstances, Marilyn remains obsessively fixated on the world of medicine, so much so that it leads her to strange and irrational behavior, such as driving to the Middlewood hospital for no reason. Upon learning that Janet Wolff is a doctor, Marilyn experiences a kind of emotional break, which eventually leads her to run away from her family and finish her undergraduate studies at a community college in Toledo. When she is ultimately forced to abandon her goal of becoming a doctor, Marilyn displaces her ambitions by projecting them onto Lydia. From a young age, Lydia is aware that Marilyn wishes to live out her own dream through Lydia, and Lydia describes Marilyn's heart as "drumming one beat: doctor, doctor, doctor". Although being a doctor revolves around healing and caring for people the novel places the role of "doctor" in opposition to the role of being a good mother. Mrs. Allen accuses Janet of neglecting Jack during her shifts at the hospital, and it is Marilyn's unrealized medical ambitions that lead her to cause pain to Lydia and other members of her family.

When Lydia dies she is sixteen, right in the middle of the charged transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. To some extent, Lydia is still a young girl with an irrationally childlike way of thinking and

little experience of adult matters. At the same time, she is also being introduced to activities associated with the loss of innocence during adolescence, such as smoking and having sex. This contrast of innocence and maturity is symbolized in Lydia's perfume, which is called "Baby Soft." As perfume, it is designed to make Lydia more attractive, and thus it is, inherently linked to sexuality. On the other hand, the perfume's name suggests purity and infancy. The combination of these two conflicting ideas illustrates the way in which teenage girls are placed under pressure to be simultaneously "innocent" and sexy, and that for many 16-year-olds, the binary between innocence and maturity becomes confusingly blurred.

Chapter four

Negotiating identity

The topic of Chinese identity is discussed in a few novels, one of which is Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You*. It is her first novel, and it has earned numerous accolades, including New York Times Notable Book of 2014, Massachusetts Book Award winner, Amazon Best Book of 2014, ALA Alex Award, Asian/Pacific American Award for Literature, Medici Book Club Prize, and selection as best book of the year by over a dozen publications. Furthermore, the Ohioana Award, the John Creasey (New Blood) Dagger Award, and the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award nominated *Everything I Never Told You* novel was a finalist for many awards, including the Ohioana Award, the John Creasey (New Blood) Dagger Award, and the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award.

James Lee is a Chinese descent man who was born and raised in America in the novel *Everything I Never Told You*. His parents are Chinese immigrants who have settled in California. James and his family move to Iowa when he is six years old because James' father gets a new job at a small boarding school in Iowa. Not only does the school give James' mother a position in the kitchen, but there is also a special policy that allows employees' children to attend for free if they pass the entrance exam. After that, James

passes the exam and begins his days at an American academy. Because of his ethnic heritage as a Chinese descendant, he is often mistreated by his American classmates.

Since the kids in his class harass him, he is ashamed of his typical Chinese appearance. He is lonely, and he goes through various periods in his life in an effort to change his past in order to fit into society. After starting school and being bullied by his peers, James' identity undergoes a number of transformations.

He decides to stop speaking Chinese, never mention his family in front of anyone, and create an American culture programme for himself. The writer analyses the novel *Everything I Never Told You* in this research. And it raises a question of identity.

James Lee, the protagonist of this book, is a man of Chinese descent who was born and raised in the United States and deals with issues of identity. The author discovered three studies that were linked to the novel's discussion and study of the idea of identity. There is one previous study that looks at the same book, and two others that are concerned with the writer's analysis theory. Chen Yan-Qiong of Leshan Normal University published the first previous study, titled *A Brief Analysis of Marginalization in Everything I Never Told You*, in 2017.

The Identity Construction of Najwa as A Jordanian Muslim Woman in The Novel *Willow Trees Don't Weep*, conducted by Ida Rosida and Molalita in 2016 at State Islamic University Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, is the second previous study. *Negosiasi Irie Jones di Tengah Keberagaman Masyarakat London Pasca Perang Dunia II dalam Novel White Teeth Karya Zadie Smith*, conducted by Ervin Suryaningsih at

the University of Indonesia in 2012, is the third previous research. Chen Yan- Qiong is in charge of the first analysis, which began in August 2017 at Leshan Normal University in China. A Brief Analysis of Marginalization in All I Never Told You is the title of the article. This journal employs a qualitative approach in conjunction with descriptive research. It focuses on how the story reveals the characters' marginalization as a result of their race, gender, and sexual orientation. The journal makes use of Georg Simmel's marginal man, marginalization, and marginal culture theories. The journal's conclusion describes that the story's setting is characterized by a strong marginal community, and each character is a marginal man who is suffering from a human illness.

The journal's findings reveal that the story's setting is marked by a strong marginal culture, and that each character is a marginal man who is experiencing human conditions in his family, social life, and in himself. The word "marginal man" refers to someone who occupies a space between two cultures and communities that never mix. Meanwhile, insecurity, conflicting feelings, intense self-consciousness, and long-term nervousness are all signs of marginalization in a marginal man's emotion and attitude. The marginal man and the idea of marginalization are then depicted in marginal culture.

James is a marginal man because, as a Chinese American, he feels different and outcast from his surroundings. Not only is he a marginal man, but his wife, Marilyn, is as well, since she attends medical school, which is dominated by men. James and Marilyn's attempts to avoid being marginal men, on the other hand, are mirrored in their three children. They put them under duress of their own urge. James wishes for his child to be well-liked and have a wide number of acquaintances. Marilyn, on the other hand, hopes that her child can pursue a career in science and become a doctor. They just put pressure

on Lydia, who has a Chinese and an American appearance. Her eyes are slit but blue, and she has black hair like the majority of Chinese people. Lydia was killed as a result of the pressure. Not only that, but their other children, Nath and Hannah, are regarded as second-class citizens by their parents because Lydia receives the majority of their attention.

Then there's Lee's next-door neighbour, Jack, and his girlfriend, Janet Woolf, who both feel excluded in certain ways. Janet is a single mother who is being gossiped about by the Community, and Jack is a gay who has a secret passion for Nath. In the book, there are issues of marginalization in terms of race, occupation, gender, marital status, and sexual orientation, according to the study.

The identity construction of Najwa as a Jordanian Muslim woman in the novel *Willow Trees Don't Weep* is the subject of the second previous study, which was published in a journal. Rosida and Molalita describe how a Jordanian Muslim woman named Najwa builds her identity in their book. She grew up in a patriarchal setting. The study employs a qualitative approach that includes descriptive analysis. The findings of this study show that Najwa's quest for her father took her to many countries, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, and England, where she engaged in identity negotiation and articulation processes. When she travels to another nation, Najwa attempts to alter her appearance and actions in order to feel more at ease.

This is equivalent to what happens to James Lee in the novel *Everything I Never Told You*. In order to feel at home in his surroundings, he attempts to reconcile his Chinese identity with American culture.

Furthermore, despite the fact that Chen Yan-Qiong analyses the same book, her study employs three distinct theories: marginal individual, marginalization, and marginal culture. Those three previous studies have eventually supported the author in comprehending the principles of identity. It illustrates that identity is never static and is always changing. Not only that, but they also help to extend understanding of Stuart Hall's identity theory. This study also looks at how James deals with his identity as a Chinese-American man.

James cannot deny his longing for Chinese cultures, despite his determination to be a true American. The word "negotiation technique" refers to a person's ability to adapt to both old and new cultures. He or she does not fully embrace the new society, but neither does he or she condemn the old culture (102). This strategy emerges as a result of a collision between the original culture that we inherit from our forefathers and the modern culture that has developed in the area where we live. Through using some negotiating tactics, James reveals his Chinese ancestry. First, James engages in negotiating technique by having an affair with Louisa Chen, a Chinese girl.

Since he is a professor of American history at Harvard University, the girl is his assistant. James becomes sad and depressed after discovering that his wife, Lydia, has committed suicide. After that, he goes to Louisa's apartment and spends the night with her. James wants everything in his life to be as it is in America, but instead of having an affair with a white woman, he prefers a Chinese girl.

Lydia has blue eyes, which is an American trait, and he has high expectations for her to become a famous girl with a large number of friends. He wishes Lydia's friends didn't think of her as a Chinese child. When Christmas arrives, instead of giving Lydia the necklace she had wished for, James purchases a psychology book on socializing and making new friends. She despises it, but she acts as though she enjoys everything her father offers her. Lydia, on the other hand, has never had a true friend at school.

It's because Asian Americans are regarded as unwanted and unassimilable foreigners, despite their best efforts to adapt to American culture (Zhou and Ocampo 113). As a result, it's understandable that James makes many attempts to assert his American identity.

In the novel, James denies his family history, adopts American culture, marries an American woman, speaks fluent English, becomes a professor of the most iconic American subject, Cowboy, and pressures his children to behave like true Americans who are famous and have a large number of friends. James' dominance of his identity reveals how much he tries to conceal his Chinese heritage. It also expresses the shame of being a Chinese person living in an American environment. James still wants to conceal his identity because he has faced prejudice as an Asian American. Since James is of Chinese origin, the next sub chapter will focus on his negotiating technique.

On the other hand, James, who aspires to be an American, is nostalgic for his Chinese heritage. According to the findings, James is a Chinese American man who aspires to be like an American. Since he is physically Chinese, he is subjected to discrimination by society. The writer in this research uses the

concept of identity of a person can be influenced by the social condition including the society and cultures where he or she lives.

In James' case, he uses a superiority tactic in order to become a real American. He tends to think of himself as an American because China has a tumultuous past in that region. Chinese Americans who are members of the minority community are more likely to face social prejudice and a sense of alienation. As a result, James employs a dominance strategy that includes denying his family history, embracing American culture, marrying an American woman, speaking fluent English, becoming a professor of the most iconic American subject, Cowboy, and pressuring his children to behave like Americans. He also participates in some negotiating tactic by having an affair with a Chinese girl and enjoying Chinese cuisine.

Finally, James' attempts to embody his status as a true American are inextricably linked to his dominance and negotiating strategies. In order to look more like an American and fit in with society, he adopts American culture's looks and habits. His physical appearance does not help his search for a sense of belonging. As a result, it can be assumed that without a conquest and negotiation technique, James would not have been able to achieve his American identity.

Chapter Five

Summation

Celeste Ng was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and moved to Shaker Heights, Ohio when she was 10 years old. Her parents were Chinese immigrants who moved to the United States from Hong Kong in the 1960s. Ng's father was a physicist who worked for NASA and her mother was a chemist who taught at Cleveland State University. Ng has an older sister, and she has explained that the character of Hannah in *Everything I Never Told You* was based on her own experience of being the youngest child. Ng attended Harvard University, where she studied English.

After graduating from Harvard, she earned an MFA in creative writing from the University of Michigan. She has published both short stories and essays in a range of literary journals, and *Everything I Never Told You* is her debut novel. Her second novel, entitled *Little Fires Everywhere* will be published in

September 2017. Ng lives with her husband and son in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she teaches fiction at the Grub Street creative writing program.

This story takes place in a small town named Middlefield. Middlefield is located in Ohio. The main focus of this story takes place during the late 1979's. However, James Lee and Marilyn meet in 1957 at Middlefield college where he was a professor and her, his student. Lydia, their daughter, dies on May 3rd, 1977.

Lydia was a Chinese-American because her mother was Caucasian and her father Chinese. Marilyn states that if Lydia had been a "white girl" they would continue to find answers about her death and to continue looking for her. There are many places within this book that play back to the Lee's being a different race. The Lake is a symbol in this book because it was very close to their home and that is where Lydia's body was found. At first, it was just a place to go swimming for the kids, even though Lydia herself couldn't swim. Then, the lake just became a mystery.

Lydia's bedroom enclosed many secrets that her family knew nothing about. Her bedroom was the place Lydia would go if she was upset, stressed, or just needed to get away. Also, when Marilyn was looking through her bedroom, she found condoms and cigarettes; two things she had no idea Lydia was using. Louisa's apartment is a symbol because it was James' get away. When he was dealing with the loss of Lydia, Louisa and her apartment were his escape. This shows how broken his marriage was with Marilyn.

Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You* narrates a tragedy that occurred in a cross-ethnic family in the 1960s. This paper focuses on Lydia's social, family and campus life environment on the strength of Erickson's theory of self-identity and personality to analyze Lydia's identity crisis. Racism and feminist movement confused Lydia's sense of self-belonging and self-values, which gave rise to her identity crisis.

Parents' exceptional expectations of Lydia and her excessive dependence on her brother also caused Lydia's self-differentiation and self-unity obstacles, resulting in her identity crisis. Finally, with Erickson's self-identity theory, this paper analyzes Lydia's obstacles to self-cognition for abnormal heterosexual emotion and alienated peer relationship. The exploration of Lydia's identity crisis will help further interpret the theme of race, gender and self-cognition revealed in the novel.

The aim of this research is to reveal that the efforts of James to perform his identity as a truly American are inseparable from domination strategy and negotiation strategy. The research uses qualitative method with descriptive analysis. It is supported by identity concept of Stuart Hall particularly on domination strategy and negotiation strategy. James dominates and negotiates his identity in order to be a totally American. He prefers to consider himself as an American since there is a tough history of Chinese in that country.

Chinese Americans who are in the minority group tend to face higher levels of social discrimination and lack of belonging. Therefore, James does domination strategy by denying his family background, adopting American culture, marrying with American woman, speaking fluent English, becoming a

professor of the most iconic American subject which is Cowboy, and forcing his children to act like Americans. In addition, he also does some negotiation strategy by having an affair with Chinese girl and eating Chinese food. He craves for the sense of belonging since his physical appearance does not support.

Ng has structured *Everything I Never Told You*, so we shift between the family's theories and Lydia's own story, and what led to her disappearance and death moving towards the final devastating conclusion. What emerges is a deep, heartfelt portrait of a family struggling with its place in history, and a young woman hoping to be the fulfillment of that struggle. This is, in the end, a novel about the burden of being the first of your kind and a burden you do not always survive.

In the last chapter Lydia jumped out to the middle of the lake because the first time she was pushed into the lake everything in her family changed. She looked to the lake this time to help change everything again. Hopefully this change would be for the best, almost a cleaning. She kept reiterating how she felt when Nath pulled her out of the lake and she expected another epiphany this time around.

The last few paragraphs beautifully wrapped up the present and futures for each character. Nath accepts Jack and had a good friendship with him. Nath becomes an astronaut and Hannah becomes a popular girl in high school. James unites with Marilyn. Marilyn finally accepts the fact that Lydia was dead. Finally, the family accepts the change. Everyone fell into their new routines and came to the reality.

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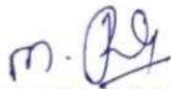
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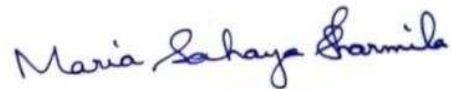
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CERTIFICATE

This is certify that the project entitled is submitted **Inquisition for Idiosyncrasy** in Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey's *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* to St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Virgin Pratheepha. P during the year 2020-2021 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



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Inquisition for Idiosyncrasy in Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey's

A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirement

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

ENGLISH LITERATURE

by

VIRGIN PRATHEEPA. P

19SPEN10



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Inquisition for Idiosyncrasy in Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey's *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi*** is submitted to St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

VIRGIN PRATHEEPPA. P

APRIL 2021

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This is certify that the project entitled is submitted **Inquisition for Idiosyncrasy in Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey's *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi*** to St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature and is a work done during the year 2020-2021.

By

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PREFACE

Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey has written nearly eight Bengali novels for kids and twenty five short stories for both kids and grownups. She has been a journalist for over twenty three years with prominent press house in India. Some of her acclaimed books are *Abar Mahabharat*(2008), *Not Just Another Story* (2019).

Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey's first transgender novel *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* solely speaks about Manobi Bandyopadhyay who is a first transgender principal at Krishnagar Women's College. This book also depicts the struggle and sufferings faced by Manobi in her life.

The project entitled **Inquisition for Idiosyncrasy** in Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey's *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* shows the light of identity crisis and how the third gender suffered to achieve their own identity in the society.

Introduction focuses on the Indian literature, transgender history, biographical details of Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey and epigrammatic abstract of the novel *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi*.

Voice of the Voiceless summarizes the plot and depicts the protagonist Manobi Bandyopadhyay's struggle to prove her identity as a woman to the society.

Convivial Scientific and Theological Scrutiny of Transgenderism discusses the social and religious view of transgender people and the birth of transcommunity.

Momentousness of Parental Assent dealt with transgender struggles and includes an interview with two transwomen Kottravai and Dharshini who demonstrates how a lack of acceptance leads to dilemma.

Summation sums up all the important aspects of the preceeding chapters.

Chapter one

Introduction

Literature is considered to be an art work. It can also be imaginative, creative writing which expresses an artistic value. And it reflects the human nature. Literature is a timeless piece of entertainment. It helps us to understand people's ideas, thoughts, feelings and also connecting with different religions and societies. It has major impact on the development of society. Literature shapes the civilizations, exposes justice and changes political system. And it allows us to analyze and examine our lives which give deeper meaning to understand the issues and situations. Literature is considered as the mirror of the society through which we see the realities of life.

Indian English literature is the body of work written by the Indian writers in English language. It produces variety of vernacular languages including Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and as well as English. The Indian literature tradition is the oldest tradition in the world. The earliest works were composed to be sung or recited and transmitted to many generations before being written down. The seed of Indian writing was sown during the period of the British rule in India.

Indian literature refers to the literature produced on the Indian subcontinent until 1947 and republic of Indian thereafter. The republic of India has twenty two efficient recognized languages. Indian English writing therefore called as Indo Anglican writing. It made its beginning under adverse circumstances and passed through chequered career. It came at the time when British ruled Supreme in India and initially thrived in the hands of many writers. Indian writing in English has been acclaimed around the world for its innovation.

While the older generation continues to produce literary masterworks, a newer generation of writing talent has emerged; ensuring that found of imagination in the country was dry. All literature is governed by one basic law. It should render life in forms of beauty. There are many themes in Indian literature. They are mythological themes, epic themes, romantic themes, and social themes. It becomes a cultural crusade against the aged taboos and doubts. And the

remarkable development of Indian writing in English is composed today with number of perceptive and talented women writers.

Indian women novelists in English have made their permanent mark in the field of literature. They are recognized for their originality, versatility and the indigenous flavor of the soil that they bring to their work. The Indian literature has gifted several talented women writers as Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, Shobha De, Sudha Murthy, Geeta Mehta and many more.

India is one of the most religious and traditional diverse nation. It reflects its own customs and usages that prevailed during that time. Those customs and traditions are still prevalent in modern century. The concept of transgender is not new. They had been recognized in our ancient history. Transgender community comprises of Hijras, Eunuchs, Kothis, Aravanis, Jogappas and Shivshakthis. They have a strong historical presence in our country in the Hindu mythology and other religious text.

Hijras are officially recognized as the third gender in the Indian subcontinent being considered either completely male or female. Most of the Hijras lived in a well defined and organized all hijra communities led by a guru. The communities are consisted over generations of those who are in poverty, rejected by their family. Many of them work as sex workers for survival. The word 'hijra' is a Hindustani word. It has been traditionally translated into English as eunuchs or hermaphrodite. Their community has a secret language known as Hijra Farsi. The language structure is based on Hindustani and has a unique vocabulary.

When Indian law recognizes transgender people including hijras and transgenders as a third gender other South Asian countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan had recognized only hijras as the third gender. Hijra characters play a vital role in some of the most important texts of Hinduism including the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. They held important positions in the court and various facts of administration during the Mughal era India from sixteenth to nineteenth century. They are also considered to hold religious authority and are sought out for blessings particularly during religious ceremonies. While the Hijra community are still revered by society at large and celebrates in religious and spiritual ceremonies. They are often the victims of

abuse and discrimination. Violence and hate crime against the community are common as housing and other discriminations.

The word “transgender” or trans is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different from the normal genders. Although the word “transgender” and our modern definition of it only came into use in the late 20th century, people who would fit under this definition had existed in every culture throughout the history. While Transgender people are increasingly visible in both popular culture and in daily life, we still face severe discrimination, stigma and systemic inequality.

Transgender people face a legal system that often does not protect us from discrimination based on our gender identity. And at present situation which makes it clear that transgender people are legally protected from discrimination in the workplace, there is still no comprehensive federal non-discrimination law that includes gender identity which means trans people may still lack recourse if we face discrimination when we’re seeking housing or dining in a restaurant.

About half a decade ago, only one-quarter of people supported trans rights, after then people's support increased to 62% by the year 2019. Despite this progress, the trans community still faces considerable stigma due to more than a century of being characterized as mentally ill, socially deviant and sexually predatory. While these intolerant views had faded in recent years for trans people a were often still ridiculed by a society that does not understand us. This stigma plays out in a variety of contexts – from lawmakers who leverage anti-trans stigma to score cheap political points; to family, friends or coworkers who rejects trans people upon learning about our trans identities; and to people who harass, bully and commit serious violence against trans people. This includes stigma that prevents them from accessing necessary services for their survival and well-being.

Only 30% of women’s shelters were willing to house transwomen. While recent legal progress had been made, 27% of trans people had been fired, not hired or denied a promotion due to their trans identity. Too often, harassment had led transgender people to avoid exercising their most basic rights to vote. HRC Foundation’s research shows that 49% of trans adults, and 55% of trans adults of color said they were unable to vote in at least one election in their life

because of fear of or experiencing discrimination at the polls. The widespread lack of accurate identity documents among trans people can have an impact on every aspect of their lives, including access to emergency housing or other public services.

Without identification, one cannot travel, register for school or access many services that are essential to function in society. Many states do not allow trans people to update their identification documents to match their gender identity. Others require evidence of medical transition – which can be prohibitively expensive and is not something that all trans people want – as well as fees for processing new identity documents, which may make them unaffordable for some members of the trans community.

Trans people experience violence at rates far greater than the average person. Over a majority (54%) of trans people have experienced some form of intimate partner violence, 47% have been sexually assaulted in their lifetime and nearly one in ten were physically assaulted in between 2014 and 2015. This type of violence can be fatal. At least 27 trans and gender non-conforming people have been violently killed in 2020 thus far, the same number of fatalities observed in 2019.

Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey was born and brought up in Kolkata. She lives in Howrah. She has interested in reading, cooking and travelling. She started her career with The Statesman and later joined the Times of India. She has been a Journalist for over twenty three years with prominent press houses in India. She started writing fiction and translating into both Bengali and English in 2007. She is an impassioned writer and her most recent novels deals with real life issues.

She has written nearly eight Bengali novels for kids and twenty five short stories for both kids and grownups. She has scripted a graphic novel in English titled *The Ghost Of Gosain Bagan* which based on Sirshendu Mukhopadhyaya's Bengali novel, *Gosain Baganer Bhoot*. She had also translated works into English many of Narayan Debnath's classic comic creation, *Nonte Fonte* as well as novels by Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay and Sunil Gangopadhyay. She also translated Shashi Tharoor's popular Bengali Novel, *The Great Indian Novel* into Bengali titled *Abar Mahabharat*. She also wrote a candid biography of India's first transgender principal, *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* and *Not Just Another Story*.

Dr. Shashi Tharoor's book '*The Great Indian Novel*' has been translated in Bengali by Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey. *The Great Indian Novel* was a satirical novel by Shashi Tharoor. It is a fictional work that explains the story of the Mahabharata, the epic of Hindu mythology, and recasts and resets it in the context of the Indian Independence Movement. The first three decades post-independence. Figures from Indian history are transformed into characters from mythology, and the mythical story of India is retold as a history of Indian independence and subsequent history, up through the 1980s. The work includes numerous puns and allusions to famous works about India.

The novel *Not Just Another Story* is published in 2019. *Not Just Another Story* is the story of Lakshmi who now renames herself as Anjali. It is the story of Saraju, Malati, Golapi. It is the story of every woman out there who had to resort to prostitution not by choice but because she is left with no other choice. Like usual stories, these women are also forced to enter prostitution by people they trusted.

They were lured in a typical style, with a promise of a happily-ever-after, a better tomorrow, a good time and later abandoned at a prostitution. It also talks about the story of Sonagachi, the infamous red-light area of Kolkata where a lot of Anjalis and Malatis are still leading a life with pain every day and have accepted it as their existence. The location, conversely, had little or almost no role to play. These women could have been in any other city and their stories would still have been gut-wrenching.

The story begins with prologue written in the first person where a journalist who had worked previously with people who lived in Sonagachi. So, when *Slumdog Millionaire* swept the Oscars, her boss asked her to track a bunch of kids who had been featured in a documentary made on their lives. That is how she lands up at Anjali's doorstep. The rest of the story is narrated in third person tracing the life journey of Anjali, her mother and her grandmother. There are moments when life had given opportunity to break free from the path of pain. Anjali, a heartwarming character, the way she talk about her own life struggles and choices made feel proud of her.

A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi is a candid biography of India's First transgender Principal by Manobi Bandhyopadhyay with Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey. Manobi Bandhyopadhyay was born on

23 September 1964. She became India's first third gender principal at Krishnagar Women's College in Nadia District in West Bengal on June 9, 2015. She holds a PHD in Bengali literature and was previously associate professor of Bengali at the Vivekananda Satavarshiki Mahavidyalaya in Jhargram. In 1995 she starts the first Bengali transgender magazine, *Abomanob* (Subhuman). She has also written two books *Ontobin Ontorin Prositovortika* (Endless Bondage) and *Third Gender in Bengali Literature*. At present she is the vice chair person of the West Bengal Transgender Development Board, Government of West Bengal and executive council member of Kalyani University.

A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi is about a story of a boy named Somnath who in reality female but trapped inside a male body. The entire topic is focused on the struggles and fight with the society in her life. When he was born as Somnath everyone in their family felt happy because finally they had a boy after two daughters. His father Chittaranjan felt proud and excited of having a male child. It is usually common in Indian society having male child is a victory.

Later at the age of six he gradually shows interest towards his sister's dresses and also started putting kohl, lipsticks. Everyone advised him but he never listen them. As years passed, he hated her genitals and had a desire to be a woman. He loves movie and imitate like a heroine. In school, everyone mocked at his behavior. But he knew that he was born a male, a woman soul trapped inside his body. Unlike other parents in the society he is not avoided by his parents they take care of him. They help him to pursue education. He was good at studies and languages.

After completing school life, he enters a college where he finds a place to prove his identity. Instead he faced many issues. When he entered college some of them cracked jokes on him by calling him hijra and asking her whether he was man or woman. Though he was depressed, he was strong in her determination to reveal his identity in the society. He always tried to hold his femininity within him. He was quite intellect and a talented person. He started a first India's transgender magazine called *Abomanob* (subhuman) in 1995 after he completed his M.Phil. Through this magazine he expressed the lives, struggles, inequality faced by the transgender people to the society and it received a lot of publicity.

He worked as lecturer in school and college. He was good in dance, article writing and interest towards arts and literature. He yearned for a sex reassignment surgery because he hated a

woman's soul trapped inside a man's body. However his studies help him to get enough more money for surgery. While working as a professor in college two professors Surya and Chandresh threatened her to quit her job. They stated that no transgender has the right to become a professor and they are low community people who are not allowed to enter the college and share their staffrooms, toilets, etc. she was tortured by them physically as well mentally. This seems to be a piteous condition of a transwoman in the society. It depicts the violence against transgender in the society.

After surgery she was so excited because now she was completely became a woman. Even though life didn't offer happiness for a long period. Many of them spread rumors against her. This made the staff and students of her college to turn against her and the college committee take this as an opportunity to degrade her. But she faced all problems with a courageous heart and finally she proved her identity in the society. Many transgender people told her that she opened the gates of freedom for them. This made her satisfied that her struggles had been worthwhile. Manobi's *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* portrays the fight of transgender with the society for life. However they should be treated equally and their identity should be respected. Through this novel she conveys a message to her community is Education: If we learn, all our problem will be solved.

Chapter two

Struggle for Identity

Somnath didn't remember exactly when he started realizing that he was different. It was not too clear to him whether it was he who found out first or the people around him. When he wakes up every morning the first thing that came to his mind is that he is different from most of the people in this world. However, his first memories as a child were of those boys no different from other boys of his age. On 23rd September 1964 Somnath was born at his maternal grandparents house in Hooghly's Chandernagore. His father Chittaranjan Bandyopadhyay felt proud and so excited because after two daughters finally he had a boy. His father didn't allow his mother to stay at her parent's house. He brought them back to Naihati home within twenty one days after birth of Somnath.

The baby was better cared by Chandernagore family because they were more educated and cultured. But his father Chittaranjan didn't care about that. He felt that he had a trophy to show off his family whoever said that he was not able to become a father of son. Chittaranjan was so happy and excited. He thought that it was a gift from Lord Shiva and named as Somnath. And his wife was not willing to move to Naihati because she felt comfortable in her parent's home. But in Naihati, no one was there to help her. She alone has to work and take care of two daughters as well as a new born baby. Chittaranjan was a domineering personality and no one could stand against him. So she asked her parents not to involve in his decision.

Bholanath Chakraborty, his maternal grandfather was an educated man and quite personality. He was a manager of the Shovabazar Rajbari and everyone in their locality considered him as a part. His grandmother was uneducated but she knows to read and write, even she helped her children in their studies. Somnath still had a vignette of beautiful wall hanging made by his grandmother with silk thread. Both his maternal grandparents entreated his father to leave Rekha and her baby in their care for three months. It was tradition and there was science behind it. Newborn babies immunity started to develop only after three months. But his father Chittaranjan didn't listen them and left Chandernagore with his wife and three children.

The boy was so keen to show off to his people at Naihati. Later he was affected by pneumonia; Doctor said that there was no hope. Somnath mother, whose health was falling, but she was forced to do all works alone. Later Somnath was recovered with the help of the child specialist. His paternal grandfather's home was a joint family in Naihati. His grandfather Mahendranath Bandyopadhyay was a supplier of jute to the railways. His earning was not enough to run a family. He had eight children, four were girls they were all get married off one by one. The boys couldn't find a job. But finally they got work in the jute supplying business. Chittaranjan, his father was the fifth child a headstrong man couldn't able to accept his poverty, so he ran away to Delhi in search of work. Later his family advertised that his mother was dying and wanted to see him last time. And finally Chittaranjan came back home and father got him married quickly.

Chittaranjan was handsome and better looking man in his family. So it was not difficult to find a suitable bride for him. Finally Chittaranjan and Rekha got married. In those days they usually say that after birth of a girl there will be a change in life. But this time their fate dramatically changed after a birth of Somnath. Chittaranjan got job in Jessop and company limited, a very prestigious engineering company. Everyone said that this was a boy Lakshmi. Somnath a boy was being referred to as Lakshmi. "Naturally there was a lot of celebration at home, and for once my mother heaved sign of relief. People joked that usually girls bring luck to fathers, but this time it was a boy who had proved to be lucky. They said, 'Chitta, this is a boy Lakshmi' " (A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi, 4).

It was quite meaning full one. After his grandfather's death his father's eldest brother ruled the household. His elder brother and his wife doesn't believe that the boy Somnath was born to Chittaranjan. His elder brother wife Jethi used to check Rekha. Rekha was horrified by misbehavior of Jethi. Rekha grew up by reading books and listening songs of Tagore. But in Naihati everyone was busy with work and they were jealous, wasting their time in meaningless quarrel.

Somnath's mother Rekha often like to go her place Chandernagore. She didn't like to stay in Naihati. Whenever she stays in Chandernagore she won't talk about returning home. But relatives who visited there talk unkind things. They used to said that it was not a good omen to keep a married daughter at home and raised so many questions like does their son in law had no

shame? Why he allow his wife to stay with her parents? and so on. Chittaranjan also heard similar unkind things and got insulted. Being a short tempered man when things went out of hand he would simply get violent. Though he loved his wife and Children he couldn't controlled himself when he got angry. Before Somnath birth when his elder sister as a new born baby was threw off the bed by his father sue to anger. But by God's grace nothing happened to her. His two sisters Sonali and Rupali were scared of his father.

Chittaranjan was not strict with Somnath because as a boy he had to inherit his father's goods after him. It was a normal thing in Indian culture, the boy had to take care of his family goods. So when he was gradually metamorphosing into someone else everyone noticed but his father chose to look him the other way as long as he could. It probably started with love for his sister's printed frocks. Somnath used every opportunity to wear frock when no one was there in his home. He wore frock and stood in front of mirror for hours admiring his looks. "First, I would do this in the privacy of my room. Then gradually, I started wearing their frocks and roaming about the whole house. I was six or seven years old then" (7). Then he gradually started wearing frocks and roaming the whole house. His family members started kidding him but they didn't take it as serious because at that time Somnath was just six or seven years old. Later he started using kohl and lipstick. His mother and sister noticed his abnormal behavior and they advised him not to use cosmetics and frocks but Somnath didn't listen to them.

Then Somnath went to Mahendra High School in Naihati. It was a winter season, so he had a scarf around his head to protect him from the cold. But the boys in that classroom called Somnath as a girl because he had a veil on his head. They made him to sit with girls, everyone laughed but Somnath never mind he quite enjoyed it. The boy in his class doesn't took pity on him. They often blamed him and led him into trouble. But Somnath a quite innocent couldn't explain to his mother, except crying alone. He hides the fact that his development of distaste to be a boy instead he loved to be a girl. It didn't mean that he never likes male but he got attracted towards them. When he was studying fifth standard he started observing good looking olderman. And one day he was left alone in home at that time he was abused by his older cousin who was twenty one years old. Gradually it became routine and it awoke the woman in him who was already waiting in the wings to make an appearance.

Meanwhile he got attracted towards boys. When he was studying seventh standard he gradually started to change as a girl and the boys in his class who ever abuse him started protecting him. He thought that his femininity was finally accepted by everyone. While studying eight standard he started wearing his sister's clothes at home. Everyone in his home were shocked but he didn't bother about that. He was supported by his classmates that made him confident. Everyone started blaming his mother for not controlling Somnath. Though his mother advice him not to wear frocks and makeup but Somnath didn't bother. He told his mother that he like to be a girl. His mother started blaming herself for giving birth to Hijra. His family was depressed and he was helpless. The only thing that made them quite was his studies. He work hard and always a topper in his class. And he found that education was the only way to get an equal right.

Weddings slowly acquired a new meaning for him. Though he belonged to join family wedding ceremony happened quite frequently. He used to observe the red banarasi sari, the veil and the jewels that the bride would wear on special occasion. "I longed for that red Banarasi sari, the veil and the jewellery that the bride would wear on this special occasion. To me that was the height of femininity and beauty and I yearned for that look. I knew that I would look better than any of them" (11).

Somnath felt jealous of girls who came to the wedding ceremony. And he tried to seek others attention towards him about most of them ignored him. He admired the custom done in the wedding and started imagining himself in that position in future. He was also passionately inclined towards Bengali movies. He used to go movie halls with his mother and sisters. He loves to watch Uttam Kumar movies. Still he remained as his hero. And he admired Suchitra Sen expressions and gorgeous look. He imitated her by saying famous dialogue of Suchitra Sen in the class. The class boys request him to do often because for his expression.

Another important incident in his life, he often visited his maternal uncle's house for every pujas celebration. Right from Durga puja to Jagaddhatri puja, they didn't leave any occasions. Similarly they celebrated Kumari puja, in that puja girls who were below nine years old they worshipped as Devi it was their custom. They dress up with sari and jewels. Somnath argued with his grandparents for not choosing him in that puja occasion. But no one paid him attention, they thought that Somnath would mingle with boys of same age. Somnath was born as

a dancer and he could pick up steps on his own. His sisters used to go dance school. Those days girls were allowed to learn singing and dancing. But boys of the middle class didn't allow them for dancing. Once in school culture program Somnath played a role of farmer's wife and dance to Tagore's song. That was the first time when he wore sari and felt like girl. It was one of the happiest moments in his life. He played the role right from the expressions to feminine body movements perfectly. Somnath was appreciated by the teacher. Even his father admitted that he did look like the farmer's wife.

Dancing remained his passion for a very long time. After finishing college he joined in Manjushri Chaki Sarkar's dance troupe. The one of the most famous dance teachers of those time. It was then Somnath realized that dance came naturally to a transgender. And those who come to dance troupe were all men physically but had feminine souls, some of them become very famous dancers today. They worked together and they used to share everything. They were called as Kotis which denotes a transgender people. But they didn't care about that. After he joined in that dance group, one of his senior trainer trained him and he started flourishing as a dancer. His trainer didn't like to reveal her identity and named herself Aditiya. It was a creative dance troupe. And there was a sense of equality among them.

Later dancing becomes his regular hobby. Before that while studying in school he had a first affair on his classmate and her cousin. They both used to tease him, he loves to see how jealous both of them were over him. Till today his classmate who was his first love remains as a good friend. Love has remained the most exclusive thing in his life. A deep heart wrenching sigh leaves him as memories rush through his mind of the relationships that he had one after the other. Though each experience hurts him at times and it brought a new realization in him. Later he understood that whatever happens, life has to move on.

When he was fourteen years old he was in the class IX and two cousins joined in his class as a new student in that year. He fell in love for the first time. The boys in his class treated him like a girl who attained puberty and they were always there to protect him. The cousins were namely Shyam and Shwet. There were always some kind of competition between both of them to hold his hand. But he had an affair on Shyam who seems to be quite wit and sit in the farthest corner in the classroom. And Shwet was exact opposite of Shyam. He doesn't care about others, jovial and take everything in easy way. Shwet life seems to be pathetic. He lived in his uncle's

house. And he used to earn his pocket money by working as a lab assistant in local studio. He loves photography. Shwet used to buy gifts from his savings whenever he met Somnath. Meanwhile Shyam whose house was near his house but never visited. He seems to be wealthy family but Shyam and his parents doesn't care about Shwet. He used to sing Tagore songs for Somnath, they both are in relationship and he used to dream of having happy family with a loving and protective husband.

He admits two things that happened in his life. His midterm results were out and he scored good marks. He remembered that they celebrated together as a family at home. His father showed off his son's achievement to everyone in the family. And Somnath know that if he chooses Science he would not enjoy next two years in the school. His two elder sisters took science but he was interested in studying humanities. He never seen his father so happy in his life. Though he wears lipstick, kohl, skirts. His father didn't considered and still believed that he need to be strict. His father blames Somnath's mother for change in his attitude. But Somnath know that his mother felt same and she tried to ignore the problems as long as possible. His mother knew that she can't be changed what God has willed. And she perhaps knew that she gave birth to a girl third time bottled in man's body. Somnath tried to share his identity, deepest concern but he couldn't able to share his feelings to others.

And his father got seat for him in Naihati Narendra Vidyaniketan School. He joined in a science stream. He was interested to join in humanities but he couldn't tell his father because he was strict and he had no other choice but to study science. The new phase of his school life had brought many unexpected things in his life. Shyam seems to be changed in the new school and started avoiding Somnath. He started behaving rudely to him. He thought that he was angry with him for something. Shyam started going out with his rich friends and he doesn't care about Somnath. He tried to track him and found him that he was having fun with his rich friends. And he asked Shyam about his sudden change. He told him that his status did not match with his family background. He was shocked to hear that Shyam encouraged his friends to tease him about his sexuality. He felt sad. One day, they started gang up and abused him. He was mortified and pained.

It was at the juncture, Shwet told Somnath that he was moving to Kolkata, where his mother lived. He was happy because finally her mother accepted to keep with her. But Shwet

was sad and didn't behave like normal. He saw Somnath with tearful eyes and told him that he never come back and asks him to forget him. But he couldn't tell him that he had mistaken Shyam's character. And anyway he was not going to stay back. But he was happy that he was going home. After Shwet left Somnath, he felt alone and depressed. He started thinking about Shyam's rude behavior. He spent many days by crying alone and rejoicing his happy memories with them in his life. His friends brought news about another boy named Deb who was nearly his age. He was not only a student but also working at the local post office after his father's death. Deb belongs to poor family and he resembles exactly like Shwet. Deb also a transgender but he tried to keep it more secretly.

The next day Somnath went to post office to meet Deb. He dressed in her finery. He saw Deb who looks exactly like Shwet and it remained him about the past love. Then Deb and Somnath became friends and exchange notes, letters. They started sharing everything. Deb used to meet his friends in tea shop and they discussed about politics, cultures and life. At that time his friends told him that Somnath was hijra and they had relationship only for pleasure but they won't truly by heart. Meanwhile Somnath was in need of love and protection not physical appearance. But if he told Deb about this he would never understand. He was very confused and so many questions were raised in his mind like why was his body different from soul? And why was he born this way? Most of them considered him as a homosexual and called him as a girlish boy who was preparing to become hijra.

He convinced them that he was a girl and not a homosexual. He knew that the girls of his age had attraction towards men. And that was not a homosexual. But others made fun of him. They were unaware of the word transgender. "The word 'Transgender' was unknown then. I am not sure if it was present in dictionaries, but no one I knew even suggested me that I belonged to the third category" (32). When he was young his friend played a game by asking question to each of them whether they were boy or girl or camel. And he realized that he belonged to camel category. But still so many questions were raised in his mind. He was a good at studies as well as good at language. But for science he need some help so he asked around and the people suggested his school senior Indra Da who was studying medicine at R. G. Kar medical college in Kolkata. He started teaching him well and they become very close. After studies they both used to chat endlessly. And he feels comfortable to share everything with him.

One day he revealed that he was actually a woman trapped inside a male body. He told him everything and asked for a help. So he got appointment with a psychiatrist. The doctor heard a story patiently and asked him what he wants. He told him somewhere he heard about sex change operations were possible and he wanted to do that. The doctor was shocked and advised him that operations may harm him. He asked him to forget those thoughts from mind. And gave him some medicine so that he would be calm and sleep well. He came back more confused and he started hate himself. Then he went back to Indra Da the only one who understands his situation and begged him for help.

This time he suggested Mainak mukhopadhyay who was doing masters in medicine in the same college. He told everything to Mainak and he said that it was because of complex hormonal imbalance and it could be corrected by the advancement of medical science. For sex change operation it could require pre and post operative therapy involving hormonal treatment and counseling because both body and mind should adopt those changes. After Mainak's hopeful words Somnath had courage and started wearing sister's petticoats and longed for menstruation. And people find opportunity to call her Hijira. Then he realized that he was turning out to be a sex toy and even if he was alone they took opportunity to use him. There was a popular couple in the neighbourhood who would often comment that he was deliberately giving up masculinity and he needed clinical treatment. The doctor named Chandan who was living with a transgender, Jolly.

Somnath and Jolly became good friends because they both were transgender. Chandan's advanced treatments were failed for Somnath and he tried to abuse him. So Somnath warned Jolly about Chandan. But he laughed, then she went to Somnath's sister and told her that she had a hijira as a brother so he can't get marry. She was afraid and told her mother about Somnath changes. They planned to take Somnath for treatment before the situation become worse. Somnath, later came to know that Jolly's story that she had a mother and her father died. She belongs to a poor family. Her mother forced her into prostitution. Jolly however a soft corner had for Chandan and they both were living like family. But Somnath felt sad because he knew that it was not going to happen. Then as days passed Chandan started avoiding Jolly. Because of that Jolly became frustrated and had cut off her private part. Her mother took her to hospital at

correct time and now she was alive after a treatment. Then Somnath heard news that she had change her name and become a successful transgender sex worker at the Indo- Nepal border.

It was a time for higher secondary exam results and he scored good marks. His father decided him to take science because his both sisters were undergraduated in Science. But this time he boldly told his father that he was interested in studying Bengali literature. He was Shocked because it was the norm for boys as a rule to study only science. His father was upset because of his decision and his sister helped him to join in Naihati's Rishi Bankim Chandra College. For others College life seemed to be a freedom after completing fourteen years in school. But for him it was the place to fight for his identity and respect. After taking Bengali literature he felt relaxed because he was not force to study science. Before the first day of college he read more about Bengali literature. And at the first day of college everyone came with good looking.

He was terrified on the first day of her college because he heard news that everyone came to know that he was a transgender. Not only from his department had everyone come to see from other departments. They crack jokes on him and some called him cross dresser. But he knows that he was not a cross dresser. They were unaware of the word transgender. At that time in application form for gender they gave only male and female. So he ticked male, teachers thought he was doing prank but he doesn't care about others. He joined that college because the two great teachers in Bengali literature Saroj Bandyopadhyay and Satyajit Chandhuri were know about his family. So his parents find that he would be safe in their hands. However safety was just an illusion. Most of them teased him and insulted him even his class boys. But girls stood for him like solid pillars. He had two close friends Bandana and Deepanwita with whom he felt comfortable.

And he had a friend from physics department called Abhi. He was attracted towards him not by his appearance but the way he spoke fluently and his love for the French. First time he came across such a person who studied science but followed his heart and take up French. But he doesn't know that Bandana and Deepanwita were jealous of her. Bandana from lower middle class family and Deepanwita belongs to rich class and her father was a doctor. They both told Abhi's parents wrongly about their true friendship. It became a big issue and Abhi came to his house talk badly, insulted him but he couldn't talk him. It was the day they got breakup and

everything ends. He went off to the university but he didn't get married. Abhi and Somnath took a picture as a couple and he kept it secretly as a symbol of their happiness.

During his college life he faced many problem and he was depressed because the way he was treated by others. At that time he read an article in popular Bengali magazine about a man in Kolkata who had undergone sex change surgery to become a woman. He read that story again and again. Then he had a hope that one day he could be able to undergone surgery and turn into woman. Meanwhile in college on the other hand he read many books and passed out examination but he had quite interested in critical appreciation of literature. Later he came to know about Maya Siddhanta, the one of the better known feminists in Kolkata. Maya had sympathy on him and she realized that he was yearning to do something creatively. So he started Malini, the first Bengali women's magazine and asked him to write an article.

As we know writing an article was pretty tough, he had a contact with the Bengali teachers in old school and they helped him. And his article received a good feedback. He got many articles to write and his family felt happy. Those people who read that article knew that it was written by transgender. He felt everyone accepting him and so he had a confidence, in college they started respecting him. Then he had a hope and started wearing unisex dresses. His parents felt that he had a friendship with wrong companions. So they pretend to be strict to him. "The term 'transgender' was unknown to most, but now, from 'hijra', my status had changed to 'samakami' or 'homosexual'. I had an objection to this. I was definitely not a homosexual, I was a woman trapped inside a man's body looking for a suitable male partner like any other woman of my age" (49).

Though he achieve something most of them treated badly and called him hijra. As he was religious he prayed to Lord Shiva about his life and spent most of his days crying. But now he felt happy with what he was and have confidence on him. However the society treated him badly he never turned up from being true to himself.

Somnath always had a strong determination of what was he. Apart from that he had a boy in his class name Debu he found something strange in his behavior because he would pass cutting remarks about his popularity among both girls and boys. He felt that he was suffered from inferiority complex. By that time, their B. A. results were out they were at the stage what to

do next? He decided to join Calcutta University for post graduate. At that time Jadavpur University was very famous. To get admission in that college they have to clear entrance exams. So he decided to join in Calcutta University. But the boy Debu gave him an application for Jadavpur University and helped him. They both cleared the exams and got seat in that college. Once again his father was upset because of his decision. Then one day his father visited the campus and got shocked on seeing girls sitting close with boys and smoking. He felt that it was not a safe place for Somnath. So he asked her to join Calcutta University but he never listen to him.

He felt comfortable in that campus because no one bothers about others. They considered everyone as a student in that campus. They won't bother about their gender, appearance and class anything. Most of the students in that University were well talented in writing poems, songs etc. And he realized that the books he read were not enough for studying in that university. So he decided to work hard. Shankha Ghosh, one of the greatest modernist poets. Everyone loves him the way he teaches and treated the students. He used to expect letters from students and clear their doubts by replied them. So Somnath started writing letters what he had in mind for many years. "I remember, in my very first letter to Shankha Sir, I revealed my sexual identity. I told him that I was in great pain because I wanted to emerge from my sexual prison in this male body and reveal myself as the woman I was in spirit" (55).

He patiently replied every letters he wrote and he supported him in studies. He helped him in every situation. He dances well so he started participating in dance competition and won the best male dancer award in Jadavpur University festival. He was included in the famous dance production. Apart from class he had rehearsal in the evening but he felt difficult because he used to reach home at night. And felt sad for depending on parents for everything.

