

Journey Towards Enlightenment: A Study of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

A Project 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

submitted by

AKILA. S

(REG. NO. 20APEN01)



PG RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Racial Politics	10
Three	Invisible Women	20
Four	Blindness and Insight	32
Five	Summation	42
	Works Cited	48

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Journey Towards Enlightenment: A Study of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*** 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 is a work done by Akila. S in the year 2021-2022 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Dr. A. Josephine Alangara Betsy
Dr. A. Josephine Alangara Betsy

Guide

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

S. Vennila
27/05/2022
Examiner

Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Assistant Prof. of English
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank **Lord Almighty** for His guidance and grace in completing this project successfully during the year 2021-2022.

I would like to express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank my institution for the values I received and the knowledge I acquired in the course of study.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head, Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. Josephine Alangara Betsy**, for her untiring help, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank **Dr. K. Vinitha**, Librarian for her extended help in the use of the library for reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided.

I thank my parents for the great comforts I enjoy and the good education they have provided me. I thank them for their trust, moral support and benevolence.

PREFACE

Ralph Waldo Ellison was an American writer, literary critic and scholar best known for his renowned, award winning novel *Invisible Man*. Ellison employs a direct, didactic style similar to that of the social realist protest novels.

The project entitled **Journey Towards Enlightenment: A Study of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*** comprises of five chapters.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with African-American literature in general, Ralph Ellison's biography, and epigrammatic abstract of the novel *Invisible Man*

The second chapter **Racial Politics** discusses the problem of the blacks, and their dilemmas they get encountered within a world dominated by white values and ideologies of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.

The third chapter **Invisible Women** elaborates women as an influential role in shaping the narrator's life and drive the narrator's journey towards true authenticity of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.

The fourth chapter analyses the **Blindness and Insight** of the characters in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible man*.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

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

Introduction

Chapter One

Literature refers to an art form or any single writing that has aesthetic or creative value. Literature is classified as fiction, non-fiction, poetry and prose. It can also be further distinguished into major forms such as novel, short story and drama. The two types of literature are written and oral. Oral literature includes folklore, ballads, myths and fables. Literature helps to understand life, cultures and experiences of people in other parts of the world which may never be able to visit in the life time. English language spreads throughout the world with the development of British Empire between the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

African-American literature is a body of literature produced in the United States by writers of African descent. Although they are certainly slaves writing in the early days of slavery and colonization. The African-American literary tradition began to take root in the 17th and 18th centuries, when former slaves such as Frederick Douglass and Phillis Wheatley came to the attention of the larger white audience. The African-American literature fights against racial discrimination, marginalization and social injustice. At the beginning of the twentieth century, African-American writers faced serious issues: race and class inequality; challenges to morality and religion; interrogations of political nationalism and cultural ancestry: they encounter the problem of how to achieve a truly African-American identity in the face of complicating diversity.

African-American artistic expressions are the results of their deep thoughts and critical analysis of their tragic circumstances. African-American are viewed as people with no history, no cultural heritage, no tradition, and no identity in white America. Blacks who remained in the United States quickly began to form educational, fraternal, mutual aid, and religious societies. The writings associated with these African American societies display a more assertive tone and argument. Two striking features of early black writing thus come into clearer focus: the skillful management of the discourses of liberty, and the critique of the

African slave trade, which went right to the moral foundation of Britain's commercial empire. Kevin Bell in his article "The Embrace of Entropy" suggests that:

Blackness recognizes within itself the density of its own nothingness, feeding on the contempt in which it is held for exactly this reason- its non-recognizing, ineluctable thwarting of social narcissism and the categories of classification erected toward this end. Blackness visible . . . is the freedom that results from relinquishment of the very imagining of subjectivity altogether, along with all of the mystifying narratives of united "positionality that keep it propped up, such as "race." (45)

Black women had to face a twofold struggle because they suffered both racial prejudice and sexual abuse by the white masters and black males. African women treated as slaves were depicted as animals and prostitutes. The numerous literary portrayals and treatment of black skinned people as 'Other' by imposing negative meanings and stereotypes were meant to legalize hierarchical racialized system and justify oppression in a white hegemonic American society.

Ralph Waldo Ellison was born in Oklahoma City in the year 1994. His father Lewis named Ralph after the great essayist and philosopher of 19th century, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ellison's father Lewis, died in an accident when the novelist was only a three year old child. His mother Ida, had to work as a domestic and stewardess of Avery Chapel Afro-Methodist Episcopal Church. Ralph had the opportunity to meet the people of other races as his parents had many white friends who visited them frequently when Ralph was a small child. Music was his first interest. Later he had training even in sculpture. Oklahoma City's lively life provided him interest in social life.

Naturally, Ralph was free from racial prejudices as his *Invisible Man* was in the end of the novel. Being free at least conceptually from the racial bias, Ellison was in a position to absorb what he has called frontier attitudes, which followed his imagination to range widely and even to soar. His mother was actively involved in garnering support for the socialist party

and, according to Ellison, she was thrown into jail several times for violating a zoning ordinance by moving into a building in a section of Oklahoma City where Governor Alfalfa Bill Murray has decided Negroes shouldn't live.

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* was a great success. It was published by Random House in 1952. It was highly praised by such persons of status as Saul Bellow and Albert Murray. The novel won praise for its stylistic innovations in infusing classic literary motifs with modern Black speech and culture, while providing a thoroughly unique take on the construction of contemporary African American identity. Christopher Hanlon in his article "Eloquence and Invisible Man," suggests that "more than strictly 'political' his chosen technique is also spiritual and musical, drawing upon a tradition of call-and-response oration that also informs the improvisational styles of jazz composition" (76).

Ellison's collection of essays, *Shadow and Act*, published by Random House in 1964 established Ellison as culture critic. The collection as a whole is aimed at representing the same disparity on a broader level drawing on American folklore, ritual, literature, and music. Ellison illustrates the complicated relationship between American culture as a whole and what he calls the Negro-American subculture. In the course of essays, reviews, and interviews written over twenty years, Ellison demonstrates his evolution as a writer and a thinker, makes observations about American culture as a whole, and in particular, represents autobiographically his experience of being black in America.

Ellison's short story *Flying Home* (1944) was named after a jazz composition written by Benny Goodman and Lionel Hampton. A legend surrounding the song claims that Hampton improvised the melody to the song while nervously waiting to board his first flight on an airplane. The story *Flying Home* is about a Todd, a young black air force candidate in Flight training School in Macon County, Alabama, during World War II. Todd is among the first African Americans accepted into the air force and feels a tremendous amount of pressure to perform well so that he can prove he is equal to his white counterparts.

Ellison's second collection of essays *Going to the Territory* was published in 1986 by Random House. Jonathan Yardley considered it as the work of one of the most formidable figures in American intellectual life. Ellison was honoured with the Medal of Freedom in 1969 and was named Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des lettres in France in 1970. A Public library was named after him in 1975, and he was awarded a National Medal of Arts in 1985.

James Baldwin was a civil rights activist, writer, and essayist. He began to write short stories and book reviews, heavily influenced by the Harlem Renaissance movement. In 1948, Baldwin moved to Paris, a move many people believe he did as a response to the treatment of Black Americans. He wrote eloquently, thoughtfully, and passionately on the subject of race in America in novels, essays, and plays. Baldwin's first novel, the autobiographical *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), is probably best known. It is the story of 14-year old boy who seeks self-knowledge and religious faith as he wrestles with issues of Christian conversion in a storefront church. He is perhaps best known for his books of essays, in particular *Notes of a Native Son* (1955), *Nobody Knows My Name* (1961), and *The Fire Next Time* (1963).

Norman Mailer (1923-2007) was the American novelist and journalist. His 1968 fiction novel *Armies of the Night* (1968) won the Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction as well as the National book Award. He is best known for using a form of journalism called New Journalism that combines the imaginative subjectivity of literature with the more objective qualities of journalism. Both Mailer's fiction and nonfiction made a radical critique of the totalitarianism he believed inherent in the centralized power structure of 20th- and 21st-century America. Mailer became famous for his naturalistic war novel *The Naked and the Dead* (1948) which is an authentic account of the lives of American forces in the pacific islands in World War II. His other famous works include *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967), *Of a Fire on the Moon* (1970), *The Executioner's Song* (1979), *Harlot's Ghost* (1991).

Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960) was considered one of the pre-eminent writers of twentieth century African American literature. Hurston was closely associated with the

Harlem Renaissance and has influenced such writers as Ralph Ellison, Toni Morrison, Gayle Jones, Alice Walker, and Toni Cade Bambara. Hurston released her first novel, *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, in 1934. Two years later, she received a Guggenheim fellowship, which allowed her to work on what would become her most famous work, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937). Hurston wrote the novel while travelling in Haiti, where she also studied local voodoo practices. The novel explores the growth of a female character Janie Neale Hurston through the turbulence of her destiny. Hurston published her autobiography, *Dust Tracks on a Road* in 1942. This personal work was well-received by critics, but her life and career soon began to falter.

Alice Walker (1944) was an African American novelist, short story writer, poet, and social activist. In 1982, she became the first African-American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, which was awarded for her novel *The Colour Purple*. A great feminist, Walker coined the term “womanist” to mean “A black feminist or feminist of colour” in 1983. She has long been associated with feminism, presenting black existence from the female perspective. Walker uses heightened, lyrical realism to center on the dreams and failures of accessible, credible people. Her work underscores the quest for dignity in human life.

Amiri Baraka (1934-2014) was the dramatist, novelist, and poet who is most respected and widely published African American writers. With the beginning of Black Civil Rights Movements during the sixties, Baraka explored the anger of African Americans and used his writing as a weapon against racism. Also, he advocated scientific socialism with his revolutionary inclined poems and aimed at creating aesthetic through them. Amiri Baraka's writing career spans over nearly fifty years and has mostly focused on the subjects of Black Liberation and White Racism. Today, a number of well-known poems, short stories, plays and commentaries on society, music and literature are associated with his name. A few of the famous ones include, *The Music: Reflection on Jazz and Blues*, *The Book of Monk* and *New poetry* among others. Baraka was one of the revolutionary provocateurs of African American

poetry. He is counted among the few influential political activists who have spent most of their life-time fighting for the rights of African-Americans.

The *Invisible Man* was written shortly after America's triumph in World War II. While the post war period is traditionally considered a boom time in American history, many men were disillusioned by the experience of the war, something reflected by the novel's veteran mental patients. Furthermore, the late 1940s and early 1950s were also a time of immense discrimination against blacks, especially in the Deep South. Segregation was in full effect in many parts of America when *Invisible Man* was published, and many of its scenes were considered shocking at the time.

Ellison's writing techniques include that of visual imagery, irony, occasional satire, and infinite examples of symbolism. All of these writing techniques help to further the novel, and benefit the book as a whole. Two techniques that Ellison used better than any others, however, are tone and language. Ellison's tone creates both a tragic and a comic response to the reader. Ellison makes good use of many literary techniques necessary for writing a good novel. These include satire, irony, symbol, and imagery. The novel appeals to all races and ages of people because of the language used and of the heroic story of the young Negro trying to make it in a predominantly white American society. The novel is truly a classic and should become more and more so as people of all races look back on the symbolic struggle this young man had.

Ralph Ellison's writing style in *Invisible Man* might best be described as symphonic for the way it captures many of the idioms and dialects of the United States. The sheer range of styles on display include the speech of poor Southern Black people like Jim Trueblood, working-class Northern Black people like Mary, and educated Black people like Dr. Bledsoe. Ellison also mimics the accented idiom of immigrants like Ras the Exhorter, the lyrical oratory style of Southern Black preachers, and the abstract sociological rhetoric of Marxist-Leninist activists. The wide use of dialects offers a panoramic picture of American speech spanning all races and socioeconomic statuses.

In addition to the diversity of speech, Ellison's writing also displays a frequent movement between realism and surrealism. *Invisible Man* contains many scenes with conventional descriptions and dialogue. But it also contains many scenes full of dense language that can obscure what is really happening. For instance, the conventional scenes in Liberty Paints give way to the highly surreal scenes. Ellison's jazz-like movement between realism and surrealism contributes to his depiction of the complexity of American life in the twentieth century.

The unnamed protagonist of *Invisible Man* tells his own story from a first person point of view. The reader sees the world exclusively through the narrator's eyes as he navigates a series of bizarre experiences and troubling encounters with both Black and white characters. The narrator's account of events varies in reliability. There are times when the narrator's perspective on events seems reliably reported, as when he arrives in New York City and struggles to find work there. However, the narrator's point of view takes on a surreal character that obscures reality. One example where reliability seems suspect comes during the narrator's stay in the hospital, where he slips in and out of consciousness.

The narrator explains that he is invisible because others refuse to see him. He lives underground, siphoning electricity away from Monopolated Light & Power Company by lining his apartment with light bulbs. The narrator listens to jazz, and recounts a vision he had while he listened to Louis Armstrong, traveling back into the history of slavery. He is invited to give his high school graduation speech in front of a group of prominent white local leaders. At the meeting, the narrator is asked to join a humiliating boxing match, a battle royal, with some other black students.

Trueblood has impregnated his daughter, and he recounts the incident to Mr. Norton in a long, dreamlike story. The narrator, worried that Mr. Norton will fall ill on hearing Trueblood's story and takes him to the Golden Day, a black bar and whorehouse. The narrator tries to carry out a drink but is eventually forced to bring Mr. Norton into the bar, where

pandemonium breaks loose. The narrator meets a patient who is an ex-doctor. The ex-doctor helps Mr. Norton recover from his fainting spell, but insults Mr. Norton with his boldness.

Dr. Bledsoe, the president of the black college is furious with the narrator. Dr. Bledsoe reprimands the narrator, deciding to exile him to New York City. Dr. Bledsoe tells the narrator that he will prepare him letters of recommendation. The narrator arrives in New York, excited to live in Harlem's black community. However, his job proves unsuccessful, as Dr. Bledsoe's letters do little good. Eventually, the narrator meets young Emerson, the son of the Mr. Emerson to which he supposed to be introduced. Young Emerson lets the narrator read Dr. Bledsoe's letter, which he discovers were not meant to help him at all, but instead to give him a sense of false hope. The narrator leaves dejected, but young Emerson tells him of a potential job at the factory of Liberty Paints.

The narrator reports to Liberty Paints and is given a job assisting Lucius Brockway, an old black man who controls the factory's boiler room and basement. Brockway has wounded the narrator severely. The narrator is taken to the factory's hospital, where he is strapped into a glass and metal box. The doctors treat the narrator with severe electric shocks, and the narrator soon forgets his own name. Without explanation, the narrator is discharged from the hospital and fired from his job at the factory.

The narrator is taken to the Brotherhood's headquarters, where he is given a new name and is told that he must move away from Mary. The narrator agrees to the conditions. Soon after, the narrator gives a rousing speech to a crowded arena. He is embraced as a hero, although some of the Brotherhood leaders disagree with the speech. The narrator is sent to a man named Brother Hambro. Four months later, the narrator meets Brother Jack, who tells the narrator he will be appointed as chief spokesperson of the Brotherhood's Harlem District.

In Harlem, the narrator meets Tod Clifton, an intelligent and skillful member of the Brotherhood. Clifton and the narrator fight against Ras the Exhorter, a black nationalist who believes that blacks should not cooperate with whites. The Brotherhood member named Wrestrum accuses the narrator of using the Brotherhood for his own personal gain. The

Brotherhood's committee suspends the narrator until the charges are cleared, and reassigns him to lecture on the "Woman Question." The narrator meets a woman who convinces him to come back to her apartment. They sleep together, and the narrator becomes afraid that the tryst will be discovered.

The narrator is beat up by Ras the Exhorter's men. Sensing his new unpopularity in Harlem, the narrator buys a pair of dark-lensed glasses. As soon as he puts on the glasses, several people mistake the narrator for a man named Rinehart, who is apparently a gambler, pimp, and preacher. The narrator remembers his grandfather's advice to undermine white power through cooperation. The Narrator plans to infiltrate the party's hierarchy by sleeping with the wife of a high-ranking member of the Brotherhood. The narrator meets Sybil, a woman who fits the bill, at a Brotherhood party. However, Sybil knows nothing, preferring to use the narrator to play out her fantasy of being raped by a black man.

The protagonist is thrown into the race riots which makes him to realize that the Brotherhood makes him a scapegoat. During the riots, he falls down a manhole and uses it as a chance to stage a "disappearance." Ellison combines psychological and social storylines in *Invisible Man*, examining the effects of racism on his protagonist and his ability, nonetheless, to rise above the difficulties he encounters to craft his own sense of self. The novel envisages the need to question, as well as accept both the past as well as the present. Since past of African-American people has become the inevitable part of their identities.

The next chapter deals with the social issue of racial politics in *Invisible Man* through the lens of African American man. It brings the narrator's struggles with his identity as a black man in a prejudice mid-twentieth century America.

Chapter Two

Racial Politics

Ellison's *Invisible Man* is a representation of black identity politics. Racism, ideologically spelt as identity politics, is an outshoot of cultural politics, where the individual identifies with the native culture. Ellison feels that unless human beings recognize the mutual identity shared by independent individuals, no one can universalize these desires for identity into a true human vocation. The novel's central motif indicates, the protagonist's painful but enlightening journey from the state of visibility to invisibility is a dominant metaphor in the life of the African-American. Invisibility also suggests the plight and trauma which a man suffers when his fundamental rights are violated and his psyche is subdued by the dominant cultural group. He is forced to live in a hostile environment that makes him sterile and timid. Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, brings out the issue of racism by showing the discrimination towards Black in American society.

Invisible Man is set in New York City, which is the major centre of African-American culture. The narrator, who is a black man, is portrayed as the invisible man. The term "invisible man" in the novel does not refer to a person who is physically invisible. It refers to someone who is invisible in the eye of the majority members of the society who are white. His invisibility is mainly because of his dark complexion. He takes first opportunity to explain the significance of his name:

I am invisible man, No, I am not a spook like those who haunted Edgar Allan Poe; nor am I your Hollywood movie ectoplasms. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fibre and liquids-and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. (3)

The narrator's metaphor of invisibility is connected to race. The narrator indicates that his blackness is the cause why the white man doesn't accept the narrator as anything more than a bad dream. By trying to take as much power as possible, the narrator shows to himself

that he has an identity beyond what the white power structure directs for him. He loves to hear five recordings of Louis Armstrong playing and singing.

The narrator, in his vision sees the layers of black history that are converted into a dream like sermon. The sermon tells him that “black,” skin colour, and “bloody” violence, have gone together ever since black men and women were brought to America. The invisible man sees a beautiful girl, of the colour of ivory, pleading in a voice like his mother’s as she stood before a group of slave owners who bid for her naked body. She is emblematic of the perplexing legacy of America. Her master is her oppressor, yet she is connected to him in ways that cannot be easily dissolved or repaired. She is compelled to kill her master to free her children, but at great pain to herself. As Shelly Jarenski explains in her article “Invisibility Embraced: The Abject as a Site of Agency in Ellison’s *Invisible Man*”, during those decades the only way for African Americans to “exist” in the eyes of white people was through artistic and cultural performances, which usually led to black people seen as mere entertainers:

Ellison’s novel appears at a key moment in the racial history of the US, as a crossover music industry fused with the emergence of television. This fusion created a context in which visibility was possible for black bodies only when they performed the role of “other” for white culture. Even more often, “seeing race” acted merely as a conduit for white culture’s appropriation and commodification of black culture forms. (85)

The invisible man bumped into a white man who called his names, which infuriated the dark invisible man so much that he butted him, tore his flesh and the white man yelled for apologize. But the white man continued to curse him. Therefore the invisible man continued to beat him until he came down on his knees, profusely bleeding. He kicked him repeatedly and wanted to slit his neck, but he couldn’t do it because light from a car forced him to run away into the dark. The invisible man holds the view that he should have used his knife to kill the white man to protect the higher interests of the society. He is in a state of hibernation, for he lives in a subterranean way, in a hole. He is aware of his poor oppressed black life.

The narrator is alarmed, disturbed and confused by the old man's words. He has been praised by the powerful white men for his meekness, especially for his speech on his graduation day, in which he focused on humility; he expressed that humility was the secret of progress. He is perplexed as to how he should behave with the whites. The narrator says:

It became a constant puzzle which lay unanswered in the back of my mind. And whenever things went well for me I remembered my grandfather and felt guilty and uncomfortable... And to make it worse, everyone loved me for it. I was praised by the most lily-white men of the town. I was considered an example of desirable conduct-just as my grandfather had been. (16)

The Battle Royal incident declares the way in which members of the black community are recognized by whites. They are a source of cruel amusement. At a gathering of white community leaders, black high school students are blindfolded and told to fight one another. For the further amusement of white audience, they are ordered to grab for what turn out to be counterfeit coins placed on an electrified rug. The rug was covered with coins of all dimensions and a few crumpled bills interspersed with gold pieces. As he tried to get a coin lying on the blue design of the carpet, a violent force tore through his body, shook him like a wet rat. The white leaders enjoy themselves watching a spectacle of torture.

The invisible man had his mouth filled with the warm blood when he was in Battle Royal incident. He couldn't tell if the moisture on his body was due to sweat or blood. He lay prone pretending that he was knocked out, but somebody put him on his feet and commanded as get away black boy. The fight and its setting embody racism because it pits black children against each other for the entertainment of the racist audience. He is perplexed as to how he should behave with the whites.

The narrator mirrors on an earlier period of the 20th century, indicating that a newly educated black class felt ashamed of a past that was no fault of its own. Narrator's grandfather on his death bed, he called his son and said to him, "Son, after I'm gone I want you to keep the good fight. I never told you, but our life is a war and I have been a traitor all my born

days” (16). The invisible man was trying to carry out his grandfather’s advice in spite of himself and was loved by the people for it. He carried his grandfather’s mission under the mask of quietness and meekness. He hadn’t had the courage to carry his grandfather’s advice in open defiance because he feared the whites wouldn’t like that.

Dr. A. Hebert Bledsoe perpetuates the myth of white supremacy rather than updating his students and giving them with an education that prepares them to give to society and service as educated adults in the real world. He had an awful figure and students called him “old Bucket-head.” Bledsoe charged the invisible man with the offence of taking Mr. Norton to the slums. He asked, “Did you think that white man had to come a thousand miles all the way from New York and Boston and Philadelphia just for you to show him a slum” (135).

Dr. Bledsoe told the invisible man that he should not have taken Mr. Norton to the God-forbidden place, even if he wanted to go there. Here, God-forbidden place refers to the living place of black people. The narrator momentarily sees the school turn into a world of overwhelming whiteness. Bledsoe is amazed that the narrator hasn’t learned how to lie to white folks while seeming to follow their orders. Bledsoe said that the whites have no aversion for lies. Their magazines, newspapers, and radios, and spokesmen often told lies. He is finally exposing the truth behind the façade of black obedience-a truth that the naïve narrator hasn’t learned yet;

He ordered you. Dammit, white folk are always giving orders, it’s a habit with them. Why didn’t you make an excuse? Couldn’t you say they had sickness-smallpox-or picked another cabin? Why that Trueblood shack? My God, boy! You’re black and living in the south-did you forget how to lie? (135)

The naked white woman is a representation of sexual power, something that the black boys have been taught is completely taboo for them. Accordingly, the town leaders, indulging in their own debauchery, use it to torture the black boys. In private, the town leaders lose all sense of public decency, working themselves into a frenzy to chase the naked women. The invisible man saw a magnificent blonde and strongly attracted,

The hair was yellow like that of a circus kewpie doll, the face heavily powdered and roughed, as though to form an abstract mask, the eyes hollow and smeared a cool blue, the color of a baboon's butt. I felt a desire to spit upon her as my eyes brushed slowly over her body. (19)

The black people are acquired up in the merciless circle. Their poverty and insufficiency of skill in the profession stop them for their progress and force them to give way in criminal activities and lose their solemnity and self-respect. Jim Trueblood commits incest with his own daughter. As to the cause or the environment of the incest Trueblood argues:

You see, suh, it was cold and us did not have much fire. Nothin' but wood, no coal. I tried to git help but wouldn't nobody help us and I couldn't find no work or nothing'. It was so cold all of us had to sleep together; me, the ole lady and the gal. That's how it started, suh.'(53)

The complex nature of Trueblood's story telling highlights that he is more than simply an unknowledgeable criminal. His ability of speech constitutes traditions and talents that are native to black culture and cannot be easily removed away. His dream emphasis on the impression of a white woman. Similar to the white woman before the battle royal, the woman in Trueblood's dream represents something Taboo for a black man. The dream places Trueblood's crime in dialogue with the history of white oppression. Trueblood's horrible crime is reflective of both his hopelessness and the power of a taboo wish that lies deep below the social norms of the community.

The narrator's curiosity and love to satisfy Mr. Norton during his visit has an excessive importance on the certainty that he's white, his founder and donor status seeming a subordinate reason compared to his race. The narrator begins the move with Norton thinking to himself, "Of course I knew he was a founder, but I also knew it was advantageous to flatter rich white folks" (38). Although this is evidently not a principle accurately taught in the college the concept has nonetheless extended the minds of the students. The narrator and seemingly the other black students in the school are being experience the idea that validation

and approval must be come across from white people regardless other elements of their status, whether from the institution itself or a much earlier conditioning.

The ex-doctor is one more example of a skilled professional who has been criticized due to his skin colour and his encounter in the war. As the girls talk about Mr. Norton's sex life, they also highlight the strange mythology of sex in race relations. The doctor's story is one of deep disillusionment, even after extending a relatively high level of achievement. The ex-doctor has undergone a different kind of invisibility, where his skill cannot truly be seen for what it is because of his skin colour.

The narrator goes to North from the South in search of a better life. However, in the cosmopolitan atmosphere of New York, he is victimized and his dreams are shattered. He experiences the adverse forces of racism there too. The whites are the factory owners and the blacks are the workers in their factories. They are made to work for cheap wages and are fired for small mistakes. The *Invisible Man* indicates that the whites of the south not only exploit and dominate the black, they also cannot tolerate the health, wealth, skill and dignity of black.

Young Emerson is the first white person in New York from the elite who has spoken with the narrator. Young Emerson seems sincerely interested in the narrator and his ambitions, but is deeply sceptical of the narrator's continued attachment to his plan to return to the black college. The invisible man inspects the office, which is filled with a huge map and exotic oddities from around the world. Mr. Emerson's office indicates the global power exercised by the white elite. A man like Mr. Emerson almost effortlessly creates change throughout the world, a level of power into which the narrator now has a brief window.

The narrator is reminded of his college's relics of slavery, and this comparison makes it clear that the exotic items in the room are the product of a power that is capable of subjugating and exploiting other cultures. Narrator notices Chinese statues and an aviary of tropical birds. Young Emerson seems to be reading Freud's *Totem and Taboo*.

The imagery of the Liberty Paints Factory symbolically links patriotism to the idea of colour. The factory is emblazoned with patriotic symbols, along with a sign asking to "Keep

America pure.” For the first time the novel mentions organized labour, indicating that there is a tension between the white labour union and the black workers in the factory. Kimbro opens a bucket of white paint, and instructs the narrator to stir ten drops of black “dope” into each white bucket. The narrator begins to experience paid labour as an inhuman activity. Kimbro tells the narrator not to think, as he is completely uninterested in the narrator as a person. Kimbro is only interested in extracting the narrator’s labour.

There is a direct symbolism to the narrator’s activity of stirring black droplets into white paint. The black droplets disappear into the white paint and make it more effective, a sign of the ways in which black labour is used to make white products. However, the black labour is seldom recognized. Despite the fact that Kimbro intends to fire the narrator, he still uses him to finish mixing the white paint. The narrator is being discarded after being utilized to help create another white product of the white system. Belinda Robnett draws a picture of the division of the community in her article “African-American women in the Civil Rights Movement” suggests that,

Not all African-Americans were eager to join the movement was anything but non-problematic. Not all African-Americans were eager to join the movement or even about the movement particularly in rural pockets of the south, any media coverage portrayed the movement as Communist backed. Many rural African-Americans believed that the “outsiders” who were stirring up trouble in their communities, were going to get them killed. (28)

In the hospital setting, whiteness is equated with cleanness and health. The narrator has a great deal of difficulty collecting his thoughts after the explosion at the paint factory, an indication that after his failed experience he is even more severed from his past life and himself. The doctors don’t treat the narrator like a human, and their speech seems informed by eugenics, the idea that certain races are biologically inferior to others. The doctors, supposedly members of an ethical profession, quickly reveal that they are cruel and careless. They shock the narrator to try to “cure” him, though his only “illness” is his blackness.

The narrator's mind has been potentially damaged by shock treatment, and he is unable to summon the anger that guided him earlier. Having lost his last opportunity, he feels no need to speak with the doctors. After the torture of modern medicine, the narrator is given a strange psychotherapy. The narrator realizes that the question of his name is no longer meaningful to him: he no longer feels like the person who previously held his name. He has become estranged from his own past experience. The doctor's question has a twofold effect. It is reflective of the narrator's invisibility, as the doctors simply wish to recognize him through an obvious piece of black culture. However, it is also a piece of the narrator's past that he has long ignored.

The narrator realizes that the question of his identity is a kind of game or "combat" that he's playing with the doctors. He still cannot answer who he is. He thinks of trying to escape from the hospital machine, but realizes that it's impossible. The narrator knows that blackness is part of his identity, but is still unsure how. The black are used for experiment as the animals. While walking in the streets of New York, the narrator observes an advertisements of the cosmetic products. Whiteness is related with beauty and happiness, implying that blackness is the opposite:

A black statue of a nude Nubian slave grinned out at me from beneath a turban of gold. I passed on to a window decorated with switches of wiry false hair, ointments guaranteed to produce the miracle of whitening black skin. "You too can be truly beautiful," a sign proclaimed. "Win greater happiness with whiter complexion. Be outstanding in your social set. (252)

The narrator sees a black woman who has been evicted from her house. Her furniture and other household goods were heaped on the pavement. The invisible man is angry to see this. He said, "I don't care who they are, they got no business putting these old folks out on the sidewalk" (258). As they were bringing out her goods, the old lady asked them to take their hands off her bible. Those who came to evict the black woman were white. Naturally, the blacks showed their anger against the whole class of whites. The officer who is removing

the household goods smelt the seething anger of the blacks. The old lady is angry not with those who were at the site, but with the whole race of the whites “It’s all the white folks, not just one. They all against us” (260).

The presence of racial experienced Black people cause stress, ugly, and dead. Black was felt very angry for white people. It had occurred protest and awaken again felt nationalist Black to their race. They felt proud to their identity as African-American. It cause emerged organization nationalist Black. That is Ras the Exhorter. Ras the Exhorter represents the Black Nationalist movement, which advocates the violent overthrow of white supremacy. The author, Ralph Ellison seems to use him to comment on the Black Nationalist leader Marcus Garvey, who believed that blacks would never achieve freedom in white society. A maverick, Ras frequently opposes the Brotherhood and often violently, and incites riots in Harlem. As a passionate black nationalist, Ras was obsessed with the idea of race, as a magnificently charismatic leader, he has a kind of godlike power.

Ras the Exhorter was a great leader with great power of eloquence. He had formed a group of the blacks which was ready to go into action at his command. It was partly due to his hiery speeches. The protagonist even when he did not know Ras the Exhorter had the chance to hear his speech which impressed him though the protagonist himself was a speaker paar excellence. Brother Jack also admitted that Ras the Exhorter has had a monopoly in Harlem. He was a daring agitator, and know well how to mobilize and unite black people against the whites. He was completely free from fear and cowardice. The leadership qualities were ingrained in him. Ras the Exhorter hates the fact that Clifton and the narrator are calling white men their brothers. He believes that black people should not even associate with white people, especially when it comes to social change;

We sons of Mama Africa, you done forget? You black, BLACK! You – Godahm, mahn!’ he said, swinging the knife for emphasis. ‘You got bahd hair! You got thick lips! They say you stink! They hate you, mahn. You African. AFRICAN! Why you with them? Leave that shit, mahn. They sell you out. That

shit is old-fashioned. They enslave us – you forget that? How can they mean a black mahn any good? How they going to be your brother? (357)

Ras the Exhorter led his men in a riot because it was heard that a police had shot down a black woman and a drunken white woman had tried to use a black man to satisfy her lust. Ras the Exhorter became Ras the Destroyer. He incited the black community not only against atrocities of the police but also against the Brotherhood which as he believed was creating a division in the community of blacks. Stores and shops of the whites were looted and plundered. A large building which belonged to whites was set on fire and all the blacks living in it evacuated it voluntarily, so that it could be burnt to a cinder. It was strange scene people watched their homes burning.

Race is not a thing, not a hypostatized object, but is rather a matter of a personal movements, relations, impingements of body-on-body, sensation-on-idea. The narrator moves through crowds, he takes the texture of the world around him. The invisibility that has kept him under lock and key for so long has become the very affect that has allowed him to see, not only himself, not only his place, but all of the fissures and cracks that run through the world. When he emerges from his hole he will know where the fault lines are, what voices he may speak for and who speak for him, what transformations are just below the threshold of being. And he will know where to strike.

The next chapter deals with the Invisible women in *Invisible Man*. The objectification of women being viewed chiefly as an object of male sexual desire and shows black men as sexual beasts and rapists.

Chapter Three

Invisible Women

Ellison uses the objectification of women throughout his novel in diverse different scenarios. In the history of literature, the lack of women recognition and equality has stood out to many and many voices have been left unheard regarding the issue. In the novel *Invisible Man* women are not treated equal to men as shown by the objectification of women, the major lack of female names, the stereotypes used upon them, and the marginalization of Mary Rambo. While Ellison tries to explicate the idea of racial inequality, he reinforces gender inequality by excluding major female characters.

Most of the women in the novel lack a name, making them invisible just like him. The lack of identity makes the women seem insignificant to the story and the narrator's journey. However, the presence of the women in the novel is important to the evolution of the narrator's personality. Isiah Lavander III in his article "Invisible Women in Invisible Man" suggests that:

The adage "behind every great man, stands a woman" particularly resonates in Ellison's novel. Like the narrator, society depersonalizes women and treats them as if less than human. Though the narrator has many encounters with women that may seem insignificant, careful deliberation reveals the integral position that women actually have in effecting the evolution of the narrator. Women help the progression of the nameless narrator throughout *Invisible Man* because they aid him in recognizing the fundamental truths underlying the dangers and powers of his invisibility: manipulation of others, dehumanization, freedom, and responsibility. (146)

By giving the assumption that a woman cannot stand alone without a man, Lavander dehumanizes woman's nature and strips her chance of having an identity. Even though Ellison made these women seem invisible and insignificant, there are signs that these women played a huge role in the narrator's evolution. Ellison uses double invisibility that is due to being black

and female. Within the text of *Invisible Man*, there are secondary female characters that appear to be trivial in their importance to the plot overall and exists in that stereotypical duality role; “whore, mother, or seductress.” Usually, the female figures deliver primarily as maternal images or sexual objects. Ellison seems to have the tendency to make the white female figures highly sexualized, while the black female figures are desexualized maternal images that must eventually be escaped.

The most relevant feminine character in the novel, Mary Rambo makes her first appearance, when she takes on the protagonist and gives him a place to stay. Mary has a penchant for service of the needy. Mary Rambo’s pity comes in the life of the protagonist after he has been discharged from the hospital, though he has not fully recovered from the injury and shock he has sustained while working in liberty paints. Ellison uses Mary as a tool to push the protagonist into a more active figure, more involved with the issues that his community is going through. She is merely a motherly figure who guides him and inspires him to pursue visibility and to fight for his rights as a black male,

Nor did I think about Mary as a ‘friend’; she was something more-a force, a stable, familiar force like something out of my past which kept me from whirling off into some unknown which I dared not face. It was a most painful position, for at the same time, Mary reminded me constantly that something was expected of me, some act of leadership, some newsworthy achievement; and I was torn between resenting her for it and loving for the nebulous hope she kept alive. (249)

Mary doesn’t have rights as a black woman. The novel makes no effort in depicting Mary’s situation in society and whether her conditions as a black female should change or not, leaving Mary in the dark and pretty much invisible. Protagonist is a man of singled psyche because he has been wronged by everyone who comes in his life. He is first thrown blind-folded in an arena to fight with other black boys, given false assurance, by Mr. Norton, expels and cheats by Bledsoe, offends by people in Liberty paints, treat cruelly by the doctors.

But Mary is an angel, who takes pity on his miserable state and helps him in every possible way, without expecting anything from him in return.

Mary Rambo is an example of goodness that can come from cooperation in the black community. Although the narrator respects Mary, he has some reservations about her community-oriented worldview. The invisible man recognizes that there is strength in her sense of togetherness, but he also wants to be recognized as his own person. The role of black men are to fight for the rights of the community, and the role of black women, who must be protect by men, is to encourage them to do so. Shanna Greene Benjamin, author of the journal *There's Something about Mary* mentions that:

A 'woman of the folk' who lives a dual life as both the character in the novel and as a figure beyond it. Present because she is included in the novel proper yet absent because she is fully developed only outside its bonds, Mary Rambo, one of the many 'un-visible' women in invisible man's journey, finds agency in 'Out of the Hospital and Under the Bar,' a chapter all her own. (122)

Mary makes justice for her marginalization in the novel and gives her a chance to put her character to work. Not only does the excised chapter prove Mary's importance in the novel but it also gives Ellison the chance to prove his knowledge of how important the female characters, especially Mary, are in the journey the narrator takes to finds his identity.

Ellison has presented with a dramatic scene focused on a black lady who is being evicted from her house. Her furniture and other household goods were heaped on the pavement. The situation worsened when the old lady prevents from entering the house. At the prayer time, she and her husband tries to enter the house to pray because it is not possible to say prayer on the pavement. The couple insists on going into the house, saying "We been living here for over twenty years. I don't see why you can't let us go just for a few minutes" (263). Marshal is firm that he wouldn't let them enter the house. He pushes back the woman from the top of the stairs. The blacks protest against the callous attitude of the Marshal. His threat of firing at the crowd acts as oil on the flames. The crowd moves menacingly towards

the Marshal, who therefore, fired two shots consecutively in the air, to scare away the crowd. But the crowd are not cowed down. It becomes aggressive, fell upon the Marshal, beats him, and kicks him so hard that he becomes unconscious.

That brief apparition of a female figure is, again, used to force the protagonist into becoming a man of action. Just like Mary, the lady is shown as a weak and vulnerable figure in the black community with the mission of inspiring in the protagonist the rebellious spirit that will finally push him out of his sleep and into the fight. Because of his fears and his lack of confidence, it takes a long time for the protagonist to react. However, after witnessing the heart breaking scene and listening to the angry complaints of the crowd, he finally bursts into a passionate speech calling for wisdom and non-violence. People physically attack the police officer who has carrying on the eviction, he cannot help but feeling certain excitement for the violent outburst. During the scene, a West Indian woman intervenes:

‘The brute struck that gentle woman, poor thing!’ the West Indian woman chanted. ‘Black men, did you ever see such a brute? Is he a gentleman, I ask you? The brute! Give it back to him, black men. Repay the brute a thousandfold! Give it back to him unto the third and fourth generations. (270)

The protagonist is approached by a wealthy white woman, after conducting a lecture on Women’s rights. She then invites the invisible man to the apartment, where they engage in a friendly conversation. The White woman starts moving closer to him. First she puts her hand upon his arm. Thereafter she pulls him in a satiny bedroom. When the bell rings she assures him that her husband is in Chicago and he wouldn’t come at the moment. She grips him by his biceps with her little hands. These gestures and movements of the woman aroused passion in him. Although her way of talking is delicate, the use of the word “naked” and her explanation about how his vitality makes her tremble have a very clear sexual connotation. With these words, she is expressing the powerful and intimidating sexuality of black men, and how attractive that is for her.

The White woman's mentality and idea of black men is a portrayal of the common stereotype that shows black men as sexual beasts and rapists. Hubert's wife, as many other white women, dreams of being raped by a strong, black male, and wants the narrator to fulfil her fantasy. When the protagonist states that his approach is rather pacifist and that his role is to organize the community, not to drive them into violence, she praises him again and carries on to say that women should be absolutely as free as men. This statement is although powerful. It is like the author puts those words in the woman's lips with no further intention, just for her to show that she is not some dull, unsatisfied white wife.

On being alienated from the committee the protagonist is in need of some channel of intelligence which could give him information about the operations of the committee. Rineheart's example gives him the idea that he could employ a woman for this purpose. He came across Sybil in the birthday party of Brother Jack. She has heard his lectures on the women's question. She is a little tipsy and wistful when he meets her. He has the opportunity to escort her and invite her to his apartment. Being a big shot's wife she is an ideal choice for his purpose.

The protagonist invites Sybil to his apartment with the intention to use her as spy. He puts in a supply of wine and extra ice-cubes and assortment of fruits, cheese, and nuts to entertain her. He learns that she has no interest in politics and has no idea about the scheme in which her husband is engrossed day and night. She is a lonely wife because her husband, George, is generally away from home and he must have been frigid and asexual. She tells the invisible man that George could talk about women's rights but he doesn't know what a woman needed. Therefore she becomes an unsatisfied nymphomaniac. Showing her sexual desire without concern, she asks the narrator to rape her. After the narrator's negative reaction, she proceeds to explain her friend's experience: "You can do it, it'll be easy for you, beautiful. Threaten to kill me if I don't give in. You know, talk rough to me, beautiful. A friend of mine said the fellow said, 'Drop your drawers' ... and –" (500).

Sybil is not the first woman that the protagonist has encountered who wants him to fulfil her wildest fantasies. Sybil wishes the narrator to conform to her fantasy of blackness, but because he has begun to attain a level of consciousness, he is unable to perform in the way he has for the other woman. In this occasion, the protagonist finds himself incapable of performing the role that is expected from him by white society, in this case white women. He finds himself struggling to decide what is right and wrong, and whether that situation has gone too far. His internal fight, as well as his awareness about the stereotype that he is being associated with:

I was confounded and amused and it became quite a contest, with me trying to keep the two of us in touch with reality and with her casting me in fantasies in which I was Brother Taboo-with-whom-all things-are-possible. Now it was late and as I came into the room with another round of drinks she had let down her hair and was beckoning to me with a gold hairpin in her teeth, saying, 'come to mamma, beautiful, from where she sat on the bed. (499)

Expressing how she wants him to rape her it becomes obvious that Sybil shares the same view as Hubert's wife; both represent the stereotype of black men as sexual beasts and the influence of that idea on white women. She is only one of the many dull, unsatisfied white wives wishing to be sexually subjugated by the powerful, dangerous and primitive black men that have been subjugated by white society all along. The only difference is that, although the narrator fell under the spell of Hubert's wife, that experience made him wiser, and therefore he is reluctant not to commit the same mistake with Sybil.

In the Battle Royal, a cruel show where a group of young black boys are forced to fight each other. The most devastating aspect of that scene is the fact that the only purpose of that fight is to entertain the white aristocrats who are attending a luxurious party. Before forcing the boys who are constantly humiliated and treated as pets by the audience to start the fight, they make them look at a beautiful blonde white woman. Through the objectification of the woman, who is dancing naked in a rather sexual way, the white audience is obviously trying

to both excite and embarrass the black boys. They are doing so in order to make a point: black men, even when they are very young, are sexual beasts unable to control themselves, and all of them would like to rape white women.

Outside the cabin there are two pregnant women washing their clothes. The narrator tries to steer Mr. Norton away from the women, but Mr. Norton insists on trying to talk to them. Noticing that there are two pregnant women but only one husband, Mr. Norton asks for an explanation. Reluctantly, the narrator explains that Trueblood has impregnated both his wife and his daughter. Trueblood admits his guilt of incest, but he says that he is to a great extent a victim of circumstances. He tells Mr. Norton that it is very cold. They don't have coal and nobody helps them. Therefore all of them have to sleep together. He is on one side, his wife is on the other and his daughter is in the middle. His daughter loves him more than she loves her mother. The girl looks like her mother when she is young.

Trueblood admits that he is erotomaniac to such a degree that the sound of oars propelling boats produced erotic sensations in him. Even the sight of one of the young juicy melons, split wide open, lying all spread out on the stripped green ones, seems suggest to him that the red, ripe, juicy is waiting just for him. He explains that he is thinking of the girl, who wears red dress when his daughter asks him whether he is still awake. At the same time, he feels that his daughter is dreaming about a boy whom she has taken a fancy to. He is trying to hear the name of the boy the girl is likely to mumble in her sleep. The girl while dreaming about her lover threw her arm across his neck. He removes her arm and turn his back towards her.

Trueblood drops into a dream in which he finds himself among women in a house, high-up, in the hills. Then he finds a woman dressed in a soft, white, silky dressing gown, looking at him. The woman comes out of a grandfather clock, starts screaming, but it appears to him that he has gone deaf. The woman also doesn't hear him. So she holds him firmly. Therefore he throws her on the bed and tries to break her hold. In the process of the dream he commits incest and yet he is not aware of what he has done. He woke up intending to tell his

wife about his crazy dream. When the Trueblood realizes what he has done, he wants to kill himself with a knife, but he doesn't have a knife. The remorse is cutting him deep. He wants to go away but his daughter gets hold of him.

Catherine, wife of Trueblood wants to shoot her husband but her daughter saved Trueblood. She then tries to murder him down with a spear, says it's better to spill his blood. He begs of her not to kill for a sin committed in a dreamy state. Nevertheless, she tries other ways to kill him He cries in the state of regret and repentance. He couldn't go away because he doesn't want to leave his family in a helpless state. Both the ladies wants to abort but he doesn't allow them to do it. He makes the confession of his sin. The school people offers him money to go out of the country.

After hearing the story of Trueblood, Mr. Norton is shocked and does not know how to proceed. Although the story is obviously brutal, Mr. Norton gives the man a hundred dollar bill before leaving, as if that interaction had been part of a show and Trueblood is a comedian or a rarity performing in a circus. Women do not actively take part in the scene, also uses female characters in order to make a point about the view of black men in the eye of whites. As the narrator states in his mind, it is likely that white society will judge all black men according to brutal actions such as Trueblood's. And in the eyes of higher educated black men like the narrator, men like Trueblood are a disgrace and degrade the decent members of their community. Through this scene Ellison is trying to represent the stereotype of black men as beasts, subhuman creatures, and once more female characters are involved in the process for the sole purpose of the portrayal.

A woman makes a short intervention after a rude, drunk white man is thrown out for repeatedly asking a black man to dance reinforcing the stereotype of black men as entertainers. A woman steps in to apologize to the narrator for the man's behaviour. Her referring to the black members of the Brotherhood as our coloured brothers makes clear that she is white. The woman, after apologizing, states: "I would never ask our coloured brothers to sing, even though I love to hear them. Because I know it would be a very backward thing.

You are here to fight along with us, not to entertain. I think you understand me, don't you, Brother?" (302).

By exploring the role and purpose of female characters in the novel, it becomes obvious that in all their appearances they are involved in an interaction with male characters. It is clear that, when female characters participate in those interactions, all they do is either support the male's perspective, introduce new ideas to change the male's mind or to encourage him to take an active approach and proof the existence of stereotypes related to black men. Therefore, female characters in the novel are mostly used to portray and denounce the stereotypes about women and whether those are right or wrong. The lack of depth in Ellison's female characters might have not been intentional, but it clearly affects the view that readers might have on the book and its message. While the author passionately works on the male characters development throughout the story, he neglects women, who undergo no change in personality and behaviour. Carolyn W. Sylvander supports this idea in her article "Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and female stereotypes":

The analysis of stereotyping of Black Americans which Ralph Ellison explores in various ways and places in *Shadow and Act* has applicability to any oppressed group. Unfortunately, however, his own creations do not always transcend the very fault he is opposing. Ironically, both Black and white female characters in *Invisible Man* reflect the distorted stereotypes established by the white American male. Though Ellison in *Shadow and Act* also suggests correctives to the oppression of a group by means of stereotyping, he does not apply those correctives to the women characters of *Invisible Man*. Fitting his patterns of beast, clown, and angel, Ralph Ellison's women characters are not, in his own analysis of stereotyping, fully human. (77)

Ellison does not portray the stereotypes that white society might have had about white and black females at the time. On the contrary, he himself shows a distorted and stereotype image of women. By having his female characters play different roles in order to proof his

point about black men, he is pouring his own stereotypes about women into the novel. Therefore, it is safe to say that Ellison's crusade is not as noble as it could have been if women would have been included in the fight.

The narrator takes Mr. Norton to the Golden Day to calm him down with some whiskey. There, Ellison introduces prostitutes who are working in the bar, which is also a brothel. The girls are black, and so are the costumers, mainly students from the university. One of the girls Edna, expresses her interest in Mr. Norton. When another girl states how she would rather kill a white man like him, Edna answers: "Kill him nothing...Girl, don't you know that all these rich ole white men got money glands and billy goat balls? These ole bastards don't never git enough. They want to have the whole world" (86). Her interest in Norton is entirely based on his race, as old white men like him tend to be wealthy. Black poor girls like her find themselves trapped in white society, and have to depend on the sexual desire that men might have for them. White men seem the perfect target, as they are in control of society and, as Edna says, they want to have the whole world.

As the young protagonist came out of Mr. Norton's room, a young girl, working some kind of receptionist, asked him to give her message "Grass is green" to her boyfriend, Jack Maston. He wants to know the meaning of the message but girl refused to reveal it to him, saying that her lover would understand it. The protagonist is annoyed to see that the girl is using him to deliver a love message when he is in deep depression. He thought that if he is expelled he would be in greater disgrace than the girl if she went back to her home pregnant due to her secret meetings with her lover.

Emma is a shrewd, intelligent, sophisticated woman who reveals in her power as Brother Jack's mistress. She is part of the Brotherhood, the association that will bring the narrator into action. Emma holds a coveted position and is one of the first to introduce the narrator into his new lifestyle at the chthonian Hotel. However, her role seems to be to bring drinks to the men and to, only now and then, throw some comment always related to the men and to the narrator in particular. She is indiscrete in asking Jack if the narrator is black enough

to fulfil the role they want for him within his hearing distance. The remark of Emma, that too in the very first meeting, hurt the emotions of the youth.

As happens with other female characters in the novel, Emma is also over-sexualized, as her appearance seems to be the only trait that makes an impact on the narrator. A thin little woman grasp the hand of the invisible man and express regret for all that have happened. She assures him that she would never ask the coloured Brother to sing even though she loves to hear him. She adds, “You are here to fight along with us, not to entertain” (302). After a while Emma comes up to him and asks him to dance with her. He starts dancing with her in a natural way. He acts his part very carefully lest he should be considered undependable, or unworthy. The sense of being a black still weighed heavy upon him. Emma takes part in the process of bringing the narrator to visibility, and as the rest of female characters, that seems to be everything that she has to offer to the story.

The female characters are portrayed not as individuals but rather as symbols and as a collective representative of the female gender and women’s situation at the time. There is, within the novel, a direct parallel between the ill-treatment of the female characters and the invisible man’s journey towards enlightenment. The female characters are deprived of their visibility at the expense of invisible man’s journey. In a different situation, Ras accuses Clifton of joining the Brotherhood just for the promise of women, by making his accusation of women being used as a source of bribery he shows the power of sexual drive. Mattie Lou, daughter of Trueblood is also encompasses the role of seductress even though she is his daughter. *Invisible Man* is the novel that has it all, and when it comes to female characters, the lack of recognition towards them is crucial to the significance of the story as a whole. Ellison used invisibility in his novel as a critique of racist American society. Enough evidence such as the objectification of women, the major lack of female names, stereotypical female figures, and the marginalization of Mary Rambo, is held in Ellison’s novel to prove the inequality of women in the American society.

The next chapter deals with the Blindness and Insight of the novel *Invisible Man* which represents how people wilfully avoid seeing and confronting the truths about themselves and their communities.

Chapter Four

Blindness and Insight

Ellison establishes the concept of invisibility, by considering the politics of sight both in the text and in the culture that produced it. In the novel, invisibility allows Ellison to create a black male subjectivity that is fully outside of visually constructed white, heteromale hegemony. Blindness is the state of those who refuse them as individual beings. Ellison did not only represent blindness and sight by the character's actions and thoughts, as he tried to depict them in an illustrative way. Thus, he uses metaphors, and symbols in the *Invisible Man* to represent blindness and invisibility. The *Invisible Man* is a story of the personal growth and development of the Narrator. The novel focuses on the life of the invisible man as a young man and his experiences Ralph from adulthood through maturity. The narrator is older now, as he reflects on his life story backwards.

The nameless protagonist goes on a journey that begins at the end, and from underground in a basement of an apartment in a white building outside Harlem, in New York City where it seems to him that he had found his home. None of his names is ever revealed, a fact that signifies his invisible state. The prologue of the novel highlights invisibility as an existential condition. The novel begins with invisible man's assertion that he is invisible and that others, when looking at him, see his "surroundings, themselves... everything and anything except me"(3).

The invisible man insists that he is invisible only because others decline to see him. He explains that his condition stems from an unusual construction of people's "inner eyes, those eyes with which they look through their physical eyes upon reality" (3). To illustrate the consequences of this problem, he recounts his encounter with a blond man. When the narrator accidentally bumps into the man and hears the man curse him, he demands that the stranger apologize. The narrator's description of the man as a blind fool and his suggestion that he is part of the vast group of sleepwalkers cleverly hints at the meaning of Ellison's metaphor of blindness. According to the narrator's logic, the failure to see correctly arises from

psychological impenetrability rather than physical deficiency, a truth responsible for his confused assessment of himself and the people he meets on his journey of discovery. The life of narrator is not psychologically equipped to envision the white man's conception of him. With this beginning, Ellison hints at the importance of overcoming inner blindness, or psychological confusion, to understand identity. Narrator in his age of forty, begins to recall his grandfather's deathbed advice, which the narrator's parents mark as evidence that the old man had gone out of his mind, as he directs his son to: "Live with your head in the lion's mouth. I want you to overcome 'em with yess, undermine 'em with grins, agree 'em to death and destruction, let 'em swoller you till they vomit or bust wide open" (16).

The narrator regard these ideas as sensible and, as a result, he promises himself to act wisely even if he compromises himself. The narrator recalls his high school graduation speech, in which he attracts the attention of the white school superintendent who invites him to give the same speech at a local hotel to the town's leading white citizens. But when he arrives at the hotel, in the Battle Royal scene, the narrator is forced to participate in a brutal blindfolded boxing match. The white men have treated black as scape goats. Through the battle royal episode, Ellison stated that he was interested in symbolizing lived experience. It reinforces racial divisions into the society and the idea of white racial superiority. The naive narrator can draw no such conclusion about his position in the royal battle. He observes the men's animalistic attitude but remains oblivious to the invisible social constructs authorizing the scene.

Feelings of discomfort only arise from his sense of superiority over the other black boys taking part: the invisible man worries that associating with them may detract from his speech. The white Southerners exploit the invisible man and the other black boys out of intoxication and disregard for human life, particularly when it is contained in a black body. In *Invisible Man* blindness and invisibility are often represented by metaphors and symbols. This is clear when the boys are forced into the ring, "blindfolds were put on" (14). Therefore, when they

allow themselves to be blindfolded with broad bands of white cloth, two different kinds of blindness are found: a literal and a metaphorical one. The invisible man laments that he was unused to darkness, which richly imparts the severity of his cultural blindness. It reflects how Ellison's view of race relations between white men and black men, however, the invisible man lacks the understanding, the mental sight, to understand the white Southerners. The boys are forced into the ring. They grope about and fight one another, like blind, cautious crabs. A boy named Tatlock, who is finally left in the ring with the protagonist, effectively blinds his one eye:

A blow to my head as I danced about sent my right eye popping like a jack-in-the box and settled my dilemma. The room went red as I fell. It was a dream fall, my body languid and fastidious as to where to land, until the floor became impatient and smashed up to meet me. (25)

The idea of vision, represented literally, underscores the invisible man's trust in men that would entangle him in a dehumanizing exhibition. The night culminates with the physically broken narrator delivering the first of his several speeches. The invisible man faces objectification at the hands of racist Southerners, and he hopes to overcome their mockery through restraint and his skill as an orator. At this point, the only way in which he is able to conceive his identity is from their perspective. The use of the word visualize, a highly charged word throughout the novel, highlights this conception. Whites can only see the narrator when he performs the roles expected of black men, as in this case when he can only give his speech after he has been dehumanized by the battle. Similarly, he can only visualize himself within the context of a black role that has already been officially recognized, thus, blindness is mutual. The battle connects these issues visualise the intersection of white power and male power.

The school superintendent who satisfied with the invisible man's performance gives him a leather briefcase containing a scholarship to the local Negro college. The dribble of

bloody saliva he unintentionally drools onto his prize metaphorically forecasts the violence and chaos awaiting him on the path the scholarship commences, but the narrator obliviously runs home overjoyed by his good news. He looks triumphantly at his grandfather's photograph, but that evening he dreams of the enigmatic old man who directs him to open his briefcase. Inside he finds a letter that says, "Keep This Nigger-Boy Running (33). So begins his long journey to enlightenment. At college the young man tries but fails to live by the visionary ideals of the Founder and Dr. Bledsoe, the college's president. In Founders Day celebration, Mr. Barbee delivers his memorable speech, a physically blind preacher, which is symbolic for the narrator's mantle blindness.

The sermon of Barbee exposes the college's willingness to transform any place into a space for spreading their political philosophy. Instead of preaching gospel, Barbee exhorts the students to idealize Bledsoe, the living symbol of the founder. At the same day, Mr. Norton, a classic imperialistic explorer of the exotic, wants to make a journey to the underworld, which is symbolic as it foreshadows the narrator's descent from North to South. The narrator acts as Norton's guide and driver on a sightseeing tour to the countryside. As a penniless student, The narrator's boundless eagerness to please the influential patron during the trip is motivated by a hope of gifts, but, in contrast, Norton effect on the narrator is disastrous. Norton, wants to stop at what used to be a slave quarter, an old, rundown cabin in a poverty-ridden area that contrasts sharply with the idyllic campus. There, he hears a story of incest from a black farmer, Jim Trueblood, which reflects Norton's incestuous feeling for his own daughter.

Ellison holds Trueblood as an example to grapple with the absurdities of African American life. He develops a picture of the complexity of black existence. However the invisible man feels ashamed, disgusted, and embarrassed because, psychologically, he is still trapped in his double consciousness, as he sees Trueblood through Mr. Norton's eyes.

As I listened I had been so torn between humiliation and fascination that to lessen my sense of shame I had kept my attention riveted upon his intense face. That

way I did not have to look at Mr. Norton. But now as the voice ended I sat looking down at Mr. Norton's feet. Out in the yard a woman's hoarse contralto intoned a hymn. (67)

Norton, hearing the story, has a physical collapse. Witnessing his psychological breakdown and defeat, the frightened narrator becomes anxious about the consequence of this unexpected turn of event for himself. He drives Norton to a local bar for a drink, trying to make up for the damage done at Trueblood's cabin. He is, however, out of luck for the bar, named the Golden Day, happens to be crowded with shell-shocked African American veterans of World War I, patients of a nearby mental asylum. They treat Norton with anger and disdain, and that anger boils over into a riot. As the black southern veterans, forgotten and invisible in the eyes of the mainstream society, mercilessly attack Norton.

The golden day becomes a portrayal of how a racial society works, and of the chaotic world where rules of normality do not apply. Whites impose interpretations upon Negro experience that are not only false, but effectively deny their humanity. Norton's self-serving vision of himself and of black-white relations thus is shaken, and the narrator is expelled from college, upbraided by the college president, Dr. Bledsoe, for being stupid enough to show a white person the reality of black experience. Moreover, the narrator is sent north, with what he thinks are letters of recommendation from Bledsoe, seeks employment from a character named Mr. Emerson. The narrator does not meet Emerson, but at Emerson's office he sees one of Bledsoe's letters, which reveals that the college and its white trustees have conspired to expel him permanently, to "hope him to death, and keep him running (106). It is the message the invisible man carries as he tries to make his way in the world.

At every step, being blind to realities, the invisible man is given the illusion of progress only to keep running in place. He needs to break with received messages, socially ascribed roles, conventional restraints, and respectable ambitions in order to come into his own experience. Ellison in *Invisible Man* gives an anonymous protagonist with no identity except

what others are continually trying to impose on him, no strategy except his eagerness to please, in order to reinforce a sense of alienation and hopelessness. In the whole spectrum of post war fiction he is the ultimate outsider, telling his story from his underground lair. But through most of the novel he is also the man who most wanted to be an insider, to fit in and to be accepted. He gets work at a paint factory, there he becomes under the authority of old Uncle Brockway, who represents African Americans hidden from view in actual and symbolic basements. He is underpaid, overqualified, submissive to white, vicious to other black, especially those connected to the union. Ellison often highlights the psychological effect on the African Americans by reflecting their invisible underground authority, their ambiguous situations both in relation to those actually in powerful positions and to their low social status.

When Brockway describes his own life, he speaks volumes for and about others. He speaks for African Americans who work hidden in kitchens and fields and on assembly lines and for thousands of slaves buried underground, as the society deny to see them. His description symbolizes the African American's paradoxical insider-outsider social position. He has been making paint for twenty-five years. His pride is partly racial. He tells the invisible man:

We the machines inside the machines. . . . I know more about this basement than anybody. . . . I knows the location of each and every pipe and switch and cable and wire and everything else —both in the floors and in the walls and out in the yard. Yes sir! And what's more, I got it in my head so good I can trace it out on paper down to the last nut and bolt. (118)

After an explosion in the factory basement, the narrator enters the hospital, a surgical white world and is subjected to several experiments by men trying to probe him of his identity, opening him up to a new sense of identity. His going to the hospital and recovery symbolizes his psychological death and rebirth. He tries to recover some of his sight and see their real status in social life as he becomes intensely concerned about his identity. After that, the narrator experiences the Northern life, in Harlem. Harlem is a black place. It is

indisputably the section of New York City reserved for African Americans, so the reference of Harlem is seen as a barbaric wilderness, an untamed expanse that is far too frightening and free to be conquered.

One day in Harlem, he stumbles upon the eviction of an old black couple from their Harlem apartment by a white marshal and two other men. Something has changed the invisible man since his fight with Lucius Brockway. He feels immediate empathy toward the old couple when he sees their belongings thrown on the sidewalk. The invisible man as an observer feels deeply moved by the old woman's sobbing, he stands in for a younger generation. Between things, the invisible man finds a relic in which there is written: "free papers. Be it known to all men that my negro, Primus Provo, has been freed by me this sixth day of August 1859. Signed: John Samuels. Macon (148). With an evidence in his hands, which is a direct link to slavery, the invisible man experience a shock of recognition and he trembles as he finally sees the very root of African American existence in the United States. It forces him to reflect the links between present and past, freedom and slavery. His own life is reconstructed through the jumble of objects in front of him. He is moved to speak to the gathering crowd of black onlookers, to stoke their anger.

Look at his old blues records and her pots of plants, they're down-home folks,
and everything tossed out like junk whirled eighty-seven years in a cyclone.
Look at them, they look like my mama and my papa and my grandma and
grandpa, and I look like you and you look like me. (267)

Yet he does not until now understand the source of his own anger, but he starts to remember the words and situations from his past and tries to link them together. His self-searching eventually leads him to the Brotherhood, a communistic organization run by Brother Jack, a one-eyed white leader, metaphorically refers to the narrators psychological blindness. The narrator's growth of awareness, his willingness to go with the urban flow reinforces the image of blindness and sight. In the Brotherhood the young man learns to see

beyond race, but he is mocked when what he sees does not fit the current line. The brotherhood liberates him at first, introducing him to a wider world, giving him work and fully developed ideas and hope. But finally, like every other institution, tries to impose its outlook on him. It pretends to a scientific grasp of history, it claims to know what Harlem's needs better than Harlem itself. But this is ultimately exposed as another example of whites patronizing blacks and of the inflexible organization stifling spontaneity and individuality.

Ellison gives a black version of the 1950s, the social critique of the lonely crowd and the organization man. Because he is black, no one really sees him. He is simply playing another assigned role keeping the dissenting parts of himself pressed down. His friend, Tod Clifton, the poster boy for the Harlem brotherhood, has turned his back on the organization and disappeared. Clifton reappears in midtown, selling Samba dolls, whose fine strings symbolize how he himself felt manipulated. The peddling of dolls represents a spiritual or psychological death with self-destructive overtones.

When a policeman repeatedly pushes Clifton while arresting him for illegal peddling, Clifton punches the policeman and is gunned down. The invisible man's meditation on his personal life and the history of African Americans awakes, he recovers his mental vision. As he leaves the scene of Clifton killing, he observes several black boys standing on a Harlem subway platform. He looks at their clothes and listens to them as they try to imitate the language and the wearing of town. They speak transitional language full of country glamour. He experiences a shock of recognition. He feels painfully aware of them, as he is unable to see them for he is blind to realities.

The invisible man searches for language to express the moment as he earns for a more permanent historical record, one that would make their lives visible apart from their trying to imitate the down town whites. Ellison here explores the sophisticated doubles of the lives of African Americans. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would

not bleach his Negro soul. In a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. The invisible man organizes a public funeral for Clifton which precipitates riots in Harlem.