Now his mother was no more and his father was nearly ninety three years old bed ridden depending on him. He doesn't like to ask him anything because he was too emotional and it may affect his health. During college time they gave him two rupees and every day evening he should tell them whatever he bought. He doesn't like to depend on them so he started writing journals again but it's not enough. So he decided to work as a salesgirl. And deep inside he long for a boyfriend who loves him and support him in everything. At that time he met Sagar Bose, son of famous Bengali travel writer, with whom he felt protective. They loved each other but that

happiness was no longer. He started writing journals together with Kapil. Sagar doesn't like to see them together and later he knows that he had relationship with many girls. He couldn't able to accept that because he considered him as his world. Then there was a clash between them which ends everything.

Later he visited his sister's house and his sister told him that famous dancer Mnjushri lived in next block. He boldly approached her and join in her troupe. Then he found that many transgender in that troupe. There Ruma Das a girl who always tried to impress Somnath without knowing that he was a transgender. Later Ruma got married and moved away. Then after M. A. results he applied for M. Phil in the same University. And he also started working as a research scholar in the country's largest archival material on Indian theatre that covers all languages and genres which helped him to achieve today.

At the age of twenty three, he realized that he need a permanent job to buy his own things. And he got part time job in Srikrishna College. There he got good friends and everyone supported him. Later he got permanent job in boys school and he was very famous for his dance in that school.

Though I was nowhere close to openly declaring my sexual status, and was still 'male' in the public's consciousness, people around me were not blind to my definite feminine traits. I was stunned at how, one by one, boys would come to me and confess that they were transgender but tried their best to hide this identity for fear of parental and societal backlash. (67)

He found some boys facing same problem and tried to hide their identity because of the fear of parents and society. Omkar and Ritankar were transgenders who became very close to him. He helped them in studies. Ritankar left the place after few years and Omkar who was good at studies later undergone sex change surgery. The senior teacher who works with him was very kind and helped him everytime. Then there join a fellowman name Biman who became close to Somanth and supported him for surgery and got appointment to psychiatrist. Then the doctor adviced him to break relationship with him. So he left him alone and he was shocked by his behavior. Then one day he saw him and quarrel with him. He scolded him back and left the place. He felt depressed and at that time he got lecturer job in Jhangram.

Somnath shared a memory of his friend name Jagadish, a multi talented person from a poor family. Jagadish is also a transgender her father died when she was a child. So she took family responsibilities and work hard for her family. Though she was uneducated she had a wide knowledge and dances well. So Somnath decided to start a group then they were irritated by the behavior of Jagadish. So she moved away. One day Somnath and Jagadish were invited by Kapil an old friend of Somnath. They went there, he collected some details and in night Jagadish and kapil had relationship. Somnath was shocked and cried. Later Kapil died because of AIDS and his friend also suffered from that disease. One day she hangs herself and died. When Somnath heard the news he felt uprooted and his part of life was lost forever.

In 1995 he got a job in Vivekananda College in Jhargram. The place was far away from their place and first time he leaving home and going to stay alone. He decided to concentrate on work and never fall in for someone again because everything leads to disappointment. His father accompanied him first day they reached the college and every one peeping from corner and they cracked jokes on him. One of the staff came and insulted his father. “No one as lowly as a hijra should be allowed to teach in a college, share the same staffroom, toilet and facilities”(93). He felt bad because his father faced many problems and left the place. Then he entered principal room and came to know that the lady who insulted was not a staff, she was a librarian and she was the leader of a political party and had two professors of English and History Surya Sengupta and Shashanka Kar were the both uncrowned kings in the campus. Later he went to the department, everyone looked him differently but he ignored everything and helps the students in their studies.

Then he taught dance for the students in the Hijli College a part of IIT campus. There he met some professors who treated him equally with respect. And he wonders why the rest of the world was not as illuminated as them. He lived in a house as paying guest and he left the place because food was not good. Then he had a friend a colleague’s son who was kind to him and later he tried get close with him but he avoided him so he scolded badly infront of everyone and he left the place silently. Then he visited his aunt’s house but the neighbours talked badly about him. At that time a auto rickshaw driver helped him and his mother offer food. And he helped his family in many ways. He got job in hotel and lead a life happily.

He used to go college by train there he got new friends who treated him equally but later he came to know that their intention is to have physical relationship with him. So he stayed away from them. Then in college he was tortured mentally and physically by Surya and Chandresh. "I dreaded the day when they would strip me naked to prove their point. I knew that no one would come to my rescue. One day, they caught hold of me and started hitting me in the chest with a paperweight till I was so badly bruised that I fell unconscious from the pain"(94).

He suffered a lot and their intention is to quit his job and no transgender should enter into the campus. He moved to another place in Jhargram and one of his students helped him named Ritankar who is a transgender. She had an affair with old man. One day she elope with him and it became a big issue that Somnath was the reason for that. So he return back to Naihati. Then he visited a college with his students in NSS campus, there a girl in her team got periods and asks for napkins. So he went to office and ask for napkin and it also became a serious problem. They pointed that he sexually harassing a student. Then he was depressed and decided to quit a job. But the principal called him and asked him to return immediately. So he went back to college without knowing that what the future held for him.

Many times he used to think whether he was really a woman trapped inside a male body or they were just a horrified thoughts. He started hate herself and spent many days crying. "My soul and sexuality did not match the image I saw in the mirror. I would rather look at that otherwise perfect reflection and weep for hours. I felt like tearing away and escaping from the man's body in which I was born" (109). Then he tried to behave like man so he started smoking and forced herself to act like man. But he couldn't able to act like man so he decided to establish his true sexual identity. After completed his M.Phil he thought of doing Ph.D on the thesis transgender issues. Later he decided to do something independently and published India's first transgender magazine called Abomanob- Subhuman the status given to transgender by the society. He highlighted the transgender's life, health, hygienic issues, language, discussed living environment and so on. And it received a lot of publicity in the society.

Then he came across a transgender community runned by a powerful leader Shyamoli. Somnath went there with the help of Diksha and he wrote a novel *Antaheen Antareen Prositobhortika* the elusive horizon with Shyamoli as central figure and it received lot of publicity in the society and again it republished in translated version. And in april 2014 the

supreme court of India declared transgender as the third gender. After that many of them told that he opens the gate of freedom and he felt happy that his struggles had been worthwhile. But deep inside he felt bad about his life because still he suffered from harassment. Then he decided to undergo sex change surgery. Most of them commit suicide by seeing changes in the body.

But he had a confidence, so he went to the best doctor name Manoj Khanna a leading plastic surgeon. He undergone hormone treatment and there was a change in his body, he became glamorous and skin became soft. After hormonal treatment his outer appearance were completely changed but he was not yet prepared for surgery. But Dr. Khanna had hope that he would come back again.

One of his students Anjana helped him to find accommodations and finally they found a house. The owner of his house treated him equally but the happiness didn't stay for long time. One of the rooms was rented for Water Company and the owner of the company named Samarjit sent him employee with a message that he wants to talk with him. But he avoided him. Then one day he noticed a guy name Arindam brother in law of Samarjit who looks calm and handsome. He had an affair on him and one day he visited his room then proposed him. He accepted him happily and share the incident with his friends they felt happy for him. Then he undergone sex change surgery and changed her name as Manobi. She felt happy that now she became completely a woman. And she informed the Dr. Khanna that she going to get married. And he felt so happy for her.

But the happiness didn't stay for long time. Samarjit who re-entered in her life. She realized that it was a trick played by Samarjit with the help of Arindam. Samarjit informed the owner that she turned the house into a prostitute place and the owner asked her to leave the room. He called her parents talked in an abusive language, this make them feel bad and they asked her to return to her home. She was totally depressed and one of her student Chhobi came to stay with her. She started smoking and drinking and she shared him everything. Then she came to know that he was a spy sent by Samarjit. The situation become worse, he told them everything adding some colours. Students and college faculties turned against her. They found another reason to degrade her. Manobi wondered when these things come to an end.

Dr. Khanna called her and worried about her situation. She started crying and share him everything. Then he told her that he will stand by her side and the surgery is done by legal way

so that she can give complain against them. Then she gave complain in the state women's commission, they find the case very interested and helped her. she gave documents everything they wanted. She had a strong determination to face the problem boldly. Meanwhile Samarjit and Arindam made many plans to trap her but she was escaped from them and finally Arindam mentioned her as a homosexual and she forced him to have relationship. Manibi was shocked and submitted the letters that Arindam wrote for her. he was shocked and became quite. Then the court asked her to prove her femininity and the next day she went for the test. "Imagine baring your body to a prying medical team as they decide whether your genitalia is male or female. Could there be anything more insulting than this?"(153). Finally she proved her feminity, the gynecologist agreed with Manobi was a transgender. Smarjit and Arindam were arrested after a struggle for nearly eleven years. Then in 2005 she completed her Ph. D in Kalyani University. Then she changed her name officially in academic certificates as Manobi Bandyopadhyay. And she got justice after losing many years.

Somehow Manobi managed to stay in her job. But the colleagues treated her like subhuman and they not included her in any meetings and other social dos. Most of the students were against her in the university as well as few students were on her side. Then the house owner of her house also turned against her. Even though she paid rent properly, he spread rumour against her. These things made her lonely and depressed so she started drinking and smoking in the room. Her family was worried about her but they didn't have to ask her to quit her job. Meanwhile her sister appointed a maid named Bithi to take care of her. They both gradually become close to each other. Manobi treated her like a family member. But later she felt that she lost her privacy and independence because Bithi started involving in her personal things and took advantage on her. So she decided to stay alone.

Then she met her old friend Kishalay after a long time. He felt bad for her situation. Manobi was happy because still his care for her remains same. He insisted her to marry him but she didn't accept because she knew that he had a family. But Kishalay left his family for her and they used to meet often. Manobi's family was afraid and they thought she was trapped again. Kishalay was a drunken, Manobi knew that he was addicted to drinks but his care for her was genuine. But this happiness didn't last forever. He started controlling her and she begin to

longing for her freedom. So she decided to break up relationship and took pludge that she won't involve in relationship anymore.

Then she attended the workshop in a college, there she met a boy named Deb who was poor in studies. He approached her and asked if she need any help. Manobi asked him to call her as Ma instead of madam. And he called her ma softly, she got tears and left the place. Later they both met at the weekend, he shared everything to her. So she decided to help in his studies. And later his mother met her and told her about their family situation. Then Deb decided to stay with her. They both become like a mother and son. Their life moves softly, they both encouraged each other in every situation.

And in 2015 she applied for Principal Job in college because she had enough experience to get that job. After completing the interview on March 2015 she was selected as a principal. "And yes, I became the country's first transgender college principal. The impossible had happened" (182). She was so happy and excited. Then she chose Krishnagar Women's college. Manobi become the first transgender principal in India. She was so happy that she achieved her goal after lots of struggles. And as a mother she gave her son everything and felt happy for him. Finally she was quite well prepared to face everything in her life with confidence.

Chapter three

Convivial Scientific and Theological Scrutiny of Transgenderism

According to Scripture, when God created human beings he created them male and female and blessed their marital union (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:20-25). This twofold act of creation and blessing was explained by later writers of Scriptures to include moral rules. Such as the development of love between husband and wife and the prohibition of sexual immorality and divorce. The Prophet Moses, Jesus the Messiah and the Apostle Paul are united in common witness to the goodness of humanity's biological complementarities and the universal rules that should regulate male, female sexual behavior.

The gradual worsening of biblical moral codes regulating sexual behavior has been experienced in recent decades. As these norms have given way to a more permissive view of non marital sexual intercourse, homosexual behavior, marital fidelity, procreation and divorce among others in the wider community. And new more fundamental challenges have arisen to the very definition of biological complementarism itself. A biblical and theological evaluation is needed for the transgender moment as it has been called in which a person may choose a gender identity at variance with their biological sex.

Transgender is defined by 'T' in the common LGBTQIA+ and in this wider population transgender may be the smallest category. Transgender refers to any person whose identification with gender differs in some way from biological gender. The word 'transsexual' is usually used for those who seeking medical help to alter their biological or birth sex. The separation of gender as a social construct from biological sex as provided at birth was a major step in the modern conception of transgenderism. As a woman being born female no longer meant anyone was forced according to society's standards. As this understanding progressed its fluidity provided considerable explanatory power for gender incongruence in the transgender experience.

Even though transgenderism is not same as homosexuality by definition there is enough overlap between the two. Because some of them considered transgenderism as the homosexuality. For example, if a transgender person is biologically male but perceives his identity to be female and sexually attracted to men. It is considered as homosexual attraction. On the other hand, because of identity as female the same person may count it as heterosexual. If the

transgender person had undergone sex reassignment surgery what would be the determination? And the response to this is not accepted by our society.

Transgenderism remains culturally dissimilar from homosexuality. And the overlap between transgender and gay culture, formerly deals with the gender identification while the latter deals with sexual orientation. It is important to note that the connection between the transgender and homosexual communities is known those who identify as transgender are not inherently homosexual. Transgender is commonly used as the umbrella term for the various ways in which people can perceive and convey contradictions between their birth sex and gender identity. It has been extended to individual as diverse as children grappling with their sense of gender, drag queens and intersex people born with features of both men and women that do not allow easy identification.

A common belief among some physicians is that transgenderism has a biological basis but years of study and controversy about the origin of transgenderism have been unproved within the medical community. And some recent studies have questioned whether gender can be found as something other than birth sex on any biological basis. It does not mean that the experience was selected by those who experience gender incongruity with their birth sex. But that seem to be out of their control in terms of their gender sense have a psychological and cultural cause along with or rather than a biological cause.

Mental health workers strive to support people with their experience of gender incongruence rather than the incongruence of gender itself. The third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association, first define 'Gender Identity Disorder' as a mental disorder in which one can recognize a gender other than the sex of one's birth. 'Gender Identity Disorder' was replaced by 'Gender Dysphoria' in the fifth edition of the DSM, 2013 to reduce the stigma associated with the term disorder. The condition has changed as a mental disorder which signified by actions to an individual's confusion due to their gender incongruence.

Not all people that would be classified as transgender would still diagnosed with gender dysphoria, only few of those who no longer reported a feeling of dysphoria following surgery for sex reassignment. Consider that 41% of people who experience gender Dysphoria will attempt

suicide and the tendency to focus on depression in the area of the mental health is understandable. In gender dysphoria, there are four potential outcomes. They are gender dysphoria could remain unresolved, it could be resolved in favor of birth sex, it could be handled with occasional cross gender activity, it could be resolved by deciding to fully accept their chosen gender over their birth sex.

In some studies of transgender people have shown a short term psychological gain from sex reassignment surgery. While other studies have also shown that suicide rates for those who have fully transitioned are still abnormally high. And few of them blame the lack of complete acceptance by society for the cause of psychological distress after surgery. But this is not the reason for the high number of suicides. Treatment for a desired sex mask the issue but it is not solved by resolution alone. The morality of sex reassignment surgery has been challenged by few mental health practitioners particularly in light of the absence of hard evidence for a biological cause of transgenderism. The solution for a deep rooted psychological problem should not be an unwanted surgical response, requiring the disposal of healthy organs. In this case it will not solve the root problem.

The treatment choices include a wait and see strategy in children diagnosed with gender dysphoria, encouraging the child to identify as their birth sex or encouraging the child to identify in accordance with their gender incongruence. This last option could also involve offering hormone blockers to postpone puberty so that before making the choice of how to overcome their gender incongruence, children would have time to reach adolescence. It gives the possible risks of sterility, the effect on bone mass and brain growth and that most children diagnosed with gender dysphoria do not bring the condition into adulthood, this last procedure seems reckless.

Throughout the transgender culture, gender dysphoria exists and carries with it certain harmful and dangerous activities including body damaging operations such as cutting to suicide. Transgender people should not be treated as soldier in a cultural war, but rather as their victims, according to Dr. Mark Yarhouse, an evangelical psychologist. The question that needs to be addressed is how the church can react in a way that is completely in line with the redemptive plan of God for all to the problem of transgenderism and transgender individuals.

Scripture does not clearly describe a modern conception of gender as a socially constructed notion distinct from biological sex, beyond those practices that can be viewed as reflections of transgenderism. Through a biblical theology of the body, one can answer to transgenderism is better developed than by mixing the scriptures in the light of individual practices. Transgender experience an unconscious sense of gender at odds with one's birth sex. A common way to deal with this incongruity is to demonstrate that one's inner sense of gender tends to reflect one's true self over one's body. The church has argued by suggesting that one's inner self, associated with the spirit, should decide gender rather than the body. In other words, if anyone has an internal sense of being female with male genitalia, then he should be fully understood as she. The body does not have the vote.

A biblical theology of the body, however in deciding out identity argues for the importance of the body. Anyway the changing cultural perception of the gender, the scriptural witness of the body's sanctity remains. Scripture does not talk about transgenderism, but it also speaks to the transgender community and the church. A biblical theology of the body will help the church to develop an answer to the question of transgenderism that honors the purpose of God for human beings and their salvation. Three fundamental Christian beliefs the existence of mankind, the incarnation of Jesus and the redemption of believers, undoubtedly contain a biblical theology of the body. The scriptural testimony concerning the human body can be thoroughly understood by these doctrines.

Genesis 1:26-31 is the record of God as male and female forming, blessing and ordering humanity. Humans are created in the picture of God as male and female. The image of God refers at least to the position of humanity as a representative of God's authority over creation. If mankind is supposed to represent God above the world, then the earth must be filled with human beings. Therefore first command of God to mankind is to be fruitful and multiply. Created as male and female makes human fruitfulness possible and by extension the call to act as the image of God.

The bodily aspect of maleness and femininity is paramount in all of this. Being female and male makes the ability to reproduce possible. Reproductive ability remains attributed to God, who created human beings as male and female Genesis 4:1, even after the fall of humanity as does the continuing status of humanity as creations in the image of God Genesis 5:1-3; 9:6. The

creation of humanity as male and female by God is at least because God intends to reproduce humans.

God's plan for humanity to be female and male could be linked to human incompleteness. Genesis 2: 18-25 explains the initial relationship between woman and man with the acknowledgement of God that it is not good for man to be alone. The building of man's wife causes man to identify himself as male just as he recognizes her as female. The Hebrew word for man is adam linked to the Hebrew word for land, adamah. In Genesis 2:7 man is made of the dust of the earth and is named in relation to the earth. For the first time since the creation of woman ishshah man is known as ish, for woman ishshah came out of man ish. God would want humanity to be together in his picture as male and female because it certainly makes people related beings who not discovering completeness apart from each other. And often realize their incompleteness apart from God. Our gendered bodies serve as witnesses to our responsible to exist separately in ourselves as the image of God and to our incompleteness.

The Old Testament also narrates the role that sin plays in corrupting human existence. And to the degree that sexual impulses are impaired the New Testament affirms this degradation of humanity. Fallen-ness does not influence one aspect of being human or human experience including but not limited to nature, reason, faith, self identity and relationship between all facets of mankind. Human fallness also affects the relationship with the creator and the rest of life including other human beings. Salvation contained in Christ means healing the consequences of fallen-ness of human experience through the incarnate Lord can be untouched by God's Salvation.

No greater honor is earned by the human body than by the doctrine of the incarnation. That God's word must become flesh and live among mankind indicates that the presence of God can be reflected by the human body as formed by God. Jesus, as God in the flesh was born lived and died without sin, a total human existence. His resurrection as a human being was a physical resurrection the first fruits of all those whom God raises.

Jesus existed with all the experience of a human body and all the distinctions a human body possesses. Jesus grew to a certain height that made him identifiable to all who knew him. He was born with an ancestry that within Israel and the greater Roman world identified him as

Jewish. After the resurrection even the scars on his body that helped to identify him as the risen lord to his followers remain part of his bodily life. All the limitations of the human body including sleep, hunger, sweat and pain were experienced by Jesus. After his resurrection Jesus remained a fully embodied human being. If Jesus returned from the dead with a recognizable body not only as a human being but as Jesus still bearing the wounds of the crucifixion so in the resurrection all bodies would be redeemed and still identifiable.

In the light of the body's regeneration the full scope of the salvation of fallen mankind and hence true human identity is known. By presenting his body to be touched by the apostles and eating in front of them. Jesus reveals that he is not an apparition, his wounds show that he is the same Jesus who was crucified. The evidence of his resurrection depends on his continuous embodiment which is the confirmation of our physical resurrection in turn.

According to several scholars, in 1 Corinthians 15. Paul discusses the doctrine of resurrection since some in the Corinthian church diminish the body to the point of questioning the resurrection's validity or necessity. Paul explains the resurrection in the last half of the chapter by comparison with the present expression of the body. The resurrected bodies would be continuous as a plant is continuous with the seed from which it flows. The resurrected bodies will be enduring, strong and spiritual while the former bodies are perishable, frail and dusty. It is the flesh and blood of the present bodies that the kingdom of God will not inherit but God can give glorified bodies. A difference in death, not a difference in embodiment is the contrast between the normal and the glorified bodies.

The god who created human beings as whole beings plans to become whole beings for life in the age to come. Until bodies are raised to life, salvation is not complete. It does mean that without bodies wholeness is not conveyed. The bible Portrays human beings as complete units as bodies of dust initially animated by God's breath Genesis 2:7, which will one day become bodies of glory vitalized by God's spirit.

A biblical conception of humanity is not an account of humanity that claims inner life as the true self towards the body. The true self is a whole being redeemed and restored to a glorious resurrection by the work of Christ that represents God's final purpose for humanity embodied. That resurrection requires the entire body, since gendered bodies were part of the good creation

of God and not a result of the fall, because humanity would not be less resurrected than it was fallen and because the presumption from the accounts of the Gospels is that after his resurrection, Jesus was still remembered as a whole being.

By offering Jesus a case involving one woman who in accordance with the Law of Moses had in turn married seven brothers but survived them all without bearing children. Their concern as to which wife she would be in the resurrection was meant to illustrate the difficulties of their confidence in the eternal truth of the rule brought on by a literal resurrection. By questioning their understanding of both law and God's power, Jesus replied. He teaches that people will be like the angels in the resurrection by neither marrying nor giving away someone in marriage. Some have interpreted this to mean that resurrected bodies would be like angelic bodies believing that in the resurrection, if angels are not gendered then we will not be gendered either. However only states that after the resurrection the institution of marriage will not exist anymore than it exists among the angels. It does not mean that relative to the present body, the body would be absent in the resurrection.

The promise of the resurrection serves as a focus for a developing identity in Christ, for at the resurrection of the flesh completed humanity in Christ will be fulfilled. This theology of the body was important to our true self should not be ignored when ministering to those who suffer from gender dysphoria. An indication of the significance of the body to human identity is the urge on the part of those who experience gender incongruence to find resolution by changing their body.

This does not imply that those who struggle with gender incongruence are sinning, nor does it imply that efforts to overcome the incongruence against the body should be perceived as a calculated revolt against God rather than a war for life. The society of people in pain is a community in which 41 percent of its participants attempt suicide. While Bible does not mention transgender identity or a transgender lifestyle clearly, it acknowledges that people will make choices that are deliberately different from their birth sex.

No one has a complete understanding of what causes gender incongruity but in accordance with Christian doctrine some actions that represent a transgender identity are morally unacceptable. It is not suggest that an entirely random and unfair norm for presenting a specific

gender based on cultural norms should be in place. The absence of any norms or boundaries however the failure to accept our collective human nature as male and female as our creator's wishes leads to a misunderstanding that affects our society as a whole negatively.

In Deuteronomy 22:5, a woman shall not wear men's clothing nor a man shall wear women's clothing for the lord your God hates anyone who does this is the most widely quoted verse on cross gender conduct. In Deuteronomy 22 it focuses on reverence for both human and animal life. Verses 9-11 warns people not to merge what should stay separate while the last half of the chapter covers laws to preserve the dignity of marriage and sexually exploited persons. These rules concern the preservation of life both within nature and within marriage. Life and relationship go hand in hand and the former's protection calls for the latter's protection. It also includes laws banning murder and adultery both relating to the sixth and seventh commandments.

The judgement on cross dressing is that it is a detestable thing. The Hebrew *toebah* is used for ceremonial and ethical acts in the Old Testament that God hates including idolatry and sexual immorality including dishonest business practices and troublemaking. Cross dressing has been interpreted as a reference to homosexuality. It could be in that sense that any actions that dissolved gender distinctions provided encouragement for pagan versions of prostitution or worship of goddesses. However even if the meaning is no longer prostitution or goddess worship the text does not encourage actions that disrespects a genus based on biology.

A prohibition against cross dressing the intended dressing as the opposite sex as known within that culture without regard for a biologically based gender is not a prohibition against a culturally specific mode of dress. This law is written in light of the traditions of surrounding nations like other laws in Deuteronomy. Since Israel is named by God as a people set apart. Witnessing the good order of the existence of God represents a vital way in which Israel will stand apart. Witnessing the good order of the existence of god represents a vital way in which Israel will stand apart from other nations. Like women and men society lives and thrives. Otherwise, mankind will not fill the earth and therefore fulfill the command of God to behave as the image of God over all creation including the treatment of all life both human and animal.

By the time of Isaiah that specific restriction was abolished. Eunuchs are acceptable to God through Jesus. It is meaningless to apply the limitation of eunuch from the assembly of the people of God to transsexuals today irrespective of the weakness of that application in light of the lifting of that limitation. Jesus himself declares that one can become a eunuch for the sake of God's kingdom.

Paul lists a series of wrongdoers who will not enter the kingdom of God including malakos and arsenokoites is another passage cited against transgender behavior. While the latter term refers to a homosexual. Most scholars think it refers in a homosexual relationship to the passive partner with arsenokoites referring to the active partner. Some argue that malakos is a reference to affected men or men who play woman's part in some significant way. Transgender behaviors like cross dressing are condemned by Paul under this interpretation. Since malakos comes between two word for sexual wrongdoers it is safer to assume that what Paul intends by this word is sinful sexual behavior rather than behaviors that we may associate with transgenderism.

Paul scolded Corinthian church members for visiting prostitutes. Many commentators assume that their rationalization of this behavior was an overly spiritualized or dualistic understanding of Christianity by which in view of the importance of the soul, the actions committed by the body did not matter. Paul responds by highlighting as part of our Christian identity, the centrality of the body. As that body will be resurrected by God the physical body is not meant for sexual immorality. If the body is a member of Christ then with a harlot it cannot become one flesh. The sanctity of the physical body is stressed by Paul. It has been rewarded by God united with Christ and is now the temple of Holy Spirit. Although the command of Paul to glorify God with the body is in reaction to sexual immorality, the justification he gives for that command covers more than sexual immorality avoidance. If the body is a temple of the Holy Spirit belonging to God that will be resurrected one day, it should not in the mean time be rejected or devalued.

The issue, Paul is trying to solve is cross dressing. Paul commands women to pray with their heads covered while men should pray with their heads uncovered in relation to their gender. Cross dressing is involved in worship within the pagan temples of Corinth and Paul is concerned

with separating Christian worship from pagan worship by ensuring that gender differentiation is upheld. Paul explicitly insists that gender disparities in worship be valued.

Paul emphasizes the significance of women and men honoring their nature since men and women need each other. Gender gaps should not prevent women any more than men from praying. Dissolving these distinctions disrespects one gender as much as the other and can overall disrespect the body. In the sense of worship and Christian culture the call is to glorify God with the body and to honor their identities as male and female.

In this way, the mission of the church to transgender people is basically the same as its ministry to all people. That leads to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ symbolized by baptism and discipleship that teaches converts in ever increasing proportions to follow the commandments of Jesus Christ. This is not to deny that there are distinctive discipleship difficulties for transgender individuals. For example, when a child in the church shows gender dysphoria how should children ministers react both to the child and to his or her parents? If a transgender person comes to faith in Jesus Christ what does repentance look like for him or her?

It should be clear that the ministry of the church to transgender people should enable them to experience a growing integrity between their sex of birth and their identity of gender. This is an aim of long term discipleship. However, it is not the only purpose of discipleship or even the first issue that needs to be discussed in the lives of transgender people. The most basic question in the lives of all people is whether they are in Christ using the word of the Apostle Paul. For this reason, if anyone is in Christ the new creation has come the old is gone the new is here, that 2Corinthians 5: 17.

Holism is a third feature of flawless setting. Transgender exhausted the sense of the noun person, the temptation pastors must face down is the reduction of transgender individuals to their gender dysphoria and related behaviors. Gender dysphoria is a problem of discipleship but so is lack of faith, prayerlessness, biblical illiteracy, spiritual error, flesh's acts etc. Pastors that struggle to resolve these concerns fail to help transgender people build a bond with Jesus Christ, a religious perspective, spiritual practices and a gospel centered narrative that can help them address their gender dysphoria and associated behaviors.

Gender dysphoria is formed by diverse causes over a lifetime. Experience teaches that when a transgender individual transitions, feelings of incongruity between one's birth sex and gender identity typically do not vanish immediately. Discipleship as one writer has described it typically consists of a long obedience in the same direction. And a pastoral response to them must be patient encouraging, correcting and forgiving them all along the way as transgender people undergo this long obedience.

Transvestite originated from the German Sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld in 1910 who would later founded the Berlin Institute where the very first operation of sex change took place. Transexual was not invented until 1949. The first use of androgyne was recorded in 1552, according to the Oxford English Dictionary. But it was only in the last 10 years that people claimed it to describe a state of being in between or having both sexes for themselves. Polygender is a Californian invention used in the late 1990s to define a multi gender state.

A complete list of words that individuals use to describe themselves. Other societies had created their own terminologies to identify trans person long before Hirschfeld. There are a multitude of terms used by transpeople to identify themselves from the Hijra of India to the Faafafine of Polynesia, the ladyboys and the tomboys of Thailand and the Takatapui of New Zealand. The criminal law act was passed in the United Kingdom in 1885 which made all homosexual activity illegal. During this time, similar laws were put in place across Europe. People who cross dressed were easy targets of the law because they were connected to homosexual subculture in the public mind.

Ernest Boulton and Fred Park arrested for indecent behavior in 1870, were one of the first public trials for transvestite behavior, instead of the act of sodomy, the authorities based the case on their transvestism and their action of men as women. No accusation on these grounds could be gained and they were cleared of the charge of conspiracy by cross dressing to commit a crime. The Boulton and Park society is one of the largest groups of transvestite men in US today.

As a result of these rules, transgendered persons searched out physicians who would heal them and created a whole new area of medicine: Sexology. Krafft-Ebbing a professor of psychiatry in Vienna, was possibly the first Sexologist who took a particular interest in the sexual desires of trans individuals. From 1877 until after his death, his *psychopathia sexualis* was

published. Krafft- Ebbing was actively seeking to provide better classifications of his patients' habits and individual backgrounds.

Transexuality became a known phenomenon accessible for research, debate and treatment through the work of early sexologists such as Krafft- Ebbing and Hirschfield. Health Provisions was very scarce in the 1920s and 30s but transsexual individuals somehow managed to locate doctors who might support them. Dr. Felix Abraham conducted the first sex change operation at Hirschfield's famed clinic, a mastectomy on a trans man in 1926, a penectomy on his domestic servant Dora in 1930 and a vaginoplasty on a Danish painter Lili Elbe in 1931. It was not easy to undergo surgery and Lily died of complications less than two years later.

In the UK after the war, Dillon succeeded in receiving gender reassignment therapy. He also had a genitals designed by the plastic surgeon Sir Harold Gilles in the late 1940s who later became famous for his works with burn victims. Michael Dillon studied and served as a doctor on the ship until the Sunday express exile him in 1958. He retreated to India until his death in 1962 where he became a Buddhist monk and journalist. Eight years before Dillon was driven out, Christine Jorgensen a former American GI returned from Denmark where as part of her gender reassignment. She had undergone the first of many operations and the media picked up on the story. She became news phenomenon immediately and was arguably the most influential transsexual figure of the 20th century.

In the 1950s and 1960s the lead advocate for adjusting the body Harry Benjamin, a German born US endocrinologist became the mind of gender nonconforming individuals through hormones and surgery. Like Dillon, Benjamin saw efforts to heal such people as a useless undertaking through psychotherapy and started prescribing hormones to them and recommending surgeons abroad as on doctor in it. At that point the United States will publicly conduct gender change operations.

According to Benjamin the distinction between the groups was that true transsexuals feel they belong to the other sex want to be and function as members of the opposite sex not just to appear as such. In its contemporary sense Cauldwell was apparently the first medical professional to use the word transsexual. In an essay in 1949 in Cauldwell presented the case history of Earl a psychopathic transsexual who grew up thinking of herself as a boy and was

desperate to become a male with the title Psychopathia Transexualis. Cauldwell who was renowned for writing had approached Earl.

To seek his support in seeking a surgeon who would extract Earl's breasts and ovaries and build a genitals in place of his vagina, approvingly regarding operations on intersex people. But he declined to assist Earl, as Cauldwell stated in the paper. Cauldwell claimed in direct contrast to Benjamin that transsexuals were mentally ill and found surgery to be mutilation and a criminal act for people like Earl.

The contrasting attitudes of Benjamin and gender affirming surgery. in the mid twentieth century, Cauldwell reflected fundamental difference in how the medical profession perceived sex and gender. Most doctors accepted the view of Cauldwell that biological sex was the defining feature of the gender of someone and was irreversible outside of intersex situations where the person's true sex could not be known immediately. However physicians and scholars such as Benjamin who differentiated between biological sex and psychological sex or as it came to be called gender identity have gradually questioned this assumption.

When more and more transsexual individuals were identified and examined the evidence was established by these doctors and scientists to begin to eventually change the dominant medical opinion to the opposite argument that gender identity and not biological sex were the critical element of the gender of someone and were permanent. Therefore transgender people had to be able to alter the sex of their bodies to match their sense of self.

Some people believe that their sex at birth does not fit their gender identity or the gender they feel inside them. Such men are sometimes referred to as transgender. Transgender is a concept that involves the various ways in which the gender roles of individuals may vary from the sex they were assigned at birth. There are several different words used by transgender persons to identify themselves. For instance the term transgender is often shortened to just trans, or trans male, trans female. Using the vocabulary and the labels that the person wants is always best.

In several distinct ways transgender person convey their gender identified. In order to live as the gender that feels good for them, some individuals use their dress, actions and mannerisms. Some individuals take hormones and may have surgery to alter their body to align their sexuality

with their gender. The conventional definition of gender as divided between male and female is rejected by some transgender persons. So they identify as transgender or gender queer, gender fluid or something else. In their gender identity, gender expressions and sexual orientation, transgender people are diverse. When the assigned sex and gender identity of the individuals are the same they are considered cisgender.

A transgender person who passes through the world may encounter a simpler time than a person who is known to be transgender or who looks more androgynous. But not all transgender people have the same sensation of moving by. Although passing is necessary for some individuals it is as true as others. They may believe that passing means that it is more meaningful to be seen by others as cisgender than to be recognized as transgender.

The hijra community is distributed across India and most of them are found in the Western and North Indian states, although some also reside in a few South Indian states. Due to the availability of livelihood sources, a significant number of hijra communities live in Western and North Indian states compared to Southern India. One of the major reasons for migration from southern India to other Indian states is livelihoods. In pursuit of their identity and to flee from their homes, Hijras move from smaller cities to larger metropolitan areas. They are forced to leave the home, leading to the removal of property rights and other family rights.

A number of hijras enter the hijra community for protection in the absence of family support. Hijras perform ceremonies such as birth of children and marriages. Because of their religious and cultural heritage people believe that hijras have the ability to bless or curse. This is the primary reason people become hijra-phobic and another misunderstanding that leads to stigma, prejudice and denial of rights at different levels is gender of a hijra.

The intervention services for HIV/AIDS have opened spaces for hijras, aravanis and transgender people to work on HIV/AIDS and transgender rights issues in NGOs and CBOs. The UNDP study highlights that regardless of their transgender identity, eligible transgender people are denied job opportunities. There are however reports of only a few transgender people who have had an influence through media advocacy. Hijras also face difficulties in practicing their citizenship rights not just socio- economic issues. Discrimination, unemployment, lack of educational services, homelessness and lack of medical facilities are the major obstacles faced by

the transgender community. Such as HIV treatment and hygiene, depression, hormone pill misuse, abuse of cigarettes and alcohol, penectomy, marriage and adoption concerns.

In 1994 transgender people got the right to vote but the male or female issue caught up with the challenge of issuing them voter identification cards. Several of them were refused sex cards of their choosing. The other areas in which this culture feels overlooked are inheritance of a child's property or adoption. Members of the family can harass, scold or even assault their son/sibling by behaving like a girl or woman or dressing up. Some parents can fully disown and evict their own child for crossing society's prescribed gender norms and for not fulfilling the roles expected of a male child.

Later it will be impossible for transgender people to even claim their share of the property or inherit what would legally be theirs. The child or adolescent may often decide to run away from the home, unable to accept prejudice or not wanting to bring embarrassment to the family. Some of them may make their way to the communities of Hijra eventually. In 2014, in recognized as a third gender and enjoy all constitutional rights while also entitling them to specific educational and employment benefits.

K. S. Radhakrishnan ordered that state and federal authorities should accept transgender individual's right to determine their self identifies gender. The court made it clear that any insistence on declaring one's gender is unethical and unconstitutional for sex reassignment surgery. the objective of the Union of India is to strengthen the provisions and commitments of the Indian state and to ensure these rights and universal rights for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people residing within the authority of the Indian state, especially transgender people through special measures and safeguards.

Chapter four

Momentousness of Parental Assent

In India, transgender people face a lot of issues. Especially, discrimination not only denies transgender people to approach basic services like jobs, healthcare, education and housing. However it also drives them to the outskirts of society making them one of the most marginalized communities at the risk of social exclusion. The satisfying and complete social lives from exclusion are rooted in societal levels and marginalization. People on the margins have little influence over their lives and the services available to them.

And the transgender people are often become the subject of negative public opinion. Their opportunities to contribute to society can be limited and they may experience low self esteem and alienation. As a result of social policies and procedures they may have been restricted to approach essential social services such as schooling, housing, employment and other activities. “Surya and Chandresh were two such uncrowned kings on campus and everyone sucked up to them. They were naturally stunned by my presence and openly declared war against me, threatening to ruin my career since no hijira had the right to become a professor” (92).

When Somnath got a lecturer job in college, he went there with his father first day. And in the college they both were insulted by the staff because of Somnath’s unisex dress and his hairstyle. The staff Surya and Chandresh were the uncrowned kings in the college who had controlled over the campus. They both were against Somnath’s attitude and behavior. And they threaten him to quit his job. According to them, no transgender has a right to become a professor. The results of marginalization in terms of social exclusion are all the same regardless of source and process of marginalization, whether they are in social behavior or action.

Transgender people are faced with a number of aspects of marginalization including racism, sexism, poverty and other factors which have a negative impact on their mental health. Many transgender people are pushed to the margins of society because of the moral objection to sexual orientation and gender identity that change from the expected heterosexual and non transgender norm. Many support systems including their own families are often cut off from transgender people and leaving them with minimal access to medical care, justice, legal services and education that many others take for granted.

Transgender individuals are often denied to approach basic public services due to marginalization and gender identity which leads to substantial health inequalities. Transgender people are still oppressed by the families into which they are born. The marginalization of transgender people in their communities discourages early prevention and education efforts which encourage harmful behavior that can lead to HIV infection and makes it difficult for transgender youth living with HIV to maintain necessary medical and psychosocial care.

Many transgender youth are forced to turn to illegal activities like sex work to make ends meet due to lack of other choices and driving them further out on the margins of society and increasing their risk of getting HIV. “Jolly came from an extremely poor family and had lost her father. Her mother had forced her into prostitution with men” (37). Here, Jolly a good friend of Somnath, who was also a trans woman forced to work as a sex worker by her mother because of their poverty.

In public places such as restaurants, theatres, supermarkets and malls transgender people face extreme discrimination. Furthermore, they frequently have difficulties using public restrooms. Since transgender people do not have their own restrooms they are forced to use male restrooms, where they are vulnerable to sexual assault and harassment. “No one as lowly as a hijira should be allowed to teach in a college, share the same staffroom, toilet and facilities” (93). When Somnath was working as a lecturer, he was ignored by everyone in his department and they didn’t allow him to use restrooms and didn’t allow him to take part in other facilities.

Transgender people face a variety of problems within their communities. Most families disagree upon children’s gender non-conforming behavior that may begin as early as three to five years old. After discovering that their child is transgender many parents experience a range of feelings like depression, anxiety and disappointment, as well as fear, frustration and outrage. Few people will stand by their loved ones and not attempt to change them.

The whole locality started shunning us for my wayward behavior. ‘How can you let your son turn into a hijira right in front of your eyes?’ Was something he had to listen to, day in, day out. I could see helplessness in his eyes. We were depressed lot and I was to be blamed for it. My father took out his frustration on my mother and two older sisters for not keeping a stern eye on me. (10)

When Somnath was studying eighth standard, he started wearing his sister's clothes very confidently. Everyone was shocked by his behavior. Even though his mother tried hard to make him understand that his behavior would bring shame to his family. He was helpless at that time. And everyone around them started scolding and complaining his mother for giving birth to transgender. This made his family depressed and his father became frustrated, showed his anger towards his mother and two older sisters for not taking care of him.

Parents concerned about their children's gender nonconformity blame it on a range of factors, including mental illness, sexual abuse, confusion, rebellion or poor socialization. Believing that the best way to help their children develop as adults is to allow them to adapt to gender roles. To convince their children to stick to the gender assigned at birth, they use violence, force, threats and medical care. These reactions have an effect on the self-esteem and sense of self worth of gender nonconforming and transgender children.

Transgender people are a marginalized and disadvantaged community that falls behind in human development, especially in education. Since the majority of this group's participants are illiterate or undereducated, they are unable to fully participate in social, cultural, political or economic activities. In fact, educational institutions are highly gendered place. The education system which follows in the life of the rest of society in promoting predominantly binary and patriarchal gender roles recently expanded the use of word to identify children who are gender nonconforming or transgender.

Rejection from society, poverty, social pressure, discrimination, staff rudeness, abuse and sexual harassment are all factors that contribute to this community's low level of education. "Jagadish's family was very poor. Her father had died when she was very young and her mother was helpless with her daughters and a son. Jagadish was her only hope. Stung by poverty, Jagadish started dancing on the streets in order to earn a living" (73). Somnath's friend Jagadish who was a multi-talented transwoman lost her father at a very young age and dropped out her school because of her family poverty. And she started dancing on streets to earn money to run her family.

Transgender people's jobs and livelihood chances are further reduced by their disrupted schooling and social isolation. Some of the factors that lead to their economic hardships are alienation from family and community, occupational stigma and violence, lack of experience and training in technical skill growth, lack of opportunities, and employers' lack of trust in involving them.

The isolation, discrimination and violence that transgender children experience in their families and schools are worsened by economic marginalization. Those transgender people who escape oppression as children and teenagers face limitations in their employment opportunities due to lack of formal education, violence and discrimination in many employers' hiring practices, and hostility in most workplaces and other factors. Many male to female transgender people, especially those from working class backgrounds are left with no choice either to beg or to do sex work. Sexual abuse is an issue for both male to female and female to male transgender people in the workplace in both formal and informal environments.

The shortage of accommodation and resources that address the basic needs of transgender people who are homeless is one of many challenges they face. They are living on city streets after being evicted from their homes due to escaping an abusive situation. Homeless transgender youth lack financial resources are more likely to use drugs and engage in risk sexual activities and more likely to experience mental health problems. During their formative years, homeless transgender youth are denied access to education and social support.

Because of their sexual identity transgender people face intolerance and threat of violence more than heterosexual people. The negative reactions and effects of coming out in transphobic setting because of that many transgender people hide their sexuality. Negative feelings and attitudes towards non heterosexual conduct, culture and identity can contribute to transphobic behavior which is at the root of many transgender people's hostility.

Many transgender people for example those who have become homeless as a result of their families rejection after disclosing their sexual orientation. Individuals who are transphobic are good at reasoning about their lives of transgender people. They are unable to suppress their feelings of hate and their refusal to embrace transgender citizens. As a result, they verbally or

physically threaten transgender people and expose them to abuse. Such attitudes lead to stress, frustration, physical disruption, isolation and rejection for transgender people.

The vast majority of transgender people learn to cope with these issues, particularly when they have the help of family, friends and are active in transgender organizations and social networks. However many of them have to deal with these issue in the absence of help. Many were also stressed by events such as high level of harassment in schools as well as physical and verbal assaults. This harmed their mental health and resulting in substantial level of psychological distress, self harm and suicidality.

In rural areas, it is also more difficult for transgender people to get around. Cities encourage transgender people to choose which facets of their lives they want to be out in and with whom they want to be out such as jobs, friends, family, neighbors, medical care and associative activities. Rural transgender may be more likely than the general population to abandon their home town of birth or youth. Because of this they experience the feeling of sadness, loneliness, social distress. And mental conditions are not signs of sexual identity but rather of violence and fear of discrimination.

The transgender population has higher rates of anxiety, drug use disorders and suicidal thoughts among people ages 15 to 54 most likely due to aggression, and social rejection. Physical and emotional bullying both within and outside home accounted for much of this increased risk. Hostility or rejection by loved one or religious groups, bullying at school, abuse by neighbors, danger of violence in public places, causal homophobic and transphobic remarks on a regular basis, prejudice reaction from professionals, sexual exploitation as a child, voice intimidation, and discrimination.

In India there have been several recorded incidents of police violence aimed at transgender people in recent years. Many police forces have been accused of insensitivity, including failing to react adequately to violence aimed at transgender people. According to a report the majority of hijiras in Mumbai face a number of health issues as well as harassment, arbitrary penalties, sexual assault, crimes and deprivation of human rights. They mainly described police as perpetrators of violence and harassment including traffic and railway officers.

As a result police oppression has emerged as one of the main concerns of transgender people. They often oppressed and extorted by the police. There are no FIRs found. In this situation the police take people in for questioning and keep them in the jail for times ranging from a few hours to a few days. They don't file FIR and don't keep any record of the person's detention. They were harassed by the police who use foul words beat them up and even sexually assault them.

We heard about the issues that transgender people face and we agree that they should be tackled. They should be made more commonly known in society. And they should be treated equally. Acceptance by their parents is one of the primary causes of their sufferings. If parents support them, they will be raised well. Parents on the hand lack the attitude to embrace them and handle them badly. Then society treats them in the same way as their parents treat them.

Parental Acceptance helps to develop a positive sense of a child. Parents play a vital role in children's life. They play a role of protector, teacher, caregiver and a disciplinarian. Parents provide emotional warmth and unconditional affection to the children. They become the best supporters which helps them to understand their words. As a parent they should accept their children's feelings, thoughts and experiences. And it helps to have healthy interaction between parents and child is known as parental acceptance.

It helps the child to develop secure sense of self identity and positive self esteem. Parents are the mirror to their child. They should allow them free to explore their words and express themselves without fear. They should encourage their communication skills so that they can feel free to share everything to parents without any hesitation. And the relationships between them will be stronger and closer. Parents also should accept child's negative feelings so that the intensity of those feelings will be decrease.

Parental acceptance can be viewed easily as a parent's attitude towards a child. It means the ability of acknowledge what child says without trying to change it. It shows that parents should not respond them with disapproval. Instead they should listen them fully without interrupting with advice or any other suggestions. It shows the respect for child's view point. And it helps them to believe parents strongly. It is a positive way for the healthy development of

a child. By sharing an interview with two transwomen that I conducted, I can clearly show that parental acceptance is the primary cause of transgender issues.

Kottravai, a motivational speaker, social worker, who received many awards and also wrote a book Yakkai, a collection of Tamil poetry. She was a quite bold, knowledgeable and courageous woman trying to achieve many things in the society through her hard work. She also helping many transgender and guide them in the right path. Though she was a college dropout she had wide knowledge about life and society. Her real name was Sundarrajan. She was from a well educated family.

And she has interested in reading books, cleaning, and putting rangoli. She always used to help her mother in her childhood. During her teenage nearly when she was thirteen years old there was a change in her but she couldn't able to understand what's happening to her. She likes a man in her street and used to see him whenever he goes out and had a friendship with him. That man asked her when she started changing like woman, she was confused and started thinking why she got attracted towards man? And so many questions raised in her mind.

One day she saw a transgender while travelling in a bus and nearby man scolding her badly. So she asked that man for what purpose he scolding her. He replied that it was not a male and not a female too, some other creature. From this word itself we can understand that transgender were not respected in the society and they were ignored by the society at early times. Kottravai started following her and noticed that transgender was only talking with men and getting money.

Kottravai asked nearby woman about that transgender she told that they born as male and become female, they can't able to work outside so they getting money from others. At that time Kottravai understands that she also belongs to third category. And she got afraid of parents and others in the society. But later her father came to know about that and he hit her hardly. He poured kerosene on her tried to burn her but she got escaped.

Then she ran away from her home to Mumbai. At that time she was completed only eighth standard. In Mumbai she started her new life as a transgender. At that time, there were only two options for them to earn money. They have to beg and the other one is sex worker. She doesn't have interested to work as a sex worker so she started begging. She runs her life by

begging others and there she faced many struggles like harassment. So she moved to Bangalore there she stayed for few months.

Then she returned to Madurai, as a complete transwoman and took a house for rent stayed alone. That moment she realized that she wants to educate herself. So one day she met a lawyer and asked him help for higher studies. He asked to get her transfer certificate from school so that she can continue her education. She went her school and asked for certificate. They mentioned that they need parent's signature so she had to face them again. She went her home and her father got angry, she shouted at him and ask her mother for help to get certificate from school. Then her mother came to school and helped her to get back her certificates.

Later she started studying completed her higher education and scored good marks. No one helped for her studies. She was begging for money and through that amount she educated herself. Then she likes to pursue BSW so she joined a college, but she couldn't able to continue after first semester. Because there was clash in their community so that no one couldn't able to earn money through begging and the situation became worse. So she moved to Bangalore again. There a man forced her to have relationship with him but she avoided. Many of them told her that she can earn money through that. But she was strong in her determination that she won't be a sex worker at any situation.

Then she moved to Chennai and started selling soaps, dresses and so many things. Then she decided that she can earn money by working and should not beg others. She started earning a little and then she moved to a colony settled there. People who lives in that colony became close to her they become friendly and treated her equally. There she started taking tuition for kids and the numbers increased day by day. Through she earned some amount and she did part time job and earned five thousand per month. At that time she got opportunity to act in short films. She update herself every day. Then she started visiting many universities and local colleges for seminar to create awareness about LGBT.

She faced many struggles in her life, those pains are unable to express through words. Through that seminars and workshops she got many friends circle and so they decided to start a group to create awareness about LGBT to youngsters. Then she got many opportunities she wrote many books and those are yet to be published. She received many awards. And also she

got opportunity to act in movies. She played a role in 'Chen Naai.' She also engaged in upcoming movies. She was very much interested in doing social services. So she started guiding many transgender in a right path.

Later she came out from LBGT group and now she is doing many social services. Her main intention is no transgender should beg or go for sex work. They should work and earn for their needs. At early times they were discriminated by the society. They didn't have any facilities and opportunities to go for work. Because at that time in 80s, 90s most of them unaware of the category transgender. But now society accepts them as third gender. And providing many opportunities for job. Kottravai questioned why still they are begging and going for sex work? There are so much job opportunities for them. But they are not using those opportunities.

Then she said that was not a mistake of society or government. Because government provided whatever they need. It is a mistake of each and every individual. Each one has some talent and knowledge in some field. They can do work or small business so that they can earn money. There are many ways to earn but begging and sex work is not a solution. And she questioned if her community keeps on begging and doing sex work means how can their community improve in the society. She mentioned that at present many of them from their community achieving their goals and doing hard work to shine in the society.

The people in the society accepted them and treating them equally with respect. Still they have a thought that transgender means they will beg for money and they are sex workers. Her point was that thought should be removed from the people's mind. So she guide everyone in their community to educate themselves and go for jobs. Many of them find begging and sex work as an easy way to earn money. Kottravai mentioned that education and hard work is the only way to achieve success in their life. And self confidence is more important in everyone's life.

Most of them in our society doesn't know about transmen, a woman who changes into men. She also shares about their struggles. As a man when he changes into a woman, she faced many struggles. They were treated badly and tortured by the families as well as by the society through abusive languages. And there is a community transmen under transgender category who suffers more than transwoman in the society. Though they suffered a lot, still they won't beg

others to earn money and also they won't go as sex workers. They are working hard to improve their community by doing small business by their own. She mentioned Nazim as best example in transmen who started a small business, later he married a girl and now living happily in the society.

And also she mentioned some transwomen who achieved in the society because of their hard work. Prithika Yashini, a first transwoman Sub-inspector, Sathyasri Sharmila Lawyer, Padmini Prakash News Anchor and Rubi, a first transwoman nurse in tamilnadu. There are many achievers, hard workers in their community but they didn't appear in media. Still they continue their social works and trying to improve their community in the society.

Another transwoman named Dharshini was from Trichy. Her real name was Yogeswaran. She was a sex worker. She was a school dropout because of her family poverty. She had two brothers, her father was a drunkard and her mother worked as a maid to run her family. So Dharshini also helped her mother at the young age. She used to wash vessels and cleaning the room when she was 8 years old to earn five rupees. After year passes she identifies herself as a woman at the age of sixteen. As usual she was thrown out from her family.

Then she moved to many places and started begging for food. At that time a stranger came forward to help her. She trusted him and went Bangalore with him to get work. But there she faced a worst situation. She was tortured by the man for a month and he used to beat her with long sticks and apply chilli powder on the wound. He tortured her physically and mentally. Later she escaped from the place and she moved to Mumbai.

After moving to Mumbai she felt relaxed because almost she lived in a hell for a month. In Mumbai she doesn't know any places and in railway station she met another transgender. And she told her about the situation and asked for help. At that situation Dharshini had no other choice, she was force to involve in sex work. But there also she undergone violence and faced too many struggles in their community. And then she moved from Mumbai.

She doesn't like to be a sex worker. So she tried for many jobs but she couldn't get any jobs and most of them treated her badly. So she continues to work as a sex worker to earn money for her daily needs. And still she was longing to see her family but they didn't consider her as their daughter. She faced many struggles at the young age so she used to guide other

transgenders not to involve in sex work. She used to give some amount from her earnings and help them to educate themselves.

Finally Kottravai and Dharshini blamed their parents for their situation. They both pointed that incase if their parents accepted them and treated them equally, they might got love and care from their parents. Kottravai raised a question why parents not accepting their children when they came to know that their children were turned into transgender. And she told that every child is a gift of God. They should accept them and raised them in a right path. Being a transgender is not their fault.

And she said that if parents accepted her, it may helped her to educate herself. She may feel protective in their surroundings. So that she might got escape from the harassments and violence in the society. Even though she was from a well educated family background, still they didn't accept her and they didn't consider her as a part of her family. If we see Dharshini's life, at the young age she was tortured physically and mentally. There was no one to help her and so she couldn't get away from that situation. She was forced to work as a sex worker.

Her parents were not willing to accept her as their daughter. Because they thought if they accepted her, their neighbours will talk badly about them. And they might be get ignored by the society. Then she told that her parents think only about the society. What other will think about them? And how they will be treated in the society? They didn't think about their daughter's future. If they think about her future she won't be in this situation right now.

Though she worked as a sex worker she guide other transgender to educate themselves and go for a job and not to go for sex work. Because she knows that how they will be treated in that circle. And due to some situation she was force to involve in sex work. So she is guiding others not to earn money through this way instead she ask them to educate or to do small business to earn for their needs.

Here we see Kottravai and Dharshini faced the same problem parental acceptance. The situation they faced directs them to a different path. Kottravai worked hard and somehow she educated herself by begging. At present she is guiding others and doing many social works. But Dharshini, at the very young age she was forced to involve in sex work and she couldn't able to

educate herself. Still she couldn't get rid of that situation. Transgenders were easily discriminated by the family.

Because parents thought that society will treat them badly and ignored them. They will lose their respect and status in the society. They didn't think about the transgender's condition when they were thrown out from the family. They were facing so much struggles, obstacles, violence in the society as well as within their community. Parental acceptance is most important in transgender issue.

If parents started accepting them and considered them as a part of their family, there will be a reduction of stress, suicidal attempts and there will be growth of self confidence among the transgenders. They feel secure in the society. At present most of them started accepting them and treated them equally. Still there are some people in the society treating them badly. It should be changed. They should be treated equally with the respect in the society.

Chapter five

Summation

Chapter one explains literature is considered to be an art work. It can also be creative writing, imaginative which expresses an artistic value. And it reflects the human nature which helps us to understand people's ideas, thoughts, feelings and also connecting with different religions and societies. It has major impact on the development of society. And it shapes the civilizations, exposed justice and changes political system. It allows us to analyze and examine our lives which give deeper meaning to understand the issues and situations.

Indian English literature is the body of work written by the Indian writers in English language. It produces variety of vernacular languages including Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and as well as English. The Indian literature tradition is the oldest tradition in the world. There are many themes in Indian literature. They are mythological themes, epic themes, romantic themes, and social themes. It becomes a cultural crusade against the aged taboos and doubts.

India is one of the most religious and traditional diverse nation. It reflects its own customs and usages that prevailed during that time. Those customs and traditions are still prevalent in modern century. The concept of transgender is not new. They had been recognized in our ancient history. Transgender community comprises of Hijras, Eunuchs, Kothis, Aravanis, Jogappas and Shivshakthis. They have a strong historical presence in our country in the Hindu mythology and other religious text.

Hijra characters played a vital role in some of the most important texts of Hinduism including the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. They held important positions in the court and various facts of administration during the Mughal era in India from sixteenth to nineteenth century. They are also considered to hold religious authority and are sought out for blessings particularly during religious ceremonies. While the Hijra community is still revered by society at large and celebrates in religious and spiritual ceremonies. They are often the victims of abuse and discrimination. Violence and hate crime against the community are common as housing and other discriminations.

Jhimli Mukherjee Pandey was born and brought up in Kolkata. She lives in Howrah. She has interested in reading, cooking and traveling. She started her career with The Statesman and later joined the Times of India. She has been a journalist for over twenty three years with prominent press houses in India. She started writing fiction and translating into both Bengali and English in 2007. She is an impassioned writer and her most recent novels deals with real life issues.

Jhimli has written nearly eight Bengali novels for kids and twenty five short stories for both kids and grownups. She has scripted a graphic novel in English titled *The Ghost Of Gosain Bagan* which based on Sirshendu Mukhopadhyaya's Bengali novel, *Gosain Baganer Bhoot*. She had also translated works into English many of Narayan Debnath's classic comic creation, *Nonte Fonte* as well as novels by Shirshendu Mukhopadhyay and Sunil Gangopadhyay. She also translated Shashi Tharoor's popular Bengali Novel, *The Great Indian Novel* into Bengali titled *Abar Mahabharat*. She also wrote a candid biography of India's first transgender principal, *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* and *Not Just Another Story*. The novel *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* was published in 2017 february 10.

The second chapter deals with the struggles for identity in the novel *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi*. It is about story of a boy named Somnath who in reality female but trapped inside a male body. The entire topic is focused on the struggles and fight with the society in her life. When he was born as Somnath everyone in their family felt happy because finally they had a boy after two daughters. His father Chittaranjan felt proud and excited of having a male child. It is usually common in Indian society having male child is a victory.

Later at the age of six he gradually shows interest towards his sister's dresses and also started putting kohl, lipsticks. Everyone advised him but he never listen them. As years passed, he hated his genitals and had a desire to be a woman. He loves movie and imitates like a heroine. In school, everyone mocked at his behavior. But he knew that he was born a male, a woman soul trapped inside his body. Unlike other parents in the society he is not avoided by her parents they take care of him. They help him to pursue education. He was good at studies and languages.

After completing school life, he enters a college where he finds a place to prove his identity instead he faced many issues. When he entered college some of them cracked jokes on

him by calling him hijra and asking him whether he was a man or woman. Though he was depressed, he was strong in her determination to reveal his identity in the society. He always tried to hold his femininity within him. He was quite intellect and a talented person. He started a first India's transgender magazine called Abomanob (subhuman) in 1995 after he completed his M.Phil. Through this magazine he expressed the lives, struggles, inequality faced by the transgender people to the society and it received a lot of publicity.

He worked as a lecturer in school and college. He was good in dance, article writing and interest towards arts and literature. He yearned for a sex reassignment surgery because he hated a woman's trapped inside a man's body. However his studies help him to enough more money for surgery. While working as a professor in college two professors Surya and Chandresh threatened him to quit his job. They stated that no transgender has the right to become a professor and they are low community people who are not allowed to enter the college and share their staffrooms, toilets, etc. He was tortured by them physically as well mentally. This seems to be a piteous condition of a transwoman in the society. It depicts the violence against transgender in the society.

After surgery she was so excited because now she was completely became a woman. Even though life didn't offer happiness for a long period. Many of them spread rumors against her. This made the staff and students of her college to turn against her and the college committee take this as an opportunity to degrade her. But she faced all problems with a courageous heart and finally she proved her identity in the society. Many transgender people told her that she opened the gates of freedom for them. This made her satisfied that her struggles had been worthwhile. Manobi's *A Gift of Goddess Lakshmi* portrays the fight of a transgender with the society for life. However they should be treated equally and their identity should be respected. Through this novel she conveys a message to her community is Education: "If we learn, all our problem will be solved.()

The third chapter social scientific and religious analysis of transgenderism explains the twofold act of creation and blessing was explained by later writers of scriptures to include moral rules. Such as the development of love between husband and wife and the prohibition of sexual immorality and divorce. The Prophet Moses, Jesus the Messiah and the Apostle Paul are united

in common witness to the goodness of humanity's biological complementarities and the universal rules that should regulate male female sexual behavior.

The gradual worsening of biblical moral codes regulating sexual behavior has been experienced in recent decades. As these norms have given way to a more permissive view of non marital sexual intercourse, homosexual behavior, marital fidelity, procreation and divorce among others in the wider community. A biblical and theological evaluation is needed for the 'transgender moment' as it has been called in which a person may choose a gender identity at variance with their biological sex.

Transgender is defined by 'T' in the common LGBTQIA+ and in this wider population transgender may be the smallest category. Transgender refers to any person whose identification with gender differs in some way from biological gender. Even though transgenderism is not same as homosexuality by definition, there is enough overlap between the two. Because some of them considered transgenderism as the homosexuality.

In some studies of transgender people have shown a short term psychological gain from sex reassignment surgery. While other studies have also shown that suicide rates for those who have fully transitioned are still abnormally high. And few of them blame the lack of complete acceptance by society for the cause of psychological distress after surgery. But this is not the reason for the high number of suicides. In this case it will not solve the root problem.

Through a biblical theology of the body, one can answer to transgenderism is better developed than by mixing the scriptures in the light of individual practices. Transgender experiences an unconscious sense of gender at odds with one's birth sex. A common way to deal with this incongruity is to demonstrate that one's inner sense of gender tends to reflect one's true self over one's body. The church has argued by suggesting that one's inner self, associated with the spirit, should decide gender rather than the body. In other words, if anyone has an internal sense of being female with male genitalia, then he should be fully understood as she. The body does not have the vote.

Scripture does not talk about transgenderism, but it also speaks to the transgender community and the church. A biblical theology of the body will help the church to develop an answer to the question of transgenderism that honors the purpose of God for human beings and

their salvation. The Old Testament also narrates the role that sin plays in corrupting human existence. Human fall-ness also affects the relationship with the God, the creator and the rest of life, including other human beings.

The presence of God can be reflected by the human body as formed by God. Jesus, as God in the flesh, was born, lived, and died without sin, a total human existence. Jesus existed with all the experience of a human body and all the distinctions a human body possesses. He was born with an ancestry that within Israel and the greater Roman world identified him as Jewish. After the Resurrection, even the scars on His body that helped to identify Him as the Risen Lord to His followers remain part of His bodily life. All the limitations of the human body, including sleep, hunger, sweat, and pain, were experienced by Jesus.

Paul explains the resurrection in the last half of the chapter by comparison with the present expression of the body. The resurrected bodies would be continuous, as a plant is continuous with the seed from which it flows. The God who created human beings as whole beings plans to become whole beings for life in the age to come. Until bodies are raised to life, salvation is not complete. It does mean that without bodies, wholeness is not conveyed.

The promise of the resurrection serves as a focus for a developing identity in Christ, for at the resurrection of the flesh, completed humanity in Christ will be fulfilled. This theology of the body was important to our true self should not be ignored when ministering to those who suffer from gender dysphoria. An indication of the significance of the body to human identity is the urge on the part of those who experience gender incongruence to find resolution by changing their body.

While the Bible does not mention transgender identity or a transgender lifestyle clearly, it acknowledges that people will make choices that are deliberately different from their birth sex. No one has a complete understanding of what causes gender incongruity, but in accordance with Christian doctrine, some actions that represent a transgender identity are morally unacceptable. It is not to suggest that an entirely random and unfair norm for presenting a specific gender based on cultural norms should be in place. The absence of any norms or boundaries, however, the failure to accept our collective human nature as male and female as our Creator's wishes, leads to a misunderstanding that affects our society as a whole negatively.

Paul lists a series of "wrongdoers" who will not enter the kingdom of God, including malakos and arsenokoites, is another passage cited against transgender behavior. "While the latter term refers to a homosexual. Most scholars think it refers in a homosexual relationship to the passive partner, with arsenokoites referring to the active partner. Some argue that Malakos is a reference to affected men who play a woman's part in some significant way. Transgender behaviors like cross-dressing are condemned by Paul under this interpretation. Since Malakos comes between two words for sexual wrongdoers, it is safer to assume that what Paul intends by this word is sinful sexual behavior rather than behaviors that we may associate with transgenderism.

It should be clear that the ministry of the Church to transgender people should enable them to experience a growing integrity between their sex of birth and their identity of gender. This is an aim of long-term discipleship. However, it is not the only purpose of discipleship, or even the first issue that needs to be discussed in the lives of transgender people. The most basic question in the lives of all people is whether they are "in Christ," using the word of the apostle Paul.

Transgender exhausted the sense of the noun person, the temptation pastors must face down is the reduction of transgender individuals to their gender dysphoria and related behaviors. Gender dysphoria is a problem of discipleship, but so is lack of faith, prayerlessness, biblical illiteracy, spiritual error, flesh's acts, etc. Pastors that struggle to resolve these concerns fail to help transgender people build a bond with Jesus Christ, a religious perspective, spiritual practices, and a gospel-centered narrative that can help them address their gender dysphoria and associated behaviors.

Transvestite originated from the German Sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld in 1910, who would later found the Berlin Institute where the very first operations of sex change took place. Transsexual was not invented until 1949. And there are a multitude of terms used by trans people to identify themselves, from the Hijra of India to the Faafafine of Polynesia, the ladyboys and the tomboys of Thailand and the Takatapui of New Zealand.

In 1950s and 1960s, the lead advocate Harry Benjamin, a German born, US endocrinologist, became the mind of gender nonconforming individuals through hormones and

surgery. And some people believe that their sex birth does not fit their gender identity or the gender they feel inside them. The hijra community is distributed across India and most of them were found in the Western and North Indian states. One of the major reasons for migration from Southern India to other places is livelihood. And they are forced to leave the home, leading to the removal of property rights and other family rights.

In 2014 the Indian Supreme Court ordered that the transgender people should be recognized as a third gender and the court made it clear that any insistence on declaring one's gender is unethical and unconstitutional for sex reassignment surgery. The objective of the Union of India is to strengthen the provisions and commitments of the Indian state, to ensure the rights as well as fundamental rights are provided to the most marginalized and vulnerable people living under the Indian state's authority, especially transgender people through special measures and safeguards.

Chapter four Society towards Acceptance deals with the issues faced by transgender people. It depicts how culture and family discriminated against transgender people. Their condition is made worse by a lack of schooling, jobs and healthcare. The society frequently developed a negative view of them. The lack of parental approval is the primary cause for these issues. And here I presented evidence of the lives of two transwomen who were rejected by their parents and removed from their family.

Kottravai , a transwoman who was a motivational speaker, writer was born into a well educated family. However she was removed from her family after they discovered that she had become a transwoman. After she came out from her family, she faced lot of problems, like lack of money to educate herself so she started begging for money. And she was abused in the young age. After lot of struggles, at present she was in good position earning money by working in small company and leading her life. Another transwoman named Dharshini, she was from a poor family. After she came out from her family and forced to involve as a sex worker.

She doesn't like to be a sex worker. So she tried for many jobs but she couldn't get any jobs and most of them treated her badly. So she continues to work as a sex worker to earn money for her daily needs. And still she was longing to see her family but they didn't considered her as their daughter. She faced many struggles at the young age so she used to guide other

transgenders not to involve in sex work. She used to give some amount from her earnings and help them to educate themselves.

Finally Kottravai and Dharshini blamed their parents for their situation. They both pointed that incase if their parents accepted them and treated them equally, they might got love and care from their parents. Kottravai raised a question why parents not accepting their children when they came to know that their children were turned into transgender. And she told that every child was a gift of God. They should accept them and raised them in a right path. Being a transgender was not their fault.

There will be a reduction in depression, suicidal attempts, and a growth in self-confidence among transgenders if their parents begin to accept them and accept them as part of their family. Most of them have now begin to accept them and treat them fairly. Even so, some people in society appear to mistreat them. It needs to be changed. And they should be treated equally in the society.

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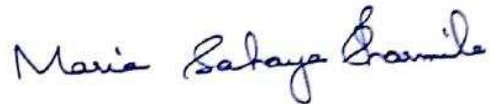
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Racial Discrimination and Supremacy of Whites - A Study of Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature and is a work done by Stephi.P during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



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**Racial Discrimination and Supremacy of Whites -A Study
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MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

STEPHI P .

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Racial Discrimination and Supremacy of Whites - A Study of Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*** is submitted to St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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PREFACE

Doris Lessing won the noble prize for literature in 2007. The majority of Doris Lessing's novels can be read, enjoyed and researched on their own.

Her works are easy to understand and open book for everyone. Doris Lessing novels mostly addresses race, philosophy, gender dynamics and the human psyche. The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the biographical details of Doris Lessing, about literature and the abstract of the novel.

The second chapter **Whites' Dominance and Discrimination** brings out relationship between the black natives and the white people which leads to racial insulting acts that are apparent in the plot.

The Third chapter **Exploring Identity and Truth** aims to present the search for individual's identity and ultimately understands the truth.

The Four chapter **Racial Politics between the Characters** deals with the major characters and the racial issues between these characters.

The fifth chapter summation deals with preceding chapter and justifies the title **Racial Discrimination and Supremacy of Whites -A Study of Doris Lessing's The Grass is Singing.**

Chapter one

Introduction

Fiction is the classification for any story created in the imagination, rather than based strictly on history or fact. Fiction can be expressed in a variety of formats, including writings, live performances, films, television programs, video games, and role-playing games, though the term originally and most commonly refers to the major narrative forms of literature including the novel, novella, short story, and play. Fiction constitutes an act of creative invention, so that faithfulness to reality is not typically assumed; in other words, fiction is not expected to present only characters who are actual people or descriptions that are factually true. Fiction includes novels, short stories, fables, legends, myths, fairytales, epic and narrative poetry, plays including opera and various kinds of dramatic dancing, but it also encompasses comic books and man films, video games, radio programs, television programs (comedies and dramas) etc. Fiction is commonly broken down into a variety of subsets or genres; each typically defined by narrative technique, tone, content or popularly defined criteria. Science Fiction often predicts or supposes technologies that are not realities at the time of the work's creation.

In any medium, fiction is usually a fictional type consisting of characters, events, or locations that are fictitious, in other words, not exclusively based on history or facts. Fiction refers to written narratives in prose and most primarily novels, but sometimes novels and short stories, in its narrowest application. More generally, imaginary narratives have been represented in any medium, including not only writings, but also live theatrical presentations, films, TV shows, radio dramas, comics, role-playing games and video games.

British Literature that is considered as top most and well known literature ever arose from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands. These article portraits the valiant features of British Literature in the English Language. Anglo-Saxon (Old English) literature is included, and there is some discussion of Latin and Anglo-Norman literature, where the early development of the English language and literature is linked to literature in these languages. There is also a short discussion of the major figures who wrote in Scots, but it is clear that the main discussion is in the various Scottish literature write-ups.

The article Literature in Britain's other languages reflects on the literature published in the other languages that are used in Britain and have been used. Reports on these different literatures also exist: British Latin literature, Anglo-Norman, Cornish, Guernesiais, Jerriais, Latin, Manx, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, etc. Irish authors played an important role in the growth of literature in England and Scotland, but it can be controversial to classify Irish literature as British even though the whole of Ireland was part of the United Kingdom politically between January 1801 and December 1922. This includes works by writers from Northern Ireland, for others.

Instead of England's literature, this article focuses on English-language literature, so it includes authors from Scotland, Wales, Crown Dependencies, and all of Ireland, as well as literature from countries of the former British Empire, including the United States, in English. However, it only deals with the literature of the United Kingdom until the beginning of the 19th century; however, it only deals with the literature of the United Kingdom, the Dependencies of the Crown and Ireland until the early 19th century. It does not contain literature published in Britain's other languages.

Over the course of more than 1,400 years, the English language has evolved. The oldest varieties of English, a group of Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain in the fifth century by Anglo-Saxon settlers, are considered Old English. In Old English *Beowulf* is the most popular novel, and, despite being set in Scandinavia, has achieved national epic status in England. The written form of the Anglo-Saxon language, however, became less popular following the Norman conquest of England in 1066. French became the official language of the courts, parliament, and civilized society, under the influence of the new aristocracy. The English spoken following the arrival of the Normans is known as Middle English. This type of English persisted until the 1470s, when a London-based form of English, the Chancery Standard (late Middle English), became popular. Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400), author of *The Canterbury Tales*, was an important figure in the growth of the credibility of language Middle English at a period when French and Latin were still the dominant literary languages in England. James Bible (1611), and Changing the Great Vowel.

William Shakespeare (1564–1616), a poet and playwright, is generally regarded as the greatest English writer and one of the greatest dramatists in the world. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are more commonly performed than every other playwright. Sir Walter Scott's historic romances influenced a generation of painters, composers, and authors across Europe in the nineteenth century.

Between the late 16th and early 18th centuries, the English language spread across the world with the creation of the British Empire. It was the greatest empire in history at its peak. By 1913, over 412 million people, 23 percent of the world population at that time, dominated

the British Empire. These colonies and the USA began to produce their own important literary traditions in English during the nineteenth and twentieth century's.

Doris Lessing, one of the mountainous figures of modern literature was the Nobel Prize-winning novelist who reflected on her grand sweeps and shed light on her much ridiculousness in the course of a literary career that spanned the latter half of the 20th century. She was a prosperous writer for almost 60 years, producing about a book a year. They included plays, poems, and short stories, especially *The Golden Notebook* that is considered her best known, best loved, and most controversial work.

A compassionate, liberal character, she was, other than being a communist, socialist, feminist, atheist, at different stages of her life and finally a Sufi. She brought a tireless passion to each of these convictions that often blurred judgment. She was in search of life changing ideas, treasured them and moved on accordingly. She wrote novels out of practice when she still believed. Her interests were diverse, but she was persistent in her capacity to make interesting fiction out of reality.

Two older Doris's attention was attracted to the group around the Left Book Club after the divorce, an organization that she had entered the year before. It was here that she met Gottfried Lessing, her future second husband. Shortly after she joined the party, they married, and had a child together (Peter, 1946-2013), before divorcing in 1949. And she didn't get married again. Lessing also had a love affair with John White horn, the RAF serviceman (brother of journalist Katharine White horn), who was stationed in Southern Rhodesia, and between 1943 and 1949 wrote him 90 letters.

In 1949, Lessing moved to London to follow her writing career and socialist ideals with her younger son, Peter, but left her older two children with their father in South Africa, Frank

Wisdom. She later said she didn't see an alternative at the moment: "I felt for a long time that I had done a very brave thing." For an educated woman, there is nothing more dull than spending an infinite amount of time with small children. I didn't feel like I was the best person who brought them up. I had end up becoming an addict or a depressed intellectual like my mom.

She was an active critic of apartheid, as well as fighting against nuclear weapons, which led to her being barred from South Africa and Rhodesia for several years in 1956. In the same year, she left the British Communist Party after the Soviet invasion of Hungary. She gave her views on feminism, communism and science fiction in an interview with The New York Times in the 1980s, when Lessing was vocal in her opposition to Soviet actions in Afghanistan.

A five-volume classified file on Lessing, prepared by the British intelligence services, MI5 and MI6, was made public on 21 August 2015 and published in The National Archives. The log, which includes documents written in sections, reveals that for around twenty years, from the early-1940s onwards, Lessing was under watch by British spies. The reasons for the secret service interest in Lessing are stated to be her links with Communism and her anti-racist activism.

The Golden Notebook is Doris Lessing's 1962 novel. It, like the two books introduced later, resembled with the Oxford Companion to English Literature written by Margaret Drabble and otherwise called as Lessing's "inner space fiction"; since her work dealt with mental and social breakdown. It expresses strong anti-war and anti-Stalinist messages, an wide-ranging study of communism and the communist party in England from the 1930s to the 1950s, and an investigation of the budding emancipation of sexual and women's liberation.

With her first published book, *The Grass Is Singing*, she caused a sensation in the literary world. It told the story of Mary, the wife of a poor white farmer in Southern Rhodesia who starts an obsessive and ultimately fatal relationship with her black houseboy, driven insane by loneliness and poverty. It was famous right away, and was reprinted seven times in five months. Lessing was founded from then on and the other books came quickly.

The Children of Violence is a series of five semi-autobiographical novels by Lessing, such as *Martha Quest*, *A Proper Marriage*, *A Ripple from the storm*, *Landlocked* and *The Four-Gated City*, that follows the life of protagonist Martha Quest from early life until her death and some features of puberty, marriage, motherhood, divorce, communism and finally the revelation of the Third World War, which takes place in the future in the year 1997. The first four novels are established during the 1930s and 1940s, in the fictional country of Zambezia depends on the former British colony of Southern Rhodesia where Lessing lived from 1925 until 1949. The fifth work, *The Four-Gated City*, is a science fiction dystopia set in London, from the 1950s into a future where World War III takes place.

In her fiction, Doris Lessing addressed race, philosophy, gender dynamics and the human psyche. For her, it was a modern genre literature and she found its possible moving. For her, *The Four-Gated City* was the springboard for her own launch into space fantasy. Briefing for a Descent into Hell (1971) characterizing a madman's inner trip and *The Memoirs of a Survivor* (1975) portraits of a woman's outward trip, in a post-disaster London.

While some readers constantly succeeded her on her cosmic team, others mourned and stood by for her to return to her consciousness and practicality. She performed so, in an entirely unexpected way. The popular and highly respected Lessing turned out to be Jane Somers, a young writer with just two books and a few moderate reviews to her credit, in 1984. *The Diary*

of *a Good Neighbors* (1983) and *If the Old Might* (1984) were initially rejected by Somers' novels, including one by Doris Lessing's own publishers. It was a *detailed* joke and one that gave her a lot of enjoyment.

The Habit of Love (1957) and *To Room Nineteen* (1978) are among the best collections of her short stories, with exciting sight into the hearts and lives of numerous different kinds of people, portrayed with a vision accentuated by the demands of brevity. Her novels were not winning at equality. *Her* style has been dubbed "slow" and "flat-footed" by some critics and her space fiction was often dismissed out of hand. She was ineffective as a literary critic; she stood alone as a novelist.

She was born Doris May Taylor to British parents on October 22, 1919, in Kermanshah, Persia. Her father, a veteran of the First World War, Captain Alfred Cook Taylor, had married his nurse, Emily McVeigh, "which was just as well, as they both said often sufficient (though in different tones of voice).

The Taylors moved to Southern Rhodesia in the mid-1920s, where there was a 1200-hectare maize farm on the veldt. There they settled down to a life of economic failure that was quiet but lasting. In order to annoy her mother, at 14, she discontinues school. She remained extremely satisfied with her lack of education until the end of her life. She left the farm at the age of 22 for Salisbury, a small town where she made her living as a telephone operator and accounting worker. She wedded Frank Wisdom in 1939. The marriage lasted five years and a son and a daughter were born. She wedded Gottfried Lessing a year after the divorce. The marriage also lasted five years, and Peter gave birth to another son.

Lessing left Rhodesia for England in 1949. She had her son, Peter, in her arms, £ 20 in her handbag, and in her suitcase the manuscript of *The Grass Is Singing*. She lived a rather

unstable life in some of the seedier parts of London while waiting for it to be accepted and published .However, for the rest of her life, this bleak and rainy London was to be Doris Lessing's birthplace. The dingy 1950s, fortunately, gave way to the much brighter 1960s and she came to look upon the capital as “a beautiful place to live.”

Lessing joined the Communist Party shortly after arriving in England, a resolution she subsequently dismissed as” mad. She became more and more disappointed with formal politics during the 1960s and became more interested in psychology and metaphysics. She discussed analysis, telepathy, meditation, déjà vu and illusion in her novels, as well as in life.

In her almost infinite facility for chronicle what one critic called the “inner experiences of miserable women,” Lessing's greatest strength lay. *Martha Search* (1952) was an extremely fine portrayal of an adolescent's willfulness and vanity; *The Summer before the Dark* (1973), unfortunately less well explored a family woman's middle years, subject to the oppression of her children and in mourning for her missing good looks.

In 2007, a journalist announced that she had been awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, and she responded, “Oh, Christ.”The activities and adaptability of Doris Lessing as a novelist earned her many faithful readers whose faithfulness was checked by her thing, perversity and uncertainty, yet unshaken. Frequently she wrote in styles that didn't go well with her, she wrote poorly about ideas that didn't give her intelligence any credit, exclude on occasion.

Yet she remained a writer who resolved these lapses with an active spill of ideas and whose eagerness and perception kept her admirers fascinated until the last word .Lessing is survived by two granddaughters and her daughter, Jean. Lessing suffered a stroke during the late-1990s that prevented her from travelling during her later years. She was still able to attend the theatre and opera. She started to focus her mind on death, asking herself if she had time to

finish a new book, for instance. She passed away at her home in London on 17 November 2013 at the age of 94, predeceased by her two sons, but survived by her daughter, Jean, who lives in South Africa. She was remembered for her humanistic funeral service.

The book '*The Grass is singing*' begins with a cut from a newspaper report about Mary Turner's death. It says that Mary Turner, a white woman, was murdered for money by Moses, her black servant. For other white people living in that African setting, the news in point of fact acts like an omen. Having looked at the report, individuals act as though the murder was very much expected. The novel's narrative moves to a flashback of the past life of Mary Turner before her assassination at the hands of Moses.

Dick Turner, the man she marries, after a short courtship, is a white farmer trying to make his farm gainful. She moves to his farm with him and supports the property, while Dick controls the farm's labor. Dick and Mary are somewhat cold and far-away, but dedicated to their union. Dick and Mary are living an apolitical life delayed in poverty together. Mary takes over control of the farm when Dick gets ill and rages at the incompetence of her husband's farm practice. To Mary, the farm exists only to make money, while Dick goes more idealistically about farming.

Mary and Dick, together, live a lonely life. Dick refuses to give Mary a child because of her poverty. They do not attend public gatherings, but among their neighbors they are a great topic of interest. While usually very unexplorative in nature, Mary feels an intimate bond with the nature around her. Mary is obviously racist, insisting that native blacks should be rulers of whites. Both Dick and Mary often complain about the absence of work ethic among the natives working on their farm. Although the staffs who work for them are not often cruel to Dick, Mary

is very cruel. As their leader and superior, she treats herself. For the natives, she displays disregard and considers them muddy and animal-like.

Mary is angry, queenly and actively aggressive to the many servants of the house that she has had over the years. She is even harsher when Mary controls the farm labor than Dick has ever been. She makes them work harder, limits their break time, and takes money out of their wages without reason. Her dislike of natives leads to her whipping a work's face because he speaks English to her, telling her that he stopped working for a drink of water.

This worker, called Moses, when he is taken to be a servant of the house, becomes a very important person in the life of Mary. Mary does not fear Moses, her servant, but rather reserves for him a great deal of hatred, dislike, and evasion. Mary also does everything she can to avoid getting any social contact to him. Dick and Mary are seen to be in a state of refuse after several years of living on the farm together. Mary also goes through periods of depression, during which energy and enthusiasm are weak. Mary ends up depending more and more upon Moses in her weakness. As Mary gets weaker, she loves Moses. She sees herself. To convince Dick to give up ownership of his farm and go on a holiday with his wife, Slatter uses his charm and power. This holiday is going to be a form of return for them. Dick spends his last month on his farm with Tony, who is hired to take over the management of the farm by Slatter.

Tony is quite seemingly cultured and has positive intentions, but he finds himself having to adjust to the white community's discrimination. Tony sees Moses dressing Mary one day and is shocked and quite surprised at the breaking of the 'color bar' by Mary. The book ends with the death of Mary by the hand of Moses. Mary waits for his arrival and is aware of her approaching death. Moses does not run from the scene as he initially plans, but at the close of

the book, waiting a short distance away for the arrival of the police, Moses settles down to a wait for the police to get there and his punishment.

Chapter two

White's dominance and discrimination

A common problem that exists in multiracial countries is racial discrimination. The problem arises because there are different numbers of individuals in cultures that contribute to the majority's oppression over the minority. The dispute is then carried by writers to many literary works. It is very proud to say that the famous writer and a novel prized winner Doris Lessing is also one among them. This theory addresses white dominance and racial inequality which is common in the relationship between black and white people and also expresses the racial discriminative actions of the characters inside Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*. In Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*, white dominance and discrimination are principle used to straighten out the issue. The importance of the study was on Frederickson's philosophy and definition of white dominance and discrimination.

The aim of this examine is to expose white dominance in the relationship between the black natives and the white people that leads to the story's obvious racial insulting actions. The results of the view demonstrate that the relationship between black and white people involves white dominance that governs and influences the actions, philosophy, and policy of society that the white people in this case extend to the black natives by Mary Turner, Dick Turner, Charlie Slatter, and Tony. There are also some types of racial discriminatory acts, including the use of racial offensive terms, blind allegations, hurtful remarks, extreme dominant acts, and the group of items associated with that race, expressed by white people "When it came to the point, one never had contact with natives, except in the master-servant relationship. One never knew them in their own lives, as human beings". (TGS,12)

The novel by Doris Lessing called *The Grass is Singing*. The novel deals primarily with racial inequality in the relationship between black native people and white people living in Southern Rhodesia. Ethnic inequality in this novel is quite obvious. It can be seen from the quote above which came from the white masters' viewpoint that they do not want to identify the black natives' presence as human beings just like them. This line also reflects the behaviour of whites in dealing with the existence of black natives. This case can be defined as a white dominance practice in which the conduct of whites is referred to as a form of discrimination that leads to superiority.

It can also be categorized as discrimination where the whites only see them as a black skin-colored servant, not as a person with feelings that are aware of the differences and try to justify and legalize them. The main reason why the novel is chosen for analysis is because the author of the novel is Doris Lessing, a 2007 Noble Prize winner in the category of Literature. The author Per Westberg said in the award ceremony speech that she gave voice to the silent and the refugees and homeless of our century, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe.

This shows that she was interested in understanding the life of suffering in order to open the eyes of people not only to sympathize with their problem, but also to try her best to solve their problem. In criticizing society, even her own race, Lessing is also known for her bold personality and acts, and put it into a number of her literary works, and one of them is *The Grass is Singing*. The novel *The Grass is singing* was published in England in the year 1950 as Lessing's first ever novel. She stated that she rewrote *The Grass is Singing's* plot several times, according to Doris Lessing's (1994) autobiography book, because she thought that in writing with the original plot she would not be honest enough because she had not lived the whole

situation as a white woman herself. The first conspiracy is about a man who backstabbed his race to make friends with white people.

Doris Lessing is bold enough to write the world's brutality rather than sugarcoated tales about the culture of Rhodesia. She seeks to pour out her inner feeling about the problem and tension of the culture she once lived in into a piece of literature instead of writing the fun stories she might have encountered as a white person who lived in Southern Rhodesia.

In this book, Lessing positions two influential topics, namely where the role of women in life and the misery of black people are encountered. Lessing uses an omniscient narrator who knows all the perspectives and opinions of character in *The Grass is Singing* novel. This novel has a flashback plot where it begins at the end of the story, so the reader will not concentrate on the crime, but will concentrate more on the creation of the characters through their harsh lives. Lessing's personal experience of living in Rhodesia, where she experienced the bigotry that existed at that time, is also told in this book. As there are many personal experiences of Lessing presented in the novel, it was regarded as a boost to the popularity of this novel and it makes the reader feel closer to the author and through this novel they can experience a little of the life of the author. The last reason the researcher is attracted to examine the novel is that it speaks of racist prejudice. Its incident continues to occur in the society in which the researcher lives, where there are a number of racial actions executed against the Chinese by Indonesian natives, especially with that Javanese society in Indonesia.

It is also triggered by many novels read by the author, such as *The Aid by Kathryn Stockett*, *The Native Son of Richard Wright*, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, which have discrimination as the main theme of the book. Although in some literary works racial discrimination is often mentioned, they either speak about the issue that is under attack at

African-American blacks or colored people. The racial prejudice in *The Grass is Singing*, meanwhile is solely directed at the black African natives who live in The Grass. Rhodesia, a colonized territory. The novel is examined by Frederickson's use of white dominance to expose the behavior, philosophy, and policy that relates to the superiority of the white people in the relationship between two races, black people and white people. Discrimination is often used as the product of white dominance exercised in the story's setting to mention and unravel the racist actions committed by the white masters against the black natives. The story tells of the moment when Rhodesia is still in the midst of colonialism in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is singing*, and apartheid is still very dominant in the country's politics and regulation. Therefore the prejudice in the novel is rather clear. In this study of the examine, the relationship between black and white people explores white dominance and discrimination. And the behaviour of the characters against the marginalized party. The problem will be extensively analyzed below through the study.

This examine focuses primarily on how some individuals from a majority group see another minority group that places white people and black natives, in this case, the lowest in society. The analysis also attempts to unravel the relationship in order to see whether white dominance practices possess it. This research would also extend the principle of white dominance in addition to theory of prejudice to examine the feeling of superiority. Frederickson said that White Dominance refers to the behaviours, ideology, and policies that relate to the dominance or power of the ancestor of European white people who in terms of number, overcome the other race. Thus the analysis aims to reveal the white dominance of the character's behaviour towards the natives, the difference of ideology, and the policies of the relationship between the two races the ones that exist.

The analysis revolves around the connection between the main characters, Mary Turner, Dick Turner, Charlie Slatter, and Tony, the newcomers, particularly Moses, with the black natives. In *The Grass is Singing*, Mary Turner is the main character. Before her death, the novel talks about her overall conduct and relationship with the black servants around her. In addition to the other characters, she is described as the one who has the most racial discrimination tendencies towards the natives. In the novel, with different occasions and occurrences of discrimination that are worth studying, the relationship between Mary and the natives is also clearly represented. She is portrayed as having the most intimate relationship with most of the servants, particularly with Moses, a black servant. The bond began when Mary met him on the farm and from there on, throughout the progress of the story, Moses is always around her.

As a white woman, Mary holds a fundamental faith that, it is the white society who has every right to control the world. Since Mary spends her time in the town alone, she is always known as a powerful woman who freely leads her life. She becomes more and more addicted to control, particularly over the servants, when she moves to the Turner's small house after her marriage to Dick Turner. It is because when she lives there, there is a limit on things to do so she begins to feel controlled by the situation. The belief of the whites in their superiority gets the best out of her and drives her vaguely to the servants' domination. In Rhodesia, the whites assume that the natives have been planning to do dreadful things for them. The act of the natives makes her feel like she's being put down and the situation is upside down where the next time she gets on her nerves, they'd basically tear her apart.

Mary becomes more and more ruthless to the servants as a result, especially those who work at the house as her maid. The form of white dominance where she tries to control and dominate the black natives is this ruthless conduct. For example, when she felt the maid wasn't

good enough to clean her house, she would shout at him and cut her salary by at least 10 percent per mistake. In return, the maids ask for leave because they aren't really fond of how they're treated by Mary. Another form of the relationship between Mary and the black servants requires horrible working conditions, as she always pays them less. Every day with a little recess over time, and they will be paid according to their expectations. There are still wage cuts over the small errors they make with the wage that does not pay their hard labour. Even if sometimes it is not their mistake. It's just that the masters have a bad day and decide to cut the salaries of the servants with their anger. The natives are powerless to protest the unjust treatment provided by Mary, since she is the owner, after all.

Respecting what the masters have said and agreed is a fundamental courtesy. Despite the fact that even a slave will normally react if they are cornered and treated unfairly, they are black people with no right to reason in this case. There are no rights for Black people to show their discontent with the masters, they are also prohibited from talking back. They have to keep it to themselves because they don't even have the right to feel oppressed. The miserable working environment that Mary gets and has to put up with by the black servants not only ends at the pay cuts. What can be said to be inhuman is anything with the minimum amount of recess, from one to three minutes per hour. Despite the black complexion of the natives, they are still human beings who need some time to rest. When they feel like their feet are ready to give up, even animals rest. Mary also forgets at times that the slaves need time to catch their breath, recover from the weariness, and perhaps eat anything to bring back their energy. Apparently, however, Mary claims that black people have entirely different ways of living than them. They believe that native people in their system do not need any food to function.

When she manages to catch him slacking off, she even goes as far as reducing his recess time. For the record, while skipping meals, Samson's day goes on with him doing the responsibilities. The example is defined as follows; “She had forgotten completely about his need to eat; in fact she had never thought of natives as needing to eat at all.” (TGS,53)

The above quotation offers details that Mary does not offer the slaves a decent working environment. This is a practice of white dominance that occurs in the conduct of Mary against the black indigenous people. Mary attempts to overpower the black servant and tries to show that the power she has over the servant is still important. The small amount of recess and wage reduction is enough to conclude that even though they work as hard as they might to satisfy the expectation of Mary, they hate the slaves. The act of Mary is regarded as prejudice because she conducts the re-imposition of slavery, according to John W. Cell (1982). “Yet discrimination would account for a wide range of conceivable alternatives extermination, there-imposition of slavery, deportation – that were not in fact undertaken.” (TGS,4)

While black people are unable to speak for themselves, they attempt to ask for permission many times, but unfortunately, the masters still turn down their needs. They still misinterpret the fear they have for their masters as a way to disrespect the whites. It seems to be an act of rudeness to stand up for themselves that they have never dreamed of. They don't do anything to protect themselves when they are being handled poorly, let alone fight back. Fighting back just means trying to argue and confront the white society, and that would only leave them in ruin because they do not have a reasonable amount of trust in repressing the whites back.

This case is the product of white dominance actions that leads to the lack of black rights because the whites are already taking it by the way they treat black natives. There are three types of white dominance within both cultures that exist in conduct, philosophy, and policy. Such forms of white dominance require blacks to fully adhere to them and serve them what they want. However the act shows that it is packed with harsh treatment and remarks aimed at the natives. Apparently there is a general tradition not to humanely handle the black native, or else the white who do will suffer any consequences. An outcast and treated the same as the natives is one of the consequences. Anyone who comes to Rhodesia has to obey and regard the belief as a rule. Therefore in order to live in the society of Rhodesia, one should always follow the law and forget the side of humanity left in them, if there is any. If they do not keep up with the act, they will automatically be the one who is handled the way they never imagine doing with themselves.

The plays will focus specifically on the insulting remarks that Mary Turner and Charlie Slatter utter as the ones that perform the racial acts continuously. Therefore, most of the quotes would be in the context of a dialogue inside the novel that is connected to these two characters. The first act of prejudice that is carried out is the use of racially abusive terms directed at the black servants by Charlie Slatter and Mary Turner. Charlie Slatter, who has a close friendship with the Turners, is at their house to take care of the mess on the day Mary is found dead.

As a white guy, he accuses Moses immediately. The question he asks the moment he steps inside their home, however, is somehow insulting the entire black community. He utters a word that at that time is commonly used by the whites to refer the black as their slave and is full of slavery suggestion. In addition, Charlie says so in the presence of black cops who

as his personal slaves, are not yet working for him. “‘Look,’ said Charlie directly, ‘have you any idea why this nigger murdered Mrs. Turner.’” (TGS, 12)

The word ‘nigger’ or known as ‘nigga’ is a word which holds so many offensive tendencies in it. It is used loosely in colonial period to refer the blacks who work for the whites as slaves.

The phrase is used to highlight their race and position in society, suggesting that blacks are at the very bottom of the social order. In this book, the ‘nigger’ word is also used to name the black servants when the whites order them around and even when they scold them for certain trivial items found by the masters to be the substitution of their name were never used to give the blacks their identity.

And it’s needed by the whites. With the ‘nigger’ word, they continue to name the servants so they will not have any identification sticks to themselves. Their identity only has to be mere slave. Aside from a substitution for names of the blacks, the term is often used to remind the blacks where their place is in society. Apparently the word gives the whites more confidence when they have to control the servants. It tells them how well they exploit the slaves under the control of the whites.