The invisible man encounters a fight with Ras the Exhorter, a representative of militant Black Nationalism. Ras calls the Harlemites to quite the stupid looting. He urges them to join him and burst in the army and get guns and ammunition. He and his supporters see the invisible man as a traitor to the black because he has given up his connection to the Brotherhood. They intend to kill him. Ras stalks him through the streets of Harlem as a rival speaker, accusing the narrator of faithlessness to the black man, seeking to align him from the Africans.

The narrator's vision of the organization becomes clearer which widens his perception of the community. "I could see it now, see it clearly and in growing magnitude. It was not suicide, but murder. The committee had planned it. And I had helped and been a tool" (299). However, although he perceive the brotherhood's misunderstanding of Clifton, he remains blind to the real implications of their blindness and his own. The complexity of Harlem's consciousness escaped him. Escaping from the scene, he falls into uncovered manhole. The manhole has been replaced by the policemen. There he finds himself lighting the content of his briefcase, his high school diploma, Tod Clifton's dancing doll, the slip of paper spelling out his brotherhood name. The narrator is finally free. The invisible man is psychologically free, having found his life by losing it. His failure to see through the realities of the society results in his exclusion from society. The narrator ends his story with the epilogue, a closing framing device.

The invisible man confesses that his reflections constitute a lesson of his own life and notes that he has been trying to be honest in recounting his experiences. The invisible man finally has a dream that the bridge rises from its position: "If you'll look, you'll see . . . it is not invisible . . . there hang not only my generations wasting upon the water"(308). The bridge

metaphorically connects the present to the past and the future, a necessary connection for the accurate perception of American identity. The forces he sought to determine his identity has freed him from any racially defined ideology. Consequently, he rejects the roles of traditional power brokers in preference for the broader, more expansive and morally honest role of the artist. He vows to make his discovery visible through the power of his pen. In *Shadow and Act*, Ellison further explains that the Negro is placed in a precarious position because of such alienation:

When Negroes are barred from participating in the main institutional life of society they lose far more than economic privileges or the satisfaction of saluting the flag with unmixed emotions. They lose the bulwarks which men place between themselves and the constant threat of chaos. For whatever the assigned function of social institutions, their psychological function is to protect the citizen against the irrational, incalculable forces that hover about the edges of human life like cosmic destruction lurking within an atomic stockpile without institutions to give him direction, and lacking a clear explanation of his predicament. (300)

The next chapter consolidates the ideas that have been discussed in the previous chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

The African-American literature is undoubtedly a protest literature which fights against racial discrimination, marginalization and social injustice. At the beginning of the twentieth century, African-American writers faced serious issues: race and class inequality; challenges to morality and religion; interrogations of political nationalism and cultural ancestry: they encounter the problem of achieving African-American identity in the face of complicating diversity. Blacks who remained in the United States quickly began to form educational, fraternal, mutual aid, and religious societies. The cultural politics of marginalization and segregation creates imagined peripheries dividing culturally oriented communities.

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* was a great success. It was published by Random House in 1952. It was highly praised by such persons of status as Saul Bellow and Albert Murray. The novel won praise for its stylistic innovations in infusing classic literary motifs with modern Black speech and culture, while providing a thoroughly unique take on the construction of contemporary African American identity. Segregation was in full effect in many parts of America when *Invisible Man* was published, and many of its scenes were considered shocking at the time. Ellison's writing techniques include that of visual imagery, irony, occasional satire, and infinite examples of symbolism. The novel appeals to all races and ages of people because of the language used and of the heroic story of the young Negro trying to make it in a predominantly white American society.

The novel's central motif indicates, the protagonist's painful but enlightening journey from the state of visibility to invisibility is a dominant metaphor in the life of the African-American. Invisibility also suggests the plight and trauma which a man suffers when his fundamental rights are violated and his psyche is subdued by the dominant cultural group. He is forced to live in a hostile environment that makes him sterile and timid.

The Narrator is invisible in the eye of the majority members of the society who are white. His invisibility is mainly because of his dark complexion. The invisible man holds the

view that he should have used his knife to kill the white man to protect the higher interests of the society. He is in a state of hibernation, for he lives in a subterranean way, in a hole. He is aware of his poor oppressed black life. The invisible man starts to show his anger towards white men. The invisible man bumped into a white man who called his names, which infuriated the dark invisible man so much that he butted him, tore his flesh and the white man yelled for apologize. But the white man continued to curse him.

The Battle Royal incident declares the way in which members of the black community are recognized by whites. They are a source of cruel amusement. At a gathering of white community leaders, black high school students are blindfolded and told to fight one another. For the further amusement of white audience, they are ordered to grab for what turn out to be counterfeit coins placed on an electrified rug. The rug was covered with coins of all dimensions and a few crumpled bills interspersed with gold pieces. As he tried to get a coin lying on the blue design of the carpet, a violent force tore through his body, shook him like a wet rat. The white leaders enjoy themselves watching a spectacle of torture.

The narrator recalls his high school graduation speech, in which he attracts the attention of the white school superintendent who invites him to give the same speech at a local hotel to the town's leading white citizens. But when he arrives at the hotel, in the Battle Royal scene, the narrator is forced to participate in a brutal blindfolded boxing match. The white men have treated black as scape goats. Through the battle royal episode, Ellison stated that he was interested in symbolizing lived experience. It reinforces racial divisions into the society and the idea of white racial superiority.

The fight and its setting embody racism because it pits black children against each other for the entertainment of the racist audience. Dr. A. Hebert Bledsoe perpetuates the myth of white supremacy rather than updating his students and giving them with an education that prepares them to give to society and service as educated adults in the real world.

The presence of Black people cause angry for white people. It had occurred protest and awaken Ras the Exhorter represents the Black Nationalist movement, which advocates the

violent overthrow of white supremacy. Marcus Garvey, who believed that blacks would never achieve freedom in white society. A maverick, Ras frequently opposes the Brotherhood and often violently, and incites riots in Harlem. As a passionate black nationalist, Ras was obsessed with the idea of race. In the novel *Invisible Man* women are not treated equal to men as shown by the objectification of women, the major lack of female names, the stereotypes used upon them, and the marginalization of Mary Rambo. While Ellison tries to explicate the idea of racial inequality, he reinforces gender inequality by excluding major female characters.

Most of the women in the novel lack a name, making them invisible just like him. The lack of identity makes the women seem insignificant to the story and the narrator's journey. However, the presence of the women in the novel is important to the evolution of the narrator's personality. Mary Rambo makes her first appearance, when she takes on the protagonist and gives him a place to stay. Mary has a penchant for service of the needy. Mary Rambo pity comes in the life of the protagonist after he has been discharged from the hospital, though he has not fully recovered from the injury and shock he has sustained while working in liberty paints.

Ellison uses Mary as a tool to push the protagonist into a more active figure, more involved with the issues that his community is going through. She is merely a motherly figure who guides him and inspires him to pursue visibility and to fight for his rights as a black male. Mary's situation in society and her conditions as a black female, leaving Mary in the dark and invisible. She is an example of goodness about her community-oriented worldview.

The protagonist is approached by a wealthy white woman, after conducting a lecture on women's rights. The White woman starts moving closer to him. She puts her hand upon his arm. Thereafter she pulls him in a satiny bedroom. When the bell rings she assures him that her husband is in Chicago and he wouldn't come at the moment. She grips him by his biceps with her little hands. These gestures and movements of the woman aroused passion in him. Although her way of talking is delicate, the use of the word "naked" and her explanation

about how his vitality makes her tremble have a very clear sexual connotation. With these words, she is expressing the powerful and intimidating sexuality of black men, and how attractive that is for her.

The invisible man invites Sybil to his apartment with the intention to use her as spy. He put in a supply of wine and extra ice-cubes and assortment of fruits, cheese, and nuts to entertain her. He learns that she has no interest in politics and has no idea about the scheme in which her husband is engrossed day and night. She is a lonely wife because her husband, George, is generally away from home and he must have been frigid and asexual. She tells the invisible man that George could talk about women's rights but he doesn't know what a woman needed. Therefore, she becomes an unsatisfied nymphomaniac. Showing her sexual desire without concern, she asks the narrator to rape her.

Sybil shares the same view as Hubert's wife. Both represent the stereotype of black men as sexual beasts and the influence of that idea on white women. She is only one of the many dull, unsatisfied white wives wishing to be sexually subjugated by the powerful, dangerous and primitive black men that have been subjugated by white society all along.

Trueblood admits his guilt of incest, but he says that he is to a great extent a victim of circumstances. He tells Mr. Norton that it is very cold. They don't have coal and nobody helps them. Therefore, all of them have to sleep together. He is on one side, his wife is on the other and his daughter is in the middle. His daughter loves him more than she loves her mother. The girl looks like her mother when she is young. Trueblood drops into a dream in which he finds himself among women in a house, high-up, in the hills. Then he finds a woman dressed in a soft, white, silky dressing gown, looking at him.

When the Trueblood realizes what he has done, he wants to kill himself with a knife, but he doesn't have a knife. The remorse is cutting him deep. He wants to go away but his daughter gets hold of him. After hearing the story of Trueblood, Mr. Norton is shocked and does not know how to proceed. Although the story is obviously brutal, Mr. Norton gives the

man a hundred-dollar bill before leaving, as if that interaction had been part of a show and Trueblood is a comedian or a rarity performing in a circus.

Emma is a shrewd, intelligent, sophisticated woman who revels in her power as Brother Jack's mistress. She is part of the Brotherhood, the association that will bring the narrator into action. Emma holds a coveted position and is one of the first to introduce the narrator into his new lifestyle at the chthonian Hotel. However, her role seems to be to bring drinks to the men and to, only now and then, throw some comment always related to the men and to the narrator in particular. She is indiscrete in asking Jack if the narrator is black enough to fulfil the role they want for him within his hearing distance. The remark of Emma, that too in the very first meeting, hurt the emotions of the youth.

Ellison did not only represent blindness and sight by the character's actions and thoughts, as he tried to depict them in an illustrative way. Thus, he uses metaphors, and symbols in *Invisible Man* to represent blindness and invisibility. The invisible man insists that he is invisible only because others decline to see him. The narrator's description of the man as a blind fool and his suggestion that he is part of the vast group of sleepwalkers cleverly hints at the meaning of Ellison's metaphor of blindness.

The golden day becomes a portrayal of how a racial society work, and of the chaotic world where rules of normality do not apply. Whites impose interpretations upon Negro experience that are not only false, but effectively deny their humanity. Norton's self-serving vision of himself and of black-white relations thus is shaken, and the narrator is expelled from college, upbraided by the college president.

At every step, being blind to realities, the invisible man is given the illusion of progress only to keep running in place. He needs to break with received messages, socially ascribed roles, conventional restraints, and respectable ambitions in order to come into his own experience. Ellison in his *Invisible Man* gives an anonymous protagonist with no identity except what others are continually trying to impose on him, no strategy except his eagerness to please, in order to reinforce a sense of alienation and hopelessness. In the whole spectrum

of post war fiction he is the ultimate outsider, telling his story from his underground lair. But through most of the novel he is also the man who most wanted to be an insider, to fit in and to be accepted.

The message of *Invisible Man* is that white-dominated society exploits the identities of Black people, refusing to see them as fully fledged persons and instead merely using them for personal gain. This denial of identity is why the narrator constantly feels “invisible” throughout the novel.

WORKS CITED

- Bell, Kevin. "The Embrace of Entropy: Ralph Ellison and the freedom principle of Jazz Invisible." *An International Journal of literature and culture*, no. 30, Feb, 2003, pp. 21-45.
- Christopher, Hanlon. "Eloquence and Invisible Man." *MLA International Bibliography*, no. 32, Apr, 2005, pp. 74-98.
- Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. Vintage ed, Random House, 1995.
- ___. *Shadow and Act*. Vintage ed, Random House, Inc., 1972.
- Greene, Shanna. "There's something about Mary: Female Wisdom and the Folk Presence in Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man." *Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism*, Vol. 12, no. 1, 2014.
- Hill, Lena M. "The Visual Art of Invisible Man: Ellison's Portrait of Blackness." *American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography*. Vol. 81, no. 4, 2009, pp. 775-803.
- Jackson, Blydon. "Ralph Ellison", *American Encyclopedia*. Vol. 10, p. 225.
- Jarenski, Shelly. "Invisibility Embraced: The Abject as a site of Agency in Ellison's Invisible Man." *MELUS- The Bodies of Black Folk*, Vol. 35, no. 4, 2010, pp. 85-109.
- Lavender, Isiah. "Invisible Women in Invisible Man." *ANQ: Quarterly Journal of short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, Vol. 27, no. 3, 2014, pp. 146- 151.
- Peterson, Cameron. *Invisible Man Study Guide*. *Grade Saver*, 10 April 2000
- Web. 19 May 2022.

Robnett, Belinda. "African-American Women in the Civil Rights Movement, 1945-1965: Gender, Leadership, and Micromobilization." *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 101, no. 6, 1996, pp. 1661- 1693.

Singleton, M. K. *Leadership as Antagonist in Invisible Man*.

Sylvander, Caroline. W. "Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man and Female Stereotypes." *Negro American Literature Forum*, Vol. 9, no. 3, 1975, pp. 77-79.

Wood, Daphne. "Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man." Weebly, <http://www.invisibledaphne.weebly.com/historical-background.html>.

Stark, John. "Invisible Man: Ellison's Black Odyssey." *Negro American Literature Forum*, Vol. 7, no. 2, 1973, pp. 60-63, *JSTOR*.

Wallace, David. *Invisible Man Study Guide*. LitCharts. LitCharts LLC, 16 Sep 2013.

The Utopian Enlightenment: A Study of Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*

A Project 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

Submitted by

ANCY JERIN .S

(REG. NO. 20APEN02)



PG AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2022

CONTENTS

DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Utopian Metamorphosis	13
Three	Female Utopianism	28
Four	Art of Narrative Technique	45
Five	Summation	54
	Works cited	

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **The Utopian Enlightenment: A Study of Mergy Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the Degree of Master of Arts in English, is my genuine effort and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

MAY 2022


ANACY JERIN. S

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am extremely grateful to the **Lord Almighty** for His guidance and grace in completing this project successfully during the year 2021-2022.

I would like to express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank my institution for the values we received and the knowledge we acquired in the course of study.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am deeply grateful to **Dr. S. Sudha Rani**, for her untiring help, academic guidance and constant supervision as well as for providing necessary information regarding the project and also for her support in completing the project.

I thank the faculty of the Department of English for their valuable input in teaching and moulding us.

I am indebted to my parents for the great comfort. I have enjoyed the good education they have provided me. I also thank them for their trust, moral support and benevolence.

PREFACE

The project entitled **The Utopian Enlightenment: A Study of Mergy Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*** comprises of five chapters.

The first chapter, **Introduction** deals with the origin of science fiction in general. Piercy's biography, and epigrammatic abstract of the novel *Woman on the Edge of Time*

The second chapter **Utopian Metamorphosis** discusses about the utopia through the alternative structures to existing structures is revealed by the major and minor chapters of the novel, highlighting the incidents which bring connie's human potential is appreciated and her stifled voice is heard by her friends by constructing the future

The third chapter **Female Utopianism** elaborates thematic content of love, dreams, fate, unity, and it intensely focuses on the exploit language in the novel to preserve women in their inferior position in patriarchal society.

The fourth chapter analyses the **Art of Narrative Technique** utilized in telling story, point of view, narrative structure, temporal manipulation and interior monologues of **Mergy Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time***

The final chapter **Summation** consolidates the woman like Connie grow up through the concrete, to consider a better way of life, a society with shorter work hours, he ability choose to work on meaningful activities, and lifelong learning and he ideas discussed in the preceding chapters.

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

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Science Fiction is any idea that occurs in the head and doesn't exist yet, but ~~sun~~ will, and will change everything for everybody and nothing will ever be the same again. As soon as you have an idea that changes some small part of the world, you are writing science fiction. It is always that art as of the possible, never the impossible. (np.)

- Ray Bradbury

Science Fiction is an eclectic genre. It is described as strenuous to define but easy to recognize. Science Fiction frequently called as "Sci-fi" it is a genre in fiction. This literature deals with impact of imaginative science upon society or individuals. It deals with facts, theories and principles which support settings, characters, plot and themes.

Science Fiction stories often tell about science and technology. It has a relationship with principles of science and fictional laws of science. It incorporates human element and explains new discoveries in scientific developments in future. The first example of science fiction stories can be found in Greek and Egyptian people who had already discovered in the field of science and technology. As far as literature is concerned ancient references are the *Odyssey* by Homer and some mythological legends.

Science fiction has a relationship with the principles of science where the stories are partially true and have partially fictitious laws or theories of science. It should not be completely unbelievable, because it then ventures into the genre fantasy. The plot creates situations different from those of both the present day and the known past. Science fiction texts also include a human element, explaining what effect new discoveries, happenings

and scientific developments will have on humans in the future. Science fiction texts are often set in the future, in space, on a different world, or in a different universe or dimension.

Modern science a greater in the seventeenth century, the credence that the accumulation of knowledge could lead a better world of both socially and morally accepted. Faith in technological progress view utopian point in typical compatibility. It characterizes an idealized vision of utopia. Science seems to take part in an important role in the developmental idea of utopian and the terminal turn to dystopian vision.

In Greece Plato, science was the theoretical understanding of nature. The rise of Modern Science in the Renaissance emphasizes the utility of knowledge obtained by scientific research. In Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* the implementation of advanced technologies not only serve very feasible ends, but it also adds a sense of awareness and direction to society. Samuel Butler creates *Erewhon* in 1872 a fictional country, which was believed a critique of Victorian society. He introduced the possibility that machines could develop scruples and become a threat to the human race. In the Nineteenth Century, antithetical opinions were accumulating and many began to see the unpredictable scientific process along with the benefits.

Friedrich Nietzsche wrote *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1871. His eloquent discussions were about the place that science was occupying in the life of man and scientific process in general. Scholar Robert Scholes terms the history of Science Fiction, as "the history of humanity's changing attitudes towards space and time... the history of our growing understanding of the position of our species in that Universe" (3). In recent decades, the

genre has widened and become firmly established and influences on global culture and assumption.

Ancient Mesopotamian Science Fiction *Epic of Gilgamesh* was the earliest text versions from 2000 BCE. Lester Del Rey supporter of using Gilgamesh as an origin point assert “Science Fiction is precisely as old as the first recorded Fiction” (12). It handles human reason and the quest of immortality. It resembles a work of apocalyptic Science Fiction. Lack of explicit science and technology has led to argue that it is better rated as Fantastic Literature.

The Theological novel in Medieval Literature deals with several Science Fiction elements such as spontaneous generation, apocalyptic themes, futurology, eschatology resurrection and the afterlife but rather than giving supernatural or mythological explanations. English critic Kingsley Amis wrote that “It is hardly Science Fiction, since it deliberately piles extravagance upon extravagance for comic effect” (28).

Thomas More’s *Utopia* in 1561 is a work of fiction and political philosophy. It evokes the fictional island, where people have perfected the aspect of their society. The name of the society wedged, giving rise to the Utopian design that would become so extensive in advanced science fiction. It designates a world that is apparently perfect but either ultimately unattainable or aberrantly flawed.

The first work of science fiction in English was Francis Godwin’s *The Man in the Moon* (1656). Some Proto-science Fiction works are Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* (1627) a deficient Utopian novel. Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726) an alien cultures and “Weird Science”. Louis Sebastian Mercier’s *L’An 2440* (1771) forecast the account of life in the Twenty-fifth Century. First true science fiction novel is Mary Shelley’s *The*

Last Man (1826). Early work of American Science Fiction in the Nineteenth Century is Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888). It extends beyond the field of Literature. It infers unknown values of a future society based on observation of the current society.

John W. Campbell considered the beginning of the Golden Age of Science Fiction in the 1930s. He characterized hard science fiction stories revelling on scientific achievement and progress. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1948) was highly observed of literary dystopias. He predicts a technologically governed totalitarian organization that dominates society through total information control.

They pretended, perhaps they even believed, that they had seized power unwillingly and for a limited time, and that just around the corner there lay a paradise where human beings would be free and equal. We are not like that. We know that no one ever seizes power with the intention of relinquishing it. Power is not a means; it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship. The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power. Now you begin to understand me. (247)

During World War II America and British military studied science fiction ideas. It induced authors to acquiesce outlandish philosophies and plans, many of the motifs in the class of Literature. The Flying saucer crash in Roswell, New Mexico (1947) made Science Fiction a modern folklore. The Golden Age writers provided new materials, some by the advances in special effects, and a public desire. The materials were treated with the advances in technology of the time, The intensification of *Galaxy* signaled the end of

Golden Age science fiction. Though most of the Golden Age writers were able to acclimate to the changes in the genre and keep writing. Some moved to other fields.

William S. Burroughs was the writer who finally brought science fiction together with the trends of Postmodern Literature. Through the support of Jack Kerouac, Burroughs published *Naked Lunch*, the first of a series of novels employing a Semi-Dadaistic technique called the Cut-up and postmodern deconstructions of conventional society. It pulls away the mask of normality to reveal emptiness beneath. Burroughs showed hallucinations of society as a conspiracy of aliens, monsters, police states, drug dealers and alternate levels of reality. The Linguistics of Science Fiction combined with the experiments of postmodernism in a beat cohort gestalt.

The 'New Wave' had faded out as an important presence in the science fiction landscape. New personal computing technologies became an essential part of society. Science Fiction writers sensed the urge to make statements about its impact on the cultural and political landscape. The Cyberpunk movement which was established in early 80s, developed its own unique style, typically focusing on the 'punks' of their imagined future. Cyberpunk authors like William Gibson *Pattern Recognition* (2003) twisted away from the traditional positivity and support for growth of traditional science fiction.

Contemporary science fiction has been noticeable by the spread of cyberpunk to other parts of the marketplace of ideas. No longer is cyberpunk a ghettoized tribe within science fiction, but an integral part of the field whose interactions with other parts have been the primary theme of science fiction around the start of the 21st century. In start of

the Twenty-First Century John Clute writes Science fiction can be understood in two ways:

A vision of the triumph of science fiction as a genre and as a series of outstanding texts which figured to our gaze the significant futures that, during those years, came to pass... [or] ...indecipherable from the world during those years... fatally indistinguishable from the world it attempted to adumbrate, to signify. (64)

Marge Piercy was born in 1936, March 31 at Detroit, Michigan. She was an American liberal activist and writer. Her work includes *Woman on the Edge of Time*, *He, She and It*, which won the 1993 Arthur C. Clarke Award and *Gone to Soldiers*, a New York Times Best Seller and an extensive historical novel is set in World War II. Piercy's work is embedded in her Jewish heritage, communist social and political activism, and feminist ideals. She stood complicated in the civil rights movement, New Left, and Students for a Democratic Society. She is a feminist, environmentalist, Marxist, social, and anti-war activist. In 1977, Piercy became a comrade of the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press (WIFP) an American non-profit publishing organization that works to increase communication between women and women-based media.

Piercy is the writer of further seventeen volumes of poems. Among them are *The Moon Is Always Female* (1980), a feminist classic and *The Art of Blessing the Day* (1999). She has published fifteen novels, one play *The Last White Class*, one collection of essays entitled as *Parti-colored Blocks for a Quilt*, one non-fiction book, and one memoir. She underwrote the pieces *The Grand Coolie Damn* and *Song of the Fucked Duck*.

Piercy's novels and poetry habitually focus on feminist or social concerns, even though her settings vary. *Body of Glass* in 1991 (*He, She and It*) is a science fiction novel that gained the Arthur C. Clarke Award *City of Darkness*, *City of Light* (1996) is set during the French Revolution. Further novels, such as *Summer People* (1989) and *The Longings of Women* (1994) are set during modern times. All of her works focus on women's lives.

Piercy's many books of poetry written, from a feminist perspective is *The Moon is Always Female* (1980). This collection is in two parts, the first a group of poems on subjects that inspired Piercy during the few years' previous publication. The second part, *The Lunar Cycle*, is the product of thinking and writing over a twenty-one year period. Piercy says that she first learned of the lunar calendar when she was a child enquiring about the changing dates of Passover. Piercy has used her consciousness of the lunar calendar in her writing and her daily living. *The Lunar Cycle* consists of a poem for each of the thirteen lunar months, an extra, introductory poem, and a short epilogue poem. The book is shown along with *The Lunar Calendar: Dedicated to the Goddess in Her Many Guises* (1987) in which Piercy's title poem, *The Moon is Always Female*, appears.

In that poem Piercy introduces a girl undergoing a clitoridectomy. Piercy describes that she woke one night and physically heard the girl's cry and felt her searing pain. Also on exhibition are drafts and the situation copy for the poem Piercy initially wrote the poem at the well age twenty-three during the time of the breakup of her first marriage. The first draft, *Encounter with a God*, uses a male protagonist and long lines. The poem did not work, even after struggling with it over and over. Years later, while

working on *The Lunar Cycle*, the poem came back with different titles, corrected sexes, and shorter lines. Then, Piercy says that the poem began to gather its energy.

Woman on the Edge of Time (1976) assembles a time travel story with subjects of social justice, feminism, and the treatment of the mental illness. It is considered a classic of utopian “speculative” science fiction as well as a feminist classic. William Gibson has recognized *Woman on the Edge of Time* as the birthplace of Cyberpunk. Piercy mentions this in an outline to *Body of Glass*.

In an interview for the *Journal Sandscript* (1977), Piercy says that the novel is primarily about Connie, a middle-thirties Chicana in New York, poor, stressed, labelled a child abuser, and put into a psychiatric facility for having stamped in the nose by her niece's pimp. Thus the novel would seem to be another of her activist, communally conscious works, especially in the scenes providing a study of mid-twentieth century practices in mental institutions. But, it also presents two fascinating views of alternative future societies one in which the human is supreme, and the other in which technology instructions and the individual is minimized in overcrowded, underground existence.

Publicized in this case are drafts of two very dissimilar versions of page one, the acknowledgement page from the setting copy reminding readers of Piercy's extensive research for this novel, and a four-page description of Piercy's first future, which she says is not a utopia, but rather a world based primarily on ideas borrowed from the women's movement. Piercy's success with *Woman on the Edge of Time* led to opportunities to speak about women's utopian writing and futurist feminism, sometimes at science fiction conferences.

Primary reviews called *Woman on the Edge of Time* absorbing and thrilling and beautifully written, but also polemical and didactic. Piercy's utopia was noted for literally embodying every idea of the counterculture movement, ecological wisdom, community, androgyny, ritual respect for madness, propertylessness etc. Behind Sixties, American novels generally shared a post-apocalyptic feeling, generally asking what are to be the new social and spiritual arrangements were to be now that the old ones were completely being shattered. In that context, Roger Sale, in the *New York Times*, found nothing new in *Woman on the Edge of Time*. The book he professes that imitative and derivative, and points out that "the major instruments... are terrible familiar pieces of apparatus, the mental hospital and a Utopian community of the future"

The novel merges feminist standards with Utopian visions of a future society based on principles of community and equality. Piercy imagined a post-apocalyptic world that established *Woman on the Edge of Time* as an early feminist innovation in the conventionally male genre of dystopian fiction. Depictions of sexuality and relations between the genders were recognized as useful elements in portraying the conflict between individual and societal demands. For example, the governments of dystopian societies like these described in *We*, *Brave New World*, and *1984*, all focus on sexuality as a crux of trouble for their efforts at public control. This focus comes about largely because of awareness on the part of these governments that sexuality is a probable locus of powerful rebellious energies. *Woman on the Edge of Time* finely counterpoints the Utopianism of Mattapoiset with the dystopian practically with which Connie's actual world is represented. The novel has been considered as a dystopia, as speculative fiction, and as radical fiction. By her vivid and coherent metaphor of new social organizations,

Piercy has answered the famous cold war dystopias like *1984* and *Brave New World* which lament an anti-totalitarian society.

Women on the Edge of Time the speculative fiction expresses the story of Connie Ramos, a middle-aged Hispanic woman with an uneasy past who suddenly finds herself able to communicate with a future society. As she struggles in the present to recollect her pride and spiritual independence in the face of being diagnosed insane, Connie's experiences in the future rouse a fierce determination to not let her be controlled or mistreated. As the narrative details Connie's awakening consciousness, it also explores themes connected to the nature of hope, relationships between parents and children, and the power of the future on the present.

The novel begins with a forceful scene of clash between Connie and her niece Dolly, a pregnant and drug addicted prostitute on the run from her abusive pimp. In the midst of Connie's attempts at comfort, the pimp arrives and beats both her and her niece into unconsciousness. Connie awakens to find herself in a mental institution, the pimp having brought her there and convinced the admitting authorities that his injuries were in fact the result of Connie's exploding into unprovoked violence. As she has a history of such violence and of insanity, there were no questions asked and she was immediately sent into confinement.

During her custody in the mental hospital, Connie makes communication with an animation from the future Luciente. With who she had been in contact earlier and who now offers to show her what life is going to become. Connie temporarily becomes uncomfortable when she discovers that Luciente, whom she had believed was a man, turns out to be a woman, but soon lets go of her discomfort and travels to

Mouth-of-Mattapoisett, Luciente's commune-like home. This is the first of several "trips" Connie makes to the future. Here she discovers that women, in the name of accomplishing true equality, made them truly unique with the ability to conceive and bear children. Childbearing, it seems, is now the function of a specific machine housed in a building called the "brooder". Connie also notices that defining identity by race or by sexual orientation has also been eradicated, that each individual in the community lives alone, everyone works and celebrates communally, and that the community is under attack by people called "The Shapers". There are scientists who advanced the genetic experiments that led the community to taking the shape and to continue their experiments in order to helping humanity "improve". Atwood writes:

Suddenly she thought that these men believed feeling itself a disease, something to be cut out like a rotten appendix. Cold, calculating, ambitious, believing themselves rational and superior, they chased the crouching female animal through the brain with a scalpel. From an early age she had been told that what she felt was unreal and didn't matter. Now they were about to place in her something that would rule her feelings like a thermostat. (308)

Back in the present, as Connie flips back and forth into the future, she is selected to be the subject of an experiment by the Shaper-like Dr. Redding. A small device implanted in the brains of people detected as being chronically violent, electronically controls their emotions. As the research progresses, Connie comes to recognize that those who have the implant soon lose the characteristics of their personality that make them interesting, unique, and independent. Experiences paralleling each other between the past

and present lead Connie to become more and more resistant to the idea of being operated against her spirit.

On visit to the future, she was drawn by Luciente and other members of the Mattapoissett community into an armed battle with forces controlled by the Shapers. She is shocked to see that the enemy warriors have the faces of Redding and the other doctors in the present. She concludes that the influence of the “shapers” in both time periods must be ended. With that in mind, she poisons in coffee served to Redding and the others to destroying the “ancestors” of the future Shapers. Doing so she stakes to claim freedom and to independence of thought and identity. The beyond chapter discusses about a general note on utopia and the element of utopia in the novel.

CHAPTER TWO

UTOPIAN METAMORPHOSIS

“A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias,” (247) says Oscar Wilde. The history of utopian literature went back to the early 16th century when Thomas More published *Utopia* to his proposed ideal society. It combines the Greek words “ou”, meaning no, and “topos”, meaning place, adding suffix “ia” represent a place. More originally intended to use the word “Nusquama”, being Latin for “nowhere” or “never”. However, he selected Utopia, when spoken in English both Outopia and Eutopia are phonetically similar, the latter mean as “good place”.

The terms “utopia” and “utopianism” has caused extensive confusion and dispute. This disagreement, which appears to be widespread throughout the disciplines where utopian thinking flourishes, has just become part of the utopian wallpaper, and to be a utopian scholar, one must simply immerse oneself, or perhaps relish in theoretical debate. As Kenneth Roemer comments, “one of the most exciting and ludicrous characteristics of students of utopian literature is that they often don’t know what they’re talking about; or, to put it more gently, they find it difficult to define their topic” (319-20). Peter Stillman adds, “to define utopias is difficult in the best of circumstances. The field is politically charged and contested liberals, conservatives, socialists, and utopians of all stripes propound definitions to fit their agenda” (9-10). One of the problems of definitions is their exclusivity, and because many people, like me, consider utopia research as an

inquiry and subversion of social and literary bounds, starting any endeavour with walls is clearly problematic. As a result, because no single definition can satisfy everyone, it will address the advantages and disadvantages of multiple definitions, as well as the idea of utopia as fluid, ambiguous, always in flux, and always going toward more development and transformation. Lyman Tower Sargent's description of utopia as "social dreaming" can also be used.

Utopia has long been associated with the concept or dream of a better society or a better way of life starting with a thought that develops into an idea, utopia thus refers to the ability to imagine and contemplate alternate realities. Historically, utopia has been associated with the 'ideal' defined as something flawless that does not yet exist. Holscher notes that usage of the ideal is of "a mental image of that which is not to be found anywhere in the world of external appearance while its realisation seems worth moving towards" (37). A traditional view of utopianism is encapsulated by Barbara Goodwin's "Utopia denotes an elaborate vision of "the good life" in a perfect society which is viewed as an integrated totality" (16).

Utopian Theory confines much more than tempting storytelling alone. Karl Mannheim excellently wrote on the relationship between Utopia and ideology in 1954, Bloch on Utopia and hope in 1985, Goodwin on Utopia and politics in 2009, and so on. Utopian Theory confines many aspects of social theory, because Utopia is so fundamental to our philosophy about society. Dystopia, a term meaning "bad place" coined in 1868 by John Stuart Mill draws on this latter meaning. The opposite of a utopia, dystopia is a concept which exceeded utopia in popularity in the fictional literature from the 1950s onwards, primarily because of the impact of George Orwell's *Nineteen EightyFour*.

The Book of Revelation in the Christian Bible depicts an eschatological time with the defeat of Satan, of Evil and of Sin. The main difference compared to the Old Testament promises is that such a defeat also has an ontological value “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. . . He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Rev. 21:1;4). And no longer just Gnosiological “See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind” (Isa. 65:17). Narrow clarification of the text depicts, “Heaven on Earth” or “a Heaven brought to Earth without sin”. Daily and ordinary details of this new Earth, where God and Jesus rule, remain unclear. Although it is implied similar to the biblical Garden of Eden. Some theological philosophers trust that heaven will not be a physical kingdom but instead an incorporeal place for souls.

As the Greek title suggests, the term utopia describes an ideal society which does not exist. These ideal societies portrayed in utopian novels are often set in the future. They are juxtaposed to the society that the novel’s protagonist is a member. In the early 19th century, several utopian ideas arose, often in response to the belief that social trouble was created and caused by the development of commercialism and of commercialism and capitalism. One classic example of utopia appears in Edward Bellamy’s 1888 novel *Looking Backward*. William Morris illustrates another socialist utopia in his 1890 novel *News from Nowhere*, written partially in response to the hierarchical nature of Bellamy’s utopia, which Morris criticized. The socialist movement

developed, it moved away from utopianism. Karl Marx in particular became a harsh critic of earlier socialism which he defined as “utopian”.

In 1905, H.G. Wells published *A Modern Utopia*, which was widely read and well-liked and incited much discussion. Also consider Eric Frank Russell’s book *The Great Explosion* (1963), the last section of which details an economic and social utopia. This forms the first mention of the idea of Local Exchange Trading Systems (LETS). In a materialist utopian society the economy is perfect there is no price increase and only perfect social and financial equality exists. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote:

The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, causes Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. They want to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favored. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without distinction of class; nay, by preference, to the ruling class. For how can people, when once they understand their system, fail to see it in the best possible plan of the best possible state of society? Hence, they reject all political, and especially all revolutionary, action; they wish to attain their ends by peaceful means, and endeavor, by small experiments, necessarily doomed to failure, and by the force of example, to pave the way for the new social Gospel. (407)

The utopias represented in utopian fiction are frequently presented to the reader as unassailable and static social and political ideals, according to critics. Many people think that this idea is a simplification of utopia. Rather than being a monolithic ideal whose

undeniable superiority over present society is assumed, utopia becomes a matter of investigating options, pointing new ways, and providing glimpses of how things might be otherwise. “Thus, many authors trust and teach their readers to be competent, critical thinkers who are willing to think in different directions, weighing out possibilities without expecting a fixed guideline to a better world without injustices, discriminations and social difficulties” (4).

Francis Bacon’s *New Atlantis* is filled with a scientific spirit, and technological utopias tend to be based in the future. It is believed that advanced science and technology will allow utopian living standards. For example, the absence of death and suffering, changes in human nature and the human condition.

It’s that race between technology, in the service of those who control, and insurgency-those who want to change the society in our direction. In your time the physical sciences had delivered the weapons technology. But the crux, we think, is in the biological sciences. Control of genetics. Technology of brain control. Birth-to-death surveillance. Chemical control through psychoactive drugs and neurotransmitters. (217)

Lyman Tower Sargent argues that the nature of a utopia is inherently contradictory because societies are not homogeneous and have desires which conflict and therefore cannot simultaneously be satisfied.

There are socialist, capitalist, monarchical, democratic, anarchist, ecological, feminist, patriarchal, egalitarian, hierarchical, racist, left-wing, right-wing, reformist, free love, nuclear family, extended family, gay, lesbian and many more utopias [Naturism, Nude Christians, ...]

Utopianism, some argue, is essential for the improvement of the human condition. But if used wrongly, it becomes dangerous. Utopia has an inherent contradictory nature here. (21)

Utopian books frequently address sociopolitical issues such as governance and social structures, gender roles, and the allocation of wealth and power. Alternative structures to existing structures are revealed, and it is up to the reader to decide whether the described utopia is desired and, if so, for whom. The fundamental purpose of this genre appears to be to teach the reader to think critically and critically evaluate his or her own society without providing clear-cut instructions for an ideal living in an ideal world for everyone.

Despite the fact that utopian books can vary greatly in terms of setting and substance, the plot is frequently the same. A person from the writer's own time is shown glimpses of a utopian, futuristic civilization while being guided by a member of that utopian society who explains things as the protagonist sees them with relation to the protagonist's own culture. Typically, the protagonist returns to his or her previous society after realising the flaws in his or her own civilization and being enlightened by the utopia about how things could be better if people were willing to strive for change.

By emphasizing the moral and political shortcomings of the society with which it is contrasted, utopian books strive to show the reader alternative and improved ways of life. They mainly deal with sociopolitical topics including how a society organizes its life, its government and social structures, and how wealth and power are distributed. However, in recent decades, a growing number of female authors, like Marge Piercy, Ursula K. Le Guin, Joanna Russ, and Margaret Atwood, have gotten excellent feedback

for their utopian books that focus on primarily feminist topics such as gender roles and expectations.

Genders have been utilized in utopias to investigate the implications of genders being a societal fabrication, a biologically “hard-wired” imperative, or a combination of the two. Socialist and economic utopias have a history of taking the “woman question” seriously and frequently offering some form of gender equality as part of their vision, whether through addressing misogyny, reorganising society along separatist lines, establishing a type of androgynous equality that ignores gender, or in some other way.

One of the most common ways to investigate the implications of gender and gender differences has long been to create utopian single-gender worlds or single-sex societies. Male authors’ utopias have frequently featured gender equality rather than separation, however Bellamy's plan does incorporate certain “separate but equal” elements.

In the novel, *Women on the Edge of Time* the utopian future serves multiple purposes. To begin, the protagonist discovers a dreamlike resort in this future to escape the tragedies of her own world. Second, the author uses the future to illuminate and critically examine pressing societal concerns such as class, gender, and race. Finally, the author creates a world in which Connie’s human potential is appreciated and her stifled voice is heard by her friends by constructing this future.

The paradise presented in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Mattapoisett, like any other city, is a tiny town with a population of around hundred people. Because big cities no longer exist in Luciente's world, “they didn’t work” (68) everything has a more rural feel to it, and it quickly becomes evident that this culture has a very strong relationship

with nature. Almost all energy is created from natural resources, rubbish is recycled and residents show tremendous respect for all living things. What's more unexpected is that the residents of Mattapoisett appear to have a natural affinity for the environment. When Connie asks Luciente if she throws anything away in her time, she says "Thrown away where? The world is round" (240).

Mattapoisett, is built on the ideas of community and equality. People work together to provide for everyone's basic needs, but they lack money and have no idea of ownership. They have private locations, but the majority of their activities are shared. Their government is highly decentralised, with local and regional councils making decisions by consensus. Their education includes both study and labour, as well as a mentorship system that makes learning more personal. They are well aware of their position in society. "the web of nature" (278), Their understanding of the damage done to the environment by the excesses of the twentieth century heightens their sense of duty toward it. They value cultural diversity and, most importantly, gender equality. In every way, men and women are equal: Work, education, and sexual expression are all important aspects of one's life. "all coupling, all befriending goes on between biological males, biological females, or both" (214). The pronouns "he" and "she" have been replaced by "person" or "per" as part of the revolution's linguistic reform.

Frances Bartkowski observes that "Piercy's novel is narratively structured through a process of gaining and losing consciousness" (62). Connie travels to the future by letting go of her own mind and receiving the consciousness of Luciente. He explains who she is and what she does. "a super-strong sender" and Connie "a top catcher" and that this is what enables them to communicate. "If I was knocked on the head and fell

unconscious,” she says, “you’d be back in your time instantly” (79). Connie’s budding understanding of the line between her word and utopia begins the story, but her awareness is passive at this point. She blames it on her nightmares or the hallucinogenic affects of the medicines she’s on. Initially, her crossing of this line is solely dependent on Luciente. Gradually, though, she improves her ability to tap into Luciente’s awareness and cross the time barrier at will. Luciente informs her at one time, “you could be a sender too. What a powerful and unusual mix!” (113). Connie increasingly travels to different sections of the future on her own as the narrative continues. Connie’s capacity to take control of her actions at the end of the process of merging her consciousness with that of the utopians is a direct result of her ability to decide not just to visit the future but to participate in making it.

Gender can be addressed on both a biological and societal level in science fiction and technology speculation. *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy depicts gender equality as well as complete sexual equality regardless of the gender of the lovers. Giving birth has been pushed onto intricate biological machinery that functions to provide a richer embryonic experience, which is often perceived as the separator that cannot be avoided in discussions of women’s rights and roles. When a child is born, it spends the majority of its time with peers in the children’s ward. Three “mothers” per child are the standard, and they are chosen on the basis of their experience and aptitude in a gender-neutral manner men and women can both become “mothers”.

Connie meets an alternate self when she visits the dystopian side of the future. Gildina, the woman she talks to there, is “a cartoon of femininity” (288), surgically altered and implanted in order to adhere to the fantasies of the guys with whom she has a

sex contract. But, like Connie, she is a Chicana beneath the plastic surgery. And, like Connie, she is unaware of her own potential. Connie is aware of this. “Gildina has a special mental power, even if she doesn’t know it” (299). Connie was able to travel to her time and location due of her receptivity. Connie and Gildina have a similar relationship to Luciente and Connie. As she moves with a male, Connie first misidentifies Luciente as a man “that air of brisk unselfconscious authority Connie associated with men . . . taking up more space than women ever did” (67). Similarly, the guard who finds Connie with Gildina tells her, “You look me in the eyes, unlike a female” (300). The people of Mattapoisett are, as one of them tells Connie, “potentialities (in your loved ones) that could not flourish in your time” (189). Seeing these potentialities realised transforms Connie, allowing her to begin fulfilling them herself and thereby influence the future.

In a crisis, Connie is approached by people from a possible, ideal future, people with charming names like Luciente, Jackrabbit, and Bee, who teach her that humans are living in a fulcrum time, in which the fate of the planet will be decided by the valour or despair of seemingly helpless people like her. Piercy’s year 2137, once again, runs the risk of indulging in ideological sentimentality by actually embodying every counterculture ideal: ecological wisdom, community, androgyny, ritual, respect for crazy, propertylessness, and so on. She takes a chance and succeeds. Because Piercy has written about this ideal society with such zeal, eloquence, and vigour, the reader not only believes in it, but also feels a kind of reverse longing for it. It is the most serious and thoroughly envisioned Utopia since Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed*, and even the most jaded reader will be rejuvenated and galvanised by it just as Piercy meant.

Connie's "act is political. It affirms her individual revolt in a way that may help to bring about a future in which her descendants can affirm their humanity and their individuality" (181). After reading a utopian work like Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, a reader could wonder about this. One of utopias' key purposes is to serve as a political and social critique of current society. Such a critique focuses on exposing the shortcomings in existing cultures and civilizations, as well as proposing some alternatives and reforms to address those problems. According to Fredric Jameson, "Utopias have something to do with failure and tell us more about our own limits and weaknesses than they do about perfect societies" (113). At the same time, the critique serves as a forewarning of a poor, sad future if the current society continues to ignore its flaws. Piercy's utopian novel, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, serves as a political and social critique of her current society in this environment.

In a patriarchal society like Connie's, women's mistreatment stems in part from their unique social definition: whereas men are assigned functions, women's responsibilities are drawn from and tied to their sexuality. Piercy proposes a sexuality based on equality and respect in the utopian alternative of Mattapoissett in the year 2137 she constructs in the novel, whereas such a society views sexuality as a bad attribute that denotes women's inferiority. Connie's future social buddy and alter ego, Luciente, declares. "We couple ... for love, for pleasure, for relief, out of habit, out of curiosity and lust" (64). Piercy's protagonist has two powerful relationships in the story, both of which are built on equality and respect.

O'Byrne says, "Piercy, a long-time activist, strives to politicize her readers, as Connie's new friends encourage her to recognize her potential for resistance" (8).

Connie's first romantic relationship is with Claud, a blind black man. Despite the fact that he is a pickpocket, she has a happy life with him. When he is subjected to an abusive treatment and dies, she believes it is better to die than to live and takes to drinking. As a result, his death marks a watershed moment in her life. The second relationship she has is with Bee from the future Mattapoissett society, which Piercy invents to allow her protagonist to interact, express herself, and subsequently defend her actions in the mental hospital. This imagined relationship reminds her of Claud and restores her sense of family after she has lost everything in her current culture. She starts to listen to Bee's advice when he tells her: "We're all at war. You're a prisoner of war. May you free yourself. . . there's always a thing you can deny an oppressor if only your allegiance. Your belief. Your co-oping. . ." (328)

Bee restores her confidence, which she had lost following Claud's death. This self-assurance gives her a fighting spirit. As a result, she begins to consider a desperate act of retribution. After failing to get out of the hospital, she begins to consider other options. Hence, "yes, she had stolen a weapon. War, she thought again. She would fight back" (363). At the end of the novel, Connie thinks, "At last once I fought and won" (375). Sarah Lefanu argues, "At the beginning of the book Connie is a powerless victim, but by the end she has become an agent for the future" (61) of Mattapoissett where "constructs of gender, race, sexuality, and mental health have been rendered obsolete" (116).

Connie has to take the medicine, obey the doctors, and accept their decision without her consent. Moreover, doctors warn her, Connie you are resisting. "You are the patient. You know why you are here. The more you resist, the more you punish yourself.

Because when you fight us, we can't help you" (261–262). One of the distinctions she notices in the future utopian society she frequently visits is that no one puts any pressure on the patients. Every member of the society has the option of volunteering for experiments. Every individual in that utopian future society is free and respected, and "difference is not suppressed or punished but welcome" (333). Connie cannot find independence in her patriarchal culture, and her basic rights are denied to her. She gains confidence and receives counsel as a result of her ability to time travel into the future. She finds a family more than anything else. In every way, the world she chooses to visit differs from her patriarchal, cruel, and ruthless civilization. The future society appears to be "women's long revolution" (105).

Connie must do her part because her actions in today's tumultuous society may shape the future. Connie's reaction to hostility and persecution at the time may have paved the way for this bright future civilization. This concept is discussed by Peter Seyferth "who learns that, the actuality of this future society depends on her own action in the present; if she does not fight now, the evils of contemporary society will grow even worse" (3). In reality, the future civilization may provide solutions to Connie's current society's problems, notably those related to class, gender, and race. This is what the imagined society does "enjoy no one culture, but many arts" (178). Despite the fact that this future promotes diversity, it does not lead to racism, as it does in Connie's society. Everyone in the future civilization is proud of his or her culture while also respecting the cultures of others. Connie brings up the black political movement when discussing cultures, "in my time black people just discovered a pride in being black. My people,

Chicanos, were beginning to feel that too” (103). As racism is eliminated in the future society, sexuality is not anymore connected with women’s social status.

Piercy goes even further in the future civilization, divorcing sexuality from production. This principle is emphasised by the usage of technology. Brooding machines are used to raise babies until they are ready to be born. As a result, Piercy deprives future society’s ladies of the ability to bear children. When it comes to breastfeeding, each child has three mothers, with at least two of them agreeing to do so. Changes marking the end of gender roles are reflected in the male mothers. Women and men are equal in every way: education, work, sexual expression, and even motherhood, according to her time-travels to a future civilization that teaches her what it is to be related with someone else. She accepts Luciente’s critique, and she acquires confidence and advice in the future society. “If we don’t correct you, how will you grow” (212).

Connie is a “woman on the brink” in more ways than one, as seen by the transitions between the present and the future, utopia and dystopia, and numerous incarnations of the same character. Her life has been chaotic in the traditional sense of the word, as represented in the novel. She has been exploited and abused, raped and beaten, and denied access to education and meaningful employment. She has lost her child to a harsh, unsympathetic society and the men she has loved to violence. By being committed to one mental facility after another, she has ultimately lost her freedom and control over her life. However, from a different perspective, Connie’s life is also chaotic in a fresh, pleasant way. The link between present and future also extends to what Libby Falk Jones calls a “web of character relationships radiating from Connie” (123).

The novel's parallels between individuals suggest that paradise is ultimately about realising individual potentials that are denied and stifled in today's society. There are several pairs or groups of characters who symbolise utopian and dystopian versions of the same individual. Angelina, Connie's daughter, and Dawn, Luciente's daughter, are two examples of parallels. Angelina was taken from Connie and placed in a foster home after she was abused as a youngster. She will be forever separated from her mother. Dawn, who is gorgeous, joyful, and well-liked, reminds Connie of her long-lost daughter, and she imagines her as Angelina in a perfect world: "Suddenly she assented with all her soul to Angelina in Mattapoisett, to Angelina hidden forever one hundred fifty years into the future. . . . She will be strong there, well fed, well housed, well taught, she will grow up much better and stronger and smarter than I" (141). Dawn is thus the realisation of not only Angelina's but also Connie's potential.

Connie appears at the start of the narrative as a powerless victim who seeks solace in visiting Mattapoisett, a future utopian society "where human potential is valued" (335) and respect, equity, and equality reign supreme. Her niece is time-traveling to the future when she visits her. This type of trip provides her with a mental and psychological break from her current troubles. At the same time, it's a form of creation; she's giving her existence significance by being able to speak with and become a part of the future.

In the end, it is the future world that gives Connie the confidence to act. Her culture has obliterated her; there is nothing left for her to sacrifice, because her niece is her last chance to make a good impression "live together" (14). She wants to defend her niece because she has a sense of family. As a result, she does not hesitate to crush her niece's "man's" nose at the start of the tale. Indeed, Piercy uses this common occurrence

in any family as one of the reasons for presenting and then criticising the merciless society and its beliefs. She allegedly assaulted him and Dolly in Dolly's home, according to the man. Connie is transferred to an allegedly charitable hospital because of her psychiatric background. Luciente insists on Connie's participation in the past as long as she is regarded a visitor from the far past, and this history has something to do with the women's revolution, and thus with the future: "But try! You're important to us, we want you to survive and break out" (262). Bee, advises, "We're all at war" and "there's always a thing you can deny an oppressor" (328).

Such an ideal community, based on equality, justice, and communal respect among all members, transcends expectations; it becomes a heaven for Connie and her generation. According to Seabury, a community "provides an alternative to the patterns of Connie's present and the dystopian future" (140). Accordingly, Connie does not hesitate to tell Luciente, "I want to be with you." Moreover, her lover from this future society, Bee, points out, "We feel you're family" (307). The progressing third chapter deals with feminism and motherhood.

CHAPTER THREE

FEMALE UTOPIANISM

"Who knows what women can be when they are finally free to become themselves? Who knows what women's intelligence will contribute when it can be nourished without denying love?" (n.p) says Betty Friedan. The term "female utopianism" has a wide range of meanings and is hotly debated. It should come as no

surprise that, because there is no such thing as feminism in isolation, there is no one definition of feminist utopianism. “One woman’s utopia is another woman’s nightmare: feminism itself takes on a range of interpretations,” (9) Warn Sarah Webster Goodwin and Libby Falk Jones warn. Feminism has progressed significantly in the last thirty years, and it now addresses a much wider range of issues than it did previously. Additionally, there have always been many types of feminism, reflecting different cultural and ideological beliefs about, gender and sexuality.

Cultural feminisms, radical feminists, and socialist feminisms were popular in the 1960s and 1970s, but postmodern feminisms, ecofeminism, and even post-feminism gained traction in the 1980s and 1990s. While cultural feminists praise femininity, postmodern feminists criticise the concept of womanhood and gender as a whole. While radical feminists may seek a women-only space in which to develop a gendered political agenda, socialist feminists are more likely to work toward gender integration and a politics that embraces questions of class and economics as well as gender.

Eco-feminists examine the parallels between the oppression of women and the oppression of animals and the natural environment while deconstructing gender. These are broad generalizations, and many feminists do not fit into neat categories, but they do show some of the ideological differences among feminists, as well as some historical shifts over time, which will be reflected in any utopian vision. Nonetheless, the discrepancies amongst feminisms haven’t stopped theorists from pursuing definitional clarity. For example, Frances Bartkowski claims that “feminist fictions· are the ‘places’ where women speak the desires that frame the anticipatory consciousness of utopia made concrete, bringing the not-yet into the here and now” (162).

Sarah Lefanu states that the feminist utopia is “an imaginary place, a nowhere land, a realm like the unconscious, where dreams may flourish and desires be realised” (53). Lucy Sargisson argues that, “Utopian thinking is thinking that creates and operates inside a new place or space that has previously appeared inconceivable. Writing from or towards a good place that is no place, glancing over her shoulder at the place whence she came, the utopian feminist escapes the restrictions of patriarchal scholarship” (41).

Sargisson’s enthusiasm with certain qualifications based on her definition. While utopian thinking does generate alternate spaces for unique, subversive politics, these spaces ‘newness’ is debatable. The utopian genre has a long literary, ideological, and even patriarchal heritage, which the feminist writer must confront when writing in it. Thus, while writing within the genre, the utopian feminist can never truly escape the constraints of patriarchal scholarship, she can only strive to criticise and pervert the ideas of her foremothers.

Coming Home: Four Feminist Utopias and Patriarchal Experience, written by Carol Pearson in 1981, was the first attempt at a definition. “Feminist utopian fiction implicitly or explicitly criticises the patriarchy while it emphasises society’s habit of restricting and alienating women” (63). The four works she discusses are all from the United States. Mizura: *A World of Women* (1890), Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland* (1915), Dorothy Btyant’s *The King of Ata are Waiting for You* (1971), and Mary Staton’s *From the Legend of Biel* are among the works by Mary Bradley Lanes, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Mary Staton (1975). She finds common themes in all four works, such as patriarchy being seen as unnatural and harmful to both women and men’s potential, and a

sexually equitable society providing opportunities for both men and women sense of “coming home to a nurturing, liberating environment” (63).

Pearson also identifies major concerns in feminist utopias such as low status and pay for women’s work, feminist ‘nature’ ideologies, issues of violence, the division between public and private, reclamation of the self, toleration, and the elimination of hierarchies. These issues clearly represent the 1960s women’s liberation movement’s concerns. Pearson also notes the widespread use of the earth mother goddess symbol, which she interprets as embodying “the philosophical vision underlying a feminist utopia” (69). Joanna Russ’ piece *Recent Feminist Utopias*, which concentrated on eleven feminist utopian novels, including her own *The Female Man*, was also published in the same year. With the exception of Monique Wittig and her novel *Les Gubillieres*, ten of the eleven authors she considers are American. Russ acknowledges the slippery nature of the term ‘utopian’:

Although “utopia” may be a misnomer for some of these works many of which (like *Triton* or *The Dispossessed*) present not perfect societies but only ones better than our own, “feminist” is not. All these fictions present societies... that are conceived by the author as better in explicitly feminist terms and for explicitly feminist reasons. (134)

Russ sees these works as not just arising from but also being made possible by the modern feminist movement, and she sees a lot of common ground in the themes and topics explored. The communal, quasi-tribal aspect of the groups, which are concerned with ecological and peace and are typically classless, sexually permissive, generally lesbian, and emphasise female bonding and strength, are among the key themes observed.

The importance of physical freedom, peace, and connectedness to the natural world are all emphasised.

In dystopian or utopian studies, the term ‘feminist’ is commonly considered to refer to a critique of social systems or cultural trends that harm women. Feminism, on the other hand, has never been a unified movement and has evolved significantly since the first recognised critical encounters with the so-called woman problem. As a result, feminist dystopia is best explored as a noble point where dystopian science fiction, feminist theory, and especially feminist utopian writing collide. With texts like Christine de Pizan’s *The Book of the City of Ladies*, feminist speculation about a better world dates back to the earliest examples of utopian fiction. In the 1970s, feminist dystopia sprang from this tradition by incorporating crucial characteristics of literary dystopia, such as the focus on and extension of repressive structures in the present, as well as humorous critiques of these structures. However, because both classical utopia and dystopia have historically affirmed gender roles, the feminist dystopia also involves a critique of the genre.

Feminist dystopia sprung onto the scene in the 1970s, although it has roots in a number of interconnected literary, cultural, and critical traditions, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The modern dystopia arose in response to the social disasters of the twentieth century, such as economic downturn, genocide, nuclear war, and environmental collapse. The founding novels of this school, such as Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), have apparent origins in the feminist dystopia. While these novels chronicle the protagonists’ failure to overcome what makes their societies dystopian total social control

over individual action and thought, feminist dystopia takes this critique a step further by highlighting the ways in which contemporary societies restrict women freedom of expression. However, by focusing on female protagonists, the feminist dystopia not only modified the plot possibilities, but it also radically affected the general conventions. Despite the fact that the utopian tradition has always contained works that address gender injustice, the key texts that have defined the genre have generally maintained the gender system.

Feminist dystopianism gave feminist utopianism a self-reflexive edge by functioning as a critique of patriarchal social institutions and cultural patterns, as well as feminist utopian thinking itself. In order to challenge this gender-genre link, feminist literature in general, and feminist utopian or dystopian writing in particular, have purposefully violated genre boundaries and questioned the stability of genre conventions from the outset. Early feminist ideas and feminist realism studies of repressive processes in ordinary life, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story *The Yellow Wall Paper* (1892) or Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), were a second source for the feminist dystopianism that evolved in the 1970s. While these texts aren't entirely dystopian, they do look at the consequences of societal and cultural pressures and boundaries on people's daily lives in a culture where individual liberty is valued.

Feminist writers had previously addressed dystopian aspects of ordinary life from the perspective of women in realism literature before dystopia as a genre first bloomed in the early twentieth century. While feminist realist fiction provided narrative patterns and tropes for women to engage with dystopia, feminist social and political theory provided the source for key themes in feminist dystopian writing, such as sexuality, reproduction,

economic and social inequality, and the human relationship with the nonhuman environment. The significance of these ideas has evolved throughout time as feminist thinking has progressed. Reproduction, sexual violence against women, and women's agency were central to the feminist dystopia in the 1970s. The threat of patriarchal totalitarianism was added to these concerns in the 1980s, as in Margaret Atwood's classic novel *The Handmaid's Tale*; and since the 1990s, there has been an increasing concern with ecological disaster, particularly climate change. As a result, the feminist dystopia has become one of the most potent literary manifestations of important themes in second and third wave feminism.

The focus of this chapter discussion on feminist dystopia is on its inception in the 1970s. As Angelika Bammer argues in *Partial Visions*, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* is often taken as an example of feminist utopian writing, despite the fact that, like other feminist utopian writing in the 1970s, it is utopian only in part. In the 1970s, the novel might be considered as an archetypal feminist dystopian literature, representing the beginnings of feminist dystopianism during the utopian renaissance. As a result, the novel has a lot in common. It presents the main narrative universe as a dystopia for women; it includes a partial utopia and its dystopian nemesis; and it includes a partial utopia and its dystopian nemesis. This utopia is just one of many conceivable futures that are dependent on current individual and community behavior; and finally, founded in a tremendous feeling of utopian hope while simultaneously expressing severe pessimism. Following the novel's complex critique, a slew of feminist dystopias emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, responding to cultural shifts by emphasising the dystopian element.

Marge Piercy's work in future feminist fiction has remained prolific. This thought was vital for the topic at hand, particularly the female voice in feminist critical dystopian fiction. Because male authors have dominated the dystopian genre for the past century, women writers who aspire to produce works in the genre are not in a particularly advantageous position to begin with. As a result, female dystopian authors are concerned not only with criticising more general issues of their time, such as the increasing importance of technology and the strain of civilisation on individual liberty, but also with confronting the problematic position of women in a patriarchal society on both a literary and societal level. They are forced to express themselves in the mainstream language in order to operate in a culture and genre characterised by masculine prejudice, while yet attempting to convey their personal, often subversive point of view. Much has been written on the challenges faced by female writers, and some feminist literary critics and philosophers have offered some insightful insights on the matter.

Elaine Showalter claims that women writers have been in a period of self-discovery and search for a proper identity since the 1920s, and Gilbert and Gubar consider how female authors are supposed to achieve a genuine female literary identity in a patriarchal society where language is primarily male oriented. Despite the similarities of the issues that all female authors face, Helene Cixous asserts that there is no single definition for 'feminine writing.' Luce Irigaray, too, is unable to give a precise definition of her concept of 'womanspeak,' although she does assert that women's style is virtually always defined by fluidity and a sense of touch. According to Kristeva, these parts, which share a lot of similarities with poetic language components, operate as part of a linguistic

revolution which “the ‘rational’, apparently natural social codes that govern our everyday speech” are challenged (289).

The oppressed sex is represented by the female protagonists in Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*. In fact, it appears that none of the women's images in the story are empowering in any sense. Connie and Offered are oppressed and controlled in a situation from which they desperately want to flee. The only good portrayal of a woman in the book is Luciente, the time traveller in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, but I don't want to include her because she is technically part of a utopian rather than a dystopian story. Although it is easy to argue that the female characters in these novels are still worse off than the male characters since dystopias are often dreary and gloomy, it is difficult to overlook that the female characters in these novels are still worse off than the male ones.

Supporters of patriarchal power structures appear to exploit language in the novel to preserve women in their inferior position. The only language that the oppressed are allowed to speak, as in Zamyatin's *We* and Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, is one that has been fashioned by the oppressors. Piercy transports Connie to a future in which language is used to demonstrate that full gender equality has been attained and will continue to be reached. These examples, in my opinion, reaffirm the idea that language may be used as a tool of oppression as well as freedom. The author of the novel appears to have confronted Connie by giving these characters a voice. When confronted with the same issues of female literary authority that Gilbert and Gubar discussed in their discussion of nineteenth-century literature, namely the assertion of creativity as a male quality and the confrontation with a fundamentally male-oriented language.

Piercy chose a Chicana lady who experiences the consequences of all class, gender, and race in order to show and critique principles of American twentieth-century society. Makinen says, “Connie’s discrimination takes place on three levels: that of gender, class and race, all of which constitute the grounds for her social oppression” (17) and Bammer states readers should not forget “the determinants of power” in a patriarchal society (96). Additionally, Frances Bartkowski points out, “Piercy chose Connie to narrate her own story because her life is one in which many of the social practices criticized by contemporary feminism are brought to light” (53).

Connie tries to explain her position to social workers and doctors on several occasions, but her story is reduced to a collection of medical records that define her as “a socially disorganized individual” (377) by the end of the novel. The question is whether the lack of power that Piercy eventually identified the figure with in her visions of the future is an indicator that women writers still battle for survival in a male-dominated literary milieu today. I’d want to wrap up this dissertation with a look at how women have dealt with feelings of inferiority for over two centuries, as formulated by Gilbert and Gubar in their book *Infection in the Sentence*:

The masculine authority with which they (women writers) construct their literary personae, as well as the fierce power struggles in which they engage in their efforts of self creation, seem to the woman writer directly to contradict the terms of her own gender definition. Thus the ‘anxiety of influence’ that a male poet experiences is felt by a female poet as an even more primary ‘anxiety of authorship’ – a radical fear that she cannot

create, that because she can never become a 'precursor' the act of writing will isolate or destroy her. (49)

Consuelo (Connie) Ramos is an impoverished Mexican American woman who lives in New York. More than that, Piercy drives her heroine insane in order to show how the issues at hand, such as class, gender, and race, affect and even dictate treatment. Ultimately, the author manages "to embody the intersections of gender, class, race, and mental illness" (110). Wetzel says that Connie's masculine society commits her "to a mental institution which is depicted as both a dystopia and microcosm of the broader society" (54). One would hope that such a facility would assist this unfortunate woman rather than becoming a tool in the hands of those who have the power to limit her abilities and choices in life. Actually, Sumbul says "the very beginning of the novel reveals that the present society is one of unquestionable masculine order in which women are deprived of any feelings and rights" (176). Her daughter was stolen from her, her lover was murdered, and she was placed on welfare. She is already inferior due to her ethnicity, gender, and social class, thus utilising further power and violence against her is unnecessary. Yet, in order to keep her under control and apply its ideological convictions about women's status in general and brown people in particular, her society insists on additional violence.