It is also a type of possessiveness because it gives them the power to realize that they have to submit to them as slaves. In order to preserve and support the racial hierarchy, this case can be described as racism in which someone insists on getting rid of the true identity of others. The argument about racism in racial order can be found in Frederickson (2002);

“Racism, therefore, is more than theorizing about human differences or thinking badly of a group over which one has no control. It either directly

sustains or propose to establish a racial order, a permanent group of hierarchy that is believed to reflect the laws of nature or the decrees of God.” (TGS,6)

Mary turner is voice the second racial insensitive term. It is always understood that she is obsessed with dominating the black natives as to how she always wants to take care of everything including the workers on her plantation. “She was filled with a feeling of victory.’ Dirty kaffirs!’she said to Dick.’How they smell!’” (TGS,81)

The character’s use of racially derogatory language is also demonstrated in the conversation between Mary and Dick Turner. Mary loosely uses the word ‘kaffir’ in her about the worker on the farm, which is known as a rather conservative racist word. It is understood that the word was used in the apartheid period by overtly racist individuals. The word ‘kaffir’ is derived from the phrase kafir in Arabic, meaning unbelievers who refer o those without faith.

However, rather than discriminating against religion, the word is considered a critical expression. Since in Rhodesia, when they are associated with the Arab slave trade on the Swahili coast, the term is adopted to refer to black non Muslim people. In English, Dutch, and eventually Africa, several variants of the phrase were then used. The word later on is used throughout the world to refer to all the black slaves living in Southern Africa, but it is commonly spelled as kaffer. In South Africa, he word is regarded as an extremely offensive racist term, particularly in this period. The ‘N’ word has the same degree of racial insensitive tendency. Instead of using the word secretly, the word is often spoken in the apartheid era by the openly racist woman, Mary Turner in this case. The use of ‘Kaffir’ has been carrying out in the South African court since about 1976. The second type of racist act committed in the novel by the characters is how they always accuse the blacks of doing something they don’t even do.

The common claim directed at the servants is that they are all criminals hidden in the faces of the oppressed. The expression of fear and surrender does not really influence whites to move their hearts and carry out their empathy. If anything the whites are just rolling their eyes for they see it as a front that covers their shame from being pilfered. In the novel as well the problem is stated. Mary, for example, still blames the maids for cheating, and though nothing is missing, something in the house. She still has a bad feeling about them that if she does not have their eyes on the maid absolutely; they're going to take something out of the house and hide it under their clothing.

That's why much of the time Mary feels anxious because she has strained her energy to do needless things, such as spying on the maids. However the act renders the maid unhappy because their master. They question their master with anything they do, even though they promise for their lives that they are not doing the things they are accused of doing by the master. In the discussion between Mary and Dick below the problem is perfectly illustrated,

“She knew there have been enough raisins put out for the pudding, but when they came to eat it, there were hardly any. And they boy denied stealing them. ‘Good heavens,’ said Dick, amused, ‘I thought there was something really wrong.’ ‘But I know he took them,’ sobbed Mary. ‘He probably did, but he’s a good old swine on the whole.’ ‘I am going to take it out of his wage.’” (TGS,67)

It can be seen from the conversation that, since some of them were missing, Mary accuses the maid of stealing the food. She would then start locking all the cupboards in the home. She actually assumes that when they realize no one is watching, they can take everything on their margin. As a means of prevention, she starts taking extra moments to hold in mind what

the blacks are doing. On the other hand, Dick doesn't really put it in mind because he sort of needs to hold the maid in a decent relationship, because if the maid wants to leave at the end, it's hard to find one.

Therefore, he also makes sure that Mary does not do something dumb for them, leading to the maid's departure. If anything the servants feel embarrassed by the manner in which Mary behaves around them. It is like Mary keeps her radar constantly on the suspected offenders who live in her home. Many of them wanted to leave their job one by one because of the unjust treatment and false allegations they got for the poor treatment they received from Mary. Another awful care based on the blind accusations of Mary for the maids is how she still reduces her pay because she is unhappy with the work of the maid. Mary simply exploits her status as the one who, without the maids' concern, holds the power to handle and determine everything. If she gives them very little wage that does not satisfy their hard work, it is a type of poor work situation, and for some reason the wage is often cut over something they do not even do. If she feels dissatisfied with the work of the maids or if she really feels like it, she does it. It can be understood from the novel that even though the black maids wanted to quit their work, Mary continues to make an unfounded allegation.

White Supremacy and prejudice are the myths that are used to analyse this book. The theory of white supremacy is a big aid to find out and learn how the narrative description of the novel portrays unequal treatment as well as prejudice. Although the theory of racism facilitates the simple interpretation of the racial insensitive acts that occurs largely in the novel's conversations. The link between the black Afrikaans and the white masters, the author attempts to resolve the racism problem through white supremacy. Mary Turner, Dick Turner, Charlie Slatter and Tony as white people and black natives, in particular the one named Moses, are the

main focus of the relationship. It also depicts how and vice versa, the white masters behave with the native slaves.

The relationship is analyzed using the theory of white supremacy to show that there are three white supremacy behaviours that are apparent in the relationship, namely: dominance activity that is mainly found in the relationship between Mary and black natives, distinct philosophy that can be found primarily in the relationship between Dick Turner, Charlie Slatter and Tony with the black natives, and unfair policy that can be found .Then, racial discriminatory acts can be listed and unraveled from these white supremacy activities.

In most of the discussions with or about the black natives, the racist actions in the novel are also vividly seen. It is impossible to deny that the acts are the results of white supremacy in the relationship between the two races. With Racism theory, the racial insensitive actions in this novel are analyzed to provide the proof of the said unpleasant behavior. In the book, more than a few racist acts are discovered in the form of the use of racial offensive terms, blind claims, hurtful remarks on physical characteristics, disproportionate acts, and the making of objects associated with that race. Thus the study aims to offer some ideas about the relationship between black natives and white people and how the connection governs and shapes the conduct philosophy, and policy of society that is filled with prejudice towards those who are oppressed.

Chapter three

Exploring identification and truth

The debut novel of Doris Lessing, *The Grass Is Singing* (1950), is considered a masterpiece of English literature in the twentieth century. In the late 1940s, the action of the novel is set in Rhodesia in South Africa, a masterpiece of social and political realism in the post-colonial era. The novel is set in a colonised environment and deals with the problems of the colour bar and its devastating effects on the marginal whites and the indigenous Africans. In post-war British literature history, Doris Lessing holds a position of singular distinction. Lessing was born on 22nd October 1919 in Iran as Doris May Tayler. From the very beginning of her writing career, Lessing, a large author, was resolute to contribute to the great tradition of realism. Her work's sheer reach, number and variety have given her a unique place among women writers of the twentieth century. Ruth Whittaker, one of the readers of Lessing's works, commented on this novel as an "extraordinary first novel in its assured treatment of its unusual subject matter. Doris Lessing questions the entire values of Rhodesian white colonial society" (88).

The Grass is singing describes the life events of Mary Turner, described in the Rhodesian veld and South Africa by colonial perception, and challenges the entire ideals of the white colonial society of Rhodesia. Lessing spins a complex text, interweaving in a colonial world the life and struggle of Mary. Lessing depicts the consequences of a world under migration in vivacious descriptions, a society poisoned by the firm infrastructure of patriarchy, giving rise to biases of gender and race. During the various phases of her life, from an indigent,

miserable childhood to her unnatural death at the hand of her native houseboy, the author traces Mary's psychological development and politically exposes the futility and vulnerability of a patriarchal colonial society in the process. Lessing correctly depicts the confusion created by identity, fact, hierarchy, racism and inequality in a culture under imperialism.

The novel *The Grass is Singing* opens with a report on the murder of the heroine, Mary Turner, who has been operating a farm in Rhodesia for several months. A clear example of the context in which the story is written is the introductory paragraph of the novel. It reads as follows:

Mary Turner, the wife of Richard Turner, a farmer in Rhodesia, was found murdered yesterday morning on the front porch of their homestead. The houseboy, who was convicted, confessed to the crime. No trigger was uncovered. He is believed to have been in possession of valuables.

The two key themes in *The Grass is Singing* are the notion of superiority and the racist mentality shown by white characters. In unraveling the murder mystery, the new white Tony Marston takes a natural stance. He was closely examined as a field assistant to Dick Turners, the actions of Mary and her treatment of Moses for a few days previous to the tragedy.

The concept of how prejudice and racism are present in the racist society of Rhodesia can be unveiled here. In addition, the paper's news suggests the colonizer's imperialist mentality. Doris Lessing presents how the white people use their political influence in the novel to snatch all the black indigenous people's belongings in Rhodesia. The reader recognises that the social and political situations of the colonised people are worse and more tragic here. They are regarded as slaves, who labour to satisfy the whites' desire and desire. In her book, Doris Lessing brings the theory of social race objectively into effect, through her characters. The two

such characters are Mary Turner and Charlie Slatter, who are not scared of turning to violence and harassment to punish farm workers. The staff, in exchange, follows all their orders and conforms without challenge to the needs of the masters.

Lessing provides an in-depth view of the defective society to which Mary belonged by outlining the reactions of the British members of the society living in the district. Renowned for her strong support and involvement in women's movements, Lessing instilled in the novel a harsh critique of the patriarchal colonial structure that immobilised women denied them the right to economic freedom and to create their own identity. Lessing reveals the traditional society of Rhodesia in the sense of the character of Mary Turner, the heroine, the elements of racial and gender injustices that weakened Mary's spirit shocked her and led her to her death.

“Mary's early childhood is shaped under the pressure of an cruel father who wastes his money on drink while his family is living in despair and poverty. Her mother who is her first model of gender role: a submissive and helpless lady dominated by the crushing manly pattern nonetheless the complying sufferer of poverty”. (33)

In addition to sharing the stings of poverty and living in “a small house that was like a small wooden box on slots” (36) and her parents' struggle over cash, Mary was the witness to her sexuality and the body of her mother in the possession of a man who was clearly not there for her, in addition to sharing the stings of poverty and living in “a small house that was like a small wooden box on slots” and the struggle of her parents over money. Mary seeks to forget these reminiscences throughout her life, but in reality she has only reserved them with the fear of sexuality that comes up dreadfully shortly in her dreams. She internalises a negative image of femininity in the structure of sexual inequality by perceiving her mother as a feminine target of

a depressed marriage, taking over the sweltered feminism of her mother. In order to escape from this tragic repetition and after her mother's death, Mary finds a job as a secretary in the town at sixteen and begins a lonely life. By dropping her father, she seems "in some way to be avenging her mother's suffering and to cut herself from her past. (35)

After her father's death, her final comfort is that nothing remains to unite her with the past. She remains a girl seeking to forget her distressing memories, preferring to live in a girls' club, wearing her hair in a little-girl theme. She does not regard her shyness, childishness and detachment as weakness; she is indifferent to them as a matter of fact. But then in her life, as she listens to her intimate friends about her age and marriage, a turning point approaches. She is surprised to hear them comment that she has "something missing somewhere" (42), only because she is still unwedded, not even thirty.

It is almost a sort of departure to be thirty and single in a white colonial society. Her personal status is a cause for apprehension, compounded by her alertness that public analysis is subject to her peculiarities. She marries the first man capable of offering her an appropriate way out of Dick Turner with intense anxiety. Equally insufficient is Dick's inspiration. Lacking Self-knowledge, in its tenderly idealised form, he craves marriage as a way of satisfying a collection of expectations generated socially. Dick and Mary Turner only have their criteria in common, although similar in their sentimental flatness, though they are worlds apart, sensitively. The only common point between the two, who have different personalities, different perspectives and different backgrounds, is isolation.

Although Mary "loved the city and felt safe there," (50) Dick dislikes the culture of the city. He enjoys spending much of his time on his farm, becoming a farmer. Dick still remains hard in his farm work after marriage, going in the morning, returning late in the evening and

retiring to bed at once after supper. Mary and Dick's sexual relationship is also not quite fair. Even sex does not get them closer; it separates them instead. Via Mary's sexual uniqueness and the distinctly inadequate sexual connection between her and Dick, the narrator explains this failure:

“It was not so bad, when it was all over: not as bad as that. It meant nothing to her, nothing at all. Expecting anger and imposition, she was reduced to find she felt zero. She was able tenderly to confer the gift of herself on this modest stranger, and stay untouched. women have a strange ability to take out from the sexual relationship, to protect themselves against it, in such a way that their men can be left experiencing down and insulted without having anything touchable to complain of. Mary did not have to learn this, because she had expected nothing in the first place”. (55)

Not only does Mary's marriage show her helplessness to overcome her sexual bigotry, but also her inability to escape from her class. “She feels weak and dissatisfied as if “her father sent his will from his seriousness and energised her back into the kind of life he had made her Mother, Go Forward (54). She sees her marriage being accompanied by the insufficiency and narrowness of her family's life. Poverty that Mary has always wanted to run from her tracks in her illness Marriage matched.

In his work *The Novelistic Vision of Doris Lessing: Splitting the Modes of Consciousness*, Roberta Rubenstein correctly observes that the novel *The Grass is*

Singing’questions’about with being female in the world of a conventional individual, social, economic and political system. The Marriage State of Mary is:

“The women who marry Dick study sooner or later that there are two things they can do: they can make themselves mad, tear themselves into parts in storms of useless anger and rebellion; or they can hold themselves tight and go bitter. Mary with the recollection of her own mother returning more and more normally, like an older, sarcastic double of herself walking at the side of her, followed the track her upbringing made unavoidable” (110).

However, the distance between the two keeps on widening. On Dick’s rustic farm, Mary, used to the area, does not feel at home. She meets the servant from the black home, Samson. She disgusts Dick because of his kindness to Samson, which she unjustifiably senses. She takes the household’s strength, being so resentful of Samson that he eventually offers his acceptance. Tensions are growing between Mary and Dick, as her squandering of precious water and lack of interest in sex aggravates him. She meets Charlie Slatter and his partner, but dislikes them, finding them patronising. Like Mary’s iron fist, the Turners cycle through one black house servant after another, it moves them away.

Dick is involved in an ill-fated project to run a bee farm, and Mary starts tomorrow believe that as he lets on, he is not almost as successful as a farmer. Then he plans to open a shop for native black Rhodesians, the kaffirstore. Mary is disgusted with her clients and the shop is doing badly. Dick is planning to grow chickens, turkeys, and then rabbits for more failed business ventures. She discovers that when he finally goes bankrupt, Charlie Slatter wants to buy Dick’s farm, and runs off to the city to try to get her old job back.

But after her old employer rejects her and she is unable to pay her hotel bill, Mary discovers that her old life is gone forever. She is going home. Soon after, malaria affected Dick. Mary is forced to take care of him and to handle the native staff she fears and hates. But Mary discovers that she likes to be in control as the weeks pass, but the staff grow aggrieved by her demands. When one, man named Moses, refuses to continue working and Mary attacks him, this argument comes to head. She's worried that he's going to strike her back, so he leaves to work again. After Dick gets stronger, Mary presents him with her views on how to run the farm resourcefully. For Mary, he feels high opinion, but also guilt, and above all, anguish and indignation that her tobacco farming plans inevitably end up moving to the area. Mary leaves Dick to farm, but their first tobacco crop is destroyed by a drought.

Particularly after Dick tells her they can't have the investment to have a child, Mary becomes discouraged. After Dick asks Mary to see the farm with him, because of his ineffectiveness, she understands they will never be good. She sees Moses, the worker she hit in the face, and is torn apart by the shame of her actions, the deceitfulness of her muscular body, and the hatred of her race. She is, in particular, dismissive of Moses, but without protest he believes her harsh word. But eventually, Moses proclaims that at the end of the month he will leave. She asks him to stay, and he agrees unwillingly. She continues to dream of the body of Moses. She instigates Moses, frightened by her own unconscious thoughts, to stop him.

Gossip starts to go around Mary and Dick's local area, both of whom have started to lose their marbles. Charlie Slatter, who hasn't seen the pair for the last two years, is paying a visit .Mary, like a young child, is slim and unsuitedly dressed. Slatter tells Dick to take Mary on a trip and sell his farm, hoping that as land manager he will carry on. Dick agrees, although his wound is visible. In Dick's absence, Slatter hires Martson to run the farm. Marston is surprised

by the mental state of Mary, by the physical deterioration of Dick, and by the rotting farm. He sees Moses and Mary helping with her, Wear, in a position like Rhodesia, a friendly act considered to be tabu. Marston arranges for Moses to leave, throwing Mary into a rage. The Turners are going to leave the next day for a holiday.

The next day, Mary awakes and goes about her farm duties in a kind of daydream, knowing that Moses is waiting somewhere on the farm. She thinks the grass is humming, and when she leaves, the farm will be caught by the trees and animals. Ultimately, she walks through the farm, meeting Marston, whom she imagines to be Dick. She tells him that, in her heart, she's sick, and she's always been. She's moving back to that building. Dick tells her to pack for her journey, but Mary has the feeling that she's waiting to die. She goes to bed alone, but outside she's taken up by thunder, and a feeling that Moses is close. She goes to the veranda and sees Moses approaching. She wonders if she can make herself clear, but faster than she can absolute a word, Moses stabs her to death. She's dead. Moses is cleaning his rifle. He agrees that when the body is identified he won't claim to be innocent. The ultimate outcome must come with the final win.

The novel sheds light on how colonialism and politicised race, culture and gender accepted the patriarchal family construction to achieve their desired results. The colonisers successfully denied them an organisation by declining race, culture and women, a voice by which they could express their identities and a sense of self, an activity that considered them delicate and easy prey to suppression. The inequality of gender and race in the life of Mary Turner is the main force behind the predicament of alienation. In her life, an unhappy marriage led to total disintegration. Ultimately, the massive gulf that was created in their conjugal lives caused her to believe that she was separating from her husband. Lessing moving deep into the

human mind shows that it is never possible to compensate for this vast gulf between individual understandings. Through the relationship between Mary and her black slave Moses, portrayed as the ambassador of patriarchal society in this novel, this dark gulf is again evident in racial discrimination.

The black slave, Moses, murdered Mary to take vengeance on both the white and the opposite sex. As her identity is exacerbated by the overwhelming patriarchal and gender constructs in which she is involved, Mary Turner is unable to take care of her own identity. She's trying hard to find a sense of self-an identity without the colonial culture's impact. By eventual death, Mary bursts through the walls of patriarchal and colonial culture, freeing her from all terms and conditions that existed in her society. Thus, Mary is the only target of a patriarchal society's threat. Lessing gracefully explains how the novel's protagonist suffered and was dishonestly killed in the whirlwind of gender and race.

In her book, Doris Lessing suggests that in order to exercise their creative capacity, the people of the post-colonial world of Rhodesia need social, political, financial and psychological freedom. They need people in a group who recognise and accept their social and political identity. The representative examples of contemporary British and African Society are Mary and Moses in the book. In addition, to claim their own individual human identity, the people of Rhodesia need a culture, a language, and economic and intellectual freedom.

Chapter four

Racial politics between the characters

Characterization is a literary device that is used step-by-step in literature to highlight and explain the details about a character in a story. It is in the initial stage in which the writer introduces the character with noticeable emergence. After introducing the character, the writer often talks about his behaviour; then and the story progresses, the thought-processes of the character. The next stage involves the character expressing his opinions and ideas, and getting into conversations with the rest of the characters. The final part shows how others in the story respond to the character's personality.

Doris Lessing's novel *The Grass is Singing* is based on the story of Mary Turner who was a victim of opposing forces within herself, as well as victim of the male dominated society. She is a strong-willed, autonomous, and extraordinarily feminist woman who resents having to live on someone else's terms. The most important cause of controversy in Mary's life, however, is her treatment of indigenous people. Mary's discrimination is particularly extreme and brutal, even for a white South African, for reasons that are never fully explained. Mary is unable to adjust to the hardness of her chosen life. She defies unspoken social standards. She is unable to reunite her real feelings with the feelings she has been conditioned to have. Her avoidance has led her to become distant from others. She is powerless, and Mary's insanity gradually becomes more violent and striking, until she is brutally murdered by a black servant. She was an innocent victim who had committed no crime. Mary Turner, on the other hand, has become a misfit in society and is unable to mantle herself according to male society's desires, so she must die. She

became a threat to male society by refusing to play the part that society had assigned to them. As a result, in the male ideological theater, they became victims of masculine power.

After her family's battle with poverty during her youth, Mary Turner develops into an independent young woman in *The Grass is Singing*. She gets a job in an office and stays in a girls' hostel, despite the fact that she is not in a serious relationship. She was happy before she overheard her friends remarking on her age, the fact that she hasn't married, and the fact that she dresses too young. Her universe, which she created after much effort, is now unbalanced. She tries to change herself as well as look for a husband as a result of the incident. Soon after, she marries Dick Turner, a struggling farmer, and the two of them leave the city for a life of loneliness and poverty on the village farm. The weight of societal standards and rituals effectively forces Mary Turner into marriage.

Mary fights a losing battle to retain her own identity following her marriage to Dick. But she quickly learns that marriage would not be the life-affirming experience she had hoped for. Dick is incompetent and unfocused, the weather is oppressive, and Mary's relationships with the black laborers, both at home and in the fields, are strained. Meanwhile, her pride prevents her from forming any kind of relationship with her neighbors, especially Charlie Slatter and his wife, who eventually abandon any attempts at friendship. Mary's spiritual state degrades slowly and profoundly over time, to the point that she tries to leave the farm and return to her life in the city only to discover that it has gone on without her, and she is no longer welcome there. She doesn't have a choice but to go back to her marriage.

Mary's initial attitudes against blacks are a case of apartheid Africa's overall mindset. Native Americans were regarded as no more valuable than animals by the white community, and a love affair between races was considered a crime. Mary and Moses were in this situation. The white woman was well aware that something strange and unethical was taking place between them, but she had little influence over it. She seemed to be so lonely and lost living in the middle of the prairie day and night that she fell in love with her only companion: the black servant. Moses is the same worker who was punished by Mary two years ago. Mary's fear of being threatened or respond against has stayed with her since that time. But, most importantly, there is a sexual desire between her and Moses. Mary is fascinated by his strong, well-built physique. Since Mary, who had previously seen the natives as inferior beings "no better than a dog," now sees Moses as a man, the formal patterns of black-and-white, mistress-and-servant have been broken "by the personal connection."

Mary Turner is a woman who is unable to understand the structure of her culture due to colonial and ethnic prejudices. Her death seems to be the only way to reunite her contradictory impulses and those of the white colonialists. She is a 'outcast' in colonial Africa.

"Class" is not a South African word; and its equivalent, "race," meant to her the office boy in the firm where she worked, other women's servants, and the amorphous mass of natives in the streets, whom she hardly noticed. She knew that the natives were getting "cheeky." But she had nothing to do with them really. They were outside her orbit. (65)

Mary Turner's husband is Dick Turner. Dick was born in the bounds of Johannesburg and qualified as a veterinarian before buying a small farm with the aid of a government grant. Dick is a decent man who is kind and principled, according to Mary, but he is an extremely inefficient farmer. Many people, including Dick, believe his failures are due to bad luck, and some of Dick's neighbors have given him the nickname "Jonah," which sailors use to refer to anyone who brings bad luck to a ship (after the Biblical character Jonah, who was swallowed by a whale). However, as the novel progresses, it becomes clear that much of Dick's "bad luck" is actually the result of his irrational fantasies and poor farm decisions. Toward the end of the novel, Dick becomes weak and is often sick, a physical manifestation of his weak will. After Mary is murdered, Dick goes mad. Dick is a failure as a farmer, and the reader is revealed evidence of his vain efforts to benefit from the land that is his to harvest in the book. Charlie Slatter is just what the discourse says and wants him to be: logical, focused, and competitive, and thus a good colonist. Dick, on the other hand, possesses many of the characteristics associated with black people, which should never be associated with a British coloniser. He is irrational, unsuccessful, and without the opportunity to improve his financial situation or social standing.

Whereas Charlie Slatter and his companion regard their land solely as property, Dick Turner, on the other hand, views it in a more romantic and idealistic light: "he loved it and was a part of it." He wants to not only take from the ground, but also to look after it. Dick is not behaving rationally in contrast to his neighbor Slatter when it comes to making a profit. This unconventional and unsuccessful strategy can also be seen in the way he keeps changing his

mind on what the farm's main priority and source of income should be. This is demonstrated in the passage where the reader sees Dick control from beekeeping to raising pigs to raising rabbits, as well as opening a kaffir store. This is irrational, and as a result, it is not the way of a good coloniser or a prosperous farmer.

Furthermore, unlike Charlie Slatter, Dick cannot simply use the land and its soil until it is no longer fertile and therefore useless for farming. Dick is conscious of his control of the property. For example, there are no trees on Charlie Slatter's property because they take up space and land that could be put to better use. On the other side, Dick Turner's farm has a hundred acres of planted trees. All of his unreasonable searching is in search of that one special thing that will allow him to prosper from his farm and raise Mary and him out of poverty.

One can say that this hunt for profit makes Dick blind to the fact that sticking with an idea or focusing on merely one crop will solve his problems, something that is obvious to the other characters of the novel and can be seen in Mary's futile attempts to try to convince Dick to give the growing of tobacco, something that in general was very profitable, more than one season. Dick's pride on the subject of borrowing capital is, in many ways, what prevents him from giving tobacco growing a real chance, as well as from improving his and Mary's financial situation. Dick saves money by taking shortcuts rather than making a large investment in his designs. As a result, he will never be a good farmer. Dick is undisturbed about Mary and Moses' friendship, while Tony Martson, a newcomer, sees the attraction and repulsion between the two.

Dick's unreasonable behavior demonstrates to both white and black audiences that the gap between the black community and the dominant white best might not be as great as it seems. Lessing makes it clear to the reader in *The Grass is Singing* that this is something that white

culture is always afraid that the black community will understand. Moses is a native who received his education at a missionary school. Dick employs him as a farm worker, and he has a broad, muscular physique. When Mary takes over as farm overseer during Dick's first illness, she hits Moses across the face with a sambok for what she perceives to be rudeness. Despite the fact that Moses is not necessarily mean, he is unafraid of Mary and refuses to follow the social conventions that regulate relationships between natives and white settlers. We learn very little about Moses' personal life, but it seems that, perhaps as a result of his education, he is painfully conscious of colonialism's injustices and ready to challenge white people. Although the relationship he establishes with Mary toward the end of the novel tends to be friendly, it is never made clear why Moses treats someone who has treated him so poorly with such kindness. He meets Mary on the veranda at the end of the novel and stabs her to death. He waits until morning, when he turns himself in under a nearby tree; while we never discover his fate, the other characters say he will almost certainly be hanged.

In *The Grass is Singing*, both of the characters have complicated and confusing relationships with one another. These bonds are certainly characterized by feelings of both intimacy and hate, which, rather than canceling each other out, coexist, resulting in intense conflict and confusion. The partnership between Mary and Moses is the most important example of this. Mary has a severely racist, cruel attitude toward all black people, and treats the black farm employees in a brutal manner. She is especially antagonistic toward Moses, constantly insulting him and forcing him to perform an endless series of pointless tasks. At the same time, Mary is also fascinated by Moses, a fascination that she will not allow herself to openly acknowledge.

Mary has a deeply racist and inhuman mentality toward all black people, and she is cruel to the black farm workers. She is particularly aggressive toward Moses, relentlessly bullying him and pressuring him to complete a never-ending list of meaningless tasks. At the same time, Mary is fascinated by Moses, an obsession that she refuses to accept. Mary has been forcing Moses to assist her with intimate tasks like getting ready, leading Tony and Charlie to assume Mary and Moses are sleeping together at the end of the book. Though Moses' feelings toward Mary are not mentioned directly, his resentful and bold attitude toward her shows his hate. At the same time, he can't get away from the closeness of the master/servant relationship that ties him to her. The coexistence of deep love and animosity eventually reaches an explosive climax when Moses murders Mary. This implies that, while the intimacy-hatred dynamic is inherent in a colonial society, it is unsustainable and will inevitably explode into abuse.

Mary and Moses' relationship is far from the only one marked by intimacy and hatred. Mary's relationship with her husband, Dick, is similarly ambivalent, mirroring and differing from her relationship with Moses. Dick, like Moses, is obedient to Mary's wishes, even though they are incompatible with his own. Mary has more love and admiration for Dick than for Moses, but she is sexually revolted by him and regrets marrying him. When Mary becomes increasingly cruel and stubborn, and Dick becomes weakened due to poverty and sickness, the early intimacy in Mary and Dick's relationship turns to hate. Although Dick recovers from his illness, Mary has a dream in which he is dead, implying that a part of her wishes this were true, and that their relationship, like Mary's with Moses, is too emotionally turbulent to survive. The mixture of intimacy and hate is shown to lead to death once more first symbolically, then literally.

Mary is disgusted by more than just her intimacy with Dick. Mary seems to dislike the notion of physical intimacy, and the narrator points out that she has never touched a native African before Moses pushes her. Mary's intense aversion to physical contact is clarified in part by dreams in which she is sexually assaulted by her father. When Mary has a dream that Dick has died, the comforting figure of Moses transforms into Mary's father, who is "menacing and terrible, who touched her with lust." As a result, she comes to hate anybody who comes into close proximity to her, and she even despises seeing moments of affection between others, such as black mothers and babies. The colonial landscape of Southern Rhodesia is characterized in a broader context by currents of affection and hatred that exist between white colonizers and black indigenous populations. Despite having a inflexible racial hierarchy, colonial societies rely on close relations between colonizers and colonized people. Indigenous women working as house servants, nannies, and prostitutes, as well as the high levels of sexual abuse committed by the settler population, are examples of these intimate moments.

All of the white characters, including Tony, who is the least prejudiced of the white characters, show racial hate to some degree. Even Tony, who is the least prejudiced of the white characters, is compelled to assimilate into the racist mentality that rules the lives of white Rhodesians. After learning that Mary is having an affair with Moses, Charlie demands that Dick whisk Mary away so that she can be separated from Moses. Despite the fact that Mary is not Charlie's wife, he claims it is his personal duty to prevent inter-racial intimacy and thus protect the colonial racial order.

Chapter Five

Summation

English literature has achieved a degree of international acclaim, not just in English-speaking countries but also in countries where English is the primary language of teaching. Also within England, the culturally and traditionally dominant partner in the union of territories that make up Britain, powerful regional writers have enriched literature as much as city writers. Another association that has been more fruitful than not for English letters has been that between social milieus, considering how often observers of Britain may have regretted the prevalence of class distinctions in their own writings. A courtly practise of literature crossed-fertilized with an earthier demotic one as early as the middle Ages. Shakespeare's frequent combination of royalty in one scene with commoners in the next represents a uniquely British perspective on society. This knowledge of the distinctions between high and low life, a state of affairs rich in artistic tensions, can be found in English literature's history.

Lessing was named the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature on October 11, 2007. She was 87 at the time of the award, making her the oldest winner of the literature prize and the third oldest Nobel Laureate in any category. In the 106-year history of the Swedish Academy, she is only the eleventh woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. She told reporters in front of her house .I have won every single prize in Europe, so I am overjoyed to have won them all. It's a royal glow, to be sure."She claimed in a 2008 interview with the BBC's Front Row that the increased media coverage that followed the award had left her with

little time to write. Alfred and Emily, her final novel, was released in 2008. Lessing died at her London home on November 17, 2013, at the age of 94.

The Grass is Singing is a strong novel that delves into a variety of important subjects, including interpersonal relationships, power struggles, and the repercussions of racism. The novel is set in Southern Rhodesia and portrays the lives of the people who lived there under the country's white rule. The novel was Lessing's first, and it helped propel her to literary fame. Her mastery and extent of treatment of desire, motivation, and need in individuals, societies, and even nations is impressive. The story revolves around Mary Turner's life events. The reader is aware from Chapter One that Mary, a self-assured woman, has been murdered by her house servant, Moses, who has confessed and been arrested. He is awaiting trial and will be put to death for his crime. The narrator describes how Mary and her husband, Dick Turner, came to be unloved by "the district, "the white farming group they were a part of, as a result of this surprising discovery.

Despite the fact that they are hated for a number of motives, it is suggested that some of these reasons which are in fact related to the murder are not addressed by anyone. This reality stimulates the reader's interest in learning more about Mary Turner and her relationship with her house servant, Moses, from the group. The story shows how Mary Turner and Dick Turner live in hopeless poverty, irritating their neighbours who worked hard to ensure that white people did not look poor or in any way resemble the hated natives. The Turners' poverty reflects poorly on the community.

This examine focuses primarily on how some individuals from a majority group see another minority group that places white people and black natives, in this case, the lowest in

society. The analysis also attempts to unravel the relationship in order to see whether white dominance practices possess it. This research would also extend the principle of white dominance in addition to theory of prejudice to examine the feeling of superiority. Frederickson said that White Dominance refers to the behaviours, ideology, and policies that relate to the dominance or power of the ancestor of European white people who in terms of number, overcome the other race. Thus the analysis aims to reveal the white dominance of the character's behaviour towards the natives, the difference of ideology, and the policies of the relationship between the two races the ones that exist.

The issue of racism is most evident when it comes to black people's subordination and how they are oppressed, insulted, and humiliated by British white people in their own country. The black servants are only regarded as slaves and savages, as embodied by the farmer's character, Dick Turner. The author's handling of the spiritual lives of her characters is more significant in this book. The female character "Mary," in particular, struggles and suffers in her relationship with the outside world as a result of her overlapping hurtful encounters and self-conscious issues. As a result, this paper will take a psychoanalytic approach to Mary's character and the factors that relate during Mary's various life stages to lead to her murder. In other words, this paper tries to apply psychoanalysis to literature. It will look at how Mary developed a psychological complex and acted on it as a result of her socio-psychological history and current suffering. In other words, the research will look into how her childhood memories, which are brought to the front and emphasised by irregular adulthood events, all add up to a tragic end to her life.

In struggling to enlarge the domain of women, feminists have to work hard to break through a great deal of fable along with pushing obvious forms of opposition. Over the years, the fable has both been preserved and undercut by literature. Without performing the acts, it would be impossible for feminists to complete the In Susan Robinov Gorsky's "Femininity to Feminism :Women and Literature In The Nineteenth Century" the American feminist and abolitionist Sarah Grimke believed that total equality between husband and wife would lead to a true relationship free of difficulties It implies that in marriage, in school, job opportunities or giving an opinion, there should be a friendliness between men and women so that they can live together in complete harmony. That to establish the natural core of life and a family, a marriage is not about living separately, but about togetherness between men and women.

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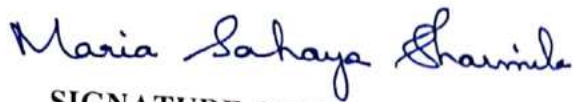
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Feminist Perspective in Roald Dahl's Matilda - A Study** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English is a work done by Pavithra. S during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.


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Feminist Perspective in Roald Dahl's *Matilda*– A Study

A project submitted to

St.Mary's College(Autonomous),

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANARUNIVERSITY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

PAVITHRA. S

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled, **Feminist Perspective in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* – A Study** submitted to St.Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to ManonmaniamSundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2021

PAVITHRA. S

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PREFACE

Roald Dahl is a fantasy writer, whose ideas are optimistic in this world. His fiction often relied on a sudden twist that threw light on what has been happening in the story and his views towards human beings shows his positive thinking.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the Children literature, Roald Dahl's achievements, awards and epigrammatic abstract of the novel *Matilda*.

The second chapter **Matilda – Child Genius and Champion for Justice** discusses the major and minor characters of the novel highlighting the genius and her concern for justice.

The third chapter **Unfurling layers of Feminism** focuses on the feminism which uncovers the struggles of womanhood in particular the struggle of Matilda and Miss Honey.

The fourth chapter **Complication and Resolution with Telekinesis** elaborates literary, narrative techniques and Telekinesis employed by Roald Dahl in the novel *Matilda*.

The fifth chapter **Summation** of all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters. Summing up the feminist perspective that is predominant in the novel.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed in MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Children's literature is any literature that is enjoyed by children. More specifically, children's literature comprises those books written and published for young people who are not interested in adult literature or who may not possess the reading skills or developmental understandings necessary for its perusal. In addition to books, children's literature also includes magazines intended for pre-adult audiences. The age range for children's literature is from infancy through the stage of early adolescence, which roughly coincides with the chronological ages of twelve through fourteen. Between that literature most appropriate for children and that most appropriate for adults lies young adult literature. Usually young adult literature is more mature in content and more complex in literary structure than children's literature. Most of the literary genres of adult literature appear in children's literature as well. Fiction in its various forms contemporary realism, fantasy, historical fiction, poetry, folk tales, legends, myths, and epics all have their counterparts in children's literature. Non-fiction for children includes books about arts and humanities; the social, physical, biological, and earth sciences; and biography and autobiography. In addition, children's books may take the form of picture books in which visual and verbal texts form an interconnected whole. Picture books for children include storybooks, alphabet books, counting books, wordless books, and concept books.

Writers of children's literature like Lewis Carroll and his *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Robert Louis Stevenson and his *Treasure Island*, and Mark Twain and his *Huckleberry Finn* stepped away from earlier productions 'strict morals and instead turned

to writing entertaining innovative works. A higher level of entertainment has been brought on by advances in technology and even more new facilities and luxuries. Now Children's literature range from historical fiction to fantasy, from fantasy to science fiction, encompassing several genres in and out of itself. As such, children love pop-up books, pre-teens have early readers, and adolescents are absorbed in graphic novels. In its range of subjects, literature has also grown enormously what once existed only for moral advancement now exists to address any number of topics ranging from environmental protection to technical progress.

Writers of Children literature include, Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962), First Lady of the United States from 1933 to 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt was a key figure in Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal policy, which helped the United States survive the Great Depression. C. S. Lewis (1898–1963), Lewis is best known for *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1965), which presents the adventures of children who play central roles in the unfolding history of the fictional realm of Narnia, a place where animals talk, magic is common and good battles evil. Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961), just as Dahl's earliest work was inspired by his experience in World War II, this American novelist's writing is largely inspired by his service in World War I. Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), This Spanish artist worked in a variety of media, including paint and ceramics, and he is often associated with the cubist art movement.

Roald Dahl (1916-1990), was a British author of novels, short stories, poems, and screenplays. He is most notable for his popular works of Children's fiction, several of which have been adapted into major films, such as *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* and *James and the Giant Peach*. Born in Llandaff, near the Welsh capital of

Cardiff, to Norwegian immigrant parents, Dahl was raised by his mother after the death of his father and sister when he was three. Dahl attended boarding school throughout childhood and joined the Public Schools Exploring Society on an expedition to Newfoundland before becoming a salesman for Shell Oil in Dar es Salaam. Dahl enlisted in the Royal Air Force in Nairobi at the start of World War II. After the war, while raising five children, Dahl began writing children's stories. Over the course of his life, he worked as a novelist, short-story writer, poet, fighter pilot, screenwriter, inventor, spy and chocolate historian.

Dahl's nineteen children's books include *James and the Giant Peach*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, Whitbread Award-winner *The Witches*, *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *George's Marvellous Medicine*, and *Matilda*, a winner of the Children's Book Award from the Federation of Children's Book Groups. Dahl was also awarded the Mystery Writers of America's Edgar Award three times. Dahl's books are widely available in illustrated editions, and several including *James and the Giant Peach*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and *Fantastic Mr. Fox* have been adapted for film. Dahl is also known for a large collection of adult short stories, including *Beware of the Dog*, *An African Story*, and several others. Dahl died on November 23, 1990 of myelodysplastic syndrome, a rare blood disorder.

James and the Giant Peach(1961), Featuring stop-motion animation and live action, this inventive adaptation of Roald Dahl's beloved children's tale follows the adventures of James (Paul Terry), an orphaned young British boy. Forced to live with his cruel aunts (Joanna Lumley, Miriam Margolyes), James finds a way out of his bleak existence when he discovers an enormous enchanted peach. After rolling into the sea inside the buoyant

fruit, James, accompanied by a crew of friendly talking insects, sets sail for New York City. While Dahl's book received great praise for the most part, *James and the Giant Peach* was also banned in some areas of the world for allegations such as sexual innuendo, profanity, racism, frightening content, and its supposed promotion of disobedience, drugs, and communism.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (1964), the book was inspired by Dahl's experiences with chocolate as a schoolboy. Cadbury would frequently send packages to schools to receive feedback on their new products. Another company, Rowntree's, would do the same. These companies became increasingly competitive and desperately tried to steal each other's trade secrets. In concurrence with this, the companies hoarded their processes. This keeping of secrets and the large, fantastical machines that the company used were the main inspiration for the story.

The Witches (1983), Dahl was partly inspired to write *The Witches* by his experiences in Norway and the United Kingdom. As a child, he spent nearly all of his summers with family in Norway. This was his favourite part of the year. Many of the stories in his memoir, *Boy*, were based on experiences from these summers. It is also said that the grandmother character in *The Witches*, who raises the main character, was inspired by Dahl's own mother. Though a perennially popular book, *The Witches* has frequently been banned. Some organizations have declared it sexist. This stems from the fact that all of the villains in the book are women, and that, according to Dahl, witches are, by definition, women. This made *The Witches* one of the most controversial major books of the 1990s. *The Witches* still received heavy praise, including three major

awards: *The New York Times* Outstanding Books Award, The Federation of Children's Book Groups Award and The Whitebread Award.

Fantastic Mr. Fox (1968), its main characters are a number of personified animals, including the Mr. Fox of the title. The story follows his adventures as he tries to outwit the farmer who lives near him. It is one of the shorter Dahl works, coming in at 96 pages. *Fantastic Mr. Fox* was inspired by Dahl's house and surroundings in Great Missenden, a village in Buckinghamshire, UK. Dahl frequently took long walks in the countryside, and was inspired by one tree, known locally as the Witch's Tree. The Witch's Tree was a 150-year-old beech. It unfortunately no longer stands. Dahl imagined that a family of very smart foxes lived in a hole beneath the tree trunk. From this, the whole story emerged. The main animals are all foxes. Other characters include badgers, moles, rats, and mice. The antagonists are all human. In typical Dahl fashion, the human characters are disgusting specimens of mankind. One is a dwarf, one is obese, and a third is grotesquely skinny. Also, their fates are left uncertain at the end of the book.

Roald Dahl's *George's Marvellous Medicine* (1981) tells, as the book's title suggests, George's story. Specifically, the book follows George as he has to deal with his cantankerous and grizzly grandmother, who terrorizes George on a relatively regular basis. When he gets the chance, George mixes up a fantastical potion of ingredients and exacts revenge on his mean grandmother who grows to an enormous size. When it was released, *George's Marvellous Medicine* received mostly positive reviews. After rating it 4 stars, a child reviewer from 'The Guardian' called the book 'so funny', 'entertaining', 'hilarious' and 'tremendous'.

Throughout his life, Roald Dahl gained acclaim as an adult short story writer. Dahl's short stories often centre specific themes, including revenge, Royal Air Force pilots, ingenuity, and black humour. Dahl's early stories centre on Royal Air Force pilots and focus on several dark aspects of World War II, depicting young men entering the battlefield and experiencing loss of limbs, friends, and sanity. In *An African Story*, a young fighter pilot writes down a story told to him by an old man. After Judson, the old man's assistant, breaks the back of the old man's dog, the old man exacts revenge on Judson, setting him up to be bitten by a black Mamba as he steals milk from a cow. In *Beware of the Dog*, Peter Williamson, a young pilot, is forced to crash-land after he loses a leg. Though his nurse tells him he is in Brighton, he begins to suspect that he is actually in France, and learns that he has been captured.

Dahl's writing style involves a great deal of humour to engage his readers. His humour and sarcasm appeal to his intended audience as children love reading funny stories with nonsense words and absurd behaviour. He normally writes from a child's perspective, on that children can familiarise themselves with. Dahl's silly character names help the reader identify with the characters personality and traits and his overuses of descriptive adjectives also give the reader a great deal of information about the character and the situation. He often uses exaggeration to make the characters seem more evil or heroic. He believes that all good books need to have a mixture of nasty people you loathe and some nice people. Dahl writes from a modern-day fairy tale world, particularly focusing on the magical world, one that excites young children and draws them in to explore. He likes to twist and invent words and play around with the sentence structure in an attempt to get words to sound exactly as they are written in an attempt to immerse the reader in the

story. He uses poetry, similes, metaphors, alliteration and puns that entices the reader and adds to his writing. Personification is often used in Dahl's stories also, to transform characters, mainly animals, into human-like forms or vice-versa, with a mind of their own and where they can speak like real humans. Dahl also quite often portrays the image of children in books, 'better' than adults, giving children space for imagination into a world like this.

He received many awards, including Edgar Allan Poe Mystery Writers of America award in 1953, 1959 and 1980, Federation of Children's Book Groups award in 1983, Whitbread award in 1983, World Fantasy Convention award in 1983, and Federation of Children's Book Groups award in 1989.

Roald Dahl's *Matilda* well – loved classic tale. The novel was published in 1988, and has received awards for its distinctive plot and characters. Matilda Wormwood is a young girl who is extraordinarily brilliant. At a young age, she can solve complex maths problems in her head and read books meant for adults. Unfortunately, Matilda has grown up with parents who do not give her the attention and love she deserves. Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood and their son, Michael, are quite different from Matilda, preferring to watch television than read books. They do not understand her, and often treat her badly. Rather than feel hopeless, Matilda plays tricks on her family to get back at them for the way they treat her, replacing her father's hair tonic with platinum hair dye and using a parrot to convince them that their house is haunted. These tricks give Matilda some agency, and distract her parents from mistreating her.

Matilda starts school late for a girl her age, and is placed in the lowest form in Crunchem Hall Primary School. Matilda's teacher, Miss Honey, is a wonderful, sweet

woman, and she immediately recognizes Matilda's intelligence and seeks to move her into the highest form, where she can maximize her potential. Unfortunately, though, Crunchem Hall is run by a terrible woman named Miss Trunchbull. She is massive and muscular, having been a former Olympic athlete for Britain. She absolutely loathes children and treats the students horribly, keeping them in line with terrible punishments such as the 'Chokey', a thin closet with walls made of nails where students have to stand straight up for hours when they misbehave.

Miss Trunchbull will not move Matilda to the highest form, so Miss Honey keeps her in her class, giving her advanced books to study while the rest of the class learns basic lessons. She does her best to nurture Matilda's mind and allow her to learn new things. Meanwhile, Matilda quickly befriends the other students in school and learns about the ways they resist Miss Trunchbull's terror. The peak of Miss Trunchbull's horrible antics is reached when she calls a school-wide assembly, and makes a boy named Bruce Bogtrotter eat an entire giant chocolate cake on his own in front of everyone as punishment for stealing a slice of hers. To her surprise he does it without getting sick or quitting, a small victory for the students against her.

Miss Trunchbull comes into Miss Honey's class for one period each Thursday to take over, and she terrorizes the students with difficult math and spelling questions and punishes them with physical abuse when they cannot answer. Matilda's friend Lavender, seeking to get revenge on Miss Trunchbull, sticks a large newt in her drinking glass, sending Miss Trunchbull into frenzy. Miss Trunchbull blames Matilda for placing the newt there, even though she did not do it, and Matilda gets so angry that a peculiar

sensation of power comes over her and she manages to knock the water glass over with her mind, pouring the newt onto Miss Trunchbull's bosom.

Matilda is awed and frightened by her newfound power, and when she demonstrates it for Miss Honey, the teacher invites her back to her cottage to talk. Matilda is mystified when she sees Miss Honey's cottage, a tiny, sparse place hardly fit for living. Miss Honey reveals her life story to Matilda: her parents died when she was young, leaving her in the care of her cruel aunt, who has bullied her and forced her to work ever since. This terrible aunt takes nearly every cent of Miss Honey's salary, so she cannot afford to live anywhere but this tiny shack. At last, Miss Honey reveals who this aunt actually is: Miss Trunchbull.

Matilda comes up with a plan to get back at Miss Trunchbull and help Miss Honey. She hones her power until she can make objects move in the air at her will, and then the following week when Miss Trunchbull comes in to teach their class, she has the chalk move on its own and write an ominous message to Miss Trunchbull. Miss Trunchbull believes that the message has come from Magnus, Miss Honey's deceased father. Panicked, she disappears, moving out of his house and leaving Crunchem Hall.

When Magnus's will mysteriously appears, it is revealed that his house belonged to Miss Honey all along, as do his life savings. She moves in immediately, and Matilda is a frequent visitor. Under the new head teacher, Matilda is moved up to the highest form, where she finds that because her mind is challenged with hard work, she has lost the ability of telekinesis. She discusses this with Miss Honey but decides she does not mind that it is gone.

When she returns home that day she sees her parents and brother in frenzy, packing up to move to Spain because her father has finally been caught for being involved with criminals who sell stolen cars. Miss Honey offers to adopt Matilda so she can stay and live with her, and Matilda's parents, who never truly cared about her, agree to the plan.

Chapter Two

Matilda – Child Genius And Champion For Justice

Characterization is a literary device that is used step-by-step in literature to underline and explain the details about a character in a story. It is in the initial stage in which the writer introduces the character with noticeable appearance. After introducing the character, the writer often talks about his performance; then and then the story progresses, the thought-processes of the character. The next stage involves the character expressing his opinions, ideas and getting into conversations with the rest of the characters. The final part shows how others in the story react to the character's personality.

Roald Dahl's characters mostly have originality, bravery and selflessness. His books help the children discover the wonders of science. He wanted the kids to enjoy his books. He also wrote about hilarious things. Some of his books are *Matilda*, *Charlie and the Chocolate factory*, *James and the Giant Peach*. People thought his books were so superior and they also made movies out of his book. Roald Dahl begins the novel by introducing about parents. Most parents will brag about their children no matter what they do, even if the child is not actually deserving of praise. However there are also parents who do the opposite, showing little interest in their children. This is the case with Mr. and Mrs. Wormwood, who see their daughter, Matilda, as "nothing more than a scab" (M 4), even though they dote their eldest son, Michael. This is particularly bad, because Matilda is a genius, and most of the parents would have been in awe of her mind. By the age of one and a half, she could talk perfectly, much better than most adults. She had taught herself to read when she was three, but her parents would never buy her a

book because they felt that television was much more important. Around this age, Matilda had been left alone at home all day while her brother was at school, her father at work, and her mother at Bingo.

Matilda was an extensive reader, she could also read quickly. One day she went to the public library, and the librarian, Mrs. Phelps, pointed out to the children's section to find a book to read. After this, she went to the library every afternoon to read, and soon made her way through every book in the children's section. Astonished, Mrs. Phelps suggested some adult books for her, starting with Charles Dickens *Great Expectations*. Matilda has been reading books in the library for six months, before Mrs. Phelps eventually tells her that she can borrow books and take them home.

Did you know, Mrs Phelps said, 'that public libraries like this allow you to borrow books and take them home?

'I didn't know that, 'Matilda said. 'Could I do it?'

'Of course, 'Mrs Phelps said. 'When you have chosen the book you want, bring it to me so I can make a note of it and it's yours for two weeks. You can take more than one if you wish (M 13).

After she understands this, she visits only once a week to take out books to take home with her. She loved books because she could escape into them.

Mr Wormwood was a small ratty-looking man whose front teeth stuck out underneath a thin ratty moustache. He liked to wear jackets with large brightly coloured checks and he sported ties that were usually yellow or pale green. 'Now take mileage for instance,' he went on. (M 17).

Matilda's father, Mr. Wormwood is a car dealer. His success is based on cheating his customers in a number of ways, such as selling them older, less functional cars, but pushing them up in a way that makes them look better than they really are, so that he can get more money out of the sale. Matilda is at times mischievous and naughty. The family eats every meal in front of the Television, and Matilda is not allowed to read her books during the meal. This, along with everything else, drives Matilda to its edge, and one day she tries to somehow get back to her parents for not caring for her.

Matilda has been neglected and mistreated by her parents since her childhood. Mrs. Wormwood often berates her daughter for her special abilities. Matilda's intellect is not respected or promoted at home, which is one of the most serious issues she faces. As a result of her mistreatment by adults, she starts to punish her parents. For her first trick, she takes the hat of her father wears to work each day and lines it with superglue. He puts it on and he has not realise that he is stuck to his head until he gets home in the evening and tries to take it off. Mr. Wormwood believes that Matilda has done something but Matilda plays innocent, and Mrs. Wormwood says she thinks that Mr. Wormwood mistakenly did it when he tried to stick the feather back to his hat. When the hat is still does not loosen up by the next morning, Mrs. Wormwood is attempting to break it off from his head. Some of his hair comes off, and a few bits of brown hat also stick to his forehead. "All in all it was a most satisfactory exercise" (M 31). Matilda is very satisfied with her performance.

Then one night he comes back from work, clearly in a sour mood, and snaps at Matilda for choosing to read a book instead of watching television. He tears the pages of her book and drops them in the trash can, which makes her shocked and frustrated,

because it is a library book and it doesn't belong to her. Although Matilda is incredibly angry, she knows that the best way to deal with this is to get back to him with a plan in mind, Matilda goes down to her friend Fred's house the next day to investigate his talking parrot, wondering if it talks as well as he says it does. The parrot's voice does indeed sound just like a human's, but he can only say "Hello and Rattle my bones!" (M 37). Matilda decides that this is enough for her reason, and gives Fred all her pocket money to lend the parrot to her for only one night.

Once home, she wedges the parrot's cage up the chimney so it cannot be seen. That evening, as the family is eating dinner in front of the television, the parrot begins to speak. It says "Hello, hello, hello" (M 39) over and over again, and Matilda's mother panics because she thinks burglars are in the house. She insists that Matilda's father go check, but he is afraid, so he drags the rest of the family with him. Unsurprisingly, they find no one, but the parrot begins to say 'Rattle my bones'. Matilda guesses aloud that it is a ghost, and proclaims that the room is haunted. The family runs out of the house in fright, and the next day Matilda is able to take the grumpy, sooty parrot down from the chimney and return him to Fred. Matilda takes satisfaction in the fact that her punishments seem to work, for a little while, at making her parents more bearable to be around. But it does not last.

Matilda was intelligent and quick in guising big figures. After a day of work, Mr. Wormwood asks Matilda's brother to fetch a pad and paper to add up some figures, since he will be joining his father's car sales business when he is older and will need to know these things. He lists how many cars he sold that day, stating both the price he bought them for and the price he sold them for, and asks his son to figure out his final total

profit. In hardly a blink of an eye, Matilda answers, getting the number exactly right. “You’re a little cheat, madam, that’s what you are! A cheat and a liar!” (M 49) This rattles her father, who calls her a liar and a cheat.

Matilda unscrewed the cap of her father’s OIL OF VIOLETS and tipped three-quarters of the contents down the drain. Then she filled the bottle up with her mother’s PLATINUM BLONDE HAIR-DYE EXTRA STRONG. She carefully left enough of her father’s original hair tonic in the bottle so that when she gave it a good shake the whole thing still looked reasonably purple. She then replaced the bottle on the shelf above the sink, taking care to put her mother’s bottle back in the cupboard. So far so good (M 53).

Matilda knows her father needs a different punishment. She takes her mother’s platinum blonde hair dye from her bathroom cupboard, which her mother uses to keep her thick black hair bright and strong and pours some of it into her father’s bottle of tonic hair. Matilda was listening to his father in the morning as he’s doing it and he’s clearly oblivious that much is wrong with him. Then he comes to the kitchen to eat his breakfast, and Matilda’s mother screams when she sees her husband, his hair that is now a dirty silver colour. She insists her husband must have dyed it and Matilda suspects that her father unwittingly took Mrs. Wormwood’s bottle of hair dye off the shelf instead of his own tonic. They all tell him to wash his hair fast or it might start falling out, since peroxide is a powerful chemical. Matilda plays naive, and her mother assures her that she will discover, when she grows older, that men are not as smart as they believe they are.

Matilda enters school for the first time at age five-and-a-half, significantly later than most children begin primary school because her parents had not bothered to make arrangements until now. Her school is a bleak brick building called Crunchem Hall Primary School, famous for its unforgiving headmistress, a large middle-aged woman named Miss Trunchbull. Matilda is assigned to the lowest class since she has never been to school before, and her teacher is a young woman named Miss Jennifer Honey.

Miss Honey could not have been more than twenty-three or twenty-four. She had a lovely pale Madonna face with blue eyes and her hair was light-brown. Miss Jennifer Honey was a mild and quiet person who never raised her voice and was seldom seen to smile, but there is no doubt she possessed that rare gift for being adored by every small child under her care (M 60).

Miss Honey is pretty, slim, and extremely quiet, and she is universally loved by every child she teaches. Miss Trunchbull, however, is the exact opposite: huge and formidable, fierce, and a monster to the pupils in her school, ploughing through them in the hallways and shouting at them like an army sergeant. On the first day, Miss Honey warns her class about Miss Trunchbull, telling them to behave themselves in her presence because she is very serious about discipline. Miss Honey begins the first lesson by asking if anyone knows the two-times table already. Matilda is the only one, and she recites it perfectly, going far beyond what Miss Honey expected her to. She multiplies large sums in her head, like two times four hundred and eighty-seven. Matilda reveals that she also knows all the other tables by heart. Miss Honey is stunned, and asks Matilda if it was her

parents who taught her to multiply so adeptly. Matilda says no, and cannot explain how she knows how to do it her mind just does the maths instantly.

Miss Honey is baffled, believing she has found a child mathematical prodigy. She probes Matilda's mind more, asking her to read long, complex sentences, and Matilda informs Miss Honey that there are few things she cannot read, even if she does not always understand the meanings. Miss Honey has her read aloud from a book of limericks. Matilda reads it perfectly, and reveals that she has been making up a limerick in her head about Miss Honey while they have been speaking. It compliments Miss Honey on her beautiful face, and she blushes when the whole class agrees that it is true. Matilda tells Miss Honey about the books she has read in the public library, saying that Dickens is her favourite. When class breaks for interval, Miss Honey goes straight to Miss Trunchbull's study to tell her that Matilda must be moved up to a higher class. Dahl takes awhile to describe Miss Trunchbull's appearance; she was once a famous athlete, so her bulky muscles are evident and imposing. She wears strange clothes that are not suited to the school's headmistress. When Miss Honey mentions Matilda Wormwood, Miss Trunchbull says that she knows and loves her father because she sold her a car just the day before. She says that Mr. Wormwood has warned him to keep an eye on Matilda, because she's in trouble.

Miss Trunchbull becomes convinced that Matilda put a stink bomb in her study desk that morning, and will not listen to Miss Honey insisting otherwise. Miss Honey tells her that Matilda is a genius, and should be moved up to the top form with the eleven-year-olds. A special bond of Matilda and Miss Honey fit together like a puzzle. What one of them lacks, the other is able to offer. This is the basis for their very special bond. Matilda is a child, while Miss Honey is an adult. Matilda's parents are terrible, while Miss Honey has no parents or children. Matilda is strong and determined, while Miss Honey is meek and mild. They both love learning and share an understanding of what is right and wrong in the world.

Miss Trunchbull thinks Miss Honey only wants her moved so she can get her off her hair, and refuses to move her, saying children must stay with their own age group regardless of ability. Miss Honey resolves that she will do something about the child on her own. Miss Honey borrows textbooks from the senior class and tells Matilda that she will give her a new one during each lesson to study while she teaches the other students. She decides to go and have a secret talk with Matilda's mother and father, not believing that they are completely unaware of their daughter's brilliance. She wonders if they would give her permission to tutor Matilda privately after school. She goes to their house late at night when Matilda is already in bed, and at first Mr. Wormwood is reluctant to let her in because she is interrupting their favourite television program.

Miss Honey yells about how television should not be more important than their daughter's future, and Mr. Wormwood, not used to being spoken in this way, finally lets her in. Miss Honey tells them how remarkable Matilda is, but quickly learns that Matilda does not come from a family that values literature and learning, as she originally

expected. Mrs. Wormwood scoffs and says girls like Matilda should care more about looks than books, since those are what will get her a good husband one day.

Affronted, Miss Honey suggests private tutoring for Matilda, believing she can be brought up to university standard within two or three years. Mr. Wormwood insists that university is useless, but Miss Honey hotly reminds him that if he needed a doctor for an emergency or a lawyer if he were to be sued, both of those people would be university graduates. She tells him not to despise clever people, but accepts that they are not going to agree. Matilda has an easy time making friends with the other children in her class, since she is very humble and polite and shows no outward signs of her brilliance. She becomes especially close friend with a girl named Lavender, and each likes the other because she is gutsy and adventurous. Many of the older kids warn them about Miss Trunchbull, and a ten-year-old named Hortensia informs them that ‘the Trunchbull’ hates the youngest class the most. Miss Trunchbull, the Headmistress, she insists upon discipline throughout the school. “She was a gigantic holy terror, a fierce tyrannical monster who frightened the life out of pupils and teachers alike” (M 54). She had an obstinate chin, a cruel mouth and small arrogant eyes. She always had on a brown cotton smock which was pinched in around the waist with a wide leather belt on her feet she wore flat-heeled brown brogues with leather flaps.

Hortensia also tells them about ‘The Chokey’, a tiny cupboard in Miss Trunchbull’s quarters where children are punished by being forced to stand up straight for hours, since the door and walls are made of glass and nails. Hortensia has been locked in it six times for various pranks she has pulled on Miss Trunchbull. Lavender and Matilda are in awe of Hortensia’s mastery of messing with the Trunchbull. Hortensia

recounts a number of terrible things Miss Trunchbull has done to the children, including throwing one child out of the window for eating in class. She tells them that the headmistress once threw hammer in the Olympics for Britain, so her arm strength is unparalleled. As she is explaining this, the playground falls silent and Miss Trunchbull stomps outside, parting the sea of children and shouting for the one called Amanda Thripp. Amanda's mother has braided her long hair into pigtails, and Miss Trunchbull hates pigtails more than anything else.

Miss Trunchbull tells Amanda to chop off the pigtails and get rid of them before she comes to school tomorrow, but Amanda protests, saying that her mother does them every morning and thinks they look pretty. Angry, Miss Trunchbull grabs the little girl by her pigtails and swings her around and around, then throws her the way she would throw a hammer at the Olympics. Amanda flies across the fence and outside the playground, but, miraculously, she hops up once she lands and backs. When Matilda wonders why the parents of the children do not complain about Miss Trunchbull, Hortensia tells her that the parents are as afraid of her as the students. Lavender says that her parents would have caused a smell if she had told them about her but Matilda doubts that any parent would believe a story that sounds so ridiculous. Matilda says that Miss Trunchbull's mind: do things that are so outrageous that they can't be trusted and encourage her to get away with it.

Miss Trunchbull's antics continue the next day, when all two hundred and fifty students will be summoned to the assembly at lunchtime. Miss Trunchbull calls a boy named Bruce Bogtrotter, accusing him of taking a piece of her special chocolate cake from her tea tray. Bruce denies that but he declines to believe it. As punishment, Miss

Trunchbull calls out to the school cook, who brings an enormous cake and tells him to take a piece of it right there. Students worry that she has poisoned the cake in some way, but she has not, instead she is going to make him eat the whole cake on her own in front of everyone and nobody can leave until it is over. It is a gruelling operation, but he manages it, polishing the entire plate in a glorious victory. Miss Trunchbull is furious that he was willing to do that. Not long later, Miss Honey announces to Matilda's class that Miss Trunchbull has a policy of taking over each class for one period each week. On Thursday afternoons, it is their class's turn. She gives them instructions to be very careful about their appearance and behaviour, since the headmistress is quite strict. She assigns Lavender to the task of preparing a jug of water to await the headmistress on her desk when she comes in. Lavender has a brilliant idea, and catches a newt from her garden to slip inside Miss Trunchbull's water jug the next day.

At two o'clock, when Miss Trunchbull is due to arrive, everyone is ready, and Miss Honey is pleased to see that the jug of water and glass are on the desk where they are meant to be. Miss Trunchbull walks in, formidable and threatening as always, and proceeds to insult the children immediately. She makes them turn over their hands so she can see if they are washed and clean, and picks on one boy, Nigel Hicks, whose hands are filthy. As punishment, she makes him go stand in the corner on one leg with his face to the wall. While he is there, she tests his spelling skills. Nigel spells 'write' correctly on the first try, and tells her that the entire class learned to spell a long word yesterday, 'difficult'. Miss Trunchbull does not believe that is true, so she tests a random girl, Prudence, to see if she can spell it. She does, and Nigel shows Miss Trunchbull the method that Miss Honey has taught them to remember the spellings of long words. While

still standing on one foot, he sings a simple song, “Mrs D, Mrs I, Mrs FFI, Mrs C, Mrs U, Mrs LTY,” to spell the word ‘difficulty’.

Miss Trunchbull thinks it is ridiculous, and tells Miss Honey not to teach poetry while she is teaching spelling. She moves on to test their knowledge of multiplication tables, and a boy named Rupert answers two times seven incorrectly. Miss Trunchbull gets furiously angry, and lifts little Rupert into the air by his hair. She will not let him go until he says that two sevens are fourteen. The children are astounded, and would think she was splendid entertainment if she was not so frightening. After Miss Trunchbull says she hates small people, she gets angry at a boy named Eric Ink for saying that she, too, must have been small one day. She makes him spell the word ‘what’, and when he spells it wrong she lifts him by his ears out of his seat. She lowers him back when he spells it correctly, and tells Miss Honey that this is the only way to make sure children learn.

Matilda has the very special power of telekinesis, which is the ability to move and manipulate objects using only the mind. It takes some time for Matilda to develop this power, but once she does, she puts it to good use. She implores Miss Honey to read *Nicholas Nickleby* by Charles Dickens to learn how headmaster Mr. Wackford Squeers handled the children in his school using physical discipline. Matilda quietly remarks that she has read this book, which Miss Trunchbull does not believe. She asks Matilda's name and when she reveals it, Miss Trunchbull screams that her father is a crook who sold her a faulty car pretending it was new. Matilda diplomatically defends him, saying he is clever at his business, and Miss Trunchbull says she does not like clever people because they are all crooked. Miss Trunchbull sits down at the teacher's desk and begins to pour herself a glass of water. When the newt that Lavender put in falls out she

shrieks and jumps around, then immediately blames Matilda even though the girl insists that she did not do it. Miss Trunchbull continues to shout at her and Matilda gets so angry, and she stares at the glass with the newt in it, feeling some kind of power brewing inside her. She wills the glass to tip over in her mind, and it wobbles, until it finally topples over and the newt spills right onto Miss Trunchbull. Once again she accuses Matilda, but Miss Honey insists that she must have knocked it over on her own since no one went near the desk. She insists that none of the children moved. Furious, Miss Trunchbull stomps out the door.

Matilda hangs back when all the students are dismissed, desperate for Miss Honey to help her understand what she was just able to do. Matilda reveals that it was she who knocked over the glass, even though she did not go near it. She did it with her eyes, by willing it to tip over. Miss Honey at first believes it is in Matilda's imagination, but gives her the benefit of the doubt and asks her to try to do it again. Eventually the glass does fall over, and Miss Honey is astounded. She invites Matilda back to her cottage to have tea and talk about it. As Matilda and Miss Honey walk through the village towards Miss Honey's cottage, Matilda becomes more and more animated, happily hopping along and chattering to Miss Honey about how powerful and happy she feels.

Miss Honey warns her that they must tread carefully, since they do not know the implications of the mysterious forces they are dealing with. She says they should explore Matilda's newfound powers on their own, for a while, before they decide what they mean. They travel down an isolated country road and finally arrive at Miss Honey's home. It's a tiny red brick cottage, meant for a farm labourer, the walls crumbling and old. Miss Honey recites a poem that she often thinks of as she walks up the path to her

house, by a poet called Dylan Thomas. Matilda is fascinated at hearing romantic poetry spoken aloud, and calls it music. She feels as if she is approaching something fantastical, like this cottage is straight out of a fairy tale. Miss Honey's cottage is small and plain, hardly furnished. The kitchen only has a few shelves, a sink, and a stove. The sink does not work, so Matilda is sent to go fetch water outside from the well. When Matilda asks, Miss Honey tells her that she is very poor. They make tea and bread, and Matilda is careful not to say anything that would embarrass Miss Honey. They take their sitting room, which is so bare that it surprises Matilda: the only pieces of furniture are three overturned boxes, two serving as chairs and as a table. Matilda cannot believe that this is where her schoolteacher lives, and thinks there must be some reason for it, something going on here that she does not know. Matilda resolves herself to figuring out the mystery of this little house.

Matilda carefully probes Miss Honey, asking if they pay her very little at school. Miss Honey says she makes the same as everyone else, but she is the only one who lives so poor and simply. Miss Jennifer Honey is a kind and affectionate person and she notices Matilda's talent and tries to convey this to Mrs. Trunchbull and Matilda's parents, despite their refusal to acknowledge this. Also, being able to sympathize with Matilda's burden of living with a family that does not appreciate her, Miss Honey has been an emotional support and a guardian for Matilda. Matilda guesses that she must like living this way, which makes Miss Honey uncomfortable. When Matilda apologizes, Miss Honey dismisses it, and says though she has never talked about her problems to anyone before, she now feels the desperate need to tell someone else her story. She begins, talking about how she was born to a doctor father in a big house nearby in the village.

Her mother died when she was two, so her father invited her mother's sister—her aunt to come in and live with them to take care of her. Miss Honey hated her right from the start; she was very unkind, though she always hid her cruelty in front of Miss Honey's father. Then when Miss Honey was five, her father died very suddenly, having allegedly killed himself, and she was left to live alone with her cruel aunt. Matilda wonders aloud if the aunt was actually the one who killed him.

Living with her aunt, Miss Honey's life was a nightmare. She does not want to talk about the specifics, but her abuse made her timid and afraid. Anything her aunt demanded, she obeyed, and grew up doing all of her housework and cleaning. Though she was a bright student, she was forbidden from going to university. She was allowed to go to a teacher's college forty minutes a day, as long as she came right home afterwards each day and did her housework. When Miss Honey got her teacher's job, her aunt told her she would have to give her every bit of her salary for the next ten years to pay her back for feeding and housing her all these years.

Miss Honey is proud of how she managed to escape from her aunt's house and settle in this tiny cottage. Two years ago, she came across the spot and was able to rent it from a farmer for ten pence a week. She's been able to live here since she gets her aunt's pension of one pound a week. Matilda thinks Miss Honey is a superwoman, but she knows that she can't survive like this for an infinite period of time and wants support. Matilda demands that she appoint a lawyer to contend over her father's estate, because he sure left it to her daughter, but Miss Honey claims that no one has ever been able to find her father's will. Besides, she claims that her aunt is a very much respected figure in the

neighbourhood and has a lot of influence. In the end, she discovers just who her aunt is: Miss Trunchbull.

Matilda is shocked, and she knows that it is no wonder Miss Honey is so afraid. Miss Honey diverts her conversation to Matilda, but Matilda admits she's not in the mood to do her mind-power experiments today; she'd rather go home and worry about what she's learned this afternoon. Miss Honey agrees and walks along and when she does, Matilda has an idea. She doesn't reveal it to Miss Honey, but she poses a few questions. She discovers that Miss Honey's father's name was Magnus, he named Miss Trunchbull Agatha, and they both called Miss Honey Jenny.

Matilda comes home to an empty house, just as she had hoped. She takes one of her father's cigars to her room to practice, sets it down on her dressing table, and sits ten feet apart. It's going to move, and it's going to fall off the table all at once. Feeling strong, she tries to see if she can lift it in the air. She concentrates intensely, and finally lifts it to the air for about ten seconds before she comes down again.

Invigorated, she practices and practices and manages to get it to stay up for a full minute. Every day after school Matilda practices lifting the cigar. By Wednesday evening, she is able not only to lift it, but also to get it to move around in the air however she wants. She knows then that the time has come to put her plan to help Miss Honey into action.

The next day is Thursday, which is when Miss Trunchbull comes in to teach Miss Honey's class. Miss Honey warns them all to be especially careful today, after what happened last week when she took over. When Miss Trunchbull comes in, she first

checks to see that there are no creatures in her water jug. She points to a boy named Wilfred and asks him to recite the three-times table backwards, and when he cannot, Miss Honey tells her that she sees no point in teaching them things backwards when the whole point of life is to go forwards.

Miss Trunchbull continues to torment Wilfred with difficult questions, and when he cannot answer she flips him and dangles him upside down. As she does, Nigel shrieks that the chalk on the blackboard is moving on its own. Everyone stares as the chalk begins to write something, starting with Miss Trunchbull's first name, Agatha. It continues to write,

Agatha, this is Magnus, this is Magnus. It is Magnus. And you'd better believe it. Agatha, give my Jenny back her house. Give my Jenny the house. Then get out of here. If you don't, I will come and get you like you got me. I am watching you Agatha (M 215-217).

Miss Trunchbull begins to shriek, traumatized, and then faints dead away on the floor. Miss Honey sends someone to go fetch the nurse, and Nigel dumps the jug of water on Miss Trunchbull's face and she still does not wake up. Matilda, with her palms crossed and motionless at her desk, feels elated and powerful. The nurses and teachers come, and all are excited to see that someone has floored Miss Trunchbull at last. They carry her out of the classroom, and as class is dismissed that day Miss Honey comes and gives Matilda a big hug and kiss. News spreads later that day that Miss Trunchbull woke up, marched out of school, and did not come back the next day. Mr. Trilby, the Deputy Head, goes to investigate, and no one answers the door at her house. When he goes inside the unlocked door, he sees that all her clothes and belongings are gone. She has vanished.

The following day Miss Honey receives notice that her father's will has been mysteriously found, and that it grants Miss Honey ownership of the old red house in which Miss Trunchbull had been living. She also gets his life savings. Within a few weeks she moves in, and Matilda comes to visit every evening after school. Mr. Trilby becomes the school's Head Teacher, and moves Matilda up to the top form with Miss Plimsoll immediately.

A few weeks later while having tea with Miss Honey in her house, Matilda tells her that she suddenly realized she is unable to move objects with her mind at all anymore. Matilda's powers vanish entirely; apparently due to her being advanced to a higher grade in school that allows her to completely use her mind. Miss Honey says she had been expecting something like that to happen, and says she believes the reason it started in the first place was that in Miss Honey's class in the lowest form, she had nothing to challenge her mind. Her brain bubbled up with energy, and with nowhere for it to go, it was channelled into this strange power. Now that she is challenging herself in the top form, all that mental energy is being used for something else. Matilda says she is glad she did not want to go through life as a miracle worker.

When Matilda returns home that night, she sees a black car parked outside her house. Inside her house, the scene is chaotic as her parents try to pack up the house. They tell her to get going and pack, too, because the family is moving to Spain. Alarmed, Matilda runs back to Miss Honey's house and tells her, her parents are trying to move away and never come back, and Miss Honey is not surprised, saying that Matilda's father was involved with a bunch of crooks who steal cars and sell them.

Matilda asks to stay here and live with Miss Honey, and wonders if her parents would agree to give her up. Miss Honey is skeptical, but she allows Matilda to drag her to her house. Matilda begs her parents to allow her to stay with Miss Honey, and Miss Honey says she would raise the girl and it would not cost them a penny. They agree, proving again that they never truly cared about her. “Matilda leapt into Miss Honey’s arms and hugged her, and Miss Honey hugged her back” (M 232). Matilda waves happily in Miss Honey’s arms as her parents and brother speeding off into the distance.

Chapter Three

Unfurling Layers of Feminism

Feminism is a set of actions which overlap with those of women's rights. It in particular specializes in gender equality and women's social roles and experience. Views on gender-based differentiation in the work and in interpersonal relationships have frequently undergone profound changes because of feminism. Some of the earlier styles of feminism has been criticized for being geared closer to white, middle-class, educative perspectives. This brought about the creation of ethnically unique or multicultural varieties of feminism. In addition to being an extraordinary man, Roald Dahl also lived in remarkable times. He was born during World War I, lived through The Great Depression, fought in World War II, witnessed the Space Race, and was alive during one of the most significant social movements in history, feminism. Although feminism had a great impact on society, the term "feminism" was not well received by the public, and was often used as a pejorative term during the early stages of the movement.

The term originated from the French word "féminisme" which was formed from the word "femme" with -isme added as it was used to refer to a social movement. Freedman opines that for many years, many female social reformers rejected the term and refused to label themselves as feminist. Despite the term's unpopularity in some circles, the political goals of the movement survived, and feminism continued with the word being constantly redefined in modern society. The term is more widely accepted today and can be defined as follows: "Feminism is a belief that women and men are inherent of equal worth. Because most societies privilege men as a group, social movements are

necessary to achieve equality between women and men, with the understanding that gender always intersects with other social hierarchies” (7).

The first wave of feminism started in the late nineteenth century, with women forming a social movement and bursting onto the political scene, demanding more opportunities for themselves. They fought for social equality, a better education, and equal rights in the workplace. As the movement continued, their agenda also focused on political rights, such as the right for all women to vote, a time that is now known as women’s suffrage. The movement was a force to be reckoned with, and by the year 1928, women had the full right to vote (Rampton). The second wave of feminism was in the later years of Dahl’s life during a time where he published many of his most beloved books (The Roald Dahl Story Company Limited). The second wave started in the 1960s and went on into the 1990s. Still dealing with the aftermath of World War II, the dominant issues were equality in the workplace and reproductive rights. Aside from the different issues that were being addressed, there was also a change in members: the first wave was mostly driven by white women who were from the middle class in Western societies, but the second wave included a more diverse group of women. Rampton opines that the women fighting were now women of colour as well as ones from other classes, and from developing nations. This diverse group of women came together, seeking solidarity (8).

During the second wave, many significant milestones were reached in England, which changed the lives and futures of women. Birth control was introduced in 1961, and in 1967, it became available for all women; abortions were then legalized with the Abortion Act in the same year. Three years later, the Equal Pay Act was passed, which

involved the equal treatment of men and women in the workplace. Other acts, such as The Sex Discrimination Act, which was passed in 1975, and The Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act of 1985, had a major impact on the lives of women and furthered the political agenda of the feminist movement (The National Archives). In 1979, Margaret Thatcher became the first woman to hold the position of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. For a long time, she was the only woman to have had been Prime Minister until 2016 when Theresa May became Prime Minister. Many influential female leaders emerged from the feminist movement. With prominent and strong women such as Emmeline Pankhurst and Margaret Thatcher in the spotlight and making a difference in the world, strong female characters became more prominent in literature. Young girls now had women that they could look up to and role models that they could aspire to be like.

In Roald Dahl's novels he had made it clear that it was his mother who had the number one influence on his existence. So it should come as no first-rate surprise that from *The Witches* to *The BFG* to *Matilda*, there are a ton of feminist instructions to be discovered from studying Roald Dahl's back catalogues. *Matilda* represents the feminine intelligence that Dahl desires to deliver to readers. *Matilda* meant to be the symbol of female cleverness. That is special and may be considered as fortune. It means that female intelligence is a fact can't be mentioned or compromised. Roald Dahl's *Matilda* is basically a narrative which sings a triumph of little girl over tyrant adults. *Matilda* is a child of great powers emerges as a savior of many other children even of adults. She takes care of the situation and out to set things right. There are five women characters in this novel inclusive of *Matilda* who behaves like a grown-up person. Others are *Matilda's*

mother Mrs. Wormwood, her headmistress Miss Trunchbull, her class teacher Miss Honey, and librarian Mrs. Phelps.

Mary Wollstonecraft in her seminal work *A Vindication of The Rights of Woman* voices importance of schooling in overall development of woman and society. She additionally writes how society denying training to women makes her inferior, a burden to herself and to the society. She writes “Taught from infancy that beauty is woman’s scepter, the mind shapes itself to the body, and roaming round its gilt cage, only seeks to adorn its prison” (3). Educating a woman is like instructing the whole circle of relatives. Hence, mother’s training is very important in the holistic development of kids. If we critically analyze Matilda’s mother that we can see that she is like any girl inside patrilineal construction perpetuating socially mounted norms. She is no exception offers prime significance to physical beauty rather than intellectual development. Her verbal exchange with Miss Honey reflects the common place attitude of women closer to life as they take marriage being the last purpose of life styles. She says, “I’m not in favour of blue-stockings. A girl should think about making herself look attractive so she can get a good husband later on. Looks is more important than books” (M 91).

Dahl sketches Matilda’s mother as a self-obsessed, lousy, splendour conscious, and a cash minded lady who neglects her duty as a mom. “My mother goes to Aylesbury each afternoon to play Bingo” (M 10). She loves to play bingo and goes out every day to play after her husband has gone to work in preference to devoting her time to nurture her children or offering them food. She hardly ever cares about her children schooling and forgets the actual age of Matilda as she thinks Matilda to be young to start training. Once, Matilda’s class teacher comes to speak about her great intellect, instead of

appreciating the matter, her mother actually turns the issue down and insists that very vital in getting a husband, training is certainly vain insensible existence. As the story comes to an end Matilda's mother tells her husband with indifference, "Why don't we let her do it that's what she wants. It'll be one less to look after" (M 232). Among other characters who are maximum debated and demands investigation is Miss Trunchbull. She has been projected as a villain throughout the story due to the fact she takes malicious delight in torturing and harassing kids. The character of Miss Trunchbull is masculine, both when it comes to her looks and traits, that does not undermine the feminist message of the book. However, the portrayal of Miss Trunchbull is still a topic of some controversy, especially in the highly praised musical adaptation of Matilda, where a man plays the character of Miss Trunchbull.

She was gigantic holy terror, fierce tyrannical monster who frightened the life out of pupils and teachers alike. There was an aura of menace about her at a distance, and when she came up close you could almost feel the dangerous heat radiating from her as from a red-hot rod of metal (M 61).

Her name fits her perfectly as she seems like a robust headed bull who is merciless and stubborn. From the very beginning, she has been hated by all her students because of her appearance which makes her now not so amiable to children. In the story, she stands in direct comparison to Miss Honey who is the whole lot that Miss Trunchbull is not. In the midst of extremities (in accordance to traditional norms) we have Miss Honey who appears to be a really perfect female together with her fragile, light white porcelain structure. She is educated, beautiful, polite, loving, motherly and extraordinarily meek.

There teacher was called Miss Honey, and she could not have been more than twenty three or twenty four. She had a lovely pale oval Madonna face with blue eyes and her hair was light brown. Her body was so slim and fragile one got the feeling that if she fell over she would smash into thousand pieces, like a porcelain figure (M 60).

Miss Honey is cherished by her students because of her concerned nature and appears to be best for those young children who for the first time depart home to start their adventure as students. She submissively bears all insults and injustice without any protest and leads a miserable life. In the unconventional, Miss Honey is sort of a damsel in distress who had no courage to fights her own war and waits to be saved with the aid of Matilda. Finally, we have Matilda, the protagonist, is a special toddler with some supernatural powers. She behaves like an person and takes the obligation to punish those who are immortal. She is rebel.

Miss Jennifer Honey was a mild and quiet person who never raised her voice and was seldom seen to smile, but there is no doubt that she possessed that rare gift for being adored by every small child under her care. Her body was so slim and fragile one got the feeling that if she fell over she would smash into a thousand pieces, like a porcelain figure (M 61).

Miss Honey is not only Matilda's friend, but also the first to be gentle and fair to her. Even though Miss Honey is sweet and kind and looks like she has a perfect life, like Matilda, she also had a difficult childhood and carries the weight of that dark secret

around with her. Miss Honey is a predominant character in the story, not only as Matilda's teacher, but as a loving and motherly figure in Matilda's life. She has many feminine qualities, but she can also be seen as breaking away from the tradition, as she is a single woman with no love interest in the story. Much like Matilda, Miss Honey can be seen as a strong role model and a feminist influence for her compassion, her spirit, and her determination to not let her past hold her back. She engages herself in analyzing, refuses to act in step with her parent's demand and prefers solitude as opposed to looking TV. She takes life-altering choices to make Miss Honey her legal father or mother and rejects her biological father and mother understanding their incapability to give her a excellent upbringing. In a way, we see Matilda as a female character who turns into the hero of her own tale. However, like many different children writers, Dahl in the manner of showcasing the triumph of good over evils somehow concludes in stereotyping different women characters within the novel.

All the women characters within the novel point out a few serious issues. Matilda's mother stands for those who take their children without any consideration and forget their education especially girl child as they suppose that they are nothing however a burden. Miss Trunchbull's behaviour in the direction of kids welfare shows how some adults treat children as a nuisance and desire to get rid of them. "Miss Honey gives us a little song about each word and we all sing it together and we learn to spell it in no time" (M 141). Miss Honey's method of teaching children have to be taken as an example, how young students can be taught without difficulty without making the procedure stupid or boring. The story additionally points out the worn-out educational gadget which refuses to improvise teaching techniques to make the gaining knowledge of manner exciting and

sooner or later it brings out the issue of child abuse which has remained a hush-hush problem in our society till now. If we study the novel as a piece of children literature that tale seems to be virtually a tale of a kid possessing mysterious powers punishing few adults who mistreat her. However, the tale is much greater complex than that. A feminist reading of the text makes the women characters of the story seem as stock characters who stand in binaries, either white angelic or black evils as the heterosexual perceived them.

From those characters, girls can see that there is no mold that they have to fit; instead, they can be who and what they want to be (though hopefully not child-hating principals). In fact, there are many more feminist lessons that can be drawn from Dahls's stories: women can be heroes or villains, and they can even have more than one role. Expectations of women are often superficial, but gender stereotypes, which are a product of society, should not define young girls or women. Women are often overlooked, especially little girls, but their voices are powerful, they matter and are just as important as grown-ups. Finally, Dahl's stories tell readers that everybody has a chance. Gender and age do not matter, with a dash of courage, everybody can find their place in the world. Given these points, *Matilda* has a feminist message to convey to its readers. Its popularity does not seem to be diminishing anytime soon, and with these works being constantly adapted into plays and films, they continue to be relevant in modern society and to entertain each new generation.

Roald Dahl as a creator of children novels has presented an interesting take with morality as youngsters see their lives in binaries of white and black. His message is simple concerning lifestyles of bad people ought to be punished for their incorrect doings. However, unknowingly Dahl stereotypes ladies within the novel which could take him to

trail. If a female takes out time from her domestic burden and do what her heart's desire, it need not to be condemned or look as a selfish act. A woman have to aspire to domesticate a sturdy personality, as male and female are equally responsible for the fantastic development of children and in giving them a wholesome society.

Chapter Four

Complication and Resolution with Telekinesis

The writing style of Roald Dahl involves a great deal of humour to engage his readers. His humour and sarcasm appeal to his intended audience as children love reading funny stories. He normally writes from a child's perspective, one that children can familiarise themselves with. Dahl's silly character names help the reader identify with the characters personality and traits and his overuse of descriptive adjectives also give the reader a great deal of information about the character and the situation. He often uses exaggeration to make the characters seem more evil or heroic. He believes that all good books need to have a mixture of nasty people and nice people. Most of Dahl's bestselling books entail this arrangement. Dahl writes from a modern-day fairy tale world, particularly focusing on the magical world, one that excites young children and draws them in to explore. He likes to twist and invent words and play around with the sentence structure in an attempt to get words to sound exactly as they are written in an attempt to immerse the reader in the story. He uses poetry, similes, metaphors, alliteration and puns that entices the reader and adds to his writing. Personification is often used in Dahl's stories to transform characters, mainly animals, into human-like forms or vice-versa, with a mind of their own and where they can speak like real humans. Dahl also quite often portrays the image of children in books, 'better' than adults, giving children space for imagination into a world like this.

In every piece of his work, Roald Dahl actually uses different styles to attract the reader's attention. One obvious trait in Roald Dahl's works is the use of devilish twists and turns. This can be seen in the story *Man From the South* where in the climax when

the little boy managed to light up the lighter for eight times. However, instead of telling his readers what the result of the bet was, Roald Dahl made use of an anticlimax by introducing another important character in the story, which is none other than the man's wife. She finally explains what was happening at the point of time and the detailed consequences that have further resulted from the long-term problem itself. In the case of the *Man from the South*, the man who seemed a perfectly normal and sane actually suffered from a mental problem. He has lost 11 cars and won back 47 fingers in the process of betting. This twist brought into the story really grabbed the reader's attention and urged them to continue reading. In this story, readers might have expected only two kinds of ending, whether the boy won the car or lost his finger. Instead, Roald Dahl succeeded in introducing a third possible ending into the story, which added some spice into it. Moreover, the last sentence in the story "I can see it now, the hand of hers; it had only one finger on it, and a thumb" (14), Without reading the story, the person might not understand and would therefore find it very abrupt. However, this sentence actually inflicts much thought into the reader, and causes him to make certain assumptions. These assumptions made something to do as the real ending to the story, bringing fulfilment to the reader despite being abrupt. The use of abrupt endings to bring and inflict thoughts or assumptions to the reader himself.

In Roald Dahl's works for the adults, Dahl actually writes mostly as a third person, so as to get a bird's eye view of the situation. However, Dahl mostly concentrates on one single perspective or view, so as to bring about the twist in the next part of the story. Writing as a third person enables him to describe the physical appearances of the characters and give specific details about them. This particular character is normally

exaggerated so as to allow the reader to become biased towards him/her. Again, Roald Dahl then makes use of this biasness to make a twist out of it. In *The Umbrella Man* some sentence which uses much adjectives to describe a man's appearance, instead of using vague phrases. This adjectives used causes the reader to imagine and infer the characteristics of the character, instead of directly telling the readers what his/her characters are for example, Roald Dahl used this sentence "He had a fine white moustache and bushy white eyebrows and a wrinkly pink face" (23) to show that the man was old and healthy. Another phrase "raised his hat politely" might refer a titled gentleman, but it is totally untrue as this man is actually a trickster and a thief. Some of the adjectives used are mainly to describe the sense of touch so as bring about the emotional state of the character. This usage of describing physical appearance so as to show the exact emotional of the character and their state of mind is often attention grabbing as it allows the reader to imagine, instead of telling them what actually happens.

Roald Dahl has a humorous writing style for children. He is very creative, using figures of speech in his writings. He uses specific names and figures of speech which complements the different character in his or her personality and features. Such as Augustus Gloop to name a fat and greedy boy in the story *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. These exaggerate the characters traits as such making them seem either more evil or a better hero. Also, Dahl makes the characters come alive on every page. He can create characters that are enjoyable and humorous. Roald Dahl has a creative and humorous style when it comes to writing children's books such as *James and the Giant Peach* or *The Twits*. With lots of sound words, interesting adjectives and humorous poems, it makes his books an interesting and enjoyable experience for young readers.

Roald Dahl is more than humorous. He uses certain characters to teach a lesson about how the other children are not being respectful and obedient. He puts a twist on his words and arranges the sentence structure to a point of wackiness at times. He also loves to twist words and play around with the sentence structure such as using “Vitches” in dialogues instead of witches to portray the high pitch, screeching voice of the witches. His humorous poems, which sound sadistic at times, are mostly found in children’s books. This adds a touch of funny and amusing plot to the stories. Such can be found in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* when he uses them to make fun of the characters when they meet with different accidents. Dahl uses various literary devices to create vivid images and sounds for his characters and readers. Through personification, Dahl creates human-like animals. These animals have a mind of their own and can speak like a real human. Many children and adults will be reading books by Dahl for enjoyment for years to come. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is one book that will be remembered and cherished for years to come, the book is especially effective when read aloud and is frequently used by teachers who read to their classes. This is partially due to Dahl’s playful use of language, featuring rhymes, puns, and hyperbole.

In *Matilda* also Dahl uses many symbols and imagery. Throughout the novel, books serve as a symbol of Matilda’s ability to escape from the trials of her daily life. When her neglectful family and their obsession with television become too much to bear, she can bury herself in a story in order to soar far away from them in her mind. Books are incredibly important objects in *Matilda*, fitting with the theme that relates literacy to intelligence, good judgment, and kindness. Both the chocolate cake that Bruce eats and the newt that Lavender puts into Miss Trunchbull’s water symbolize the resistance of the

children to their horrible Headmistress. These are objects that mark their small successes, the ways that they are able to beat her even though she is stronger and more powerful than them. Readers get a rich imagery description of the newt that Lavender finds in her backyard pond. It makes it clear that while the newt itself is not dangerous, it looks like it could be, with its bold colours and its strange form and feel. This means that, if all goes well, the Trunchbull will indeed be afraid of it. “The newt is about six inches long and very slimy, with a greenish-grey skin on top and an orange-coloured belly underneath” (M 11). The symbol of glass of water seated on the teacher’s desk becomes representative of Matilda’s mental powers; because it is the very first object she uses it on. This is the first time she recognizes the extent to which her extraordinary abilities can stretch, and it marks the beginning of her path to bettering not only her own life, but those of Miss Honey and the other children at Crunchem Hall as well.

She saw the child white in the face, as white as paper, trembling all over, the eyes glazed, staring straight ahead and seeing nothing. The whole face was transfigured, the eyes round and bright and she was sitting there speechless, quite beautiful in a blaze of silence (M 144)

Miss Honey stares closely at Matilda’s face the first time she sees her use her powers to tip over the water glass. This description makes it clear that Matilda escapes to another world when she uses her mental power, and this otherworldly trance is visible on her face as well. Miss Honey is seeing something with her own eyes that she did not initially believe was possible, so she cannot stop watching Matilda. Matilda’s school itself is an important symbol in this novel. It represents literacy, wisdom, and education, all things that Matilda strives to attain and that Dahl associates with goodness. Crunchem

Hall is sometimes a dark, difficult place, showing that the road to knowledge is not always easy. Crunchem Hall is described using very dark imagery, in particular the torture device of the Chokey that Ms Trunchbull uses. However, other imagery, while representing difficult situations, is lighter and more humour-filled, such as the antics at Matilda's home. Miss Honey's cottage, though modest, is a symbol of progress and agency. Renting the cottage was her first step towards overcoming the terrible influence of her aunt, breaking free of the chains that had bound her since her father died. The cottage means so much to Miss Honey because it is representative of her triumph.

Depending on who does the literacy, it may serve a variety of purposes. One purpose of literacy in Roald Dahl's *Matilda* is that literacy is used to seek pleasure. Matilda reads books for most of her day. Clark, Christina and Rumbold state that reading for pleasure refers to the activity of reading which is based on one's free will hoping for contentment from that activity. Reading for pleasure usually includes text, time, and place that suit the reader. Matilda's favourite place to read is a public library where she can spend hours to read many books. The library is only 'ten minutes walk' from her house. She goes to the public library in most of her afternoon when her father leaves for work, her mother plays bingo, and her brother goes to school. In public library, she can find many interesting books to read which she cannot get in her house. Thus, it is very pleasant for Matilda to go to the public library every day. "The walk took only ten minutes and this allowed her two glorious hours sitting quietly by herself in a cosy corner devouring one book after another" (M 7). In the public library, Matilda spends 'two glorious hours' to find interesting books and read them. It is very unusual for four years old child spending most of her time to read books while other four years old children are actively playing with the

toys because this is a stage of exploration development. Books are like the replacement of toys for Matilda because her family never facilitates her with toys. Her family just asks her to watch television when they are busy outside the house and Matilda is left alone in the house. Thus, Matilda uses books instead of toys as media in her exploration stage.

She can observe the shape of the book, open the book from page to page to look what is inside the book, and read the sentences in the book because she has been able to read since she was three years old. As a result, instead of playing toys, Matilda reads books as her exploration. She finds it as a joyful activity thus she can spend two hours in public library. Matilda also finds her favourite spot to read in the public library. It is in 'a cozy corner' of the public library, the place where Matilda finds it comfortable to read books. Reading many interesting books in a cozy corner of the public library is a perfect combination for Matilda to get happiness from reading. Matilda's favourite spot makes her more enthusiastic doing her favourite activity. She also has many choices on which books she will read. Literacy offers an act of escapism for the reader. Once someone reads books they will forget about all the problems in his life and travel into a different world in the story. Usually, one of the reasons why someone reads books is that a desire to get an escape from the pressure someone gets in his life. In Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, Matilda's reading practices can be categorized as an act to be able to escape from her real world. She starts to treat herself not to bother about her family habit in watching television, by reading a book, and being absorbed in that book.

The ability of reading or writing is not enough to show literacy as power, but the skill to use literacy to create power is the main thing. Matilda's literacy practices are not just about her reading. She also does writing. Writing practice that she does in the school

shows how smart she is in using her telekinesis ability and her writing as her power to attack the wicked Mrs. Trunchbull, her headmistress. The special thing about Matilda is that she is a girl with telekinesis ability and she knows how to use it in a right way. By the help of telekinesis ability, Matilda could move a chalk to write on the blackboard. “It’s writing something! Screamed Nigel. The chalk is writing something!” (M 214).