A patriarchal society, on the other hand, categorises women based on their sexual relationships with males. In such a social system, a woman's status is more similar to that of her husband than to that of other women, including patriarchy among brown people. Connie suffers because she is a woman; her husband, Eddie, hits her and eventually abandons her without a job or money, despite the fact that she is still his wife and bears

his surname Ramos, according to state documents. He fixes so because she does not have “the money to divorce him for her desertion” (113).

In the same vein, Connie’s niece, Dolly, prefers Geraldo over everyone else, including her aunt and her pregnant child, in that patriarchal system. From the very beginning, the reader knows that Dolly’s father “washes his hands of” her. Thus, she finds no way but that “he (Geraldo) is my man” (24). Her societal responsibilities are to do whatever her partner wants her to do, even if that means lying. Through her dependency on a guy, she becomes passive and contributes to the current authoritarian system’s strengthening. Dolly simply confirms her husband’s accusation that Connie assaulted him and her. As a result, Dolly participates in the patriarchal society and accepts her fate.

Dolly is initially portrayed as a symbol of repressed female sex since she arrives at her aunt’s house bleeding and wailing after her husband, pimp Geraldo, had beaten her up. She is frequently urged by Connie to leave him, but she lacks the confidence to do so. In the end, she betrays her aunt by allowing her father to confine Connie in a mental facility. Dolly afterwards appears to have found a new pimp who treats her a little better, but she is now hopelessly hooked to speed. So far, the ladies in this novel’s fates have been fairly depressing: one is forbidden to leave a psychiatric facility because her brother believes she is insane, and the other is a prostitute and addicted to hard drugs. One would believe that some of Connie and Dolly’s issues stem from their status as members of society’s lower classes.

Connie time-travels by mistake to a dystopian universe that is an extension of Connie’s existing culture after having the dialytrode implanted in her brain. This is the

outcome of the type of experiment in which Connie is participating. When she meets Gildina, whose body she can see, she transfers a horrifying image of that future. “seemed a cartoon of femininity, with a tiny waist, enormous sharp breasts that stuck out... Her stomach was flat but her hips and buttocks were oversized and audaciously curved. She looked as if she could hardly walk for the extravagance of her breasts and buttocks, her thighs that collided as she shuffled a few steps.” (288)

Gildina as a future woman is no more than a product that is kept as long as it is valuable for its operator. Gildina points out that “you can’t get out of a contract unless you’re bought out” (290). Women similar Gildina are “monitored like everybody else” in that dystopian future, and “from the electrical impulses” in their brains, they “can’t lie” (298). In detail, Minico says “in Connie’s reality and in Gildina’s future, the female identity is shaped (and sometimes condemned) by sexuality, motherhood, economic condition and race” (10). Nowadays, forty years after the publication of this masterpiece, programmes and/or advertisements are replete with such “cartoons of femininity” with “enormous breasts” and “oversized hips and buttocks?” (288)

Gildina is a more mature version of Dolly who accepts and participates in the patriarchal system's continuance. If Connie is left alone, she may accept her fate. But she goes through a lot: they kidnap her daughter, murder her partner, and finally deny her the right to create a modest family with her niece and children. Ultimately Bakay says, “Connie has never had the chance to live the life she wanted to live” (332). Dolly is her confidence to make a family because she cannot become pregnant any longer after becoming “no long a woman. An empty shell” (45). Later an abortion, “unnecessarily

they (doctors) had done a complete hysterectomy because the residents wanted practice ... and (she would) never again hope for a child” (45).

Piercy goes even further in the future civilization, divorcing sexuality from production. This principle is emphasised by the usage of technology. Brooding machines are used to raise babies until they are ready to be born. As a result, Piercy deprives future society's ladies of the ability to bear children. When it comes to breastfeeding, each child has three mothers, with at least two of them agreeing to do so. Changes marking the end of gender roles are reflected in the male mothers. As Luciente points out, women and men are equal in every way education, work, sexual expression, and even motherhood.

It was part of the long women's revolt. We were dismantling all of the traditional hierarchies at the time. Finally, there was the one thing we had to relinquish, our sole power, in exchange for no more power for anyone. The original production “the power to give birth. Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males never would be humanized to be loving and tender. So, we all become mothers” (105).

Males have breasts and become moms for children, which Connie finds unusual. In Connie's modern society, mothers are expected to give birth and breastfeed their children. Minico's existence is due to the fact says “in Connie's United States, women, especially poor and marginalized ones, are chained to stereotypes of motherhood and inferiority” (8), Kendal says Connie “comes to realize that sacrificing biological gestation (is) indeed necessary to achieve the gender equality” (68).

As long as men and women's are treated equally in the future community, especially in what is thought to be women responsibilities in the present, the entire future

society, including women, will prosper, discovers that “Our dignity comes from work. Everyone raises the kids, haven’t you noticed? Romance, sex, birth, children—that’s what you fasten on. Yet that isn’t women’s business anymore. It’s everybody’s” (251).

Even traditional parental power has been done absent with, and the experience of motherhood is shared among women and men, as “technology has been developed to gestate babies in a mechanical brooder and men have been enabled to breast-feed” (9). Motherhood is seen as a duty to be shared equally by each parent, regardless of gender. “In addition, critics have treated the novel as an allegory for the conflict in academia between dogmatic feminism and the commitment to motherhood” (5). “The deconstruction of power structures is continued on a linguistic level, where Piercy deletes the dimorphism of the objective and possessive pronouns ‘his’ and ‘her,’ which have been replaced with the unisex ‘per’ referencing the single personal pronoun ‘person’”(10). Feminist futurists say that Piercy’s novel’s nonlinear and complicated structure leads to a more comprehensive feminist argument. This concept argues that, in order to deal with future feminist solutions, there are issues from the past that must be addressed.

Piercy’s opinions are essentially those of the feminist movement. In Connie’s present reality, each character in Mattapoisett has a counterpart, juxtaposing inequalities in personal power and thus potential for self-actualization. Connie’s buddy Skip, for example, who was committed to a mental institution by his father because he is gay, reminds her of Jackrabbit, a bisexual person who is not only accepted but also immensely popular in Mattapoisett. Unlike the mental hospital, where all of the doctors are men, in

Mattapoisett, “women have a special tradition and role in healing”, (80) and positions of power rotate among men and women alike.

Examine the numerous ways in which women are represented in this work and decide whether they are empowering or oppressive. One of the most essential female characters, aside from Connie Ramos herself, is her niece, However, one of the novel’s wealthier ladies, Luis’s wife Adele, does not appear to live a happy existence. She embodies the caricature of the bored, pampered society wife who considers everyone as second-class citizens. Connie is Adele’s maid, not a family member, and as a result, she comes across as extremely superficial to the reader:

Adele blinked from her serene, faintly smiling cocoon. Connie watched her sideways, sure she was on something. (...) She could not help speculating what Adele was on. Adele might just be incredibly stoned, but Connie didn’t think so: she was too far off. Downers, most likely. (357)

Furthermore, she is Luis’s third wife, and it appears that even Connie regards her as disposable, someone that may be replaced by ‘more of the same’. Shirley, Luis’s second and Italian wife, blended into Adele, who was responsible for luring him into her family’s nursery company. Shirley was a brunette with dark brown hair, a large pouting mouth, and a raging temper. Because of the business, she had lasted as long as she had. Yet she had sat there many years saying “um hum, oh dear, uh huh, mmm. And Carmel before her. All Luis’s wives came to sound the same, nodding at him, but each one was fancier and had a higher polish” (353).

The image depicted here is of a malleable and manufactured femininity, which bears many resemblances to a stereotype that women are still required to live up to today.

In contrast to this futuristic New York, women in Mattapoisett are treated equally to males. It's a very upbeat image of womanhood, yet it appears that in Mattapoisett, femininity and masculinity have melded into something androgynous rather than maintaining their own identities. This explains why when Connie first encountered Luciente, she mistook her for a guy:

‘You’re a woman! No, one of those sex change operations.’ She stared at Luciente. Now she could begin to see him/her as a woman. Smooth hairless cheeks, shoulder length thick black hair, and the same gentle Indian face. With a touch of sarcasm she said, ‘You’re well muscled for a woman.’ (...) A dyke, of course. (...) ‘I’m not unusually strong.’ Luciente’s face was screwed up with confusion. (...) ‘About middling. We do more physical work than most people did in your time, I believe. It’s healthier, and of course your lugs (sic) were burning up all those fossil fuels. ... You seem surprised that I am female?’ Feeling like a fool, Connie did not choose to reply. (67)

As we can see from this excerpt, men and women in Mattapoisett are thought to be capable of undertaking the same jobs. The fact that the female sex no longer has the luxury of bearing children adds to this sense of equality. Children are conceived in brooders, and men can ‘mother’ them in the same way as women do, including breast-feeding. All of this appears to Connie to be incredibly unnatural, because she believes that the one thing that made women unique in the world was the ability to have children has been taken away from them. The women of Mattapoisett, on the other hand, believe they have gotten a lot in return for their sacrifice:

It was part of women's long revolution. When we were breaking all the old hierarchies. . . . Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we'd never be equal. And males never would be humanized to be loving and tender. So we all became mothers. Every child has three. To break the nuclear bonding. (105)

By presenting time travel as a politically mobilising and agency-creating device, Piercy's feminist classic changes the polarity of those conversations. Time travel frequently reveals the bleak determinism of the future and reinforces oppressive mechanisms symbolised by modern civilization. Instead, Piercy's novel depicts a scenario in which time travel is beneficial, helpful, and motivating because minoritized, disadvantaged people are given the ability to alter the future.

With Skip, Jackrabbit, and Luciente, the novel explores the idea of queer characters. Piercy depicts Skip being committed to a mental institution for being gay, demonstrating her continued struggle with other people. Luciente also has a queer relationship with Diana, a friend. Through the hardships of LGBT characters, Piercy demonstrates that there is still progress to be achieved for those who are queer. In Mattiposett, Connie goes on a trip with the LGBT characters, as she links gendered roles with the children's parents. Luciente disproves this by demonstrating both masculine and feminine characteristics while in a queer relationship. Connie quickly adapts to this concept and comes to accept homosexuality, putting her patriarchal ideas of the past aside. Piercy's portrayal of Connie's adaption to Mattiposett's homosexual relationships furthers the novel's thesis of queer progress. The fourth chapter "Narrative Technique" brings out the style and art of narration in the novel.

CHAPTER FOUR

ART OF NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

All stories have a curious and even dangerous power. They are manifestations of truth yours and mine. And truth is all at once the most wonderful yet terrifying thing in the world, which makes it nearly impossible to handle. It is such a great responsibility that it's best not to tell a story at all unless you know you can do it right. You must be very careful, or without knowing it you can change the world. (174)

- Vera Nazarian

As a literary technique, a narrative approach known for literary fictional narratives. A literary device, also known as a fictional device, is one of several specific methods used by a story's creator to convey what they want to the audience. It is a strategy used in the creation of a story to relay information to the audience and, more specifically, to develop the story, usually to make it more complete, complex, or interesting. Literary strategies are distinct from literary components, which are found in all works of literature.

The steps involved in telling a tale the techniques followed by a story or account writer. Narrative method is a broad phrase that includes terms like “devices” and “linguistic resources” and asks you to discuss the techniques utilised in telling a story. Point of view, narrative structure, temporal manipulation, dialogue, and interior monologue are examples of approaches you could utilise.

This difference is central to Piercy's approach throughout the novel the author presents with an obviously imperfect present, with constraints that harm the persons that

is encountered. People are shown to be trapped in unpleasant lives, whether within or outside of institutions. In times of stress, Connie, Dolly, and Luis third wife Adele turn to drugs. Many of the males in the present, including Connie's father and her husband Eddie, are physically violent or verbally harsh. The characters appear to be social misfits within the mental hospital, but the problem is the rigid categories into which people are supposed to fit, not the patients resistance or inability to comply. As Luciente says to Connie, "in truth you don't seem mad to me" (65). Rebellious Alice, self-described witch Sybil, and homosexual Skip are considered as monsters, but they appear rather sane in comparison to the medical staff.

Shifts in time are also used by authors as a narrative tool in books. When the storyline travels backward to depict something that happened before the novel's main events and is relevant to the current story, it is called a flashback. When the narrator foreshadows events that have yet to occur, it is known as foreshadowing. A framing narrative, which is a secondary story that is not the main story of the novel but tells the main story, is also used by authors. A frame tale could be a character in the future remembering what happened in the past, as in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. A frame tale can also be a character learning of the truth main story as the reader does in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. Piercy makes it obvious that the novel's real-time present is the same as her time of writing. This 1970s society, which punishes people for following their natural impulses, is contrasted with a future in which some of today's issues have been resolved. Many of the remedies need a shift in mindset. For example, the stigma associated with mental illness is no longer present in Mattapoisett, Luciente adds, the terms "sick" and "crazy" are not interchangeable.

Piercy does not claim that crazy can be erased from human experience, and one hears of instances in which people retreat to heal themselves or be healed, but there is a creative side to breakdown. Luciente believes herself to be too flatfooted and earthen to go insane, although healer Diana and artist Jackrabbit periodically 'sink down' into themselves and resurface with rejuvenated energies. "The mental hospital had always seemed like a bad joke; nothing got healed in here" (194). Skip's parents, unable to accept his homosexuality, send him to treatment at the age of thirteen in order for him to "be fixed." He goes through different programmes, including shock therapy, which causes him to try suicide repeatedly until he succeeds. The reader encounter Skip's futuristic doppelganger, Jackrabbit, in the future, who has sexual freedom and is adored and loved rather than shunned. In the same way, Sybil the witch has a 2137 counterpart in Diana the healer, who has a large following. Piercy seeks to depict what a society may look like if people's unique qualities and abilities were valued rather than scorned or neglected. Luciente tributes Connie on her telepathic abilities "You're an extraordinary top catcher. In our culture you would be much admired, which I take it isn't true in this one?" (42). Luciente serves as the 'sender' to Connie's 'catcher,' and their telepathic powers complement each other.

When a place, house, scenery, time, or atmosphere is treated almost as an additional character in the story, it is called technique. The location is frequently created to mirror a character or people associated with it. Connie first considers Mattapoisett culture as being stuck in the "dark ages," as the village reminds her of her peasant uncle to Manuel's, complete with vegetable plots and goats. In this way, Piercy's novel is an early example of ecofeminism, as the abuse of the planet is paralleled by the exploitation

of women, as in Dolly's prostitution. In its promotion of sustainable farming, composting, natural fertiliser, and recycling, the book appears to be ahead of its time. Teenagers, for example, go through an initiation ritual, spending a week alone in the forest as a passage into maturity, and Piercy has drew on many so-called primitive communities in her depiction of the future. She also depends on key twentieth-century theories. Luciente is shocked at the idea of living 'piled together' and explains that "you have space of your own. How could one live otherwise? How meditate, think, compose songs, sleep, study?" (72). This is unmistakably a writer's opinion. The striking parallels between Mattapoissett's objectives and those of the early kibbutzim, which strove for collective, collaborative society with sexual equality, community child-rearing, and socialist values, reveal Piercy's Jewish heritage. Kibbutzim were originally agrarian settlements that were intentionally kept small, mirroring Luciente's vow "we don't have big cities – they didn't work" (68).

A blackstory is a segment of a story that focuses on events that occurred before the main plot is revealed. In other words, blackstory is a literary approach that allows readers to connect with current events. This technique is aided by many prologues. Character reflections, on the other hand, are frequently used to share glimpses of the blackstory over a long period of time. However, technology plays a significant role in Piercy's imagined future. Jobs that are repetitive are automated, and Luciente focuses on plant genetic manipulation. Solar panels are installed on homes, and transportation is provided by 'floaters,' a form of hovercraft. Piercy has also researched on the possibility for sexism in language and family systems, which were important issues of the 1970s women's movement. The omission of gendered pronouns, which are replaced by the

androgynous ‘per,’ exacerbates Connie’s difficulties in determining some people’s gender. Whether one is drawn to one’s own sex or another, sexual couplings are devoid of prejudice, legal or religious constraints. Each child is co-mothered by three parents of either gender.

As Piercy points out, having three parents allows for eight hour shifts, giving everyone a reasonable chance to sleep. The future conception of birth is the most radical of all. The reproductive system has been relocated from the body to the brooder, a place that resembled a large aquarium rather than a laboratory where embryos develop into newborns. This ‘baby factory’ disgusts Connie, but Luciente explains that “It was part of women’s long revolution. . . Finally there was one thing which we had to give up too. . . the power to give birth. Cause as long as we were biologically enchained, we’d never be equal” (105).

This reasoning is comparable to Shulamith Firestone’s argument in *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970), in which she claims that biological determinism is caused by women’s childbearing ability. Connie is first opposed to what she sees as “manufactured” infants, but she eventually realises that her daughter would have grown up far better, stronger, and brighter in a society like Mattapoisett. Piercy’s world now appears to be more attainable in 2012.

According to Aarathi Prasad’s book, *A Virgin How Science is Redesigning the Rules of Sex*, artificial wombs will be available in forty years if regulatory and ethical constraints are overcome. The first test-tube baby was born in 1978, two years after the publication of *Woman on the Edge of Time*. Piercy herself does not see her shaped future as Utopian. In a 1977 interview, she says:

Time-travel works in both directions in this book, as Piercy uses her imaginary future society to interrogate the present and the past. In flashbacks throughout the novel, we learn more about Connie, a second-generation Mexican who's determined to escape the fate of her mother. Aged fifteen, she declares: 'I won't grow up like you Mama! To suffer and serve. Never to live my own life! I won't! Mariana's response, 'You'll do what women do. (46)

Piercy implies that her gendered fate is predetermined. However, the novel demonstrates that Connie's incapacity to lift herself out of poverty is not solely attributable to her gender. Luis is affluent, but he has earned it by sacrificing wives and humanity, transforming from Connie's adored sibling into a thug she barely recognises. Connie's gender is only one element in her failure to attain her goals, as she becomes pregnant while in college and has to drop out. There are other concerns of class and race to consider. Connie slips into a cloud of alcoholic despair when her beloved lover Claud dies in prison after volunteering for a drugs experiment, and she loses her anger and beats her daughter Angelina, who is taken into care and later adopted. Connie's rage is fueled by both poverty and sadness, as Piercy explains

Angelina had damaged her only pair of shoes, which her mother couldn't afford to replace. Her temper against her daughter is also shown to be a product of self-loathing "to love you. . . especially to love a daughter you see as yourself reborn', and Connie felt it was a crime to be born poor as it was a crime to be born brown (62).

The inference is that if Connie had been white and well-off, the authorities would not have been so quick to take her child from her, but she was powerless. “Most people hit kids. But if you were on welfare and on probation and the whole social-pigeonholing establishment had the right to trek regularly through your kitchen looking in the closets and under the bed, counting the bedbugs and your shoes, you had better not hit your kid once” (26).

After Claud’s death, Connie has an eight month mental collapse and agrees to the adoption without fully understanding what she is doing. When she attacks Geraldo, he and the authorities refer to Connie’s previous criminal record, which shows her history of child abuse and mental illness, and she is re-incarcerated.

The travel with Connie to Mattapoisett for lessons showcases what an other life could be like in between these flashbacks into her sad past and present. Each visit reveals something new she witnesses a death, studies how relationships operate, and enjoys a celebration. Connie becomes our mouthpiece, voicing questions and objections, while Luciente becomes Piercy’s avatar, showing us how society may run if were desired. In effect, Piercy’s work is her method of conveying a message to us, in the hopes that we, like Connie, will choose to be ‘catchers,’ understanding that we need to modify our behaviours in order to construct the society we want. To emphasise the idea, Connie finds herself in a bleak environment in Chapter Fifteen. Gildina, a silicone-enhanced ‘cartoon of femininity,’ lives in a windowless flat in a future New York, where impoverished people serve as ‘walking organ banks’ for the ‘richies’. She has a short-term sexual contract with a man named Cash, which is similar to Dolly’s relationship with a series of pimps. She eats processed foods, uses medications, and relies on technology for

entertainment, a life she portrays as luxurious in comparison to others, but one that parallels many of the circumstances of life in Rockover, the mental institution.

Connie believes this could not exist at the same time as Mattapoisett couldn't do it. It is simply one possible future, Luciente tries to explain there are alternate universes. Chances collide, and opportunities fade away forever. The novel's fundamental moral is that must actively make positive choices. Connie's new acquaintances push her to see her potential for resistance, and Piercy, a long-time activist, tries to politicise her readers: "There's always something you can deny your oppressor, if only your allegiance. Your belief. Your co-oping" (328). Luciente refers to Connie's life in 1976 as "the Age of Greed and Waste" (55), and "fat, wasteful, thingfilled times" (69) contrasting it with their careful resource management in Mattapoisett, and heralding the current ecological discourse on conservation.

Other aspects of Piercy's Mattapoisett have become part of our everyday lives in the twenty first century. The 'kenner,' a computerized 'memory annex' Luciente wears on her wrist to contact people and access information, is similar to a smartphone. Luciente confesses that she feels "naked without my kenner. It's part of my body. I only take it off to couple or to sleep. . . . For some it's only convenience. For others part of their psyche" (327). This echoes the attitude of many of our peers with their iPhone. Piercy's insight in writing this book, which came out before we were reliant on mobile communication devices, is astounding. When Jackrabbit is discussing his intention to embark on active defence, a form of voluntary national service, the novel contains one humorous neologism. He tells Connie that he's going out of a sense of social obligation, but that "I

don't twitter to go" (268), implying that he's not particularly enthusiastic. A modern Jackrabbit would definitely communicate his reluctance with many characters on Twitter.

Piercy's assertion that her Mattapoissett is not a utopia because it is possible echoes Margaret Atwood's claims that her novels *A Handmaid's Tale* (1986) and *Oryx and Crake* (2003) are not science fiction but rather speculative fiction because they depict events that have occurred or could occur. Atwood and Piercy have consistently written insightful reviews of each other's work. In *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Atwood wrote on the Mattapoissett sequences some reviewers treated this part of the book as a regrettable daydream or even a hallucination caused by Connie's madness. Such an interpretation undercuts the entire book. The uncompromising reality of the first chapter, in which Dolly discovers that the chair Luciente has vacated is still warm, undercuts this reading. Connie finds traces of Luciente's distinctive smell, which derives from the chemical she works with, on her own arm shortly after their first meeting. Piercy portrays a constant and accessible consciousness in Connie, whose point of view shared throughout the book. Connie is frequently told that she is not hallucinating by Luciente, a character who is as reliable.

The future Connie imagines when she learns that her niece is pregnant appears to be unrealistic in the story "Like figures of paper, like a manger scene of pasteboard figures, a fantasy . . . she and Dolly and Dolly's children would live together. She would have a family again, finally" (14). This book is Piercy's call to arms, a warning and a manifesto. Luciente tells Connie, "I can't interfere in the past . . . but I can give you advice" (223). She refers to Connie as "my rose," and because she lives in Spanish Harlem, it reminds me of the song:

There is a rose in Spanish Harlem. . .

It's growing in the street

right up through the concrete

But sweet and soft and dreamin.(4)

The story places on us, the readers, to help women like Connie grow up through the concrete, to consider a better way of life, a society with shorter work hours, the ability to choose to work on meaningful activities, and lifelong learning. It may have found utopian places in other genres of women's literature in a similar way. The literary analysis of the feminist utopian book *Woman on the Edge of Time* that to explore. Plotting strategic changes within the feminist utopian genre and connecting them in with major discourses of the modern moment bolstered the claim that utopianism can have political usefulness. It will feature unique general shifts, fresh themes, and alternative perspectives, and we will be confronted with a new altered state of utopia that is unusual and amazing beyond our imagination.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Science Fiction is an eclectic genre. It is described as strenuous to define but easy to recognize. It has a relationship with principles of science and fictional laws of science. The first example of science fiction stories can be found in Greek and Egyptian people who had already discovered in the field of science and technology. As far as literature is concerned ancient references are the *Odyssey* by Homer and some mythological legends. Science fiction texts also include a human element, explaining what effect new discoveries, happenings and scientific developments will have on humans in the future. Science fiction texts are often set in the future, in space, on a different world, or in a different universe or dimension.

The first chapter, “Introduction” discusses the history of science fiction. Biography of Piercy and an concise summary of the novel *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) assembles a time travel story with subjects of social justice, feminism, and the treatment of the mental illness. It is considered a classic of utopian “speculative” science fiction as well as a feminist classic. The novel merges feminist standards with Utopian visions of a future society based on principles of community and equality. Piercy imagined a post-apocalyptic world that established *Woman on the Edge of Time* as an early feminist innovation in the conventionally male genre of dystopian fiction. Depictions of sexuality and relations between the genders were recognized as useful elements in portraying the conflict between individual and societal demands.

The second chapter “Utopia Metamorphosis” describes utopia has long been associated with the concept or dream of a better society or a better way of life starting

with a thought that develops into an idea, utopia thus refers to the ability to imagine and contemplate alternate realities. Historically, utopia has been associated with the ‘ideal’ defined as something flawless that does not yet exist.

Woman on the Edge of Time depicts Mattapoissett as a little town with a population of a few hundred people, similar to any other city. Almost all energy is generated from natural resources, waste is recycled, and residents treat all living things with great regard. What is more surprising is that Mattapoissett locals seem to have a natural appreciation for nature. The town of Mattapoissett was founded on the principles of community and equality. People collaborate to meet everyone's fundamental requirements, but they lack funds and have no concept of ownership. They have private spaces, but they share the majority of their activities. Their government is very decentralised, with decisions made by consensus by local and regional councils. Their education consists of both study and work, as well as a mentorship programme that makes learning more personal.

Gender can be addressed on both a biological and societal level in science fiction and technology speculation. *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy depicts gender equality as well as complete sexual equality regardless of the gender of the lovers. Giving birth has been pushed intricate biological machinery that functions to provide a richer embryonic experience, which is often perceived as the separator that cannot be avoided in discussions of women's rights and roles. When a child is born, it spends the majority of its time with peers in the children's ward. Three “mothers” per child are the standard, and they are chosen on the basis of their experience and aptitude in a gender-neutral manner men and women can both become “mothers”. Piercy's year 2137, once again, runs the risk of indulging in ideological sentimentality by actually embodying every

counterculture ideal ecological wisdom, community, androgyny, ritual, respect for crazy, propertylessness, and so on. She takes a chance and succeeds.

Piercy has written with such fervour, eloquence, and vigour about this ideal society that the reader not only believes in it, but also feels a kind of inverted craving for it. The analogies between characters in the story show that paradise is ultimately about realising personal potentials that are repressed and stifled in today's society. Several pairs or groups of characters represent utopian and dystopian versions of the same person. Connie's confidence to act comes from the future world. Her culture has destroyed her; there is nothing left for her to sacrifice because her niece is her last chance to "live together" and create a positive image. Such an ideal community, built on equality, fairness, and communal respect among all members, exceeds expectations and becomes a paradise for Connie and her generation.

The third chapter "Female Utopianism" deals with feminism and motherhood. The term 'feminist' is commonly considered to refer to a critique of social systems or cultural trends that harm women. Feminism, on the other hand, has never been a unified movement and has evolved significantly since the first recognised critical encounters with the so-called woman problem. As a result, feminist dystopia is best explored as a noble point where dystopian science fiction, feminist theory, and especially feminist utopian writing collide

Marge Piercy's work in future feminist fiction has remained prolific. This thought was vital for the topic at hand, particularly the female voice in feminist critical dystopian fiction. They are forced to express themselves in the mainstream language in order to operate in a culture and genre characterised by masculine prejudice, while yet attempting

to convey their personal, often subversive point of view. Much has been written on the challenges faced by female writers, and some feminist literary critics and philosophers have offered some insightful insights on the matter. Piercy chose a Chicana lady who experiences the consequences of all class, gender, and race in order to show and critique principles of American twentieth-century.

Connie is a poor Mexican American woman living in New York City. Piercy also drives her heroine nuts in order to demonstrate how issues like class, gender, and colour influence and even dictate treatment. Her daughter was kidnapped, her partner was slain, and she ended up on welfare. Because she is already inferior owing to her race, gender, and socioeconomic class, it is unnecessary to use more force and violence against her. Her society, however, insists on more violence in order to keep her under control and apply its ideological ideas about women's place in general and brown people in particular.

Dolly is initially depicted as a symbol of suppressed female sex because she comes at her aunt's house bleeding and weeping after being beaten up by her husband, pimp Geraldo. Connie constantly encourages her to leave him, but she lacks the confidence to do so. Finally, she betrays her aunt by allowing her father to commit Connie to a mental institution. After having the dialytrode implanted in her brain, Connie time-travels to a dystopian universe that is an outgrowth of Connie's existing culture. This is the result of the experiment in which Connie is taking part. She transfers a terrifying image of that future to Gildina, whose body she can see.

Piercy goes even further in the future civilization, divorcing sexuality from production. This principle is emphasised by the usage of technology. Brooding machines are used to raise babies until they are ready to be born. As a result, Piercy deprives future

society's ladies of the ability to bear children. When it comes to breastfeeding, each child has three mothers, with at least two of them agreeing to do so. Changes marking the end of gender roles are reflected in the male mothers. As Luciente points out, women and men are equal in every way-education, work, sexual expression, and even motherhood.

Time travel frequently reveals the bleak determinism of the future and reinforces oppressive mechanisms symbolised by modern civilization. Instead, Piercy's novel depicts a scenario in which time travel is beneficial, helpful, and motivating because minoritized, disadvantaged people are given the ability to alter the future. Piercy demonstrates that there is still progress to be achieved for those who are queer. In *Mattiposett*, Connie goes on a trip with the LGBT characters, as she links gendered roles with the children's parents. Luciente disproves this by demonstrating both masculine and feminine characteristics while in a queer relationship. Connie quickly adapts to this concept and comes to accept homosexuality, putting her patriarchal ideas of the past aside. Piercy's portrayal of Connie's adaption to *Mattiposett*'s homosexual relationships furthers the novel's thesis of queer progress.

The fourth chapter "Narrative Technique" bring out the morality, ethical culture in the novel. As a literary technique, a narrative approach is known for literary fictional narratives. A literary device, also known as a fictional device, is one of several specific methods used by a story's creator to convey what they want to the audience. It is a strategy used in the creation of a story to relay information to the audience and, more specifically, to develop the story, usually to make it more complete, complex, or interesting. Literary strategies are distinct from literary components, which are found in all works of literature.

This difference is central to Piercy's approach throughout the novel the author presents with an obviously imperfect present, with constraints that harm the persons encountered. People are shown to be trapped in unpleasant lives, whether within or outside of institutions. In times of stress, Connie, Dolly, and Luis's third wife Adele turn to drugs. Many of the males in the present, including Connie's father and her husband Eddie, are physically violent or verbally harsh. It meet characters who appear to be social misfits within the mental hospital, but the problem is the rigid categories into which people are supposed to fit, not the patients resistance or inability to comply. Piercy does not claim that crazy can be erased from human experience, and it hear of instances in which people retreat to heal themselves or be healed, but there is a creative side to breakdown.

Piercy's novel is an early example of ecofeminism, as the abuse of the planet is paralleled by the exploitation of women, as in Dolly's prostitution. In its promotion of sustainable farming, composting, natural fertiliser, and recycling, the book appears to be ahead of its time. Teenagers, for example, go through an initiation ritual, spending a week alone in the forest as a passage into maturity, and Piercy has drew on many so-called primitive communities in her depiction of the future. She also depends on key twentieth-century theories.

Technology plays a significant role in Piercy's imagined future. Jobs that are repetitive are automated, and Luciente focuses on plant genetic manipulation. Solar panels are installed on homes, and transportation is provided by 'floaters,' a form of hovercraft. Piercy has also researched on the possibility for sexism in language and family systems, which were important issues of the 1970s women's movement. Piercy

implies that her gendered fate is predetermined. However, the novel demonstrates that Connie's incapacity to lift herself out of poverty is not solely attributable to her gender. Luis is affluent, but he has earned it by sacrificing wives and humanity, transforming from Connie's adored sibling into a thug she barely recognises. Connie's gender is only one element in her failure to attain her goals, as she becomes pregnant while in college and has to drop out. There are other concerns of class and race to consider.

The travel with Connie to Mattapoisett for lessons in what an other life could be like in between these flashbacks into her sad past and present. Each visit reveals something new she witnesses a death, studies how relationships operate, and enjoys a celebration. Connie becomes mouthpiece, voicing questions and objections, while Luciente becomes Piercy's avatar, showing how society may run if desired. Connie believes this could not exist at the same time as Mattapoisett. There are simply one possible future, Luciente tries to explain there are alternate universes. Chances collide, and opportunities fade away forever. The novel's fundamental moral is that must actively make positive choices. Connie's new acquaintances push her to see her potential for resistance, and Piercy, a long-time activist, tries to politicize.

Piercy's insight in writing this book, which came out before it were reliant on mobile communication devices, is astounding. When Jackrabbit is discussing his intention to embark on active defence, a form of voluntary national service, the novel contains one humorous neologism. He tells Connie that he's going out of a sense of social obligation, but that "I don't twitter to go" (268), implying that he's not particularly enthusiastic. A modern Jackrabbit would definitely communicate his reluctance with many characters on Twitter.

In *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Atwood wrote on the Mattapoissett sequences. Some reviewers treated this part of the book as a regrettable daydream or even a hallucination caused by Connie's madness. Such an interpretation undercuts the entire book. The uncompromising reality of the first chapter, in which Dolly discovers that the chair Luciente has vacated is still warm, undercuts this reading. Piercy portrays a constant and accessible consciousness in Connie, whose point of view share throughout the book. Connie is frequently told that she is not hallucinating by Luciente, a character who is as reliable.

The people of Massapoisset are openly sexually active. They fall in love, are jealous, are flawed, and can request to be co-mothers when three individuals decide to conceive a kid. Heterosexual civilizations can achieve Utopian civilization as long as women are permitted to flourish beyond their sexuo-economic confinement. As revealed in the two feminist utopian writings, the deconstruction of family does not exclude love. Simply imagining a metaphorical family being destroyed compresses patriarchal dominance.

According to deproduction, understanding familial and domestic violence as symptoms of greater systemic dominance becomes nearly impossible. The home is just like any other institution; it is not a private, healthy, relaxing space; it is where the most people suffer. It is a man-owned institution in which wife and children are enslaved. Domestic violence is rarely discussed in society, and it can range from verbal abuse to physical assault to rape and murder. It is still considered taboo and a personal matter. Domestic violence, on the other hand, is a reality for many women and children, where violence is used to display and employ patriarchal power.

The story places on the readers, to help woman like Connie grow up through the concrete, to consider a better way of life, a society with shorter work hours, the ability to choose to work on meaningful activities, and lifelong learning. Connie has had the opportunity to imagine a future free of patriarchy, androcentrism, and female oppression in the utopian world. Motherhood has unsurprisingly, been a major issue in feminist utopian works. As a result, it is an adequate medium for tracing the knowledge and difficulties of motherhood in a fictional non patriarchal culture.

WORKS CITED

- Bartkowski, Frances. *Feminist Utopias*. Lincoln U of Nebraska P, 1989, pp. 62 - 162.
- Bammer, A. *Partial Visions: Feminism and Utopianism in the 1970s*. New York: Routledge, 1991, pp. 96.
- Caoaldi, Nicholas, and Gordon Lloyd. *The Two Narratives of Political Economy*. “Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels *The Communist Manifesto*.” Scrivener Publishing LLC, 2007, pp. 407
- Clute, John, and Nicholls Peter. *Encyclopaedia of science fiction*. Orbit\Time Warner Book Group UK, 2007, pp. 64.
- Del Rey, Lester. *The World of Science Fiction, 1926–1976: the History of a Subculture*. Garland Pub, 1980, pp. 12.
- Fridan, Betty. *It Changed my Life: Writings on the Women’s Movement*. Harvard University Press, 1998, pp. 18.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: the Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*. London: Yale University Press Ltd, 1979, pp. 49.
- Goodwin, Barbara, and Keith Taylor. *The Politics of Utopia*. Bern. 2009, pp. 16.
- Holscher, Lucian. “Utopie”. *Utopian Studies*. 1996, pp. 37.
- Kendal, E. “Utopian Literature and Bioethics; Exploring Reproductive Difference and Gender Equality”. *Literature and Medicine*. 2018, pp. 68,
doi.org/10.1353/lm.2018.0002
- Kingsley, Amis. *New Maps of Hell* “A Survey of Science Fiction.” Harcourt, Brace, 1960, pp. 28

Kristeva, Julia. *The Ethics of Linguistics*. "Desire in Language: a Semiotic Approach to Literature". Oxford: Blackwell, 1980, pp.289.

Lefanu, Sarah. *Feminism and Science Fiction* Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988, pp. 53 - 61.

Nazarian, Vera. *Dreams of the Compass Rose*. Wildside Press, 2004, pp.174.

O'Byrne, D. M. *Marge Piercy's Non-Utopian Women on Edge of Time*. 2012, pp. 8.

Orwell, George. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Harcourt, 1949, pp.247.

Piercy Marge. *Woman on the Edge of Time*. Ballantine Books, New York, 1985.

Roemer, Kenneth. *Utopian Studies: A Fiction with Notes Appended*. Extrapolation, 1984, pp. 319-20.

Russ, Joanna. "When It Changed" in Patricia S. Warrick, Charles G. Waugh, Martin H. Greenberg *The Science Fiction Research Association Anthology*, Harper and Row, 1998, pp. 134.

Sargent, Lyman Tower. "Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction." Oxford UK: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 21.

Sargisson, Lucy. *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism*. Routledge, 1996, pp. 41.

Scholes, Robert, and Rabkin, Eric S. *A Brief Literary History of Science Fiction*, "Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision." London Oxford University Press, pp. 3.

Seyferth, Peter. *A Glimpse of Hope at the End of the Dystopian Century: The Utopian Dimension of Critical Dystopias*. ILCEA, 2018, pp. 3.
doi.org/10.4000/ilcea.4454

Stillman, Peter. "Nothing is, But What is Not: Utopias as Practical Political Philosophy." Goodwin, Barbara, ed. *The Philosophy of Utopia*.

London New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 9-10.

The Bible. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, Rev. 21: 1, 4, 1998.

The Bible. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, Isa. 65: 17, 1998.

Uhlenbroock, Wiebke. *The Depiction of Utopia and Dystopia in Modern Feminist*.

GRINVerlag, p.4,2007. [www.google.co.in/books/edition/The depiction of utopia and dystopia in/uvkhsAcfqbUC?hl=en&gbpv=0](http://www.google.co.in/books/edition/The+depiction+of+utopia+and+dystopia+in/uvkhsAcfqbUC?hl=en&gbpv=0)

Wilde, Oscar and Ian Small *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*. "Criticism:

Historical Criticism, Intentions, The Soul of Man." Vol. IV, OUP Oxford, 2007, pp. 247.

Wetzel, A. *Alienating punishment: Prisons in science fiction*. 2014, pp. 54.

<https://margepiercy.com/portfolio-items/about-marge/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_science_fiction

<https://literaryterms.net/science-fiction/>

<https://www.cegastacademy.com/2021/08/29/35-narrative-techniques-in-literature-with-examples/>

<http://4pl5.blogspot.com/2013/10/narrative-technique.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_narrative_techniques.html

https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/ray_bradbury.html

Insurrection Against Beauty Standards: A Study of Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies*

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

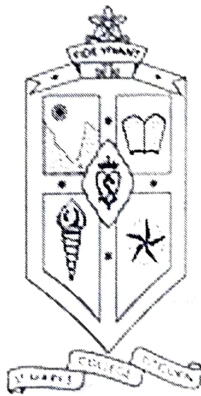
for the award of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

by

ANNIE SHERLIN MEL R.

(REG. NO. 20APEN03)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Concept of Ideal Beauty	13
Three	Conflict with the Government	26
Four	Technology and Modernisation	36
Five	Summation	45
	Works Cited	52

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled "**Insurrection Against Beauty Standards: A Study of Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies***" 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 is a work done by Annie Sherlin Mel R. during the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department of English
Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Guide

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

S. Vennila
27/05/2022
Examiner

Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.
Assistant Prof. of English
Sarah Tucker College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 627 007

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled "**Insurrection Against Beauty Standards: A Study of Scott Westerfeld's *Uglies***" 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.

Thoothukudi

May 2022

Annie Sherlin Mel R.

Annie Sherlin Mel R.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom, peace of mind and strength that he has bestowed upon me in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi, Head of the Department of English and my project guide for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project. I sincerely thank her for the support, encouragement and meticulous proof reading and contributing immensely towards the completion of this project. I also thank the other staff members of the Department of English for their moral encouragement towards the completion of my project.

I thank Dr. K. Vinitha, Librarian and the staff members for their extended help in the use of the library for reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided. My gratitude and appreciations are indebted to my family for their love, and financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

This project entitled “**Insurrection Against Beauty Standards: A Study of Scott Westerfeld’s *Uglies***” deals with the beauty standards present in Tally’s world and her fluctuation of thoughts about ideal beauty.

The first chapter ‘**Introduction**’ deals with Scott Westerfeld’s life, works, achievements, her contemporaries, techniques, critical views of the book and various genres of the book.

The second chapter ‘**Concept of Ideal Beauty**’ explains about the beauty standards, the consequences of the Pretty Operation undergone by the uglies and the emphasis of the oppression towards women by Naomi Wolf’s Beauty Myth Theory.

The third chapter ‘**Conflict with the Government**’ deals with Tally’s acts of rebellion against the government imposing beauty standards.

The fourth chapter ‘**Technology and Modernisation**’ deals with different technological advancements that are used in Tally’s society.

The fifth chapter ‘**Summation**’ sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the foregoing chapters and validates the study.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is a record of human experience. It is a term used to describe the written and sometimes spoken material, derived from the Latin word *literatura* meaning 'writing formed with letters'. Literature most commonly refers to the works of the creative imagination. It can also be classified according to historical periods, genres and political influences. It is regarded as the reflection of the society. It has a supreme value, and it plays a major role which leads to the further intellectual development of the world. It is seen as a language tool for the purpose of exploring human experiences in diverse situations. Hence, literature is a product of imagination, originality, thought, feeling, emotions and ideas.

American literature is a part of literature predominantly written or produced in English in the United States of America and its preceding colonies. It begins with the colonization of England in America. It was dominated by the influence of Puritanism. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Americans began to shape them into a new nation. On July 4, 1776, they declared their independence. This independence influenced in literature and everyone started to write about American ideas and Americanism. The origin of the American literature dates back to the early seventeenth century. The flowering of American literature occurred during the mid-nineteenth century. This was seen as the beginning of the great American literature. It flourished in the New England region. The American literature since 1950s varied both in structure and content.

American literature mirrors American culture, its history, and revolutionary concepts such as relationships with the church, the state, and supernatural elements that emerged in the country. The three characteristics of American literature include plot of decline, indifferent of nature and third person omniscient reaction to romanticism and surrealism. The major themes in American literature are the American dream, loss of innocence, coming of age, relationship with nature, relationship with science, relationship with society, alienation and isolation, survival of the fittest, rebellion and protest, disillusionment etc. Therefore, American literature was largely shaped by the history of the country, and revolutionary ideas emerged during civil and revolutionary wars.

Scott David Westerfeld is an American writer. He was born on May 5, 1963, in Dallas, Texas, United States of America. His parents were Lloyd Westerfeld and Pamela. His siblings were Wendy and Jackie. As a child, he moved to Connecticut for his father's job as a computer programmer. His father worked for Univac in its various forms, and the family lived in Houston for the Apollo missions, in California for Boeing and Connecticut for submarines etc. Westerfeld attended Arts Magnet High School in Dallas, Texas. He graduated from Vassar College with a degree in Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy in 1985. He began composing music as a teenager and still composes music for modern dance. In 2001, Westerfeld married the Australian author Justine Larbalestier. He now splits his time between Sydney, Australia and New York City.

Westerfeld is an American writer of science fiction and young adult fiction. He is best known as the author of the *Uglies* quartet, including the spin-off graphic novel series *Shay's Story* (2012). Westerfeld began his fiction-writing career with the

novel *Polymorph* (1997), which explores identity and sexual issues via a title character who is able to change gender and appearance. The plot was inspired by the author's move to New York City in the 1980s and his awe at the layers of diversity created through successive waves of immigration and the range in city residents' wealth, values, and cultures. Other novels of his include *Afterworlds* (2014) and for adults, *The Risen Empire* (2003) and *The Killing of Worlds* (2003), parts one and two of *Succession* series. He began his career writing novels for adults but switched to Young Adult literature with his *Midnighters* trilogy. He has written twenty-five novels: five for adults and twenty for young adults. His four young adult novels set in contemporary New York are *So Yesterday* (2004), *Peeps* (2005), *The Last Days* (2006) and *Afterworlds* (2014).

The Last Days is not a sequel to *Peeps*, and it follows a group of different characters in the same setting. *So Yesterday* is not related to these novels but is often grouped with them because it is also set in New York City. Westerfeld has also written the *Leviathan* series, an alternate history trilogy set in World War I consisting of *Leviathan* (2009), *Behemoth* (2010), and *Goliath* (2011), including its illustrated guide *The Manual of Aeronautics* (2012). In 2017, he produced a graphic novel with illustrations by Alex Puvilland titled *The Spill Zone* (2016). The graphic novel tells of a photographer who ventures back into her upstate New York hometown abandoned by a mysterious event to take pictures of the occurrences happening there.

Evolution's Darling (2000), which tells the story of an artificial intelligence that evolves into a sentient being through its relationship with a teenage girl, was praised by Trevor Dodge. Westerfeld reshapes his science-fiction for a younger readership in several trilogies, including *Midnighters* and *Uglies*. *Midnighters* takes

readers into a parallel world where hidden dangers lurk for a group of teens, while in the *Uglies*, he creates a near-future world where cosmetic surgery is a required process for everyone at the age of sixteen. Praising *Uglies*, the first novel in the trilogy, Westerfeld asks engaging questions about the meaning of beauty, individuality, and betrayal.

The Secret Hour (2004) is the first volume in the *Midnighters* trilogy. The novel focusses on fifteen-year-old Jessica Day, a new student at Oklahoma's Bixby High. While feeling predictably out of place in her new town and coping, as usual, with a bratty younger sister and flaky parents, Jessica begins to find other things strange. Jessica's story continues in *Touching Darkness* (2005) as the five teens learn that something in Bixby's distant past now threatens the community's present. In a break from science fiction, Westerfeld has also penned *So Yesterday* in which seventeen-year-old Hunter parlays his talent as a trend-spotter in his job for a high-profile clothing manufacturer.

Westerfeld claimed to have ghostwritten five Goosebumps books. Spending his early career as a composer whose musical compositions have been performed in dance productions both in the United States and in Europe, Scott Westerfeld moved into writing as a ghostwriter and creator of educational software programs for children. Now, as a fiction writer working primarily in the science-fiction genre, he pens novels and short stories for both adults and younger readers. An article about Gerald Jonas in *The New York Times* tells us that Westerfeld's work is characterized as "space opera," which is defined as "far-future narratives that encompass entire galaxies and move confidently among competing planets and cultures, both human and otherwise" (6).

Discussing Westerfeld's work within the context of the challenges inherent in writing science fiction, Jonas commented that "to master such material and still bring to life characters with recognizable emotions and aspirations is a challenge few writers care to take on. Westerfeld succeeds admirably" (7). The contemporary writers of Westerfeld are Suzanne Collins, Lois Lowry, Veronica Roth, John Green, James Dashner, Kate DiCamillo, Rick Riordan etc.

Westerfeld's greatest accomplishment is his three Powerpuff Girl choose-your-own-adventure books. He served as an occasional ghostwriter, and in his artsy days, he wrote music for artsy downtown New York dancers. Outside the writing world, he held multiple positions as a factory worker, substitute teacher, textbook editor, software designer and ghostwriter. Major themes in Westerfeld's works are the idea of free thinking and questioning authority.

In *Uglies* (2005), the protagonist Tally rebels against her society's rules first with harmless pranks and eventually by leaving the city altogether. She finds a group of runaway uglies who refuse to conform to social norms that includes undergoing cosmetic surgery. Similarly, *So Yesterday* examines popularity and why certain trends are considered 'cool'. Another common theme in Westerfeld's novels is the coming of age. Because Westerfeld writes primarily for young adult audiences, his protagonists are usually teenagers who find themselves over the course of the novel or series. Tally in *Uglies*, Cal in *Peeps* and Hunter in *So Yesterday* all struggle with finding where they belong until they come to terms with who they are.

Courage is another common theme in Westerfeld's work. His protagonists often face frightening or dangerous problems and have to rely on their own courage to overcome the problem. Often adults are not present during the crisis and the

protagonist is left to his or her own devices. For example, Cal in *Peeps* is trained by adults on how to track down vampires, but he goes alone to catch them and accomplishes the task completely on his own. Many Westerfeld's novels have been optioned for films. *So Yesterday* has been optioned to be made into a film by one of the producers of *Fahrenheit 9/11* and *Bowling for Columbine*. The *Uglies* series was optioned in 2006 by Twentieth Century Fox as a possible film series.

Uglies is a 2005 science fiction novel and the book is the first installment of the *Uglies* series which also include the books *Pretties* (2005), *Specials* (2006) and *Extras* (2007). In 2018, four new installments were announced, collectively titled the *Imposters* (2018) series. *Uglies* is told from the third-person-limited point of view, which allows readers to follow Tally while not being completely consumed by her rendition of the story. By keeping the point of view limited, characters are able to intimately connect with Tally's thoughts and emotions. This is useful to the young adult genre in particular because Tally is going through a unique, coming-of-age scenario which many teens can identify with. The story utilizes a diction that is easily accessible to young readers but is engaging enough for older readers as well. It is conversational and familiar, which makes it easier to figure out the meaning of words specific to the civilization that Westerfeld has created. Because Westerfeld's language is so accessible, it makes it easier for readers to discern the meaning of unfamiliar words.

In the dedication page for *Uglies*, Westerfeld says, "This novel was shaped by a series of e-mail exchanges between myself and Ted Chiang about his story *Liking What You See: A Documentary*." Westerfeld said that this short story is about a new technology that enables an individual to turn off their ability to see beauty so they can

focus on the deeper and more important parts of another individual. Westerfeld explained that his point in writing the book was not to make a big commentary on the issues with beauty, but to make people aware of the culture of retouching that is developing in the world and to be aware of our own ideas about beauty and our need to think for ourselves.

Uglies is an excellent example of a novel that falls into four different genres. They are science fiction, dystopian fiction, young adult fiction and coming-of-age novel. Science fiction is a genre of speculative fiction which deals with imaginative and futuristic concepts. It has been called the “literature of ideas” and it explores the potential consequences of scientific, social and technological innovations. Science fiction has become popular and influential over much of the world and is often said to inspire a “sense of wonder”. It can trace its roots back to ancient mythology and is related to fantasy, horror, and superhero fiction and contains many subgenres. Science fiction, often called “sci-fi,” is a genre of fiction literature whose content is imaginative but based in science. It relies heavily on scientific facts, theories, and principles as support for its settings, characters, themes, and plot-lines, which is what makes it different from fantasy.

Dystopian fiction is a genre of speculative fiction that explores social and political structures. It portrays a setting that completely disagrees with the author’s ethos. Dystopian fiction worlds tend to contain many of the same narrative features. Common elements of dystopian fiction include societies engaged in forever wars, and characterized by extreme social and economic class divides, mass poverty, environmental devastation, anarchy and loss of individuality. The purpose of

dystopian fiction is to serve as a warning about how things could go wrong if we do not change.

Young adult fiction, also referred as YA fiction, is a fiction written for readers from twelve to eighteen years of age. It was developed to soften the transition between children's novels and adult literature. To Loretta Gaffney,

supporters argue that YA literature has put away childish things, reaching maturity through its staying power within the publishing industry, its increasing critical respect and acclaim, and its active engagement with topics relevant and important to readers of all ages. (1)

Young adult novels focus on the coming-of-age experiences of teen protagonists. Dealing with teen issues such as conflicts with authority, as well as darker ideas like economic struggle and loss, the genre exploration of universal themes can teach both young and older readers valuable lessons about dealing with challenges and forming a strong self-concept.

Coming-of-age novel is about the protagonist's journey from being a child to being an adult. It is a journey that takes a young person from naïve to wise, idealist to realist and immature to mature. Coming-of-age novels are important because they explore experiences that many readers can relate to. They tend to emphasize dialogue or internal monologue over action. Personal growth and change is an important characteristic of this genre. The common themes of coming-of-age novels are losing one's childhood innocence and accepting that life is not always going to be perfect.

Uglies is set in a future post scarcity dystopian world in which everyone is considered an "ugly", but then turned "pretty" by extreme cosmetic surgery when

they reach the age of sixteen which makes them happy, carefree and gorgeous. It tells the story of a teenager named Tally Youngblood, a resident of Uglyville, is herself an “ugly” and is eagerly anticipating her birthday and the procedure that will transform her into a blissful and lovely “pretty”. Tally’s best friend Peris has already had the Pretty procedure and she sneaks into New Pretty Town to see him. This act nearly gets her captured, but in the turmoil, she meets a new best friend named Shay. Tally and Shay share the same birthday and are expected to undergo the operation at the same time. However, the night before procedures, Shay tells Tally that she plans to run away to an outside settlement called The Smoke, outside the reach of the governmental powers that control the uglies and the pretties. Shay disappears and is assumed to have gone to the Smoke.

Tally is forced into locating Shay and leading government agents to the rebel settlement. If she does not, she is told that she will never be given the procedure that will turn her into a pretty. Tally reluctantly becomes a spy and sets out to locate the Smoke and her absent friend. There, she begins to realize that maybe everything she's been told about uglies, pretties, and smokies isn't all true, and that the residents of the Smoke are rebelling for a very good reason. Her conscience keeps her from betraying the rebels, but her act of heroism leads her to consequences that will affect her forever. A budding romance between Tally and David, one of the smokie leaders, helps her see the moral difficulties with the Pretty procedure, and brings up questions about what the government surgeons do during the operations to keep the population under control.

The novel has received mostly positive reviews. In *The Baroque Body: A Social Commentary on the Role of Body Modification in Scott Westerfeld's Uglies*

Trilogy, Kristi N. Scott and M. Heather Dragoo praised the novel as having “creative slang, unique technical gadgets, and defining characteristics of personhood” (10). In *Uglies: young adult sf that perfectly captures adolescent anxiety*, Cory Doctorow complimented *Uglies* for its perfect parables of adolescent life, and stated that it is “fine science fiction for youth” (23). *Uglies* is praised for the convincing plot and is noted that it is highly readable. Delvin Grayson considered Tally’s character as a “passive protagonist” in *Publishers Weekly*. In *The United Kingdom Times*, Robin McKinley complained that “Tally herself is a bit too vague as a character” (3).

The novel *Uglies* sparked discussion over the use of plastic surgery to improve one's looks. Westerfeld said that he has received many letters from girls who have decided against having surgery since reading *Uglies*, while others, sparked by *Uglies*, have started to ponder the ethics of changing your body's appearance. Westerfeld has theorized that having extreme cosmetic surgery will be like buying a \$1,000 Gucci bag, an indication that you are a member of the privileged class. Critics have echoed their opinion. However, Westerfeld has also stated that he would not hesitate to use plastic surgery if he had a kid with port-wine stain. Other critics have stated that while altering one's appearance with plastic surgery can be ethically debatable, the benefits of it to people who have need for it are tremendous.

The issue of monitoring people is a prominent aspect in *Uglies*. The state has started to track teens through their cell phones and on occasion through dental implants. Westerfeld feels that this will result in a total loss of privacy. However, others feel that this technology is necessary to properly supervise people. Written for young adults, *Uglies* deals with themes of change, both emotional and physical. According to critics, *Uglies* contains themes of identity, particularly regarding

teenagers. Philip Gough explains that the government of Tally's city, which controls what happens within the operation, “removes responsibility for identity” (26) creating sameness and uniformity.

The novel *Uglies* shows the importance of teen's self-concept by placing heavy emphasis on the role of individualism. Because identity is formed by displacement and all citizens are carefully sheltered, there is no chance for them to branch out into independence. Gough noted that physical identity is determined by committees and due to the lack of choice, all markers of physical identity are destroyed by their government. Kristi N. Scott and M. Heather Dragoo noted that another recurring theme in the image-obsessed society, is beauty, and its recurring relationship with individuality. Gough agreed, commenting that “when everyone is equal, beauty loses its meaning” (26). Beauty went hand in hand with identity. *Uglies* were taught to think of their bodies and faces as temporary, something that would be replaced later with cosmetic surgery. A strong line is drawn to connect features with personality, and one critic stated that the characters develop “ugly” and “pretty” personalities with each stage of their operations.

Many critics identified the trend of a controlling government in the novel. Amanda Craig described about Tally's city in *The Times* as a “utopia resting on ruthless suppression of individual freedom” (7). People in the protagonist's world are programmed and designed by the Pretty committee, and identity is placed firmly in the hands of the state. Dragoo and Scott pointed out how segregated the city is, with Pretties, Uglies, Middlies, and Crumbles neatly divided into different sections. Many reviewers have commented on the way in which the city manipulates its inhabitants, including the supposedly rebellious uglies, who are nothing more than docile bodies.

The theme of humanity is found by various critics in *Uglies*. Phillip Gough noted that pretties and specials (those who worked for Special Circumstances) are “posthuman” because of their operations. Others, including Scott and Dragoo, argued against this, claiming that “the human body provides an artistic and political canvas for intentional manipulation,” (2) and that this physical transformation can be an “outlet for humanity” (2). The novel *Uglies* seems to take no definite stance on it, though clearer points are shown in *Pretties* and *Specials*, the following books in the trilogy. When asked about the idea of *Uglies*, Westerfeld said that the inspiration came from a friend whose dentist asked him to consider getting cosmetic surgery.

Scott Westerfeld has received many awards in his writing career. *Evolution's Darling* was a New York Times Notable Book (2000), and won a Special Citation for the 2000 Philip K. Dick Award. *So Yesterday* won a Victorian Premiere's Award. *The Secret Hour* won an Aurealis Award. *Peeps* and *Uglies* were both named as “Best Books for Young Adults” in 2006 by the American Library Association. *Leviathan* won the 2010 Locus Award for Best Young Adult Fiction. Russian translation of *Leviathan* was awarded by Mir Fantastiki as Best Young Adult Fiction in 2011. *Leviathan* was nominated for an ORCA (Oregon Reader's Choice Award) in the intermediate division.

Chapter Two deals with the concept of ideal beauty and the aftermath of the plastic surgery undergone by the uglies to achieve the beauty standards of pretties.

Chapter Two

Concept of Ideal Beauty

Beauty is one of the most important characteristics to a woman, both physical appearance and behaviour. These features are called the concept of beauty. It is associated with pleasure and influences personal choices which make women do many things just to be beautiful so they can feel the satisfaction. According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr in Mehdi Aminrazavi and David Ambuel's *Philosophy, Religion and the Question of Intolerance*, "To live in this world is to live in a world of duality and also opposition . . . such as harmony and complementarity as seen in the yin and yang in the Chinese tradition . . . as can be seen in such realities as truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness, or goodness and evil" (44).

Beauty is often distorted, misunderstood and shadowed by a wide amount of conflicting pressures. Women have different physical appearances and are made of different shapes, sizes and colours and these aspects will create a term called the true beauty. Standards of beauty have changed over time based on changing cultural values. Beauty standards are rooted in cultural norms crafted by societies and media over centuries. However, humans who are relatively young with smooth skin, well-proportioned bodies, and regular features have traditionally been considered the most beautiful throughout history.

Scott Westerfeld's novel *Uglies* is related to the concept of beauty. Lexi Herrick described in *Huffpost* that "Beauty has varied throughout time, various cultures and the vast different perceptions of the world. Beauty has been defined in so many ways. What I have discovered is that beauty is simple. Beauty is happiness" (4).

In *Uglies*, Westerfeld showed the government and society that oppressed women in order to fulfil the concept of ideal beauty in which Tally says, “Everyone judged everyone else based on their appearance. People who were taller got better jobs, and people even voted for some politicians just because they weren’t quite as ugly as everybody else” (44). The concept of ideal beauty in a society plays a major role in constructing society member’s perception about the definition of beauty and also ugliness. This resulted in a number of women who wanted to look beautiful so that they would be accepted in the society.

Women wanted to look beautiful because women who have same physical appearance as the concept of ideal beauty will gain multiple advantages rather than women who are classified as ugly. Although they are aware that plastic surgery is categorized as a dangerous matter, they wanted to undergo the surgery to reach their ideal physical appearance. The concept of ideal beauty in this novel is greatly determined by the physical appearance and behaviour. It has changed over time, therefore, *Uglies* uses some kinds of beauty concepts.

In millennium era, plastic surgery has become more common than before although people know that it can harm their health. Plastic surgery is a surgical speciality involving the restoration, reconstruction or alteration of the human body. It can be divided into two main categories: reconstructive surgery and cosmetic surgery. Cosmetic surgery or aesthetic surgery is a voluntary or elective surgery that is performed on normal parts of the body with the only purpose of improving a person’s appearance or removing signs of aging.

Cosmetic surgery continues to grow in popularity. In Asia, it has become more popular and countries such as China and India have become Asia's biggest cosmetic

surgery markets. It is performed mostly on women. Ninety-two percent of cosmetic procedures were performed on women in 2014. Cosmetic surgery has both advantages and disadvantages. Enhanced appearance, improved physical health, increase in confidence and self-esteem, psychological benefits, permanent results are the benefits of cosmetic surgery. Common complications of cosmetic surgery include hematoma, nerve damage, infection, scarring, implant failure and organ damage.

In *Uglies*, the result of plastic surgery cannot be decided by the one who undergoes it, but it is decided by the government as it is mentioned that “The doctors pretty much do what they want, no matter what you tell them” (41). The government tries to eliminate one’s uniqueness and make everybody’s physical appearance almost the same. “They rubbed you raw, and you grew all new skin, perfect and clear. The old marks of accidents and bad food and childhood illness all washed away” (25).

The uglies are thoroughly measured by the city surgeons in preparation for the operation shortly before their sixteenth birthday. During the process, their faces are given perfect symmetry and their bones are all replaced either stretched or shrunk to a more attractive physique. Nose cartilage and cheekbones are stripped out and replaced with programmable plastic. Eyes are laser-cut for a lifetime of perfect vision where reflective implants are inserted under the iris to add sparkling gold flecks to their indifferent brown eyes.

During the Pretty Operation, muscles are trimmed up with a night of electrocize. Baby fat are sucked out and teeth are replaced with ceramics as strong as suborbital aircraft wing. The patient’s skin is extremely sensitive for two weeks after the surgery and the sensitivity is similar to having a sunburn and is said to be the only

part of the operation that hurts. Tally feels that “Two weeks of killer sunburn is worth a lifetime of being gorgeous” (98).

The plastic surgery rules are applied to everyone after they turned sixteen that makes them perfect in beauty and health. The Operation completely overhauls a person’s body structure and also includes lesions upon the brain, which makes them compliant and less likely to cause conflict. The lesions also tend to “dumb them up.” Another interesting aspect in the concept of ideal beauty is about behaviour. *Uglies* mentions about the behaviour of men and women, which are significantly different from each other. The behaviour changes after the process of plastic surgery because of the brain damage caused by the plastic surgery. Women are portrayed as less smart and they often say and do something stupid.

Both men and women must do the plastic surgery to make them look physically attractive so that they can move to New Pretty Town to meet other people who have already got the plastic surgery. The difference is that women deal with a side effect of plastic surgery that causes brain damages which are manageable, while men do not deal with it. There are proofs that brain damages happen only to women.

Peris, Tally’s friend, is one of the proofs that men do not get brain damages from the plastic surgery. He acts like the same person even after the surgery. “His eyes narrowed, and for a moment he looked like the old Peris: serious, thoughtful, even a little bit unhappy” (125). Even after the operation, Peris still cares about Tally. He does not feel clumsy when he takes care of Tally who is still ugly instead he listens to Tally’s problem and tries to convince her not to worry and that she will get the operation soon.

Peris' behaviour is very different from Shay, Tally's friend, who finally gets the plastic surgery before Tally can get it. Shay becomes a very different person. She becomes someone who is easy to grumble and keeps complaining about life as an ugly because although she has already turned pretty, she is assigned by the government to live with the rebels so that she can persuade them. Westerfeld says that,

Shay stayed with them, complaining about the food, the ruins, her hair and clothes, and having to look at all the ugly faces around her. But she never seemed bitter, only perpetually annoyed. After the first few days she didn't even talk about leaving. Perhaps the brain damage made her pliant. (407)

Tally feels that Shay is not the same person anymore. She enjoys being beautiful and forgets about rebelling against the government. Shay is the one who keeps telling about the side effects of getting the plastic surgery to Tally but now she becomes a calm person and she thinks that it is the right thing after the surgery. She can remember her past actions which include rebelling against the government but later she considers it as a wrong action and suggests everyone in Smoke city to follow her way and get operated. She considers that ugliness leads to chaos and suggests other rebels to get operated so that they can live in peace and stop worrying about rebellion.

Everyone can design their own ideal physical appearance in Uglyville although the doctor will not consider the design and still change everyone based on the concept of ideal beauty. Tally wanted to have "almond-shaped brown eyes, straight black hair with long bangs, the dark lips set to maximum fullness" (39-40).

The way Tally reacts to the pretties shows that the ideal beauty in her society has already had a fixed rule, and all of the society members have already known the concept because they were taught about it since their childhood.