Mrs. Trunchbull is a wicked and dangerous headmistress in Matilda’s school. She is like evil for all people in the school. It is because of her rude attitude toward the children. She is also Miss Honey’s aunt who takes all of Miss Honey’s inheritance from her father. She causes Miss Honey living in a poverty and difficult life. Matilda who is happened to be so close with Miss Honey feels pity toward her teacher’s life. She wants to help Miss Honey take revenge to Mrs. Trunchbull. She gets that chance to do her action when Mrs. Trunchbull teaches her class. By using her telekinesis ability, Matilda moves the chalk to write threatening sentences on the blackboard. She makes it as if it is Miss Honey’s father’s soul who wants Mrs. Trunchbull to give back Miss Honey’s wages and house. If she does not do it, he will come and get her like she got him. This threatening sentence written on the blackboard effectively creates fear and guilt on Mrs. Trunchbull and she faints on the floor. Telekinesis itself is an ability to move things with the power of the mind. Telekinesis is purely a powerful ability because it needs full control of the power of the mind. By using telekinesis ability, Matilda has shown that she has control of her mind to create such strength to move things around. Moreover, in term of literacy, power is the ability to know how, when, and why to display the literacy practices. Matilda surely knows the reason she has to use her telekinesis ability to write threatening sentences for Mrs. Trunchbull, the time she has to do it; when Mrs.

Trunchbull teaches her class, and the way Matilda punishes Mrs. Trunchbull by creating situation as if it is the ghost of Miss Honey's father who moves the chalk.

Matilda's powers seem to manifest as a defence mechanism in situations where she is utterly powerless. When her father rips up her book, he isn't just damaging library property he's attacking the one thing that makes Matilda feel safe in an abusive, neglectful household. He takes away what matters to her, so her powers give her a way to take what matters to him. The relationship between Matilda's powers and unjust displays of authority becomes more pronounced as her telekinetic abilities grow stronger. When Trunchbull, the power-hungry and blood-thirsty principal of Matilda's school, comes to visit Matilda's class, one of the students puts a newt in Trunchbull's glass of water. Trunchbull finds the newt and blames the prank on Matilda.

Matilda is angered at the injustice of the situation but, as a small child facing a large and vindictive authority figure, can't do anything about it. It is during this moment of powerlessness that her powers kick into gear, tipping over the glass and tossing the offending newt onto Trunchbull. Even before her powers become apparent, Matilda has shown a rebellious spirit in the face of oppression. Before she begins school much of this rebelliousness is directed at her father. Harry Wormwood constantly belittles Matilda, showing no respect for her or for her desire to learn. At one point she retaliates by swapping his hair oil for her mother's hydrogen peroxide, bleaching his hair blond. She later puts superglue in the hat that he uses to hide this unfortunate hairdo. But Matilda's telekinetic abilities allow her to retaliate directly to injustices in ways that actually give her more power. When she knocks over the glass and throws the newt onto Trunchbull, the cruel principal begins to jump around and shriek, expressing the same sort of fear she

usually causes her students. Matilda also uses her powers to care for herself at home. In one particularly affecting scene she joyfully fixes herself a bowl of Cheerios – the kind of loving act that her own parents would never do for her.

But the most important use of her powers isn't when she is using them for revenge. Rather, Matilda uses her powers to their full potential when she's attempting to make a positive change for herself and her peers. Matilda may be unfortunate enough to have a family that doesn't respect her, but all of her classmates are equally as helpless within the confines of Crunchem Hall. Miss Trunchbull is a tyrant, and she doesn't just single out Matilda – she hates all children. Trunchbull uses her authority and intimidating physical demeanour to torment the students in her school, throwing a girl over the fence by her pigtails and forcing a boy to eat an entire cake. But instead of allowing themselves to be cornered, the students rally together in the face of this oppression. Matilda uses her powers to save the girl who Trunchbull threw from being hurt, instead allowing her to glide joyfully through a field of flowers. And the students forced to watch Bruce Bogtrotter eat an entire cake cheer him on until he finishes it victoriously. In the book, Matilda's powers disappear entirely, allegedly due to her being advanced to a higher grade in school that allows her to fully use her mind.

Matilda is no longer living with her parents and is instead under the custody of Miss Honey, the kind teacher who is always interested in her student. Miss Honey also becomes the new head of Crunchem Hall, bringing her attentiveness and caring to the entire school. Matilda no longer needs her powers to fight against oppression because she is no longer in an oppressive environment. Now instead of battling unjust authority, Matilda can use her powers to have fun something that her previous circumstances never

allowed her to do. Matilda is wise beyond her years, but she is still just a child. She recognizes that she was treated unfairly by her parents and school principal. But until she developed her advanced mental capabilities, there was nothing she could do about it. Her powers gave her the autonomy to act on her convictions. Once those oppressive forces are gone, it is no surprise that she wants to use her powers frivolously, floating a bedtime story over to her instead of saving a girl who was thrown over the fence. Genius or not, Matilda is still a kid.

Chapter Five

Summation

Roald Dahl born in the year 1916, a British author generally investigates the topic of the agreeable connection between family individuals in his compositions. Dahl's greatly valued novel *Matilda* portrays an interesting account which unfurls the layers of issues identified with kids, women and social shades of malice. A valid image of general public can be surveyed by considering its treatment towards women and youngsters. The story, *Matilda* is having a wide scope of female characters who address different shades of womanhood.

Dahl outlines Matilda's mother as a self-fixated, horrible, excellent cognizant of who ignores her obligation as a mother. She loves to play Bingo and goes out each day to play after her better half goes to work as opposed to dedicating her chance to sustain her children or giving food. She scarcely thinks often about her children's tutoring and fails to remember the genuine period of Matilda as she might suspect Matilda to be too youthful to even consider beginning tutoring. Once, Matilda's class instructor comes to talk about her remarkable astuteness, rather than valuing the matter, her mom essentially turns the issue down saying excellence is generally significant in getting a decent spouse, schooling is essentially futile in down to earth life. Mrs. Wormwood says, "A young women doesn't get a man by being brainy,"(80). Toward the end of the story, Matilda's mom essentially leaves her girl as though she was only a scab whom she was looking an approach to dispose of. She reveals to her significant other with detachment, "For what reason don't we let her go if that is the thing that she needs. It'll be one less to care for"

(199). Although in most fairy tales boys are placed in the role of heroes, Dahl proves that girls can fulfil this role just as well.

Matilda, for example, is an adventurous and active girl who outsmarts her parents by going to the library herself when they refuse to buy her any book. Accompanied by her witty friends, she stands up against the scary and authoritative Miss Trunchbull in a manner that only boys would in more traditional literature. As a lot of Dahl's main characters grow up in somewhat unconventional families, he shows that family comes in all shapes and sizes. This includes single parents such as Miss Honey, who is a single woman without the desperate need to marry the perfect guy. She teams up with Matilda in fighting both the evil Miss Trunchbull and Matilda's parent. She takes Matilda into her own home in the end. The story of Miss Honey and Matilda shows that women really don't need men to survive. In spite of the fact that women's liberation enormously affected society, the term "woman's rights" was not generally welcomed by general society, and was frequently utilized as a pejorative term during the beginning phases of the development. The term started from the French word "feminism" which was shaped from "femme" with -isme added as it was utilized to allude to a social development. For a long time, numerous female social reformers dismissed the term and would not mark themselves as women's activists. In spite of the term's disagreeability in certain circles, the political objectives of the development endure, and woman's rights proceeded with the word being continually reclassified in present day society.

The main influx of woman's rights began in the late nineteenth century, with women shaping a social development and blasting onto the political scene, requesting more freedom for themselves. They battled for social equity, a superior schooling, and

equivalent rights in the working environment. As the development proceeded, their plan likewise centred around political rights, like the appropriate for all women to cast a ballot, a period that is presently known as women testimonial.

The first chapter discusses depictions of the child in Children's Literature and, in general, Roald Dahl's literary works, as well as the overall introduction to the book *Matilda*. Roald Dahl is a fascinating author because his children's books often feature child heroes who are neither heroes nor villains, but rather a wild, subversive mix of both. Since they are born with powers or allies that allow them to inflict lawless vengeance on violent or despised adults, they are called wild. Dahl's child heroes and heroines aren't helpless victims waiting for a prince or a woodcutter to come to their rescue: Instead, they may be avenging avengers who, when provoked, go off the beaten path in search of their threatening giants and evil step-parents, and retaliate violently toward maltreatment without relying on adults or the rule of law.

The novel's characterization is presented in depth in chapter two. This chapter explores a child character who has been depicted as both a heroine and a villain: Matilda is the main character in Roald Dahl's *Matilda*. Miss Trunchbull, Matilda's headmistress, terrorizes her because she is a super-intelligent girl who is mocked and mistreated by her ignorant parents. However, as a result of her mistreatment by adults, she starts to punish her parents and later develops supernatural abilities that allow her to exact revenge on Miss Trunchbull. The book has a vindictive spirit at work, no matter how funny it is. Matilda's character has a lot of suspense, which makes her fascinating for both critics of children's literature and teachers who may want to use these texts for young readers.

The novel's feminism context is explored in the third chapter. Mrs. Wormwood is the woman character in *Matilda* who embraces or is subjected to patriarchal ideologies. Mrs. Wormwood, she is the mother and is portrayed as a woman who is obsessed with her appearance. Her hair is dyed and she wears a lot of make-up. Matilda's intellect is not respected or promoted at home, which is one of the most serious issues she faces. Mrs. Wormwood's only hobbies are watching American soap operas and playing Bingo on a daily basis. She claims that a woman does not have to be intellectual. "A girl doesn't get a guy by being clever", she says. The only thing a woman needs to do is look nice and find a wealthy husband. Mrs. Wormwood, like her husband, is submissive to her husband and often berates her daughter for her special abilities. Matilda and Miss Jennifer Honey are two characters who reject patriarchy. Miss Honey stands up for Matilda in front of her parents and does all she can to provide Matilda with the education she deserves. Educating a woman is akin to instructing her entire family. As a result, mother training is critical to the holistic growth of children. The Wormwood house – a stretch to call it a home – acts as a model for the adult-child dichotomy that emerges in the book, as well as a screenplay for Matilda's neglect as a girl child.

The fourth chapter focuses on the novel's writing style and structure. Several conclusions emerge from the discussion of intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Mrs. Wormwood, for starters, is the feminine, or the one who supports or is a victim of patriarchal ideology. Second, there are Matilda and Miss Honey, who are anti-patriarchal. Third, Mr. Wormwood and Michael are the patriarchal or masculine characters. We can deduce from the novel's structure that the novel includes three main events. To begin with, it is a portion of the novel that tells the story's suspense. Matilda

has been neglected and mistreated by her parents since she was a child. Second, it is a part of the story's identity. Matilda educates herself and encourages herself to learn as a result of this. Third, it is a part of Matilda's telekinesis ability to create an imaginary world. She is not only the focus of the plot, but also the beneficiary of it, and facets of her personality, such as her wit and magical powers, are regarded as beneficial. These two things can be regarded as one, as her magical powers are a function of her mental abilities.

The kid's books are a wellspring of information just as a medium to imbue profound quality. Be that as it may, now and then it fills in as an office to imbue certain thoughts which shape their mind absolutely. On the off chance that we re-peruse the story from point of view than the translation will be totally extraordinary as Matilda's mom may get anticipated essentially as a survivor of male centric development which lectures women to put underscore on super dimensions. Every one of the female characters in the novel point out some major issues. Matilda's mother represents the individuals who underestimate their kids furthermore, disregard their schooling particularly young female kid as they imagine that they are only a burden. Miss Trunchbull's conduct towards kids uncovers how a few grown-ups treat youngsters as an irritation and wish to dispose of them. Her issue additionally brings up the issue of the instructor understudy relationship as educators assume a superb part in forming youthful personalities.

Miss Trunchbull's suppressive nature and her unforgiving treatment towards youngsters as opposed to making her near her kids introduce dread and disdain in youthful personalities. Here Miss Honey's technique for training kids ought to be taken

for instance, how youthful understudies can be educated effectively without making the interaction dull or exhausting. *Matilda* has a feminist message to convey to its readers. Its popularity does not seem to be shrinking anytime soon, and with these works constantly being translated into plays and films, they remain relevant in modern culture and entertain each new generation. As an author of children's books, Roald Dahl has offered an intriguing perspective on morality, as children see their lives in binary terms of white versus black. His message is straightforward, evil people's lifestyles should be disciplined for their wrongdoings. However, Dahl unknowingly prejudices women in the book, which could place him in trail. If a woman takes time away from her family duties to do as she desires, she should not be condemned or seen as selfish. A woman must strive to domesticate a strong personality and both male and female are equally responsible for the excellent growth of children and provide them with a thriving society.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Home and Feminine Subjectivity in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*** submitted to St. Mary's College [Autonomous], Thoothukudi affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree Master of Arts in English literature is the work done by Abinaya. S. during the year 2020 – 2021, and that is has or previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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**HOME SPACE AND FEMININE SUBJECTIVITY IN MARILYNNE
ROBINSON'S *HOUSEKEEPING***

A project report submitted to

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), THOOTHUKUDI.

Affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

TIRUNELVELI.

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

Submitted by

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ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), THOOTHUKUDI.

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

2020- 2021.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Home Space and Feminine Subjectivity in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*** submitted to St. Mary's College [Autonomous], Thoothukudi affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, for the award Of Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is our genuine work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

APRIL 2021

ABINAYA.S

THOOTHUKUDI

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Home and Feminine Subjectivity in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*** submitted to St. Mary's College [Autonomous], Thoothukudi affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts and is a record of work done during the year 2020 – 2021.

SIGNATURE OF THE GUIDE

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SIGNATURE OF THE PRINCIPAL

SIGNATURE OF THE EXAMINER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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PREFACE

Marilynne Robinson is the recipient of a 2012 national humanities medal, awarded by president Barrack Obama, for “her grace and intelligence in writing”.

The project entitled “**Home Space and feminine subjectivity in Marilynne Robinsons housekeeping**”. It focuses on the two sisters relate to their domestic place, both physically and psychologically.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the American writing in English. It also deals with Marilynne Robinson’s biography, works and lastly the short list of her novels.

The second chapter **Phenomenological Studies of Home** deals with the critical analysis of the novel.

The third chapter **Feminist Victory** deals with the ideology of feminism in American society.

The fourth chapter **Cult of Domesticity** deals with the traditional concept of domesticity and home.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects that dealt in is the preceding chapters in justifying the title of the Project.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA hand book Eighth edition for the preparation of the title.

Chapter One

Introduction

The art form of reality in society is literature. It helps us to understand people, society, events and culture. It expresses feelings, ideas and thoughts. Literature is considered to be an art form or any single writing deemed to have artistic or intellectual value, due to deploying language in ways that differ from ordinary usage. Literature spread out feelings of an individual in any forms he imagines or not. It is one of the mediums invariably made use of civilizing a nation. Literature is a mirror through which we see the realities of life. “Literature is the one place in any society where, within the secrecy of our own head, we can hear voices talking about everything in possible way”. Literature emerges out of life and records our dreams and ideas, hopes and aspirations, failures and disappointments, motives and passions, and experiences and observations. Over the years, literature has reflected the prevailing social, economic and familial issues. (Salman Rushdie, Feb.6, 1990) Literature is very important in current world as it allows the people to know the history of a nation’s spirit.

American literature is written or produced in United States and its preceding colonies. In the early times American literary tradition and the English literature have their prominent feature. Later, American literature had separated its path and tradition because of its unique characteristics and features. In the early histories the center of American literature was in the New England colonies. After the immediate decades following the civil war American literature culture was equally reluctant to confront the

realities of the nation. American literature had redefined itself as a literature of social protest and reformation with realism as a dominant mode of expression.

The first European settlers of North America 1660s recorded in wrote experience in the American literature was mostly consisted of practical nonfiction written by the British settlers. The first American literature was mainly the work of immigrants from England and not American's inform of essay or poetry. A new era began when the United States was declared its independence on 1776. American literature emerges in the first decades of nineteenth century. Though still derived from British literary tradition the American short stories and novels published were from 1800 through 1820 begin to depict American society. The change in the way of thinking and feeling; the rise of science and industries helped the development of United States that fashioned the literature of the country. Mark Twain is considered as a father of American culture. In 1789 William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy; or, The Triumph of Nature* was considered as the first American novel which was published 226 years ago.

The themes of American literature is a combines of many ideas that include spirituality, freedom and fighting for the identity. American literature reflects the practical life of the people. The early stages of American literature is considered it as literature of struggling the literature of imagination. They saw America comprised of hope. Later, America writers started to write about the evil which was linked human fate. Modern American writers their theme for their dark comedy, called as black humor. Social direction became the main theme of American writers during the nineteenth century.

The American dramatic literature depends on the European style of writings, many American writers had been influenced by these models in their topics and themes. On the other hand American play rights invented their own character type which belongs to American models. The term of *Realism* also influenced the American writers which actually originated from the Europeans. Their focus was on the social turmoil of American psyche than the romance. In 1920s many writes used world was as their subject because they themselves encountered with the World War II. To add more essence, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mocking Bird* is the best example of it.

A study of themes and techniques in American literature depends crucially on how American literature is itself defined. This is vital because it can be categorized in a variety of Ways through the utilization of different criteria. Using historical periods, American literature can be split into six broad groups which correspond with significant periods of the country in history. These groups are: Colonial Literature, written between 1620 and 1770 when what was to eventually become the United States of America was under British imperial rule. Revolutionary Literature, which was produced during the American war of independence between 1772 and 1776. Antebellum Literature, produced before the American Civil War of 1861 to 1865. Civil War Literature and the literature produced between the end of the Civil War and the end of the First World War in 1918. Literature produced between the First World War and the end of the Second World War in 1945.4 Literature produced between 1945 and the present.

American literature can also be categorized along ideological lines, reflecting the way in which literary texts portray the major philosophical, religious and other concerns of specific eras. Thus, it can be defined according to the ways in which it was influenced

by concepts like Puritan Christianity, transcendentalism, realism, naturalism and Humanitarianism, as well as the more recent ideas of race, gender and political issues.

Ethnic criteria represents that is another way in which American literature can be categorized. Many American writers can be identified as belonging to specific racial and ethnic groups and their writings can consequently be classified according to ethnic origin. Utilizing such criteria, American literature can be classified into Native American Jewish, Hispanic, African American and Asian American literatures.

The contemporary American literature, the prominent literary movement is postmodernism. The contemporary literature represents the present age. The contemporary American literature reflect a society a social, political view points, realistic characters, connection to current events and socio economic messages. The United States, which emerged from World War II confident and economically strong, entered the Cold War in the late 1940s. This conflict with the Soviet Union shaped global politics for more than four decades, and the proxy wars and threat of nuclear annihilation that came to define it were just some of the influences shaping American literature during the second half of the 20th century. The 1950s and '60s brought significant cultural shifts within the United States driven by the civil rights movement and the women's movement. Prior to the last decades of the 20th century, American literature was largely the story of dead white men who had created Art and of living white men doing the same. By the turn of the 21st century, American literature had become a much more complex and inclusive story grounded on a wide-ranging body of past writings produced in the United States by people of different backgrounds and open to more Americans in the present day.

Contemporary writings in modern narrative represent the dark side of human life. The writings of this era are completely different from the past era. The contemporary literature writers prove their uniqueness. They tend to narrate their prosperous lifestyle which inspired to have than the bitter reality. The contemporary writers have their unique features, high standards and style of writings. Many of their works discuss the social issues and it has got the power of influencing the people.

Contemporary Americans twenties century novels play an eminent role in the literary world. The term postmodernism attempts to cover the socio-economic, linguistic, politics and cultural difference of the American society. It is also known as post modernity. The literature produced during this phase, detail the clash and the differences in the American culture. Many writers aim to unfold the picture of history and form of writing. The new American literature contemporary writers aim to unfold the picture of history and reality of American society. They give importance of portraying the imaginative world than the concept of realism.

Feminism is a diverse collection of social theories, political movements and moral philosophies. Many people focus on analyzing what they believe to be social constructions of gender inequality and promoting women's rights, interests and issues. They believe to be treated equally in legal, economic and social arenas- regardless of gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity and other similar predominant identify. It begins by establishing a the gender and the feminist values, which include co-operation, respect, love, nurturance, justice, equity, honesty, sensitivity, perceptiveness, intuition, altruism, fair- ness, morality, and commitment.

Women's rights movement, also called women's liberation movement, diverse social movement, largely based in the United States, that in the 1960s and 1970s sought equal rights and opportunities and greater personal freedom for women. It coincides is recognized as part of the “second wave” of feminism. Second-wave feminists saw women's cultural and political inequalities as inextricably linked and encouraged women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and as reflecting sexist power structures. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, founder of the 19th century feminist movement and one of the women organized the Seneca Falls, N.Y., and Women’s Rights Convention of July 1848.

Marilynne summers Robinson was born on November 26, 1943 in Sandpoint, Idaho, U.S. she is an American novelist and essayist especially known for her elegant language and studied observation on religion in works of fiction and non-fiction. Robinson shoot up in *Coeur d’ Aene*, Idaho, daughter of taciturn father who worked in timber industry. David Summer her brother, the art historian dedicated his book *vision reflection and desire in Western Painting* to her. She did her undergraduate work at Pembroke College, the former women’s college at Brown University in of Washington in 1977.

Robinson was unknown in literary world when her first book *Housekeeping* published in 1980 which is a debut novel Robinson seeks her attention to her essays and book reviews for *Hapers magazine* and *the New York Times Book Review* her short story *Connie Bronson* was published in the Paris reviewing on 1986. Robinson came across a newspaper article on the Sella field complex which caused damage to the workers’ health and nearby community. She wrote an angry but reasonable article for *Harper’s magazine*

in response and also extended her thoughts in her first nonfiction book *Mother Country; Britain, the welfare state and nuclear pollution* (1989). She published a book of scholarly essay titled *The Death of Adam* (1998) that challenged the views accepted by John Calvin and Charles Darwin which raised on questions regarding how to live.

After long decade she came back with *Gilead* (2004) a fictional novel. She was praised for her elegant description and careful examination, winning the Pulitzer prize (2005) and the national book critics circle award for fiction this followed by *Homer* (2008) and *Lila*(2014). In *home* she revisited the characters of *Gilead*, the former Presbyterian minister Robert Bough Ton and his youngest daughter Glory who narrates the family drama that occurs but the side of events in *Gilead*. This novel received the orange prize for fiction (2009). *Lila* is prelude to *Gilead* that tells the story of Lila wife of John Ames. This novel is also well received and won the national book critics circle award in 2014.

Robinson also published collections of essays habitually defending her Christian faith. *Absence of mind; the dispelling of inwardness from the modern myth of the self* in (2010) continued by *When I Was a Child I Read Books* in 2012 and *The Givenness of Things* in 2015 deals with science, religion, politics and culture. She was awarded with National Humanities medal for her elegance and intelligence in writing. In 2012 Robinson was awarded the national humanities medal for her elegances and intelligence. In 2016 Robinson was named in time magazine's list of 100 most influential people. She has been writer in residence and also has delivered the University of oxfords annual Edmond Harmsworth lecture in American arts and letters at the universities Rother more American institute in May 2011. She is currently the professor of English and creative

writer at the Iowa writers workshop and lives in Iowa City. On January 24, 2013 Robinson was announced to be among the finalists for the 2013 Man Booker International Prize.

Robinson was raised as a Presbyterian later who became a Congregationalist, worshiping and sometimes preaching at the congregational United Church of Christ in Iowa City. Her congregationalism and her interest in the ideas of John Calvin have been significant in her works, including *Gilead*, which centers on the life and theological concerns of fictional Congregationalist minister. In an interview with “*The Church Times*” in 2012, Robinson said:” I think, if people actually read Calvin, rather than read Max Weber, he would be rebranded. He is a very respectable thinker”.

In November 2015, “*The New York Review of Books*” published two part conversation between Obama and Robinson, covering topics in American history and the role of faith in society. She won many awards including national book critics circle award for *Lila* in 2004 ambassador book award for *Gilead* in 2005, and library of congress prize for American fiction and Dayton literary peace prize in 2016. In 1967 she married Fred Miller Robinson a writer and professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and got divorced in 1989. They had two sons James and Joseph. Her Novel *Housekeeping* in the 1970s were in the evening while they slept the people. Robinson said that influenced her writing since motherhood changes her sense of life.

Alice walkers, Jonathan frozen, Michael carbon, Bret Easton ells, George saunter, Racheal Kushner, Anne Tyler. They are the best American novelists in the contemporary periods.

In *Housekeeping*, Robinson joins a legacy of female novelists like Radcliff, Austen, and Woolf who work to undo the constraint of separate spheres. Robinson's treatment of the domestic space differs from that of her predecessors because, as a woman writing during the height of second-wave feminism, she can envision a solution that was not feasible for the writers who came before her: Robinson's characters can actually leave the house; by the late 20th century, women could work outside the house. So she can conceive of a character like Sylvie, who spends the majority of her time in the public sphere. The problem lay in the residual ties from the rigid private and public sphere divide—though women could now work, they were still seen as somehow belonging to the house. As this tie had very real consequences for women, such as lower pay, second wave feminists sought to free the woman from this chain.

Jack novel was published in September 2020. It is fifth novel overall and her four in the *Gilead* sequence preceded by *Gilead* (2004), *Home* (2008) and *Lila* (2014), it is focuses on John Ames Jack Boughton, the troubled son of Robert Boughton. He was named after Roberts fired reverend John Ames the subject of *Gilead* (2004). It tells the story of the courtship of Della miles and Jack Boughton, an interracial couple in post-world war II St. Louis Missouri.

Gilead (2004) is an account of the memories and legacy of John Ames as he remembers his experiences of his father and grandfather to share with his son. All three men share a vocational lifestyle and profession as Congregationalist ministers in Gilead, Iowa. The novel appeals to everybody because spiritualism is a colorful umbrella which consists of various colors like compassion, forgiveness, human kind, harmony and love.

Home (2008) is a moving and healing book about families, personal secrets, and the passing of the generations, love, death and faith. Hundreds of thousands were enthralled by the luminous voice of John Ames in Gilead Marilynne Robinson's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel.

Marilynne Robinson's "*Lila*"(2014) is the story of a young woman who, was abandoned from home the migrant workers, and they kidnapped at a young age and cared for by Doll. Though her life is challenging, Lila finds herself in Gilead where she is befriended and later married by Reverend John Ames.

Housekeeping (1980) is not only in the domestic sense of cleaning, but in the larger sense of keeping a spiritual home for one's self and family in the face of loss, for the girls experience a series of abandonments as they come of age. Family frames identities and people define themselves, from the origination of their relationships. Marilynne Robinson's novel, *Housekeeping* narrates the story of the two sisters, Lucille and Ruth, with no father figure from the beginning of the novel. They lose their mother at a young age and pass through a series of female guardians and all of which are female. The text, narrated by Ruth, clearly says that the girls struggle to frame a relationship with a motherly figure at the homes they enter. During this search they struggle to identify themselves.

Housekeeping teaches us those polarizing contradictions that lead only to pain. Darkness and light, past and present, life and death—the whole of *Housekeeping* aims at removing the space and the boundaries between opposing forces. If stillness and movement are two dichotomies that follow this same pattern, then both Ruth and Lucille

have found only temporary solutions to pain. The true solution, the ideal state, would be something in between, a somehow stationary transience.

Chapter Two

Phenomenological Studies of Home

Marilynne Robinson the finalist of the Pulitzer Prize and the recipient of the Pen Hemingway Award for best first novel, *Housekeeping* remains one of the most mature and accomplished debuts in contemporary American fiction. Those reviewing the novel at the time of its original publication praised, its then unknown author for her command of language. As Le Anne Schreiber wrote in the *New York Times Book Review*, “Marilynne Robinson has written a First novel that one reads as slowly as poetry—and for the same reason: The language is so precise, so distilled, so beautiful that one does not want to miss any pleasure it might yield up to patience” (14). Anatole Broyard, also writing in the *New York Times*, observed:

Here’s a first novel that sounds as if the author has been treasuring it up all her life, waiting for it to form itself. It’s as if, in writing it, she broke through the ordinary human condition with all its dissatisfactions and achieved a kind of transfiguration. The readers can feel in the book is a gathering voluptuous release of confidence, a delighted surprise at the unexpected capacities of language, a close, careful fondness for people that we thought only saints felt.

As a modern classic, *Housekeeping* can bear any weight of interpretation. Like Fingerbone’s lake in the words of an early *New York Times* review, this novel is “about people who have not managed to connect with a place, a purpose, a routine or another person. It’s about the immensely resourceful sadness of a certain kind of American, someone who has fallen out of history and is trying to invent a life without assistance of

any kind, without even recognizing that there are precedents. It's a woman who is so far from everyone else that it would be presumptuous to put a name to her frame of mind". Water, it has become a mirror in which generations of new readers can find themselves, as if for the first time. The first, the reviews of *Housekeeping* were united in their admiration for the luminous subtlety of her work, and her powerfully simple, almost Biblical, way with language.

Subsequent critics have echoed this praise but broadened its reach to focus on the novel's rich and allusive texture and its resonant relation to a wide range of classic and contemporary works of American fiction. Thus, *Housekeeping* has been likened to novels as diverse as Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, as well as Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, E. Annie Proulx' *The Shipping News* and Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye*.

The novel is taught regularly in colleges and universities across the English-speaking world not only in courses on American literature and contemporary fiction but also in Women's Studies, Psychology, Philosophy and Religion programs. In recent years, it has twice been named one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century, and it has served as the inspiration for a highly praised film adaptation by the Scottish director Bill Forsyth.[1] Finally, *Housekeeping* has been the subject more than seventy scholarly articles, published in academic journals and monographs, ranging from *American Literature* and *Modern Fiction Studies* to *Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, *Philosophy and Literature*, *Religion and Literature* and the *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, as well as numerous Master's and doctoral dissertations, and this number continues to grow.

Established in the fictional town of Fingerbone in northern Idaho in the 1950s, *Housekeeping* tells the story of two young girls, Ruth and Lucille Stone, who are orphaned at an early age after their mother deposits them on their grandmother's doorstep and then drives her borrowed car into the Fingerbone lake that had claimed the life of her father and the girls' grandfather years earlier. As Ruth, the narrator of the novel, informs us early on in her narrative, she and her sister are raised by their grandmother until "one winter morning [she] eschewed awakening" (29). They are then briefly cared for by their elderly great aunts Lily and Nona Foster, who within weeks of arriving feel overwhelmed by the isolation of the small town and by the responsibility of looking after two young girls, and soon write to the girls' itinerant aunt Sylvie requesting that she return to Fingerbone to look after her young nieces. The novel focuses on the relationship that forms between Sylvie, Ruth and Lucille, and on the growing differences between the two girls.

At first, they are simply grateful to have someone to look after them after having experienced so many losses in their young lives. Gradually, however, Sylvie's eccentricities and her unconventional behavior drive a wedge between the two girls. Lucille, the more conservative and conventional of the two sisters, longs for a normal childhood, and is frustrated and embarrassed by her aunt, especially after discovering her asleep on a park bench in broad daylight in the middle of town. Ruth is less concerned with appearances and less attracted to the proprieties of middle-class life. She is also more dependent on her aunt, whom she comes to see as a surrogate mother. When Lucille leaves home to live with the local home economics teacher, Sylvie and Ruth are left alone until the townspeople become aware that Sylvie is initiating her impressionable niece into

a life of transience, at which time they threaten to take Ruth away from her aunt. The two respond by setting fire to the family home and crossing the bridge over the lake and disappearing into legend. In fact, the townspeople believe that Sylvie and Ruth have perished in trying to make this dangerous crossing, and more than one commentator on the novel has come to the same conclusion, suggesting that Ruth is a ghost narrating her story from the grave, while others believe the novel describes the social death of the young girl.

Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping* has been described as a pending of stage story, a trauma narrative, an "extended prose poem in the form of a novel," and a "primer on the mystical life." [2] Whatever the differences among these diverse interpretations, virtually all commentators agree it is a rich and challenging novel that both requires and rewards our careful attention. In an interview with Thomas Schaub, Robinson states that she wrote *Housekeeping* as an experiment, with no idea of ever seeing the book published. "What I was doing . . . was writing little bits of narrative because I was working on a dissertation and wanted to still see what I could write (233). Specifically, she claims to have wanted to write a novel that would "galvanize all the resources that novels have, the first being language, what language sounds like and how it's able to create simulations of experience in the reader... (235). Robinson's love and command of language are evident on virtually every page of the novel.

In fact, it is this aspect of *Housekeeping* that has led many readers to liken it to poetry. The comments of the English novelist Doris Lessing in her review of the novel are typical of the response of many readers. "I found myself reading slowly and then more slowly—this is not a novel to be hurried through for every sentence is a

delight.”[3] But this attention to language is not without its challenges for the reader. To begin with, Robinson often seems more interested in language and the various ways it may be used to convey the subtle movements of Ruth’s mind than she is in plot or the more mundane expository details of setting or characterization. This is not to suggest that the novel lacks a clear plot or a strong sense of character or place. In fact, quite the opposite is true.

The characters of Ruth, Lucille and Sylvie are clearly drawn, as is the town of Fingerbone. Furthermore, there is a clear straightforward plot that runs throughout the novel. But this plot is frequently subordinated to long lyrical, philosophical passages that may on a first reading seem to have little direct connection to the forward movement of Ruth’s narrative. Yet a more careful reading of the novel reveals that even the tiniest detail in these digressions is integral to our understanding of Ruth’s character and to the emotional, psychological and spiritual growth that she experiences over the course of the novel.

For example, in a chapter recounting the first days after Aunt Sylvie’s return to Fingerbone to look after the girls, Ruth describes her and Lucille’s futile efforts to build a snow man that would survive “the three days of brilliant sunshine and four of balmy rain” that announced the arrival of spring:

We put one big ball of snow on top of another, and carved them down with kitchen spoons till we made a figure of a woman in long dress, her arms folded. It was Lucille’s idea that she should look to the side, and while I knelt and whittled folds into her skirt, Lucille stood on the kitchen stool and molded her chin and nose and her hair. It happened that I swept her skirt a little back from her hip, and that her arms were folded

on her breasts. It was mere accident—the snow was firmer here and softer there, and in some places we had to pat clean snow over old black leaves that had been rolled up into the snowballs we made her from—but her shape became a posture. And while in any particular she seemed crude and lopsided, altogether her figure suggested a woman standing in a cold wind. It seemed that we had conjured a presence... (60-1).

Eventually, as the days grow milder, Ruth describes the collapse of this figure one feature at a time, until finally “she was a dog-yellowed stump in which neither of us would admit any interest” (61). The novel for the first time often experiences frustration at the slow pace of Ruth’s narrative precisely because of this sort of digression. Conditioned by more conventional, plot-driven novels, they are anxious to find out what happens next and puzzled or annoyed that Robinson has Ruth devote so much attention to such seemingly inconsequential details. Yet, as becomes evident on a more careful reading of Ruth’s narrative, there is a point to this detour or digression that has little to do with the plot per se or even with the establishment of verisimilitude. In fact, the passage quoted above is one of many in which Ruth unconsciously reveals her and her sister’s desire for a maternal presence in their lives. It is significant therefore that the snow man becomes a snow woman and then “a shape” that assumes “a posture” before it is described as an “a woman standing in the wind” and finally “a presence.” Like their mother Helen, their grandmother Sylvia Foster, and their great aunts Lily and Nona Foster, this maternal presence is destined to disappear, leaving them alone with their thoughts and their fears of abandonment. Moreover, the image of the snow woman appears later in the novel as well in a passage in which Ruth describes her thoughts and feelings after she is left alone in the woods by her aunt Sylvie. Reflecting on her loneliness and the remoteness of her

surroundings, Ruth muses, “If there had been snow I would have made a statue, a woman to stand along the path, among the trees (153). In other words, there are few if any accidental details in Robinson’s novel; each word or image is carefully chosen for its emotional effect and its insight into the characters of Ruth, Lucille and Sylvie.

Housekeeping challenges readers in other ways as well. As many critics have pointed out, Robinson’s prose style is rich in echoes of and allusions to other books and other writers. For instance, even the first sentence in the novel— the simple declaration “My name is Ruth”—contains two significant allusions: the first to the *Book of Ruth* from the Hebrew Bible; the second to Melville’s *Moby Dick*, which begins with an equally resonant first sentence —“Call me Ishmael.” Just as Melville has deliberately chosen to identify the narrator and protagonist of his novel with the wayward son of Abraham and Hagar, both the name of Robinson’s narrator, protagonist and the basic structure of her narrative deliberately call to mind the Biblical story of Ruth and Naomi. Like her Biblical namesake, Ruth Stone chooses exile with a surrogate mother over the security of a settled life in her homeland; and like the Ruth of the Hebrew Bible, she is unwavering in her commitment to this figure. Indeed, the Biblical figure’s words to her mother-in-law are embodied in Ruth’s attachment to Sylvie: “Whither thou guest, I shall go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge” (*The Book of Ruth* 1: 16). In fact, Biblical allusions and echoes recur throughout *Housekeeping*, ranging from the flood that occurs in Fingerbone shortly after Sylvie’s arrival to Ruth’s references to Lot’s wife, Barabbas, Lazarus, and to the theme of resurrection that runs like an obstinate pattern throughout the novel. Once again, these echoes are far from accidental. As Robinson has stated repeatedly in interviews over the years, she grew up reading the Bible and nineteenth century

American literature, and both her prose style and her formal and thematic preoccupations have been profoundly influenced by these two literary traditions.

Finally, *Housekeeping* challenges its readers not only through its reliance on lengthy poetic and philosophical passages that demand us to attend to metaphor and imagery as carefully as we do plot and characterization, or even through its extensive use of allusion and intertextuality to develop many of its central themes; it also challenges us by encouraging us to re-think some of our most basic assumptions about the relation of the individual to society, and about the relationship between the world of appearances and an alternate reality that lies beneath the material or phenomenal world. Indeed, Ruth's narrative forces us to reconsider our most basic assumptions about the institutions of family and home, and about their opposites, solitude and homelessness. Most of us are brought up to seek the former and to fear the latter. As Sylvia Foster, the girls' grandmother and the voice of conventional wisdom in the novel, tell her granddaughters shortly before she dies, "So long as you look after your health, and own the roof over your head, you're as safe as anyone can be..." (27). In *Housekeeping*, however, Robinson turns this idea on its head, suggesting in a variety of ways, and through a variety of metaphors, that homelessness is the essential condition of being human. As Anne-Marie Mallon notes, "Homelessness is not only the primary condition of the novel, but also becomes Robinson's metaphor for transcendence" (96).

In fact, for Ruth, and for Sylvie, who is her teacher or spiritual guide throughout the novel, transcendence entails not only the abandonment of home and the material and emotional comforts associated with it, but also the abnegation of the self and of the concept of an embodied identity. In one of the most memorable passages in the novel,

Ruth voices this desire as she sits alone in the woods on a cold, winter morning reflecting on loss and loneliness: “Let them unhouse me of this flesh, and pry this house apart. It was no shelter now, it only kept me here alone, and I would rather be with them, if only to see them, even if they turned away from me... (159). Here the body is regarded as the soul’s material shelter, but like the material world itself, it is less real than the ideal world of dreams and desire. What Ruth longs for at this moment is a shaking off of this corporeal shelter so that she might be reunited with her mother, her grandmother and even her grandfather in a life after death.

The essays in this casebook have been chosen to introduce students and general readers to the critical commentary that Marilynne Robinson’s *Housekeeping* has inspired since it was first published almost forty years ago, and to provide a wide variety of contexts for reading this rich and challenging novel. While there is a clear consensus that it is one of the most brilliant debut novel’s in contemporary fiction, this selection highlights that *Housekeeping* may be read in many different ways and from a variety of critical and theoretical perspectives. They have limited the selections to what they believe are the most interesting, insightful and accessible interpretations of the novel, reflecting the diverse critical and theoretical perspectives that have been brought to bear on the book. For those readers interested in learning more about the growing body of criticism devoted to *Housekeeping*, They have included a list of further readings at the end of this volume.

Chapter Three

Feminist Victory

The fiction of Marilyn Robinson *Housekeeping* is a beautiful is the development of the two young girls whose growth through adolescence is continually shadowed and complicated by paternal abandonment and suicide. They are left at their grandmother's porch as their mother drives off a bridge, Ruth and Lucille are raised by a series of female relatives. This largely female cast has proved particularly alluring to feminist critics, who are perhaps too eager to claim Ruth and Sylvie's ultimate departure from the patriarchal, symbolic order as a story of feminist victory. Julia Kristeva's is Bulgarian-French philosopher, literary critic, Semiotician, Psychoanalyst, Feminist, and most recently a Novelist. She is now a professor emeritus at the University Paris. The author of more than 30 books, including *power of horror*, *Tales of Love*, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, *Proust and the Sense of Time*, and the trilogy *Female Genius*. Julia Kristeva analyses of the novel tempers and the claim of other feminist critics by skillfully demonstrating how "the novel's feminist charge resides equally in the tension it *sustains* between symbolic and semiotic realms" (565). Drawing from the language and work of Julia Kristeva, it's clear that Ruth, despite her obvious links to the semiotic, is quite unwilling to relinquish all ties to the symbolic. Her role as narrator is firmly located in the linguistic order. It is worthwhile to widen this critical lens and even further and include Kristeva view of the semiotic as not just a source of creativity and joy, but as an horrible source and depression. In doing so, the critic is open to explore a deep sadness in Ruth, whose life seems driven more by a desire to replace loss than by a search for self-fulfillment. Such an understanding helps explain why this feminist "victory" feel to so

hollow, and why Lucille-- who strives to individuate and find a role in society need no longer to be as a marginalized.

Julia Kristeva, a primary figure in "French Feminism," draws on her rich psychoanalytic background to explore women's issues. She considered a Lacanian psychoanalyst, she nonetheless makes some significant breaks with Lacan's thinking and terminology. Like Lacan, she believes that a child's movement from the pre-oedipal to the Oedipal is marked by the development of the subjectivity located within and constituted by language. For Lacan, this passage (his "mirror stage") marks the Child's movement from the realms of the real and the imaginary for her own term "semiotic" (not to be confused with semiotics, the study of sign systems), maintains the concept of subjectivity arising from movement into a symbolic realm (Lacan's use of the word "symbolic" is typically capitalized while Kristeva's is not). Kristeva's semiotic refers to a paralinguistic arena associated with the mother's body, its rhythms and a lack differentiation between self and others.

Robinson's Housekeeping manifests this symbolic dialectic as a struggle between the house and the lake. The order and stability of the house is constantly threatened by the lake's power to flood, rupture structures, and efface the boundaries between land, air and water. The lake's water also has a long history of claiming lives, including those of Ruth's mother and grandfather. Like Kristeva's semiotic, the lake is a mix of creative and destructive forces. The same water that floods the land and generates new growth in the spring will later destroy homes and claim lives. "One is always aware of the lake in Fingerbone", Ruth states, "...when the ground is plowed in the spring, cut and laid open, what exhales from the furrows but that same, sharp, watery smell. The wind is watery..."

water suspended in sunlight, sharp as the breath of an animal, which brims inside this circle of mountains” (9). Vigilance is required to keep the house and land in order, to prevent the lake from reclaiming the land.

The Vigilance Robinson alludes to is also a spiritual and psychic one, as in the Christian injunction to “keep one’s house in order.” In Kristeva terms, this can be seen as the need for the symbolic to impose some kind of structure on the semiotic. It is just this ordering that proves so difficult for Ruth. Ruth, who is certainly aware of the loss of her mother, has nonetheless never had this separation clarified by the intervention of a “third term.” Her dead mother, in fact is a continuing presence that constantly floats on the border of Ruth’s existence. It is especially predominant in her dreams and memories. Walking through town, she disassociates from the gaze of strangers by “thinking about my mother. In my dream I had waited for her confidently...Such confidence was like a sense of an imminent presence, a palpable displacement, the movement in the air before the wild comes”(121). This is a far cry from the “matricide” that Kristeva claims are essential to healthy emotional development. It is, instead, an unhealthy preoccupation that prohibits Ruth’s assimilation into the symbolic realm. Ruth conflates Sylvie with her mother. Watching Sylvie comb her hair in front of a mirror, Ruth comments,

“Sylvie’s head falls to the side and we see the blades of my mother’s shoulders and the round bones at the top of her spine. Helen is the woman in the mirror, the woman in the dream, the woman remembered, the woman in the water, her nerves guide the blind fingers that touch into place all the falling strands of Sylvie’s hair”(131,132).

Later she even goes so far as to call Sylvie “Helen” (167). Her thoughts at that time:

Anyone that leans to look into a pool is the woman in the pool, anyone who looks into our eyes is the image in our eyes, and these things are true without argument, and so our thoughts reflect what appears before them. But there are difficulties... the faceless shape in front of me could be as well be Helen herself as Sylvie. I spoke to her by the name Sylvie, and she did not answer. The how was one to know? And if she were Helen in my sight, how could she not be Helen in fact? (166,167)

These are difficulties indeed. Ruth is caught in a Lacanian *mise en abyme*, a series of constantly reflecting images that accentuate her decentered position. The metaphor of Lacan’s “mirror stage” is particularly apt here, and it is significant that this Lacanian concept coincides with Kristeva’s point of a subject’s accession into the symbolic order. This move proves impossible because Ruth impossible, in with the relationship with her sister and aunt can be seen as attempts to reclaim the fluid boundaries of self which characterize the mother-child combination. She describes her relationship with Lucille for example as “most a single consciousness”, and of her ultimate relationship with Sylvie she notes, “the measure of our intimacy[was] that she gave almost no thought to me at all” (98,195). The boundary between self and other is never fully realized.

Fragmented and ethereal, Ruth’s worldview is characterized by deep sadness and a yearning for structure: “[Lucille and I] walked the blocks from the lake to our grandmother’s house, jealous to the light and the somnolent warmth of the houses we

passed” (35), “what are all these fragments for” she asks, “if not to be knit up finally?” (92). This is not a young woman who rejoices in freedom from society’s strictures, this is a “towering child” whose language is notable for its frequent references to loss and loneliness (97). To be separated from Sylvie, Ruth states, “could indeed lead to loneliness intense enough to make one conspicuous in bus stations” (68). Later, discussing people in bus stations, she imagines that for them. “Loneliness is an absolute discovery”, and she refers to “the embarrassments of loneliness” (157,158).

It is the threat of this loneliness that ultimately pushes Ruth into full acceptance of Sylvie’s transient lifestyle. Lucille’s move with the economics teacher Miss Royce and leaves Ruth feeling isolated and her need to maintain some appearance of the mother child combo is compelling. “Anyone with one solid human bond,” she claims, “is that smug, and it is the smugness as much as the comfort and safety that lonely people covet and admire. I had been, so to speak, turned out of house now long enough to have observed this in myself (154). This “turning out of house”, this weakening attachment to the symbolic order, is something that Ruth associates with the loneliness of the homeless and transient, with the ghosts of abandoned children.

Seeking out these ghosts occasions the night on the lake with Sylvie—a night which marks a point of no return for Ruth. This is when the lake truly claims her, when her thoughts most clearly reveal a willingness to be reabsorbed into the semiotic. With prayer like formality she states, “Let them come unhouse me of this flesh, and pry this house apart. It was no shelter now, it only kept me her alone, and I would rather be with [the ghost children]” (159). Having made the connection between house and body

explicit, Ruth then goes on to connect this longing to a desire for reunion to with the mother:

If I could see my mother, it would not have to be her eyes, her hair. I would not need to touch her sleeve. There was no more the stop of her high shoulders. The lake had taken that, I knew. It was so very long since the dark had swum her hair, and there was nothing more to dream of, but often she almost slipped through any door I saw from the side of my eye and it was she, and not changed, and not perished. She was a music I no longer heard, that rang in my mind, itself and nothing else, lost to all sense, but not perished, not perished. (160)

These words, so full of longing for her mother, are immediately followed by scenes complete with symbolic rebirth. Sylvie steps into the role of mother and draws Ruth back into the calming rhythms of the semiotic by “sway[ing] us to some slow song she did not sing” (160). A new combination established:” I could feel the pleasure she took in my dependency, and more than once she stooped to look into my face... it was as if she were studying her own face in a mirror”(161). Lying in the bottom of the boat, wrapped in Sylvie’s coat, Ruth feels “like a seed in a husk” waiting for the shell to fall away so that she “the nub the sleeping germ” could come to “parturition in some form” (162).

The regression of rebirth yearns for home and structure that characterized Ruth at the beginning of the novel is replaced by an acceptance of its loss. “I would be lost to ordinary society”, she comments, “I would be a ghost”, (183). Ruth begins to show

evidence of the symptoms Kristeva associates with a fragile symbolic order. Ruth loses her ability to communicate with Lucille: it seemed Lucille was talking to me. I think she said that I need not with Sylvie... I am sure that she spoke to me in all sober kindness, but I could not hear a word she said" (175). Now Ruth claims to "[speak] only to Sylvie" (183). This moment toward a symbolic is explicitly evidenced in Ruth comment, it was absurd to think that things were held in place, are held in place by a web of words" (200). Her sense of self has been reduced to a slim "I "and even" that slenderest word," she states, "is too gross for the rare thing I was then" (214).

In contrast to her own slim "I", Ruth describes Lucille as having "eyes" wide open to Sylvie's instability. While Ruth acknowledges that "clearly our aunt was not a stable person", it is Lucille who repeatedly attempts to expose the inconsistencies in Sylvie's stories and the inadequacies of her housekeeping. One summer evening, for example, as the three sat together in darkness, Lucille suddenly "stood up and pulled the chain of the overhead light" (100). In doing so, she exposed:

The cluttered kitchen... [The] heaps of pots and dished, the two cupboard doors which had come unhinged... everywhere the paint was chipped and marred. A great shadow of soot loomed up the wall and across the ceiling above the stove, and the stove pipe and the cupboard tops were thickly felted with dust. (101).

Lucille refuses complicity with Sylvie's style of housekeeping, a housekeeping whose goal appears to be the gradual devolution of house into earth. Earlier, when Sylvie first arrived, Lucille had fired a sequence of blunt questions: "would you tell us about

[our mother]? ... But what was she like? ... What was [our father]like? What kind of work did he do? ... (50,51). These evidence Lucille's desire for hard foundation to her personal story, a foundation upon which she might build an identity. Sylvie fails to provide the structure Lucille seeks. Ruth remarks of their different attitude toward Sylvie: "I was content with Sylvie, so it was a surprise to me when I realized that Lucille had begun to regard other people with the calm, horizontal look settled purpose with which, from a slowly sinking boat, she might have regarded a not - too - distant shore" (92). Lucille does not wish to sink in the vague and timeless semiotic realm which has absorbed her aunt and which appears to claiming her sister.

The lifeline thrown to Lucille comes in the form of Miss Royce. A home economics teacher, Miss Royce is devoted to the study of keeping house, of imposing structure and checking disorder, she affords Lucille with Kristeva's "third term", a person who acts as "paternal metaphor" and facilitates creation of the psychic space necessary for movement into the symbolic. Sensing the worsening of her own home structure, Lucille is eager to gain admittance into a stable environment. She "walked around [Miss Royce's] house, rapping at every window she could reach, until... she was incited in" (140).

Lucille's need to escape coincides with her physical maturation. This parallel highlights the developmental suitability of Lucille's movement toward selfhood. Ruth's physical maturation, in contrast, seems frozen in time. "While [Lucille] became a small woman", says Ruth, "I became a towering child" [97]. Lucille automatically realized that staying with Sylvie would delay her emotional growth. She relates a dream: "I was a baby, lying on my back, yelling and then someone came and started wrapping me up in

blankets. She put them all over my face, so I couldn't tell she was trying to smother me" (120). This dream accurately reveals both the allure and the danger of semiotic realm. For Lucille, it is time to assimilate into the symbolic.

It is not coincidental that Lucille's determination to "make something of herself" evidences itself as a wholehearted embrace of language (132). In full accord with Kristeva's idea of selfhood as being constituted in and by language, Lucille "threw herself down in the grass with *Ivanhoe* and *The Light That Failed* and *Wuthering Heights* and *Little Men* and *National Geographic*..."(132). She begins to keep a diary. Ruth sense that she herself "was more the image of Sylvie with every day that passed", and knows Lucille [will] soon be gone [133,134]. The contrast between the two sisters is particularly pointed in the scene where they are called into the principal's office. Lucille does most of the talking for herself and Ruth. The principal comments to Ruth "You are going to have to learn to speak for yourself, and think for yourself..." (135).

Ruth never does not learn to speak for self. The narrators of Robinson's novel always speak for a combination, for the "we" of "Sylvie and I". The sadness of Ruth and Sylvie's position at the end of the novel is underscored by Ruth's word choice. She tells the reader that she and Sylvie "had to leave", that they were "cast out to wander" (209). They do not click their heels with glees they joyfully escape patriarchy. Feminists, any humanist for that matter, would do better to recognize the rich and complex interactions needed for individuation. In a society where family structures are undergoing radical changes, Kristeva's theories and Robin's work suggest a more fruitful feminist agenda. With single parent homes and same sex marriage on the rise, careful study is needed to determine how teachers, social workers, family friends, therapists and others can provide

that needed “third party”. Ruth claims, “The sorrow is that every soul is put out of house” (179). Perhaps, but the joy is that a healthy individual is free to build a new and more personalized home.

Chapter Four

Cult of Domesticity

Author Marilyn Robinson's attempts cult of domesticity in her novel *Housekeeping*. Published in 1980 and set in 1960, the novel spans much of the time frame of Friedan and Matthews' writing, but reaches back to the 19th century for inspiration and adopts many tropes from the gothic novel. *Housekeeping* is narrated by Ruth, who tells the story of her childhood in the fictional town of Fingerbone, Idaho. Ruth and her sister Lucille are raised by her grandmother after her mother, Helen, who commits suicide by driving a car into a cliff into the lake. After their grandmother's death, the girls are cared for by their aunt Sylvie, down to whose odd interpretation of domesticity sparks a series of events that forever change both Ruth and the family house. Like the gothic novel, *Housekeeping* features women attentive in the house engaged by ghosts and, despite the absence of living male characters; they are still subject to patriarchal influence. In *Housekeeping* family, the very thing that makes the house "a place of refuge, comfort and rest" also becomes "the unfamiliar... that directly disperses [the familiar]" (Ng 2). As Andrew Hock Soon Ng explains in *Women and Domestic Space in Contemporary Gothic Narratives*, the fact that the house is capable of creating this dichotomy, and of being both the site of patriarchal authority as well as female empowerment, marks the house's function "as more than just a stage for narrative unfolding.... The subject of many gothic works is not just their principle character, but also frequently the house itself" (4-5).

In *Housekeeping*, Robinson creates a new American gothic; like her 19th century predecessors, Robinson (who was herself a housewife before she became a novelist) writes about the house in order to undermine the traditional understanding of domesticity that continued to constrain women through the end half of the 20th century. Like the traditional gothic, *Housekeeping* features a “domestic space that has the power to unnerve, fragment, and even destroy its inhabitant unless something is done to arrest it and restore order and normalcy back to the house”(Ng 1). The house in the novel, as the domestic space, is built to be a sanctuary from the outside world but is instead a place of inescapable trauma. This trauma threatens the protagonist’s well-being and, eventually, her very existence; to survive it, Ruth, in the role of the artist figure, deconstructs the home and remakes the very concept of domesticity.

In writing the house, Robinson joins a legacy of female novelists like Radcliff, Austen, and Woolf who work to undo the constraint of separate spheres. Robinson’s treatment of the domestic space differs from that of her predecessors because, as a woman writing during the height of second-wave feminism, she can envision a solution that was not feasible for the writers who came before her: Robinson’s characters can actually leave the house; by the late 20th century, women could work outside the house. So she can conceive of a character like Sylvie, who spends the majority of her time in the public sphere. The problem lay in the residual ties from the rigid private and public sphere divide—though women could now work, they were still seen as somehow belonging to the house. As this tie had very real consequences for women, such as lower pay, second wave feminists sought to free the woman from this chain.

However, this possible solution of the woman outside the house uncovers new difficulties that Radcliff, Austen, and Woolf did not encounter; second-wave feminist sand novelists had to negotiate the problem of expulsion. In leaving the house, does the woman bar herself from returning? This, of course, would not be ideal, as the desired end is not a destruction of the separate spheres but simply the system that requires women to exist solely in one: “The private sphere [does not have] more intrinsic worth than the public sphere. Rather, there are certain important values that are generated in each realm. A disproportionate emphasis on one realm at the expense of the other impoverishes the whole of life” (Matthews 226).

Similarly, Robinson’s novel asks the question, ‘does a rejection of domesticity require a similar abandonment of femininity? If we understand the traditional concept of domesticity to revolve around a peaceful, serene household created by the woman for her husband in the name of safety, what might domesticity look like if the woman is not bound by societal expectation to create it? The sense of domesticity created by the woman, for herself, cannot be imagined.

Housekeeping seeks to answer these questions by destabilizing the traditional concepts of domesticity and the home. The reader will describe how the house engenders and maintains trauma rather than safety, despite the best intentions. Despite the lack of men, the house is still a place of suffering because the women still belong to the house and cannot leave even when there is no safety left and the very boundaries that define the house erode. The chapter will discuss Ruth’s journey out of this cycle of pain through her transformation to artist figure. As a creative force, Ruth can undo the constraints of the house and construct a new form of domesticity.

The house at the heart of Robinson's novel is built with a set of guiding principles in mind. Like the *Housekeeping* in the gothic novel, it is meant to be a safe heaven for the family. When Ruth's grandfather, Mr. Foster, decides to settle down in Fingerbone, he does so "trailing us after him unborn" (149) his family, even before fully existing, guides the creation of the house. This focus on family does not fade over time, as Ruth begins the novel by introducing herself and her relatives through their relation to the house:

My name is Ruth. I grew up with my younger sister, Lucille, under the care of my grandmother, Mrs. Sylvia Foster, and when she died, of her sisters-in-law, Misses Lily and Nona Foster, and when they fled, of her daughter, Mrs. Sylvie Fisher. Through all these generations of elders we lived in one house, my grandmother's house, built for her by her husband.

(3)

"All these generation of elders" lived in the house; the structure is so tied to the Foster family history and identity that Ruth can neither begin her story nor introduce herself without first placing herself and her family lineage in the house. So closely tied are the Foster family and the house that Ruth offers the lineage of the house immediately after describing her own. Ruth's introduction also shows that the house is meant, more specifically, as a safe haven for the women of the family. Thus the house, though built by her grandfather, is her "grandmother's house." Through all the generations listed, the house does not change hands because Mr. Foster builds it for her, it remains Mrs. Foster's after his death, and even after hers. Mrs. Foster does not take this issue of ownership lightly, as she understands the perilous position of women in the mid-20th century: "Sell the orchards,' she would say... "But keep the house. So long as you look after your

health and own the roof above your head, you're as safe as anyone can be" (27). Both grandfather and grandmother are well aware of the natural dangers outside the house, but Mrs. Foster here is referencing a different kind of safety. She tells Ruth 'as safe as anyone can be,' but the unspoken message is 'as safe as any woman can be.' As the women of her generation are relegated to the home, Sylvia understands the need to preserve and maintain that safe space for women; having uprooted herself to follow her own husband to Fingerbone, Ruth's grandmother knows firsthand the benefits of a solid foundation. Her house ties her to Fingerbone, gives her roots and allows them to grow stronger, which become invaluable when tragedy strikes. Mr. Foster dies in a train accident that rocks the community and ends with the train at the bottom of the lake, after which no bodies can be recovered. Mrs. Foster has a the reason and the luxury to stay, but the other two new widows of the town are not so fortunate both leave their old lives behind, "one to live with a married daughter in North Dakota and the other to find any friends or kin in Sewickley, Pennsylvania, which she had left as a bride" (8). Without owning their own home, they are forced to leave their old lives and find shelter in the home of someone else—some other male presence. Mrs. Foster, however, owns her home and is thus able to maintain the integrity of her family after the loss of the father and head of the household.

The safety and independence afforded by the house, Mr. Foster builds the structure with some specific boundaries in mind. Firstly, the house must separate itself from the landscape surrounding it. Ruth's grandfather "had grown up in the Middle West, in a house dug out of the ground... from without, the house was a mere mound, no more a human stronghold than a grave" (3). Though in execution, this first ancestral home is

more reminiscent of a grave than anything else, the original intention is clear: the structure was meant to be a “human stronghold” against the elements. Ruth’s description paints this first house as a humble shelter daring to defy a barren, harsh landscape, an image that follows Mr. Foster as he makes his way from the desert to the mountains and finally to Fingerbone. Consequently, the house he builds for his own family is a prouder, improved stronghold against nature: it stands on a hill, far from the reaches of the lake’s yearly floods. Finger bone’s lake is not the only threat, however; in fact, all of the natural features and elements of the area seem to wage war against the house. During the winters “limbs from the apple orchard flew against the side of the house” and “the wind [would] badger the house, throwing frozen rain against the windows” (36, 49). From the onset, then, the house must withstand, push against, and exclude the forces of nature.

This protection from the natural world becomes all the more important as Ruth starts to equate the lake with death. Mr. Foster and the other unfortunate train passengers lie at the bottom of its depths, as does Ruth’s mother Helen, and after Mrs. Foster’s death, Ruth places her in the lake as well. After reading her grandmother’s obituary, Ruth dreams that she walked on the surface of the lake, “but in the dream the surface I walked on proved to be knit up of hands and arms and upturned faces... The dream and the obituary together created in my mind the conviction that my grandmother had entered into some other element” (41). The hands and arms that she imagines are the bodies of all the lake’s dead. By adding her grandmother, who did not drown in the lake, to this “element,” Ruth imagines the lake to be a sort of purgatory: its inhabitants do not belong in houses with the living, but they remain present on earth.

The house is also built to be equally isolated from the town. As Ruth explains, “Our whole family was standoffish... That we were self-sufficient, our house reminded us always. If its fenestration was random, if its corners were out of square, my grandfather had built it himself, knowing nothing whatsoever of carpentry” (74). The Fosters prize their self-sufficiency over community, so the house is purposefully removed from the social center of the town: after a particularly bad flooding that threatens to wipe Fingerbone off the map, Ruth notes “[my grandfather] had the good judgment to set [the house] on a hill, so while others were pushing drowned mattresses out second-story windows, we simply spooled up our living-room rug and propped it on the porch step” (74). The family, already physically distant from the town, grows emotionally distant as well when Fingerbone’s natural disaster leaves them essentially untouched: they cannot share in the suffering, and their relative wealth sets them apart from the newly destitute town people. This isolation results in a much-desired sense of privacy. Mrs. Foster, for whom the house is built, so enjoys the peaceful solitary existence of a housewife in a lonely house that her husband’s death has little effect on the life in the house, perhaps because it was “not altogether unanticipated. How many times had she walked in the morning to find him gone?” (10). If anything, his death heightens the most peaceful effects of the original founding principles. The house becomes intensely private because Mr. Foster’s death removes the family entirely from the public sphere:

With him gone they were cut free from the troublesome possibilities of success, recognition, and advancement. They had no reason to look forward, nothing to regret. Their lives spun off the tilting world like thread off a spindle, breakfast time, suppertime, lilac time, apple time...if

immortality was to be this life held in poise and arrest...it is no wonder that five serene, eventless years lulled my grandmother into forgetting what she should never have forgotten. (13)

With the loss of the only male member of the household, the remaining members of the Foster family are released from the worries of the public world. Free from the demands of success and advancement, Mrs. Foster and her three daughters seem to fall away from the course of history. They belong not to the world now, but only to themselves, and out of this intense privacy Mrs. Foster creates her own little paradise. The new living circumstance is described as a kind of heaven, with “immortality” and “serene, eventless years,” free from “troublesome possibilities” and regrets.

The Foster women also fall away from time. Life continues in the house, but time has somehow stalled; nothing develops or changes, but neither does it end. Their life becomes an endless dependable routine: “breakfast time, suppertime, lilac time, and apple time.” Having lost ties to, and therefore the influence from, the masculine outside world, the house is feminized. The girls abandon the standard measurements of time in favor of chronological markers that reflect domestic yet poetic activities. For Mrs. Foster, this simplicity marks a “resurrection of the ordinary,” a return to the stability and comfort she had felt before her husband’s death (18). Built originally to provide safety, the house also provides stability, and continues to do so even after Mrs. Foster’s death. When Lily and Nona, the two maiden aunts who come to care for Ruth and Lucille, consider asking Sylvie to care for the girls instead, they discuss her unconventionality and then consider how to fix them:

“Perhaps some attention from her family...”

“A family can help.”

“Responsibility might help.”

The spoons went round and round in cups until someone finally said,

“... A sense of home” (39).

Lily and Nona have heard some rumors about Sylvie’s eccentricities; she is difficult to judge as she is constantly moving and her address is perpetually changing. Sylvie is, then, unstable—a condition which might be helped by attention, family, and responsibility. Ultimately, though, the only antidote to her variability is a matched stability created by a sense of home; the house itself can act as an influencing factor and a method for stability. Either Lily or Nona pronounces this answer, but the text reads ‘someone,’ as though a collective voice has spoken some eternal truth. Just as Mrs. Foster enjoys the simplicity of the isolated house, she revels in the routine created after Mr. Foster’s death. It is she who craves the “resurrection of the ordinary,” the “dear ordinary” (15). Out of this pervasive routine comes an equally pervasive silence:

Her girls were quiet...because the customs and habits of their lives had almost relieved them of the need for speech. Sylvie took her coffee with two lumps of sugar, Helen liked her toasts dark, and Molly took hers without butter. These things were known...perfect quiet had settled into their house after the death of their father. (15)

The house becomes silent and still Mrs. Foster’s death. Lily and Nona never wished to care for children, but they accept the care of Lucille and Ruth because

“I’m sure they’d be quiet.”

“They’re very quiet.”

“Girls always are.” (37)

Girls are always quiet, even in the house—because the house itself is quiet. This silence contributes to the serenity that Mrs. Foster craves. So the house, built by Mr. Foster as a safe haven for his family and specifically for his wife, relies on the boundaries between itself and the surrounding environment, both natural and social, to protect that safety. It appears that his efforts have not gone to waste, as after his death Mrs. Foster and her daughters are left alone to create their own private feminine space. Consequently, the house becomes serene, timeless, routine, and quiet. So the physical structure of the house is built to ensure the safety of its inhabitants, particularly its women. Through isolation and enforced boundaries, the house achieves this desired peaceful existence, but because *Housekeeping* follows in the gothic tradition, we might foresee that this safety is but an illusion that will soon fall.

The home-space in Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*, Ruth shows that the house, which was earlier peaceful and harmonious during the life of her grandmother, becomes ineffective with the coming of her aunt Sylvie. In discussing how Robinson epitomizes the meaning of dwelling as well as homelessness, the reader show how the characters relate to their domestic place, both physically and psychologically. The readers illustrate the powerful relation between the individual dweller and the space they inhabits. In so doing, they use the theory of genius loci or The Spirit of Place that the Norwegian architect Christian Norberg-Schulz conceptualizes in relation to the existence of place as a being. By using this theory as a way to provide a fresh look at Robinson's novel, they discuss *Housekeeping* as a narrative about spatial crisis. They show how the domestic place metamorphoses from meaningfulness to meaninglessness.

Chapter Five

Summation

American literature is the written or literary work produced in the area of the United States and its preceding colonies. American literature was shaped by the history of the country that produced it. For almost a century and a half, America was merely a group of colonies scattered along the eastern seaboard of the North American continent colonies from which a few hardy souls tentatively ventured westward. After a successful rebellion against the motherland, America became the United States, a nation.

By the end of the 19th century this nation extended southward to the Gulf of Mexico, northward to the 49th parallel, and westward to the Pacific. By the end of the 19th century, too, it had taken its place among the powers of the world—its fortunes so interrelated with those of other nations that inevitably it became involved in two world wars and, following these conflicts, with the problems of Europe and East Asia. Meanwhile, the rise of science and industry, as well as changes in ways of thinking and feeling, wrought many modifications in people's lives. All these factors in the development of the United States molded the literature of the country. The summation chapter traces the history of the American poetry, drama, fiction, and social and literary criticism in *Housekeeping*.

Marilynne Robinson was born in Sandpoint, Idaho. The Town located on the shores of Lake Pend Oreille and surrounded by the Bitterroot mountain range and the Kaniska and Coeur d'Alene National Forests. The geographical inspiration for the fictional town of Fingerbone is the setting of Robinson's first novel, *Housekeeping* (1980). After graduating from high school in nearby Coeur d'Alene in 1962, she attended

the Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, where she studied literature, religion and creative writing, including a course in fiction writing taught by the novelist John Hawkes. Upon completion of her B.A. in 1966, she enrolled in the graduate program in English at the University of Washington in Seattle, completing the Ph.D. in 1977, with a dissertation on Shakespeare's early history plays. Over the years, she has taught and/or served as writer- in-residence at a variety of universities, including the Universite de Haute Bretagne in France, the University of Kent in England, Amherst College, and the Universities of Alabama and Massachusetts. From 1991 until her retirement in 2016, she was a regular faculty member in the prestigious Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa. In addition to *Housekeeping*, Robinson has published three other critically acclaimed novels that together frame a trilogy: the Pulitzer-prize winning *Gilead*, first published in 2004, followed by *Home* in 2008, and *Lila* in 2014. A finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the recipient of the Pen Hemingway Award for best first novel, *Housekeeping* remains one of the most mature and accomplished debuts in contemporary American fiction.

Housekeeping is narrated by Ruthie, who tells the story of how Ruthie and her younger sister Lucille are raised by a succession of relatives in the town of Finger bone, Idaho. Eventually, their aunt Sylvie comes to take care of them and initially the three live together as very close knit group. However, as Lucille grows up she comes to dislike the lifestyle of her sister Ruthie and Aunt Sylvie and decides to move out. When Ruthie's well-being is questioned by the local courts due to the eccentric lifestyle which her and Sylvie live, Sylvie takes Ruthie with her to live on the road, always moving from place to place.

The book was written by the author to deal with the subject of housekeeping, not only in the domestic sense of cleaning, but also in the sense of keeping a well spirited home for one's self and family in the face of loss, as Ruthie and Lucille in this novel experience a series of abandonment by the changing guardians.

Ruthie narrates the story of how she and her younger sister Lucille are raised by a succession of relatives in the fictional town of Fingerbone, Idaho (some details are similar to Robinson's hometown, Sandpoint, Idaho). Eventually their aunt Sylvie (who has been living as a transient) comes to take care of them. At first the three are a close knit group, but as Lucille grows up she comes to dislike their eccentric lifestyle and moves out. When Ruthie's well-being is questioned by the courts, Sylvie returns to life on the road and takes Ruthie with her.

The events take place in an uncertain time, in that no dates are mentioned; however, Ruthie refers to her grandfather living in a sod dugout in the Midwest, before his journey to Fingerbone, while she herself traverses adolescence sometime in the latter half of the 20th century. *Housekeeping* is a story about the three generations of women. Ruth and Lucille grow up in a world of mothers and daughters, sisters, widows, unmarried aunts and divorcees. Since that first catastrophe of their grandfather's death, all men have been elsewhere—the girls never knew their father, and the whereabouts of Sylvie's husband are similarly unknown.

Robinsons inclusion of poetical elements of the novel on her own upbringing in Sandpoint, Idaho, including the setting of Fingerbone—an isolated place “chastened by an outsized landscape and extravagant weather, and chastened again by an awareness that the whole of human history had occurred elsewhere.” Its main feature is the lake, which

is also the source of the family's loss—it was into these waters that Ruth and Lucille's mother sailed in her neighbor's car and also where their grandfather, decades earlier, plunged to his death in an extraordinary train derailment.

Each spring, the lake rises up through the soil. You can taste it in the air and the drinking water, it floods the town when the snow melts too quickly before the earth has had time to thaw. Soon after Sylvie's arrival, the family home is steeped in water for the first time.

The water wreaks quiet damage on personal art facts and treasures of the domestic world: “the losses in hooked and braided rugs and needlepoint footstools will never be reckoned. Fungus and mold crept into wedding dresses and photograph albums, so that the leather crumbled in our hands when we lifted the covers.” Memory, Robinson seems to suggest throughout *Housekeeping*, might be something like water in the way it rises and recedes. But the memory of loss is particular in its ability to flood, to warp. It turns the familiar strange and shows us the world inverted, trembling. Like the lake of Fingerbone, the memory of loss permeates everything.

Housekeeping chronicles the experiences of Ruthie and her sister, Lucille who moved from one relative's house to another after the death of their mother. Ruthie and Lucille are sent to live with their grandmother, Sylvia after their mother committed suicide. The two children live with their grandmother until she dies a few years later.

After their grandmother Sylvia's death Ruthie and Lucille's aunts Nona and Lily come down to Fingerbone, Idaho to take care of them. However, the two find it difficult to survive Idaho's extreme winters and set about looking for another guardian for the two girls. The children are led to their Aunt Sylvie's care. Aunt Sylvie had left Fingerbone a

little less than two decades ago but she eventually agrees to come back after Lily and Nona's insistent pleas. Aunt Sylvie does her best to provide for the two children.

Ruthie and Lucille are initially shocked by Aunt Sylvie's chaotic and disorganized world. Ruthie adjusts to her aunt's ways but Lucille is unhappy with her aunt's unconventional parenting style and just wants to belong to a normal family like the rest of her peers. This difference in opinion separates the two sisters who were once so close. Over the years they come into their own identities, Ruthie remaining the same, gangly and introverted and Lucille blossoming into a social butterfly.

Lucille becomes increasingly unhappy living in Aunt Sylvie's house and she leaves. The courts begin investigating Aunt Sylvie and the living conditions of the children in her house after Lucille's leaving. After being investigated on her parenting and ability to provide she decides to go back to her old life as a drifter. This time however, she takes Ruthie with her and the two embark on an entirely new life away from Fingerbone. Lucille, on the other hand, moves to Boston to finally start a conventional and normal life but is increasingly lonely and distant.

Ruth has completed her journey of an artist figure, and just as Woolf and Friedan postulated, this creative energy has freed her from the confines of the house. Like her own author Marilynne Robinson, and so many women writers before her, Ruth uses her talents to write about the house and to destroy the system that had previously constrained her. Ruth, in her telling of her own story, destroys the house, but in its stead she creates a new theory of domesticity. If the traditional theory of domesticity is safe, feminine, ordered, and subject to male authority, Ruth's vision of domesticity is adventurous, inconstant and unpredictable, and revolves entirely around female authority: Ruth's

remained ship-house has a compass, to orient towards new lands, and a keel, to keep it oriented and afloat. These are all the tools she needs to decide her own way, to follow her own path, to tell her own story. This freedom of movement undoes the pain of the house, because families need not be broken: if the 'house' can move with its inhabitants, than every soul need not be put out of house. Has Robinson truly solved the problem of expulsion in *Housekeeping*? We know that Ruth is free to return to the house, but because she is a transient, perhaps she is not free to stay. There exists a worrying implication that the floating state, now a safe space for Ruth, becomes the only safe space, thereby condemning her to a life of movement. This would deny her certain aspects of life that require stability, such as motherhood. Has Ruth then simply switched prisons, the first a house and the second a ship? If so, then we must read Ruth's liberation as a possible solution to the problem, but not the only solution. If Ruth has chosen a life of transience and anomaly, we must accept that Lucille has also chosen, and has simply chosen differently. Lucille may suffer occasionally in her life of expectation, but perhaps Ruth, too, suffers from constant mobility. In fact, if *Housekeeping* teaches us anything, it is that polarizing contradictions leads only to pain. Darkness and light, past and present, life and death—the whole of *Housekeeping* aims at removing the space and the boundaries between opposing forces. If stillness and movement are two dichotomies that follow this same pattern, then both Ruth and Lucille have found only temporary solutions to pain. The true solution, the ideal state, would be something in between, a somehow stationary transience. Is this even possible? Ruth actually hints towards this concept when thinking of Sylvie: "It seemed to me that if she could remain transient here, she would not have to leave" (103). The end of the novel does not result in this stationary transience, as both

Ruth and Sylvie leave and adopt a life of total transience. Why would Robinson write a novel about liberation that does achieve true freedom? Perhaps it was deliberate, an attempt to gain the middle ground showing the world the complete opposite: having seen the woman stuck in the house for centuries, we now see a woman completely free from it, and from the two extremes we can conceive of a possible middle ground. More likely, however, is that this topic of the woman in the house is an ongoing negotiation that feminists, even now, have yet to resolve. Thirty five years after *Housekeeping* was published, leading second-wave feminist Gloria Steinem published her book *My Life on the Road*. In this autobiographical account, Steinem describes how, through all her years of writing and organizing to empower women, she herself lived a transient life that was unavailable to the women she talked about. Yet Steinem ends her book not on the road, but with an afterword called “Coming Home.” In the afterword, Steinem admits to herself that this transient life was an unbalanced one, and that she did suffer from a lack of home. It was not until she turned fifty that she focused on creating a sense of home for herself, and it liberated her: “Now that being on the road was my choice, not my fate, I lost the melancholy feeling of Everybody has a home but me... Instead of either/or, I discovered a whole world of and” (250). Steinem might recognize much of her younger self in the character of Ruth, so perhaps achieving stationary transience that requires time, or the benefit of a more current, third-wave feminist perspective. Steinem ends her book with a direct message to the reader about abandoning the rigid gender roles of the past: “My father did not have to trade dying alone for the joys of the road. My mother did not have to give up a journey of her own to have a home. Neither does me. Neither do you” (251). These final words are also a call to personal action: negotiating the role of the woman in

the house is an ongoing project, but it is one in which the woman may now participate as well. It is the task and the privilege of the 21st century woman to define her own role, a privilege we owe to the generations of women who worked and wrote for centuries to undo the damage of separate spheres and dreamed of creating a better society.

The conclusion has identified and examined elements of trauma and traumatisation in *Housekeeping*. The death of her grandfather and her mother's suicide are traumatic experiences which trigger Ruth's entrapment in the dialectic of psychological trauma. Like the sunken train wreckage and ruins, the Foster's and Stone's suppressed family traumas are buried in the lake; the spatial-temporal manifestation of trauma lodged in the unconscious. The wake of Lake Fingerbone's overflowing; the drenched Foster household's fragmentation, destruction, and disintegration; and the shattered shards of ice comprising Ruth's splintered reflection, richly illustrate trauma's penetrative and destructive force. Ruth creates a new form of housekeeping by knitting worlds together to reap (re)unity to counter the trail of trauma's psychical destruction. Ruth's wish to reunite with her mother is deduced from her references to the pre-oedipal stage and her construction and occupation of womb-like structures. Although Ruth wishes to be reunited with her ever-present spectral mother, the lake and dark natural world traced with Helen's touch is both desired and dreaded. Robinson's death-drenched feminine nature casts Helen as a disseminated, ubiquitous, and traumatic Mother Nature and, therefore, the natural world, which permeates the crevices of the household, is representative of Ruth's trauma and her trauma-induced longings. Through her fusion with Mother Nature, Ruth is both self and mother. Subsequently, she is a traumatised ghostlike figure and an emblem of the uncanny; the figurative reflection of her dead

mother and the uncanny natural world. As a result of her fractured consciousness and subjectivity, the solid boundaries between self and other, and life and death dissolve into fluidity.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Socio – Political Activism and Oppression Towards Women in Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature and is a work done by Esther Mancy. S during the year 2020-2021, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

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MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

ESTHER MANCY. S

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH (SSC)

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)

(Re-accredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2021

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ESTHER MANCY. S

THOOTHUKUDI

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PREFACE

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with Afghan-American literature in general. Khaled Hosseini's biography, achievements, awards and abstract of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

The second chapter **Quelling of Endurance** discusses the major characters of the novel, highlighting the incidents which bring out the realization of every individual.

The third chapter **Trauma of War and Terrorism** deals with the political history of Afghanistan.

The fourth chapter **The Book of Guidance** focuses on the culture and customs of a Muslim society through the novel.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters. Summing up the socio – political activism and oppression towards women in the novel.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed in MLA Handbook Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is an expression of life through the medium of language. It is a record of what men have seen and experienced in life, and what they have thought and felt about it. It has the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. The major impulses behind literature are the desire for self-expression and the interest in people and their doings.

Various forms of literature are nothing but the various channels man has opened up for himself for the discharge of his sociality through media which testifies his paramount desire to blend expression with artistic creation. While the first impulse of self expression gives birth for poetry, essay, and literature of artistic and literary criticism, the second impulse of interest in people gives birth to history, ballad, epic, romance, short story, novel and drama. Latest to develop of all these forms is novel. The characteristic of novel is long, and contents several themes. For example a novel might contain love, family and friendship as main theme.

Afghanistan has a rich heritage, a proud history and is a conglomeration of myriad cultures and ethnicities. The country is known by three principal names – Aryana, in ancient times, Khorasan, in the mid-eighteenth century and Afghanistan, today. More than five thousand years ago, it was regarded as a centre of culture and learning. The literature by Afghan American writers is considered as Afghan American literature. Afghan Americans are amongst the newest and smallest of America's ethnic communities. Millions of refugees from Afghanistan fled to the United States during soviet and civil war and created their own community in U.S. They migrated from their homeland to the US for survival. Some of these people found the way and motivation to express their feelings, emotions, memories and

dreams to the world. They shared their experience as Afghans and as immigrants in the United States. Out of these experiences a literature has been emerged and is getting its own identity in the world literature. The Afghan-American literature has several distinct features : war, terrorism, violence, personal experiences, diasporic experiences, clash of identity survival urge for homeland, family relationships, women's violation, women's struggle for education, religion, Afghan culture and traditions.

Khaled Hosseini is a man with a mission, a mission to redeem his country of all its ills, to make it beautiful, like it once was. He does this by writing beautiful novels with breathtaking canvas, spreading across Afghanistan and the Afghan diaspora all over the world. It tells the story of the Afghan people, in particular about Afghan women, children and men, those who are caught in the web of religion, politics and terrorism.

Hosseini was born in Afghanistan, in Kabul in 1965. He was the oldest of five children. He belonged to a wealthy family, they lived in the Wazir Akbar Khan district of the capital city, an area famous for high-end residents. It was an era and area in which women were treated equal to men and could work with them, go without hijab in the open.

Hosseini's father worked with the government, in the foreign ministry department. His mother taught Persian literature. As a result, Khaled grew quite fond of Persian poetry and developed a deep love for non-Islamic, pagan past of Afghanistan and the regions around his country. He lived in Iran for a brief time, when his father worked in the Afghan embassy in Teheran, Iran's capital. He deepened his knowledge and love for Persian literature there. He came to know how deeply Afghanistan owed to Persia, in terms of literature. He loved reading novels in

foreign languages and always enjoyed a good story. Soon he started writing on his own. The cook who worked with his family was from the Hazara community in Afghanistan, a community which has more Turkic features than Persian. Due to this they are highly discriminated against. He taught the cook to read and write. It was a time when he became politically conscious to the faults of his own country, faults embedded deep in the religion and politics that his country supported.

In 1973, when he was eight years old, the monarchy in Afghanistan was overthrown. King's cousin, Daoud Khan declared himself the new ruler of the Republic that he declared Afghanistan to be. The country was in for a long spell of instability, something which is still going on. Their family got a great chance to go out of the circle of misery that was beset upon their country when Khaled's father got an opportunity to work with the embassy in Paris. His entire family moved to France. It would be 27 years before he could see his native country once again.

Due to civil war in Afghanistan , it was no longer possible for their family to return to their native country so they decided to migrate to the United States. Arriving as political refugees, they settled in San Jose, California in 1980. Khaled was fifteen years of age then and did not speak any English at all. They survived on the little welfare money that they got from the government and the father and son would go to the local flea market and sell wares there.

In his first year in school, he encountered many linguistic difficulties, but soon he got the hang of it through literature. His deep and abiding love for literature got wind in the United States once again when he caught hold of *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. He started writing stories in English, the language that would become his vehicle for producing literature later.

The financial conditions of his family improved. Khaled started studying in the Santa Clara University. He enrolled himself in a medical course. Soon becoming a doctor, he started practicing in Pasadena. He soon got married to Roya and the family settled in Mountain View, in northern California. Even while pursuing a medical career, he was writing stories all the time.

Though he was much happy with his adopted country, he could not help himself thinking about his native Afghanistan. Meanwhile, things had got out of hand in his country Afghanistan. After the departure of the communists from the country, the Islamic organization Taliban had taken over the country and had imposed the inhuman and barbaric Shariat Islamic law on the country. Under this law, non-Muslims were ethnically cleansed, religious racism was institutionalized, gays were killed, women were tortured and kept under strict and inhuman control of men.

Hosseini was watching all this with pain and disgust. He wanted to tell the world that his country was not just about religious fundamentalism. He wanted to tell the world that it was much more than this before the Taliban took over. He wrote a short story, picked up from his childhood memories of Kabul and later expanded it into a novel at the encouragement of his wife.

Khaled Hosseini used to wake up at four in the morning so he could write, as he had to go to his clinic to see his patients for the entire day. He is the author of the four best sellers of the twenty first century: *The Kite Runner* (2003), *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), *And The Mountains Echoed* (2013) and *Sea Prayer* (2018).

He decided to complete his first novel and wrote the beautiful story of the friendship of two Afghan boys who were separated by religious terrorism in their country and how different their lives became after that separation. After much

difficulty he found a publisher, an imprint of the Penguin. *The Kite Runner* was published in 2003.

The book picked up speed gradually but when it did it became an international storm. For more than two years it remained in The New York Times bestseller list. After his first book, he returned to his native country and was shocked to see the level of devastation that terrorism had wrought upon his country.

Racism plays an important role in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*. The author uses racism to describe the characters and the culture represented in the stories. In *The Kite Runner*, Khaled Hosseini uses prejudice as a tool to tell this story of betrayal and redemption. He pursues his story with prejudice and racism in Afghanistan as well as in the United States. *The Kite Runner* pits two classes against each other, the educated modern and secular elite and the medieval masses.

The most important events in *The Kite Runner* tell the story of its primary characters on one hand and on the other hand they discuss the momentous events that were going on in the country at that time. Hosseini has beautifully blended the personal events with the political ones in his first novel.

Hosseini employs the means of symbolism to illustrate how ethnic and religious discrimination takes place in the country. Most of all, *The Kite Runner*, is about the individual's search for redemption; redemption for the crimes committed in the past; redemption for the regrets of not doing one's duty; regrets for things left unfinished; regrets for fulfilling the moral and ethical duties towards friends, family, society and country. Khaled Hosseini's third novel is radically different from his first two but the themes of loss and violence are persistent in this one too.

The theme of *And the Mountains Echoed* is suicide. More often than not, we find that the characters of the novel find redemption and peace in death, death that

they bring upon themselves by committing the acts of suicide. One of the themes of the novel *And the Mountains Echoed* is its depiction of homosexuality, in the relation of Mr. Wahdati and Nabi, his employee. Though nothing happens between the two as Nabi is straight and the affair never comes to anything as Wahdati is paraplegic, but the very fact that an Afghan author is willing to breach the subject which is taboo in Islamic societies, and more so in Afghan society shows that he is willing to air the feelings and emotions of his fellow people. He is very committed to this act. Even though it does not have a uniform narrative structure, *And the Mountains Echoed* has many persistent themes in it. Actually it is these themes which bind the narrative into a single whole. Memory of loved ones and loved places, their loss and a love for the family are some of the binding themes of the novel. The themes of loss, memory and familial love are expressed with the most intensity in the sibling love between Abdullah and Pari. Their story is heart-rending but also what drives the novel.

In *And the Mountains Echoed*, Hosseini has depicted the sibling love in its most heart-wrenching state. Abdullah and Pari seem inseparable but they get separated and Abdullah has almost no desire left. He then migrates and finds love in his wife and even more than that in his daughter whom he names Pari, but the hole that his sister left in his heart is never filled. He suffers a stroke just when he thinks he is going to meet his sister and loses all memory. When he finally meets his sister he is in no condition to recognize her. But perhaps in this twisted way, he finally has peace as he has got the magic potion which has made him forget the very memory of his dear and beloved sister. It is found out that almost all of the novels of Khaled Hosseini have a deep sense of place. Its primary characters love their place, their birthplace fondly and always remember it. In fact it is only natural that a migrant author like Khaled Hosseini would write characters, who have a deep sense of place.

The characters of *And the Mountains Echoed* both embody and transcend the sense of place.

The illustrated short story *Sea Prayer*, Hosseini drew on the highly publicized death of a three-year-old Syrian refugee who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea in 2015. In the book a father reflects on his life as he and his son wait to depart war-torn Syria. The story is narrated by an unnamed man who was born and raised in Syria. As a boy, he grew up in the countryside near the Syrian city of Homs. He lived in a farmhouse with his brothers and parents, and he enjoyed a boyhood of peace and contentment. He is now married and has a son named Marwan. The Syrian Civil War began when Marwan was a toddler. The Syrian Civil War was preceded by protests and civil unrest from the civilians. Eventually, the government began attacking its own civilians, and a violent civil war broke out.

The war caused many deaths and immense damage to cities. The narrator eventually flees from Homs with his wife and son. They arrive at a beach on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. There are other refugees there as well. Some are from Syria, but there are also refugees from other war-torn countries. As they wait for morning and the arrival of a rescue boat, the narrator thinks about the fact that previous refugees have often been treated hostilely by the denizens of countries to which the refugees have fled. His wife has said that if those people could witness the destruction of the war directly, then they would be kinder to the refugees.

Hosseini touches on the role of women in most of his novels, but it is the main theme of *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. He was raised at a time in Afghanistan when women were free to attend schools and seek professional employment. Many women in his family were professionals, and he was not raised with the worldview of protecting women from outside intrusion.

In *A Thousand Splendid Suns* Hosseini returns to Afghanistan and once more offers his readers a love story. As in *The Kite Runner*, the relationships are complicated and diverse. There is first and foremost the love between two women, supporting each other in their marriage to the same man. There is also a more traditional love story—a childhood romance that at first seems hopeless and then becomes reality. The two women are quite different from one another and were raised in completely different worlds, although within the same country. They nonetheless forge a strong bond of family and friendship. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is most of all, a story of the oppression of women and how even in such bleak conditions there is still hope for them; that there is still humanity left in the darkest corners of earth. There is not much hope for women in the religious theocracy like Afghanistan, but still the hope that is should be picked up and worked upon, this is what the message of Khaled Hosseini is *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

The characters of the novel, particularly women, often keep up the hope, even in very adverse conditions. They bear the oppression of men, society and religion and yet go on in the hope that one day their condition will be redeemed. Though their conditions express oppression, at many important junctures in the novels the characters also express hope. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is the story of the women of Afghanistan. It is told through the pains and hardships that two women Mariam and Laila go through, who are married to the same sadistic, wife-beater. The women of Afghanistan are oppressed many times over. They are oppressed by the orthodox traditions of Afghanistan which does not let them much freedom. They are oppressed by their men, who take benefit of the helplessness of women in their country. But most of all, they are oppressed by religion, which is the primary reason of all other oppressions.

One can see how Khaled Hosseini has dealt with the endless endurance of women and how he brings out the difficulties, pain and endurance faced by Mariam and Laila. Their confidence and self-determination helped them to break all the shackles. He creates a vision of women empowerment through these powerful characters Mariam and Laila.

Chapter Two

Quelling Of Endurance

Feminism is basically a social theory which argues for the equality of woman. It describes the rights of women in the society and protects women from male oppression. It demands equality in all aspects of public and personal life. Gender equality is the longest war that women have been fighting for a long time. Throughout history, women across the world who have fought for gender equality are considered as feminists.

The women are gloried only as mothers, daughters, sisters and wives in all the relations related to men. She is glorified as someone who has immense patience and who sacrifices her life for the family. In other words women are conditioned by the society to become sacrificial lambs who could only think about rearing children and looking after their husbands. They were the sacrificial lambs of the society and the society thrived on their sacrifices. It was after the advent of feminism that education was made available to the women. Earlier it was a privilege that was enjoyed by only a few women who belonged to royal or aristocratic families. Rise of feminism as a movement also paved the way for equal status of women in the world. Prior to the advent of feminism women were treated as objects and even they were inferior to the males.

Feminist theory proposes the concept of mutual understanding between both the genders and is poised to create a healthy society for future. Feminism was not accepted at the first yell but it stepped its feet in western societies a little easier as compared to Eastern societies and cultures.

The inequalities that exist between men and women are not natural but social, not pre-ordained but created by men so that they remain

powerful. Religion, family, education, arts, knowledge systems are all social and cultural structures that enable the perpetual reinforcement of this inequality... the structures convince the woman that she is destined to be subordinated. (ATSS 83)

Feminism is not treating women as a boss or some supernatural creature thrown upon men but to treat them generously and to give them respect as a fellow human being. The basic fault here lies with the misunderstanding of men that believing in feminism is equal to accepting women as their competitors. Whereas, it is about bringing honour not only to both the sexes but also to the entire human society with the healthy practice of equal rights.

Feminism differs from country to country considering the situations and circumstances of the victims. Islamic feminists fight for the equal rights for Muslim women by providing educational opportunities, international human rights and progressive interpretation of the Koran. They raise their voice for justice and equality from within Islamic traditions. Feminism has been waging a war against male chauvinists who have degraded women, but it does not mean that the women have been waging this fight alone. There have been men who have assisted the women in fighting this battle.

Women in Afghanistan have been going through gender equality issues in its severe form for ages. Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* depicts the plight of women behind the walls of Afghanistan during several invasions in the country. In the novel, the issue of feminism and gender equality has been raised through the character of Mariam and Laila. The novel stresses on women who are deprived of their rights and their restrictions on education, choices and liberation that hinder their great potentials in the male dominated world. Male dominance over the women in

Afghanistan is a major concern that relates this novel to a feminist aspect. Forceful marriages, lack of freedom, lack of identity and torture that is perpetrated towards the Afghan women are the issues that are of concern to feminists across the globe. Hosseini's novel exposes the cultural, political, religious and social structures of Afghanistan in degrading and devaluing Afghan women.

All the female characters of novel endure terrifying situations where they are abused beyond human imaginations. Hosseini draws a similarity between the fate of two characters, Mariam and Laila, who hail from drastically different backgrounds but are connected by tragic twist in their lives. They share the same pain and agony and undergo similar stereo-typical trials of being women in Afghanistan. The author shows how their struggles and trials lead them to fight back and to hope for happiness and a better future. Further Hosseini underlines the parallel of Afghan women's suffering with the fate of Afghanistan. He masterfully weaves the personal narrative of Laila and Mariam into the backdrop of Afghanistan's turbulent recent history. Women's rights have diminished in the society of Taliban authority: they are banned to laugh loudly, to play sports, to even talk or shake hands with non-mahram males, and most importantly to study in schools or any other educational institutions.

Afghanistan considers women as machines to look after their home and children. The women never enjoy freedom. These social norms should be changed and women should get their rights. Hosseini advocates that there is great need for creating a bond of amity between Afghan people and rest of the world and also women empowerment. This project attempts to throw lights on the suppressed sufferings of the women of Afghanistan and creates a vision of women empowerment through Mariam.

In Afghanistan, the process of achieving equal rights for women has been a complicated one. Their conditions depend on where they live. In rural areas, the question of female employment and education has not been an issue. They have always worked on the land and have been provided with a minimal level of education. Apart from having the roles of wives and mothers, they have played an important economic role by covering some aspects of agricultural routine, particularly planting and weeding, animal husbandry, and craft production. In terms of wearing burqas in rural areas, the burqas was seldom worn because it interfered with women's work in fields and with the care of livestock. Instead, wearing burqas has been more common in the southern provinces. Moreover, Marsden indicates women in traditional societies have had an important symbolic role as the core of society. Protection of women depends on the protection of society, and the honour of society is tied up with the honour of women. The wish to protect women has resulted in purdah, which is restricting women's movements so that they have limited contact with men outside family or village community. This has been particularly the case in the Pashtun society. Although the movement of women in the Hazara, Uzbek, and Tajik societies has been circumscribed, it is not to the degree inherent in the Pashtun society¹ . Nevertheless, the nomadic society in Afghanistan is exceptional.

The nomadic women are inevitably highly mobile and do not face the strict taboos on contact with strangers. Eventually, in 1996, the Taliban, who felt outraged at the behaviour of the Mujahidin leaders fighting for power, decided to take action. They determined to put an end to what they saw as corrupt practices, drawing on Islam as a justification for their intervention. Ellis asserts that the Taliban began as a small group in Kandahar. Their soldiers are largely the orphans of twenty years of war, who grew up out of the mud and hopelessness of the refugee camps in Pakistan.