In *Uglies*, people under sixteen are placed in a dorm and are made to attend a school that teaches about the concept of ideal beauty. In the school, children are taught about the conflicts that can rise because of the physical diversity. They were taught that people killed one another because they have different skin colour. It is the reason given by the school to children in order to justify the rule to get plastic surgery and make everybody equal. It can be seen that the school has a big role in creating children's mind about the danger of physical diversity and suggests them to do the plastic surgery to make everyone equal so that there will be no jealousy and conflicts.

The children are given an application to create their own dreams of ideal beauty based on the concept. "Everyone made morphos, even littlies, too young for their facial structure to have set. It was a great waste of a day, figuring out all the different ways you could look when you finally became pretty" (40). The teachers always associated ugly people with stupidity. Therefore, the school aims to warn the young generations that diversity leads to stupidity and ugliness.

Everyone has different physical features in Uglyville which are classified as ugly, whereas, in New Pretty Town everyone has beautiful look and all the women present there have almost identical physical features. Initially, beauty is seen as a fixed quality in *Uglies*, indicating only the physical appearance. People who have undergone the surgery are considered as pretties and those who have not undergone the surgery are called uglies. The uglies have no shot in living a successful and happy

life because the society excludes them. They grow up with heavily damaged self-esteem unable to see their bodies in a positive light.

There are some physical features that are considered beautiful in the novel *Uglies*. One day, Tally saw some women while she sneaked into New Pretty Town. She described that there was something magical in their large and perfect eyes. “Something that made you want to pay attention to whatever they said, to protect them from any danger, to make them happy. They were so . . . pretty” (8). The ones who have bigger eyes are considered pretty than the ones who have slanting eyes. People would refer it as the symbol of a woman’s innocence and purity. When someone looked at them, it seemed that their physical appearance could convey something. Westerfeld illustrates the following:

The big eyes and lips said: I’m young and vulnerable, I can’t hurt you, and you want to protect me. And the rest said: I’m healthy, I won’t make you sick. And no matter how you felt about a pretty, there was a part of you that thought: If we had kids, they’d be healthy too. I want this pretty person. . . . (16-17)

Tally’s explanation about pretties’ physical features indicates that the concept of ideal beauty consists of large eyes, full lips, pointed nose, long eyelash, smooth skin without any scar, and tall and thin body which can be attained only through plastic surgery without considering its effects toward the body.

Tally has all physical features of what is called as ugly. “She put her fingers up to her face, felt the wide nose and thin lips, the too-high forehead and tangled mass of frizzy hair” (8). Shay also has all physical features of what is called as ugly. “She

had long dark hair in pigtails, and her eyes were too wide apart. Her lips were full enough, but she was even skinnier than a new pretty” (28).

There are many social age groups based on the beauty standards set in *Uglies*. They are Littlies, Uglies, New Pretties, Middle Pretties, Late Pretties and Specials. Littlies are young, cute and innocent children. They live with their parents in the suburbs surrounding New Pretty Town and they will attend elementary school until they turn twelve. They turn uglies during their pre-teen years. When children turn twelve years old, they are considered “Ugly” because of the burgeoning physical developments experienced by all pre-teens and teens. Uglies are then moved out of the suburbs and live in monitored dorms in Uglyville where they attend middle and high school.

Uglies are encouraged to call each other with nicknames based on their personal imperfections as well as to use software that generate preferences for their facial features. The former and latter are both methods of building up the Uglies’ anticipation for the Pretty Operation they will undergo upon turning sixteen. Everyone was called by their ugly nicknames in the Uglyville. Tally was called “Squint” because of her “squinty, narrow-set, indifferently brown eyes” (17), while Shay was called “Skinny” because of her skinny body.

Everyone was called by their real name in New Pretty Town because they had already got rid of all the flaws they ever had before by the plastic surgery. However, the separation between the pretties and uglies is intended to reduce the confidence of the uglies so that they want to undergo the plastic surgery. The pretties do not like to meet up with the uglies. As Tally said, “it must be horrible to see an ugly face when you’re surrounded by such beautiful people all the time” (25).

Irony shows up when Tally tried to get a mask to cover her ugly face while she was in the New Pretty Town, although there are various kinds of masks, Tally only managed to get a pig mask. Therefore, she was called a “Piggy” by the other pretties. Tally felt uglier every second she spent in the New Pretty Town. It means that Tally had lost her confidence because she had already understood the concept of ideal beauty in her society and she realized that she did not have any feature of ideal beauty. Every time, Tally looked at them, she was overwhelmed by the feeling that she did not belong to the Pretty community

Uglies are monitored by the city authorities without their knowledge, not to restrain their behaviour but to see who are most capable of ‘pulling tricks’ such as sneaking out at night and into New Pretty Town. This information is used in the uglies’ later life to determine whether they are capable of holding jobs that require decisiveness, initiative, and independent thinking, such as being a surgeon, a firefighter or a Special.

New Pretties arise after uglies undergo surgery and are moved into apartments or mansions in New Pretty Town. New Pretties do not have to work. The only thing they do in New Pretty Town is have fun and maintain an active social life. New Pretties generally join popular cliques such as the Swarm, the Hot Airs and the Crims. The Crims commonly consist of those who pulled the most tricks when they were uglies and are therefore considered to have a ‘criminal’ past, hence the name.

Middle Pretties pick their professions and go through a second minor operation that makes them look older and wiser but still beautiful. Then, they move to the suburbs and are allowed to marry and have children but are encouraged to do so only every ten years so as to discourage the formation of sibling bonds and to ensure

that the population of the city doesn't rise over the capacity. Middle Pretties are the working class. The Middle Pretties' Littlies (children) are allowed to stay with their parents until they turn twelve. Late Pretties or Crumbles are parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, etc. They live in assisted living homes and receive life extension surgery that allows them to live into their middle hundreds and two-hundreds.

Specials are described as frighteningly beautiful and as a "cruel pretty" with features like large coal black eyes, sharp cheekbones, etc. They undergo a special surgery that gives them the ability to feel vibrations with their hands, enhanced senses, muscles sheathed with self-repairing mono filament, sharp orbital alloy teeth, incredible reflexes, and bones made out of aircraft ceramics. Furthermore, they are implanted with skintenna, an antenna implanted on their spine which allows them to hear and see what others are doing, talk to each other and listen to music. They are also very strong. Ugliers are surveilled by Special Circumstances to see if they can become Specials. It is believed that the Specials were created by Dr. Cable to stop humans from expanding into wild or resisting the cities. Therefore, the society undergoes oppression even though they belong to various social age groups.

Oppression towards women in *Uglies* is emphasized by Naomi Wolf's Beauty Myth Theory. The novel tells about the oppression towards women in such a way like an obligation to be beautiful, and the beauty ideal itself is constructed by the society around women rather than based on their own desires. The increasing pressure towards women on the social standards of physical beauty becomes Naomi Wolf's main reason in writing *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women* (1990). It focusses on how media and public influence affect women's

perception about their body. She wants to differentiate between female liberation and female beauty because it has no relation with each other.

The idea of 'beauty myth' by Wolf believes that women are forced to follow the beauty standards so they can be accepted in the society. However, this kind of society spreads the belief that physical beauty can be used as a measurement of women and that women must follow the beauty standard so that men would want them because of an assumption that men must want such women. Naomi Wolf gives a detailed explanation about female power:

Whatever is deeply, essentially female--the life in a woman's expression, the feel of her flesh, the shape of her breasts, the transformations after childbirth of her skin--is being reclassified as ugly, and ugliness as disease. These qualities are about an intensification of female power, which explains why they are being recast as a diminution of power. (232)

Naomi Wolf explains that the characteristic of ideal women in society is based on sexual characteristics that does not exist on women's body, so plastic surgery is needed to make women's body to be ideal. However, ideal beauty on women's body does not appear by itself, but it was created by the society. It shows that the concept of ideal body of a woman cannot be achieved in a natural way. If a society has already set the concept of ideal beauty, then it should appreciate the natural form of a woman rather than oppress and force them to fit the concept of ideal beauty because it will only lead them to have low confidence and probably hate themselves unless they get the operation and get rid of all the ugly physical features.

In Lucy Mangan's *The Feminism Book* (2019), Naomi Wolf suggests that the beauty norms imposed by the patriarchal society control women by making them devalue themselves. The beauty myth tells women that they must strive for a narrowly constructed feminine ideal that is ultimately impossible to achieve. Wolf describes how the beauty myth leads to violent interventions such as cosmetic surgery, which are normalized by society. Rather than solving women's unhappiness and self-hatred, society helps create the neuroses that lead to them. Wolf states that "If we are to free ourselves from [the beauty myth] . . . it is not ballots . . . that women will need first; it is new way to see" (265).

Relating to the cult of beauty is Naomi Wolf's concept surrounding the beauty myth which she discusses in the book *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*. According to Wolf, "If a person thinks or feels that they are ugly, it does not matter what they look like" (272). The subjection to society's absurd beauty and aesthetic ideals begins during childhood, so the people in Tally's society are already manipulated into thinking that society's norm for beauty is the only correct one. This is evident in Tally where she states multiple times how everyone is ugly before going through the Pretty Operation.

Naomi Wolf says, "one must feel and society must agree that some parts of the body are not worthy of life, though they are still living" (266). An example of this is when Tally and Shay are arguing about how society has programmed people into thinking that anything else but society's beauty norm is ugly. Tally states that, "It's not programming, it's just a natural reaction [. . .] Now, everyone's ugly . . . until they're pretty" (83). The brain lesions that are inserted into the brain of pretties are only one part of the manipulation of how people view beauty in *Uglies*. Growing up,

Tally is surrounded by pretty adults. Thus, a specific part of beauty canon is ingrained in Tally's mindset since birth.

Tally's experience in the Smoke and most especially her romance with David, complicate her understanding of beauty. She realizes that it is a relative and subjective term applicable to a person's inner as well as their outer self. According to Wolf, "The beauty myth is always actually prescribing behaviour and not appearance" (14). David, who is against the Pretty operation, confesses to Tally that "What's inside you matters a lot more" (278). He surprises Tally by saying that he was attracted to her initially because of the scratches on her face. He concludes that, "What you do, the way you think, makes you beautiful" (279). Therefore, Tally's initial thought of beauty standards takes a shift when David reveals what's more beautiful and what matters the most.

Chapter Three deals with the idea of rebellion against the government imposing beauty standards.

Chapter Three

Conflict with the Government

Uglies is a story about a heterogeneous society where the government oppressed the members of the society to be beautiful with plastic surgery so that everyone will fulfil the concept of beauty in that society. The government chooses body modification as the only way to change the members of the society in order to make a society where all the people are physically equal.

The novel mainly describes about the beauty standards. It can be seen that the concept of beauty is constructed by the society (parents, peer group and government). Some people tried to rebel against the government for applying a regulation that clustered people into some groups based on their type of beauty. The government's ideology about the necessity of being beautiful makes the society members want to have plastic surgery in order to fit into the society although it only gives them physical enhance. This ideology is implemented to the society members since their childhood, which results in portraying plastic surgery look like a tradition rather than a compulsion.

Plastic surgery is seen as the only way for the people to be accepted in the society. It neither has a relation with self-satisfaction nor self-expression but it is just a matter of rules that are already established by the government. Therefore, the oppression to become beautiful is something that must be questioned because it constructs a beauty standard in the society that can sometimes burden someone.

Plastic surgery is performed by the doctors who are a part of the government. The government provides everything including plastic surgery and entrusts the

Special Circumstances to oversee the doctors to ensure whether they are operating people based on what the government wants. This is one of the factors showing the concepts of ideal beauty in *Uglies* which are set by the government in order to create an absolute beauty.

Tally realizes that Special Circumstances is the organisation that controls the problem caused by the rebellions and always tries to keep the balance of the city in their own way. The Special Circumstances does violation towards anyone who breaks the rules. They use punishments and also threats to control the society members to make them obedient. When Tally was asked by Dr. Cable to disclose the location of Smoke City where all the rebels stay together, she was suspicious about Special Circumstances' real plan since they were most likely being tricky.

The Special Circumstances always wanted Tally to be a spy, an infiltrator. "She wondered just how long this had been planned. How many times had Special Circumstances tried to get an ugly to work for them before?" (134). It shows that they will do anything to catch the rebels who break the prescribed rules. They are very tricky and try to repress the society members to follow their order and anyone who refuses to obey faces consequences. Initially, Tally accepts the government's rule about being operated in order to turn beautiful at the age of sixteen. She knows nothing about the risk of being operated because it is a normal thing that happens in her society and everyone she knows has already done the same thing including her parents and friends.

Tally dreams about being pretty in the beginning and lives happily with all her friends, until she finally meets Shay who knows about the side effects of the Pretty Operation. Tally is taken to the Smoke by Shay to meet other rebels, where they

explain to Tally about the aftermath of the operation. Finally, she knows that a person suffers from a brain lesion after the process in order to make them become more manageable so that there will be no rebellion among the society. She joins with the rebel group and plans to rebel against the city and the rule that binds their freedom. Tally, with the help of her rebel friends, carries out the rebellion rather than hiding all day in the Smoke City like every rebels did before. On their runaway, Tally feels tired because of her lack of sleep. She says, “A little escape was one thing, but I didn’t know you guys were going to drag me all the way out here. I’m through with this whole rebellion thing, I’ve got a wicked hangover, and I really need to wash my hair” (401).

Tally’s rebellion starts before her operation, when she performs different pranks and tricks that go against the society’s rules. Rosemary Moore-Clement says in her book *Challenging the Gods* (2009) that Tally begins rebelling against the society even before she started to think critically about it. Tally does not act upon her realization with purpose until she has viewed society from a distance. Shay, on the other hand, has viewed society critically for years and is aware that her desire to rebel comes from the society’s need to control its citizens.

Moore-Clement argues that “Tally is already breaking the rules the moment the reader meets her” (95). In the second chapter of *Uglies*, Tally sneaks into New Pretty Town, crashing a party and then stealing a bungee jacket to escape by jumping off the rooftop. Moore-Clement describes Tally’s action as a “daring boundary-breaking move” (95) since all these actions are strictly against the society’s set of rules. This can be seen as the start of the rebellion against the society, since Tally’s actions impact on many people throughout the city.

Tally's first act of rebellion against society's beauty standards is when she chooses to stay in the Smoke and join the rebels living there. Sonya Sawyer Fritz, in her essay *Girl Power and Girl Activism in the Fiction of Suzanne Collins, Scott Westerfeld, and Moira Young* (2014), states that for Tally, "the running away to the Smoke is not a rebellious act, it is the choice to stay that matters" (20). She is forced by the Special Circumstances to find the Smoke and go there with an intent to expose the rebels living there, but Tally begins to feel sympathy for the rebels in the Smoke and makes the choice to sever her ties with the Special Circumstances. She decides to believe in what she knows to be true, instead of what the society and the Special Circumstances told her.

In addition to Tally's first rebellion against the society's beauty standards, her choice to stay "ugly" in the Smoke and to not have the Pretty Operation can also be seen as the start of her continuous rebellion against the societal control. The rebellious acts committed by Tally are not only physical but also intellectual since she is able to fight off the brain lesions without medication.

Tally's ultimate act of rebellion against societal control is just being herself. According to Fritz, the motivation behind Tally's rebellion is a "desire to care and protect others" (27). An example of this can be seen at the end of the book, when Tally is willing to sacrifice herself by turning herself in to undergo the Pretty Operation while David refuses to do so. She does this so that she can be the test subject for the cure of brain lesions, which suggests that Tally is willing to risk losing her identity in order to save her friends. This tends to suggest that Tally never stops trying to bring down her society's leaders even though she might lose her self-identity, memories and freedom.

Tally performs many physical rebellion of not letting herself be controlled which is considered as her most momentous conquest. The driving force behind Tally's motivation to rebel against the society is her desire to stay in control over herself and to protect those around her, which is shown in Tally's willingness to risk losing herself in order to protect her friends' self-identity. Although Tally wants to stay in control over herself, it can be concluded that Tally's main concern throughout the novel is not on herself but on those around her as she fights against the societal control and for people's rights to be how they want to be.

Tally decides to turn pretty in order to take a huge responsibility by risking herself just to free not only herself but also everyone from the government's rule. Tally realizes that she is the only one who can make the change, so she volunteers herself to be operated and take the risk to get brain damage. She says, "I'll go back to the city and get caught, and Dr. Cable will give me the operation" (415).

Tally Youngblood enjoys all sorts of gadgets for leisure. She does not feel followed by the government, but the Specials actually track both the location and other personal information. The first glimpse in the novel is the announcement to Tally and Shay that their hoverboarding near the city limits, what proves that the citizen's exact location, must be reported at all times. In the second place, a more complex surveillance is unveiled. When Shay runs away from the metropolis, Tally is escorted in order to be interrogated. Dr. Cable asks Tally about Shay's reasons to leave and says, "And our city can stand a great deal of freedom, Tally. It gives youngsters room to play tricks, to develop their creativity and independence. But occasionally bad things come from outside the city" (106). Tally knows that there is a

group of outcasts hidden in the forests, and all this information can only be retrieved through a strong surveillance.

Irony arises when Dr. Cable tells that the city can stand a great deal of freedom because the city actually opposes freedom and individuality. The government does not give freedom for the individuals to choose between turning pretty or staying ugly. They set it as a mandatory rule to get Pretty Operation at the age of sixteen which seizes the opportunity of freedom.

The third notable evidence of surveillance is the pendant. The heart-shaped pendant is a tool that Dr. Cable gives Tally to signal to the Specials that she has arrived Smoke. The pendant hangs around her neck like an albatross, a constant reminder that she is an infiltrator of the Smoke and not a member. She is set apart by it. Whenever Tally begins to enjoy herself, she remembers that she is still wearing the heart-shaped pendant, and thus her terrible task is yet to be completed. The heart-shaped pendant indicates the emotionality of this decision for Tally.

Dr. Cable forces Tally to pretend to run away to the hidden Smoke. To Tally, it symbolizes her central dilemma: whether to betray the location of the Smoke or to stay ugly forever. Tally realizes in the Smoke about all the good will of the outcasts, who just wish to live away from the control of the government. Therefore, she makes the decision of throwing the pendant into the flames to destroy it but the flames' heat causes the tracker to activate, giving away the Smoke's location. Some of the rebels are captured by the authorities including Shay.

Tally feels guilty because she is the reason why the authorities know the location of Smoke City. The runaways are chased, in spite of not being a political or economic threat for the dystopian civilization, and when caught, their settlements and

artifacts are destroyed. For example, when the specials, those in charge of preserving social stability in *Uglies*, eventually find the Smoke, and not only do they capture all the dissidents, but also burn all the remains of their hidden town. When the Special Circumstances landed in the Smoke,

The camp was a chaos of smoke and running figures. Cooking fires had been blown from their pits, and scattered embers burned everywhere. Two of the encampment's big buildings were ablaze. Chickens and rabbits scampered underfoot, dust and ashes coiled in rampant whirlwinds. Dozens of Smokies ran about, some trying to put out the fires, some trying to escape, some simply panicking. (288)

After the arrival of the authorities in the Smoke City, Tally and David – the rebels – try to escape from the specials who destroy the Smoke city. They help each other to save their lives, and they did not want to be taken by the government facility to undergo the Pretty Operation. When they were about to execute their plan,

Another hovercar roared over them, and he pulled her around the corner of the building and down behind a drum that collected rainwater from the gutters. “You noticed her too?” He grinned, showing a missing tooth. “Maybe if we both run at once, one of us might make it. If the other puts up a fight.” (290)

Although Tally and Peris are presented in the first chapter as best friends, she longs for the operation as her beloved Peris undergoes it before her, so he is sent to the area reserved for the New Pretties, while she waits in Uglyville on her own. As a result, Tally does not embrace the conditions provided by the government and the later spying mission due to political belief, but for the wish to reencounter Peris. This

is not achieved, since Tally learns the dystopian truth about the New Pretty Town in the Smoke and the programmed alienation carried out. David embodies Tally's admiration of the resistance and she falls in love with him. This makes her ditch her wish to go to Pretty Town, and she later fights for the Smoke's right to live away from the control of the government.

In *Uglies*, Shay also functions as an unrecognized leader of the rebellion against the society. She has this role because she is the one who leads the way in most of the rebellious acts and Tally mostly follows her best friend's footsteps. It can be argued that it is Tally who plays the essential part of the rebellion while following Shay's footsteps. This means that Shay stands in Tally's shadow throughout the novel, even though Shay deserves to stand beside Tally.

Almost everything that Shay does in the novel is turned around on her and affects her in a negative way, in contrast with Tally who almost never suffers from her actions. It can be argued that Shay works as a catalyst for Tally's rebellion against society by making Tally think about why Shay wants to run away to the Smoke and avoid the mandatory beauty operation. Shay already knows how to move outside society's strict rules and she shows Tally how to do it too. Furthermore, it is Shay who tells Tally the truth about how their society really functions.

Shay is more likely to rebel on her own accord than Tally, since she already views the society critically. It is Shay who runs away to the Smoke first, and she is also one of the first rebels from the Smoke who are forced to go through the Pretty Operation. The society removed Shay's ability to take the cure when she was offered it because she had already been put through the beautification process.

Shay is aware of the brain damage a person can get when they get the operation, but after she turns pretty she considers that it is non sense and she keeps convincing everyone around her that plastic surgery has no deal with brain damages. Throughout the novel, Shay gets much more dramatic punishments for her own or Tally's actions than Tally ever does. One example of this is when the Smoke is invaded by Special Circumstances, Shay is forced to undergo the Pretty Operation against her will while Tally is able to escape.

Shay is used as a tool of repression by her society and her rebellious acts backfires with negativity. This suggests that Shay's fate functions as an alternative to Tally's fate where things tend to work out in Tally's favour. The motivation behind Shay's rebellion is nothing like Tally's and instead of being motivated by protecting others, Shay's driving force is her anger and resentment towards Tally. Therefore, the primary motivation that drives Tally and Shay to rebel against their society's control and biased beauty ideals validates their desire to keep their self-identity and be allowed to be themselves in whatever way they want.

The government wants to control women specifically because Tally and Shay are the major roles in rebelling against the government. They want to control through plastic surgery which results in the loss of intelligence and makes them obedient towards the government. The government decides to control women's mind so that women can be more manageable, and also repress their potential of rebellion. After all, women are meant to be tamed in the society which indicates that the possibility of women's rebellion is higher than men's. It can be caused by many kinds of factors so that the government prefers to control women's mind rather than men's.

Ultimately, Tally decides to rebel against the government because the government had already oppressed the women for their own purpose. In *Uglies*, women are meant to be tamed by men and government by eliminating their intelligence during the plastic surgery. Women cannot decide their own life rather they are controlled by the government. Tally decides to be a heroine who fights against the government because she believes that women are meant to be equal with men. Therefore, Tally accepts to see herself as a heroine, and believes that women can still be good women although they must be against the myth.

Chapter Four deals with the different technological advancements used in Tally's society and the division of the society based on the availability of technology and the Pretty procedure.

Chapter Four

Technology and Modernisation

Technology is a key aspect in *Uglies*. Tally Youngblood's society is able to function in the first place owing to this technology. Tally's world is held up, literally and figuratively, due to modern technology. It renders Tally's society more vulnerable to destruction, because its citizens are completely dependent on its continued success. If their technology fails, the population would become utterly helpless, completely unable to care for themselves.

The societies are distinguished based on advancements in technology and beauty. The bedrock of the society's structure depends on the social divides created by cosmetic surgery—Uglies, New Pretties, Middle Pretties, Crumblies, and Specials. The different societies are Rusty Ruins, Uglyville, New Pretty Town and Smoke. The Rusty Ruins used to be a thriving epicentre of Rusty civilization, but once the petroleum they all depended on was mistakenly transformed into phosphorous, it only took exposure to air for the substance to ignite and the city to go up in flames. Just as Rusty civilization was over-dependent on oil, so too is Tally's society over-dependent on technology.

The Rusty Ruins symbolize the fragility of civilization. The ruins stand as a reminder that all civilizations have a fatal weakness. Every building was crude and massive, and needed a steel skeleton to keep it from falling down. In Rusty Ruins, hoverboards couldn't hover rather they just roll along on rubber wheels. There is no steel grid built into the ground in Rusty Ruins for hoverboard to pass over.

Uglyville is a section of the city where all the uglies live. Dorm rooms have wallscreens that give access to get minor medical treatment. The rooms also feature a basic Artificial Intelligence Interface which turns lights on and off and wishes the resident. In Tally's city, the addition of the physical barrier formed by the river creates a separation between Uglyville and New Pretty Town. The river contains iron deposits which makes it easier to fly on hoverboards over it.

At the beginning of the novel, Tally reflects on the thematic issue while surveying an old bridge spanning between Uglyville and New Pretty Town. "A million years from now, when the rest of the city had crumbled, the bridge would probably remain like a fossilized bone" (5). Some technologies, like building with bricks and mortar, are more dependable than others. New Pretty Town is where all the Pretties live. It is separated from the rest of the city by a river, and the bridges report people when they cross the bridge.

The Smoke is a hidden settlement in the wilderness where uglies go to escape from having to get pretty surgery. It is a smoky place because the smokies burn wood. They live by cutting down trees. They plundered metal from the railroad to build hoverpaths in and around the Smoke. In *Uglies*, technology reveals what a society values. Even though there are advancements in technology, the people in the Smoke live a primitive life when compared to those in Uglyville, who depend entirely on the technology. The smokies live a primitive existence but they put their energy into having a library because they value knowledge and history instead of drinking parties.

The White Tiger Orchids are present on the way to the Smoke. These orchids, once considered rare, were genetically altered by a Rusty looking to meet consumer demand, who failed to realize that these alterations would effectively turn the precious

orchids into weeds that snuff out all surrounding plant life, including the trees where the species of hummingbird that propagate the flower's seeds lives.

The orchids have created a monoculture, or an ecosystem consisting of a single plant that crowds out all other life and eventually renders the soil barren. It symbolizes the oppressive autocratic government and conformist mentality under which Tally lives. This phenomenon echoes the plight of Tally's society—her government's insistence on plastic surgery that makes everyone look the same tramples diversity of appearance and thought. Though her culture may look beautiful from the outside, it is slowly killing off any hope of heterogeneity.

Each division of the society contains various technological advancements. Numerous scientific technologies includes morpho software, lifters or metal grids, hoverboards, crash bracelets, hovercars, hovertanks, hoverstruts, hovercraft machine, mask dispenser, interface ring, heart shaped pendant, belly sensor, carpet, powerjack, wallscreen, bungee jacket, knapsack, SpagBol cooked with water purifier, toothbrush pill, position finder, firestarter, etc.

Westerfeld critiques society's growing dependence on technology by highlighting the dangers of over dependence. This critique is evident alongside his critique of beauty because it was technological advancement that allowed the operations to be performed. With the help of technology, surgery is performed that results in conflict due to implanted lesions. Citizens devote their lives to pleasure once they become pretty, and have their brains genetically altered to become more docile.

Tally's view of the technologies in New Pretty Town as 'toys' that could crumble reveals a sentiment that the structures and the people are temporary, artificial creations without any true substance. The Morpho software took each side of the face

and doubled it, like holding a mirror right down the middle, creating two examples of perfect symmetry. While the software transformation takes only a click of a button, the surgical change is more painful as Tally comes to realize:

Maybe when they do the operation—when they grind and stretch your bones to the right shape, peel off your face and rub all your skin away, and stick in plastic cheekbones so you look like everybody else—maybe after going through all that you just aren't very interesting anymore. (50)

During the process, the fat is sucked out, the lips are plumped up, the eyebrows are slimmed and made identical, and the skin tone evened. Although littlies and uglies use Morphos as both a tool and a game, the idea behind it is to make the uglies think of themselves as even more hideous, after seeing the “perfected” version of themselves.

People are perceived to be under constant surveillance in *Uglies*. This is proved when Tally said aloud good night before sleeping, to which her room responds ““Sweet dreams, Tally”” (4). This shows that there is surveillance in the society because the rooms know where its people are, for instance, Tally's room knows where she is at all times. Technology is even used to direct people. “A voice came into Tally's head: “Warning, restricted area.”” (50). The society is considered as dystopian not only for its constant surveillance but also for its technological control being used in the society.

The complex architecture of the city is made possible only by "lifters," which function based on magnetic principles. Metal grids are underground networks of iron buried under most of the cities. Almost everything in the cities require magnetism to

work. A vast metal grid allows these magnetic machines to work anywhere and everywhere within the city limits.

The hoverboards are a hovering form of transportation about three times larger than a skateboard. These boards have built-in metal detectors. Most boards hover using magnetic levitation. They are held aloft by the steel grid that has been installed underground. They are long-distance boards that recharge on solar. The citizens of the city use hoverboards as a method of transportation. They are automatically equipped with warnings if the user strays near restricted areas, goes too fast or high, or flies out of city bounds entirely. Some are even capped at a certain maximum speed. Some boards are specially designed for travelling long distance. This shows that there is technological control in the society because the hoverboards track everywhere the people go and the authorities know where they go.

The hoverboards help to illuminate the themes of maturity and of technology in *Uglies*. At the beginning of the novel, hoverboards are characterized as a toy for littlies and uglies, much like a skateboard. The same toy transforms into a tool for escape later in the book, for Shay and Tally as they use hoverboards to make their journey to the Smoke. They are the main method of transportation in the Smoke. Shay, David, Croy, and Tally scavenge metal to build new hoverboard tracks around the settlement, like railways. By the end, hoverboards are associated with rebellion; while the Specials use hovercars, rebels prefer a more agile form of transport. Indeed, David and Tally use hoverboards to rescue the prisoners from the Specials' clutches.

Small lights on the nose of the board automatically wink on or off the closer or further the board gets to metal deposits. These hoverboards can unfold into a large sheet that turns jet-black in order to soak in solar power. The Specials use ones that

can also use lifting fans when away from deposits of metal. Hoverboards can be dangerous for an untrained novice, but safety measures including crash bracelets and grippy shoes help to keep users safe.

Crash bracelets are a safety device used in conjunction with hoverboards. The bracelets are heavy and solid in hand. They are strapped firmly to the wrists and use magnetic levitation with the metal grid to stop the user from plummeting to the ground if they fall off a hoverboard. Unlike bungee jackets which distribute the force of decelerating a fall to standstill, crash bracelets concentrate all that force on the wrists. Without a source of metal to push against, such as a grid, crash bracelets wouldn't work.

Hovercars are small vehicles that use electromagnets to hover. They are used to patrol New Pretty Town and are probably the government's main transportation unit. They use the grid as a source of metal for their magnets to push against and hover. Hover tanks are similar to hovercars, but are designed to be weapons of war. Hoverstruts are used in architecture to enable hovering buildings. Without the vast grid as a source of metal, these structures would collapse.

The flying machine is another technological mode of transport used for the surveillance of the people. When Tally was close to the Smoke, a thundering hovercraft machine hovers over her. This shows that there is surveillance in the Smoke also. One of the incredible technology is the mask dispenser. It is a machine that makes parties. The machine was "lobbing the masks out the back, trying to coax more followers into the impromptu parade: devil faces and horrible clowns, green monsters and gray aliens with big oval eyes, cats and dogs and cows, faces with crooked smiles or huge noses" (10).

Tally's interface ring is a small tracking device that allows her to interact with all the smart devices in her world. "Without an interface ring, she was nobody. The elevator wouldn't listen" (15). Interface rings are how citizens interact with the technology around them. The rings are what connects them to the city interface and forms of social media. They even need them to communicate with elevators and self-driving vehicles.

The real catch of the interface rings is that they are also how the city government tracks its citizens. This is the first glimpse of control and tyrannical ways of the society that exists in *Uglies*. If a citizen wants access to the conveniences of their homes and other buildings, they must always be wearing their rings and therefore must always be kept under the surveillance. "Without her interface ring, she was invisible to vehicles. They'd just run her down like she was nothing" (7). Interface rings are assigned to nearly every citizen. It can access the city interface, send pings, control music, identify and track anyone who wears a ring and communicate with "smart" objects such as food trays, elevators, and the smart walls of the buildings.

The heart shaped pendant has a built-in navigation that sends signals to Special Circumstances. The pendant is the reason why the Smoke was found. Belly Sensor tells the hoverboard where the centre of gravity is and makes it easier to stay balanced on the board. The sensor even read her stomach muscles. The carpet in the elevator is designed in such a way that the discarded plastic mask recycles itself and turns into pink dust. Powerjack is a tool used to pull up tree roots and get the railroad tracks that are underneath. It is also used to open the elevator doors. It is heavier than

it looks, but its controls are simple. It is an arm-length pole that telescoped out almost to Tally's height. It can move anything.

A giant wallscreen is used in the society that emphasizes being ugly. This is Dr. Cable's method of blackmailing Tally. He uses the wallscreen, to show Tally the consequences of withholding access to another technology, the surgery. He pointed at the wallscreen in which an image appeared "Like a mirror, but in close-up, it showed Tally as she looked right now: puffy-eyed and disheveled, exhaustion and red scratches marking her face, her hair sticking out in all directions, and her expression turning horrified as she beheld her own appearance" (135).

Bungee jackets are a device that use magnetic levitation to counter the momentum of falling. They are vests covered in straps and magnets. Initially, they were invented as emergency devices used to escape burning buildings, but pretties use them to safely jump off from the buildings for fun. Tally used it to escape from New Pretty Town. The bungee jackets used the same lifters as the hoverstruts that held the spindly structures up.

During Tally's journey to the Smoke, she carried the knapsack. Knapsack is a bag where Tally stuffs her SpagBol, water purifier, toothbrush pill, position-finder, firestarter, survival kit and sleeping bags. Spagbol or Spaghetti Bolognese is a type of dehydrated meal and instant food developed by Special Circumstances for people camping out. Tally used a waterproof bag to stack the food. It is cooked with a water purifier. After adding a packet of Instant Food into the purifier, the water purifier heats the water to boiling and cooks the food. It can be used for trade in the Smoke as it is city-made and cannot be easily acquired in the wild without returning to the city. It looked and felt like a finger-size knot of dried yarn.

The water purifier is an essential part of living in the Smoke. It can filter any water, including body discharge, and can cook instant food such as SpagBol or Pad Thai. Toothbrush pill is a gadget that takes the place of brushing the teeth. Instead of brushing the teeth manually, the pill is used. Position finder is a device used to find the position of anyone anywhere.

Tally's world would collapse without technology. Few technologies like bungee jacket, crash bracelets, belly sensor, water purifier, position finder, firestarter and hover vehicles help for the betterment of life in Tally's society. Some scientific technologies have major drawbacks like morpho software and wallscreen that create feeling of ugliness to get the surgery done, heart shaped pendant that reveals the location of Smoke, powerjack that destroys tree roots, toothbrush pills that create laziness and interface rings that track everything. Ultimately, technological advancements are not only a boon but also a bane to the society.

Chapter Five

Summation

Scott Westerfeld has contributed notable works to the literary world. Major themes in his works are the idea of free thinking, coming of age, courage and questioning authority. His famous book, *Uglies* is told from the third-person-limited point of view. The story utilizes a diction that is easily accessible to young readers.

Uglies is an excellent example of a novel that falls into four different genres. They are science fiction, dystopian fiction, young adult fiction and coming-of-age novel. It is set in a future post scarcity dystopian world in which everyone is considered an “ugly”, but then turned “pretty” by extreme cosmetic surgery when they reach the age of sixteen which makes them happy, carefree and gorgeous. It tells the story of a teenager named Tally Youngblood who is an “ugly”, a resident of Uglyville, and is eagerly anticipating her birthday and the procedure that will transform her into a blissful and lovely “pretty”.

Tally’s best friend Peris has already had the Pretty procedure and she sneaks into New Pretty Town to see him. This act nearly gets her captured, but in the turmoil, she meets a new best friend named Shay. Tally and Shay share the same birthday and are expected to undergo the operation at the same time. However, the night before procedures, Shay tells Tally that she plans to run away to an outside settlement called The Smoke, outside the reach of the governmental powers that control the uglies and the pretties. Shay disappears and is assumed to have gone to the Smoke.

Tally is forced into locating Shay and leading government agents to the rebel settlement. If she refuses, she is told that she will never be given the procedure that

will turn her into a Pretty. Tally reluctantly becomes a spy and sets out to locate the Smoke and her absent friend. There, she begins to realize that maybe everything she's been told about uglies, pretties, and smokies isn't all true, and that the residents of the Smoke are rebelling for a very good reason. Her conscience keeps her from betraying the rebels, but her act of heroism leads her to consequences that will affect her forever. The main reason for rebelling against the government is the beauty standards set by the authorities.

Beauty standards are rooted in cultural norms crafted by societies and media over centuries. It is often distorted, misunderstood and shadowed by a wide amount of conflicting pressures. *Uglies* is related to the concept of beauty. In this novel, Westerfeld showed the government that oppressed women in order to fulfil the concept of ideal beauty. The concept of ideal beauty in a society plays a major role in constructing society member's perception about the definition of beauty and also ugliness. The only criterion to gain ideal beauty is the plastic surgery.

The result of plastic surgery cannot be decided by the one who undergoes it, but it is decided by the government. The government tries to eliminate one's uniqueness and make everybody's physical appearance almost the same. The plastic surgery rules are applied to everyone after they turned sixteen that makes them perfect in beauty and health. The operation completely overhauls a person's body structure and also includes lesions upon the brain, which makes them compliant and less likely to cause conflict. Both men and women must do the plastic surgery to make them look physically attractive. The difference is women deal with a side effects of plastic surgery that causes brain damages which are manageable, while men do not deal with it.

People under sixteen are placed in a dorm and are made to attend a school that teaches about the concept of ideal beauty in order to create a positive outlook of the surgery. It can be seen that the school has a big role in creating children's mind about the danger of physical diversity and suggests them to do the plastic surgery to make everyone equal so that there will be no jealousy and conflicts. The children are given an application to create their own dreams of ideal beauty based on the concept. Therefore, the school aims to warn the young generations that diversity leads to stupidity and ugliness.

People who have undergone the surgery are considered as pretties, and those who have not undergone the surgery are called uglies. There are many social age groups based on the beauty standards. They are Littlies, Uglies, New Pretties, Middle Pretties, Late Pretties and Specials. The society undergoes oppression even though they belong to various social age groups. Oppression towards women is emphasized by Naomi Wolf's Beauty Myth Theory. The idea of 'beauty myth' by Wolf believes that women are forced to follow the beauty standards so they can be accepted in the society.

Wolf describes how the beauty myth leads to violent interventions such as cosmetic surgery, which are normalized by society. Tally's initial thought of beauty standards takes a shift when David reveals what's more beautiful and what matters the most because according to Wolf, beauty myth is about behaviour and not appearance. The government oppressed the members of the society to be beautiful with plastic surgery so that everyone will fulfil the concept of beauty in that society. The government's ideology about the necessity of being beautiful makes the society members want to have plastic surgery in order to fit into the society although it only

gives them physical enhance. The oppression to become beautiful is something that must be questioned because it constructs a beauty standard in the society that can sometimes burden someone.

Tally dreams about being pretty in the beginning and lives happily with all her friends, until she finally meets Shay who knows about the side effects of the Pretty Operation. Tally's rebellion starts before her operation, when she performs different pranks and tricks that go against the society's rules. Tally begins rebelling against the society even before she started to think critically about it. Her first act of rebellion against society's beauty standards is when she chooses to stay in the Smoke and join the rebels living there.

Tally's first rebellion against the society's beauty standards is her choice to stay "ugly" in the Smoke and to not have the Pretty Operation can also be seen as the start of her continuous rebellion against the societal control. For Tally, just being herself is the ultimate act of rebellion against societal control. She performs physical rebellion of not letting herself be controlled which is considered as her most momentous conquest. She realizes that she is the only one who can make the change, so she volunteers herself to be operated and take the risk to get brain damage.

Tally Youngblood enjoys all sorts of gadgets for leisure. She does not feel followed by the government, but the Specials actually track both the location and other personal information. The government does not give freedom for the individuals to choose between turning pretty or staying ugly. They set it as a mandatory rule to get Pretty Operation at the age of sixteen, which seizes the opportunity of freedom. The government wants to control women specifically because Tally and Shay are the major roles in rebelling against the government. Therefore, the primary motivation

that drives Tally and Shay to rebel against their society's control and biased beauty ideals validates their desire to keep their self-identity and be allowed to be themselves in whatever way they want.

Technology serves as a vital feature in Tally's society because it is the reason why her society is able to function in the first place. The societies are distinguished based on advancements in technology and beauty. The society's structure depends on the social divides created by cosmetic surgery—Uglies, New Pretties, Middle Pretties, Crumblies, and Specials. Based on technology, there are different societies like Rusty Ruins, Uglyville, New Pretty Town and Smoke.

Each division of the society contains various technological advancements. Numerous scientific technologies include morpho software, lifters or metal grids, hoverboards, crash bracelets, hovercars, hovertanks, hoverstruts, hovercraft machine, mask dispenser, interface ring, heart shaped pendant, belly sensor, carpet, powerjack, wallscreen, bungee jacket, toothbrush pill, position finder, firestarter, etc.

Tally's world would collapse without technology. The Morpho software took each side of the face and doubled it, like holding a mirror right down the middle, creating two examples of perfect symmetry. Although Littlies and Uglies use Morphos as both a tool and a game, the idea behind it is to make the Uglies think of themselves as even more hideous, after seeing the "perfected" version of themselves.

The complex architecture of the city is made possible only by "lifters," which function based on magnetic principles. The citizens of the city use hoverboards as a method of transportation. They are automatically equipped with warnings if the user strays near restricted areas, goes too fast or high, or flies out of city bounds entirely. This shows that there is technological control in the society because the hoverboards

track people's location and the authorities know where they go. Crash bracelets are a safety device that use magnetic levitation with the metal grid to stop the user from plummeting to the ground if they fall off a hoverboard.

Tally's interface ring is a small tracking device that allows her to interact with all the smart devices in her world, and they are also how the city government tracks its citizens. The heart shaped pendant has a built-in navigation that helps in tracking the location. A giant wallscreen is used in the society that emphasizes being ugly. Therefore, technology has different impacts that acts as both boon and bane. Morpho software and wallscreen create feeling of ugliness to get the surgery done, heart shaped pendant reveals the location of Smoke, powerjack destroys tree roots, toothbrush pills that creates laziness and interface rings that tracks everything. Bungee jacket, crash bracelets, belly sensor, water purifier, position finder, firestarter and hover vehicles help for the betterment of life in Tally's society.

The ending of *Uglies* is highly controversial. Initially, Tally awaits to get the Pretty Operation done but after the bitter revelation of the aftermath of the surgery, she rebels against the government by trying to destroy the heart shaped pendant that the Specials gave her to track the location of Smoke. When Maddy, David's mother begins devising a cure for the lesions developed during the surgery from Dr. Cable's information, Shay refuses fearing what the outcome might be. After continuous rebellious acts, Tally accepts to get the Pretty Operation done in order to take the cure to see what the result will be, even after knowing its drawbacks. She concludes saying, "Make me pretty" (425). Tally volunteers not only to know the outcome of the cure but also to relieve people by cure to those who got the pretty operation done.

The novel *Uglies* is significant because in today's world, most of the people consider themselves ugly depending upon their appearance. They worry because they think that they lack the perfect beauty standards which are considered as pretty. People see only the external appearances to conclude if they are pretty or ugly. Beauty is actually based on behaviour and not on external appearances. Tally is satisfied in being ugly, and she refuses taking the Pretty Operation in the beginning but finally accepts to undertake the procedure only to test the cure in order to relieve the people who have already undertaken the procedure. Therefore, people should not consider themselves ugly and take cosmetic surgery like Tally's society rather they should feel that they are beautiful and unique in their own way even if they lack ideal beauty standards.

Works Cited

- Aminrazavi, Mehdi, and David Ambuel. *Philosophy, Religion and the Question of Intolerance*. New York Press, 1997, p. 44.
- Craig, Amanda. "Future Imperfect." *The Times*, 2006, www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-future-imperfect-7bvqjb2bnrl.
- Doctorow, Cory. *Uglies: young adult sf that perfectly captures adolescent anxiety*. Boing Boing, 2006, boingboing.net/2006/01/01/uglies-young-adult-s.html#previouspost.
- Fritz, Sonya Sawyer. *Girl Power and Girl Activism in the Fiction of Suzanne Collins, Scott Westerfeld, and Moira Young*. Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014, pp. 20, 27.
- Gaffney, Loretta. *Young Adult Literature, Libraries, and Conservative Activism*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017, p. 1.
- Gough, Philip. *Who am I? Who was I?: The Posthuman and Identity Formation in Scott Westerfeld's Uglies Trilogy*. Roehampton University, 2010, p. 26.
- Herrick, Lexi. "What Is the Real Definition of Beauty?." *Huffington Post*, 2015, www.huffpost.com/entry/what-is-the-real-definition-of-beauty.
- Jonas, Gerald. "Review of Evolution's Darling." *The New York Times Book Review*, 2000, p. 22.

Mangan, Lucy. *The Feminism Book*. DK Publishing, 2019. p. 265.

McKinley, Robin. "Pretty faces, hideous truths." *The United Kingdom Times*, 2006,
p. 17.

Moore-Clement, Rosemary. *Challenging the Gods*. BenBella Books, 2009, p. 95.

Scott, Kristi, and M. Heather Dragoo. *The Baroque Body: A Social Commentary on
the Role of Body Modification in Scott Westerfeld's Ugliest Trilogy*. 2010,
[www.academia.edu/251998/The Baroque Body A Social Commentary on
the Role of Body Modification In Scott Westerfelds Ugliest Trilogy](http://www.academia.edu/251998/The_Baroque_Body_A_Social_Commentary_on_the_Role_of_Body_Modification_In_Scott_Westerfelds_Uglies_Triology).

Westerfeld, Scott. *Uglies*. Simon & Schuster Children's Division, 2005.

Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*.
Chatto & Windus, 1990. pp. 232, 266, 272.

Diaspora - The Root of Identity Crisis in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*.

A project 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

by

S. BAGAVATHI

(REG. NO. 20APEN04)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Problems Because of Race	12
Three	Diasporic Elements	27
Four	Analysis of Names	40
Five	Summation	59
	Works Cited	

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **The Utopian Enlightenment: A Study of Mergy Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfilment 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 Ancy Jerin .S during the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.


Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi


Dr. S. Sudha Rani

Head of the English Department
Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Assistant Professor of English

Guide


Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


External Examiner

Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English
Sarah Theroth College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Diaspora – The Root of Identity Crisis in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names***, submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmanian 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.

Thoothukudi

Bagavathi. S
S. Bagavathi

MAY 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind and strength in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study.

I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. G. Sharon Roque Corera**, Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance, encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Name* exposes clearly the feeling of the protagonist Darling, who has gone out of her native land Paradise and went to her aunt's place America. Darling suffers in her native land because of the civil war and spends time with her friends in a shanty town. She dreams about America and wishes to go there, but when she goes there the reality is opposite from her expectation. The title itself states that the protagonist demands for her identity.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the characteristics of African literature and about NoViolet Bulawayo's life. It showcases the rudiment of her works and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Problems Because of Race** focuses on the struggles of the protagonist Darling when she goes to America. The author has portrayed it in a proper manner for a better understanding.

The third chapter **Diasporic Elements** expresses the feelings of Darling and how she was treated when she was in America.

The fourth chapter **Analysis of Names** conveys the significance of the names that were used by the author to indicate the situation prevailing in the novel. Here name plays a major role in explaining the political situation.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and brings out the researcher's findings.

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

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Literature, a body of written works. The name has traditionally been applied to those imaginative works of poetry and prose distinguished by the intentions of their authors and the perceived aesthetic excellence of their execution. Literature depends upon the language, national origin, historical period, genre, and subject matter. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* considers literature to be “writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest.” Literature is a word derived from the Latin *littera* means “a letter of the alphabet,” literature is a first and foremost humankind’s entire body of writing. Walter Pater has said that “transcript, not of mere fact, but of fact in its infinitely varied forms.” It explains the readers about the literal meaning of literature. As an art, literature is an organization of words to give pleasure. It also plays a main role in the society as a means of both criticizing and affirming cultural values. Moreover, literature is a form of human expression.

Literature represents the culture and the tradition of a language or a people. At times literature goes to an extend where it can ultimately represent the society’s problem through a form of work. In simple words literature is considered to be a blend of emotion, in which anyone can feel circumstances and the pain of others through words. People who read literature have more empathy for others. So, the people Socialize more effectively, solve conflicts easily.

Works of literature, provides a kind of clarity about human society and their mindset towards the society where they belong to. From the writings of ancient civilization such as Egypt and China to Greek philosophy and poetry, Homer to the

plays of William Shakespeare, from Jane Austen and Charlotte Bronte to Maya Angelou, works of literature gives insight and context to all the world's societies. Literature was first produced by some of the world's earliest civilization – those of ancient Egypt and Sumeria, probably in the 4th millennium BC. It can serve as an introduction to a new world of experience. William Shakespeare in his most renowned work *Henry VI* said “I’ll call for pen and ink and write my mind”.

This was a famous dialogue from Shakespeare’s play Henry VI, in which Suffolk who is in love with Margaret wants to express his feelings to her. But he couldn’t express it through speech, instead he chose to convey it through a letter. This shows the importance of literature from an early age.

Literature allows a person to step back in time and learn about life on earth before us. It expands the knowledge of a person to gather a better understanding of culture and its importance at that time. It shows the how history has been recorded, in the form of manuscripts and through speech itself. It acts as a mediator which passes the cultural pride from one generation to other through writing.

According to the World Literacy Foundation, reading is one of the best ways to develop a strong imagination. People who engage with a variety of literature, through this a person can broaden his or her knowledge for new words and phrases. Critical thinking is essential for life. By reading literature reader can improve their critical thinking which can be applied for life. So, all these shows the importance of literature and its use in day-to-day life.

African literature, the body of traditional oral and written literatures in Afro-Asiatic and African languages together with works written by Africans in European language. Modern African literatures were born in the educational systems imposed by

colonialism, with models drawn from Europe rather than existing African traditions. African literature means works of the African continent. Oral literature, including stories, dramas, riddles, histories, myths, songs, proverbs, and other expressions, is frequently employed to educate and entertain children. Oral literature deals with their ancestor's heroic deeds, their past, and the precedents for their customs and traditions.

Some of the first African writings to gain attentions in the west were the poignant slave narratives, such as *the African* (1789), which describes vividly the horrors of slavery and the slave trade. As Africans became literate in their own languages, they often reflect colonial repression in their writings. Since the early 19th century writers from western Africa have used newspaper to spread their views. Newspaper served a big role as a platform for expressing the patriotic feelings. Their poetry not only denounced colonialism, it proudly asserted the validity of their culture that the colonialists had tried to crush.

As the world war II ends, it draws an awareness among the Africans, that they needed freedom for their future generation. To support this, many Africans writers were bloomed and started to write their story of oppression and suppression. It lighted the dark secret, which were unknown by the world. Through their writings people of the world came to know that the African people were suffering for a long period under the colonial rule. Especially the west African writers, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ousmane Sembene, who were the representers of the African sufferings. All were writing in European languages, and often they shared the same themes: the clash between indigenous and colonial cultures, condemnation of European subjugation, pride in African past, and hope for the continent's independent future.

In south Africa, the horrors of apartheid have, until the present dominated the literature. Writers like Nadine Gordimer, Dennis Brutus, J. M. Coetzee and Miriam Tlali, all reflect in varying degrees in their writings the experience of living in a racially segregated society. Africa experienced several hardships in its long history which left an impact on the themes of its literature. One hardship which led to many others is that of colonization. The problem with colonization is when the incoming people exploit the indigenous people and the resources of the inhabited land. Colonization led to slavery. Millions of African people were enslaved and brought to western countries around the world from 16th to 19th century. This created a term “African Diaspora”. So, in simple words Africa is the continent which was suffered a lot by various problems.

African women writers played a vital role in representing their social problems through their writings. African women writers have tackled the hard work of representing a diverse spectrum of lived and imagined experiences, including and especially their own. The long struggles with racist oppression and gender-based violence, including slavery’s culture of endemic rape, forced or interrupted motherhood, infanticide, concubinage, fractured families and egregious physical and mental abuse. In addition to influential autobiographers like Maya Angelou, dramatists like Lorraine Hansberry and poets like Gwendolyn Brooks, fiction writers have constantly demonstrated how imaginative art can simultaneously inform, persuade, entertain, catalyze social changes and address individual as well as collective concerns.

This shows the willpower of women writers who have been the pillars of the female society, and inspired every single woman through their writings. They provoked the female society to voice out their problems. African women writers have many enriching and fascinating stories to tell. Through their work, we realize that Africa isn’t

just what the world feels it's so much more. These writers come from different parts of continent, which is what makes their writing so interesting, and also, very important. They each have a different point of view based on their surroundings and the culture they come from, beside the diversity of their own voices. These women made use of literature as a form of protest, initiative, having their voices heard and bringing about powerful changes.

Here some of the contemporary African women writers who is working for the transformation and for the development of the society where they belong to.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian novelist who also writes short stories as well as fiction. Her famous novel *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) was shortlisted for the Orange Prize for fiction (2004) and was awarded the Commonwealth Writer's Prize for Best First Book (2005). The book is set in postcolonial Nigeria against the backdrop of political instability and a broken economy. The protagonist of the story is a 15-year-old girl who is on her path to maturity while dealing with family issues. She has also written *Americanah* (2013), and a book length essay *We Shall All Be Feminists* (2014).

Yewande Omotoso is an African woman writer. She is a South-African novelist, architect and a designer who was born in Barbados and grew up in Nigeria. She has written *Bom Boy* (2011) and *The Woman Next Door* (2016). Her second novel *The Woman Next Door* is about two women, one white and one black, who live next to each other. They have spent most of their years bickering and insulting one another till a time comes where the two must come together for a greater cause. This book longlisted for Bailey's Women's Prize for Fiction (2017) and was shortlisted for International Dublin Literary Award (2018).

Laila Lalami is a Moroccan-American novelist and essayist. Her opinion pieces, cultural commentary and literary criticism have appeared in prestigious newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Boston Review* and elsewhere. Some of her notable works are *The Moor's Account* (2014), *Secret Son* (2009) and *Hopes and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005). Her third book, *The Moor's Account* is a fictional memoir about Estevanico, the Moroccan slave who survived the Narveaz Expedition. He is considered to be the first black explorer of America. This book has won American Book Award, the Hurston-Wright Legacy Award and was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Yaa Gyasi is a Ghanaian-American novelist. She was born in Ghana, later moved to America in 1991. Her debut novel, which was inspired by a trip to Ghana – the first since she left in 1991, was completed in 2015. The book *Homegoing*, focuses on the Asante women of Ghana. It follows the descends of Maame, beginning with her two daughters who have very different lives. One marries a British official while one is held captive in the dungeons. Each chapter following this one speaks of their children and the generation to come. The book was nominated for Centre for Fiction First Novel Prize in 2016 and it was awarded the John Leonard Prize by the National Book Critics Circle for outstanding debut noel in 2017.

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi is from Uganda. She is novelist and a short story writer. Makumbi's form of writing is largely based on oral traditions because they are able to accommodate any form of writing regardless of subject, form of genre. For her, oral traditions brought in depth to her writing. She draws on these as they anchor her writing in Ganda culture and also helps her put her thoughts across with confidence as she's extremely familiar with the traditions. She has written a novel, *Kintu*, which was

published in 2014. Set in 1754, Kintu Kidda, belonging to the Ppookino of Buddu Province decides to pledge his allegiance to the new Kabaka(King of the Kingdom of Buganda) of the realm. On his journey, he comes across a challenge for which he makes an impulsive decision, causing him and his family to be cursed for generations. This book for longlisted for the Estisalat Prize for literature in 2014 and is the winner of the Kwani? Manuscript Project in 2013.

Patina Gappah is a Zimbabwean lawyer and writer. This African woman writer began writing at a very young age, about 10 or 11. She has written *An Elegy for Easterly* (2010), *The Book of Memory* (2015), and *Rotten Row* (2016). *An Elegy for Easterly*, like *Rotten Row*, was a collection of stories. The book talks about what it's like to be a Zimbabwean in today's world. It deals with the country's ruling, political chaos and economic instability. Along with all this, the characters also go through everyday hardships such as failed promises, disappointments, uncertainty and struggles. It was shortlisted for the Frank O'Connor International short story Award, Orwell Prize and the Los Angeles Times Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction. It has also won the Guardian First Book Award in 2009.

Maaza Mengiste is an Ethiopian-American writer and author. She was born in 1974 in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. However, her family left due to the Ethiopian Revolution and she spent the rest of her life in Nigeria, Kenya and the United States. This African writer is the author of *Beneath the Lion's Gaze* which was published in 2010. It is set in 1974 Addis Ababa and looks at the Ethiopian Revolution through the eyes of a doctor's family him, his dying wife and their two sons. It goes through the end of emperor Haile Selassie and the beginning of the Derg's military rule. This book was named one of the 10 best contemporary African books by the Guardian and has

been translated into various languages including French and Dutch. She was a runner-up for the Dayton Literary Peace Prize in 2011 and a finalist for the Flaherty-Dunnan First Novel Prize.

Noviolet Bulawayo is the pen name of Elizabeth Zandile Tshele, an award-winning Zimbabwean author. Bulawayo was born in Tsholotsho, Zimbabwe. She finished her schoolings in her native and moved to United States for her higher education. She got master's degree in English from Southern Methodist University and a master's in Creative Writing from Cornell University. Bulawayo's debut novel *We Need New Names*, was released in 2013 to immediate critical acclaim. Among the honors she received for this work were the Etisalat Prize for Literature and the Hemingway Foundation / PEN Award, and she made the competitive 2013 fiction lists for the Man Booker Prize, the National Book Award's "5 Under 35," the Guardian First Book Award, and the Barnes & Noble Discover Award. She was a Stegner Fellow at Stanford University from 2012 to 2014 and a Hodder Fellow at Princeton from 2016 to 2017. Bulawayo was cited as one of the Top 100 most influential Africans by *New African* magazine in 2014. She sat on the board of trustees of the pan-African literary initiative Writivism between 2014 and 2018.

Bulawayo has written another novel *Glory* in 2022. *Glory* is an energy burst, an exhilarating joyride. It is the story of an uprising, told by a bold, vivid chorus of animal voices that helps us to see our human world more clearly. A long time ago, in a bountiful land not so far away, the animal denizens lived quite happily. Then the colonizers arrived. After nearly a hundred years, a bloody War of Liberation brought a new hope for the animals- along with a new leader. A charismatic horse who commanded the sun and ruled and ruled and kept on ruling. For forty years he ruled,

with the help of his elite band of chosen ones, a scandalously violet pack of Defenders and, as he aged, his beloved and ambitious young donkey wife, Marvellous. But even the sticks and stones know there is no night ever so long it does not end with dawn. And so, it did for the Old Horse, one day as he sat down to his Earl Grey tea and favourite radio programme. A new regime, a new leader. Or apparently so. And once again, the animals were full of hope. Glory tells the story of a country seemingly trapped in a cycle as old as time. And yet, as it unveils the myriad tricks required to uphold the illusion of absolute power, it reminds us that the glory of tyranny only lasts as long as its victims are willing to let it. History can be stopped in a moment. With the return of a long-lost daughter, a free fair credible election, a turning tide even a single bullet.

Coming to our selected novel *We Need New Names*, it is a work of fiction by Zimbabwean author NoViolet Bulawayo. It's her debut novel, which garnered critical praise upon its publication in 2013. Bulawayo's narrative centers around 10-year-old Darling and her group of friends, in a Zimbabwean shantytown called Paradise, as the group perceptively observes life around them. When Darling later moves to America, she's confronted with the America of her dreams as it clashes with her reality as an immigrant in a foreign and often hostile land. Themes of loss, identity, struggle, sacrifice, violence all flesh out the pages of this sobering yet necessary novel. Darling's humor also adds to the novel's appeal, a humor that helps to digest some of the weightier topics.

Darling a 10-year-old girl Zimbabwe who likes to steal guavas with her friends. Her group of friends include Bastard, Stina, Godknows, Shbo, and chipo and the group travels to nearby cities to steal guavas from trees to satiate their hunger. Early on, the reader learns that Darling is supposed to join her Aunt Fostalina in America

sometime soon. This hope, in fact, is a hope of many people in Zimbabwe, especially as the country is suffering from a violent and oppressive government. Many of Darling's own friends want to leave the country as well, but others don't have Darling's opportunity. As Darling waits for the day that she can leave, she comments on her days in Paradise, which is the name of shantytown where she lives. Darling's parents lived in a proper brick house once, but police came and bulldozed the neighborhood. Now, Darling and her mother try and get by without the help of her father, who left for South Africa but hasn't been heard from since.

Darling's childlike gaze takes issues with many things around her, and her perceptions, as well as those of her friends, are often wise beyond her years. She looks at the discrepancies in religion, she's been accused of having the spirit of her unruly grandfather who was killed by whites residing within her by prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro; colonization she thinks whites are stupid for stealing something as large as a country because everyone can tell they stole; sex; her mother sleeps with a man who isn't her father and Darling hates how the man snores; and many other issues. Heavier topics that include incest/ rape, murder, suicide, AIDS, and displacement are also viewed through her eyes, and these are approached humanely and maturely despite her age and the presence of humor. The main body of chapters are interspersed by three chapters that are more omniscient in perspective. These chapters help to transition the text from one place to another, such as from Zimbabwe to America. The chapter titles are: "How They Appeared", "How They Arrived", "How They lived". These chapters describe the process of displacement, as well as the overall transition from optimistic dreams to sobering reality.

When Darling finally arrives in America, she soon finds that it's not the America of her dreams. Her childlike concept of America as the land of plenty is both true and false; she's able to go without being hungry, yet she also finds that her dreams of say, a Lamborghini, or simply living without worry or concern, are indeed just dreams. She begins working menial labor jobs at a young age to help her aunt, though she wants to return home to visit, she realizes that, like many other immigrants, she doesn't possess the proper paperwork to get back into US if she leaves. As such, she's little more prisoner in this country of her dreams. In America, Darling faces violence, cultural misunderstandings, homesickness, and doubt that she assimilates, an assimilation that confuses her as she longs for home yet also feels like she's outgrown her home. In the end, Darling must settle for a version of America that is far less than she dreamt of, and the reader must determine if Darling, like others, is better off her journey to America. Darling too must struggle with the concepts of loss and longing in a country that she will never be able to truly call her own.

Despite its weighty subject matter, *We Need New Names* "glows with humanity and humor, thanks to Bulawayo's remarkable knack for creating delightful, resilient characters who enchant us much with their antics as their poignancy. In particular, Bulawayo gives us a protagonist whose raw, vivid voice may be the novel's most memorable aspect. *We Need New Names* has been translated into thirteen languages, making it is the most translated book in modern Zimbabwean history.

In chapter two we are going to witness the actual face of racial discrimination which was faced by Darling, a 10-year-old girl in the novel *We Need New Names*. Chapter two is going to be a realization of how racism plays a role in the lives of African people.

CHAPTER TWO

PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF RACE

At first, we have to understand what is race? Race is nothing but the complexion of a human being. Everyone is equal, but British people after colonizing every country they made every individual to feel about their skin complexion. As British is of fair complexion. So, with this they colonized everyone and made everyone to have an inferior feel about their complexion. One such people caught in their trap is Africans. Generally African people are addressed by their dark complexion. So British people took this as an opportunity to keep them in their control.

Race is a constructed social category, designed to stratify people and establish meaning in a social context. Racism encompasses a web of economic, political, social and cultural structures, actions, and beliefs that systematize and ensure an unequal distribution of privilege, resources, and power in favor of the dominant racial group and at the expense of all others. As a form of bias against social groups, racism encompasses three related but separate aspects: prejudice (emotional bias), stereotypes (cognitive bias), and discrimination (behavioral bias). Prejudice refers to an emotional reaction to another individual or group based on preconceived ideas about them. Stereotyping is the projection of an individual's thoughts, beliefs, and expectations onto another individual without first obtaining factual knowledge about them. Discrimination is the action of denying equal rights based on prejudice and stereotypes.

In the work *We Need New Names*, Noviolet Bulawayo has done her work perfectly by explaining the problems of the protagonist Darling. She is portrayed as a small girl who has been tolerating all her problems which comes because of her race.

For being a Zimbabwean girl, Darling made decision to exile from her native and nation, because of the political war which took place in her country. So, she moved to America, where her aunt lives. There also she faces a lot of problem, as she goes with an expectation as America was a land of dream for the new entries. After going there only she realized that her imagination about America is false. Then she started to cope up with her new culture and circumstances, but there also she lags in making an equal move with it. So, we will know how the writer has explained the situation prevailed in Zimbabwe as well as in America.

The latter is a continuation of her earlier short story “Hitting Budapest” (2010), which won the Caine Prize for African Writing. *We Need New Names* revolves around the journey of Darling from Zimbabwe to America. During the early 2000s, Darling used to live in Zimbabwe where her home was bulldozed due to a political turmoil. She was obliged to leave and settle in a new village they called Paradise: “We didn’t always live in this tin, though. Before, we had a home and everything and we were happy... Now all we have is this small bed that sits on some bricks and poles” (62-63).

Darling is depicted as a very smart and energetic girl who spends most of her time playing different games with her childhood friends, “They are the most important thing to me and when I’m not with them I feel like I’m not even me” (94). Together, they go to Budapest, where white rich people live, and steal guavas since it is the only source of food they could possibly find, “We just eat a lot of guavas because it is the only way to kill our hunger” (16). The narration differs from an engaging, energetic and exquisite in Zimbabwe into a quiet, introvert and broken voice of an immigrant in America.

The wretched situation that they were living in made the citizens leave the country in order to find jobs and be able to take care of their families. Darling's father went to South Africa for the sake of working but he ended up leaving his wife and daughter without any form of support. This behaviour left an enormous impact on Darling as a young girl who needs not only shelter but her father's attention as well, she says: "Now Father is in South Africa, working, but he never writes, never sends money, never nothing. It makes me angry thinking about him, so most of the time I just pretend he doesn't exist; it's better this way" (22-23). However, she cherishes his existence and tries not to forget him, "by looking for him in the faces of the Budapest men, in the faces of my friends' fathers" (93). Bulawayo depicted the massive traumatization caused by the armed mob rioting on the inhabitants of Paradise in general and on Darling specifically. She suffered from nightmares which kept her awake all night fearing the returning of bulldozers:

Now I am counting inside my head; this way I will not sleep. Nobody knows that sometimes I do not sleep... Even if I want to sleep I cannot because if I sleep, the dream will come and I don't want it to come. I am afraid of the bulldozers and those men and the police, afraid that if I let the dream come, they will get out of it and become real. I dream about what happened back at our house before we come to paradise. I try to push it away but the dream keeps coming and coming. (64-65)

This psychological instability at her age is quite effective and it destroys her sense of steadiness and well-being. The sudden incident left an instilled shock as Darling describes the terrible situation surrounding her at that moment, "When the bulldozers finally leave, everything is broken, everything is smashed, everything is

wrecked. It is sad faces everywhere, choking dust everywhere, broken walls and bricks everywhere, tears on people's faces everywhere" (66). Her insecurity gets deeper when they move to Paradise and her life turns upside down because they become deprived of everything. The inhabitants feel disappointed by those who destroyed their land and properties, since they are supposed to stand by their side against the white colonizers and not the opposite, "Better a white thief do that to you than your own black brother. Better a wretched white thief" (75).

The white settlers in Rhodesia institutionalized a system of racial segregation against the blacks and benefitted from the lands. Therefore, the white colonizers became more powerful and affluent after taking over the agricultural lands unlike the aboriginal people, black Rhodesians who were deprived of their rights in their own country.

Bulawayo highlights the injustices that the indigenous people have endured during the colonialism era through the voice of a child who can still see its lasting impact. Darling has a sarcastic way of thinking about the real intentions of whites while colonizing her country as people will never forget or forgive the crimes committed by the white settlers, "I don't know what the white people were trying to do in the first place, stealing not just a tiny piece but a whole country. Who can ever forget you stole something like that?" (20).

Zimbabweans have always been charmed by the whites, and have surrendered to the belief of the white supremacy which contributed to their immigration fantasies. Moreover, the tragic political, social and economic situation in Zimbabwe pushed the citizens to do anything in order to get out of country, "For the visas and passports, we begged, despaired, lied, groveled, promised, charmed, bribed- anything to get us out of

the country” (240). Because they were always positioned outside the mainstream, Zimbabweans felt what it is like to be visible, recognized and worthy, even if that means to leave towards the unknown. This white supremacy and the dream of immigration exist not only with adults, but with children as well: Who doesn’t know that the U.S.A is the big baboon of the world? I feel like it’s my country now because Aunt Fostalina lives there, in Destroyedmichygen. Once her things are in order she will come and get me and I will go and live there also. (49).

Darling’s self-esteem changes throughout the novel according to her social in-group and she strives to attain a satisfactory social identity.

Immigration obviously means a new society and brings radical changes for immigrants who find themselves in a whole different world. They immigrate with the eagerness to absorb the freshness of their dream country. Being an African immigrant in America, Darling is exposed to harsh racist treatments which made her very upset, “When I first arrived at Washington I just wanted to die... I just felt wrong in my own skin, in my body, in my clothes, in my language, in my head, everything” (165). Going through such traumatizing experience shook Darling’s self-esteem and disturbed her self-perception because she was not only young and vulnerable, but because she was never treated like that before. She was always the loved friend and daughter back in Zimbabwe unlike her estranging status in America.

Darling could not support the disrespectful, degrading treatments of the Americans and thought about finding a solution for that, “I have decided the best way to deal with it all is to sound American... I also have my list of American words that I keep under the tongue like talismans, ready to use” (194). The importance of language in general and acquiring an American accent more specifically is highlighted by

Bulawayo to stress the initial step toward seeking acceptance in the new society. Sounding an American will ease and speed up the process of assimilation and it will cover the smell of immigration, “I don’t know why Aunt Fostalina doesn’t think to learn America speech like this, seeing how it would make her life easier so she wouldn’t have a hard time” (194).

Darling finds herself automatically categorized with Africans in America, this categorization imposed a low status and more marginalization. Hence, she refuses to belong to an inferior, subordinate group. Self-esteem is one of the most crucial motives that individuals seek in an in-group and its fulfilment will certainly strengthen the person’s social identity. Darling’s attempts to attain acceptance into an American in-group is initiated with her American accent regardless of the others’ negative remarks, “tryna sound like stupid white folks” (222). Speaking and acting like Americans swallowed Darling’s attachment to her friends and family who once meant the world to her, “With time I stopped writing altogether, I just started putting it off... before I knew it I’d lost touch” (188).

Furthermore, Darling starts to be ashamed of how people from her country keep calling to ask for money and support, “The calls just keep coming and coming like maybe they’ve heard Aunt Fostalina is married to the Bank of America” (204). Their calls reinforce her belief that she came from a subordinate social group which will contribute to further derogate her identity among Americans.

Darling’s decisions are basically enacted out of her negative discriminating experience since racism against blacks is found to be among the main reasons of anxiety, depression, suicide. Her identification with a different in-group got her carried away with being an American and living according to the America social norms,

especially with her reckless friends who encourages her to watch porn videos on the internet to explore their sexualities. Darling has mixed feelings regarding the flicks they were watching sometimes they were interesting, exciting, quiet and at other times they were embarrassing, nasty and creepy.

Being wild and careless is something that Darling learns in America so that she will not be entitled a coward. Therefore, she pretends to be uncaring while she is hanging out with her friends who steal the car of Marina's mother and allow Kristal to drive it though she is violating the law since she does not have a driving license, "Kristal isn't old enough to have a license but that doesn't mean she can't drive" (215). At a moment, police follow them, "we hear the wailing sound, and we know that the police are chasing us. All the fun comes to a sudden end" (218), which frightens them especially Darling, "I think about opening the door and running, just running, but then I remember that the police will shoot for doing a little thing like that if you are black" (219).

Putting her life at risk makes Darling feel uncomfortable and she cannot relate to her new, fake behaviour that she is wearing to impress people and to be accepted among Americans. She suddenly becomes aggressive against her friend and she blows up the truth about how she feels about her, "When I first met you, I couldn't understand anything coming out of your mouth, not a single word, nada, and you sit here and say you are American and that you speak English!" (221). Honesty relieves her a little bit but she cannot completely feel at ease with herself anymore.

All these drastic changes lead Darling to reach a state of instability and fragmentation. Her identity shatters between her pre and post immigration attitudes, "It's hard to explain, this feeling; it's like there's two of me" (210). Bulawayo

deliberately shows this struggle that Darling undergoes to portray the dark side of the complete accumulation and assimilation into the host culture. Her categorization with the dominant social group is not enough to satisfy her individual needs.

Darling is torn between keeping up with her new American identity, which does not resemble her, or cherishing her African identity that she seems to miss. Her relationship with her friends and family trembles since she arrives to America especially when she stops writing to them. Cutting off all the ways of communication burdens Darling's conscious and the feeling of guilt overwhelms her, "I feel a little guilty but I brush the feeling away" (210). There is an inner battlefield between her guilt and aspirations. Darling struggles when she reminisces her past and what she left behind, "I missed them, missed them very much, and there were these times when I'd be doing something and get this terrible feeling of guilt for not keeping in touch" (188). Then she remembers what she could be in her dream country, "You are in America now and you can actually be anything you want to be" (158).

Darling reaches a state where she criticizes all the American things that are supposed to please her after encountering various obstacles and losing her self-esteem:

No matter how green the maize looks in America, it is not real. They call it corn here, and it comes out all wrong, like small, sweet, too soft. I don't even bother with it anymore because eating it is really a disappointing thing, it feels like I'm just insulting my teeth. (164)

This new habit makes Darling partly satisfied since her America is not that perfect and at some points it seems even worse than Zimbabwe:

In America, the fatness is not the fatness I was used to at home. Over there the fatness was of bigness... It was fatness that didn't interfere with the body; a neck was still a neck, a stomach a stomach... but this American fatness takes it to a whole 'nother level': the body is turned into something else- the neck becomes a thigh, the stomach becomes and anthill, an arm a thing, a buttock a I don't even what. (171)

This denunciation does not mirror her American identity. Instead, it gives her hidden African identity the chance to see the light under the imprisonment that is imposed on it. Darling spends a long time ignoring her feelings and the longing to her family to the point where she is surprised when she confronts her emotions, "Today, it's Mother on the phone. I am glad to hear her voice so I start smiling. I miss her so much sometimes it makes me dizzy but then there is nothing I can do about it" (204). The old Darling has very strong ties with her beloved friends whom she intentionally ignores in America:

I get goose bumps just from hearing them talk. There is a strange feeling coming over me and I feel this dizziness and I have to sit down. Time dissolves like we are in a movie scene and I have maybe entered the telephone and travelled through the lines to go home. (205)

The distant meeting of her friends through a tiny screen leaves an immense effect on Darling who surrenders to the inner yearning she holds for years:

Sbho is standing there watching her and eating a guava... I get a strange ache in my heart. My throat goes dry; my tongue salivates. I am remembering the taste of all these things, but remembering not tasting,

and it is painful. I feel tears start to come to my eyes and I don't wipe them off. (209)

This moment takes her back home when she was still a child and her only interest was to have fun with her friends while stealing guava to silence their hunger. Darling could not disregard and numb her feelings anymore as she feels more comfortable when she freely let go her yearning and she no longer hides it as she would usually do. Silencing her true sentiments is not the smartest thing that Darling opts for owing to its negative contribution to her identity deconstruction. Ignoring her inner voice and depersonalizing herself from the social group that she really belongs to shatter her identity and she never completely feels her true sense of self.

Throughout the narrative of the novel, we sense the clear and profound impact that the whites' supremacy ideology has left on Darling's personality. She is raised to the belief that, "everything in America was better" (189) which inevitably means that America is the dominant, superior country in comparison with home i.e., Zimbabwe which becomes the subordinate, uncivilized and miserable place. Privileging the white people and not just their countries is much worse as it made Darling always, "wonder how a white person's hair feels to the touch" (181) and feel the honour to speak to a white person, "I'm just proud that I'm finally talking to a white person, which I haven't ever done in my life" (129). If talking to a white person in Zimbabwe is regarded as something to brag about, then it is no wonder that living among them makes Darling impatient for their acceptance and approval.

Moreover, the deprivation and poverty that Africans suffer from plays a vital role in encouraging immigrants to assimilate into the host country as they find what they have always been lacking. For Darling, it was food that matters the most, "there is

food to eat here, all types and types of food” (153). She suffers from hunger back in Zimbabwe and this makes her remember the times when she and her friends used to still guavas just to feed themselves, “In America we saw more food than we had seen in all our lives” (238). Another surprising news is the prohibition of child beating which is normal in Zimbabwe, and plastic surgeries that she looks at with amazement:

How America surprised us at first. If you were not happy with your body you could go to a doctor and say, for instance, Doctor, I was born in the wrong body, just make me right; Doctor, I don't like this nose, these breasts, these lips. We looked at people sending their aging parents away to be taken care of by strangers. We looked at parents not being allowed to beat their own children. We looked at strange things like these, things we had never seen in our lives. (239)

The huge difference between the home and the host cultures makes America even more interesting for Darling.

Darling recalls the words of her friend Stina about the country and they keep ringing in her ears due to their deep meaning which were not quite significant until she lived in America:

Stina said that a country is like a Coca-Cola bottle that can smash on the floor and disappoint you. When a bottle smashes, you cannot put it back together... Stina also said leaving your country is like dying, and when you come back you are like a ghost returning to earth, roaming around with a missing gaze in your eyes. I don't want to be that when I go back to my country. (160)

One day, Darling encounters a harsh criticism from her mother through a phone call, “I see that America has taught you to speak English to your mother, and with that accent. He-he-he, so you are trying to sound white now!” (204). Her mother’s denunciation leads Darling to unconsciously react as Americans do when they argue with their parents, “I start to call her crazy but I hold it and tell myself that it is one of the American things I don’t want to do” (204). This reaction makes Darling think twice about her attitude and the values she learned back in Zimbabwe where elders’ respect is a must.

Later, Darling hears the voices of her childhood friends and they take her back to relive the past:

I get goose bumps just from hearing them talk. There is a strange feeling coming over me and I feel this dizziness and I have to sit down. Time dissolves like we are in a movie scene and I have maybe entered the telephone and traveled through the lines to go home. (205)

The connection with her family and friends is an alerting signal for Darling to realize how much she misses her childhood, her stealing guava adventures, and her old self around the people who truly loved her, “Sbho is standing there watching her and eating a guava... I get a strange ache in my heart. My throat goes dry; my tongue salivates” (209). Once she arrives to America, she does not allow herself to surrender to her longing and she repeatedly ignores the feeling of guilt of not keeping in touch with her friends, “I feel a little guilty but I brush the feeling away” (210). However, at this stage Darling allows herself to cry for the yearning that has been imprisoned for years. She reaches a state where she could no longer suppress her feelings, “it is painful. I feel tears start to come to my eyes and I don’t wipe them off” (209).

Another essential encounter is the fact that Darling's friend Chipso who was impregnated at a very young age had a daughter and she named her after Darling, "they claimed they decided to name her after me so there would be another Darling in case something happened to me in America" (210). It is a good initiation from her friends who like to feel her presence through naming Chipso's daughter after Darling but she could not completely swallow this act. This is like a call for the death of her old self since she left her country and stopped talking to her friends. Thus, Darling becomes confused and uncomfortable, "It's kind of cute, but I don't know how to feel about it, somebody being named after me like I'm dead or something" (210).

Darling's desire to go back to Zimbabwe is so elevated the more she spends time in America and she keeps complaining about it, "In America, roads are like the devil's hands, like God's love, reaching all over, just the sad thing is, they won't really take me home" (191). Darling insists on the different meanings of home according to every person, "When somebody talks about home, you have to listen carefully so you know exactly which one the person is referring to" (192). She further elaborates that, "There are two homes inside my head: home before Paradise, and home in Paradise" (191) but she does not mention America as a home for her. The same goes for her mother and her Aunt Fostalina, "There are three homes inside my mother's and Aunt Fostalina's heads: home before independence... Home after independence... And then the home of things falling apart, which made Aunt Fostalina leave and come here" (191). Darling comes to the realization that America will never be home for Black immigrants.

This awareness leads Darling to excessively think about going back home but Aunt Fostalina does not allow her, "You came on a visitor's visa, and that's

expired; you get out, you kiss this America bye-bye” (189). Since Darling’s studies are not completed, she could not move out of America until she gets her diploma, which she is hardly working for to pay her tuition fees. The financial dependency that Darling undergoes ties her in America. Darling came to America primarily to study; and not completing this goal prevents her from leaving. Even when choosing her field of study at the University, she is limited by choosing only the ones that really matter in America, “These... are the careers that count, and I didn’t come all the way to America to do meaningless stuff and be nothing” (275). Therefore, Darling’s desire to go back home is put on hold until she completes her studies and attains her financial independence, so that she could go back to Zimbabwe without waiting for the permission of Aunt Fostalina.

Bulawayo portrayed the life of African immigrants in contemporary America through knitting a well-crafted story that captures the journey of a young Zimbabwean female who immigrates to the United States with a luggage of dreams. Eventually, immigrants suffer from a negative social identity due to the accumulated deceptions, and they struggle to cope with all the changes that they encounter in a very short time. By projecting the concepts of this theory on the immigrant characters of the selected novel, it has been possible for the readers to address the impact of racial discrimination and social inequality in moulding the African immigrants’ racial identity. The Nigrescence theory operates as a mirror to the process of how an African immigrant embraces his black identity through protruding out the pervasive social and psychological trauma that Africans endure. It has been of great importance to dismantle the various social identifications and categorizations that immigrants adopt for the sake of gaining social recognition.

Moreover, the second aim of this study has been to analyse Darling's process of becoming black utilizing Cross' Nigrescence theory. As a result, Darling has experienced a drastic social and cultural change after her immigration which was a tough challenge for her to retain a stable identity. Therefore, she socially identified and categorized herself as an American which resulted into a distorted and ambiguous identity. Darling has gone through various stages to finally reach a state of self-love and acceptance as an African instead of forcing herself to become an American. This is the auspicious outcome that this study strived to highlight because Darling mirrors what a great number of immigrants go through. At the end, it is crucial to emphasize on the struggle that immigrants endure during their journey of self-discovery due to the difficulty to pass from self-hatred to self-love. The immigrants' process of appreciating their African identity is our most celebrated finding especially that it is derived from a literary analysis through the application of enriching social and psychological theories. This study paves the way for other future researches in the literary field using the social identity and Nigrescence theories to further understand the immigrants' displaced identities and how they can embrace their black identity after immigration.

Chapter three titled 'Diasporic Elements' talks about how Darling struggled to find her identity in the new land. The feeling of alienation of Darling made her to hate the new land America. Through the protagonist Darling, one can feel how diaspora plays a major role in changing one's life.

CHAPTER THREE

DIASPORIC ELEMENTS

The term diaspora comes from the Greek verb diaspeirō meaning “to scatter” or “to spread about”. The meaning of diaspora is forcing the aboriginal people or taking them as a slave to other nation. So, people of the native were made to take decision to leave their mother nation in order to attain a peaceful life. Some people find it difficult to leave their native land. Some of them were taken as slaves to work for others throughout the world. So, the emerging immigrants were created as a group and their displacement called as diaspora. Especially

African people are the still sufferers of dislocation. In *We Need New Names*, Noviolet Bulawayo expresses the variety feelings which African people undergoes and one such feelings is dislocation from their native. As the protagonist Darling moves out of her native land paradise to her aunt’s place which is in America.

The novel opens with the evocation of movement; ‘We are on our way to Budapest...’ followed by a paragraph that starts with; ‘Getting out of Paradise is not hard...’ (1). This immediately opposes the two locations while indicating the desire and imperative to move between the two. Paradise – the shanty town in which the children know hunger – is described as a ‘kaka toilet’ (12), while Budapest – a relatively affluent suburb where the child steal guavas to appease their hunger – is ‘like a different country altogether’ (4). Budapest, although a neighbouring suburb, is as far removed from the reality of Paradise as the eponymous European city. This contrasts with the ironic naming of a shanty town as Paradise, when life there is hellish. Naming is also used to anchor the story in a Zimbabwean location. Referentiality gives meaning to names such

as Chimurenga Street (5) – which evokes Zimbabwe’s nationalist struggle for independence – or Mzilikazi Road, with reference to the founding father of the Ndebele nation, King Mzilikazi. These names can be read as signifiers that inscribe the novel as a certain history of the Zimbabwean nation, given the post-independence dominance of the Shona majority and the political marginalisation of the ethnic group.

The merit of postcolonial writers’ agency lies in their well-meaning call to use the plight of the waifs and straits as a staple diet for their opus. This epitomizes a significant paradigm shift with regards to what obtained in the aftermath of independence, when the failure of statehood had pride of place in terms of fictional themes. Prospective migrants are mostly folks who live in skid row. In the world of *We Need New Names*, Darling and her friends (Godknow, Stina, Chipso, Sbho, Bornfree, Bastard) are a close-knit bunch who live by their wits, and whose miseries constitute a blistering indictment of postcolonial African leadership. Mismanagement of public funds and the pervasiveness of the dead hand of corruption as well as the stifling of freedom of expression spawn a climate of fear and anxiety that pushes Darling and her friends to mull over going down the road of migration. From the get-go, the young female narrator offers the reader interesting insights into the humdrum existence of parents who think nothing of whiling away time on peccadillos, thereby leaving their kids to their own devices:

Getting out of Paradise is not so hard since the mothers are busy with hair and talk, which is the only thing they ever do. They just glance at us when we file past the shacks and then look away. We don’t have to worry about the men under the jacaranda either since their eyes never lift from the draughts. It’s only the little kids who see us and try to

follow, but Bastard just wallops the naked one at the front with a fist on his big head and they all turn back. (3-4)

The wretched situation that they were living in made the citizens leave the country in order to find jobs and be able to take care of their families. Darling's father went to South Africa for the sake of working but he ended up leaving his wife and daughter without any form of support. This behavior left an enormous impact on Darling as a young girl who needs not only shelter but her father's attention as well, she says: "Now Father is in South Africa, working, but he never writes, never sends money, never nothing. It makes me angry thinking about him, so most of the time I just pretend he doesn't exist; it's better this way" (22-23). However, she cherishes his existence and tries not to forget him, "by looking for him in the faces of the Budapest men, in the faces of my friends' fathers" (93).

Bulawayo depicted the massive traumatization caused by the armed mob rioting on the inhabitants of Paradise in general and on Darling specifically. She suffered from nightmares which kept her awake all night fearing the returning of bulldozers:

Now I am counting inside my head; this way I will not sleep. Nobody knows that sometimes I do not sleep... Even if I want to sleep I cannot because if I sleep, the dream will come and I don't want it to come. I am afraid of the bulldozers and those men and the police, afraid that if I let the dream come, they will get out of it and become real. I dream about what happened back at our house before we come to paradise. I try to push it away but the dream keeps coming and coming. (64-65)

To be sure, the construction of white subjectivity as a locus of political discrimination is nothing but a smokescreen to whitewash failed leadership. The political dispensation portrayed in the first half of *We Need New Names* points to dismally gross misgovernment that has spawned a pervasive disphoric atmosphere, so that the female narrator calls Zimbabwe “a kaka country”. The abysmal connotation associated with this metaphoric term speaks volumes about the depth of social and economic suck gripping the country, leaving Darling to fantasize about a hunky-dory life in America where an aunt of hers lives as a migrant worker: “I’m not worried about that because when that time comes, I’ll not even be here, I’ll be living in America with Aunt Fostalina, eating real food and doing better things stealing” (12). If anything, generations of post -independence African youths feel hard done by. A bitter sense of betrayal over the ideals of the liberation wars cum the lofty expectations in the aftermath of statehood achievement plainly shines through their hard-hitting indictment of their leadership. Witness the conversation between folks reduced to homelessness after their houses have been razed to the ground by government bulldozers:

The children are trapped in a ceaseless quest for survival. Hunger is what prompts them to cross the border into Budapest, just as material lack prompts them to dream of escape and migration. Sbho, the prettiest one declares; ‘I’m going to marry a rich man from Budapest. He’ll take me away from Paradise’ (12). Bastard, the bully of the group, dreams of Johannesburg; ‘I’m blazing out of this kaka country myself. Then I’ll make lots of money, come back and buy a house in this very Budapest’ (13). Here, Darling’s real possibility of escape – her aunt Fostalina in America – puts her in a position of superiority. This representation of migration as a potentially liberatory displacement is introduced through the children’s fantasies but undermined by the

reality of adult lives. Darling's immigrant father returns from Johannesburg with AIDS while her cousin Makhosi gets lung disease from working in the mines.

Social precarity is demonstrated by the community's obsession with migration despite evidence that migrant labour might lead to illness and the breakdown of family structures. Indeed, one of the many services advertised by the local traditional healer alongside 'DEAD PEOPLE TERRORIZING YOU' is help with 'BAD LUCK GETTING VISAS ESPECIALLY TO USA AND BRITAIN'. Yet the last line of this advertisement; 'PLEASE PAYMENT IN FOREX ONLY' (27), is most revealing. It highlights the gritty reality beneath the fantasy of migration, namely the global economic inequities that govern the permeability of the local space.

While the novel cleverly subverts the clichéd tropes of childhood purity, it maintains the innocence of the child voice through the semantic dissonance created by adult and child perspectives. For example, when Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro publically rapes a woman who accused of being a devil (39- 40), only the children (Darling and Chido) see this as a transgression while the congregation cries 'Sweet Jeeesus' or 'Glory, glory' (Bulawayo 2013, 35) throughout the so-called exorcism. Because of the children's ignorance, Cornell becomes a brand name associated with Bastard's social precarity rather than the American university but they are not ignorant of their material lack. This is made poignantly clear by their violent reaction to the bitter irony of a pizza munching British-Zimbabwean woman in Budapest, who takes pictures of them— asking them to say cheese and smile at the camera when they don't even know what it tastes like (9-10).

The global power relations that govern this permeability are reinforced by the children's visit to Shanghai, a Chinese construction site, to beg for cheap Chinese

trinkets that they call ‘zhing-zhongs’. Here a Chinese construction worker proudly declares “We build you nice big mall. All nice shops inside, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Versace...” (46). These global brand names, like the faded Cornell University t-shirt worn by Bastard (12), highlight the state of lack that characterises the lives of the residents of Paradise. They transact the material imperative to migrate. Therefore, despite their ignorance, the representation of the children refutes the notion of an ‘untainted’ original subjectivity.

Bulawayo describes the difference between Darling’s childhood and her own as two different zimbabwes. Hers being a successful newly independent nation state while Darling’s Zimbabwe, a country in crisis, serves as a reminder that this ‘original’ Zimbabwe is no more. This difference between the idealism of nationalist liberation and the current era of political disillusionment is captured by the reference, Chinua Achebe’s canonical *Things Fall Apart* (1985) through Darling’s rhetorical question; ‘who wants to be a place of hunger and things falling apart?’(49).

But first we have to fight over names because everybody wants to be the U.S.A. and Britain and Canada and Australia and Switzerland and France...These are country-countries. If you lose the fight, then you just have to settle for countries like Dubai and South Africa... They are not country-countries, but at least life is better than here. Nobody wants to be rags of countries like Congo, like Somalia, like Iraq...and not even the one we live in – who wants to be a place of hunger and things falling apart? (49)

This description of the Country Game, played by 10-year-old Darling and her friends relates to several key elements in the novel. These include the relative power of names – notably African and international country names - the trope of migration and the association of political disillusionment with material lack. Political disillusionment is highlighted by chapters such as *How They Appeared* (ch.5), *How They Left* (ch.10) and *How They Lived* (ch.16) in which the third person plural, ‘they’ represents this as collective displacement and a communal sense of (dis)location. This is symbolised depicted through examples of the violent rupture of kinship experienced during the forced removals, such as Nomviyo who loses a son – symbolically named Freedom – beneath the rubble (67). This rupture brings a global presence into the local space. BBC and CNN cameramen inscribe this local tragedy within a narrative of global disasters, callously comparing it to a ‘fucking tsunami’ (67).

Global inequalities are also at play as *Mother of Bones*, engages in a ritual of counting her devalued bricks of Zimbabwean notes while muttering ‘Money is money no matter what this is still money’ (25). Her refusal to burn the devalued currency piled in a suitcase beneath her bed betrays an inability to accept her current location – socially, economically and politically. *Mother of Bones* is anything but crazy; she may wear mismatched shoes and obsessively count her stashed bricks of Zimbabwean notes but she is actively performing her sense of displacement. This performance represents semantic dissonance – a loss of meaning – as an active rather a passive process. Driven by the need to make sense ‘make sense’ of loss through a new narrative, *Mother of Bones* adopts a religious narrative of material loss and eternal salvation, through the caricatured figure of Prophet Revelations Bitchington Mborro.

Here the children witness the killing of Bornfree – a political activist whose name suggests the hope of the liberation era – by a mob of government supporters.

Stina takes off his What Would Jesus Do? T-shirt and waves it because it's now the flag of the country, and we point to it with our weapons and sing the president's name...By now we are laughing and chanting and signing war songs and waving our weapons. We are proper drunk with verve; we are animals wanting blood. But first, we dance.... Our faces are contorted now; we look at each other and we have become fierce and really ugly men...After the dancing we pounce on Bastard who is now Bornfree. We scream into his face while we clobber him...With all our weapons clamouring for one person like that, it looks like we are hitting a grain of sand...But we only laugh and keep hitting (140-141) Despite their laughter, the children's 'play' locks them into adult violence which is only stopped by the symbolic death of the nation; 'The flag of our country is bloodied' (143).

This brings the novels satirical criticism of the nation to the fore, particularly when the children affirm the seemingly paradoxical reality of their game' (144). Darling develops a greater consciousness of the categories of being – gender, race, and nationality – which are used by others to define her within the American social matrix.

Although presented as a collective of escape from material lack in *How They Left* (ch.10) migration is once again linked to post-independence disillusionment through a reference of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*; 'When things fall apart, the children of the land scurry and scatter like birds escaping a burning sky' (145). *How They Lived*

illustrates how the dream of escape to a land of plenty becomes a cycle of dangerous unwanted jobs and the constant fear of deportation. It also subverts the trope of migration being a form of liberatory movement through a collective entrapment by the label 'African' as within the migrant space; 'What part of Africa...Is that the part where vultures wait for famished children to die?... Is that where dissidents shove AK-47s between women's legs?' (237). This clichéd schema of questions which are actually affirmations of preconceptions, foregrounds the ignorance of those who

'name' Darling when compared to her own knowledge of being African. The chapter traces a collective genealogy whereby America, initially seen as a place of unimagined plenty and all you can eat gluttony, creates dissonance by robbing the African of sites of meaning 'Because we were not using our languages, we said things we did not mean; what we really meant remained folded inside' (140).

Darling's Aunt Fostalina who lives the satirised American dream because she makes enough money to send to her relatives and subscribes to American beauty aesthetics is rendered powerless by being labelled as 'foreign'. Upon hearing her accent her American telesales agent simply becomes unable or unwilling to understand what 'the foreigner' is saying.

This dissonance forces Fostalina into the humiliating position of spelling out the name of her desired product despite knowing that she can actually say the brand name. (196). In Darling's case, her insertion into the American social matrix – or translational subjectification – is impacted by the connotations associated with the name 'African'. This is represented through clichéd interactions such as a stranger at a wedding declaring 'Africa is so beautiful...But isn't it terrible what's happening in the Congo' (175) or her boss asking 'You don't have cockroaches

in Africa?’ (253), as though it was a country. Through the homogenising connotation of the name ‘Africa’ Darling finds her subjectivity entangled in the history of the continent and the life stories of those that she would not normally affiliate herself with; ‘Others with names like myths, names like puzzles, names we had never heard before: Virgilio, Balamugunthan, Freehem’ (243).

However, the novel’s critique of the ignorance associated with ‘African’ as a category of being is nuanced by the concept of multiple affiliations as sites for renegotiating meaning / identity. Darling renegotiates of a heterogeneous African identity through her friendships with Nigerian Marina and African American Kristal in *This Film Contains Disturbing Images* (ch.14). *Hitting Crossroads* (ch.15) depicts Darling and Marina negotiating their immigrant

African and Black identities so differently from Kristal, that she mocks them; ‘it’s called Ebonics, and it be a language system, but it be our own ...Uh-huh, I beg your pardon, my ass, trynna sound like stupid white folk’ (222).

This is topographically represented by the chapter title ‘DESTROYEDMICHYGEN’ (ch.11), deliberately misspelt M-I-C-H-Y-G-E-N with the two words literally smashed together.

When I first arrived at Washington I just wanted to die. The others kids teased me about my name, my accent, my hair, the way I talked or said things...When you are being teased about something, at first you try to fix it so the teasing can stop but then those crazy kids teased me about

everything, even things I couldn't change... I felt wrong in my skin, in my body, in my clothes in my language, in my head, everything. (165)

The destruction of ways of being is associated with the loss of kinship; 'Some things happen only in my country; this here is not my country' (147), coupled with the daunting reality of new kinship or new ways of being; 'That fat boy, who is supposed to be my cousin even though I've never seen him before' (147). The character of Tshaka Zulu nuances this representation of migration as a ruptured genealogy. Symbolically named Tshaka Zulu due to mental illness that leads him to sometimes believe that he is the founder of the Zulu nation, Tshaka sold his father's cattle in order to immigrate to America. Although trapped there until death, Tshaka engages in elaborate rituals of remembrance with a wall full of news clippings of Nelson Mandela, photos of icons such as Hugh Masekela and Kwame Nkrumah, meticulously maintained photos of his family and an unfailing memory of the names of families old and new. The legend of Shaka Zulu, often associated with pre-colonial black power and a resistance to colonising influences, is a somewhat essentialised representation of an 'authentic' or original African subjectivity. Tshaka uses naming rituals to remain inserted in the social matrix of his country of origin; 'he remembers every detail, like he lives with all these people. He has named all of his children and grandchildren...each name carefully thought out and finally given over the phone' (236).

This schema of being 'frozen' in translation does not romanticise the psychological hardship that accompanies translational subjectification. Darling's social immobility is highlighted by working in a grocery store, becoming a domestic cleaner and unable to return to Zimbabwe for even a simple visit because her illegal status. This entrapment between two social matrices is foregrounded when the boss's daughter

arrives wearing a Cornell T-shirt (267) which immediately she refers to as ‘Bastard’s Cornell shirt’.

As the novel draws to an end, Darling’s own psychotic episode during which she scrawls the Zulu words ‘iBioiyirabishi’ [Biology is rubbish] with blood-red ink on her bedroom walls (275) draws her into a vortex of childhood memories. These are interspersed with text messages from her American friends and her observations of Uncle Kojo. Her thoughts and actions oscillate wildly between here and there, and then and now, foregrounding how the present gives new meaning to the past and vice versa. Thus, the country game, played as child returns to her adolescent self with the added significance of her cousin becoming a soldier in Iraq (282). Likewise, a childhood song about the explorer Vasco Da Gama acquires the significance of a bereaved Uncle Kojo driving aimlessly to escape the loss of his son to an American war (280). In this final chapter, time and space are compressed to reveal a cyclical re-configuration of meaning or subjectivities.

This culminates in Darling’s mirror moment, when she learns of the existence of another Darling – daughter of her childhood friend Chipó – living in Paradise as she once did (285).

When Chipó accuses her of no longer having a country to come back to, Darling’s reaction is to smash her computer – an act of violence that reflects dissonance of being trapped in a neverending process of translation. This is symbolically captured by the dissonance of the novel’s closing passage in which the ‘delicious’ smell of American Lobels bread signifies the bloodied carcass of a dog crushed by the wheels of a Lobels truck in Darling’s childhood shanty town.

In the end we could find the dilemma which is in the mind of Darling, as she thinks to return to her native, paradise. So now she has nothing to say as her native land, because she moved to America. This shows the pathetic situation of African people who has been working as a slave in other nation, eventually missing their mother land and bearing all the sufferings.

Chapter four entitled as 'Analysis of Names' deals with names and its significance in the novel *We Need New Names*. Bulawayo had used names in different manner to indicate the political issues which takes place in the novel.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF NAMES

Through naming and privileging the voice of a black-female-child Bulawayo challenges the oppressive Western discourses of Othering, the act of a monolithic entity placing people in a subordinate position based upon their race, gender, age and nationality. Additionally, Bulawayo's use of naming draws attention to the status of Darling as a subaltern, an individual that is usually one who was colonized and/or a female of color that is rendered completely powerless because of their social status. The oppressive forces of Othering and the subaltern are represented by Bulawayo naming the economic, social, and historical chaos that has occurred in Zimbabwe under Mugabe's rule, the remnants of British white colonists and their presence within Zimbabwe, and Darling's experiences in America as an immigrant. The names used within the novel are used to challenge the linear narratives of immigration that reproduce the false ideology of easy upward mobility and the disregard of diasporic realities in order to reclaim the historical and social narrative of the Zimbabwean immigrant/postcolonial novel.

The names that Bulawayo chooses for Darling to reclaim her own history and experiences are a combination of metaphorical, indirect, and through a collective voice of "we" and "they" that speaks to the immigrant perspective as a whole. The novel jolts the reader into Darling's story through the names of Budapest, The Sickness, a tin shanty town named Paradise, "We", and Lamborghini, just to name a few. Examining the function of names in the novel and how they speak to the larger picture of the immigrant narrative is done through Henry Louis Gates' definition of signifying as "the

figurative difference between the literal and the metaphorical, between surface and latent meaning” (82). Analyzing the names used within the novel by connecting how they signify the larger historical and social aspects of Zimbabwe and immigration furthers the argument as to how Bulawayo is reclaiming the immigrant narrative through the privileged voice of Darling renaming her experiences.

Bulawayo privileging Darling’s voice is a way in which she gives a narrative back to Zimbabwean history as it is often misrepresented as subordinate through a Western lens. Othering is a term that can be used to define and discuss the concept of alienating and separating people from the “main stream” because they differ racially or economically. Darling’s homeland of Zimbabwe was occupied by The British Empire, then known as Rhodesia until 1964 and in 1980 after a civil war the country became legally independent. The representation of Zimbabwe depicted in the novel does address the topic of Othering through the names used to describe the economic, social, and historical aspects of Zimbabwe.

The oppression that Darling experiences and aims to overcome with finding her identity and voice within the novel also takes on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s definition of the subaltern. Othering and subaltern are not interchangeable terms, even though both terms share the commonality of oppression. Othering takes a look at the monolithic structure, political powers, governments or culture as a whole, and its responsibility for creating a separation amongst certain people because they differ from the “norm”. Spivak elaborates that many people have an incorrect definition: “everybody thinks the subaltern is just a classy word for oppressed, for Other, for somebody who’s not getting a piece of the pie...in postcolonial terms, everything has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism-a space of difference” (45). Through

naming Bulawayo opens up the “space of difference” that Spivak is discussing by opening up a narrative on Zimbabwe and immigration that is often foreclosed through Western discourses of the media and history. Spivak’s famous essay, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” questions if one who is rendered powerless due to their gender, colonization and lack of Western identity or value can speak for themselves without the presence of a monolithic force. In a way, Bulawayo is answering Spivak’s question with Darling reclaiming and renaming Zimbabwean history and postcolonial identity through the immigrant narrative that seeks to find her voice and identity living in America.

The author of the novel’s own name is representative of her ties to her homeland of Zimbabwe. Bulawayo’s writing in *We Need New Names* is a conglomeration of her own personal life, the stories of those she knew, and the story meant to reach every immigrant, who like herself, needed a new name. The names that she chooses represent certain aspects of Zimbabwean history and identifying with the struggle of identity that immigrants undergo while moving away from their homeland. Bulawayo’s use of naming draws attention to topics such as AIDS, Zimbabwe’s political struggles under Mugabe, and the process of leaving the homeland which are all also arguably intertwined with her own life.

The significance of names in the novel also appears alongside the topic of AIDS as both Darling and Bulawayo suffered the loss of loved ones to the disease. In the novel, Darling’s father becomes so emaciated from the disease that Darling gives him the nick-name “Bones” to signify his skeletal state as well as Bulawayo “lost a brother and sister to AIDS” (35). Bulawayo’s use of names also correlates with the topic of AIDS in the novel as Darling and others refer to the disease as, “The Sickness”. The

use of ‘The Sickness’ in conjunction with AIDS signifies the very real taboo that surrounds AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa as well as Bulawayo calling attention to the taboo of AIDS by using a euphemism through a child’s voice to demonstrate the social anxiety some hold in Zimbabwe when it comes to AIDS. As of 2013 Bulawayo is “working on a collection of AIDS stories, which began as a memoir about all that she has lost” (35). Both Bulawayo and Darling lose loved ones to AIDS and in telling those personal stories of those who have suffered through the use of different names represents the economic and lack of access to health care that are connected to the plight of AIDS in Zimbabwe.

Although Darling and Bulawayo share similar biographical qualities like geographic locations and loss of loved ones to AIDS, the entire novel and the characters within the novel are not solely based on Bulawayo’s personal experiences. Shortly after Bulawayo moved to the United States, Zimbabwe went through even more political and economic turmoil under President Mugabe. Bulawayo conveyed that after “hearing all this desperation, horrors we couldn’t do anything about? I wrote about it” and “the kids in the book were inspired by my friendships” (Rosen 35). The names given in the novel to some of Darling’s friends include Chipso, Bastard, and Sbhoo and each of these children take part in Darling’s life and Zimbabwe’s history. Although Bulawayo did not experience some of the horrors that her friends and family back home in Zimbabwe did, she represents and reclaims those experiences through the names given to the children remembering their homes being demolished by bulldozers, their adventures in the city of Budapest that represent the postcolonial division between race and economic class, and the ideals that they hold with America being a land of freedom and opportunity.

For the first analysis, Bulawayo chooses to un-name the historical event of Operation Murambatsvina that was a government program enacted by President Mugabe to rid Zimbabwe of poor housing communities with bulldozers. Darling's narrative of this historical event is through the name of "The Bulldozers". The name is much more than just a simple term used to represent how a child would see their home obliterated by numerous bulldozers that came out of nowhere. The un-naming of Operation Murambatsvina is a way in which Bulawayo incorporates a metaphor for Darling and people in Zimbabwe being oppressed and mowed over by their own government. On a larger scale the un-naming also gives Darling an individualized voice and a presence in this historical moment that was covered by the Western media, through the likes of CNN and the BBC. The media's interpretation of Operation Murambatsvina furthers the idea of Zimbabwe being an Other because its representation of this government tyranny did not include any dialogue from the people it actually affected. It was all literally viewed through a Western lens. Through un-naming Operation Murambatsvina Bulawayo gives Darling a voice and a way to reclaim this crucial moment in her life and Zimbabwean history.

Bulawayo describes Operation Murambatsvina, but does not specifically name it in the novel; it is arguably alluded to through Darling's vivid dreams of bulldozers that she experienced when she was younger. Darling remembers her past trauma through the bleary eyes of a child: "Then the lorries come carrying the police...and we run and hide inside the houses, but it's no use hiding because the bulldozers start bulldozing and bulldozing and we are screaming and screaming" (67). The visual representation of innocent children screaming against the roars of massive bulldozers is powerful and painstaking. The repetition of the word "bulldozing" ingrains itself into the mind of the reader. The repeated word creates a visually charged image of Darling's

home being demolished over and over, with each movement of the bulldozer another part of Darling's life is destroyed and smashed by the cold jaws of government ordered steel and the only thing that remains is the pulsating-painful memories that are on constant repeat in Darling's mind. The memories of the bulldozers and their violent interjection into the lives of people in Zimbabwe were not just seen through the natives, but also displayed for the world to witness through the media. Darling reflects that: "Then later the people with cameras and T-shirts that say BBC and CNN come to shake their head and look and take our pictures...It's like a tsunami tore through this place, Jesus it's like a fucking tsunami tore this up" (69). A tsunami shows no mercy as it erupts from a ferocious quake within the earth and forcefully gushes onto land and destroys everything in its path, and that is exactly what the bulldozers backed by a corrupt government did to people and their lives. The force of the government was akin to a force of nature, like a tsunami, that is beyond the people's control. And it aired on television for the rest of the world to witness from the comfort of their couches within their still standing homes. The presence of the media in this passage represents the presence of a Western identity through major networks like the BBC and CNN.

The news anchor reports to the world about the human "tsunami" in Zimbabwe, Darling is in the background, she is unseen or unheard on the major news network. She and the aftermath of Operation Murambatsvina are captured in a still picture. She is a muted subaltern in the eyes and ears of the West. Bulawayo uses this passage and the naming of "The Bulldozers" to give Darling a voice and to reclaim the story through the eyes of a child that was standing behind the Western camera man and looking at the shambles of her once previous home. Bulawayo is illuminating Operation Murambatsvina from the point of a view of a native child in order to demonstrate the difference between clips on the news and watching your home being destroyed by your

own government. The complete obliteration of Darling's home, which then forced her and her mother to move to Paradise depicts the horrific effects that Operation Murambatsvina had on Zimbabwe and Darling's life.

Next comes the name Paradise and its ironical element. Paradise is a fictitious city that Darling and many others were forced by the government to live in after their homes were destroyed. Bulawayo could have chosen a real village in Zimbabwe or named Paradise something like "tin-shack Ville" but chose to use indirection with associating a village of poverty with a synonym for heaven. In naming Paradise as Darling's land Bulawayo summons the reader to see this space as home and a form of paradise all its own to Darling. Bulawayo choosing to name this village Paradise complicates what the Western image is of the third world is by challenging the reader to see where Darling lives outside of the realm of "loser" or Other and reclaiming it as a complex space filled with its own beauty, love, and government abandon.

Darling's Zimbabwe is estimated to be set between the years 2005-2008. She describes her home from a hilltop as: "Paradise is all tin and stretches out in the sun like a wet sheepskin nailed on the ground to dry; ...The shacks themselves are terrible but from up here, they seem much better, almost beautiful even, it's like I'm looking at a painting" (36). The sheepskin metaphor that she uses invokes a visual of a land that is worn and tethered to the earth. Paradise has been traversed by many; the soil is not still or fragile but weathered like a drying sheepskin from the many people who were forced to make Paradise their new home. The physical distance that Darling is from Paradise gives her a different perspective on the land that is riddled with tin shacks, and instills an idyllic sense of home within her despite the land's flaws. Comparing her land to a painting, a work of art, allows Darling to parallel what the West would

consider a desolate third world to something beautiful, like a painting that is revered and sought after.

The imagery and use of naming that signifies where Darling lives allows her to claim Paradise as her own and disrupts the image of Western oppression of seeing Darling's land as a "loser" or less than. Paradise also creates a space to tell the story of what happened to those whose homes were destroyed. The people of Paradise had their own homes demolished by their own government, the very entity that is supposed to work for their well-being. Although, Paradise may not be the perfect ideal of a functional city it is a home to many people. Paradise is described as having its own innate beauty, but when compared to the predominantly white fictitious city of Budapest the children find many dividing lines between race and wealth.

After the name Paradise, here comes the name Budapest in which the upper-class people live, the reader is taken by Darling and her friends Chipu, Bastard, and Sbhoo into the fictitious city of Budapest as they scour the trees in the neighborhood for ripe guavas. At first read, one thinks that the novel is in the country of Hungary because of the name "Budapest", but they are in Zimbabwe. Budapest as it appears in the novel, is a white dominant city down the road from Paradise that seeps wealth from almost every corner with its well-manicured lawns, imported cars, and beautiful homes. The actual city of Budapest is similar to the one in the novel as it is renowned for its beauty and for being an economic hub as it is one of the largest cities in Central Europe. The naming of this city is intertwined with representations of hungry children, Darling idolizing Budapest for all that it has and all she does not, and moving to the larger picture that shares historical similarities between Zimbabwe and the actual country of Hungary in the events of uprisings against oppression. Placing Darling in a fictitious

city that symbolizes postcolonial struggle, mirrors the wealth and prosperity of Hungary, and exemplifies her own poverty allows Darling to have a place and reclaim a narrative within a social sphere of Budapest that thinks of the people of Paradise as an Other and Darling as a subaltern.

Arguably Bulawayo chose to name this space, where the upper-class white people occupy, after a city in Hungary as it sounds similar to “hungry” to represent a division of race and economic status that has caused the natives of the land to live in poverty. Budapest is often a space where the children wander in search of guavas and in search of what a life outside of Paradise could look like. Darling describes the city as: “Budapest is big, big houses with satellite dishes on the roofs and neat graveled yards or trimmed lawns...the big trees heavy with fruit that’s waiting for us since nobody around here seems to know what to do with it” (5). The description that Darling gives of Budapest closely resembles middle-class suburbia with its manicured lawns and its large homes that tower over these small children wondering its streets. Darling’s explanation, specifically about the guava trees, also indicates the difference between the natives of the land and those who are foreigners because the foreigners do not appreciate nor know what to do with these overwhelming and delicious guava trees. The division between Budapest and Paradise and more specifically between the white inhabitants and the natives is starkly made with this fictitious space that is representative of President Mugabe’s rule and the effects of postcolonialism on Zimbabwe.

Darling and her friends are aware of the harsh circumstances of being displaced and the lack of resources that surround their lives. Even though their young selves have been exposed to harsh realities, Budapest also serves for them as an avenue of desire as

well as the harsh reality of upward mobility. Sbho is enamoured with the city of Budapest and imagines her life there, but is harshly reminded by Bastard that “Budapest is not a kaka toilet for anybody to just walk in, it’s not like Paradise. You’ll never live here” (14). Bastard is ten years old and he knows that because they are poor and black it is impossible for them to cross over the threshold of postcolonialism in Zimbabwe that keeps them separated into lands like Paradise. Darling, at a later visit to Budapest in the novel sees a Lamborghini and associates the car to a symbol of American prosperity: “When I go live with Aunt Fostalina, that’s the kind of car I’ll drive...I just know, because of this feeling in my bones, that the car is waiting for me in America, so I yell, My Lamborghini, Lamborghini, Lamborghini, Reventon!” (113). The Lamborghini being placed in a space of wealth in Budapest and Darling equating the Italian car to a symbol of American abundance creates a divergence from her life in Paradise.

The children in the novel are far up in the trees when they see a band of men heading towards the neighbourhood and bang on a door. A man answers and the boss proclaims: “Know this, you bloody colonist, from now on the black man is done listening you hear? This is blackman country and the black man is in charge now. Africa for Africans, the boss says to thunderous applause” (120). Within the novel Budapest has isolated Paradise and its people economically and socially. They want their country back, not just their land, but also their nationality and power. They no longer want to be an Other because they want to live in a “Africa for Africans” (120). The couple that lives within the house becomes upset about the situation and the people at their door and demanding their country back. The band of men carry off the couple and there is a moment where Darling and the woman’s eyes meet while she sits in the guava tree. Darling knows that “from the look, because eyes can talk, that she hates us, not just a

little bit but a whole lot” (124). Darling knows that because of the colour of her skin and who she is this woman automatically loathes her and what she stands for. The woman sees the native children hiding in the tree in her yard and she equates them to the next generation of people who, in her mind, do not belong in a place like Budapest. The naming of this place and how it signifies wealth, racial tension, and historical uprisings allows Darling to reclaim and be a part of history with reclaiming a Zimbabwe that has often been robbed of by the West.

Finally, the presence of the West and how it is idolized in the mind of Darling appears in the chapter “We Need New Names”. Bulawayo writes a very powerful scene that juxtaposes the innocence of a child alongside the preparation for an abortion. Darling’s eleven-year-old pregnant friend named Chipso, who was raped by her grandfather, is a symbol of fleeting innocence. Darling and her friends Sbhoo and Forgiveness have decided to help Chipso get “rid of her stomach” (80) in the wee hours of the morning without any adults around to interfere. This chapter centres around three themes: juxtaposing innocent children against abortion and pregnancy through the naming of “the stomach”, the representation of Chipso as the muted subaltern who is a victim of gender violence, and the way in which Bulawayo uses names in conjunction with the girls seeking a new identity that links them to idolized images of America. In this scene and its use of names Bulawayo is speaking to the larger implications of gender violence and the lack of healthcare resources in Zimbabwe as well as highlighting the false ideal these children hold with America as an entity of abundance and wealth while giving Darling her own narrative through names to describe these experiences.

Darling, Sbho, and Forgiveness are determined to help the pregnant Chipo and the way that they name her pregnancy as “the stomach” or “bulge” symbolizes their innocence and lack of understanding pregnancy. They charge themselves to help her because she cannot be carefree like them and easily climb guava trees and take part in their daily games. Darling declares that “today we are getting rid of Chipo’s stomach” (80) and she proclaims that their plan will end Chipo’s bulge, “once and for all” (80). The way in which Darling and the other girls refer to Chipo’s pregnancy as “the stomach” creates a powerful division in this chapter between the innocence of a child and that innocence coming up against arguably real implications of gender violence in Zimbabwe.

What finally pushes the girls to “get rid of Chip’s stomach” is the fear that she will die. The girls believe that Chipo will die from her swollen belly because they “heard the women talking yesterday about Nosizi...[she] is dead now, from giving birth. It kills like that” (80). The young and malleable minds of the children overhearing about a woman dying from giving birth instantly makes it fact that Chipo will die because all pregnancy, “kills like that” (80) . In this moment of contemplating Chipo’s death Darling is clamouring between the innocence of a child and being shoved into adulthood with the harsh realities of her eleven-year-old friend being pregnant and the larger implications of women dying from childbirth. These girls are the game changers for Chipo. They acknowledge the fact that Chipo has a protruding stomach and that she is pregnant, which could equal death in their minds. In the novel thus far, no other adults have acknowledged that Chipo is pregnant. The young and innocent child named Chipo walks around Paradise carrying a child of her own. No adults ever question how and by whom did an eleven-year-old girl become impregnated. Chipo did not speak for many months as her belly grew and one day in a fit of tears she screamed to Darling that, “He

did that, my grandfather” (42) as she pointed to her stomach and continued sobbing, “my grandfather was there and got on me and pinned me down like that and he clamped a hand over my mouth and was heavy like a mountain” (42-43). Chipó was smothered out by her grandfather as her innocence was robbed. The imagery of her grandfather as an overwhelming and strong force crushing down upon her like forceful and unstoppable rock commands the reader into Chipó’s crumbling world of rape and child pregnancy.

In a patriarchal land such as depicted in *Paradise*, Chipó has gone unnoticed until now. Darling was the first one that Chipó broke her silence to about the rape and now Darling is the one who will help save her from her “stomach”. Darling, Sbho, and Forgiveness begin the preparations to get rid of Chipó’s pregnancy. The three girls begin to collect eclectic items strewn about on the ground around in hopes that what they are gathering will help Chipó:

Forgiveness has found a rusted clothes hanger and she is busy with it. We don’t ask her what it’s for...Sbho emerges from behind a bush carrying a twisted metal cup, half of a man’s brown belt, and a purple thingy I don’t know what it is...Chipó is smiling up at us, and we know she’s happy about not dying, and we know we are not going to let her die...” (81-82)

Each of the girls with their own convictions has found items that they have deemed necessary to help Chipó. To an adult the imagery of seeing a rusty clothes hanger is symbolic of tools that were used to perform illegal abortions. The sight of this type of tool in the hands of the young Forgiveness who is preparing to use it on a pregnant child once again juxtaposes the innocence of a child up against harsh realities

of pregnancy that Chipo is facing. The name Forgiveness that Bulawayo chooses to give the girl who is holding the rusty clothes hanger is also symbolic of a form of absolution for Chipo and that she will no longer be punished with the swollen stomach that her grandfather is responsible for.

The process to “get rid of the stomach” (80) is in its next phase and each of the girls need new names in order to really fulfil their roles as the doctors who are going to help the patient, Chipo. The girls mimic a brief glimpse that Forgiveness had of American pop culture from the show ER. The girls begin massaging Chipo’s stomach because Forgiveness “saw it on TV in Harare when I visited... ER is what they do in a hospital in America” (84) and they now need the names of doctors in order to really morph into the American doctors. Forgives becomes Dr. Cutter because of the swiping motions that she continues to do on Chipo’s stomach, Darling becomes Dr. Roz because she is tall, and Sbho becomes Dr. Bullet because she is small and fast. The girls undergo a metamorphosis by taking on the names associated with America as it holds a promise of new bodies and new beginnings from another space and another land. Their imaginations combined with their new names transcend them into another place where Chipo is no longer helpless and they are her saviours, just like the doctors on American television. The doctors not only have the knowledge to save Chipo but they also have confidence as their new names ties them to a land that they consider knowledgeable and full of resources, just like ER.

The girls are charged with confidence with their new American names and the ideals of America that Darling holds also takes on a form of comfort for Chipo. As the girls are almost ready for the operation Chipo becomes frightened and wants “a proper doll with a battery that you can turn off when you want it to stop crying” (86). The

imagery of a pregnant child that desires a doll, a toy to play with speaks to Chipó's innocence and her young mind that has not fully comprehended that she herself will have a child and all of the responsibility and crying that comes with it. Darling promises Chipó that, "When I go live with Aunt Fostalina in America I'll send you the doll. There are lots of nice things over there" (86). Darling's childlike imaginative ideal of what America is like, a land filled with nice things that she can finally have and share with her friend Chipó that is coupled with sitting next to her young pregnant friend under the name of Dr. Roz speaks to Darling's ideals that she maintains with American life.

Naming continues in this scene as they prepare to help Chipó their innocence and the larger problem with gender recognition is revealed as they refer to Chipó's vagina as "thing" (87). This naming not only indicates the euphemisms that children give genitals, it also speaks to how the female form is known as an object and not an actual organ and a part of their body. Dr Cutter (Forgiveness) begins to tug at Chipó's shorts and explains that: "The clothes hanger goes through the thing. You push it in until all of it disappears inside; it reached deep into the stomach, where the baby is, hooks it, and then you can pull it out. I know because I overheard my sister and her friend talking about how it is done" (87). The vagina is given a vague nickname which could indicate an amount of shame and taboo surrounding sexuality and female anatomy. The use of the word "thing" also correlates to Chipó's pregnancy, as to where nobody in Paradise acknowledged its existence except the children who also gave her pregnancy the name of "stomach".

Towards the end of this scene a matronly figure of Paradise, named mother Love, walks upon the girls holding a rusty clothes hanger while Chipó lays on the ground. Her presence and her name signify a maternal-adult existence and one of

nurture. Mother Love assesses her surroundings with a sharp eye and an emotionless face as the girls await their judgment. She picks up the clothes hanger and Forgiveness spouts off that “we were trying to remove Chipo’s stomach... Then she bursts into tears. Chipo raises her voice and starts to wail” (89). Forgiveness was sure of herself as Dr. Cutter and preparing to thrust the clothes hanger into Chipo’s “thing” (87) but now Forgiveness is transformed back into a child, she is no longer a doctor on ER, she is a small child who is at the mercy of an adult. mother Love does not speak and “there are tears in the eyes and she is clutching her chest like there’s a fire inside it” (90). She reaches out and clutches Chipo and they both wail together. mother Love is the first adult within the novel to acknowledge Chipo’s pregnancy and she is also the first one to truly grasp the weight that Chipo carries as she weeps with her. The name, motherlove, becomes fitting for this character as she takes on a maternal role and comforts Chipo with something that she so desperately needs, love.

The chapter does not end with the weeping Chipo and Mother Love, but it ends with another symbol, a butterfly. As the girls watch the embrace between Chipo and Mother Love, Darling sees, “A purple lucky butterfly sits at the top of Chipo’s head and when it flies away...we are all chasing the butterfly and screaming out for luck” (90). The butterfly and how it symbolizes luck for Darling morphs the ending of the chapter back into the light hearted mind of a child. They chase the butterfly with the same amount of passion that they chased the idea of “getting rid of the stomach” (80) and creating new names to align themselves with America.

The name of this chapter sharing the same name of the title of the novel illustrates the way in which Darling is seeking a way to connect to America and to rename her own personal history with Zimbabwe. The names that have been given to

Darling and Zimbabwe as a whole by the West furthers Othering and treating her as less than because she is from a place that namely poor, desolate, underprivileged, and diseased. Seeking new names, specifically in this chapter with associating themselves with the Western media through the television show ER, complicates the privileged child narration. Boehmer explains how “colonized peoples were represented as lesser: less human, less civilized, as child or savage, wild man, animal, or headless mass” (76). Bulawayo challenges these images of colonized people by presenting this chapter centred on children and their youthful and individualized dialogue that speaks to the larger issues of maternal care in Zimbabwe through using names, such as Dr. Roz. Darling and her friends are far from savages as they risked it all to save Chipso and they transformed themselves with new names in order to do so.

Darling refers to America in the novel as “My America” which represents how Darling views America as a place that is all hers for the taking. That name and America itself belongs to her. Darling’s image of what America is like does begin to fade as she is in Detroit. In Darling’s America she is trying to find a place between assimilating with the reality of America not being how she imagined and trying to stay connected to her loved ones back home. The way that Bulawayo portrays this relationship with Detroit and the struggle that immigrants face with maintaining relationships back home through naming reclaims an immigrant’s emotional experience of being in a foreign land.

The neighbourhood where Darling lives with her aunt, uncle, and cousin is described as being dark, grey, rundown, and with gunshots echoing through the night. The letters Darling would send back home purposefully “left out these things, and a lot more, because they embarrassed me, because they made America not feel like My

America, the one that I had always dreamed of back in Paradise” (190). The reality of America disrupts the dream that Darling has in her mind of a place that she thought was filled with dolls and Lamborghini’s for the taking. Darling’s perspective of America is from the view of a child but the thinking of America being a land that represents the possibility of wealth and abundance is an ideal that Bulawayo is challenging, the idea of easy upward mobility with the name “My America”. Immigrants can face racism, xenophobia, and the challenge of securing financial stability. America, at times, is misrepresented as the land of opportunity and prosperity that draws on the ideal of America being there for the taking by anyone. Bulawayo is using this as a way to speak to false notions of upward mobility and abundance in America.

Darling is coming to the realization that her America is not what she imagined and she longs for home. She desires a way to connect with the people around her in “My America” but as she begins to immerse herself in American culture, she finds her relationships back in Paradise floundering. She is torn between the “one part that is yearning for my friends; the other does not know how to connect with them anymore, as if they are people that I have never met” (212). Anthony Appiah, whose family is from Ghana, relates that he “like many, return[s] there from time to time, to visit family and friends. And like many, when I am there, I feel both that I do and that I don’t belong” (90-91). Darling is already in land that treats her as an Other and the name of “My America” reclaims her space in America along with all of the emotional turmoil that she experiences with being torn between home and her new home.

The journey of Darling from Paradise to Destroyedmichygen is not just an immigrant experience, it is reclaiming a story from colonists, racists, and the media. Bulawayo creates new names in order to create a new space for the

Zimbabwean/postcolonial novel. Bulawayo also creates a charged dialogue through the privileged voice of a child.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Bulawayo portrayed the life of African immigrants in contemporary America through knitting a well-crafted story that captures the journey of a young Zimbabwean female who immigrates to the United States with a luggage of dreams. This paper has analyzed the main character through the lens of social psychological theories, namely the Social Identity. The displacement brings life changing experiences which shatter Darling's identity, starting from the drastic social and cultural transformations. Darling has experienced a drastic social and cultural change after her immigration which was a tough challenge for her to retain a stable identity. Therefore, she socially identified and categorized herself as an American which resulted into a distorted and ambiguous identity. Darling has gone through various stages to finally reach a state of self-love and acceptance as an African instead of forcing herself to become an American. This is the auspicious outcome that this study strived to highlight because Darling mirrors what a great number of immigrants go through. At the end, it is crucial to emphasize on the struggle that immigrants endure during their journey of self-discovery due to the difficulty to pass from self-hatred to self-love.

According to Bulawayo's depiction, Darling is among those who are subjected to racial discrimination which was never an issue for them back in their countries. This article attempts to bridge the literary field with social psychological theories by examining the influence of African immigrants' social identifications and categorizations, using Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory. Moreover, the concept of individual mobility is explored as a coping mechanism by the immigrants to deal with their negative social identity. The second objective is the identification of the

various phases that African immigrants go through during the process of becoming black. This can be achieved through the use of William Cross' Nigrescence Theory. A significant contribution of the present paper lies in analyzing African immigrants from a different perspective, focusing more on the journey of self-acceptance and the process of becoming black through the Nigrescence theory. The inclusion of these theories, namely Social Identity and the Nigrescence theory, is a broadening input in literary analysis since they have not been applied in previous literary studies.

Bulawayo does not end the novel with a "happily ever after" ending. The reader is left with Darling trying to figure out if she wants to go to college and a memory of her friends back home. The ending is not conclusive in a traditional form because Darling's story is ongoing and will always be in process. The story of anyone is always ongoing. Bulawayo challenges the ideals of easy upward mobility by leaving the reader with Darling not owning a Lamborghini or being wealthy but attempting to figure out what her next step is in her life in America. The story is also left open ended arguably so that the reader can continue the dialogue of how an individual like Darling and her story can be a jumping off point to mend the damage that has been done by Othering entire countries as well as ushering in support to those who begin to submerge from the oppressive state of subaltern. Towards the end of the novel Darling is confronted by Chipso on Skype about where her loyalties and interests lie now that she is in America. Chipso asks Darling, "Why did you just leave? If it's your country, you have to live in it and not leave it. You have to fight for it no matter what, to make it right" (288). Bulawayo is fighting for her country and trying to make it right with reclaiming a narrative through Darling and using the names of The Sickness, Rhianna, or Cornell to challenge the Western discourses that have taken those stories from so many. Darling's story is a challenge to the oppressive Western discourses that misrepresent Zimbabwe

through the lens of a camera, a headline in a newspaper, or an ideal of misguided representations.

The journey of Darling is not just an immigrant experience, it is reclaiming a story from colonists, racists, and the media. Bulawayo creates new names in order to create a new space for the Zimbabwean/postcolonial novel. Bulawayo also creates a charged dialogue through the privileged voice of a child. The narrative of Darling is one that pushes through the social barricades of Othering and the subaltern and into a realm of an individualized story. Darling's story has been captured by the Western media and her country has been categorized into a generic form through the news portrayed through a Western lens and constricted mentalities that the West holds with countries and people they deem less civilized. The names that Darling uses to reclaim Zimbabwe and her immigrant experience as her own ultimately signify Darling's individuality and her individual story that she charges with new names. Names that are all her own and names that are a part of her history and story.