The word Taliban means student of Islamic religious studies. They were educated at madrasa, religious schools, in Pakistan, and their education was largely limited to learning the Koran by repetition. Many of them had limited exposure to girls and women as they were growing up. They were raised by men who had a total disregard for women. How they moved from small group to major force is not clear. However, it is likely that some elements outside Afghanistan decided to back them because they were potentially useful in promoting their interests. The nature and the extent of the backing received from outside has been the subject of much speculation. Pakistan, the U.S., and Saudi Arabia have all been implicated. Seizing power, the Taliban implemented four central policies regarding women. First, women were forbidden to hold jobs, and their sole responsibility was to bring up the next generation of Muslims. Second, they could not attend schools until the Taliban had come up with a curriculum in accordance with the basics of Islam. Third, women were forced to wear burqas. Although women were obliged to wear chadors during the Mujahidin period, the Taliban implemented the policy that women must wear burqas that cover their faces as well to 14 completely observe the practice of wearing the hejab as recommended by Shariat.

Finally, women were denied freedom of movement. They could only leave their homes if escorted by male relatives and had to avoid contact with male strangers. If these rules were violated, the religious police would mete out punishments like public beatings and sometimes even death.. When women were punished, they must still wear burqas. Indeed, as a result of implementing these harsh policies, women's situation was getting severely worse. Women who had been once teachers and nurses moved in the streets like ghosts under their enveloping burqas for selling their every possession and begging to feed their children. The children were forced to begin

streets because the widowed women were prohibited to work. Women were beaten for showing up in public without a male chaperone or for showing their faces. Many women turned to prostitution. The business survived because of frequently relocating, bribing judicial authorities, and entertaining the Taliban free of charge. Furthermore, imposing such severe restrictions on women caused them many health problems. Women's fear of being beaten in streets deterred them from seeking health care. In most cases women could not go out to seek health care because they had no money to pay for a burqa. This harsh situation apart, the burqa itself could contribute to health problems like eye problems, poor vision and hearing, skin rash, headaches, asthma, hair loss, and depression.

The novel is divided into four chapters. The first two chapters illustrate the lives of Mariam and Laila, the two female protagonists of the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Mariam is a 'harami' or illegitimate child of a rich businessman, Jalil and a maid Nana. At the beginning of the novel, we are dropped into the world of Mariam, a young girl living alone with her unmarried mother on the outskirts of Herat. She is a thoughtful child at the start of the book. Both Mariam's and Nana's life are almost completely absent from the public world by living a life based on the decisions of the men around them. This portrays the poor education system the country has provided in Afghanistan. The only quality Mariam learns are the basics of survival and enduring. But she resents her mother's strict ways and the fact that she only sees her father once a week. Mariam's shame at being illegitimate makes her unable to stand up for herself. As soon as her mother suicide, her father forces her to marry a forty five year old man- Rasheed. She experiences dreadful and vicious behaviour from Rasheed.

Mariam's life changes with the arrival of Laila, Rasheed's second wife as well as their neighbour. Though Mariam hates Laila in the beginning, later, Laila's inspiration helps Mariam to take control of her own destiny. Rasheed has been an awful, abusive husband to her, but up until this point, she never defended herself. Mariam changes more than any other character over the course of the novel. She kills Rasheed and selflessly takes the rap for the crime so Laila can live on. She never dreams for a better life. But she wants to be free from all the brutality. Mariam is able to become what she thought a 'harami' like her could never be: a mother, a friend, and a hero. She breaks all the shackles and comes out a real, true hero.

Laila, the second female protagonist, is the youngest child and only daughter of Hakim and Fariba. Laila has a strong desire to use her intelligence and education to improve the world around her. As her father is a well-educated teacher, education has always been a priority in Laila's life. She has always received encouragement from her parents to achieve her dreams. Hosseini's energetic narrative speeds on through the political and domestic worlds, as we move through the tragedies that fall on Laila's family. Laila's idealism and independence are challenged when she decides to marry Rasheed in order to give her unborn child a father through Tariq. She represents hope for the future in Afghanistan, because she is a strong woman who can outlast every evil man who tries to take away the ones she loves and lives for. From then on, she along with Mariam bears the domestic violence and insult from him. Laila undergoes the crudest form of humiliation at the hands of Taliban.

Hosseini portrays Laila as a strong woman character in his novel. Her presence and support only inspire Mariam to gain courage to fight back and ultimately kill Rasheed. At the close of the novel, Laila finally, finds the life she has been dreaming. Mariam and Laila find solace and happiness in each other's company.

Their bond gives them freedom from pain not only physically but emotionally by trusting each other.

The story begins in 1974, as Mariam, an illegitimate child of a wealthy businessman from Herat, is growing up with her mother, Nana. Nana is the first woman we meet in the novel who has become the prey of male villainy. Nana worked as a housekeeper in Jalil's house until she was impregnated and abandoned by him. Nana is an outcast who has been violated, discarded by her master. Nana sees the truth of both men and traditions thus is deeply embittered as she expresses, "A man's heart is a wretched, wretched thing, Mariam. It isn't like a mother's womb. It won't bleed, it won't stretch to make room for you" (ATSS 26). She tries to open her daughter's eyes to this wisdom, "Learn this now and learn this well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always. You remember that, Mariam" (ATSS 7). Mariam constantly faced and blamed for circumstances that were out of her control. She never did anything wrong, yet had to endure a lifetime of hardship. She was a selfless human being cursed for being a woman. Her illimitable plagued her as well, in ways we would imagine it would not have had she been a boy. These line are the prophetic lines said by Mariam's mother when she was a child that came true in her life after some years.

In a few years this little girl will be a woman who will make small demands on life, who will never burden others, who will never let on that she too has had sorrows, disappointments, dreams that have been ridiculed. A woman who will be like a rock in a Riverbed, enduring without complaint, her grace not sullied but shaped by the turbulence that washes over her (ATSS 5)

She has always tried to protect Mariam in the best of her capability. But one mistake she did was not sending Mariam to school. That became the biggest drawback and hurdle for Mariam's growth and development. When Mullah Faizullah insisted that Mariam should go to school Nana outrightly rejected the idea of sending her daughter to school.

“Learn? Learn what, Mullah sahib?” Nana said sharply. “What’s there to learn?” She snapped her eyes towards Mariam...”What’s the sense schooling a girl like you? It’s like shining a spittoon. And you’ll learn nothing of value in those schools. There is only one skill a woman like you and me needs in life, and they don’t teach it in school. Look at me...Only one skill. And it’s this tahamul. Endure. (ATSS 17)

“Endure” the words echoes in the ears of Mariam later in her life. Though, hearing the words sounded harsh for those who are reading the inner line meaning that Nana wanted to convey is quite true. Nana knew that women like her have no value in the Afghan society and ultimately they have the power to endure the harsh treatment of the men. Later Mariam remembers her mother’s word “Endure” which works like an ointment healing the wound that Rasheed inflicted everyday of her married life. Mariam’s mother Nana, spiteful and stubborn, has Mariam, consequent to her illicit relationship with Jalil, a successful businessman. He has three wives in Herat and eleven children living in a mansion and visits Mariam his only illegitimate child once a week. “Rich man telling rich lies. He never took you to any tree. And don’t let him charm you. He betrayed us, your beloved father. He cast us out of his big fancy house like we were nothing to him. He did it happily . (ATSS 5)

Nana portrays Jalil in dark shades. This is in contrast to Mariam’s version, which yields like a fantasy, almost too good to be true. An adorable father daughter

relationship. Jalil never called her 'harami', for him Mariam "was his little flower". He was fond of seating her on his lap and telling her stories. Whenever Jalil talks to her, Mariam listens with enchantment. She admires him for his vast and worldly knowledge. She quivers with pride to have a father who knows such things. Nana always warns her not to be attached with her father. But Mariam always dreamed to be with him in Herat along with her siblings.

Following her mother's death, Mariam is left alone. Reluctantly Jalil takes her to his home where under pressure from his family, Jalil marries off fifteen year old Mariam to Rasheed, a brutish cobbler thirty years older than her. In his house Mariam feels, "...uprooted, displaced, like an intruder on someone else's life"(ATSS 56). Her initial days of marriage, however, bring hope- an over-protective husband and the demanding household chores. She feels protect with Rasheed's companionship. Rasheed is shown as a split personality when he says to Mariam about the women who come to his stores, uncovered, show their feet, wear make-up and look into his eyes directly. He calls them and their husbands as shameless people who think they're modern and do not bother about the honour and pride. Rasheed's another shade of his personality comes from his craving to watch nude women in magazines and that it is a justified act because he is a man.

Rasheed's insistence on women wearing the hijab is meaningful and also lawful. But it is also seen that Rasheed has involved himself in watching nude women in magazines. And this is justified by Mariam herself, considering that his needs are different since he had lived a solitary life after the demise of his first wife and son. This gives an insight of the psyche of the woman who compromises with such acts of men declaring that it is their physical and emotional needs. Rasheed a typical patriarch in a deep rooted patriarchal society treats Mariam as an object. Rasheed's

verbal and physical abuses of powerless Mariam is due to her failure to give him a son to hold his name, which is hardly her fault, but this is how a traditional culture sees it.

Over the years, she learns to endure, harden herself against his derogatory talk, his scorn. His manhandling her with a belt becomes a regular feature, she trembles and shivers with fright, as he sneers and slaps the belt with bloodshot eyes. It is the fear of a goat released in a hungry tiger's cage. She pleads Rasheed to reconsider his decision of marrying Laila, as she is old, old to bear the pain. Her fortitude is immense. she internalizes and endures Rasheed's physical and psychological dominance as destiny.

Rasheed, a very domestically violent sixty years old husband of Mariam, explained very clearly that "A women's face is her husband's business only"(ATSS 63). This quote gives an example of a male warning a female, Rasheed to Mariam, that he is the owner of Mariam. Women are considered properties to men in this world. When Rasheed goes through rough time, the comfort Mariam gives was not appreciated nor respected. As Mariam tries her best to satisfy Rasheed, she was nothing but a means of satisfying his physical needs, somethings Rasheed will pull out and use when needed. Mariam is only another piece of property Rasheed uses like a car, a house or a gun.

However, at the end Mariam is not a silenced, peripheral self. She effaces the overwhelming male presence of Rasheed, turns into a rebel female and comes out of her typical feminine cocoon.

Unlike Mariam, Laila on the other hand is living a free and emancipated life. Laila goes to school and is aware of her rights. She is lucky to have the support of two liberal minded men, a father and a boyfriend, both of whom have taught her how to

stand for her rights. Her father believes that education is the absolute top priority. He says to Laila,

...marriage can wait, education can't... You're a very, very bright girl... when this war is over; Afghanistan is going to need you as much as its men, may be even more. Because society has no chance of success if its women are uneducated, Laila, no chance. (ATSS 103)

But Laila's freedom does not last long. She loses all her family in war and is compelled to marry Rasheed. In the beginning Rasheed treats her with care but then Laila commits the unforgivable sin of giving Rasheed a daughter, not a son. In Afghanistan a woman's value has been measured by her ability to bear children especially boys. From here onwards she becomes the target of Rasheed's abuse and torture in the same way as Mariam. She is ruthlessly beaten, subjected to extreme violence. Laila obeys her husband as he often warns her and her children of sending out to the streets. people in her environment consider her a woman and no longer a mere girl. As she becomes a woman, she also becomes a feminist.

The novel also stresses over restrictions to education, choices and liberation that restrict their great potentials in the male dominated world. It depicts a gradual adherence of women towards the rules and regulations made against them by the society as in case of Laila. Throughout her life she has struggled to obtain freedom from any man and as she has grown up and becomes a woman, she slowly sees the position she sits in the world. The ideas of women rights are superseded. Laila finally realizes that the world is male dominated but still she doesn't lose hope.

Laila's only use was granting Rasheed a child. This is considerably the argument stated in which women are only properties to the male superior. This is the case with most of the women in Afghanistan. They were treated as an object not as a

human being. When Laila is ready to give birth to her son, only one hospital in all of Kabul serves women. This hospital is severely short of staff and lacking in medicine and anaesthetics. It seems extreme to portray a caesarean section without anaesthetic, but this is historically correct. Laila was to be operated on without any sort of medication during the time of Fundamentalist regime in Afghanistan indicates the hypocrisy of the male dominated society where women were so segregated that sanitary medical conditions, let alone mixed gender hospitals, were denied.

The strength these women had shown during the tough time was magnificent and shows the activism on their part. Kabul had only one hospital for women, few doctors were working there, and they had little or no medicine or means to anesthetize their patients:

The doctor took a breath, then told Laila that the hospital had no anaesthetic. But if we delay, you will lose your baby. Then cut me open, Laila said. She dropped back on the bed and drew up her knees...Cut me open and give me my baby (ATSS 259).

These were the circumstances through which Afghan women were going through during the horrified reign of Taliban. The women in the novel often work to retain hope while dealing with the realities of political and personal oppression. At significant points throughout the novel, characters express their individual hopes. For instance, when Mariam asks Mullah Faizullah if she may attend school, her journey of hope begins. For Laila, hope lies in Tariq and an attempted escape from Rasheed. Most characters walk into such events with high levels of hope for the future, but once reality sets in, a character's hope is crushed. Not only do these waves of hope provide the reader with suspense and emotional attachment to the characters, but this cycle

appears to reflect the cycles of hope and dashed dreams that Afghan women suffer over the period of time.

The personal stories of hope are mirrored in the political hope of the Afghan citizens. Jalil and Rasheed emphasize the importance of their reputations by doing their best to avoid any shame to their names. Jalil thus takes action by casting Nana out of his house once she becomes pregnant with his illegitimate child. He also does not keep his promise to take Mariam into town with him. He also marries off Mariam to Rasheed after Nana's death. For his part, Rasheed notes that he would need to marry Laila because he could not have her living in his house without some sort of pretence otherwise, people would gossip about him. He also spends beyond his family's budget in order to make it seem that his family has wealth. Ironically, both men behave in ways that are ethically shameful. To protect their names in order to meet their own ideas of social expectations, they neglect or even abuse their offspring and wives, sacrificing the welfare of those around them.

The women in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* have very different educational experiences. Mariam is tutored by Mullah Faizullah in the Koran, and she learns how to read and write. Yet, when she asks her mother about going to school, Nana insists that the only lesson that Mariam needs to learn is to endure. This shows the social set up against women who were made to learn endurance since their childhood. While on the other hand Laila's father emphasizes the importance of her education. Hakim diligently works with Laila on her homework and provides her with extra work in order to expand her education. He emphasizes that Laila's education is as important as that of any boy. After the streets of Kabul become too dangerous, he insists on tutoring Laila himself. He comments about the importance of women attending universities. Aziza is educated by both Laila and Mariam, who contribute what they

know in order to educate her. Mariam teaches the Koran, and Laila eventually volunteers to teach at her school. The end of the book feels hopeful in terms of the education of women in that Zalmai and Aziza head off to school together.

A clear distinction is made throughout the novel between true love and marriage. Since the marriages in the novel tend to be forced, they are not likely to be influenced by love. For Nana, the prospect of marriage was ruined by a 'jinn'. She remembers the lost prospect fondly. Mariam finds hope in her marriage as something that could lead to contentment and possibly to love, but the marriage actually devolves into abuse and oppression. Only Laila escapes the abusive bonds placed on her by Rasheed when she finds true love in Tariq. The contrasts between forced marriage and true love are obvious once Laila and Tariq are finally able to get married and live as a family. Daily living in a forced marriage, for Laila, involved disgust and futile hopes for a better future. With Tariq, in contrast, daily routines leave Laila content and fulfilled. Sexual relations between Laila and Rasheed were completely one-sided, with Rasheed forcing himself upon Laila. With Tariq, however, Laila finds safety in making love. Perhaps most importantly, Laila felt fearful and restrained with Rasheed, but she can be honest and brave once she finds true love in Tariq.

The actions of these characters symbolizes their strength to endure things as they join together in feminist retaliation against the man who has taken away their rights to live according to their own choice. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, two generations of characters are brought inharmoniously together by the tragic sweep of war, where personal lives, the struggle to survive and to raise a family, to find happiness, are inextricable from the history playing out around them. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, the story of Afghanistan includes the story of the role and place of women in Afghan society.

However the novel, towards the end kindles a ray of hope for all those women who have been suffering under the male dominance and are deprived of all freedom. The novel gives voice to those women whose voice has been muffled by the illegitimate patriarchal authority. Mariam and Laila finally take the cudgels towards their emancipation and overcome their subjugation. Laila's inspiration helps Mariam to take control of her own destiny. Rasheed has been an awful, abusive husband to her, but up until this point, she never defended herself. Mariam changes more than any other character over the course of the novel. She kills Rasheed and selflessly takes the rap for the crime so Laila can live on. She never dreams for a better life. But she wants to be free from all the brutality.

As Mariam and Laila become closer through their shared love of Aziza, Laila's daughter, and a common need to survive the brutal and tyrannical Rasheed, Mariam, for the first time, finds herself wanted and needed and part of a family. By virtue of this sense of belonging, she undergoes a transformation that is complete at the point she tells Laila to "think like a mother. I am"(ATSS 319). After killing Rasheed to prevent him from killing Laila, Mariam, older and more accustomed to hardship, must form a plan to save them from the repercussions of her act. There is no possibility of convincing Taliban authorities that she committed this act in self-defence. For women under the Taliban there is no self defence, there is only obedience to the male authority, and punishment for failing to be obedient.

Mariam, confident and in control, makes her decision to turn herself in. She is a mother sacrificing herself for her children. Laila, still young and still finding her way, cannot comprehend this decision, but follows Mariam's orders.

Mariam makes the ultimate sacrifice for the woman and children who have become her family and for the relationship she sees that Tariq and Laila might have.

Although her final act is tragic, it is also heroic and a choice that she makes on her own. Mariam lives out the final days of her life in the Walayat Women's Prison. To the women in the prison, many of whom are imprisoned for attempting to run away from their husbands,

Mariam, who has killed her husband, is a hero. She is honoured and cared for by her cellmates and loved by their children until her final day. It is well to recognize that Hosseini's characters are neither passive nor helpless, but they are abused and their lives are made tragic by the social and the religious mores and the political restrictions placed on them and the lack of any kind of support afforded to them. Hosseini strengthens his case in pointing out the hypocrisy behind laws by the Taliban who forbade women from working outside the home even when no males in the family could support them.

Mariam herself was surprised that she possessed such heroic traits whom everyone condemned as a 'harami' She breaks all the shackles and comes out a real, true hero. Her great strength allows her to face the sacrifice she makes, to save the ones she loves. She makes Laila understand that she and her children cannot live like fugitives; they deserve a better life, a peaceful solitary life, away from this unforgiving country. She says;

"It's fair," Mariam said. "I've killed your husband. I've deprived your son of his father. It isn't right that I run. I can't. Even if they never catch us, I'll never...." Her lips trembled. "I'll never escape your son's grief. How do I look at him? How do I ever bring myself to look at him, Laila jo? For me it ends here. There's nothing more I want. Everything I'd ever wished for as a little girl you've already given me.

You and your children have made me so very happy. It's all right, Laila jo. This is all right. Don't be sad. (ATSS 319)

The actions of these women show their strength to endure things and to retaliate against the man who has taken away their rights to live according to their own choice. The novel ends with a happy note where the bloody war has ended, the Taliban rule vanished and women feel secured and emancipated, where schools are reopened for the girls and women are free to work.

The strong female bonds, sisterly and even a motherly bond that is formed between Mariam and Laila are soul-stirring. Their bond empowers them to think, feel and overthrow the patriarchal norms. Laila and Mariam work towards a better future not only for themselves but also for their children.

Chapter Three

Trauma Of War And Terrorism

The war literature serves only to remind us that war is still very much a contemporary issue and that war is a popular topic for literature. Writers have also treated the Boer War, the Hundred Years of War, the English Civil Wars, the American Revolution, The War of 1812, and the US-Mexican War, as well as lesser known conflicts like the Chaco War, Zimbabwe's War of liberation, and the New Zealand Wars. The literature of war takes a wide variety of approaches in its efforts to comprehend the war experience and encompasses scholarship on a number of genres, including poetry, drama, short stories, novels, journals, diaries, oral histories, memoirs and letters. The 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York city as well as other acts of terrorism around the globe have resulted in a new body of literature that considers the war on terror.

A majority of Afghanistan's multi ethnic population consists of Pashtuns and Tajiks. The Pashtun comprise the largest chunk of Afghanistan's population followed by the Tajiks, Hazara, Uzbe, Aimak, Turkmen, Baloch and others. Because of the diverse ethnic composition of the country's population, there have been discords and even clashes between various groups on several occasions. The Pashtun and the Hazara have had many bloody encounters in the past few decades. the Civil War in Afghanistan has deteriorated the situation to such a level that people are dying every day because of war and poverty. The long stretched civil war and the war on terrorism have made normal existence almost impossible in the country. Also, because of the traditional conservatism in all walks of life, the level of poverty has gone up to a great extent as very few employment opportunities remain available to the people. The women are almost under house arrest in most of the tribal parts of the country. Owing

to various racial, religious and political issues, the country and its people are struggling to lead a normal and peaceful life.

The war novels in Afghanistan describe the daily suffering of the war, including the pain of the people, their displacement and the destruction of schools. The destruction of terrorism thus created a powerful literary tradition. Writing the truth over this period was entirely prohibited. Many writers who opposed the Taliban and other religious groups were killed, imprisoned or fled to another country.

The themes of novels in Afghanistan are different from those in the rest of the world because the issues of Afghanistan are completely different from those in the peaceful world. The main issues of the Afghans are migration, suicide attack, massacres, psychological diseases and starvation. The issues are not limited to the battleground between Afghan forces and the Taliban. Sometimes killing among them also created tribal enmities which continue for years.

Khaled Hosseini is one of the best authors of our time. His works have set a benchmark for modern literature and his voice has been revolutionary as a “spokes person” for the Afghan notice. His stories are best known for their empathetic tone, as they evoke emotions that cut to the core of the human heart. His stories dig deep into the human soul to find the fine line that separates right and wrong war and terrorism, love and betrayal, redemption and loss, forgiveness and revenge, power and weakness, and conviction and indifference.

The themes in Hosseini’s novels are powerful and exceptionally relevant in this day and age. Set in Afghanistan, Hosseini’s novels give us a glimpse of what life must be like to live in a war-torn country, where times are perilous, lives are threatened and people live in fear. Against this backdrop, we realize how precious life is.

When life is under threat, we prioritize and put health, safety, family and friends above wealth and material gain. As the stories unfold, we learn these incredible lessons about the value of life and importance of having the right priorities. The novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* foregrounds the problems faced by the general public due to political instability and civil war in the country through the journey of Mariam and Laila.

In the novel the suffering of people due to the civil war in the country is highlighted. At one time it is the other nations' interests that diminish chances of happiness and normality in the country and at another the internal forces like the Taliban and Mujahideen prove to be the biggest hurdle in the progress of the nation and its people. For decades, people have been dying almost every day. Sometimes, it is because of violence and sometimes out of hunger.

A Thousand Splendid Suns begins in 1970, when there is a relatively peaceful atmosphere in Afghanistan. People go about performing their daily chores in an usual manner. We find Mariam living on the outskirts of a remote village in Herat along with her unwed mother, and nobody bothers them. The novel showcases the time when it was possible for a woman to live alone in the contemporary society. Soon after however, it becomes impossible for a woman to live on her own as conservative forces start targeting the people violating their personal version of Quran. As the novel progresses, the things, both in the novel as well as real Afghanistan, change. The liberal atmosphere starts getting strained with people dying under mysterious circumstances. Khaled Hosseini in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* includes the real accounts of Daoud Khan's demonstrations of people in the streets of Kabul after the murder of Khyber:

On April 17, 1978, the year Mariam turned nineteen, a man named Mir Akbar Khyber was found murdered two days later, there was a large demonstration in Kabul. Everyone in the neighborhood was in the streets talking about it... Rasheed said that Mir Akbar Khyber had been a prominent communist, and his supporters were blaming the murder on President Daoud Khan's government. (ATSS 88)

Innocent lives are snuffed out an account of the reasons unknown to most of the victims. Mariam's step sisters Afsoon and Nilufar also were killed during these disturbances. It is revealed later in the novel through the letter of Jalil to Mariam that many innocent people were a prey to the war. More about this is brought to light through the accounts of the people Laila meets in Kolba. The driver who takes her to Kolba, on the way tells her about his family whom he had lost during these disturbances. He tells Laila:

This was back in March 1979, about nine months before the Soviets invaded. Some angry Heart is killed a Jew Soviet advisers, so the Soviets sent in tanks and helicopters and pounded this place. For three days, Hamshira, they fired on the city. They collapsed buildings, destroyed one of the minarets, killed thousands of people. Thousands. I lost two sisters in those three days. One of them was twelve years old. (ATSS 350)

When the Mujahedeen started fighting their war as per the directions of the US, they affected the masses in two major ways. Firstly they misused the power they had attained because of the funding and the arms and munitions provided to them. They killed the people many a times for recreation also. Apart from it, the collateral damage was really high. The other thing that made people suffered greatly during

their so called religious army was when they were fighting Guerilla war with the Soviets, a large number of boys and men were coerced to fight in the name of Jihad.

As a result, a large number of families lost their children to the war. Families kept waiting for in children who would never returned. In most cases, the untrained fighters who had been coerced or forced into fighting did not make it long in the fights. As a result, the Mujahedeen had to constantly scout for replacements. They started kidnapping the young boys to force them to join Jihad. The boys who knew nothing about the war and the weapons were made to fight. If they were caught by the enemies, they were tortured mercilessly. Rasheed in his conversation with Mariam and Laila has portrayed the plight of the boys:

They're forcing young boys to join. The Mujahedeen are. In plain daylight, at gunpoint. They drag the boys right off the streets. And when soldiers from a rival militia capture these boys, they torture them. I heard they electrocute them – it's what I heard-that they crush their balls with pliers. They make the boys lead them to their homes. Then they break in, kill their fathers, rape their sisters and mothers.
(ATSS 227)

Laila's mother is one of the women who hope that their children would return after their victory. But in the end her hopes fail. Her sons never come back. Like many other Afghan mothers, she receives only the news of their death. When her sons leave for the war, she stops going out of her room and her relation with her husband also gets sour. She ignores her daughter who knows nothing about why and where her brothers have gone. Her family life is wrecked due the bitterness of war and eventually she loses her life along with her husband when rocket strikes their home. We see that Laila hardly remembers her brothers as they leave for the war when she is

quite young. But she very well remembers that day when the news of her brother's death arrives. She tells us how her parents reacted to this, which changed their life forever:

Though the targets of the Soviets were the Mujahedeen, people blamed them for deliberately targeting children through these landmines. Mujahedeen used the anger of people as a advantage. Though propaganda in newspapers, they misled the common people to serve their own ulterior motives. Impressionable teenagers believed the news and turned against the Soviets. One of the newspaper clippings that Laila's brother, Ahmad collects reads :

Children are the intended victims of Soviet land mine campaign. The article went on to say that the Soviets also liked to hide explosives inside brightly coloured toys. If a child picked it up, the toy exploded, tore off fingers or an entire hand... In another article in Ahmad's box, a young Mujahid was saying that the Soviets had dropped gas on his village that burned people's skin and blinded them. He said he had seen his mother and sister running for stream, coughing up blood (ATSS 109)

Both in reality and in the novel, we see that the resentment for the Soviets in hearts of the civilians grows gradually, For this reason many people including Fariba want Mujahedeen to win and take over Afghanistan. Many people think that the Jihad is the righteous way and they go up to the extent of dutifully sending their children to join the Mujahedeen forces. The false projections start proving detrimental of the Soviets who were originally hailed as saviors by the same people. In case of Afghanistan, these vile projections cost the Soviets the trust of the general public. When the US started funnelling money to aid Mujahedeen and the external support to

the Mujahedeen got intense, the end of Soviet's in Afghanistan seemed near. Khaled Hosseini in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* observes:

...after eight years of fighting, the Soviets were losing this war. Particularly now that the American President, Reagan had started shipping the Mujahedeen stringer Missiles to down the Soviet helicopters, now that Muslims from all over the world were joining the cause: Egyptians, Pakistanis, even wealthy Saudis, who left their millions behind and came to Afghanistan to fight the Jihad. (ATSS 102)

The news of withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan generated a mixed response among the civilians. Though most of the people rejoiced the idea, there were few others who anticipated the continuation of their indirect rule in the country. Some people also feared that their withdrawal may create a vacuum which may be filled by some vicious forces. Amid the apprehensions in April 1988, a treaty was signed in Geneva. According to the treaty, “within nine months, there won’t be any more Soviets in Afghanistan” (ATSS 138). In January 1989, the people “went to watch one of the last Soviet convoys exit the city” (ATSS 139)

Even when the Soviets left, the people complained that Najibullah as the Puppet President of the Soviets would be controlling them proxy. In the novel also, the things take a similar course. We see people talking about the same thing. Many people do not seem happy even after watching Soviets leave their country. Fariba may be considered to be a representative of the general public’s opinion at that time. When Babi and Laila happily go to tell her about Soviet’s withdrawal, she gives them a cold response and refuses to celebrate. She tells them:

But the communist regime is staying... Najibullah is the Soviet's puppet president. He's not going anywhere, no, the war will go on. This is not the end...you two celebrate if you want to. But I won't rest until the Mujahidin hold a victory parade right here in Kabul.(ATSS 138)

Most of the people in Afghanistan had celebrated the change when the Mujahidin had risen to the power. Hope for a bright future once again had started growing in the hearts of the people. But little did anyone know that they were exchanging an evil for the other. The Mujahedeen renamed the country as the Islamic state of Afghanistan. An Islamic Jihad council was formed in Peshawar by Mujahidin factions. In the atmosphere of confusion and suspicion among the members, things came to a head very rapidly. "The leadership council was formed prematurely. It elected Rabbani President. The other faction cried nepotism. Massoud called for peace and patience" (ATSS 154).

When the entire country was struggling to live through the heavy fighting due to the civil war, the Taliban rose to power. The Taliban arrived with promise to liberate country of all its hardships and chaos but ended up as one of the most inhuman and brutal regimes. The Taliban imposed on people many dictates which made their already miserable life unbearable. Horrific crimes were committed by them on helpless victims who failed to obey them.

Especially women were relegated to a very inferior level and their movements were restricted greatly. In their attempt to run the country according to Quran's laws, they made everyday existence of the Afghans miserable. In Afghanistan, the Taliban rose to power while the Mujahedeen were busy fighting the civil war. They, for a long time, were waiting for the right moment to strike and finally they quietly entered the

battle scene in early 1995. The Taliban members belonged to the poorest, the least literate and the most conservative Pashtun areas of Afghanistan.

The people heard about the Taliban in October 1994, when “they had overthrown the warlords in Kandahar and taken the city” (ATSS 244). Rasheed comes with the news of the Taliban’s arrival and telling Mariam and Laila that they are a guerrilla force made up of “young Pashtun men whose families had fled to Pakistan during the war against the Soviets” (ATSS244). He further tells them that their, “leader was a mysterious, illiterate, one eyed recluse named Mullah Omar who, Rasheed said with some amusement called himself Ameer-ul-Mumineen, leader of the faithful” (ATSS 244).

During the Taliban rule, they also force people to follow their rules from the very beginning. The moment the Taliban entered Kabul, they had exhibited their violent nature. They told people they will take Afghanistan to the days of Prophet Mohammad. They believed in the precepts of Islam in their rigid form, so that their attitude bordered on fundamentalism. Therefore the very first thing that the Taliban did after their coming to power was the execution of Najibullah.

They do not treat him humanely even after his death. They drag his dead body in the streets of Kabul as a warning to the people going against the practices of Islam. “...two bloodied men hung from ropes tried to traffic – light posts. Their clothes had been shredded. Their bloated faces had turned purple blue... the one on the left... was Najibullah(ATSS247). This incident was unanimously criticized by the people outside Afghanistan.

The common people rejoiced at the death of Najibullah as they had hated him. Najibullah was communist and people had long been waiting for the end of Soviet intervention of Afghanistan. But the people at the time did not have any idea that the

Taliban were going to meet out similar harsh treatment to the civilians too. Very soon after their coming to Kabul, the Taliban released a long list of codes for both the men and the women.

A common feature of all wars is that children suffer the most during these trouble - torn times. When Tariq comes back to meet Laila after many years, he tells her about the condition of the children in the refugee camps he had lived in. He says that the children, who survived these conditions, had to subsequently fight various diseases. He tells her that, “A lot of kids died. Dysentery, TB, hunger – you name it. Mostly, that damn dysentery. God, Laila. I saw so many kids buried. There’s nothing worse a person can see” (ATSS 298).

After the incident of falling Twin Towers in 11 September America begins war against terrorism and Taliban’s. The era of rockets and bombs once again overpowers the state of Afghanistan. The interest of the American’s in the country is revived. They start supporting the Mujahedeen once again-this time to fight the Taliban. Helpless people begin to suffer again, desperate to save their lives. The United States of America demands the custody of Osama Bin Laden from the Taliban but they refuse to hand him over.

After almost a year of fighting between the U.S and the Taliban, coalition forces drive out “the Taliban out of every majority city... to Pakistan and to the mountains in the South and east of Afghanistan” (ATSS 377). International peace keeping forces also start coming to Kabul to help the people rehabilitate. This time Laila decides to come back to Afghanistan. Though she knows that the conditions in Afghanistan are still not good and it will take some time for the things to come normal, still she comes back. She believes that she could help in reconstructing her country.

Laila never loses her hope that one day her country would become as a peaceful one. Along with Tariq and Zaman she converts a bombed building into a school and starts teaching there. Like other people she finds it difficult to forget their painful past but believes in future.

Hosseini ends his novel on a positive note capturing the silver lining amid the clouds of despair. The Afghan war situation may have had religious, ethnic and political origins, but the sufferers build hopes for a better future even when things have not yet started looking up. Everyone begins to lend their hands for their country to reconstruct it. The action of Laila is symbolic of the hope that the country nurtures for its future because those children who have had a tragic past are the future citizens of the country.

A Thousand Splendid Suns bears out that war affects a nation deeply and a war of monumental proportion leaves indelible scars on the psyche of common men and women. It brings to the fore many dormant conflicts that destroy peace and harmony of a nation. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, therefore mirrors the trauma that innocent Afghan people have been subjected to a long period because of war and terrorism in Afghanistan.

Chapter Four

The Book Of Guidance

Holy books play an important part in the life of almost all the people. Different religion have different definitions for God, have different concepts about the origin of this world, have different opinion about the lifestyles, and have different methods and way of living. All these issues are described in their respective religious books or Holy books. These books are scared and are never disrespected, in fact, these books are worshipped. Religious texts may be used to provide meaning and purpose, evoke a deeper connection with the divine, convey religious truths, promote religious experience, foster communal identity, and guide individual and communal religious practice. The religious books, apart from the teaching about God, also tell us about the history and the world during the ancient times. With changing times, the writings in the books have remained unchanged and as holy and pure as ever. These books direct our mind in times of moral dilemmas.

Different religions have different holy books according to their beliefs. There are over four thousand different religions in the world today. They vary by geographical spread, number of adherents, language hierarchy and of course, beliefs. While the number of living religions is staggering, nearly 75 percent of the population belongs to one of five religions: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism. These five religions are considered to be the most influential in the world and are often referred to as the “world religions” due to their size and influence. The adherents of Islam and Christianity alone make up nearly half of the world’s total population.

The holy book of Christianity is the Holy Bible. This sacred text is divided into two main sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament which are, then

further divided into various books. The Old Testament describes the creation of the world. God's convenient with the Israelites and the many struggles of the Israelite people. The New Testament is dominated by the teachings of Jesus Christ whom Christians believe was the son of God and the Saviour of the world.

Islam is the second largest religion in the world and followers of Islam, are called Muslims. They believe in a single all-powerful god called Allah sent numerous prophets to Earth over the centuries in order to teach humanity the correct way to live. The last of these prophets was Muhammed, Allah spoke through him and recited a number of teachings. The teaching were preserved and recorded in what would come to be the Holy book of Islam, the Koran. Muslims believe that the Quran is the complete and unaltered word of Allah. The text is free of human interpretations or mistakes and thus serves as the foundation for Muslim life.

The Koran, like the Christian Bible, is comprised of two main sections which are associated with the city in which they were written, Medina and Mecca. These two sections are then further broken down into chapters or *surahs* and verses or *ayats*.

The importance of the Holy Koran in a Muslim country is reflected in the novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. Due to the crucial conditions in Afghanistan many people in the country did not have any opportunity to go to schools and study. Comparing with men, women had less opportunities to attend schools. On the other hand studying Koran is a mandatory thing for every Muslim . So Muslim men and women were taught Koran in their houses when they were young. It shows the importance of Koran over their education. In *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Though Mariam wants to study, she was not allowed to go to school by her mother Nana. Nana had some different reasons for not allowing her to school. But Mariam was taught the five daily prayers by Mullah Faizullah, the elderly village Koran tutor.

Nana did not make any negative comments on Mariam for learning Koran, because Nana knew the importance of Koran to her child Mariam and when Nana was young she was taught Koran by the same tutor.

But Mariam's favorite, other than Jalil of course, was Mullah Faizullah, the elderly village Koran tutor, its akhund. He came by once or twice a week from Gul Daman to teach Mariam the five daily namaz prayers and tutor her in Koran recitation, just as he had taught Nana when she'd been a little girl... It was Mullah Faizullah who had held her hand, guided the pencil in it along the rise of each *alef*, the curve of each *beh*, the three dots of each *she*. (ATSS 15)

Mullah taught Mariam and Nana verses from Koran when they were young. The importance of the Koran is imbibed in them right from their childhood. To seek admission in a school, they have to know about every prayers and about their holy rituals. Like other Muslims, Mariam learnt everything in Koran when she was young. "Mulla Sahib. You taught me every surrah and ayat in the Koran years ago"(ATSS 40). In a same way, when Aziza was a child, Mariam taught her Koran. "... Mariam had started teaching Aziza verses from the Koran" (ATSS 180). The people who believe in Islam, have a unique way to worship Koran. Worshipping Koran is the first lesson to everyone. Worshipping Koran is more important than reading it. People would kiss Koran three times before opening it. They would touch it to each brow between each kiss. It was the first lesson Mullah taught Mariam. "As he'd taught her, she kissed it three times, touching it to her brow between each kiss and gave it back to him" (ATSS 40).

Being a child, Mariam might not understand the importance and the duty of a Koran in a life of a Muslim. It was the duty of a tutor to clear doubts of his student.

Mullah had lived with Koran throughout his life. He taught Koran to Mariam's mother Nana, now to Mariam. So he had more knowledge about Koran. From his answer to Mariam, he proved himself as the best tutor of Koran. Mullah gave a single line answer which clearly defined about Koran. "the Koran speaks the truth, My girl" (ATSS 36). This single statement which Mullah gave, is not only for Mariam but also to those who search the meaning of Koran.

Though Koran is a religious book, it is a master piece of Arabian literature. People who belong to other religion, who do not have any knowledge about Koran might not understand the meaning of the verses in Koran, but they would surely like the way of pronouncing each Arabic words from the Holy Koran. According to Mullah, he looked for a kind of comfort from Koran whether it is through the meaning of the verses or through the rhythm of those verses. "Mullah Faizullah admitted to Mariam that, at times, he did not understand the meaning of the Koran's words. But he said he liked the enchanting sounds the Arabic words made as they rolled off his tongue. He said comforted him, eased his heart" (ATSS 16).

A happy event or a sorrowful event, the Holy Koran has a place in their ceremony. Mariam's marriage was a forced one. Mariam did not like to get married in a young age. Marriage was used as an excuse to send Mariam away from her father, Jalil and his wives made a sudden arrangement for her marriage. There was a Koran in the middle of the table in the marriage hall. "she was taken to the room with the long, brown table... in the middle of the table, a Koran, a green veil, and a mirror" (ATSS 47). During the burial of Nana, there was a Koran. When Mariam buried her children, she used to read some verses from the Holy Koran.

When Taliban came to power, they began to force people to adhere of the rules of Koran, they read a list of rules in streets and advised people to follow it.

Strict measures were taken to see that the civilians followed the rules of Koran. Strict and cruel punishments were enforced to check those who did not follow the rules of Koran. They hated any kind of entertainment. They burnt all kinds of arts, books, paintings and drawings. The only book, they worshipped, is Koran. “Books, except the Koran, were burned in heaps” (ATSS187).

Mullah Faizullah taught Mariam the impact of Holy Koran. According to Mullah, the words in Koran would never fail to give solution to our worries and sorrows. “They’ll comfort you too, Mariam jo”, He said. “You can summon them in your time of need, and they won’t fail you. God’s words will never betray you, my girl” (ATSS16). So whenever Mariam had a problem, she always thought of the words of God from Koran. When Mariam was worried about the death of her mother, Mullah told her to give her worries to the hands of Allah. “Blessed is He in whose hand is the kingdom, and He who has power over all things, who created death and life that He may try you” (ATSS 35- 36)

According to Koran, everything happens with the knowledge of God. When Mariam felt guilty on the suicide of her mother Nana, Mullah told her it was not Mariam’s fault but it was a plan of God. He advised Mariam that “Behind, every trial and every sorrow that He makes us shoulder, God has reason” (ATSS 36). Mullah also clearly stated that killing oneself was a major sin in Koran.

In Muslim countries, Koran was not just a religious book. The government functioned according to the norms in the Koran. The Koran lists the punishments for the sinners.. Most of the Muslim countries followed those laws and punishments still now. When Mariam was accused for killing Rasheed, the Jury thought that Mariam had apt reasons. But they told her that they had to obey the rules in Koran. At last Mariam was sentenced to death as a punishment following the decree in Koran.

Koran is not only the source of rules and laws, but is a healer too. It is a site of solace for the troubled and sorrowful. Whenever people came to Koran they forgot about every sorrows which gave pains to their heart. Koran healed every pain and sorrows in their heart. When Mariam could not become mother, she was treated as a slave by Rasheed. She was there only to cook and work for him. Whenever her heart was broken, she always thought of comforting verses from Koran. “She remembered a verse from the Koran that Mullah Faizullah had taught her: And Allah is the East and the West, therefore wherever you turn there is Allah’s purpose” (ATSS 81). In the last hours of Mariam in prison also, she thought of some verses from Koran. “Mariam’s final thoughts were a few words from the Koran, which she muttered under her breath” (ATSS 200).

One who took under shades of the Koran, would surely lead a happy peaceful life. Koran would never betray those who believe in it. When Laila and her family wanted to begin a new life in Afghanistan, they were given a farewell with a Koran as a sign of prosperity. “for good luck, he holds a Koran by the doorway for Tariq, Laila and children to kiss three times, then holds it high so they can pass under it” (ATSS 347).

Khaled Hosseini in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns* shows the importance of Koran in a life of a Muslim through the life of Mullah Faizullah, Mariam and Laila. The Koran is the part and parcel of a Muslim’s life. Koran is important to a Muslim as oxygen is to one’s life. Hosseini clearly makes note on different features of Koran. People outside Islam think that Koran is a religious book for Islam. But Koran is more than a religious book. As shown by Hosseini in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Koran is a book for healing, for counseling, for regulations and for literary and religious purpose.

Chapter Five

Summation

Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan American novelist. He was born in Kabul, Afghanistan and migrated to United States of America. He has adopted a secular western culture in spite of his Afghan Muslim parentage. He has written four novels: *The Kite Runner*, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, *Mountains Echoed* and *The Sea Prayer*. His novels are set in Afghanistan. He writes about the life and the sufferings of Afghan people in his novels. His works are a voice of the downtrodden and women in Afghanistan. He wants to tell the world about his country's pathetic condition due to political instability. His novels reflect the real situation of Afghanistan to the worldwide readers.

Hosseini, in his novel *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, writes about the life of two young Afghan girls Mariam and Laila. He narrates the story of Mariam and Laila in one hand and gives readers the information of the political changes in other hand. Hosseini focuses more on the changes that happened in the history of Afghanistan. The story of Mariam and Lailla begins as a normal family story with some domestic sufferings. As the novel moves, they begin to suffer a lot. Their life becomes a tragedy. Laila lived through all sufferings with the support of Mariam and never gave up her spirit. In the end, Laila wins in the battle where Mariam and other women in Afghanistan lost their life.

These women's acts demonstrate their ability to persevere in the face of adversity and to retaliate against the man who has taken away their freedom to live their lives as they see fit . The novel ends on a happier note , with the bloody war over the Taliban rule gone and the women feeling safe and liberated , girls schools reopened and women free to work.

The strong female bonds, sisterly and even a motherly bond that is formed between Mariam and Laila are soul-stirring. Their bond empowers them to think, feel and overthrow the patriarchal norms. Laila and Mariam work towards a better future not only for themselves but also for their children.

Suffering undergone by the protagonists Mariam and Laila due to their feminine gender in a terroristic country is analysed. The theme Feminism is applied in order to analyse the difficult situation faced by both Mariam and Laila. From birth to death, Mariam faced sufferings. Laila was lucky compared to Mariam. The social and political changes did not improve the status of women. When the Taliban comes to power, the sufferings of women increase to its peak. Women were treated lower than slaves.

Focus on the reasons and different aspect of Afghan war is being investigated. The novel takes place in a civilian setting which was affected by the horrors of war. The daily suffering of people is clearly explained through the stories of Mariam and Laila. Terrorism is a major factor which controls the Afghan society. The Taliban strictly dismissed entertainment of any kind in the country. All means of entertainment ranging from music to television were banned. The books of poetry were burned and their creators. If by any chance alive, were also killed. Even the dead talks about the similar incidents in Kabul when, all the cinema houses are shut down and people are asked to destroy everything that provided entertainment ranging from the TVs, transistors, musical instruments and even the books of art and poetry.

The people began to leave the country. The people who did not have resources to leave the country stayed back and endured the sufferings inflicted upon them. Some people like Laila escapes from the cruelty of terrorism. But most of the people were victims of terrorism.

The action of Laila is symbolic of the hope that the country nurtures for its future because those children who have had a tragic past are the future citizens of the country. *A Thousand Splendid Suns* bears out that war affects a nation deeply and a war of monumental proportion leaves indelible scars on the psyche of common men and women. It brings to the fore many dormant conflicts that destroy peace and harmony of a nation. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, therefore mirrors the trauma that innocent Afghan people have been subjected to a long period because of war and terrorism in Afghanistan.

Hosseini ends his novel on a positive note capturing the silver lining amid the clouds of despair. The Afghan war situation may have had religious, ethnic and political origins, but the sufferers build hopes for a better future even when things have not yet started looking up. Everyone begins to lend their hands for their country to reconstruct it. The action of Laila is symbolic of the hope that the country nurtures for its future because those children who have had a tragic past are the future citizens of the country.

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The importance of Koran in a Muslim society has been analysed. Koran plays a major role in the life of every Muslim. As a child learning the moral values in the Koran is considered. When they grow up, they follow the rules and morals given in Koran for a peaceful life. When people die, the funeral rites are carried on with the

rituals in Koran. Hosseini deals with many aspects of Koran. Personal, religious and social life of a Muslim is guided by Koran.

A Muslim's life is incomplete without the Koran. The Koran is as important to a Muslim as oxygen is to life. Hosseini makes several observations about the Koran. Outsiders believe the Koran is a holy text for Muslims. However, the Koran is more than a religious text. Koran is a book for healing, counselling, rules, and law, as Hosseini demonstrates in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*.

Book review

A Thousand Splendid Suns, released on 2007, May 22, received favourable prepublication reviews from Kirkus, Publishers Weekly, Library Journal, Booklist, Washington Post, New York Times, Houston Chronicle, and Guardian. It reached number 2 on Amazon.com's bestseller list before its release.

Jonathan Yardley (2007) in Washington Post Review asserts that *A Thousand Splendid Suns* is powerfully moving. He reminds that this novel is popular fiction of the first rank, which is plenty good enough, but it is not literature and should not be mistaken for such. The central theme of the novel is the place of women in Afghanistan. It is the story of two women intertwined with the chaotic history of Afghanistan. Like a historian or journalist, he adds, Khalid Hosseini carefully provides dates for all of the historical events.

I conclude the novel, towards the end kindles a ray of hope for all those women who have been suffering under the male dominance and are deprived of all freedom. The novel gives voice to those women whose voice has been muffled by the illegitimate patriarchal authority. The novel depicts socio political and economic complexities. The author illustrates the extreme gender inequality and ideology that prevails in Afghan society through the lives of Mariam, Mariam's mother, and Laila.

The Taliban's and other conservative groups' standards punish women for eloping. Ironically, the woman who is the victim of rape and other atrocities is held responsible. The novel portrays the state of the country through the eyes of a single citizen. Similarly, the political positioning of women is highly unfair. Women are not allowed to be educated or to work. Women are not allowed to participate in politics and are denied any form of autonomy. The novelist insists that women should be treated equally in each household and in the society large.

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