Bulawayo does not create a false ideology of Darling's story as she still remains as a subaltern but she does also write for Darling to begin to change and find power within her voice. Finding her voice was a journey from Paradise to Destroyedmichygen that Darling had to navigate through racism, broken ideals, missing home, and discovering who she is. Bulawayo acknowledges that upward mobility is not easy, breaking from being classified as a subaltern is not done overnight, and that Darling does reclaim her history and story from the oppressive forces that have silenced her for so long. Darling can speak for herself and for those, like her, who are often overlooked. Darling's voice is straightforward and sincere. One is captured, one is jolted, and one is emotionally swept into the history of Zimbabwe and a girl finding a

voice and who she is. Darling does not just stay within the pages of the novel, she morphs into the tears you shed after you close the book, the breaths you take in while trying to internalize all that has happened in her story, and her voice and story echoes in your ears long after the novel has been closed.

By exploring NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, this paper turns a lens on how the protagonist's nostalgia can be a positive emotion that acts as a coping mechanism to acculturative stress. Moreover, nostalgia is used to evaluate the protagonist's consciousness in response to her acculturation and adaptation in America. While many researchers have approached nostalgia differently, only few of them have noticed its pivotal function in the processes of migration, acculturation and adaptation. Moreover, it was commonly defined as a negative emotion that indicates the failure of the process of migration and adaptation. Darling's negative psychological state results from her experiences of migration and acculturation as she strives to adapt to the American way of life. The psychological consequence of this state is Darling's acculturative stress. She finds that the language, weather, customs, traditions and even religion are different from her homeland. She is torn between maintaining her ethnic identity on the one hand and assimilating in American lifestyle on the other. In such times, nostalgia provides her with strength and stability in the face of the change that pervades immigrants' life. When the past and present come together in Darling's mind, nostalgia plays an important role in maintaining her identity, having a sense of meaning, increasing her self-esteem, and developing her self-awareness. Moreover, Darling's nostalgia helps her in keeping in touch with her customs and traditions. Furthermore, it helps her in forming her integrated identity by adopting certain customs and traditions from both the guest and host cultures. Accordingly, nostalgia offers her a positive

emotional and soothing place through which she can cope with her acculturative stress and achieve the final adaptation.

In the final analysis, suffice to say that *We Need New Names* is a sobering primer on the human toll of migratory experience. To boot, it serves as a cautionary tale on the cloud cuckoo land of the act of migration as a sure-fire way out of destitution. Through the lead character's moral and physical travails, NoViolet Bulawayo foregrounds the universality of poverty as well as suffering. Even in the nations at the cutting edge of development, there are pockets of poverty. The enactment of migration may stem from excruciating despair but is not a fool proof remedy for it. Rather, it lies bare inter alia the cultural and linguistic dehumanization, as it were, of the 'Other' that the migrant subject is the epitome of. The desperate quest for a better life abroad results more often than not in sheer disillusionment. The world that is being indicted and rejected in *We Need New Names* is that of post-colonial African leaders whose gross betrayal of the ideals of independence is the main driver of the continuous flux of movements of young people from Africa to the West, as well the ideology of racism and xenophobia.

WORKS CITED

- Lombardi, Esther. "Literature Quotes and Sayings." *ThoughtCo*, Aug.27.2020,
www.thoughtco.com/literature-quotes-and-sayings-738757.
- Rexroth, Kenneth. "Literature." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 30 Oct.2020,
www.britannica.com/art/literature. Accessed. 21 May 21, 2022.
- Lombardi, Esther. "What Literature Can Teach Us." *ThoughtCo*, 7 Sep. 2021,
www.thoughtco.com/What-is-Literature-740531.
- Mowat, A. Barbara and Werstine, Paul, editors. *Henry VI Part I by William Shakespeare*. Simon& Schuster. 2020.
- "African Literature". *Infoplease*, 6th ed. Columbia UP. 2012. www.infoplease.com.
- "African Literature: History & Characteristics". *Study.com*, 7 Nov.2017,
www.study.com/academy/lesson/african-literature-history-characteristics.html.
- "Booker Prize 2013: NoViolet Bulawayo returns to her Homeland". *The Telegraph*,
The Telegraph, 2 June 2013.
- Bulawayo, NoViolet. *We Need New Names*. Little Brown, 2013.
- Cameron, Claire. "Finding Her Voice: An interview with NoViolet Bulawayo."
Los Angeles Review of Books, 7 August 2013.
- Fontein, Joost. "Anticipating the Tsunami: Rumours, Planning and the Arbitrary State in Zimbabwe." *Africa: The Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 79, no. 3, pp. 369 398, 2009.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. 1988, pp. 66-111. Print.

"NoViolet Bulawayo." Foyles, 2018, www.foyles.co.uk/NoViolet-Bulawayo.

Meditation on womanhood in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*

A project 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

by

M. Cigorniya

(REG. NO. 20APEN05)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Emptiness of Conventional Expectation	13
Three	Growth through Pain and Rebirth	30
Four	Female Relationship	42
Five	Summation	53
	Works Cited	60

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Meditation on womanhood in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*** 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 is a work done by M. Cigorniya during the year 2020-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

M. Mary Manonmani
Dr. M. Mary Manonmani

Head of the Department of English

Guide

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

S. Vennila
Examiner 27/05/2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Meditation on womanhood in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*** 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.

Thoothukudi

May 2022

M. Cigorniya
Cigorniya. M

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Meditation on womanhood in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*** 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.

Thoothukudi

May 2022

M. Cigorniya
Cigorniya. M

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the **Lord Almighty** for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, wisdom and strength in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research-oriented study. I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research-oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. T. Mary Manonmani**, Associate professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance, encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank the faculty of the department of English for their valuable input in teaching and moulding us. My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of the project.

PREFACE

This project entitled in **Meditation on womanhood In Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*** dramatizes the struggles undergone by a woman to become complete. It portrays the condition of many young women in the society of America in 1950s.

The first chapter, **Introduction** presented a review of American literature and the literary fame of Sylvia Plath's works, awards and achievement. It showcases the rudiments of her work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Emptiness of Conventional Expectation** highlights the tale of a sensitive and extremely intellectual protagonist's scaring experiences. It explains the emotional turmoil and internal struggles she faced.

The third chapter **Growth through Pain and Rebirth** pictures the miseries caused to the psyche of a woman and explains how the chastity of women is unique.

The fourth chapter **Female Relationship** describes the helplessness, pain and love both on the motherly and daughterly side. It depicts the quality of a mother and daughter role and how it is evaluated in the society.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby validates the study.

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

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

American works of art reflects beliefs and traditions that come from the nation's frontier. The pioneer ideals of self-reliance and independence appear again and again in American writings. American authors have great respect for the value and importance of the individual. They tend to reject authority and to emphasize democracy and the equality of people. They often celebrate nature and a sense of boundless space. American writers have always had a strong tendency to break with literary tradition and to strike out their own direction. Writers of other countries seem to absorb their national literary traditions. But many American authors have rejected the old in order to create something new. A lively streak of humour runs through American literature from earliest times to the present. American humour tends to be exaggerated rather than subtle. It reflects the people's ability to laugh at themselves even during the most difficult times.

The American Revolutionary Period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson. John Neal, a critic and a writer in the early-mid nineteenth century helped advanced American progress toward a unique literature and culture. Ralph Waldo Emerson pioneered the influential Transcendentalism movement. The political conflict surrounding Abolitionism inspired the writers like Harriet Beecher Stowe. Mark Twain was the first major American writer to be born away from the East coast.

American writers expressed both disillusionment and nostalgia following World War I. The short stories and novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald captured the mood of the 1920s and John Dos Passos wrote about the war. Ernest Hemingway became

famous with *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* in 1954, won the Nobel Prize in Literature. William Faulkner was another major novelist. In the mid-twentieth century, drama was dominated by Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as the musical theatre.

Since the dawn of 20th century, writers were looking for new ways of writing and new topics. Their writings expressed their feelings about living in the modern age, some of them wrote positively, some negatively. Their style became more complicated, experiments were quite common. The authors of the second half of the 20th century followed in the tradition developed by their predecessors. More movements appeared, together they might be called as modernism. The modernist Era started early in the 20th century and continued through the mid-1960s. Modernist techniques followed less formal, unconventional writing styles and focused on Individualism, self-expression, emotionalism and self-identity.

Women's literature presents a unique view into the female American experience. America accomplished abundant alteration following the civil war. The country has undergone tremendous changes and has brought in reforms political, economic, social and literary fields. As the country rose into the Industrial Revolution, female authors were fabricating a place for themselves in the literature. The feminist movement called into the query the aspect of women in the society and female authors acknowledged by establishing works presenting strong, self-resistance, intelligent women. Female writers resist for approval in the literary society in spite of existing in the benevolent society.

Women's literature gained extensive eminence by the end of the nineteenth century. Feminist agents and the augmentation of education for women led to many

more female writers than any preceding century. In previous eras women's writing was assigned generally to writing for children and poetry. These works were distinguished by sentimentality, morality and intensity of sensation deliberates works of feminine genres. During the nineteenth century the women's attestation movement responded to the social, legal inequalities placed on women. Women's literature echoes the feminist movement through subject matter, characterization and situation.

American women writers who have made significant contribution to the field include many familiar and great American female writers such as Maya Angelou, Emily Dickinson, Harper Lee, Toni Morrison, Anne Sexton, Sandra Cisneros, Ayn Rand, Jhumpa Lahiri, Marianne Moore and Jean Kerr. The women represented have won every major writing prize of the 20th century.

American poetry dramatically changed during the mid-20th century. Because the impact of postwar changed the social structure and sensibility of the poets of the fifties. The individual belief became more important than the social life. The poets like Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Theodore Roethke, John Berryman and Anne Sexton dealt with their experiences of private life in poetry. Poetry became self-revelatory and autobiographical. Slices of autobiography that disclosed intimate aspects of an author's life have become grist to the poetic mill, especially since Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* (1959) and after Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton became cult figures in America. M.L.Rosenthal while making a review on Lowell's *Life Studies* coined the term "confessional poetry".

The preoccupation of confessional poetry were private humiliations, sufferings, nakedness of emotion, alcoholism, mental breakdown, confinement in a

mental institution, relationship with one's parents and relations, self-destruction. The works of these confessional poets must be placed in the context of not only private confessional poetry but of the poetry of madness as well. As they are the product of the second world war, certainly they are all concerned with man as victim.

Sylvia Plath, who belonged to this school of confessionalism is certainly concerned with self as victim. The victim may be a person, who is victimized expelled, pursued, disabled, persecuted or destroyed by a person, a group by a person, a group or an agency more powerful than he or she is. She had been "stimulated" by such writers as D.H Lawrence, James Joyce, Fyodro Dostoevsky, Virginia Wolf, Henry James, Theodore Roethke, Emily Dickinson and later by Robert Lowell and Anne Sexton member of the so-called "confessional school of poetry".

Sylvia Plath acquired some characteristics of the poetry of her contemporaries. The motif of mental breakdown associated with the theme of death is obvious in the poems of Theodore Roethke, Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath. The theme of guilty consciousness adds to the experimental vision projected by them. The metaphor of journey to death is also common to Theodore Roethke, Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath. This metaphor-of journey does not carry any positive meaning for these poets. She herself is personally responsible for the holocaust that she is ultimately her own victim. Her central obsession from the beginning to the end of her life and career was her father. His death affected her so catastrophically that she felt herself victimised socially and intellectually.

Sylvia's poetry exhibits the feminist consciousness. But she wrote and published her poems before the feminist movement began in America. She stands, however, as a milestone in women's movement. Her poetry has those characteristics of the feminist movement with confessional mode. There is expression of despair and disintegration, pain and frustration. These characteristics could also be discovered in other contemporary poets. But her expression of them is more vigorous than others. Madness occurs in her as a metaphor for absurdity. This is brought to light in her poems through frustration and contradiction.

Sylvia Plath was one of the most dynamic and admired writers of the 20th century. In the history of American feminism, Sylvia Plath has a very special place as she is an early feminist. She was born on October 27, 1932 in Boston to Otto Plath and Aurelia Schober Plath. Sylvia Plath and her younger brother Warren had a happy childhood at Winthrop, a town near Boston, and this was instrumental in developing her as a writer. She wrote complete poems when she was hardly five. Her first publication was at the age of eight. In 1941, a short piece *Poem* was printed in the children's section of the Boston Herald. Her father died on the night of November 5, 1940, and when the eight-year-old Sylvia Plath was informed of her father's death, she proclaimed never speak to God again. Her strong and conflicting emotions of love, hate, anger and grief at the loss of her father were to affect Sylvia for the rest of her life.

Plath won a scholarship to Smith College, where she continued to excel academically and in her poetry. Throughout college she also dated with many boys, and the most serious relationship was with Dick Norton, a Wellesley neighbour. She also developed periodic bouts of depression, insomnia and thoughts of suicide,

as evidenced in her Journals. Plath went to New York as part of a writing contest she had won through *Mademoiselle*. Contrary to expectations, Plath returned home very depressed and attempted suicide by swallowing a handful of pills and hiding under the stairs of her home. Strange behaviour in the hotel at New York, discarding her clothes off the roof of the hotel, rejection from her desired course at Harvard Summer School, insomnia, hospitalization, electroshock therapy, consequent suicide attempt by consuming sleeping pills, financial and emotional help from a sponsor, another round of electro shock treatment from a female psychiatrist in a private hospital and even the frightening incidents of rape and near-to death haemorrhage are all incidents in her life which she has recorded in her autobiographical fiction *The Bell Jar*.

Plath transcribes her private anguish into fiction, and *The Bell Jar* is a window into the author's mind. After graduating with a Fulbright scholarship, Plath went to Cambridge to study literature. In England, her meetings with Ted Hughes led to their marriage in 1956. They had a daughter Frieda and a son Nicholas. In 1960, a collection called *Three Women* of Plath's poems and *The Colossus* was published. In the summer of 1962, Sylvia's piece was set to air on the BBC. Though initially her married life was idyllic, the bliss did not last long. As Ted Hughes's affinity for Assia Wevill strengthened, his bond with his wife loosened.

After Hughes departure, Plath, in turmoil of emotions, was at a turning point. Alone in charge of her fate, she was suddenly able to focus the full force of her expert craft, her huge energies, on the unresolved inner predicament that had brought her to this pass. She could now examine every facet of it and definitively conquer her predicament by writing it out. She could then go forth, unencumbered,

to a new world full of possibilities. Her extremist poetry of the *Ariel* finally turned out to be more extreme than any of her predecessors.

Though Plath struggled single handily, to balance her career and her household duties, and write feverishly, she was unable to bear the torment and the anguish. She put an end to her life prematurely in 1963. The same year her only novel was published, the sequel of which she herself had burnt. This manuscript is supposed to have told the story of a young American girl in England who fell in love and married. *The Colossus*, *Crossing the Water*, *Winter Trees*, and *Ariel* contain Plath's poems. *Johnny Panic* and *The Bible of Dreams* has her short stories, prose and diary excerpts. The primary concern of Plath in drafting these poems was to reconstitute herself; exhibiting a poetic transparency in which a woman writer is assumed to be writing directly and authentically from her lived experience.

Sylvia Plath considered writing a way of life, an expression of being alive; writing was at once an expression of her personality and preservation of sanity. In her diary she noted, "I have powerful physical, intellectual and emotional forces which must have outlets, creative, or they turn to destruction and waste..." (131). Sylvia Plath was a gifted writer who suffered an extreme mental breakdown; this in turn, led to an obsession with the theme of death in her writings. Her writings are intensely personal, often based on every day experiences, the knowledge of which often proves beneficial in revealing obscure references or cryptic images to fuller clarify and meaning for the reader. She is considered as the writer in love with death, the woman who perversely made suicide a metaphor for her creativity.

The intensity of the personal and literary struggles Sylvia Plath underwent is rendered in *The Journals*. *Letters Home* is a record of Sylvia Plath's

correspondence addressed chiefly to her mother, from her time at Smith College up to her suicide in London. To crown all the honours, awards and prizes she had received in her lifetime, came the rarely posthumously awarded Pulitzer Prize in 1982. Sylvia Plath expressed feminist ideas in her poems, short stories, *Journals*, *Letters Home* and the only novel *The Bell Jar*. *The Bell Jar* that was first published in January 1963, under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas is considered to be the earliest feminist novel- a feminist novel that was written even before people realized that real feminism had bloomed in the US. Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* seen in this light is a typical feminist novel in the pre-feminist era. It projects the predicament of the trapped and the oppressed woman of the American society of the fifties. Plath presents woman as being crushed under an institutionalized system of male power and strength.

To locate Sylvia Plath in the feminist literary tradition, what Elaine Showalter considers in her *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) has to be foregrounded. She speaks of a female literary tradition and sees its identity in resistance to a dominant society. According to her, this tradition of women's literature has a hierarchical nature and it falls into three periods. During the first phase, which she calls "feminine", women wrote like men imitating their literary devices. In the second phase of protest or the 'feminist' phase, women dramatized injustice against women and wrote about their oppression and victimization. In the third phase, a period of self-discovery or the 'female' phase, women wrote, turning to their own experiences and relying on their own resources in their quest for a true identity.

Sylvia Plath as a writer in her quest for self-definition demonstrated a feminist consciousness and produced great works, voicing the protest against her entrapment and victimization. Before assessing the nature of such a consciousness, which gets crystallized at the final phase of her career as a writer, it will be profitable to examine both the traditional and the feminist approaches to the complex and continuing problem of victimization of a woman in a contemporary world. First the traditional, male stream and non-feminist view of a woman in a patriarchal society is examined and then how feminist ethics or the feminist schools of thought reject such an approach, is considered.

Plath posed questions which drew the attention of all reviewers, critics and readers alike. It is interesting to observe that her life and her poetry are intertwined to such an extent, as to lose contact and perception of all outer things and outer life, even at the cost of getting irrevocably isolated. Out of this fatigue of isolation and a terrible gnawing insecurity thereof, she holds out her hands to death, thus wishing to transcend her life and its agony of which her works are the expression. And she does transcend the boundaries of herself, her terribly lonely life, her social context and all those devices that assimilate to make her writing out of experience.

Plath as a writer makes almost a desperate attempt towards the realization of her own voice and attempts a kind of poetry which could speak out the fear and apprehensions of her life as a woman. She takes up the different aspects of woman's life through a communion with the surface of her mind, imagination of violence and sexuality. She moves away from the conventional instances in style and theme.

The Bell Jar is about a woman struggling to become whole. In this self-expressive novel, Plath's protagonist, Esther Greenwood, throughout the novel is harassed and haunted because of her very fragile and vulnerable self. She is an unwilling captive of her background and conditioning; external familial and social pressures war with her natural instincts and her level of self-confidence is far too low for those instincts to assert themselves sufficiently. The discussion here does not probe deeply into the intricacies of the incidents presented in the text, but confines itself to only a few deliberations regarding Plath's attitude to a woman's place in the society, particularly in conjunction with man.

In the novel, Esther's innocent expectations of sex and marriage are thoroughly conditioned by her mother and others. According to them, to be acceptable as a wife she must remain a virgin, and after marriage she must assume a submissive domestic role. Instinctively she rebels against these notions, partly because she naturally senses their limitations, and partly because she discovers that men are not bound by similar premarital rules. The depression, caused by immobility baffles and frustrates her and indeed she is trapped within the stifling confines of the bell jar. Unable to establish and nurture a self-identity, she is reduced to act according to the expectations of others. This in turn makes her lose touch with her own true self and the result is further loss of confidence and growing disorientation.

Men especially threaten Esther; their reality always fails her expectation. They are either hypocrites like Buddy Willard, or violently selfish like Marco, or sexually cold like Costantin and Erick, or crude and cruel like Irwin. Hence, marriage is impossible for Esther, since she knows that any man would require that

his wife becomes a domestic drudge, “being brain washed” (68). Esther feels powerless and victimized, threatened and judged by everyone and everything. Placed in such a precarious emotional position by her insecurity and disorientation, the embattled Esther finds it more and more difficult to connect her inner self with outer reality. Esther grows to understand the futility of building her identity on the expectations of others. She achieves sufficient perspective to see that her struggle against the tyranny of customs and expectations is not hers alone, but is generally characteristic of human condition.

The bell jar has now been raised, it now hangs, “suspended, a few feet above my head. I was open to the circulating air” (174). The protagonist is no longer a sexual victim, even though her fear of marriage persists, she comes to terms with her sexual identity. An atmosphere of uncertainty pervades toward the end as the fear of the bell jar is simply “suspended” (174), Esther is as good as new, but not completely new. In her only novel, given its final shape in the transitional phase of her career as a writer, the most demanding and disturbing period in her personal life. Plath, using the young protagonist as her mouth-piece, lodges a scathing attack on the conventional notion of marriage, the orthodox sense of female virginity and the double standards of morality as practised by men.

The indignation and angry outbursts of the protagonist should be viewed as a sign of Plath’s new attempt at artistic independence in the final months of her life. She unburdens herself of a male god at the centre of her universe and also frees her from the restraints on her imagination. It is not in her anger for men but in the artistic expression of it that she finds a new awareness of her distinctively feminine “fertile” and “life giving creative energies”. Further, Plath’s attempt “to free myself

from the past” is ample evidence of the indication that she will not be dominated by images of femininity other than by her own concept of a true woman liberated from all forces of oppression.

To convey this story of the growth of a woman, Sylvia Plath has used a feminist idiom. She uses very special images to suit feminist themes and intense female experiences. Anne Cramny Francis in *Feminist Fiction and Feminist Uses of Generic Fiction* defines feminist genre fiction as “fiction written from a self-consciously feminist perspective, consciously encoding an ideology which is in direct opposition to the gender ideology of western society, patriarchal ideology” (88). In this sense, *The Bell Jar* is a feminist genre fiction written before feminism reached its peak, and before patriarchal ideas were openly debated in America. Sylvia Plath belongs to Elaine Showalter’s “female phase” when women writers advocate their own autonomous. Female perspective, and we find Plath delving deep into her psyche and looking for her own independent female identity.

Sylvia Plath has long been hailed as a feminist writer of great significance. In her 1976 book *Literary Women* Ellen Moers writes: “No writer has meant more to the current feminist movement” (116) and still today, at a time when the idea of equality for women isn’t so radically revolutionary as it had been earlier in the century. Plath is a literary symbol of the women’s rights movement. Roberta Mazzenti quotes Robert A. Piazza as writing that there is: ““Little feminist consciousness” in Plath’s work, and goes on to explain that because: Plath’s work is being read...by readers searching for political sustenance, feminist sentiment that the author never held can easily be attributed to her writing” (116).

CHAPTER 2

EMPTINESS OF CONVENTIONAL EXPECTATION

Well, I think that as far as language goes, I'm an American, I'm afraid, my accent is American, my way of talk is an American way of talk, I'm an old fashioned American. That's probably one of the reasons I'm in England now and why I'll always stay in England.

(166)

-Sylvia Plath

This is some of the attitudes of the past America which are brought out with a revealing insight in *The Bell Jar* and the novel, therefore, has a documentary importance for the reader. *The Bell Jar* is not merely a record of the conflicts and cross-currents in Plath's personal life leading to her suicide attempt and final recovery. Nor is it just an attempt of the author to come to grips with those shattering personal memories through a literary rendering of a phase of personal misery. Literature is not merely for her pathological value. It is a creative recording of her personal experiences, and the novel, without even the knowledge of biographical details infused into it, turns out to be a moving tale of a sensitive and extremely intellectual girl's scarring experiences in her quest for identity.

Esther Greenwood, a student of Smith College, is a girl who struggles to combine her rare intellectual prowess with creative abilities, and wins an award from one of New York's greatest fashion magazines. Esther is at New York in the summer of 1953, the year of the electrocution of the Rosenbergs. The very opening

sentence of the novel runs thus “It was a queer, sultry summer, the summer they electrocuted the Rosenbergs” (1). Throughout the novel this image of the electrocution looms large upon the psyche of the protagonist. She comes to work as a Guest Editor and is apprenticed to the literary Editor of the magazine. The manic desperation of a flat and fast life in New York brings the protagonist face to face with certain experiences in which she feels gauche, hesitant, nervous and finally wrecked. The inane baseness, the hate, the sexual violence and the manic gaudiness of the American world of commercial journalism and image - promotion are all rendered vividly and with a cool detachment in the opening section of the novel. Her suburban low middle-class background, her poverty and her unique intellectuality cannot save Esther into a sense of meaningful existence. “I couldn't get myself to react. I felt very still and empty” (2).

In New York, Esther comes to associate herself mainly with four women characters - Doreen, Betsy, Hilda and Jay Cee. Both Doreen and Betsy are award-winners like Esther, but it is in contrast with these two characters that Esther's problem is revealed to the readers. The cleavage between her artistic and intellectual ambitions and that of social conformity is noticeably absent in Betsy and Doreen. Betsy is typically feminine, soft, tender and kind, but completely devoid of intellectual distinctions. She achieves fame as a cover girl and is a perfectly normal individual, so that she can accept her femininity as a result of which she escapes any form of identity crisis. Doreen is also an individual who has the ability to be conscious of her femininity and accept it in a typically social outlook. She is sharply sophisticated, intelligent but unacademic. Esther rejects her, for when she comes to encounter the reality of Doreen's social experience she feels terribly estranged from her world. Esther goes out one evening with Doreen which

leads to their encounter with Lenny Shepherd. Doreen easily yields to Lenny's call for enjoying such a "nice night" (6) through a couple of drinks in a bar. Lenny offers a friend of his to give Esther company, but she is unable to accept a sudden company as a male partner. The encounter with Lenny ultimately culminates in a game of sex. Both Doreen and Lenny enjoy it as "funny" (6) while it appears to her as a disastrous experience. Doreen and Esther are taken into Lenny's apartment, where to her utter dismay Esther walked out of Lenny's apartment.

Hilda, another college girl, apprenticed to the fashion editor of the magazine. She is the typical unintellectual female who perfectly fits herself into the world of media-promotion. Her ambition, she records, is to be a designer of hats, with expensive looking scarfs and dangling gilt chains, is portrayed as if she has no identity, no humanness, nothing but of hats and hats and hats only.

Jay Cee, the literary editor of the fashion magazine, is Esther's boss for the month. She is a thoroughly successful career woman, who has struck a perfect compromise between her personal ambition and her social role as a woman. Jay Cee is married, but Esther cannot imagine her feminine self as real. Jay Cee offers her an opportunity for reappraisal of her future career plans. Esther wishes Jay Cee in the mother's position because she would afford a larger scope for career-planning and that she was much less narrow and constricted than the mother who could think of nothing but a secretaryship for her own daughter. The point is that ultimately Jay Cee cannot afford to be a real mother, a better one than Esther's actual mother, since she cannot provide her with love. Jay Cee does not offer any positive love to Esther in her crisis. She simply vanishes from the room, giving her time to recover from the traumatic experience. She cannot actively help her. All she

does is to provide some pseudo-amusement. She brings some manuscripts which she feels will amuse Esther. Jay Cee is seen as inadequate, unable to help her in her anguished search for identity. The problem with Esther is that there is a total absence of love in the world around her.

All her relationships in the novel are negative ones. Buddy Willard, Constantin and Marco are all portraits of hate. Buddy Willard, a medical student whom Esther accepts as her suitor, is considered gentle, socially decent, eligible to fulfil the expectations of the Greenwoods, has grown up in the same vicinity with Esther. Buddy suddenly comes to visit Esther at Smith and invites her for a weekend at Yale, where he is studying in the medical college. Esther is initially delighted to accept him as a suitor, for Buddy seems to offer her an entry into a larger world of personal fulfilment. Moreover, Esther considers him a source of release from the teasing of her college mates.

Esther is a social outcast in the sense that she is looked down upon by the other girls as she does not have proper friends to date her on weekends. Though Esther gains a kind of individual identity through her brilliant academic performances, she can never present herself as a complete woman having a social identity as well. But it is Esther's closer personal encounters with Buddy which lead her realisation of his hypocrisy. The breach between the two actually begins in the moment Buddy kisses Esther for the first time. Esther cannot reciprocate passionately to Buddy. It is here she learns that Buddy was involved in a sex-relationship with a lusty waitress. Esther feels betrayed and infuriated. She is dejected not so much because of Buddy's affair with the waitress, but Buddy had pretended innocence and tried to blame Esther for having much more experience

and knowledge of sex than him. The disaster with Buddy is a constant source of turmoil in Esther's feminine psyche. She starts brooding upon the general ethical concepts of pureness and virginity, concepts which are of much importance in her middle-class suburban society.

Constantin, an interpreter at the United Nations, came to meet Esther at New York. He gets her company through Mrs. Willard, Buddy's mother who has obviously asked him to meet Esther. Constantin takes her out to a visit to the United Nations and later, in the evening, invites her to his apartment to listen to balalaika music. She asked him if he is engaged, thinking that is probably the reason why Constantin inclined to lie with her, but Constantine simply says that he consciously keeps away from such attachment. Her relationship with Constantin is merely barren in an urge to morally revenge herself upon Buddy, she has been on a search for a suitable partner to be seduced.

Eric is the only boy who voices his disgust with the obsession with sex among young boys and girls and tells her how bitterly he hated the idea of sex, specifically because he felt that sex destroyed human love. Esther chooses to propose love to Eric. But it fails. Esther considers Constantin as the best potential seductor. Constantin seems mature enough to keep a reserve about his experience with her and moreover, Esther feels, that sleeping with him would be taking the best possible revenge against Buddy, since Constantin is introduced to her through Mrs. Willard. At last Esther goes to his bedroom and in his clean lonely bed drowns off to a barren sleep. She gets awake after midnight only to find Constantin "warm with sleep" (67). Finally, she realizes that Constantin has failed her.

Constantin is an ironical pointer to Esther's increasing inner emptiness and brings to focus her growing need to establish a meaningful human identity.

If Constantin's indifference to Esther reflects his latent hate for her, Marco explicitly expresses the hate which Esther recognizes among the males around her. The encounter with Marco is literally disastrous. On her last night in New York, she is persuaded by Doreen to go to a country club dance and there she meets Marco, the aggressive male counterpart of Constantin. Constantin's neglect of Esther suggests a total lack of human feeling for her; in Marco this apathy is further intensified into a confirmed attitude of destructive hate. Marco has an air of compulsive attraction around him. The moment Esther looks at this tall, dark man with slightly longer hair, she notices his immaculate white suit, his yellow satin tie with a bright stickpin. "I couldn't take my eyes off the stickpin" (85), recalls Esther.

When Marco gives her the diamond, she is simply gripped by a fascinator for him. But the moment he holds her arm tight, she flinches in pain. Marco's male power is seen as an injury upon her womanhood. Esther readily realizes that Marco is a bad threat, an impinging male-image in her feminine world. In her vision Marco is associated with the menace of a snake. Her illusions are once again shattered when she understands, beyond doubt, that Marco is a misogynist. He simply does not pay any attention to even the most dazzling women in the room. His attention to Esther is not seen by as a mark of kindness or even curiosity, but because she "had happened to be dealt to him like a playing card in a pack of identical cards" (85).

Marco is a source of depersonalisation and Esther realizes that before him she loses her human identity. As a woman-hater he makes food for Esther when he

practically forces her into dancing with him. She realizes that Marco cannot be easily dismissed; it is his male-power and attractiveness that hold strong upon her, “woman haters were like gods” (86), realizes Esther. Esther is merely trapped in his compulsive power; she cannot but hold him in her heart. Later, when Marco takes her out to the garden, Esther learns to her dissatisfaction that he is a fanatical split-off idealist. She finds him adoring an ideal vision of beauty which he sees in his cousin whom he nearly worships. It is when Esther questions him about her, pointing to him the essential unreality of such a relationship which will never fructify into marriage, that she is given a taste of Marco’s intense hate reaction. For the first time in her life, she tastes the real male-touch, a touch which, ironically, is loveless, a touch which does not give meaning to life, but which, through the terror of power, crushes and destroys whatever meaning she finds in life.

Marco’s hate is so terrible and monstrous that he simply strips her off to dishonour her, to put her to the extremity of shame and suffering, but not to deflower her. The imagery he pointedly suggests violence. The most pathetic irony is that even while Marco forces his dirt upon Esther, she expects that he would seduce her. Esther feels a terrible urgency to be deflowered only to revenge upon Buddy’s hypocrisy; yet even that need could not be fulfilled through Marco. His feelings are so intense, so mountainous and disturbing, that even in hate he does not rape her. such a pitiful desperation obviously results in the deepening of the void within her.

The yearning for being seduced is actually a longing for uniting with the positive side of maleness that lends significance to feminine experience, that makes a woman taste the wholeness of life. Wherever Esther looks around her, however

vigorously she tries to experience wholeness through which to establish at least a sense of femininity, she feels betrayed and cheated of her hopes and desires. The world of encounters in New York, beneath all its lucence and grandeur, only intensifies the horror of darkness, the darkness of emptiness and the meaninglessness of her existence.

Esther struggles to achieve a sense of identity only make her feel cabined, crippled and confined. She feels stultified within her encapsulated gloom. The world finally begins to break away and her self-splinters into fragments, a tendency towards a schizophrenic withdrawal, to commit suicide. Earlier, during her visit to the sanatorium where Buddy was undergoing treatment for tuberculosis, Buddy asks her that most decisive question in their entire relationship, "How would you like to be Mrs. Buddy Willard?" (62). She simply tells him that she has decided never to get married in life and goes on providing evasive gestures to his last, but desperate appeal.

Later, when Buddy takes her skiing, a sudden impulse to suicide grips her. As she is about to push herself down the ski-track, she is aware that she will not be able to stop herself by skill or by any belated access of will. The suicide attempt on the ski-slope is a quest for purity, for rebirth and rejuvenation. The ski-slope has obvious similarities with the birth passage. Her journey down the slope is a journey down the womb, a journey to rebirth and resurrection. To die is to achieve a triumphant freedom from the hypocrisy of the male-dominated world, from the complexities of social attitudes.

Esther comes back home, she takes up all her fashionable dresses, and throws them one by one from her hotel window to be borne in the darkness and lost in the

world. These dresses symbolize her social self and the throwing away presents a moving image of cremation in which she sacrifices her anguished and arduous concerns for achieving an integration of her personal world with the society at large.

Esther is shown as back to the world of Boston with the legacy of her searing experiences in New York. The final breakdown comes the moment Esther is back to her mother's world. Of all the unflattering pictures of individuals who fail to offer her love, thereby virtually contributing to her breakdown, the mother's image suffers the most. What Esther needs at that moment is kindness and affection which can reintegrate her broken visions, but what the mother offers is superficial concern. Esther immediately feels stifled in the sheltered world of Boston of which the mother is a representative. Esther's animosity to her mother is dreadfully powerful. She sees in her a machine, and not a woman's heart too full of the milk of human kindness.

Esther yearns to be mothered out of her psychic storms, out of the conflicting forces raging within her, and it is because of the mother's inability to do so that she feels hostile towards her. The entire effective and machine-like, smooth routine of the mother is a threatening impingement upon Esther's private world. Esther wants to murder her in her sleep, but the decisive violence ultimately eludes her. It is only through an escape into the more meaningful world of creative individuality that she can surmount the pseudo-life offered by her mother's world. Her last ray of hope sinks into the darkness of despair when she learns from her mother that her application is rejected. With the crumbling down of her last hope, her emotional world finally snaps and falls to pieces. She is offered an alternative course in the

summer school, may be for learning German or abnormal psychology, but she just cannot master up the falling psychic forces in her to decide. She refuses the offer. This is Esther's discovery of the dichotomy between the impulses of the human will and the impulses of the parts of her body.

A similar experience is recorded in Esther's description of the failure of her suicide attempt as she goes to hang herself. It is only when she decides to stay back in her mother's house that the bell jar finally claps her shut. For a short time, she tries to write a novel, to pick up shorthand under her mother's instruction, but in all her attempts she realizes that failure is the only reality facing her. She strikes her flag to the mental Inertia. The refusal of the summer course of creative writing, Esther sees as a rejection of herself by the world of intellectual creativity, and in revenge she attempts to reject the social world, a false collection of hollow attitudes and concepts. It is in such a moment that Buddy's letter comes and with all the savagery of vengeance she refuses to accept Buddy for good.

Buddy is dismissed as a hypocrite, one who merely conforms to social codes and conventions and adopts social attitudes. Esther's revolt against Buddy is inextricably related to her revolt against that society which sees him as eligible and potent enough to fulfil its expectations. It is also against the attitudes of young feminist in society that Esther's revolt manifests itself. It is in this context that her venom is poured against Dodo Conway and even Mrs. Willard, apart from her mother. Dodo is a terribly satiric portrait of a woman who has come to successfully reconcile herself to the woman's eternal role of the mother. The satisfaction and fulfilment that she finds in her six children and the seventh she is presently carrying are rejected as pseudo-fulfilment, as false-doing, which Esther feels indicative of

the negative and subordinate role of woman in society. Esther cannot accept the source of the strength of Dodo's position in which she seems to make meaning out of her female role. Dodo's world of personal fulfilment amid fertility reflects a mere surrender to male domination. Earlier, it is because of such an attitude that she feels estranged from the world-view of Mrs. Willard.

When the crisis deepens and the bell jar descend upon her, Esther suffers breakdown. She is referred to a psychiatrist, Dr. Gordon, who instead of reconstructing her splintered self, further annoyed her split. The very first meeting with Doctor Gordon proves unfruitful. Esther hopes to find some "kind", "intuitive"(104) man who would be able to provide a curative solace to her inner needs. But Esther recognizes him as "conceited" (104), shut within his own world of masculine ego-centricity and private success. Immediately she realizes that he would be incapable of rescuing her from the feeling of being trapped in a bell jar. Far from telling her the source of her feeling of the inane makes it clear to her that he would not suffer her to enter his private world of satisfaction. She feels estranged and hostile. He simply appears as a different version of impingement, one who would at best force her.

Dr. Gordon is a serious source of threat. Instead of helping her revive her lost world, he simply offers her a horrendous experience of ferocity. She is admitted to his private hospital. Dr. Gordon is a kind of psychiatrist who petrifies his patients. She encounters the sight of a woman being dragged along and experiences the sort of repression he offers, a repression which is born out of complete ignorance of the plight of madness, an ignorance which borders on violence. She experiences the Electro Convulsive Therapy; it intensifies her gloom and multiplies her splinters.

The experience of the shock-therapy is essentially related to the execution of the Rosenbergs through electrocution, a crucial image which is introduced right in the opening sentence of the novel.

In her baffled terror Esther feels closeness with the awful plight of the Rosenbergs. She feels brutally sacrificed on Dr. Gordon's altar of violence and male power. Such an appalling treatment she definitely does not deserve. In desperation, the urge to be, to live, fades away and she ruminates upon the different modes of suicide. The only way left for her is to die and Esther starts ruminating on suicide. She locks herself in the bathroom and runs a tub full of warm water. She takes out a Gillette blade and thinks of the Roman philosopher who said that the easiest way to die would be to open his veins in a warm bath. But in her mental inertia, she loses the ability to translate thoughts into action. In the absence of proper motivation, her will fails her. Esther goes to Deer Island Prison, sits by the sea in the ambience of her childhood when her father was alive and her grandparents lived there, and once again thinks of suicide.

Esther goes out to the sea-shore for a change with Jody, her childhood friend, in the company of Mark and Cal. While Mark and Jody enjoy a sea-bath, she discusses a play with Cal which deals with a mad character. Esther is immediately fascinated with the play because of its concern with madness and more because in it the madman is killed by his mother. Casually she asks Cal what form of suicide he thinks best and Cal speaks of blowing his brains out with a gun. Esther cannot feel interested in such a means of suicide, for it implies male-violence and power.

Esther cannot make much of her wish to drown herself. As she starts swimming out, she realizes that her "heart boomed like a dull motor in my ears"

(128). This consciousness of the heart booming is a reminder of life and, obviously, she is in a fix. Yet she decides to drown herself: "The only thing to do was to drown myself then and there" (130). Esther in all her suicide attempts does not yearn for this form of death. What Esther seeks through suicide is rebirth, a state in which she can transcend the sufferings of her inner-psyche and in which she can resurrect herself into her purer, real self. It is in search of rebirth that Esther, in spite of her failures in drowning or bleeding to death, tries to hang herself. It has already been pointed out how Esther fails even in this attempt.

Esther thinks of her father. She decides to go and pay her father's tomb a final visit, for she believes that the ritual of mourning for her dead father has not been properly performed. As she enters the graveyard where her father is lying, she recollects scornfully that her mother had prevented her from mourning his loss properly. This is probably the worst accusation that has been hurled against her mother. When she finds her father's gravestone, she now pays for the mother's lapse by a ritualistic mourning that poured out from her eyes in profusion. This is a negative reunion with her dead father. It is only after her visit to the father's grave that she can muster up strength enough to ultimately commit the suicide she has long been trying to. Leaving a note to her mother, Esther finally attempts suicide. This time she is calm and orderly in her preparation for the suicide. She opens her mother's locker and takes out fifty sleeping pills from the strongbox. She then goes downstairs, takes a glass of water and goes down to the cellar. The methodical coolness in the preparation for the event suggests that this effort will not fail her like the earlier ones. She crouches at the mouth of the darkness, like a troll. It is significant that she chooses the cellar as the perfect place to cease to exist without any pain. The cellar symbolizes the mother's womb, an entry into which would

easily bring about a rebirth. It is the worst irony of her fate that even this attempt fails her. What she achieves is not rebirth, but even a further dislocation of her identity. Later, when she is removed to a local hospital, what she wants to see is an image of the self-reborn; what she sees instead is a dehumanized, sexless image of gawkiness and distortion. The realization of her extent of awkwardness and self-denigration results in a shock which leads to further revolt.

In a mood of destructive condemnation, she breaks the mirror into pieces. The utter indifference she faces in the hospital ward irritates the bruise in her, and she, too, is readily regarded as too insane to be kept there. She is thus sent over to a city hospital. Here, too, she encounters the same callous nonchalance and the surrounding atmosphere of hatred. In the city hospital she takes revenge upon the unfeeling nurses, by kicking a tray of thermometers and shattering the mercury bulbs. She is under the stereo-typed rules of primitive psychiatry, she is punished by isolation. As she is taken away to a separate room, one devised for rabid and hopeless cases, she manages to scoop up a ball of mercury from the floor. After being locked alone she opens her palm and looks at the shining silver ball. The mercury ball is an image of her own schizophrenic split. She too has been split into million selves, but the irony is that there is nobody to push her splintered.

Esther boxed up in Philomena Guinea's black Cadillac, journeying to an even more expensive and efficient psychiatrist. The expenses are endured by the lady novelist, Mrs. Guinea. She has read about Esther in the paper and learned that Esther "will never write again" (149). Esther's major session is with the idea of the unborn self. Whenever she revolts against social normalcy and tries to commit suicide, she is spiked and instigated by the urge to be reborn. She identifies herself

with the image of those pickled fetuses which recur obsessively throughout the novel. Later, Esther states this connection explicitly.

Esther is put under the supervision and treatment of Dr. Nolan, a woman psychiatrist. Ironically, for Esther, even Dr. Nolan turns out to be a female counterpart of Dr. Gordon. She is recognized as even more malicious as she, too, offers impingement but in a subtler and nicer way. In her first meeting with Dr. Nolan, Esther tells her of the traumatic experience of Electro Convulsive therapy in Dr. Gordon's private hospital and her utter dislike of him. This is utter falsehood that Dr. Nolan resorts to. She makes a false promise in her mode of gentler coercion. Though she does this only to reassure her patient, what is evident is that she is not basically different from Dr. Gordon. What she differs from him is in his mode of application of Electro Convulsive therapy, but she never considers that application of Electro Convulsive therapy is, in itself, a formidable and destructive process. She simply encourages Esther to accept the Electro Convulsive therapy which for Esther is an annihilation of personal existence, something like the electrocution of the Rosenbergs.

Esther realizes to her utter irritation, that she is not being offered breakfast as she is on the list of Electro Convulsive therapy. She feels utterly betrayed, cheated to the very core. Although Dr. Nolan comes over in a short time to personally reassure Esther, she feels violated and Dr. Nolan is no longer seen as a source of creative reflection. Earlier she has found out from a patient how conventional psychiatric treatment destroys the power of the individual will and humanness of the patient. Esther encounters a friendly girl named Valerie at the hospital. Valerie has shown her the marks on her temples, a result of her "lobotomy" (155), and for

the first time Esther has recognized the petrifying potentials of the Doctor who has destroyed Valerie's independent personality forever. This is a lurid picture of a patient crushed of all sense of freedom, one who is impinged upon, coerced to accept and conform to the expected norms of behaviour. Such a state can be achieved, only when individual identity is annihilated and when a patient is reduced to complete dependence.

Esther realises with a shock that Dr. Nolan does not really differentiate between herself and Valerie that Esther feels deeply distressed and deceived. The Electro current treatment under Dr. Nolan is nothing intrinsically different from the shock Dr. Gordon puts her to; only Dr. Nolan offers it in a more comforting manner. The effect, however, is equally shattering and reflective of violence. Esther is frightened and broken down. The effect of the Electro Convulsive therapy seems at first to be saltory. As Esther gradually comes back to consciousness, she feels lifted out of the burden of the stress and despair. But very shortly Esther realizes that Dr. Nolan has ultimately failed in bringing about any fundamental change into the basis of her crisis. A few devastating memories are temporarily suppressed.

Esther had been brought to Dr Nolan to be "cured" (129). What is attained finally is anything but that. The shock-treatment under Dr Nolan merely freezes her. It is merely a case of deadened perception. The real-life experiences lay alive with the risk of a renewed recurrence and schizoid attack. Esther, too, recognizes the same possibility someday at college, in Europe, somewhere. The closing image of Esther in proper outfit preparing herself for her final interview presents the protagonist merely in new uniform. It is not the image of a renewed identity, not signifying a triumph of the real self but merely an image of a subdued personality

who has been forced to an acceptance of the conventionalities of society. The novel ends as Esther enters a room to face her final interview with the board of doctors who will declare her cured, fit to return to normalcy “The eyes and faces all turned towards me, and guiding myself by them, as by a magical thread, I stepped into the room” (197).

CHAPTER 3

GROWTH THROUGH PAIN AND REBIRTH

Man takes upon himself the right to have control over woman as if it is a divinely ordained one. Philosophers and thinkers down the centuries have attributed to men all qualities good for society, and to women characteristics not so good. All these have created an exploitative structure that is reinforced by governments, religions and social practices. Eventually, this sense of male superiority is deep rooted in social beliefs. It is this belief in male supremacy that has instigated societies to justify the oppression of woman just because she happens to be a woman. This feeling of male superiority is patriarchy.

Be it in economic, political, religious, social or domestic life - man has asserted his supremacy, and in his desperate attempt to affirm his power, he has caused untold miseries to the psyche of woman. He has tried to establish a kind of ill feeling or hatred towards woman, which is misogynistic. Rules, whether social or political, have been carefully drafted to ensure that woman remains oppressed. She is harassed, pursued and hunted by social customs and beliefs. Atrocities are unleashed on her, and she is taught, down the ages, to be mute and accept everything without protest. This kind of male domination can be termed misogynistic patriarchy.

Misogynistic patriarchy uses different yardsticks in measuring values for men and women. Plath takes the example of chastity, and shows how the American society views the chastity of woman as different from the chastity of man. Treating

the woman as a commodity and marriage as a necessary security for her, woman, down the centuries, has been taught to value virginity and chastity as the highest form of virtue. Adrienne Rich defines patriarchy as,

... the power of the fathers: a familial, social, ideological, political system in which men by force, direct pressure or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education and the division of labour determine what part women shall or shall not play and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male.
(57)

Germaine Greer in *The Female Eunuch* locates the cultural status of woman as equivalent to the eunuch. Attributing some deficiency to women, men think of themselves as uniquely qualified to supplement. It provided women show them their gratitude by their submissiveness. The subjugation of women, therefore is not due to their biological difference but because they are forced to live in a male-dominated culture.

Feminist criticism as Showalter sees it, tends towards the active exposure of power relations and explosion of patriarchal thoughts. Speaking aloud the painful reality of suppression, it aims at rescuing women from their present position of inferiority. As patriarchy is a social order in which male interests and powers are privileged and women are subordinated to male authority, feminism questions this, and claims that women should be on par with men politically, economically and socially. Feminism as a social and political force must try to change the existing power relations between men and women. According to Ruth Robbins, "Feminisms are politicized discourses which uncover symptoms of oppression, whatever their

ground, diagnose the problem, and offer alternative versions of liveable realities”(7). They have thought about the condition of women and many of their women characters exemplify what Simone de Beauvoir said about women: “She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, the Absolute - she is the Other” (16).

Patriarchy is the fundamental oppressive force, though different classes and ethnic groups suppress women under various power relations. Plath’s *The Bell Jar* that is intensely personal presents how the woman in American society of the fifties was trapped and oppressed. Oppression and suppression appear to be more intense, as it is presented through the psyche of a female protagonist. The subjugation of women, encounters in *The Bell Jar*, is one experienced by or seen by or heard by Esther the heroine of the novel.

In *The Bell Jar*, men are presented as having vested interests. They want to ensure that women do not get empowered and thereby cut into their jobs, challenge their position of comfort in their family and take personal power away from them. Their intention seems to be that man's world does not get disturbed by determined women. What Plath presents is an institutionalized system of oppression in which man wields his power and strength. Plath wrote *The Bell Jar* at a time when American women, becoming aware of their rights, were yearning to become liberated from the clutches of male domination. Betty Friedan describes the late fifties and early sixties for American women as a “comfortable concentration camp” - physically luxurious, but mentally oppressive and impoverished.

In *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan refers to “the sophisticated trappings” (38) in which women were caught. Society wants man as well as woman to believe that what a man needs is a mate whereas what a woman needs is security. Buddy’s mother endorses the male chauvinistic ideas. She thinks, talks and acts like male chauvinist. She appears a ventriloquist of the male chauvinistic world when she says, “What a man is an arrow into the future and what a woman is the place the arrow shoots off from” (57). Male dominated society ensures that woman never becomes an arrow.

Esther’s mother who very willingly accepts man as the arrow is herself an expert in short hand and typewriting, and teaches them to college girls. She has accepted uncomplainingly the concept that woman has to be dependent on a man for her survival and sustenance. Girls with such attitude “looked awfully bored” (3) to Esther and they make her sick, as they are “secretaries to executives and junior executives and simply hanging around in New York waiting to get married to some career man or other” (3). Esther’s mother advises her to learn shorthand and qualify for a job so that “Everybody would want her. She would be in demand among all the up-and-coming young men, and she would transcribe letter after thrilling letter” (60). But the daughter says, “The trouble was, I hated the idea of serving men in any way. I wanted to dictate my own thrilling letters” (60).

The Bell Jar speaks of the fight women had started, at least in their thought, against forces that are designed to make women play their secondary role. It suggests that the emancipated woman is one who is not at the beck and call of man, taking orders from him. Plath, though doesn't rebel against this prescriptive chastity of women, emphasizes that it is equally important for man. Esther says, “And that’s

how Buddy had lost his pureness and his virginity” (56). Attributing pureness and virginity to a male is iconoclastic in a society steeped in patriarchy:

“It might be nice to be pure and then to marry a pure man, but what if he suddenly confessed he wasn't pure after we were married, the way Buddy Willard had? I couldn't stand the idea of a woman having to have a single pure life and a man being able to have a double life, one pure and one not”. (65)

The article “In Defense of Chastity” that Esther’s mother cut out from *The Reader’s Digest*, though written by a woman lawyer, reflects male oppressive thought. “It gave all the reasons a girl shouldn’t sleep with anybody but her husband and then only after they were married” (83). The risk a woman encounters in having free sex is pregnancy. “What I hate is the thought of being under a man’s thumb ... A man doesn't have a worry in the world, while I’ve got a baby hanging over my head like a big stick, to keep me in line”(179).

The article Esther’s mother gives her to read ends with a warning to be safe rather than feel sorry later. It is this thought of fighting against pregnancy that makes Esther opt for birth control before experimenting with sex. Esther feels that a woman should never marry a man like Buddy Willard who looks for chastity in a woman whereas he himself has slept with a waitress several times. To her, deciding on birth control is the right step in getting emancipation from the oppressive forces of male society that uses sex as a tool to subjugate women: “I was my own woman” (180). What Esther gains is not a license to permissiveness but rather freedom from the concept that man, however unchaste he may be, can demand virginity from

woman at the time of marriage. In a letter to her mother young Plath wrote, “I love freedom. I hate constrictions and limitations” (40).

Plath ponders over various issues associated with virginity, marriage, sex and birth control. Speaking through Esther, she says that a man who appears flawless at a distance is in no way attractive at close quarters. This makes her take a negative attitude to marriage. Marriage appears to her a hollow institution that deprives a woman of her identity. She wouldn't allow womanhood to be exploited by the institution of marriage.

“And I knew that in spite of all the roses and kisses and restaurant dinners man showered on a woman before he married her, what he secretly wanted when the wedding service ended was for her to flatten out underneath his feet like Mrs. Willard's kitchen mat” (67-68).

The oppressive marriage is very much true to Esther's mother too, “... my father had been married before, so he needed a divorce - my father said to her, ‘Whew, that's a relief, now we can stop pretending and be ourselves’? - and from that day on my mother never had a minute's peace” (68). Esther remembers Buddy Willard telling her that after she has children, she might not like to write poems. This makes her think, “...maybe it was true that when you were married and had children it was like being brainwashed, and afterwards you went about numb as a slave in some private, totalitarian state” (68). *The Bell Jar* looks at sex and marriage as instruments of oppression perpetrated by the patriarchal society.

Society dictates the condition that only a male can opt for a career and woman has to take up the responsibility of home making at the expense of her

career. When a woman who has a career gets married, she is burdened with domestic responsibility besides the demands of her job. This is evident from the description of Buddy Willard's mother as well as the mother of Esther. " ... cook and clean and wash was just what Buddy Willard's mother did from morning till night, and she was the wife of a university professor and had been a private school teacher herself" (67). About her own mother she says,

At seven I had heard my mother get up, slip into her clothes and tiptoe out of the room. Then the buzz of the orange squeezer sounded from down stairs, and the smell of coffee and bacon filtered under my door. Then the sink water ran from the tap and dishes clinked as my mother dried them and put them back in the cupboard.
(93)

Esther is a girl with fifteen years of straight A's, and to her "this seemed a dreary and wasted life" (67). She tries to imagine what it would be like if Constantine were her husband. It would mean getting up at seven and cooking him eggs and toast and coffee and dawdling about in her nightgown and curlers after he'd left for work to wash up the dirty plates and make the bed, and then when he came home after a lively, fascinating day he would expect a big dinner, and she'd spend the evening washing up even more dirty plates till she falls into bed, utterly exhausted.

Esther, as an unmarried girl, feared of getting married. She believed that once married she would be caught in the cage of male domination and would be crushed. Esther experiences a sense of entrapment. The very title *The Bell Jar* is garbed in a rich metaphor that suggests suffocation consequent to entrapment. The

image of being confined under a glass enclosure alone in a vacuum for the purpose of being observed would surely be a negative experience. This image of confinement was to be used often by the later feminist movement, to show that women are looked upon as objects of their men and their culture.

Plath uses recurrent metaphors of entrapment and fragmentation. Even schizophrenia is a powerful fragmentation that is a necessary escape from the incessant heartless oppression of a patriarchal society. The mental aberration very sympathetically presented by the novelist is symptomatic of the physical as well as the mental torture met by the female soul by the male dominated society. As Marjorie G. Perloff points out in a web site, "Disease whether mental or physical is an index to the human inability to cope with an unliveable reality" (41). Unable to cope with the ugly world of harsh realities, Esther finds schizophrenia an escape. Not only that, she sees death also as an escape from the sadism of life in a patriarchal culture.

Esther's encounters with men have been nearly devastating: her father deserts her by dying when she is very young; much more recently in the novel, she is knocked down in the mud, mauled, practically raped by a man who marks her face with blood; in another, a flashback to an occasion where she ends up inspecting Buddy Willard's genitals, all she can think of is "turkey neck and turkey gizzards" (54). The man she sets out to seduce (Constantin) falls asleep unaroused by her, and the male psychiatrist to whom she turns for help practically electrocutes her. This pattern of gain and disappointment is merely confirmed by her experience with Irwin, who creates for her, in deflowering her, a possibly life-threatening medical emergency. All the men whom Esther comes into contact with disappoint

her. Buddy is a hypocrite, Marco is a woman-hater, Constantine is cold, and Irwin is unfeeling and smug. No wonder, these men remind her of animals. Marco of a snake she had teased in the zoo, Lenny Shepherd a horse, and Buddy Willard a panther.

Sex, attitude of man to sex, and oppressing women using sex are all viewed with intensity in *The Bell Jar*. Plath had realized that the American male is insensitive to the feminine beauty of a woman and adores her only as a sex machine. “Being born a woman is my awful tragedy” (30), she wrote in her Journal. It is that gets reiterated when she describes Esther’s encounter with sex in the sexist society. She is not able to come to terms with the passivity and indifference of Constantine to sex, nor with the aggressive sex of Marco the woman hater who is able to see only a “slut” (88) in the pure woman. Buddy’s expectation of one-sided chastity in woman is also totally disgusting. She feels that man should no longer be allowed to play the fool by taking upper hand in sex, nor should a woman be constrained to go begging for sexual favours within the confines of marriage.

Sex with proper protection against pregnancy, Esther believes, is the symbol of female protest against male oppression. Esther doesn’t like the age-old idea of man seducing woman. So, by obtaining security through birth control devices, she plays the role of a seducer. Reversing the role, she induces Irwin the known seducer to have sex with her. She doesn’t seem to regret the haemorrhage and the consequent excessive bleeding, but uses them to exert the right of the female over the male.

Esther fights a battle against Marco when he attempts to rape her. Rape is the worst suffering to a woman, and in this male superiority that is asserted. Susan Brownmiller in her book *Against Our Will*,

Men, Women and Rape viewed the question of rape from a forthright feminine perspective. According to her, Rape is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear ... A world without rapists would be a world in which women moved freely without fear of men. That some rape provides a sufficient threat to keep all women in a constant state of intimidation ... Men who commit rape have served in effect as front line masculine shock troops, terrorist guerrillas in the longest sustained battle the world has ever known.
(272)

Plath has presented with force the rape attempt of Marco on Esther. It is said that when men writers present rape it is seldom presented from the woman's point of view. As Eileen O'Neil has pointed out, "The theme of rape is never treated from the point of view of the victim, nor is the anguish of woman pressured into sexual service, nor the distress of a woman bound sexually and emotionally by her own internal sense of powerlessness" (80). *The Bell Jar* is considered the first feminine novel, which presents rape from Esther's point of view and she is made to narrate her experiences.

Marco dashed his cigar underfoot.

The ground soared and struck me with a soft shock. Mud squirmed through my fingers. Marco waited until I half rose. Then he put both hands on my shoulders and flung me back.

“My dress...”

“Your dress!” The mud oozed and adjusted itself to my shoulder blades. “Your dress!” Marco’s face lowered cloudily over mine. A few drops of spit struck my lips. “Your dress is black and the dirt is black as well.”. (87-88)

A domineering male performs rape successfully when the submissive female becomes totally incapable of preventing it, registering a protest. It is the helpless cry or the pathetic pleading that is heard. But in the case of Esther who is aware of her feminine strength, fighting rape is like fighting a battle against male oppression. “It’s happening,” I thought. “It’s happening. If I just lie here and do nothing it will happen.” (88). Marco sets his teeth to the strap at her shoulder and tore her sheath to the waist and saw the glimmer of bare skin like a pale veil separating two bloody-minded adversaries.

According to Linda W. Wagner, “Marco’s brutal rape attempt and his marking Esther with blood from his bleeding nose are physically even more insulting than his calling her slut” (30). Realizing this cruel impact of rape, Esther gets ready to fight the battle. She cleared dust and she had a full view of the battle. She began to writhe and bite.

Marco weighed me to the earth.

“Slut!”

I gouged at his leg with the sharp heel of my shoe. He turned, fumbling for the hurt. Then I fisted my fingers together and smashed them at his nose. It was like hitting the steel plate of a battleship. Marco sat up. I began to cry. (88)

Plath suggests that male oppression in the form of rape cannot go on without being opposed. The message is clear and pointed. Not all men can rape all women. This oppression cannot go on forever. As Wendy Martin has rightly commented, Sylvia Plath was one of the first American women writers to refuse to conceal or disguise her true emotions; in articulating her aggression, hostility, and despair in her art, she effectively challenged the traditional literary prioritization of female experience. In addition to being a novelist and poet, she was a pioneer and pathfinder. (113)

CHAPTER 4

FEMALE RELATIONSHIP

Mother-Daughter relationship is very commonly described in novels, because it is an idealized relationship. In reality, the mother does not always offer sacrificial love and the daughter seldom cherishes gratitude. In literature, the relationship has received special attention, as the feminists have focused their attention on it. Interest in the subject of women's experience as mothers and the unique relationship between mothers and daughters has increased. Notar and McDaniel have stated, “One of the earliest and most profound bonds women form with each other is that of mother and daughter” (11). As a woman journeys through this, she matures into a woman and gains a separate identity. *The Bell Jar* has mother-daughter conflict as a central theme. It is worthwhile to know how mother-daughter relationship is reflected in the works of Plath.

Sociology and social anthropology hold that the desire and the capacity of a woman to look after children are largely socially created, and argue that nature and quality of a mother's role depend on the way this role is institutionalized and evaluated in the society. Motherhood has been seen as a desirable and valued position for women and it is mandatory for all normal woman to be a good and sacrificing mother. Society lays great burden on women whereas the same society shows little concern or respect towards childbearing and childrearing. Attributing a low status to childcare, society creates low self-esteem in many mothers. Mother's role restricts a woman's contacts and activities outside the home. Social isolation

has created detrimental effects of a mother's identity. The focus is shifted from the mother to the daughter, the daughter requires complete obedience, reverence, modesty and thoughtfulness of others.

The nineteenth century feminine writer Elaine Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own*, Elaine Showalter says, "A factor that recurs with remarkable frequency in the backgrounds of these women is identification with, and dependence upon the father; and either loss of or isolation from the mother" (61). Psychologists like Freud have said that sons separate themselves from their mothers and find their own identity easily whereas the daughters struggle to do so.

Nancy Friday in her *My Mother My Self* speaks of the ambivalence between love on one side and hate, fear and envy on the other in a girl's relationship with the woman in whose image she is. "It is this essential ambivalence that characterizes the mother-daughter relationship more than any other relationship in human life" (32). The conflict between the mother and the daughter experiences fierce battles within and bear emotional and psychological scars from which the mothers are not able to shield them. This reality is being portrayed in *The Bell Jar*.

The mother plays a critical role in the development of her daughter. This relationship maintains the daughter's role play in their interpersonal relationships as well and the role women play in the society. The mother remains the identification object for the girl, not the boy. It is an intense and questioning relationship. It is a relationship between same gender persons. Thus, it is clear that the mother-daughter relationship is unique and intense one that often determines the future development of the woman.

Carolyn G. Heilbrun terms the mother-daughter relationship as “the least explored and understood among all human relationships” (33). She writes of the guilt and pain suffered by women who take advantage of choices unavailable to their mothers and shed off their bond with their mothers. The social structure is that women are heavily dominated by men. The myth regarding the ideal mothers and the working mothers are imposed in order to lower women’s self-esteem, and the mutual respect between mothers and daughters. In a patriarchal society, the father asserts his masculinity by denying the value of the mother. At the same time, father leaves child care responsibilities to mothers and this contributes to the dilemma in mother-daughter relationships.

Plath has presented the experiences of mothers and daughters and the dilemma in their relationship. This presentation will give an insight into real experiences and help to see if children, particularly daughters give their mothers a purpose, a value and a meaning in life. Plath’s only novel *The Bell Jar* is a case of very special interest. The author had a very strange relationship with her mother, and this has its impact on the portrayal of the mother daughter relationship in the novel, through the characters. Plath was two and a half years old when her brother was born, and like many sensitive children of that age, she felt replaced by her brother and rejected by her mother.

Plath had a very special attachment for her father who died when she was eight. This intensified her sense of loss and gave her a feeling, as she grew, that her mother was rejecting her. The relationship Plath had with her mother was intense, mixed and complicated. She wrote almost daily to her mother reporting her day-to-day experiences. But, comparing her letters with her poems that she wrote at the

same time, it becomes questionable whether she confided her true feelings with her mother. The loss of mother-love haunts Plath's poetry and is the basic cause of her profound despair. The daughter recognizes the mother as a complete fabricator and the mother's efforts to reach her daughter become eventually abortive.

The sense of separation coupled with several traumatic experiences she had, resulted in nervous breakdown that she has used as the centre of her personal novel. Ted Hughes in an interview after her death said, "All her creative work tells just one story - her Oedipal love for her father, her complex relationship with her mother, the attempt at suicide, the shock therapy whatever she wrote before, were metaphors of parts of this story" (2).

In *The Bell Jar*, Esther's emotional stability is anchored on the father. She is not able to forgive her mother for not taking her for her father's funeral. Esther visits her father's grave and weeps her heart out. She howls her loss. She has never before cried for her father's death. "My mother hadn't cried either. She had just smiled and said what a merciful thing it was for him he had died, because if he had lived he would have been crippled and an invalid for life and he couldn't have stood that" (135). With her personal experience at the back of her mind, the author was not able to present a selfless mother with sacrificial love and a thankful daughter who reciprocates this love.

Aurelia Schober Plath, mother of Sylvia Plath was shocked to see the rendering of the mother through Mrs. Greenwood, mother of Esther and went to the extent of denying in public many of the undercurrents. She considered the posthumous publication of her daughter as a document in ingratitude. As a traditional mother, Aurelia believed that she had been only protective, and was

doing what a mother ought to do. Never did she dream till she reads *The Bell Jar* that her daughter was nurturing ill will and hatred for the mother. Plath's life was tumultuous and packed with psychological tensions. As a child. She was so attached to her father that she could not forget his death nor forgive his dying. It was rather due to the compulsion of the situation that Plath had to be with her mother. All along she had a feeling that her mother was interfering with her life, and curbing her liberty.

Mrs. Greenwood, mother of Esther has been depicted as one who does not acknowledge the growth of her daughter or her ability to take decisions. With her domineering love, she thinks that she has to plan everything for her daughter. Mrs. Greenwood encourages Esther to pursue her writing career, she does not really believe in it and wants her to earn money in a more secure and permanent job. As a result, she urges her daughter to learn shorthand so she could find work as a secretary after college. For Esther, however, shorthand symbolizes a domestic life, and she therefore refuses to learn it. Her own mother's warnings why Esther cannot succeed in life throw shadows on her future and make it hard to decide what to do in life and even harder to believe in her qualities. Esther says,

My own mother wasn't much help. My mother had taught shorthand and typing to support us ever since my father died, and secretly she hated it and hated him for dying and leaving no money because he didn't trust life insurance salesmen. She was always on to me to learn shorthand after college, so I'd have a practical skill as well as a college degree. (31)

Esther's mother believes that the path she has chosen for herself is the ideal one for her daughter too. "By the end of supper, my mother had convinced me I should study shorthand in the evenings. Then I would be killing two birds with one stone, writing a novel and learning something practical as well. I would also be saving a whole lot of money" (98).

Mrs. Greenwood is oblivious of the fact that her daughter has a right over her world just as she has over hers. She is not able to understand the aspirations and feelings regarding her writing career. When Esther returns home as a neurotic after her traumatic experiences in the city, with blood marks on her face, her mother instead of trying to understand her, is blunt in pointing out her failure to make it to the writing course.

My mother climbed behind the wheel and tossed a few letters into my lap, then turned her back.

The car purred into life,

"I think I should tell you right away," she said, and I could see bad news in the set of her neck, "you didn't make that writing course."

The air punched out of my stomach. (92)

Esther does not have high esteem for her mother. She takes her as one who serves as a hindrance to her attaining independence. The daughter, never appreciates whatever the mother does out of love and believing it to be her duty. The image created of the mother is that of a rigid, strong-willed, loveless person. When her daughter becomes psychotic so that she can neither eat, sleep, nor wash herself, this mother reasons with her sweetly and blandly. But the daughter never

takes the mother as lovable or venerable, but is able to perceive her only as a little woman. Esther has a peculiar vision of the mother when she is taken to Dr. Gordon for her neurological disorder.

“I watched my mother grow smaller and smaller until she disappeared into the door of Dr. Gordon's office building. Then I watched her grow larger and larger as she came back to the car”.

“Well?” I could tell she had been crying.

My mother didn't look at me. She started the car. (110)

Mrs. Greenwood comes to a breaking point when she hears that her daughter is a confirmed mentally sick person and is in need of electro shock therapy. ““You tell me the truth,” I said, “or I'll never speak to you again”” (110). It is true that mother is always in need of attention and recognition from the daughter. Mrs. Greenwood is not able to swallow the fact that Esther made an attempt to commit suicide. Even in such a bad condition in the hospital, Esther wants her mother to go away. It is clear that mother has expectations from the daughter, but what the daughter has in store for her is hatred. Though protection and comfort are kindly offered by the mother and desperately needed by the daughter, they prove ill directed.

Mrs. Greenwood offer Esther roses on her birthday, she dumps it in the waste basket. Her hurting retort to the mother regarding the roses, ““Save them for my funeral”” (164). Esther doesn't even remember what was the day. Esther said that she hates her mother.

Doctor Nolan nodded. She seemed to know what I meant. "I hate her," I said, and waited for the bow to fall.

But Doctor Nolan only smiled at me as if something had pleased her very, very much, and said, 'I suppose you do'. (164)

Mrs. Greenwood comes to know that she too is responsible for all the troubles of her daughter. What increase her suffering is that others came to know that her attitude to her daughter is the reason for her sufferings. "My mother was the worst. She never scolded me, but kept begging me with a sorrowful face, to tell her what she had done wrong. She said she was sure the doctors thought she had done something wrong because they asked her a lot of questions (164)". The mother takes the illness of the daughter as a personal insult and something that she should forget. "We'll take up where we left off, Esther" she had said, with her sweet, martyr's smile. "Well act as if all this were a bad dream" (191).

After Esther's suicide attempt, she thinks that her mother has no place in her heart. The daughter, though it is true that she was mentally unsound, had only hatred for the mother. The mother is a source of irritation that she can never stand. There is an innate tendency to stop the irritating presence of the mother. The basic reason for the difference of opinion is the mother's lack of understanding of the daughter, and her unwillingness to sacrifice her authority. She is not able to give any allowance to the strange behaviour of the daughter in such a state of mind.

"My mother's mouth tightened. "You should have behaved better, then."

"What?"

“You shouldn’t have broken that mirror. Then maybe they’d have let you stay.”

But of course I knew the mirror had nothing to do with it. (142)

Andree Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne have rightly said in their book *Dislocating Masculinity*, “If a woman cannot express her relation to her mother, or to other women, she may become hysterical” (23). It happens to Esther. Esther seeks her models in a bewildering variety of women: Dodo Conway, the Catholic mother of six or seven children, whose face is always bright with a “serene, almost religious smile” (94); Buddy Willard's mother, a professor’s wife, whose words of wisdom are regularly quoted by her brainwashed and adoring son; Doreen, the Southern blonde sex kitten who always knows how to get her man; Betsy, innocently happy and uncomplicated Midwestern fashion model; Jody, a loyal friend; Philomena Guinea, best-selling novelist whose endowed scholarship Esther holds at college; and finally, Jay Cee, the successful editor who is Esther’s boss in New York. Esther at one point wishes she has a mother like Jay Cee. Of Jay Cee, Esther says,

“I liked her a lot, in spite of what Doreen said. She wasn’t one of the fashion magazine gushers with fake eyelashes and giddy jewelry. Jay Cee had brains, so her plug-ugly looks didn’t seem to matter. She read a couple of languages and knew all the quality writers in the business. (4-5)

There is a pattern that can be discerned in Esther’s attitude to all these women. Just a little later, she admits that she can’t imagine Jay Cee in bed with her

husband. These women associated with some stereotype of womanhood, are unacceptable to Esther. No one can be a proper mother substitute, and a series of rejections or separations from these women have nurtured some important aspect of her evolving identity. She rejects her mother, later she rejects Jay Cee too. Though she loves Jay Cee, at a particular stage she says, “Jay Cee wanted to teach me something, all the old ladies I ever knew wanted to teach me something, but I suddenly didn't think they had anything to teach me” (5).

The relationship between Mrs. Greenwood and Esther was not a relationship of sacrificial love responded by unquestionable loyalty, but one of down to earth relationship of mutual jealousy, suspicion and hatred. Esther who has a lot of complaints about her mother. She accuses her mother for total indifference. Her mother following her like a shadow dictating terms, believing that she is incapable of taking decisions on her own. But Mrs. Greenwood, is not able to bear when the doctors quiz her on her conduct. She feels guilty and at the same time terribly pained that the love she has showered and the sacrifices she has made are not understood or appreciated by others and also by her daughter. Esther is one who can never tolerate fetters of any kind including the restrictions imposed by the mother.

The relationship between Mrs. Greenwood and Esther never comes into great conflict, but it is never resolved either. It has images of Esther and her mother gliding from one place to another in gray or black vehicles, without leaving and without arriving. Sylvia Plath takes up this motive in *The Bell Jar* by describing helplessness and pain both on the motherly and the daughterly side. Although

Esther and her mother long for each other's love, they lose it at the same time and even start blaming each other in the end.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMATION

The American Revolutionary Period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson. John Neal, a critic and a writer in the early-mid nineteenth century helped advanced American progress toward a unique literature and culture. Ralph Waldo Emerson pioneered the influential Transcendentalism movement. The political conflict surrounding Abolitionism inspired the writers like Harriet Beecher Stowe. Mark Twain was the first major American writer to be born away from the East coast. Therefore, American literature is more democratic and more individualistic and focuses on liberation of personality.

American women writers who have made significant contribution to the field include many familiar and great American female writers such as Maya Angelou, Emily Dickinson, Harper Lee, Toni Morrison, Anne Sexton, Sandra Cisneros, Ayn Rand, Jhumpa Lahiri, Marianne Moore and Jean Kerr. The women represented have won every major writing prize of the 20th century. Lynne Salop says that,

Darkness sometimes finds the light

And joy can interface the night,

Lonely prophets turn to dust,

Their vision left behind. (46-49)

Sylvia Plath, the most forceful and emphatic voice of the twentieth century. This enigmatic personality gained popularity after her death and ruled the lives of readers worldwide. Through her works, she has presented the frame of mind of the twentieth century people. She is the most important poet of the past and the present century. She refused to conceal or disguise her true emotions. Suaen Juhanz says that “Plath is the women of our century who sees the problems, the situation of trying to be a women poet with the cold stand most underredeemed clarity” (87).

Plath’s life could not be really understood by many people. The reasons are crystal clear because she had multiple psychological problems which served as the root cause for her depression and her traumatic end. She is a starkly honest writer whose ceaseless, pitiless self-scrutiny has given a unique point of view to psychological disorder and to the theme of the feminist-martyr in a patriarchal society. She forged a compelling new voice in the 1960s of America. She was ahead of her time. She is the most read, amongst American poets of the twentieth century and one of the most talented as well.

Plath confronts, themes of patriarchal entrapment and subsequent victimization. However, through the creation of compelling and unique images and through the evolution of her female themes, Plath at the close of her career emerges out with a voice proper to her own potentiality which is basically a feminist voice.

The woman as quester, Sylvia Plath finds herself trapped between two worlds, one external and regressive, of which she is a passive object, the other inner yet dynamic struggling to break through. Hence, a woman writer’s task is twofold. She has to break through the encapsulating and circumscribing self-linked taboos,

to deconstruct the identity she has received from the patriarchal culture, risking an existential conflict between the self and the social and cultural structures. She explores the possibility of a new self not only in the denial of the self-moulded by the patriarchal society, but through an affirmation of positive values that have been ignored.

The Bell Jar, written under the pseudonym Victoria Lucas is Sylvia Plath's only published novel. Esther Greenwood, a student of Smith College, a girl who struggles to combine her rare intellectual prowess with creative abilities, and wins an award from one of New York's greatest fashion magazines. She comes to work as a Guest Editor and is apprenticed to the literary Editor of the magazine. In her course of a one-month stay in New York, a world of Big Spenders and of manic liveliness, she faces terrible dilemmas and encounters some disastrous experiences as a result of which her cloistered middleclass Boston world-view cracks and she is totally lost in the wilderness of the city life. The reactions and conflicts raging within Esther's mind as she struggles to find for her secure identity through which she can control the complex demands of the larger adult world form the first section of the novel.

The second section, the shortest, deals with the shattered Esther, the protagonist return to the claustrophobic world of Boston. Here, her distressed attempts to compromise between social attitudes towards women and her personal ambition to carve for her a distinctly creative identity result in a complete psychic breakdown in which she attempts suicide. The third section of the novel narrates her psychiatric treatment and her recovery leading to a renewed phase of awakening and projects the theme of the novel - the questionable efficiency of mechanized

psychiatry in restructuring a self, fragmented as a result of loveless forces of social compromise.

The Bell Jar is a significant novel not because it gives the reader a moving document about a crucial event of Sylvia Plath's life, because it is a commentary on the closed system of psychiatry, a product of society itself. The novel courageously throws light on the middle-class American society of the fifties, its hollow attitudes to woman, its vacuous conventionalities and its utter inability to realize the need of *love* for sensitive individuals in search of existential security. Man takes upon himself the right to have control over woman. Philosophers and thinkers down the centuries have attributed to men all qualities good for society, and to women characteristics not so good.

The sense of male superiority is deep rooted in social beliefs. It is this belief in male supremacy that has instigated societies to justify the oppression of woman just because she happens to be a woman. This feeling of male superiority is patriarchy. Man has asserted his supremacy, and in his desperate attempt to affirm his power, he has caused untold miseries to the psyche of woman. He has tried to establish a kind of ill feeling or hatred towards woman, which is misogynistic.

Feminism as a social and political force must try to change the existing power relations between men and women. Feminist wants to ensure that women do not get empowered and thereby cut into their jobs, challenge their position of comfort in their family and take personal power away from them. Their intention seems to be that man's world does not get disturbed by determined women.

Misogynistic patriarchy uses different yardsticks in measuring values for men and women. Plath takes the example of chastity, and shows how the American

society views the chastity of woman as different from the chastity of man. Women are treated as commodity. Marriage as a necessary security for her. Woman, has been taught to value virginity and chastity as the highest form of virtue. Plath, though doesn't rebel against this prescriptive chastity of women, emphasizes that it is equally important for man. The risk a woman encounters in having free sex is pregnancy. "What I hate is the thought of being under a man's thumb ... A man doesn't have a worry in the world, while I've got a baby hanging over my head like a big stick, to keep me in line" (234).

Esther, the protagonist believed that a woman should never marry a man like Buddy Willard who looks for chastity in a woman whereas he himself has slept with a waitress several times. To her, deciding on birth control is the right step in getting emancipation from the oppressive forces of male society that uses sex as a tool to subjugate women. Plath ponders over various issues associated with virginity, marriage, sex and birth control. Speaking through Esther, she says that a man who appears flawless at a distance is in no way attractive at close quarters. Marriage appears to her a hollow institution that deprives a woman of her identity. She wouldn't allow womanhood to be exploited by the institution of marriage.

Like the writer Sylvia Plath, the heroine Esther too experiences a sense of entrapment. *The Bell Jar* is garbed in a rich metaphor that suggests suffocation consequent to entrapment. The image of being confined under a glass enclosure alone in a vacuum for the purpose of being observed would surely be a negative experience. This image of confinement was to be used often by the later feminist movement, to show that women are looked upon as objects of their men and their culture.

Esther Greenwood is seen fighting against sex and the institution of marriage that have long been used as tools of suppression by the androcentric society. Instead of accepting chastity as a quality prescribed exclusively for women, she looks for that quality in a man too. She does not want to get caged in and burdened by the institution of marriage. When a career woman gets married, she is doubly burdened and is crushed. Marriage obliterates a woman's identity, and chokes her to suffocation. To highlight the idea of woman experiencing a sense of entrapment in a male-designed life, Plath uses the symbol of the bell jar.

The Bell Jar expresses the strong reaction of a writer to the various modes of constraining a woman, besides marriage and sex. There is a discussion of rape as the most heinous crime committed against women by a society that swears on the might of man. This novel is not a plea for free sex, but it advocates proper protection of women against pregnancy. Birth control, Esther thinks, is a boon to women to safeguard her against the oppressive forces of male society that uses sex as a tool to subordinate women.

Sylvia Plath with all her psychological problems as a result of "Oedipal complex" never had a smooth relationship with her mother Aurelia Schober Plath, and this has its impact on the portrayal of the mother daughter relationship in her novel. She has portrayed Mrs. Greenwood as a mother who fails to understand, accept, appreciate and acknowledge her daughter's growth. Her love does not seem to be a selfless and sacrificial one, but rather the consequence of her intense desire to assert her authority over her daughter. This results in the daughter nurturing hatred for her mother.

Esther Greenwood is able to see her mother only as an impediment to her growth and emancipation. According to Plath, Just as a male-chauvinist refuses to accept a girl who is capable of thinking and taking decisions and exercises a negative impact on a girl, the mother too has the same impact on a girl's maturation. In such a situation, an adolescent girl seeks her models in other women, but no one can be a proper mother substitute.

A series of separations from these women nurture some important aspect of the girl's evolving identity. The relationship is not one of domination and obedience, but one of emotional interdependence frequently disturbed by clashes and turbulence. Feminists and psychologists say that to attain freedom, the daughter extricates herself from the clutches of the mother, and the tension in the mother daughter relationship and the consequent liberation are essential for the blooming of the woman in the daughter.

Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* seen in this light is a typical feminist novel in the pre-feminist era. It projects the predicament of the trapped and the oppressed woman of the American society of the fifties. Plath presents woman as being crushed under an institutionalized system of male power and strength. To drive home this idea, Plath uses the effective image of arrow. Feminist ideology of Plath is well pronounced in her protagonist Esther Greenwood who breaks male dictated restrictions and tries to be an arrow that shoots off in all directions.

WORKS CITED

Agarwal, Suman. *Sylvia Plath*. Northern Book Centre, 2003, pp. 116.

Cornwall, Andree, and Nancy Lindisfarne. editors. *Dislocating Masculinity.*

Comparative Ethnographies. pp. 2

Deiterman, Julia. *The Significance of Maternal Relationship in Sylvia*

Plath's novel "The Bell Jar." Munich, GRIN Verlag, 2004.

www.grin.com/document/61103

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Norton, 1963, pp. 38.

Greer, Germaine. *The Female Eunuch*. New York, Bantam Books, 1972.

Hughes, Ted. Interview with Eilat Neget. *The Hindu*, Nov 8, 1988. pp. 2.

Plath, Sylvia, and Karen V Kukil. *The unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath*.

1950-1962, 1st Anchor Books ed., Newyork, Anchor Books, 2000.

Plath, Sylvia. *Letters Home*. London, Faber and Faber, 1977, pp. 40

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*. New York, Robin Books, 2022.

Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists*

from Bronte to Lessing. New Jersey, Princeton, Princeton UP, 1977.

Suzanne, Juhanz. *Modern American Poetry by Women*. New York Harper

and Row, 1976, pp. 87.

Deceptive Appearance in Edith Wharton's *The age of innocence*: A Study

A project 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

by

A.ESAKIYAMMAL

(REG. NO. 20APEN07)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Life in the Gilded Age	11
Three	The Society of Innocence	21
Four	Role of Women	29
Five	Summation	39
	Works Cited	46

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Deceptive Appearance in Edith Wharton's *The Age of innocence: A Study*** 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 is a work done by A. Esakiyammal during the year 2020-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

M/L
25.05.22
Dr. L. Jacquiline Leo

Guide

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Principal

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

S. Vennila
Examiner *27/05/2022*

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Deceptive Appearance in Edith Wharton's *The Age Of Innocence: A Study*** 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.

Thoothukudi

May 2022



A.ESAKIYAMMAL

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Deceptive Appearance in Edith Wharton's *The Age Of Innocence: A Study*** 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.

A. Esakiyammal

A.ESAKIYAMMAL

Thoothukudi

May 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the **Lord Almighty** for the wisdom, , the peace of mind, and strength He bestowed upon me in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging me to do this research oriented study.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. L. Jacquiline Leo** Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her support.

I thank **Dr. Vinitha** the Librarian, St. Mary's College for her assistance in permitting me to use the library resources.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

Edith Wharton's *The Age Of Innocence* published in 1920 but set in the 1870s, the novel comments on the supposed loss of innocence occasioned by World War I, which ended in 1918. By focusing on the rampant hypocrisy of New York society, Wharton suggests that the pre war United States may not have been as innocent as it seemed then. Additionally, the characters in this novel seem particularly foolish to a world looking back to the 1870s through the lens of a devastating global war. The character's lives are focused on little more than keeping up proper appearances to sustain the approval of those around them.

The project entitled **Deceptive Appearance in Edith Wharton's *The Age Of Innocence: A Study*** focuses on New York society's stubborn insistence on a blind and damaging pretension of innocence and the ironic attitude toward New York society through its constant comparisons with primitive society and through the portrayal of the modern society's hypocrisies. The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of *Edith Wharton's* life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of her work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Life in the Gilded Age** focuses on Wharton's life in the Gilded Age and to the ironies of life in New York.

The third chapter **The Society of Innocence** describes the struggle between conventionality and unconventionality, represented by May Welland and Ellen Olenska.

The fourth chapter **Role of Women** discusses the transformation of a single girl to a married woman, how uneducated the girl was with love and marriage matters.

The last chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and brings out the researcher's findings.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

American literature is the literature written or produced in the area of the United States and its preceding colonies. During its early history, America was a series of British colonies on the eastern coast of the present day United States. Therefore, its literary tradition begins as linked to the broader tradition of English literature. However, unique American characteristics and the breath of its production usually now cause it to be considered a separate path and tradition. American writing began with the work of English adventurers and colonists in the New World chiefly for the benefit of readers in the mother country. Some of these works reached the level of literature as in the robust and perhaps truthful account of his adventures by Captain John Smith and the sober, self-partial journalistic of John Winthrop and William Bradford in New England.

The New England colonies were the centre of early American literature. The revolutionary period contained political writings by Samuel Adams, Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Paine. In the post-war period, Thomas Jefferson's United States Declaration of Independent solidified 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. These fictions were too lengthy to be printed as manuscript or public reading. Publishers took a chance on these works in hopes they would become steady sellers and need to be reprinted. This was a good bet as literacy rates soared in this period among both men and women. Among the first American novels are Thomas Attwood Digges' *Adventures of Alonso* published in London in 1775 and William Hill Brown' *The Power of Sympathy* published in 1771. Brown's novel depicts a tragic

love story between siblings who fell in love without knowing they were related. This epistolary novel belongs to the Sentimental novel tradition.

In the next decade important women writers also published novels. Susanna Rowson is best known for her novel, *Charlotte: A Tale of Truth*, published in London in 1791. In 1974 the novel was reissued in Philadelphia under the title, *Charlotte Temple*. *Charlotte temple* is a seduction tale, written in the third person, which warns against listening to the voice of love and counsels resistance. Hannah Webster Foster's *The Coquette: Or, the History of Eliza Wharton* was published in 1797 and was also extremely popular. Told from Foster's point of view and based on the real life of Eliza Whitman, this epistolary novel is about a Women who is seduced and abandoned. Both *The coquette* and *charlotte Temple* are novels that treat the right of women to live as equals as the new democratic experiment.

With the War of 1812 and an increasing desire to produce uniquely American literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged. The most prominent among them are Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe. Nathaniel Hawthorne is notable for his masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter*, a novel about adultery. Hawthorne influenced Herman Melville who is notable for the books *Moby-Dick* and *Billy Budd*. America's two greatest 19th-century poets were Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. American poetry reached a peak in the early-to-20th century, with such noted writers as Wallace Stevens, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound, Hart Crane, and E.E. Cummings Mark Twain (the pen name used by Samuel Langhorne Clemens) was the first major American writer to be born away from the East Coast. Henry James was notable for novels like *The Turn of the Screw*. At the Beginning of 20th century, emerged famous American novelists namely Edith Wharton, Stephen Crane, Theodore Dreiser, and Jack London.

American writers expressed disillusionment following World War I. The stories and novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald capture the mood of the 1920s, and John Dos Passos wrote about war. Ernest Hemingway became notable for *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*; in 1954, he won the Nobel Prize in Literature. William Faulkner is notable for novels like *The Sound and the Fury*. American drama attained international status only in the 1920s and 1930s, with the works of Eugene O'Neill, who won four Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize. In the middle of the 20th century, American drama was dominated by the work of playwrights Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as by the maturation of American musical.

Depression era writers included John Steinbeck, notable for his novel *The Grapes of Wrath*. Henry Miller assumed a unique place in American Literature in the 1930s when his semi-autobiographical novels were banned from the US. From the end of World War II up until, roughly, the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the publication of some of the most popular works in American history such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. America's involvement in World War II influenced the creation of works such as Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) and Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). John Updike was notable for his novel *Rabbit, Run* (1960).

The connection of American literature with writing in England and Europe was again stressed by William Dean Howells, who not only as an able novelist but an instructor in literary realism to other American writers. Though he himself had leanings toward social reform, Howells did encourage what has come to be called 'genteel' writing, long dominant in American fiction. The mould for his sort of writing was broken by the American turned Englishman, Henry James, who wrote of people of the upper classes but with such psychological penetration and subtlety of narrative,

and complex technical skill that he is recognized as one of the great masters of fiction. His influence was quickly reflected in the novel of Edith Wharton and others and continued to grow in strength in the 20th century. Ever since the Civil War, voice of protest and doubt have been heard in American fiction. Mark Twain (with Charles Dudley Warner) had in *The Gilded Age* (1873) held the post war get-rich-quick era up to scorn. By the early 20th century Henry Adams was musing upon the effect of the dynamo's triumph over man, and Ambrose Bierce literally abandoned a civilization he could not abide.

The tension, horror, and meaninglessness of contemporary American life became a major theme of novelists during the 1960s and 70s. While authors such as Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Hortense Calisher, and Philip Roth presented the varied response of urban intellectuals, usually Jews, and John Updike and John Cheever treated the largely Protestant middle class, William Burroughs, Joyce Carol Oates, and Raymond Carver unsparingly depicted the conflict and violence inherent in American life at all levels of society.

Irony and so called black humour were the weapons of authors like Roth, Joseph Heller, and Jules Feiffer. However, other writers, notably Donald Barthelme, Jerzy Kosinski, Thomas Pynchon, and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr, expressed view of the world as unreal, as mad, by writing fantasies that were by turns charming, obscure, exciting, profound, and terrifying. Many of these writers have been called postmodern, but the term compasses a number of characteristics, including multiculturalism, self-reflection, and attention of new means of communication.

Major themes in Wharton's work include the effects of class on both behaviour and consciousness (divorce, for example, often horrifies the established

upper class as much for its offense against taste as for its violation of moral. The American belief in progress as actual and good (many “advances” Wharton welcomed; others she was contemptuous of); the contrast between European and American customs, morality, and sensibility; the confinement of marriage, especially for women; women’s desire for and right to freedom in general, and particularly sexual and economic freedom, and the reality that, usually, the desire and right are thwarted; the preference of powerful, white, usually upper-class men for childish dependent women; the complexity and pain relationships between women within patriarchal culture, including rivalry and animosity among women.

Historically, Wharton was both the product and the beneficiary of a highly developed, even if recent, high-culture tradition of brilliant, educated woman who is able to write and publish fiction for a living. Before Wharton, in France England George sand, Madame de Stael, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Mrs. Gaskell, and the Brontes had used fiction to examine many of the issue that engaged Wharton: marriage, the restraints of class, the repression of “respectable” women’s sexual desire, the structure of patriarchal power, and the desire of middle-class white women for respectable, paid work. In the United States, in addition to popular women novelists in the nineteenth century, artistically ambitious women writers such as Stuart Phelps and Sarah Orne Jewett preceded Wharton. Contemporary with Wharton was a whole group of accomplished women fiction writers Chopin, Austin, Hopkins, Dunbar-Nelson, Cather, Stein. The point is that Wharton’s work, historically, is rooted not only in the tradition of social and psychological realism commonly associated with Howells and James (writers she admired). It is also rooted in the realism and social criticism of women writers publishing before and contemporary with her who

were concerned with many of the same issues that engaged Wharton, Particularly issues centred on women's experiences and problems.

Wharton treated many of the issues of her own life in her fiction. Most importantly her estrangement from and anger at her mother, her frustration with the limitations placed on women, and especially women of the upper class; her miserable marriage and the stigma divorce, again particularly in her class but also generally; her fear of the ways in which cautiousness and selfishness can corrupt one's soul; her knowledge that female sexuality, despite society's repression of it, was a potent source of creativity.

Wharton was a best-selling author at the turn of the century and into the 1920s; she was also highly acclaimed by critics. After the 1920s, she was taught less and less in schools and universities until before and following World War II she was virtually untaught. In the late 1960s and then on through the 1990s, Wharton has steadily and dramatically regained both an academic audience and a general readership, clearly as a result of the most recent wave in the women's movement. In other words, her work attracts attention of the readers currently now for the very reasons it was generally dismissed in the middle of the twentieth century. It focuses on women and women's experience and its emphasis on social context, customs pressures, and manners as human variables rooted in time, class, gender, nationality, and culture are worth mentioning.

Edith Wharton (Edith Newbold Jones) was born on January 24, 1862; August 11, 1937 was a Pulitzer Prize-winning American novelist, short story writer, and designer. She was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1927, 1928 and 1930. The upper stratum of New York society into which Edith Wharton was born in

1862 provided her with an abundance of materials as a novelist but did not encourage her growth as an artist. Educated by tutors and governesses, she was raised for only one career namely marriage. But her marriage, in 1885, to Edward Wharton was an emotional disappointment, if not a disaster. She suffered a series of nervous breakdown in 1884. In spite of the strain of her marriage, or perhaps because of it, she began to write fiction and published her first story in 1889.

Wharton's first published book was a guide to interior decoration, but this was followed by several novel and story collections. In Europe, she met Henry James, who became her good friend, travelling companion, and the sternest but most careful critic of her fiction. *The House of Mirth* (1905) has borne a resounding critical success and a bestseller, as was *Ethan Frome* (1911). In 1913 the Whartons were divorced, and Edith took up permanent residence in France. In Wharton's work her subject, however, remained America, especially the upper-class New York of her youth. Her great satiric novel, *The Custom of the Country* was published in 1913 and *The Age of Innocence* won her the Pulitzer Prize in 1921. In all, she wrote some 30 books, including an autobiography, *A Backward Glance* (1934). Wharton combined Hider's view of America's privileged classes with a brilliant, natural wit to write humorous, incisive novels and short stories of social and psychological insight. She was well acquainted with many of her era's other literary and Public figures, including Theodore Roosevelt. She died at her villa near Paris in 1937.

By the time bloody chaos of the First World War finally came to an end on November 11, 1918, Edith Wharton had already been living as an expatriate in Paris for five years. During that time, she had essentially ceased to write fiction and had turned her energies instead to the Allied effort by providing war relief for soldiers and refugees. Her devotion and enthusiasm for her work was, in fact, enough to win her

the French Legion of Honour. By the end of the war, however, Wharton found herself disturbed by what she was as the profound social disruptions that had been brought on by the war. In the month after the armistice, she again picked up her pen to write what many critics consider to be her war novel.

One would be hard pressed, however, to find any elements within *The Age of Innocence* that even remotely address the disruption and the bloodshed of the First World War. Set in 1870's New York, Wharton's novel depicts a society that is in many ways the antithesis of war-devastated Europe. Old New York, Wharton's term to describe this wealthy and elite class at the top of the developing city's social hierarchy, was a society utterly intent on maintaining its own rigid stability. To Wharton, Old New York imposed on its member set rules and expectations for practically everything; manners, fashions, behaviours, and even conversations. Those who breached the social code were punished, with exquisite politeness, by the other members.

The differences between the fractured society following the First World War and the Old New York of *The Age of Innocence* are without a doubt dramatic. However, there is more of a connection between them than may first appear. Edith Wharton herself was born into the claustrophobic world of Old New York. When she began, at the age of fifty-seven, to write what would become her Pulitzer-prize winning novel, she had already witnessed an astounding amount of social change. Both horrified and fascinated by the chaos and the freedom of the new century as it headed towards modernism and war, Wharton was prompted to compare this new age with that of her own past. *The Age of Innocence* then, stands as both a personal recollection of the culture of Wharton's youth and an historical study of an old-fashioned world on brink of profound and permanent change.

Chapter Two

Life in the Gilded Age

In United States history, the Gilded Age was an era extending roughly from 1870 to 1900. It was a time of rapid economic growth, especially in the Northern and Western United States. As American wages grew much higher than those in Europe, especially for skilled workers, and industrialization demanded an ever-increasing unskilled labour force, the period saw an influx of millions of European immigrants. By the time Edith Wharton wrote *The Age of Innocence*, she had seen World War I destroy much of the world as she knew it. She looked back on her early years in New York as a time of social continuity, and felt that the passing of values from parent to child had a civilizing influence. However, she also saw the hypocrisy and cruelty practiced by individuals who wore the veneer of respectability. Both of these ideas are seen throughout *The Age of Innocence*, making it a timeless novel of both the Gilded Age and of social change.

Wharton was often critical of the rigidity of the social code, but she saw its purpose of handing down values and replicating culture. Order, loyalty, tradition, and duty are all values upheld and also criticized in her novel. Order is epitomized by the repetition of certain rituals. Newland Archer's wife must be sexually innocent and pretend not to know about affairs or passions. When we first meet May Welland we see her in white with white lilies of the valley, oblivious to the sexual innuendoes of the play she is watching. Later, the reader discovers that she knew all along of Newland's passion for Ellen, but she followed the accepted code of ignorance. Order is maintained by these understood practices. The wedding at Grace Church is a perfect

replication of the order in which things must be done; even Newland has a list of socially mandated duties to perform. This is the way civilization continues.

The Age of Innocence centers on an upper-class couple's impending marriage, and the introduction of the bride's cousin, plagued by scandal, whose presence threatens their happiness. Though the novel questions the assumptions and morals of 1870s New York society, it by no means develops into an outright condemnation of the institution. The novel is noted for Wharton's attention to detail and its accurate portrayal of how the 19th-century East Coast American upper class lived, as well as, for the social tragedy of its plot. Wharton was 58 years old at the time of its publication and had lived in that world and had seen it change dramatically by the end of World War I. The story is presented as a kind of anthropological study of the society through references to the families and their activities. Winner of the 1921 Pulitzer Prize for fiction, the novel was written in the fragmented aftermath of the First World War, which Edith Wharton experienced first-hand in Paris.

Published in 1920 but set in the 1870s, the novel comments on the supposed loss of innocence occasioned by World War I, which ended in 1918. By focusing on the rampant hypocrisy of New York society, Wharton suggests that the pre war United States may not have been as innocent as it seemed then. Additionally, the characters in this novel seem particularly foolish to a world looking back to the 1870s through the lens of a devastating global war. The character's lives are focused on little more than keeping up proper appearances to sustain the approval of those around them. In this way, the title, *The Age of Innocence*, can refer both to a time when New York society prized innocence above all else, and to a time when society was laughably ignorant of the horrors of the more complicated world to come.

The Age of Innocence is the story of a troubled marriage. The unhappy groom is Newland Archer, initially blissfully engaged to wed May Welland, pampered daughter of one of New York's most prestigious families. Newland and May enjoy a brief period of premarital joy, their union celebrated by the crème-de-la-crème of New York, who see in the marriage the perpetuation of the storied lives of the elite. And then, Newland meets May's cousin, the Countess Ellen Olenska, on the run from an unhappy marriage. Newland falls in love for the first time in his life and the first (and perhaps only) crisis in Newland and May's coddled lives begins.

In a society where appearance is everything, divorce is most definitely off the table. Ellen can live apart from her husband for the remainder of her life, if she wishes, but she cannot make the failure of her marriage legal or official - and she can't publicly pursue her feelings for another man. So Newland proceeds with his marriage to May, but his attraction to Ellen grows. Finally, Newland decides to defy social convention and run off with Ellen, even if it means ruining his career and being disowned by his family. He braces himself for the destruction of his reputation, for the scandal that will devastate him socially and financially.

May is sharper than she appears. She is aware of her husband's feelings and understands when the relationship turns sexual between Newland and Ellen, though her deeply engrained sense of decorum and breeding would never permit her to acknowledge it. On the night Newland plans to leave his wife, May announces her pregnancy. May and Newland's children cement the relationship between their parents, and the couple spends the rest of their lives together, unhappily married and yet to the outside world the portrait of idyllic upper-class domesticity.

The novel ends with Newland, a recent widower, on a trip to France with his son. Without the knowledge of Newland, his son has made arrangements to meet his long-lost aunt, the Countess Ellen Olenska, who has lived in Paris since just before the young man's birth. In the final scene, we see Newland staring up at the balcony of Ellen's apartment before ultimately turning and walking away.

Wharton's life in the Gilded Age of the novel, and the characters all contribute to the irony of the novel's title. By the time she wrote this book, Edith Wharton had survived an unhappy 25-year marriage, ignoring her husband's affairs and business improprieties. She had divorced and moved to a more congenial atmosphere for divorcees: Paris. Looking back at her childhood, she was critical of a society that kept girls innocent, sheltered, and away from obstacles they might have to solve.

May Welland is the perfect embodiment of that child-raising principle. Kept innocent and naive, she has never known passion nor is she supposed to know it until her husband introduces her to it. She has been taught to remain innocent and avoid life's difficulties. Throughout her marriage she pretends not to know about Newland's passion for Ellen. Even on her honeymoon, her attitude towards all things European is to ignore, be critical, or avoid them. "Her incapacity to recognize change made her children conceal their views from her . . . a kind of innocent family hypocrisy." Her photo on Newland's desk following her death reflects the carefully groomed ignorance criticized by Wharton: "And she had died thinking the world a good place, full of loving and harmonious households like her own."

Newland, while seemingly in charge of his world as well as the narrative, is actually one of the more naive characters in the story; "In matters intellectual and artistic Newland Archer felt himself distinctly the superior of these chosen specimens

of old New York gentility; he had probably read more, thought more, and even seen a good deal more of the world, than any other man of the number". He never realizes until the end that his wife has known about his sacrifice all along; even after her death he has cultivated the viewpoint that she was ignorant of real life from beginning to end. Until Ellen's farewell dinner, he does not even know that his entire family has plotted and planned without him, leaving him intentionally ignorant of their machinations. Despite his supposedly cosmopolitan attitudes, he believes that a love affair with Ellen would be tolerated, an attitude showing his lack of realism. At the end of the novel, everyone has outflanked him, especially the women in his life who have used his innocence well.

Ellen begins the novel honestly, thinking that New Yorkers will welcome her and seeing them as the harmless, innocent youngsters of her childhood. Quickly, because she has lived in a less dissembling culture, she learns that beneath the surface are cruelty, judgment, and hypocrisy. Not having been taught the rules of the game, she stretches the tolerance of New Yorkers, eventually forcing her exit. Of all the characters in the novel, she is perhaps the least innocent, forcing the reader to wonder how much of her knowledge is based on Wharton's life as an adult living in Paris.

Newland Archer, the ambivalent protagonist of *The Age of Innocence*, represents the peak of good breeding. He is the ultimate insider in post-Civil War New York society. Although engaged to May Welland, a beautiful and proper fellow member of elite society, he is attracted to the free-spirited Countess Ellen Olenska, May's cousin and a former member of their circle who has been living in Europe but has left her husband, a cruel Polish nobleman, under mysterious circumstances and returned to her family's New York milieu. His upcoming marriage to the young socialite unites two of New York's oldest families, but from the novel's

opening pages, Olenska imports a passionate intensity and mysterious Old World eccentricity that disrupt the conventional world of order-obsessed New York. Ellen's hopes of being set free from her past are dashed when she is forced to choose between conformity and exile, while Newland's appointment by the Welland family as Ellen's legal consultant begins an emotional entanglement, the force of which he could never have imagined.

The Age of Innocence focuses on New York society's stubborn insistence on a blind and damaging pretension of innocence. In many ways, this performance stems from society's avoidance of scandal at all costs. It often amounts to characters pretending that they don't understand things that they actually understand completely. New York society in particular insists that women remain innocent and pure. Women have long been valued for purity and scorned when they fall from this ideal, particularly through sexual experience. In the society, innocence is a woman's foremost virtue, and May Welland embodies this ideal. She leads a sheltered life with little knowledge of the world beyond what her mother sees fit to tell her. As a result, May represents the safe, secure world of New York gentility and it becomes clear that May's innocence is partly an act. For example, Archer eventually realizes that she knows of his feelings for Ellen, and has intentionally made it impossible for him and Ellen to run off together. Even so, May never comes rather unprepared for her marriage with Archer, making him feel that they'll never be able to really relate to each other or have honest, meaningful discussions, acknowledges what she knows or what she's done; instead, she maintains the illusion that Archer has successfully concealed his affair. This is what society demands, and she never strays from its path.

In Wharton's world, women are sexually innocent, not expected to have affairs. Although the characters don't directly discuss women's virginity, the idea of

innocence is intimately connected to it. First and foremost, in order to preserve their innocence, women can't know about topics surrounding sexual desire, marital infidelity, or divorce. May's purity of mind is represented by the lilies-of-the-valley that Archer always sends her; these flowers are white, a colour traditionally associated with virginity. Archer perceives that women are trained to preserve their innocence so that their husbands can have the pleasure of stripping them of it, but he notes that, realistically, this doesn't make for a happy marriage either for husbands or wives.

May Welland, in *The Age of Innocence*, embodies the innocence that Old New York idealized in a woman. In Old New York's view, May perfectly plays her roles of a daughter, a wife, and mother till her death. The anti-climax of the novel is that when her son Dallas reveals to his father Newland Archer that she has known her husband's love for her cousin Ellen Olenska, Newland denies himself a visit to Ellen. Instead, he sends Dallas to Ellen with his words; "Say I'm old-fashioned: that's enough" (304). May continues to have power over her husband even several years after her death.

In What Edith Wharton saw in *Innocence* Louis Coxe mentions: "I believe that if any character in this novel partakes of the heroic nature it is ended May, Welland, she of the pink and white surface and the candid glance, whose capacity for passion and sacrifice her husband never knew" (159). Coxe is not only one who pays tribute to the under-appreciated character May. Gwendolyn Morgan, in the "Unsung Heroine – A Study of May Welland in *The Age of Innocence*" also asserts that, in spite of being a minor character in the novel, May can be the novel's "true heroine" with her many triumphs in her fights for her home husbands (101). On the other hand, feminist scholars such as Elizabeth Ammons and Emily Orlando attempt to illuminate the oppressed nature Wharton hides within "the innocent American girl" May. Feminist

scholars conclude that the myth of the American Girl, that she is a perpetual “innocent” child, is damaging to women because it makes them victims of their husbands and the patriarchal system. May is a victor and victor and victim, considering critics’ contradictory views of her.

Wharton presents two women characters to suggest two contrastive approaches of life. May is the fair American girl with a slim, athletic body and an innocent mind. Ellen, on the other hand, is the dark, passionate beauty with the experience of Europe. The differences between May Welland and Ellen Olenska are due to their upbringing and education. While May is born into a traditional-styled family, Ellen is raised up by a rather eccentric and unusual one. May Welland’s personality is created by the environment in which she grows up. Her father is a conventional, nervous and weak man who is highly conscious of his health. He has a lot of habits which other members in his family have to follow. Every winter the Newlands have to go to St. Augustine with him to prevent him from catching bronchitis. It is impossible for him to go alone because he cannot do anything without the help of his wife. During this holiday, he has to hire a house since he cannot stand the local hotel, and a lot of servants need to be hired to satisfy his demand.

In summer, the whole family always goes to Newport as it is a fashionable place which attracts everyone in the upper class society. Mr. Welland is an extremely methodical man. He wants everything to occur on time, never dares to miss a drive or drink his medicine late (even though he does not have any health problem). Living with a mechanical man like her father, May becomes a girl who does everything that other people expect her to, conforms to traditional customs without wondering at their absurdity. It is because she is used to satisfying the demands of her father and hereby she learned to follow the of society. The one who has the deepest influence on May is

her mother. Mrs. Welland is a stolid, dull and selfish woman. The thing she cares for most is conventionality and she is ready to do anything to conform to it, even by pretending.

In reality they all lived in a kind of hieroglyphic, where the real thing was never said or done or even thought, but only represented by a set of arbitrary signs; as when Mrs. Newland, who knew exactly why Archer had pressed her to announce her daughter's engagement at the Beaufort's ball (and had indeed expected him to do no less), yet felt obliged to simulate Reluctance, and the air of having her hand forced. (39) Mrs. Newland is also unsympathetic towards the problem and mistakes of other people. When Ellen tries to confide her grievances to her, she refuses as "having an invalid to care for [her husband], I have to keep my mind bright and happy" (124).and also because she hates to hear about scandalous thing. After Ellen refuses to return to her husband, she decides to abandon her and let poor Ellen find her own level. She teaches May how to become a good wife, which is to cheerfully fulfil all requests of her husband. Mrs. Welland has succeeded in moulding May into an exact of her; indifferent, rigid and dull.

She is also the force behind May's long engagement. Had it not been for decision, May would have yielded to Newland's request to hasten their marriage. In short, Mrs Welland is the one who shapes May's personality and her influence is even greater than that of Mr. Welland. Contrary to May's peaceful and traditional family, Ellen's is more complicated and unusual. Her parents are described as "continental wanderers" and since her childhood, she has been taken to different places with them. Her free-spiritedness is obviously inherited from them. When she was nine or ten, her parents passed away and she was adopted by her aunt Medora Manson. Medora is an

eccentric, capricious and romantic woman. She is also a wanderer who rarely settles in one place pays little attention to conventionalities.

Poor Medora, repeatedly widowed, was always coming home to settledown (eachtime in a lessexpensive house), and bringing with her a new husband or an adopted child; But after a few months she invariable parted from her husband or quarreled with her Ward, and, having got rid of her house at a loss, set out again on her wanderings.
(51)

Ellen receives a most peculiar education under Medora's queer upbringing her lessons include "dancing a Spanish shawl dance and singing Neapolitan love-songs to a guitar "as well as" 'drawing from the model' a thing never heard of before, and playing the piano in quintets with professional musicians" (52). When she is mourning for her parents, instead of wearing blacks, she puts on crimson merino and amber beads, like a gipsy foundling. At her coming-out ball, where she should not appear in black colour, she wears a black satin dress. Due to Medora's guidance, she grows up to be a wild and broad-minded girl, who pays no attention to fashion or old traditions. Her own marriage is as tragic as Medora's and both women end up losing their property and have to rely on the support of their family, i.e. Mrs. Manson Mingott. Scientists have proved that children's Personalities depend on the hereditary factors as well as their upbringing. This theory also applies to the case of May Welland and Ellen Olenska. May, born into a traditional family, has become a conventional woman; while Ellen, who receives an eccentric education, grows up to be high-spirited and unconventional.

Wharton characterizes Ellen Olenska as energetic and free to the same degree that she shows May Welland as conventional and predictable. Ellen fulfils Newland's belief that women should be as free as men in order to develop into mature human beings. Not yet thirty, Ellen has achieved a kind of maturity that neither May nor the other women in the novel such as Mrs. Welland, Mrs. Archer, or even Mrs. Mingott will ever gain. According to Wharton the finest characters must have the sensitivity to assess the consequences of their actions and the courage to follow their judgement. Throughout the novel, Ellen resists the demands of others and the threat of moral dissolutions by means of her stoicism and emotional maturity. But at the same time, she confidently moves through her life with a lack of self-consciousness. Ellen is the model of firm self-control and intellectual honesty, which all Wharton's finest characters possess. In fact, any human being who wants to invent a new self must struggle not only against the outside world but also against the habits of identity the person had already moulded oneself to the expectation of others.

May is willing to do anything that tradition requires her to do and she respects old traditions and feels comfortable living within their limits. As May's character foil, Ellen Olenska represents experience, the opposite of innocence. For one thing, she's already married, and thus she is no longer a virgin. Furthermore, she's seen far more of life than any of the other female characters of her age: she has struggled in her marriage and has escaped from it, and she has travelled widely, both of which make her wise. Although Archer is initially irritated by the negative social repercussions of Ellen's lack of innocence, it soon becomes one of the characteristic that most attracts him to her. Ellen's experience allows Archer to meet her as an equal, whereas he has to hide parts of himself to produce May and he often feels that he can't have sincere discussions with her.

May Newland and Ellen Olenska are different in their attitudes toward changes. While May dislikes changes and never expects them to happen, Ellen Olenska always welcomes new things because they make her life become less monotonous. May Welland leads a methodical life. She does what society requires of a “nice” woman and abhors things that go against the golden rules. Her idea of travelling is “mountaineering in July and swimming in August” (166). She never breaks these rules, even when her husband suggests that they should go to Italy to visit the Italian Lakes in July. May also dislikes going to unfashionable places, and she flatly refuses when her husband tries to persuade her to come to a remote island for a change. In general, she does not like travelling without valid reasons because she cannot bear to leave her comfortable house. As time goes by, May Welland still remains the same, “so lacking in imagination, so incapable of growth, that the world of her youth had fallen into pieces and rebuilt itself without her being conscious of the change” (294).

She is able to live a happy life - it is because of her incapability to recognize changes believing that the world is still the good old one that she grows up in; but her defect also prevents her children as well as her husband from confiding their opinions to her. Archer once comments that “she would probably go through life dealing to the beat of her ability with each experience as it came, but never anticipating any by so much as a stolen glance” (160). May is the perfect embodiment for 19th century New York’s perception of changes:

It was thus, Archer reflected, that New York managed its transitions conspiring to ignore them till they were well over, and then, in all good faith, imagining that they had taken place in a preceding age. There was always a traitor in the citadel; and after he (or generally she) had

surrendered the keys, what was the use of pretending that is was impregnable? (220)

The “traitor” mentioned in the above passage is Ellen Olenska. She heartily welcomes all kinds of changes as long as they make her feel alive. Ellen loves conversing with artists because of their artistic and innovative views. She is the first among the people to join in Mrs. Struthers’s Sunday parties, even though that woman is considered as common and vulgar. Several years later, people start coming regularly to Mrs. Struthers on Sundays to entertain themselves, but they still resent Ellen for being the first person to frequent her house. Ellen is a creative woman. She decorates her house in her own way and transforms it into something exotic, romantic and sentimental. She dislikes following fashion trends and prefers creating her own style. Her lively personality is the source for her creativity, but it also makes her become capricious. She does not like the monotonous life in New York and decides to move to Washington “to meet more varieties of people and of opinion” (203). Ellen likes to mingle with all types of people because good conversation is what she values the most. This is contrary to the view of New York upper class, which opposes any kind of relationship with her lower class. In short, May Welland abhors and ignores changes, while Ellen Olenska likes to acquire new things and heartily welcomes them. Due to these differences, May’s life is peaceful yet monotonous, while Ellen’s is exciting, active but lonely.

The Age of Innocence describes the struggle between conventionality and unconventionality, represented respectively by May Welland and Ellen Olenska. May Welland considers conventionality as a matter of fact and regards unconventionality as vulgar. Meanwhile, Ellen Olenska objects to conventional ideas and leads an unconventional life. May Welland respects old traditions and feels comfortable living

within their limits. When Newlands persuades her to hasten their marriage and suggests that they might elope together, she refuses because it is vulgar, and in fact, being vulgar is the thing that she fears the most.

‘But that kind of thing is rather- vulgar, isn’t it?’ she suggested, relieved to have hit on a word that would assuredly extinguished the whole subject. ‘Are you so much Afraid, then of being vulgar?’ She was evidently by this. ‘Of course I Hate it so would you,’ she rejoined a trifle irritably. (71)

May is willing to do anything that tradition insists. For instance, she embroiders cushions even though she dislikes it “since other wives embroidered cushions for their husbands she did not wish to omit his last link in her devotion” (250). She never confronts her husband’s infidelity because etiquette requires that she should be discreet about infamous subjects. May knows her husband’s love for another woman. But she does not find fault with him. Instead she bears with him and decides to suffer within herself and to carry on her tasks. She successfully manages to keep her husband without playing the role of the outraged wife. As usual she does her domestic duties, such as managing the household and looking after her husband and children. She has become a so-called wise wife by developing her skill in coping with her husband and the conflicting situation that, arises between them. May cultivates her intuition to a functional degree to attain her goal, which makes her marriage a success. It is only because of their mutual understanding, as husband and wife Newland and May never quarrel over any substantial conflict.

May especially dislikes people who revolt against conventionality, i.e. Ellen Olenska and Regina Beaufort. She even goes to the extent of making a

relationship once they breach the social the social etiquette. Ellen, on the other hand, does not care about conventionality. She once tries to confirm to social etiquette by moving from a poor quarter to a more luxurious residential area. However, the change does not suit her and she fails to subject herself to the old-fashioned traditions.

She had grown tired of what people 'society; New York was kind, it was almost Oppressively hospitable; she should never forget the way in which it had welcomed her back; but after the first flush of novelty she had found herself, as she phrased it, to 'different' to care for the things it cared about- and so she had decided to try Washington, Where one was supposed to meet more varieties of people and of opinion. (203)

Ellen repeatedly commits unconventional acts, from befriending common people to wearing shocking clothes and refusing to return to her husband. She dislikes the old-fashioned customs, but she still respects them because she believes under the dullness there are things so fine and sensitive and delicate that even those she most cared for in her other life look cheap in comparison. In general, May Welland blindly follows traditional etiquette and conforms unconditionally to conventionality, while Ellen Olenska revolts against it and indulges herself in unconventionality. In short, New York upper class society in the 1870's led an idle and luxurious life, bounded by a complicated set of rules and etiquette. In many cases, unconventionality can be considered as the ability to "think outside the box."

Marriage is the central institution of New York society. It is considered to be a commercial and social bond that ensures the continuation of prominent families and fortunes, rather than a personal arrangement that can realistically bring happiness and

fulfilment to a couple. Wharton's depiction of marriage as a flawed institution that can cause misery and ruin lives is tragic incite of how much power the institution of marriage has over the lives of New Yorkers.

New Yorkers pride themselves on not having arranged marriages, as some Europeans do. However, in a society uniquely obsessed on social status and making advantageous connections, a New Yorker can freely choose his or her spouse based on a monotonous list of qualifications, such as class and family reputation. Marriage is culturally almost required, and once married, couples must maintain the appearance of matrimonial harmony no matter what unhappiness or extramarital affairs may ensue. In society's eyes, it is more important to uphold the image of traditional marriage than to find realistic solutions for the many problems inherent in marriage.

Wharton structures her novel around marriage just as New York society is built around the institution of marriage. The story opens as Archer and May become engaged, and it moves through their wedding and subsequent experience as husband and wife. At the beginning of the novel, Archer idealizes marriage, believing himself to be thoroughly in love with his fiancée and imagining their future domestic bliss, with Archer acting as May's protector and she as his supporter. However, he quickly begins to realize that the rules of society have set him and May up for failure; since unmarried women are expected to be innocent of all worldly knowledge, May lacks the experience, flexibility, and freedom of judgement that are necessary to a successful partnership in marriage.

Ellen Olenska has a very different story of marriage to tell, one that emphasizes its prison-like quality. She married a Polish nobleman who has ill-treated her in ways never fully described (and perhaps more terrifying for their vagueness).

She has escaped her husband with the help of his secretary, with whom she's rumoured to have had an affair. Clearly, marriage has failed her, but in the eyes of society, she has also failed the institution of marriage by fleeing. Ellen breaks the convention first by leaving her husband, but husband, but even further by considering divorcing him. While divorce may be legal and possible, it's certainly not acceptable to New York society, in part because it signals such an utter failure of the institution upon which everyone is expected to structure their lives. With divorce spelling social scandal, marriage truly becomes a trap from which there is no full escape short of death. In one chilling scene, Archer feels that the death of his wife would give him freedom.

Wharton presents marriage as a destructive institutions based on a lie. Because marriage is culturally mandatory, those within its grip are often forced to commit immoral acts of betrayal in order to fulfil their desires. Characters such as Lawrence Lefferts and Julius Beaufort have frequent affairs that their wives either don't know about or pretend not to know about. It is because such affairs are so common, they are more or less accepted, as long as they don't become obvious enough to create a scandal. Though Archer doesn't approve of these affairs, he eventually finds himself engaging in one such affair. He feels, as everyone does, that his case is different and somehow more excusable. The fact that so many characters resort to affairs proves that their marriages were unfulfilling. In turn, the affairs further disintegrate the marriages, as the men hide their illicit relationship from their wives and the women feign ignorance of their husbands' disloyalty.

Archer's marriage may be said, to be successful from an outsider's perspective though he and May remain together and have children. Archer's affair with Ellen is never consummated. Archer's perspective shows that his marriage endures out of

convenience and a respect for convention, rather than out of love. The marriage also endures because May, not as innocent as she seems, lies to Ellen to make her and her relationship with Archer; May says that she's pregnant before she knows for sure whether she is. Thus the continuation of her marriage, and he is stuck with the dull, uninspiring sameness of a life that he has dreaded throughout the novel. All through the novel the characters remain trapped within the clutches of marriage and suffer inwardly.

Thus *The Age of Innocence* is a skilled portrait of the struggle between the individual and the community. It is also a work that explores the dangers and liberties of a society that change as it moves from a familiar, traditional culture to one that is less formal and affords its members greater freedom.

Chapter Three

The Society of Innocence

The Age of Innocence explores the effects of a rigidly structured society on the individual. The novel maintains an ironic attitude toward New York society through its constant comparisons with primitive society and through its biting portrayal of the society's hypocrisies. Having lived in New York of the Gilded Age, Wharton provides a rich description of the life of the upper class in *The Age of Innocence* and contrasts this life to the European society she had encountered during her numerous travels.

The story of Newland Archer, a young lawyer from a respected upper-class family, who is torn between marrying his betrothed May Welland and thereby following society's expectations and entering into a relationship with her cousin, Ellen Olenska, and with that super ordinate his personal happiness, won Edith Wharton a Pulitzer Prize in 1921. In *The Age of Innocence*, Newland Archer's life is predestined by the enclosed society of New York City which finds expression in his eventual decision to marry May Welland, and separate him with Ellen Olenska who transgresses the boundaries of the society feeling misplaced as the world familiar to him approaches change.

The time when Edith Wharton wrote *The Age of Innocence*, she had seen World War I destroy much of the world as she knew it. She looked back on her early years in New York as a time of social continuity, and felt that the passing of values from parent to child had a civilizing influence. However, she also saw the hypocrisy and cruelty practiced by individuals who wore the veneer of respectability. Both of these ideas are seen throughout *The Age of Innocence*, making it a timeless novel of both the Gilded Age and of social change.

Edith Wharton had by the time survived 25 years of an unhappy marriage, ignoring her husband's affairs and business improprieties when she wrote this book. She had divorced and moved to a more congenial atmosphere for divorcees- Paris. Looking back at her childhood, she was critical of a society that kept girls innocent, sheltered, and away from obstacles they might have to solve.

Wharton was often critical of the rigidity of the social code, but she saw its purpose of handing down values and replicating culture. Order, loyalty, tradition, and duty are all values upheld and also criticized in her novel. Order is epitomized by the repetition of certain rituals. Newland Archer's wife must be sexually innocent and pretend not to know about affairs or passions. When we first meet May Welland we see her in white with white lilies of the valley, oblivious to the sexual innuendoes of the play she is watching. Later, the reader discovers that she knew all along of Newland's passion for Ellen, but she followed the accepted code of ignorance. Order is maintained by these understood practices. The wedding at Grace Church is a perfect replica of the order in which things must be done; even Newland has a list of socially mandated duties to perform. This is the way civilization continues.

A perfect product of the social code, May Welland Archer begins the novel in ignorance and ends it in wisdom. When she first appears, she is the personification of innocence. She marries Newland and her slim intellectual abilities never vary, but her wisdom in manipulating Newland grows immensely. Wharton exercises considerable talent in showing May through the eyes of Newland Archer, whose vision of her is frozen in time like her photograph on his desk. He sees too late that she outmaneuvers him at every turn and that she knows of his unhappiness.

Always worrying about what her mother will think, May manages Newland's life; she arranges every minute of his schedule at Newport, becoming the image of her mother after two years of marriage. Her strategic actions throughout the novel show that she has learned well at her mother's side. She sends Newland a letter from Florida reminding him of her kindness just as he is ready to fall for Ellen's charms. She is firm about her position as his wife, and she uses the ruse of pregnancy to finally vanquish Ellen forever.

In a society where women have little power, they use what they can. Her suggestion that they give a "last dinner" for Ellen shows how she has grown in wisdom and the determination to hold on to what she has. She knows her husband, and even her deathbed confession to Dallas demonstrates her knowledge of Newland's unhappiness but her total understanding of duty and their shared values. She cannot fulfill Newland's desires for an emotional life or intellectual stimulation, but with true Wharton irony she does symbolize the perfect wife and marriage partner for his social class and time. Like other women, she keeps Newland on the straight and narrow, pronouncing any deviation from the norm to be "vulgar" and unthinkable. May Welland is exactly what she has been trained to be: the perfect helpmate of civilized society in wealthy 1870s New York.

Newland Archer is a study in intellectual conflict, but under the surface little contradiction actually exists, as his wife knows well. He has been raised into a world where manners and moral codes dictate how the individual will act, and in some cases, even think. At many points throughout the book, both Archer and Ellen Olenska are expected to sacrifice their desires and opinions in order not to upset the established order of things. In *The Age of Innocence*, this established order most often takes its most concrete form. In the family one of the individual's foremost duties is to

promote and protect the solidarity of his tightly knit group of blood and marital relationships.

When Archer first appears at the opera, he is so steeped in the social graces that even his hair is carefully parted by "two silver-backed brushes with his monogram in blue enamel," and he never appears in public without a flower in his buttonhole. He contemplates his perfect wife, May, and seems quite at ease as her parents buy his house and even the brougham he drives. As Archer comes to better know the Countess, he begins to appreciate her unconventional views on New York society. Meanwhile, Archer becomes increasingly disillusioned with his new fiancée, May. He begins to see her as the manufactured product of her class: polite, innocent, and utterly devoid of personal opinion and sense of self.

So correct is he that when he impulsively sends yellow roses to Ellen, he is conscience stricken and must tell his future wife. Even his meticulous attention to the list of his duties before his own wedding is typical of Newland's conformity. In a key scene when he fails to call to Ellen at the Newport shore, he once again shows that actually doing the unconventional is beyond the bounds of possibility for him. Countess Ellen Olenska represents a dream of the unconventional, more passionate life for which he will never sacrifice everything. He sometimes feels he is being smothered in his social position, but he will only dream about a life outside the tight parameters of his class and duty. May uses her knowledge of his commitment to the social values of his class to keep him faithful. Even 26 years after his wedding, he realizes that his conventional life has the comforting feeling of the place where he belongs. He is a relic in the twentieth century, where increased personal freedom is changing life forever.

Not only rituals but also group dynamics play a pivotal role in the shaping of Archer's identity. The dichotomy between individual freedom and collective requirements of the group within the New York society of the Gilded Age is revealed in the novel. This tension finds expression in the main conflict of the novel between Archer, his prospective wife May Welland, and May's cousin, Countess Ellen Olenska. While Ellen challenges Archer's desire for individual agency, the rigid societal construct and its focus on rituals and tradition predominates in Archer's mind. Thus, although he is drawn to Ellen, the decision of staying with May has been made for him by society. Old New York forms an entity that can hardly be breached.

The sexual double standard for men and women is an intellectual battleground in his mind. In several scenes, he debates whether this standard is valid, especially when he meets and desires Ellen. In the long run, however, he overlooks Lefferts' affairs because it is the way of his world. He talks convincingly about honour and integrity, but selfishly he wants both his wife and Ellen, and briefly he contemplates a hole-in-the-corner affair, not caring on an emotional level about the price Ellen will pay.

Newland also longs for a life of passion, intellectual stimulation, and freedom, represented by both Ellen Olenska and Ned Winsett. He is unfulfilled by his "gentlemanly pursuit" of law and feels that he wants the sophisticated and passionate Ellen. But in the end he remains true to his station in life and that four-letter word, "duty." Wharton uses his character to show the ironies of 1870s society as well as the extremes in social thought represented by his relationships with Countess Ellen Olenska and May Welland Archer.

If a person considers breaking the code, the eyes of society are everywhere. When Newland is out for a walk and sees Ellen, he worries about the eyes of Lefferts and Chivers who happen to see them. Because Newland has been in on many of the cigar-smoking gatherings of his fellow men, he knows the judgments that will arise about his meeting with Ellen. Despite that knowledge, Newland does not realize that the family has been plotting behind his back to keep him faithful, ignoring the code does not work. This is evident because Ellen, having lived in a more open society, pays a price, even among her family, for doing so.

Personal freedom is sacrificed when the social code enforces such rules are good for society. Newland cannot follow his passion; he must do his duty. Ellen realizes that they cannot have an affair no matter how much they might love each other and maintain social integrity. To be married to a despicable husband who has numerous affairs and treats his wife badly is condoned by the social code, to divorce that husband is not.

Ellen, the Countess Olenska, fulfills Newland's longing for an emotional fantasy life. Her words, her unconventional taste in clothing and interior decorating, and her attitudes symbolize the exotic to traditional Newland. She causes him to question his narrow existence and brings out his protective instincts. Where May is ice, Ellen is fire. Ellen's élan and style would be at home in Europe, but seem unduly passionate and unorthodox in New York City.

Emotionally, she is the opposite of May Welland Archer. She shows compassion to Regina Beaufort, a fellow victim of social censure. Often she causes Newland to question why everyone must be and act exactly alike. Her tolerance for the mavericks of society reveals her benevolence, a trait unappreciated by New

Yorkers. This makes it possible for May to use Ellen's softness to her advantage because she knows that Ellen will never run away with Newland when May reveals her possible pregnancy.

Ellen falls in love with Newland, but she is a realist. She asks him, "Does no one want to know the truth here?" as she notices the narrow hypocrisy of his social world. Ellen knows that they cannot live a life outside of convention without hurting others. She reminds Newland that social, religious, and class standards must be upheld. A clandestine affair with him means no honor, no principles, and no happiness. As she explains, "I can't love you unless I give you up." Unselfish in doing exactly that, she realizes they are "chained to their destinies" and she leaves because an unconventional life cannot survive in 1870s New York.

Loopholes can be found in this code and those who find them might often be despised, but they are still tolerated in this society. Lawrence Lefferts is the prime example of hypocrisy, having numerous affairs but extolling Christian virtues and snubbing Ellen for leaving her husband. Newland realizes that if he leaves May for Ellen, society's sympathy will be with May, even though he could have a quiet affair and get away with it. May must pretend that she does not know Newland is in love with her cousin, but from her deathbed confession the reader sees that she lived with this knowledge most of her life. In the age of alleged innocence, hypocrisy abounds.

True to the Gilded Age, Wharton's society knows that appearance is everything. Ellen realizes the hypocrisy of New Yorkers from her first glimpse of them. She tells Newland on many occasions that they do not want to hear the truth; they would rather pretend. May gives a lavish going-away dinner for Ellen. It is a huge success, but under the surface it is a "civilized" triumph because of May's

position as "wife." Similarly, all of New York turns out for the annual Beaufort Ball, but under the surface they know he is scandalous and uncomfortably not one of theirs. His adultery and that of Lefferts are acceptable as long as they are discreet.

In Wharton's world, women are sexually innocent, not expected to have affairs, acknowledge those of their husbands, or ever divorce. The only power they have is the power that May uses: duty, loyalty, and (most of all) pregnancy. Victorian women are beautiful trophies but innocent brides. Single, they are ornaments like May with her exciting and radiant glow, and married, they are mothers who keep the home and provide continuity. Ellen's sin is that she refuses to accept these restrictions and will not lie about loving Newland. Men too have restrictions, one of which is their jobs. The only acceptable vocation for Newland is the law, however boring. He must not dirty his hands in business or "trade."

May Welland is the perfect embodiment of that child-raising principle. Kept innocent and naive, she has never known passion nor is she supposed to know it until her husband introduces her to it. She has been taught to remain innocent and avoid life's difficulties; throughout her marriage she pretends not to know about Newland's passion for Ellen. Even on her honeymoon, her attitude toward all things European is to ignore, be critical, or avoid them. "Her incapacity to recognize change made her children conceal their views from her . . . a kind of innocent family **hypocrisy.**" Her photo on Newland's desk following her death reflects the carefully groomed ignorance criticized by Wharton: "And she had died thinking the world a good place, full of loving and harmonious households **like her own.**"

Newland, while seemingly in charge of his world as well as the narrative, is actually one of the more naive characters in the story. He never realizes until the end

that his wife has known about his sacrifice all along; even after her death he has cultivated the viewpoint that she was ignorant of real life from beginning to end. Until Ellen's farewell dinner, he does not even know that his entire family has plotted and planned without him, leaving him intentionally ignorant of their machinations. Despite his supposedly cosmopolitan attitudes, he believes that a love affair with Ellen would be tolerated, an attitude showing his lack of realism. By the end of the novel, everyone has outflanked him, especially the women in his life who have used his innocence well.

Ellen begins the novel naively, thinking that New Yorkers will welcome her and seeing them as the harmless, innocent youngsters of her childhood. Quickly, because she has lived in a less dissembling culture, she learns that beneath the surface are cruelty, judgment, and hypocrisy. Not having been taught the rules of the game, she stretches the tolerance of New Yorkers, eventually forcing her exit. Of all the characters in the novel, she is perhaps the least naive, forcing the reader to wonder how much of her knowledge is based on Wharton's life as an adult living in Paris.

Even New York City in the 1870s is a society of innocence. It worries about its social code wedding details, the season, rituals, and rules passing its time in total ignorance of what is to come. The supreme example of this is the farewell dinner for the Countess, a dinner that seems innocently gracious and honorable on the surface but which hides rigid assertiveness in enforcing the social order. This is an age of innocence for a society existing in its own niggling concerns that cannot conceive of the devastating war that will change all life and history, and sweep away this innocence

A few stylistic notes must be mentioned regarding *The Age of Innocence*. The first of these is the complex nature of the narration. Wharton uses the character of Newland Archer as a lens of consciousness through which to see Old New York. As a result, much of the criticism of that society is comprised of his opinions. And in fact, the reader sees two central characters, May Welland and Ellen Olenska, primarily through Archer's eyes. Yet Wharton also employs an omniscient narration to describe many of the details of setting, as well as the personal histories and physical appearances of several characters. This more remote narrator often serves to undercut Archer's opinions. Archer's opinions of May lead us to believe that she is an innocent and hollow person, there are several indications that Archer does not realize his wife's depth. By reading Wharton's close-up descriptions of May's gestures, looks, and offhand comments, it is possible to construct a more complex portrait of her.

A close reading of Wharton's prose, then, is essential to a full understanding *The Age of Innocence*. Detailed descriptions are frequent and can include obscure references, yet each has a crucial significance. As far as behaviours and gestures are concerned, a raised eyebrow or a meaningful glance can communicate a tacit understanding, a carefully concealed passion, or a politely expressed disbelief. As for material objects like fashion and furniture, each object bears a significant relationship to its owner. In a society where personal wealth is gratuitously displayed, each object reflects the economic status of the owner. On a more sophisticated level, these objects indicate the personality of the owner: his or her tastes, interests, and values.

Ellen's lack of concern for social rules and etiquette make her a target of malicious tongues, but a heroine of the dispossessed. Unlike the inane society wives, she has a mind of her own and uses it well and with concern for others. Unfortunately,

this seals her fate because New York society has a difficult time understanding single woman living apart from their husbands, and her lifestyle makes her family, as well as their social class, nervous. May guarantees the continuation of the family line and, according to Knights, “everything about her signals purity”²⁰. However, May's character is controversial. While on the one hand, she can be regarded as brave and more calculating than it seems, her adherence to the rules and lack of passion reveals that she is indeed a “terrifying product of the social system”.²¹ Thus, both May and Newland Archer share their belonging to the rigid social structure of New York of the 1870s. They continue in the long-standing tradition of their families by marrying and raising a family. Society controls Archer's actions to the extent where he subordinates his feelings for Ellen to the wellbeing of his future family.

Chapter Four

Role of Women

Gender plays an important role in Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* each gender has been assigned its own respective freedoms and restrictions. Female subordination seem to be the most severe. Just to protect their dignity, women must be submissive to their societal ties or suffer the possibility of being ostracized. They

must seem to appear overly dutiful and loyal. It seems the only restriction men have is their jobs, which they toil at un-enthusiastically. Both sides of the gender spectrum also had powers granted to them solely due to their gender. Although it may not appear that women have any powers, it's merely because they are overshadowed by the cons of being a woman in this society. Women, most importantly, have the power to get pregnant. Although this may seem like a menial power or even a burden, pregnancy can be tactical.

Wharton describes the transformation of a single girl to a married woman. She showed how uneducated the girl were with love and marriage matters. Although the proper education can bring success, as could be seen in example of May, who was closed in her cage. She did not have any unimportant questions about marriage and she accepted her role and all circumstances.

Although powerful in social terms, in a society women were dependent on men to provide for them. If a woman came from a wealthy family, she might be fortunate enough to have a sum of money to contribute to the marriage, but women expected their husband to take care of all their material needs. Women were expected to behave in certain ways, especially in the upper class. They were to master domestic skills, such as needlework, and they were never to challenge men or be unpleasant. A virtuous woman was one who was pretty, elegant, and compliant. In *The Age of Innocence*, May represent the New York society ideal, while Ellen hints at the strides being made for female independence outside the tightly knit New York community.

May's marriage was happier and she was not childless. Wharton states that "a girl is only a sketch; a married woman is the finished picture" (New Frenchwoman 294), so Ellen comes to New York as a whole woman, however she was not accepted

in society, although it is only married woman who counts as a social factor. She was married but seeking divorce, by which she again lost on the social ladder. May and Newland's marriage was the same according to the general pattern that is the wife's efforts concentrated on home-making and child rearing. With men leaving the to work elsewhere, time invested in fatherhood occurred primarily during leisure hours. They seem to be following this pattern, May was not working, and Newland was. May changed only a little when she got married, she dropped her girlishness, she was loyal, gallant and unresentful and it led Newland to do the same. He could not behave otherwise towards her, he actually did what May wanted, although, he did not like it going to Newport with her parents was one example. He outweighed it with the idea of being "the husband of one of the handsomest and most popular young married women in New York... one of sweetest and most reasonable wives" (167). While looking at her appearance he had pleasant feeling of proprietorship, unfortunately, he could not forget about Ellen, he could not get her appearance out of his mind

The most apparent reason why Newland was not happy with all he gained in marriage, including May, his good wife, was his sheer temptation for Ellen. The thought of possessing her did not diminish out of his mind as was already said. May must have sensed, that he is not fully hers and she therefore invented this strategy of offering Ellen to him " You must be sure to go and see Ellen ... I wish you to do so with my full and explicit approval" (226). She might have done it for different reasons, one might be that the 'forbidden fruit tastes better' and if she did not allow him to see Ellen he would be tempted and who knows where it would lead to. The other might be that she was so nice that she wanted her husband to be happy and saw that meeting with Ellen will make him happy. The most probable reason is that she wanted him to find out by himself that living with Ellen would not be the right way

for him and that she, was the best wife he could get in life. She was mentioning Ellen several times to him to show him that she knew about them. However, he did not perceive it and did not guess that it may be truth that she knows. Sometimes it seems that she was cruel to him “what a pity, that you and Ellen will cross each other on the way” (232). On the other hand she was happy, that he would not see her. She was pretending to feel pity for them, and she was scornful.

May wanted Newland to be happy, however, individual happiness was not the primary aim for the 19th century society. Newland did not realize that behind his back May had a plan. Coopering together with all her family, she wanted to send Ellen away. The whole family wanted her to go back to her husband, where her rightful place was. On the contrary, Ellen and Newland were sort of manipulated, by May and her family. Edmund Wilson in *Justice to Edith Wharton* generalizes men in Wharton’s novel “men are usually captured and dominated by women of conventional morals and middle class ideals” (352). Ellen thought only positively about May, who was her nice cousin, who helped her to assimilate in New York. Ellen did not see the intrigues behind her back.

Ellen did not want to steal May’s husband from her, she could have had him, however not as a husband as he was already married but as a lover, which she refused. She had the instinct of self-preservation and she was also moral. To run from her husband did not mean she was immoral. Ellen accepts the rules of the sexual and social game as determined by the society. The basic laws of this game are that a mistress has no rights and that a wife may use means as she the rights necessary to preserve her marriage and the honour of her family. Ellen in that case would not like to be a mistress because a mistress does not have any right and she wanted to be free and have her rights. May in the same case has the right to fight for saving her

marriage and she later uses all possible means. Ellen understands that the protection that society provides must not be relinquished and Newland from spiralling into professional and personal ruin.

May, according to Newland, did not have imagination and their life would be monotonous, of which Newland was afraid. He lacked excitement, which he experienced with Ellen. She was always herself and she was a huge personality. May, on the other hand echoed what he told her at the time of their engagement, but later in the marriage she developed her own opinion. However, she was still doing what was expected from the society, she did not like needlework, she was not good at it, but because other wives did it, she was knitting as well. Ellen in contrast did only what she liked. If May knew, that Newland once wished her to be dead, so that he would be free to go to his real love Ellen, and that May would probably not devote herself to him as she did. May had a long talk with Ellen, however what was said between them stays unknown. Wharton only mentions one, but the most important thing that May told Ellen about her pregnancy. May wants to hide her willingness for Ellen to go far away, she would like to hide it in front of Newland, for him to think that she likes Ellen, "I'm afraid I haven't been fair to her [Ellen] lately" (266). She plays the role of a wife who wants to keep her husband for herself and rather wants his mistress to go away. She uses all the tools she can and she has the right to do it, save her marriage. Wharton made her to do it by intrigues rather than to persuade her husband or at least talk to him about it. It was period when people apparently did not talk about such topics, and naturally May and Newland did not talk about their relationship at all, which is very well understood by their elder son Dallas.

You never did ask each other anything, did you? And you never told each other anything. You just sat and watched each other, and guessed

at what was going on underneath... I back you generation for knowing more About each other's private thoughts than we ever have time to find out About our own. (301)

Though he disagrees with the lack of talk between his parents, he admires them for spending time with each other and only looking at each guessing what the other might think. He does not state which way is better, but his statement says that society at his time, twenty-six years after his parent's marriage, lives in a hurry and does not have as much time for each other as they did have in past.

James did not like the rushing life, huge materialization and industrialization in America. Instead he preferred England where the changes were not so obvious. Wharton might have adapted James' ideas and used them in her novel; however she might have the same opinion still because Wharton does not prefer changes. She was right with Dallas's opinion the society. The rules should have been changed if the family wants to live together in unity, society should become comfortable and obey fashionable rules. New York society felt the change is fast approaching they wanted to stop it, but such a change cannot be stopped. They really knew it is in the back of their minds, but they still tried. Archer perceives the change through his son, and he understands that the ideal of freedom which allows people to say what they mean and do what they want. This change allows husband and wife to live in comradeship with one another, not in silent fear and wonder, as their own marriage actually was. Newland may be a bit jealous of his son, but he does not let him to know it, he does not try to change what has happened before, his decision to stay with May. The change of New York and also of the society was reasonable. The industrial as well as economic growth, and heavy immigration were parts of the change. Society was

forced to civilize other nation, however “about 1900 the progressive Movement arose to reform the society and individuals through government action” (Maura 26).

The fear of new immigrants was strong, they knew if more newcomers arrive, from outside the society they will make a new circle, new society and their old one might be ruined and forgotten. Their children, although, brought up on their old one might will have to accept the new ones as well. Wharton wrote the novel after the World War II. And while living in Paris, she saw New York and its society with distance and also saw to what extent the society had changed over the years. Wharton did not believe traditional society. Crown in shield agrees that the change was necessary, because “The telephone, the education, wireless telegraphy, motor cars, millionaires ... and talking machines have all contributed to an astonishing social metamorphosis” (330). The truth is that having many newcomers was scary. On one hand, society was right that the number of members should not be extended in protection of all their rules and habits, however it is believed that not even the highest class has permission to set fashion.

May uses the most powerful lie to get back Ellen New York. At one point in the story, Newland thinks that May hates Ellen. She would like not to hate her and she would like to help him to overcome his feeling towards his feelings towards Ellen. May found perfect reason for Ellen to go away for the rest of their lives. While having a long talk with her she did not forget to mention to Ellen that she is expecting a baby with Newland. It was the last straw for Ellen and nothing could keep her from going back to Europe. May made her triumph complete by organizing a farewell dinner for Ellen, to show how nice she is to her own cousin. May works unscrupulously to defend her position- that of married woman whose husband has no other duties but those of providing for, loving, her and their children. Newland fulfils his role. May

uses a lie, because she was not sure about being pregnant while talking to Ellen about it. She uses the information as a weapon against Ellen and it becomes unethical, although she was fighting to save her marriage. Wharton mentions May's great satisfaction several times, apparently to show the amount of May's feeling about her own action, "he [Newland] met May's triumphant eyes" (286), "glitter of victory in his wife's eyes" (287) and "her blue eyes wet with victory" (290). May did not tell anyone as to how she feels about her victory, not even to her husband, but she let him to perceive it through senses, through her eyes. He knew, that she was the one, who had great participation on Ellen's going away. He did not hate May for what she had done, he also knew that Ellen would not allow him to come closer to her and with her departure; the temptation towards Ellen would suddenly be gone. He had never had such a feeling for another woman.

Traditionally, marriage is the destination that all women are supposed to reach and the only way to be happy. Ellen was not single, she was married but not living with her husband in one household. For Ellen, however, an unhappy marriage is nothing more than a restriction. She values her own freedom and she will ask for a divorce when her marriage is not working in the right way, though divorce is not favoured by social customs. She was Europeanized, experienced, and therefore corrupted. She has fallen in love, however does not have an affair with the other man; she just enjoys life and a kind of freedom which does not really allow her to find another man. Finally, she seeks divorce, and with the label 'divorced woman' she leaves for Paris. She does not try to enter New York society again. Ellen was a married woman coming back to New York, however she did not behave as a married lady. She was separated from her husband and it was the main reason why the New York society did not want to let her inside their community. Her life was morbid and

unnatural, because she was breaking the rules about marriage and the role of a proper wife. There was someone who made them, and a few others who followed them, only the participants knew them.

Wharton writes about Ellen's perception of rules in a way that Ellen as a foreigner did not chance to learn the rules of the society. However, in reality existed etiquette books, which were imported from Britain, but in mid-19th century they were also published in America. Wharton must have known about those books. With the flood of new people coming to America from all over the world, the rules must have been changed, and what once was unthinkable, was then a normal thing. Ellen seems to be the indicator of the change, and also the one who was punished for her modern behaviour and her opinions. She was forced to leave New York and to live abroad. The people, her family and friends, to whom she came to help, did not satisfy her. They tried their best to send her back. Many of them would not care if she went back to her cruel husband. Wharton experienced the same problem and that may be the reason for her decision to stay in Europe where people were interested in art and where she had many friends. Ellen had possibility to go back to her husband. He also promised her to give her back her money, which was an attractive offer, however she refused it. She did not want to go back and experience the same cruelty as she did before, only for the sake of money. Ellen's life might seem strange to the reader. She ran from her husband and she could not have her beloved man, because he was already engaged. The view of his mistress was not convenient for May. So she left for Paris. The reader doesn't have an idea as to what kind of life she led there, what people she was meeting there and what she was doing there. She was finally freed from her husband's constraints with the help of her grandmother, but the reader does not know if she found new husband or lover. Ellen must have been a great woman and

friend because she did not grab her chance to be with Newland but rather told him to marry May, even though, she loved him. It also points out her character that she did not even allow herself to have an affair, except one kiss. The same cannot be said about Wharton herself. Clear evidence points to the fact that she had affair with Morton Fullerton. She also possibly could have had an affair with Walter Berry, however it was never proven. Nevertheless, she makes her heroine refuse the affair with Newland and rather to choose the way on her own. The reader does not get the glimpse of new society in Paris perceived a young lady who was divorced from her husband.

Aristocratic privilege enabled some English ladies to flaunt middle Class standards: women intellectuals in Paris were not absolutely Constrained by bourgeois codes. In the United States, however, increasing number pf well-educated women seemed to trapped by Domesticity. (Cuncliffe 286-7)

The society by Cuncliffe was not so bewildered by codes in Paris and it might be one of the reasons why Wharton left America for Paris. Wharton preferred France to England, because she did not stay in England, where she had many friends. She also sent Ellen to Paris, Ellen was apparently accepted by society more easily than anywhere else.

Ellen's love for Newland was strong. They loved each other so much so that they did not even need words, to confirm their love. They did not talk much they mainly watched each other and enjoyed their time together, a moment which would be ruined by the words. Ellen seems to be I control of herself and her feelings. Newland, on the other hand, was nervous from their meeting and she made him even more

nervous with her calmness, “she seemed to take their adventure as a matter of course” (202). It made him get confused, but she had nothing to lose, she already knew that he will not be able to give up May and his life his society. She apparently wanted to enjoy being in his presence, as it will not last long. They will not have another chance to be together back in New York.

Ellen moved to Washington, because she could not stand, that in New York people did not have their own opinion but they all relied on the opinion of someone who was superordinate to them. It was not Ellen’s habit, she was free in her opinions and she was willing to meet variety of people with free ideas, which was impossible in New York, where everyone was narrow minded. She felt different from all those people and that might be the main reason why she did not try harder to participate in the life of the upper class New York society. They seem to be not worthy for her, she needed to communicate and she prizes good conversation even more than the heirloom jewels and priceless antiques that she married into. Ellen had this opinion because she knows of no country in which there is so little independence of mind and real freedom of discussion as in America. Ellen needed to be livelier and freer, not to be tied with so many rules. Her later decision to move France might have similar basis of free mind as France being more free spirited. But in New York was the man whom she loved and could not have, and therefore she did not want to be close to him.

Ellen wanted to be free, wished to do what likes and she had also many ideas about freedom and independence. Ellen’s way of thinking led her to real freedom. Ellen promised Newland that she would not go back to Europe as long as he will not touch her and will not start closer relationship with her, “as long as we can look straight at each other like this” (206). However, why she changed her mind at the end of the novel is a mystery. She might be forced by the circumstances, while Newland

was married she still might be hoping him to leave May and stay with her, although it would have bad influence on society's opinion on them. She could not have been sure that he would ever do, it but there still was some little chance. However, she was not the one who would be cheating on someone, and neither on the member of her own family. It would be in Newland's hands to leave May and come to live with her. The marriage preserves the vital social values of stability, continuity and propriety but for Newland, social values meant a lot, apparently, more than his happiness and love. With the news about the child May was expecting, Ellen did not have any other reason to fight for Newland. He was a married man and on the top of it, he would have a child soon, and it was the reason why left. To break the marriage was not accepted, however there were some exceptions to the rule, and with the fast changing society, divorce might be soon forgotten. Both Ellen as well as Newland Knew that to leave the wife along with the child, was highly valued for nurturing of children but also for its economic contributions. Moving abroad seems to be an indication of dissatisfaction with the country. The other reason for not fighting for Newland might be that Ellen family reached her main aim, divorce from her husband. She did not have anything else to do in New York, she moved to Paris to the Rue de Varenne. Wharton moved to the same street in Paris after separation from her husband, and her love Fullerton also used to live there. As was already mentioned the environment was not the best she would wish for, she did not feel free enough there, because she still felt rejected from New York society, that which Ellen felt strongly on herself, might also have come from Wharton's impression about New York (Little Girl 256). On the contrary Ammon says that Wharton did not hate her country or feel aggrieved; she simply needed an older, richer environment in which to live and work. Having spent large portion of her youth in Europe, she settled abroad. Ammons seems to be

apologizing for Wharton of her leaving America, but it seems that Wharton did not have any liking towards New York and she was deeply disappointed with her native country.

Some of the rules and principles of the 19th century New York society seem comparatively very strange. The “divorce was considered sociably unacceptable. This does not mean... that families were living happily and in harmony. A high rate of desertion and separation of couples took the place of legal divorce” (Heaven 255), which was partially Ellen’s case. As is mentioned in Hasting history, woman could not escape from cruel marriage, and until 1891 woman running from husband could be captured by police and returned to husband. The church, law and also the society approved of the situation. Ellen was lucky that her family saved her and did not return her to her husband. Primarily, Ellen longed for divorce, but the circumstances were unfavourable against her getting divorced so, unfortunately were too high to do it, she was persuaded to remain in marriage. However, after she did not find any luck in America, she persisted on the divorce and reached it at the end. Ammons explains Wharton’s clear point that in America would Ellen never be independent, as well as Wharton. It seems that neither Newland’s and May’s marriage was as happy as others might have awaited. Newland never fully devoted himself to May which she knew, but apparently never complained about. What Newland has lost is not Ellen, but May, whom he never took pains to know or to love. May who knew, all along the extent and the fullness of her husband’s sacrifice, they both tried to remain in their marriage. It might be proof that people cared enough about the content and quality of family life and marriage to be willing to dissolve an unsatisfying marriage. The problem with May and Newland might not have been deep to the extent of divorce, because May loved Newland and he did not dislike her. May lived a proper life without scandals,

being a perfect wife respected by husband and society. Newland proved to be loyal and faithful to her even after her death.

Newland was free to go to find Ellen, and his son wanted to help him to be happy after all, after spending the whole life longing for something unreachable. Now, when he had it in front of him, he did not go for it. He decides not to see Ellen. It might have been because of his loyalty to May, but it seems that he was more afraid of the meeting, than being loyal. He might have different reasons for not seeing Ellen because, she will not look the same as he saw her twenty-six years ago, that he will not like her, or that she will not like him as an old man, that they will not have anything to say to each other, because they really do not know and did not know each other much. He also might have been afraid to admit that his previous decision about whom he married was wrong, that he should not have left Ellen. Although he has lived according to Old New York society's codes, he was missing all of his life, he led "life without passion, without expression, without satisfaction" (Doren 386). He apparently did not know how he could apologize to Ellen, and therefore he sees only one possible way, to leave all as it is and not to see her. It was too late that he realized what the members of New York's elite think of one another is more important than individual effort, honour, or happiness. Finally, Wharton made Newland realize such a problem, through his own son; however, Newland could not do much about his situation at the moment. It was too late and he was unable to act, he could only be dreaming of action. Wharton announced that the sealed society of Old New York, which could not admit of the marriage of Archer and the Countess, must inevitably open to modernity and to the wider world, and must thereby pass out existence and therefore Wharton puts Archer's family await the change "Archer family... feels

keenly the changes in New York society, vigilantly tracking ‘each new crack in its surface ’ (Bentley 454).

In the novel, different behaviours and manners are expected from both men and women. Professions such as banking or law, politics were seen as more distinguished and acceptable for men. Women are expected to act according to society’s conventions as innocent wives, mothers, and daughters. In *The Age of Innocence* Edith Wharton puts opposite options for both men and women, one is to follow the orders of the mainstream society and the other is to revolt from the forbiddance. From this the reader can see that her attitude towards the old gender roles and her understanding of human life are ambivalent.

The Age of Innocence Wharton contemplates on marriage type in her time in America, In some occasions, a man owns a female and a female needs a man to ensure her what she wants in life. There are several qualities that the female is supposed to have in order to guarantee herself a male, which also leave her with no other power or ability at all. Women of innocence like May are trapped in their limited roles. Newland Archer perceives May as a light under ice she embodies “the steadying sense of an unescapable duty” (176). Except for May, Mrs. Welland is also an example of socially required woman (she trains her daughter to be one as well). She believes in the prescribed gender relationship, which tells people the right and wrong, Her relationship which her husband serves for May as a model in her marriage.

While women like Ellen, although they are mostly alien to the old society they are still fearless in fighting for what they want. In that patriarchic society women must follow the rules that are determined by men. For example, in the novel,

Lawrence Lefferts is an example of hypocrisy. He himself has numerous illegal love affairs but he severely criticizes Ellen for divorcing her husband. However, the New York society treated him with tolerance only because he is a male.

The society in which Wharton had reached and which she wrote was the feudal remainder of the traditional New York aristocracy. Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* beautifully echoes the pain of being a woman in a patriarchal social setup.

Chapter Five

Summation

Edith Wharton, an American author and Pulitzer Prize winner, is known for her ironic and polished prose about the aristocratic New York society into which she was born. Edith is perhaps best known for her novels depicting New York aristocratic life and the complicated struggle of the individual with the conventions of a powerful, and triumphant, moneyed class. Edith received much acclaim for her lifelong devotion to writing. She is considered one of the leading American authors of the twentieth century. Because of her humanitarian endeavours and contributions to literature, Edith became the first woman to receive an honorary doctorate from Yale University in 1923, and in 1930 she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Although a successful novelist in 1920 when she completed *The Age of Innocence*, Edith Wharton anticipated best-selling status for her new novel. *The age of Innocence*, set in late nineteenth century New York society, did indeed become a best-seller and won the Pulitzer Prize the following year. Wharton was the first woman to receive this high literary honour. The novel is both nostalgic and satirical in its depiction of Old New York, with its often-selling conventions and manners and its insistence on propriety.

The style of Edith Wharton and that of her friend Henry James had huge resemblance. Hence Edith Wharton's *The Age of Innocence* is frequently compared to James' writing, especially his novel *A portrait of a Lady*. *The Age of Innocence* is regarded as a skilled portrait of the struggle between the individual and the community. It is also a work that explores the dangers and liberties of change as a

society moves from a familiar, traditional culture to one that is less formal and affords its members greater freedom. The novel's staying power is generally attributed to its presentation of such universal concerns as women's changing roles, the importance of family in a civilized society, and the universal conflict between passion and duty.

Also, some critics such as Cynthia Griffin Wolff described *The Age of Innocence* as *bildungsroman*, which is a novel that depicts a character's growth from adolescence into adulthood. Wolff argued that it is Newland whose growth into maturity is witnessed in Wharton's novel. She added that his experience is unique because of the narrow environment in which he matures. As a result, the restrictive setting can be viewed as meaningful, providing necessary structure to everyday life and to Newland's passage into manhood.

Some critics found notable flaws in *The Age of Innocence*. In fact, two of the members of the Pulitzer Prize committee felt that the prize should have been awarded to another contemporary instead of Wharton. They believed the book to be overly specific to a time and place. As a result, they argued, the book lacked universal relevance. Other critics took this stance a step further, adding that the book has limitations for it mainly targets a community of people who were far removed from the norm, even in their own time and place.

May is depicted as the model of perfect wife to that period who represents the New York society ideal. She is a representative of the culture of "Old money" where the society acted as a tribe that was ruled by strict regulations, and anyone who stepped outside the boundaries of these regulations was ostracized. May acts and reacts like a cog in the social machinery of the New York upper crust. But Ellen hints at the strides being made for female independence outside the tightly knit New York

community. Ellen is a new and different type of woman than May, and she represents where the roles of women were strict at that time. She is much more individualistic than May. She has been in Europe, and her experiences have been outside of the structures of the type of society that has found formed May.

The Age of Innocence is Edith Wharton's satire of 19th century New York with May representing the conventionality and Ellen as the representative of unconventionality. May possesses all the qualities of the old upper class, including her opposition to frank talk, her stolidity towards the lower class as well as sinners, and her extreme antifeminism. Ellen, on the other hand, is a perfect illustration of the upcoming generation who is more straightforward, friendlier to people outside the upper class and eager to adopt feminism. At the beginning of the novel, Ellen appears as a challenge to the old New York while May stands for the stolid conventions of this city. However, as the novel progresses, she becomes less and less conspicuous, showing that the tradition of New York is too big for her to overcome. Towards the end of the novel, Ellen compromises with the conventionality and has to settle in Paris. The gentle and innocent May emerges as the winner, though throughout the novel, she pales in comparison with the conspicuous and strong Ellen. It is true that no matter how much Edith Wharton Abhorred the old-fashioned and narrow-minded New York upper class society, she still respected and preferred to live in it. This fact is understandable as it is the place where she grew and it had become an inseparable part of her. Her protagonist, Newland Archer, said: "If one had habitually breathed the New York air there were time when anything less crystalline seemed stifling"(61). This is the reason why Mrs. Wharton let conventional May win and deliberately forced unconventional Ellen to return to Europe.

Conventionality and unconventionality as represented in *The Age of Innocence* are not totally good or absolutely bad. Their very existence is the factor that attracts early 20th century readers. Even modern readers have a fascination for this novel because conventional and unconventional things mentioned in it still exist in today's world and form a large part of human life.

Wharton also focuses on the detailed portrayal of social conventions and the manners of the upper-class in the late nineteenth-century high society. Newland has grown up in this environment and has internalized all the manner that, dictate behaviour in old New York. Even intimate matters are subject to rules of etiquette, as when May lets Newland guess that she cares for him, which is the only declaration of love that has been allowed to utter to a young unmarried woman. Gossiping is completely acceptable, yet members of society strive to uphold, above all things, their own reputations. Sillerton Jackson and Lawrence Lefferts are held up as experts on New York's family trees, proper form, and good taste. Every event in old New York is subject to ritual.

By the time Edith Wharton wrote *The Age of Innocence*, she had seen World War I destroy much of the world as she knew it. She looked back on her early years in New York as a time of social continuity, and felt that the passing of values from parent to child had a civilizing influence. However, she also saw the hypocrisy and cruelty practised by individuals who wore the guise of respectability. Both of these ideas are seen throughout the novel making it a timeless novel of both the Glided Age and of social change.

Wharton was often critical of the rigidity of the social code, but she saw its purpose of handing down values and replicating culture. Order loyalty, tradition, and

duty are all values upheld and criticized in her novel. Order is epitomized by the repetition of certain rituals. Newland Archer's wife must be sexually innocent and pretend not to know about affairs or passions. In the beginning of the novel May Welland is shown in white with white lilies of the valley, oblivious to the sexual intimation of the play she is watching. Later, it is discovered that she knew all of Newland's passion for Ellen, but she followed the accepted code of ignorance. Order is maintained by these understood practices. This is the way civilization continues. Loyalty is also a virtue, not only among families and marriages, but also among men. Newland must go to the Mingott box to show his family loyalty when the notorious Ellen arrives. Ellen's "last supper" is presided over by the family showing its loyalty to May and ousting the interloper. Tradition also is a way of passing on values. Duty is the idea that one accepts on with a smile even in the face of adversity. Newland's commitment to May after she reveals her pregnancy is a duty understood. His acceptance is, in the end, what makes civilization works. At every turn of his passion, Newland sees the doors closed by May and her duty.

Wharton also comments on the gender conflicts that was taking place in America. May was a single woman; however she was perfectly even-minded with her role of a married woman. She was brought up in a society that followed strict rules and traditions that a women should follow and with such a belief he does not see any other way of life. Therefore, she does not have any struggle or doubt in getting married. Society and her family expects her to marry and she not even think about disappointing them. The role of women and their position in the Western world changed rapidly over the last 130 years, the woman is now generally free to choose her life partner, she has freedom to bear children as she wishes, she can even regulate how many of them she will have; or on the other hand she can simply become a

professional and have an excellent career. Of course there are still some professions where women are not accepted by men, however this has been changed over time, because women have proved their abilities to work, behave and think as well as can do. The woman choosing marriage over the career does not necessarily have to stay at home only bearing and raising children; the woman also does not necessarily lose all her fortune by marrying someone, she need not become the possession of her husband. She can go to work, career of her own choice and she has total freedom to beget children as she likes. The marriage and career does not exclude each other, in the contemporary society many women have both, even though the majority of them marry later than those without career.

The Age of Innocence takes place during the last breath of New York high society, although its members did not sense the dramatic changes coming to their world. They gathered at the opera house, and they relied on an accepted canon of rules and conventions to direct their behaviour. They flaunted their wealth and talked behind each other's backs, but remained respectful of convention. There were strict expectations regarding appropriate attire, events, home décor, and marriage.

The plot of the novel is set against the backdrop of the New York upper-class society in the 1870s, which deals with a story of the eternal triangle between Newland Archer, Ellen Olenska and May Welland. Since its publication, readers all over the world have been delighted with the brilliant and exact description of the style and manner of the 19th century society. The novel not only realistically depicts the life of the upper-class but also successfully illustrates the profound emotions of the main characters. *The age of Innocence* is really an addictive novel. Once readers put it up, they can hardly put it down again. They are charmed by the beautiful words, stunning descriptions together with a very high level of accuracy.

The Age of Innocence is truly a novel that can lure people, make them forget their own problems for a short moment, and at the same time inform them of the lost etiquette as well as the oppressed lives of the previous generation. A melancholy feeling pervades the whole book, which makes the readers realize how fortunate they are to live in a free world. The conventionality and unconventionality is reflected through May Welland and Ellen Olenska. The brilliant narrative of the suppressed feelings of the main characters, especially in the scenes of the two lovers Newland Archer and Ellen Olenska, has also charmed both the critics and the readers.

The significance of literature to human life is undeniable. Literary works have the ability to soften people's pain. They can draw in readers' attention, let them drown in an imaginary world, put their problems aside for sometimes, then emerge from them and become stronger than ever. Literature is also a great educator. Children can be aware of what is good and bad by reading books. People are motivated to work hard and live well as it is the way to a "happy ending" for their own lives. Besides, they learn the way to treat each other without inflicting pain or humiliation. *The Age of Innocence* is a novel which possesses all the features mentioned above.

WORKS CITED

- Ammons Elizabeth. "Cool Diana and the Blood-Red Muse: Edith Wharton on Innocence and Art". *American Novelist Revisited: Essays in Feminist Criticism*. Ed. Fritz Fleischmann. Boston: Hall, 1982. Print.
- Benstock, Shari. *No Gifts from Change: A Biography Edith Wharton*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994. Print.
- Bentley, Nancy. *Relativism, and the Discipline of Manners*. New York: W. Norton & Company, 2003. Print
- Canby, Henry Seidel. "Our America." Edith Wharton. *The Age of Innocence*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003. Print
- Crowninshield, Francis W. *Manners for the Metropolis: An Entrance Key to the Fantastic life of the 400*. New York: D. Appleton Company, 1908. print.
- Coxe, Louis. "What Edith Wharton Saw in Innocence." *The New Republic*. 27 June 1955. Web. 11 Sept. 2017.
- Cuncliffe, Marcus. *The Literature of the United States*. London: Penguin Books, 1954. Print.
- Doren, Carl Van. "An Elder America". *The Age of Innocence*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, 2003. Print.
- Heaveren, Tamara K. "Continuity and Change in the America Family." *Making America. The Society and Culture of the United States*. Ed. Luther S. Luketke.

Washington: United States Information Agency, 1990. Print.

Pragmatic Analysis: “A Study of John Green’s *The Fault in Our Stars*”

A project 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

by

FEBYA P. RAYEN C.

(REG. NO. 20APEN08)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY’S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

(Re-accredited with ‘A+’ Grade by NAAC)

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO
One	Introduction	1
Two	Physical and Mental pain	12
Three	Conflicts in Relationship	23
Four	Lament of an Optimist	33
Five	Summation	43
	Works Cited	48

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Pragmatic Analysis: “A Study of John Green’s *The Fault in Our Stars*”** 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 is a work done by Febya P. Rayen C. in the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

A. Sharon Roque Corera
Dr. Sharon Roque Corera

Guide

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary’s College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

S. Vennela
27/05/2022
Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Pragmatic Analysis: “A Study of John Green’s *The Fault in Our Stars*”** submitted to St. Mary’s College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmanian 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.

Thoothukudi

May 2022

Febya P. Rayen .C
Febya P. Rayen C.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom, peace of mind, and strength he has bestowed upon me in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research-oriented study. I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research-oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, Ms. Vinobini Abila for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, encouragement and meticulous proof reading, contributing immensely towards the completion of this project.

I thank the Librarian St. Mary's College extended help in the use of the library for the reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided. My thanks and appreciations are due to my family for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

This project entitled “**Pragmatic Analysis: A Study of John Green’s *The Fault in Our Stars***” highlights the sufferings and conflicts faced by the cancer patients. The story is said to be a success because the reader is able to visualize the emotions of the author.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of John Green’s life, his works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of his work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Physical and Mental pain** delineates with the physical and mental suffering of each and every character who appears in the novel. Especially Augustus and Hazel have been keenly described.

The third chapter **Conflicts in Relationship** focuses with the difficult teenagers, who are mostly mystified with their life. Green has brought out the emotional conflicts of parents, conflicts with friends, and the conflicts in romance.

The fourth chapter **Lament of an Optimist** deals with the positivity of facing cancer in this novel.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature comes from the Latin word 'litera' which means 'acquainted with letter'. The history of the English language really started with the arrival of three Germanic tribes who invaded Britain during the 5th century AD. Literature represents the culture and tradition of a language or people. The concept is difficult to precisely define, though many have tried; it is clear that the accepted definition of literature is constantly changing and evolving. The five main literary genres are poetry, fiction, non-fiction, prose and media. Literature means reflection of life; teaches us how to live, feel the joys and sorrows. Geoffrey Chaucer is the father of English literature.

Study of literature is but the study of man's struggles and aspirations, which of late, have assumed desperate proportions because of host of reasons- social and philosophic, in the broadest senses of the terms. Studying English literature opens up a world of inspiration and creativity. Hence, the very character and nature of literature of the present century in general and that in English in particular. People those who are engaged in a serious study of the modern predicament- sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, philosophers, creative writers, not all thinkers in general. Literature in English in the 20th century assumes increasing importance.

Novel is a literary work that has potential meaning to be a media to express ideas, emotions or even personal experience which are constructed to be a fascinating story. Novel is the mirror of the real social life. This statement shows that novel is realistic; it is the picture of human success and social life including interaction in economy, life, religion and so on. The elements of the novel are theme, plot, settings

and characters. The characters of the novel are merely as a message sender: it reflects the thoughts of an author.

American literature is literature predominantly written or produced in English in the United States of America 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 successful rebellion against the motherland, America became the United States. Native Americans, the first inhabitants of the continent, did not develop anything we can call “literature”

American literature is strongly influenced by several factors. American Literature was the era of colonizing the continent. Since not only the English explored and claimed the territories, the beginnings of American are more or less connected also with French, Spanish or Dutch literatures as well. The first writers brought mainly English ideas and ways of writing, which means early American literature is based on the literature of England. As years passed and literary theory developed, the writers who adopted the English style are now sometimes called pale faces. Their poetry is sometimes referred to as “cooked poetry”. On the other tradition. Those are called redskins. This poetry is referred to as “raw poetry”.

Religion played an important part in the writer’s lives. Many writings of the period were sermons and theological books. The fact that the Pilgrims landed in the Massachusetts Bay in 1620 had an immense influence on the culture of the newly developing colonial system. The topics common in the early periods were connected with the issues of living in a new land. American literature has traversed an extended,

winding path from pre-colonial days to contemporary times. Society, history, technology all had a telling impact on it. Ultimately, though, there is a constant-humanity, with all its radiance and its malevolence, its tradition and its promise.

Young Adult Literature is a genre that is separate from Children's Literature. It emerged in the twentieth century when teenagers became a powerful force of the economy in the 1930s and gained prominence in the sixties. In *Reflection on Young Adult Literature*, Campbell says:

To trace the history from the start, the mainstream of Young Adult Literature has been perceived as realism. Although the prototype for style and voice was J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), it was not until six years later that the books promise began to be fulfilled. In the magic years of 1967-68, S.E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* (1967), Robert Lipsyte *The Contender* (1967), and Paul Zindel's *The Pigman* (1968), broke away from the saccharine formula of the junior novel to confront bold new subjects that soon earned such novels the name of *The new realism*. (11-12)

Young adult literature is flourishing in the United States has increased around the world. In *The Wall Street Journal*, Megan Cox says, "If books show us the world, teen fiction can be like a hall of fun-house mirrors, constantly reflecting back hideously distorted portrayals of what life is". This recent arrival on the literary scene 'Young Adult Literature', has had a profound impact on readers, libraries and the politics of reading. Over the years, waves of Young Adult Literature defenders have argued that Young Adult Literature has finally come of age, not only holding its own with adult books but also succeeding as a literature in its own right.

All have heard and read the headlines: “Do kids read anymore or, rather don’t read anything that isn’t blips of information on a screen.” A striking example of this phenomenon is a 2016 New Yorker Article that answers its own title “Do teens read seriously anymore?” with a resounding sound no while critic David Denby grudgingly acknowledges that teens “very likely... read more words than they ever have in the past, “he hastens to damn those words as ephemera” “from everywhere and nowhere” what most troubles Denby is that teenagers do not seem to be bothered by their reading deficiencies. Denby opines that print reading has become a relic of earlier, less digitally hectic frames; teens find this normal and do not even circulate widely in the popular media.

They are fueled by and in turn shape the findings of teen reading research. Popular narratives and stereotypes about teen readers are intertwined with the stories told ourselves about Young Adult Literature. In *Young Adult Literature, Libraries and Conservative Activism*, Loretta says, “The Young Adult “story” cannot be separated from the stories we tell ourselves about the readers in professional, popular, and scholarly discourse” (25). Some of the criticism about Young Adult are justified, but it is unnecessary to minimize the issues and topics covered in Young Adult is being petty or mundane. Most of the books they read in middle school and high school focused on, and were written for young teenagers.

John Green was born on 24th of August in 1977, in Indianapolis, Indiana. His parents are Mike Green and Sydney Green. Soon after his birth, the family was in a constant move; first, they shifted to Michigan, then to Birmingham before settling in Florida. He also spent his childhood in Orlando, where his parents helped him prove his creative abilities. John Green started his educational journey at Lake Highland

Preparatory School, where he completed his elementary and middle schooling. Unfortunately, his experience at school was terrible due to constant bullying from the fellow students making his life miserable. Later, he attended Indian Springs School and after graduation, he was admitted to Kenyon College, where he gained a double major in religious and English studies.

After graduating from college, in 2000, he was enrolled at the University of Chicago Divinity School to become a priest. He also worked at a children's hospital that proved a good experience for his future career. The miseries of the people and the life-threatening situation that he witnessed in the hospital made him rethink the choice of his life. Thus, he gave up the idea of the priesthood and decided to become a writer. He married Sarah Urist on 21st of May 2006 and the couple has two children. His books have been published in more than twenty languages. He introduced more philosophical approach to the issues in a teenager's life. Unlike other Young Adult writers, Green has broadened the horizon of Young Adult novels subject matter.

John Green is a recent popular name in the American young adult fiction. He is also an avid video blogger. *The Fault in Our Stars* is considered to be his outstanding by far along with other notables. While working as a critique he also began writing his debut *Looking for Alaska* (2005). Eventually, he had his project completed and published by 2005. It is a coming-of-age romance novel about a teen Miles. The novel is inspired by Green's time at Indian Springs. The publication proved a huge massive success by winning the annual Michael L. Printz Award. Later, in 2006, he came up with another big hit, *An Abundance of Katherine's* (2006).

To this bright author, appreciation and admiration has added glory to him. After two years, with fellow young authors, he collaborated on *Let it Snow: Three*

Holidays Romances (2008). The book once again brought fortune for Green. His third novel, *Paper Towns* (2008), winning the Edgar Award for Best Young Adult Novel and the 2010 Corine Literature Prize. His next book, *The Fault in our Star*, published in 2012 earned him a rapid success. This book was also awarded the Teen Book of the Year Award in 2013. His other notable works include *Turtles All the Way Down* (2017) and *The Space and The Cat and the Mouse* (2014).

The time he spent among children with terminal – illness stimulated him to become a writer. After establishing his career as a writer, Green’s creative, witty, and philosophical ideas brought variety to the literary world. His work primarily focused on the experiences and feelings of real people in real situations. Using intellectual concepts and down to earth real languages mixed with compassion and humor, his books have proved treats for a wide variety of his readers. Moreover, with his ambrosial and wistful writing style, he successfully creates certain experiences for his audiences. Marked with the blend of expectations and reality, his work, *The Fault in Our Stars*, blow the shelves, fulfilling his expectations about his creative abilities.

Green’s opinion about self-fulfillment and personal happiness have won applause from people across the world. Further readership extension burgeoned by his distinctive writing approach and unique expression. This approach, in fact, sets him apart from his contemporary masters. Many great authors and writers have attributed John Green as their inspiration. His writings also impacted a huge number of teens around the globe. It is stated that his works have inspired and helped thousands through challenging situations like death, love, sufferings and fragility of life that they desire to follow his footsteps in writing.

In 2006, Green won his first Michael L. Printz Award for his book; *Looking for Alaska*. In the following year 2007, he was also nominated for winning another Michael L. Printz Award for his book, *An Abundance of Katherines*. In the years later, Green was ambushed with awards for his new released novels. In 2009, he won Edgar Allan Poe Award for *Paper Towns*, as it being the best young adult novel. In 2010, he received Corine Literature Prize for *Paper Towns*, too. Two years later in 2012, John attained the Indiana Author Award. In 2013, he won two great awards, in the Children's Choice Book Awards and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for his best-selling book, *The Fault in Our Stars*. Finally, in 2014, he won Visionary Award in the Musical Television Fandom Awards.

Green philosophically and wittily approaches the theme of grief, pain, death, oblivion and other serious subjects. Moreover, he profusely infuses the literary allusions in the novel giving it a more sophisticated form. *The Fault in Our Stars* has been adapted for big-screen, released on June 2014. Green is one of the rare breeds of young adult authors who has achieved mainstream name recognition. He introduced more philosophical approach to the issues in teenager's life.

The novel *The Fault in Our Stars* is the first-person point of view from the perspective of the main character, Hazel Grace Lancaster. The point of view of this novel is intimate, allowing a reader to connect closely with the main character, Hazel. The book *The Fault in Our Stars* is written in a manner that allows the reader to get inside Hazel's head, thoughts and inner struggles. The reader cares about the narrator. This point of view also allows the author to inject his own opinion into the narration and to expand on the events taking place around the other characters and the occurrences.

In *The Fault in Our Stars*, John Green tells the story of young love with no sense of futurity, no belief in a happily ever after. Green rejects the sentimental clichés that tend to structure cancer narratives, about the nobility of suffering and struggle, and the redemption that validates pain and loss. The result is a novel where love is inextricably bound up with fear, death, and merciless physical pain- but is still, somehow, worthwhile. The tone in *The Fault in Our Stars* is blunt. Both of them, Augustus and Hazel share their very honest, blunt feelings towards just about anything. From the beginning, Augustus shares his fear for oblivion.

Hazel Lancaster of age sixteen and Augustus Waters of age seventeen, meet and fall in love at a support group for teens with cancer. Augustus, once a rising basketball star, has lost a leg to bone cancer, and Hazel carries an oxygen tank everywhere she goes because of thyroid cancer that has spread to her lungs. The two are attracted to each other immediately; they share a bright, restless intelligence and a skeptical view of the insipid platitudes that adults use to whitewash the horrible reality of their diseases. Augustus pursues Hazel determinedly from the beginning, but she is hesitant to begin a romantic relationship, despite being deeply attracted to him

Hazel's cancer is terminal, and she doesn't want to allow anyone besides her parents to become attached to her, knowing that they will suffer when she dies, "I'm a grenade", she tells her mother one day" (99). Their relationship develops when they take a trip to Amsterdam, funded by the Genie Foundation. Augustus, who qualifies for a wish through the loss of his leg, has arranged the trip, so Hazel can meet her favorite author, Peter Van Houten. The author has agreed by email to discuss his only book, *An Imperial Affliction* with them in person. *An Imperial Affliction* is a sacred

book to Hazel; she identifies with the heroine, Anna, who dies of leukemia and is consumed with the desire to know what happens to the book's other characters after it ends.

In Amsterdam, Hazel and Augustus share a romantic evening together before a crushingly disappointing encounter with their literary idol. Van Houten is drunk and contemptuous; he refuses to answer Hazel's questions about the characters and mocks her for asking them. They leave his house in disgust, and after a painstaking climb to the top of the Anne Frank House, Hazel and Augustus was in an intimate relationship with one another.

On their last day in Amsterdam, Augustus gives Hazel terrible news, which he has delayed telling her in order not to ruin their trip. His cancer has returned and spread throughout his body; he is not only sicker than she is, he is incurably, mortally ill. Hazel stays by his side as the cancer slowly, then more and more quickly, destroys Augustus physically, emotionally, and mentally. At foremost he can no longer walk, and then he can no longer feed himself or control his bowels; finally, he can barely stay awake or holds a conversation. As Hazel watches in despair, his intelligence, optimistic spirit and eventually his sense of humor fade, too, under the strain of strong medication and stronger pain.

Augustus dies in the hospital about a month after they return from the Netherlands. Hazel is overcome by grief and strengthened by it. She realizes that the pain she once tried to save Augustus from – of loving someone only to lose them to cancer is worth suffering for the experiences of true love, and that their relationship was limited in time but limitless in depth of feeling. She gives a sentimental, hackneyed eulogy at his funeral, not because she believes in the cancer clichés now,

but they comfort his parents, and she faces life after Augustus openly, eager to observe the universe.

After Augustus' death, Hazel learns that Augustus sent pages to Van Houten because he wanted Van Houten to use the pages to compose a well-written eulogy about Hazel. The novel concludes with Hazel reading Augustus's words. He says getting hurt in this world is inevitable, but they do get to choose who they allow to hurt us, and that he is happy with his choice. He hopes she likes her choice too. The final words of the novel come from Hazel, who says she does.

The film based on John Green's best-selling novel of the same name *The Fault in Our Stars*. Many critics have praised the adaptation as doing its source material justice. In *The New York Times*, A. O. Scott says,

The movie, like the book before, is an expertly built machine for the mass production of tears. Directed by Josh Boone with scrupulous respect for John Green's best selling young-adult novel, the film sets out to make you weep—not just sniffle or choke up a little, but sob until your nose runs and your face turns blotchy. It succeeds.

In the novel *The Fault in Our Stars*, the physical and mental suffering of each and every character who appears in the novel especially Augustus and Hazel have been keenly described. It provides us a detailed explanation of how cancer patients overcome their mental and physical sufferings. To a stretch, it acknowledges the seriousness of cancer which is the main reason for their physical and mental suffering.

A story may deal with a conflict within a single person, a conflict among people, a conflict between people and society, between people and nature and so on. There are many conflicts throughout the book that cause the characters pain. The

novel *The Fault in Our Stars*, deals with the difficult teenagers, who are mostly mystified with their life. Green has brought out the emotional conflict of parents, conflicts with friends, and the conflicts in romance.

Optimism is a positive attitude in facing any problem in life. *The Fault in Our Stars* is a story about teenagers who suffer from cancer and they meet each other in the Support Group. They face many problems in life because the cancer is a deadly disease. Green focuses the positivity of facing cancer in this novel. Green centers positivity as the major theme of the novel, because he wanted to show that by positivity, someone can get the good thinking of how to face his or her destiny.

Chapter Two

Physical and Mental Pain

Cancer is a disease in which abnormal cells divide uncontrollably and destroy the body tissue. In a broad-spectrum, cancer is painful. Having cancer does not always mean having pain. Just as it affects the health it affects the people emotionally as well. As Hazel Grace says, “If it likes you, it takes the rest” (18). Scientifically the ultimate result of cancer is death. The cancer cells move through the blood stream or lymphatic system, and spread throughout the body. Eventually the whole body begins to get worse, and results in death. At first when the victim comes to know about the disease, they begin to feel that there is out of control, then they wonder if they are going to live or not.

In common, people ask “Why Me?” because denial and anger become their thing. The number of long-term cancer survivors in the U.S continues to rise, with more than ten million Americans now living with the history of cancer. Linda Nelson, a well-known professor of psychology at Wake Forest University writes on ‘The Bucket’ journal about her experience of having cancer.

“The doctor had the answer,

And the news wasn’t good

With one word my world stood still,

I totally understood. (n.p)

Cancer not only affects the victim physically, but also brings up a wide range of feelings that are not used to dealing with. It also makes many feelings seem more intense. Distress is a generic term that encompasses a variety of psychological

responses, including depression and anxiety. Carey in her article to Daily Mail writes “Some positive responses to cancer diagnosis and treatment include enhanced self-esteem, greater life appreciation and meaning, heightened spirituality and greater feelings of peace and purposefulness” (140).

As *The Fault in Our Stars* is a cancer novel, there are so many characters suffering from the terminal disease. The protagonist is not only the cancer victim, also there is Augustus Waters, Isaac, Anna Van Houten, and Caroline Mathers. Augustus Waters is a sixteen-year-old, well-built who used to play basket-ball with ‘Osteosarcoma’, a bone cancer of which he had lost his right leg and replaced with a prosthetic.

For a novel about kids dying of cancer, suffering is a prominent part of the character’s lives. Hazel, Augustus, and Isaac all endure quite a bit of physical unsurprisingly and emotional pain. The buildup of fluid in Hazel’s lungs deprives her of oxygen, leading to a bout of intense pain that lands her in the emergency room. Isaac has to contend with losing his remaining eye, which leaves him blind and leads his girlfriend to break up with him. Augustus physically deteriorates to the point that he has to take pain medication strong enough to leave him nearly incoherent, and he suffers to know he’ll never accomplish any of the heroic things he wanted to do in his life.

The novel starts as the protagonist, Hazel Grace thinks about death. Hazel is just seventeen years old with thyroid cancer that spreads all over her lungs to make her life complicated. John Green shakes the universal beliefs, being young means mostly likely being healthy. Observing a teenager battling a disease than an old person battling a person disease is hurting. The suffering is not only felt physically, it

affects them mentally as well. The main characters in the novel are forced to confront death in a way that the young and healthy aren't. Although everyone will eventually die.

In the eyes of the novel's characters, specifically Hazel and Augustus, all these types of pain are simply a part of living, a side effect of it as Hazel might put it. That does not mean they are desirable, just that they are inevitable. But the most thematically significant type of pain in the novel is that caused by the death of a loved one, and it is this variety that the novel suggests is the most necessary. Hazel worries a great deal about inflicting this kind of suffering on those around her when she dies, leading her to come up with the metaphor of the grenade that explodes and injures everyone nearby. It turns out she becomes the victim of this kind of pain when Augustus begins to weaken and finally succumbs to his cancer.

Being a cancer patient, pain is not a new thing to experience. Suffering is a prominent part of this novel. When the protagonist was asked to rate her pain out of ten before entering into the emergency room, she rates it as nine believing that she is saving her ten for another time. All the characters suffer. Hazel lands in emergency room, when her lungs are filled with fluid, which deprives her of oxygen. For Hazel Grace the pain she felt was like:

I screamed to wake up my parents, and they burst into the room, but there was nothing they could do to dim the supernovae exploding inside my brain, an endless chain of intracranial fire crackers that made me think that I was once and for all going, and I told myself—as I've told myself before—that the body shuts down

when the pain gets too bad, that consciousness is temporary, that this will pass. (105)

What Hazel comes to understand that this type of pain cannot be avoided. Since dying is certain and universal, all people will experience it. But as Hazel comes to recognize over the course of the novel, it is not necessarily something one should avoid. She wouldn't take back the love she feels for Augustus for anything, even though that love is the precise cause of her pain. It is a blessing and a curse. The reason, as Augustus suggests in his letter to Van Houten that Hazel reads at the end of the novel, is that the pain they cause others when you die is a mark that they mattered. Augustus says happily that he left his "scar" on Hazel, meaning he hurt her but he also had an effect on her life that she will carry with her always.

Hazel Grace calls herself "a professional sick person" (38). She feels alienated from others. The physical evidence of disease separates her from other people. To Hazel Grace, it is the worst part about having cancer, she always carries an oxygen tank which she calls Philip, with her. Her only life supporting factor is her oxygen tank which delivered two litres of oxygen every minute through cannula. On her way to Amsterdam at Airport, she thinks,

I could feel everybody watching us, wondering what was wrong with us, and whether it would kill us, and how heroic my mom must be and everything else. That was the worst part about having cancer... stewardess nodding sympathetically and gesturing us toward our row in the distant back. (144)

So, she feels good when she chose to walk through the metal detector without the oxygen cart or the plastic nubbins in her nose, the machine acknowledged her a non-metallized creature.

But these do not matter to her as she got used to it. Because at the age of thirteen, she was diagnosed with stage IV thyroid cancer and were told incurable, medicines, radiations, chemo became a part of her life since then, when a normal kid would never have heard these words.

John Green's experiences of working in Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus as a student chaplain, is sure an urge to write this book. Having witnessed the sufferings of children with life-threatening illness had forced him to write *The Fault in Our Stars*. The character Hazel Grace Lancaster is a huge inspiration for John Green from Esther Grace Earl, who is an American author, internet vlogger, online personality and a nerd fighter as well as an activist. She died at the age of sixteen due to thyroid cancer. Prior to her death in 2010, Earl became friends with John Green, who credited her for inspiring him to complete the novel *The Fault in Our Stars* that became 2012 bestseller.

Depression, fear, anger, stress and pain become the part of cancer fighter. The famous Indian-American oncologist Siddharth Mukherjee shares his experience as a doctor, who meets his patients with questions like: "How old is cancer? What are the roots of our battle against this disease? Or as patients asked often me; where are we in the "war" on cancer? How did we get here? Is there an end? Can this war even be won?" (5).

The world they live in are seen in a different perspective by the society as it is an uncomfortable subject to deal. The cancer survivors find it difficult to differentiate

the term ‘sympathy’ and ‘love’. Hazel is not an exception despite her strong nature. “I was living with cancer not dying of it, that I must not let it kill me before it kills me” (125) says the strong Hazel. This strong persona in Hazel disappears at times ‘when her mom tells her “Hazel, you deserve a life” (7), when she refuses to attend the support group. This is because she definitely knows that she is going to die. The inner monster arises, when she went on a shopping with her best friend Kaitlyn.

Kaitlyn finds a strappy hooker shoes and said, “is it even possible to walk in these? I mean, I would just die” (44) for which Hazel immediately responds that “I’d sooner die” (44). Later she regrets for saying this. In a heated argument with Peter Van Houten, Hazel shouts at him,

“I don’t want your pity,” I said.

“Like all sick children,” he answered dispassionately,

“you say you don’t want pity, but your very existence depends

upon

it”. (192)

Hazel represents the cancer community. The cancer fighters seem to be very strong, when they get to know the reality of their life but it kills them deep inside for not being able to live a normal life. The pain and weakness they feel humiliates them. Hazel says, “In truth, it always hurt. It always hurt not to breathe like a normal person, incessantly reminding your lungs to be lungs, forcing yourself to accept as unsolvable the clawing scraping inside-out ache of under oxygenation” (45).

The hero Augustus Waters is an optimistic character. He had always thought that “The world was a wish-granting factory” (110), but soon comes to know the

reality that it is not. Being a basket-ball player and losing one of his legs to cancer, makes him to understand the truth. The cancer in him has developed a determination to leave a mark on everything and everyone he touches. He wants to lead a meaningful and heroic life. When Hazel asks him about this, he replies

“Your obsession with, like, dying for something or leaving behind some great sign of your heroism or whatever. It’s just weird”.

“Everyone wants to lead an extraordinary life”.

“Not everyone,” I said, unable to disguise my annoyance.

“Are you mad?”. (169)

Even in video games he always thinks of sacrificing his own-life to succeed a heroic death. The truth of being a cancer fighter and not to be felt as a sympathetic creature by others might have made him to get this determination. But when cancer reappears, the real-self comes out. The very handsome Augustus Waters suffers, frightens and shows the world the suffering of every cancer fighter. He loses his control over his body, urinates in his bed, and becomes confined to a wheel chair.

Hazel says, “He looked up at me. It was horrible. I could hardly look at Augustus Waters of the crooked smiles and unsmoked cigarettes was gone, replaced by this desperate humiliated creature sitting there beneath me” (245). The humiliation and the pain he suffers are all the results of his cancer. The both optimistic and heroic Augustus soon realizes the truth and finally accepts his fate as saying “The world is not a wish-granting factory” (214).

Isaac is a mutual friend of Hazel Grace and Augustus Waters, attends the support group along with Hazel Grace since he had an eye cancer or retinoblastoma.

He is the third most cancer fighter in the novel *The Fault in Our Stars*. In beginning he appears as a one-eyed man who has already lost his eye to cancer and loses the other and becomes a blind. This blindness also leads his girlfriend named, Monica to break up with him. The one-eyed Isaac was content with his life and happy with his girlfriend who assured him that she will ‘always’ be with him.

Isaac too believed those words that there will be an ‘always’ be with him. But soon gets disappointed after Monica has left him. At hospital, after the surgery he says, “I just wish the whole thing hadn’t happened sometimes. The whole cancer thing” (76). When the novel begins, he had one real eye, and other was a glass one. But soon his real eye was removed and he turns NEC, they say ‘No Evidence of Cancer’.

Caroline Mathers is the background in the novel *The Fault in Our Stars*. She is a victim of cancer and ex-girlfriend of Augustus. Augustus reveals to Hazel that he witnessed a serious disaster of behavior in Caroline during the last phase of her life due to brain tumour. Hazel grace finds striking similarities between her and Caroline in physical appearances and justifies Augustus staring for her on their first meet. “It’s all good, Hazel Grace. But just to be clear, when I thought I saw Caroline Mathers’s ghost in Support Group, I was not entirely happy. I was staring, but I wasn’t yearning, if you know what I mean” (176).

Caroline is the deceased girlfriend of Augustus Waters. Caroline died of brain cancer a year ago. She carried an unstable and crude personality. Readers get to know Caroline only when Hazel decides to check her on an online page. Though Augustus, the most cruel last stages of her life was known. She has failed as a cancer fighter in the battle. There was a serious character disorder in her, due to the brain cancer

because it is a variety that made herself not her before it made her not alive. A little note, written by her parents read,

Caroline continues to have behavioral problems. She's struggling a lot with anger and frustration over not being able to speak (we are frustrated about these things, too, of course but we have more socially acceptable ways of dealing with our anger). Gus has taken to calling Caroline HULK SMASH, which resonates with the doctors. There's nothing easy about this for any of us, but you take your humor where you can get it. Hoping to go home on Thursday. We'll let you know....
(101)

Other post after her death read, "we all miss you so much. It just never ends. It feels like we were all wounded in your battle, Caroline, I miss you. I love you" (97). These messages make Hazel to think that after her there would be nothing for people to say, except she had fought the cancer well heroically.

Anna Van Houten is the daughter of Peter Van Houten, author of *An Imperial Affliction*. She had died at the age of eight, due to Leukemia. Peter Van Houten writes *An Imperial Affliction* in the memory of his deceased daughter. Anna travels along with the story as Hazel compares herself with Anna's life. The protagonist of *An Imperial Affliction* suffers from a terminal illness. Hazel greatly admires the honesty with which Anna deals with her cancer. *An Imperial Affliction* ends midsentence, causing Hazel to speculate about her beloved Anna's fate.

The only character who is lucky enough to win the cancer battle was Patrick, who is the leader of Support Group. He encourages the young cancer survivors in the Support Group like any other leaders do. Being a cancer survivor, he knows how to

console the other survivors at the Support Group. He always let the survivors to introduce themselves and allows them to share their stories. He is so frank to accept that he is lucky to have a life and advises others too by saying, “And you too might be so lucky!” (5).

Every pain changes the person, be it physical pain or mental pain, the characters unearth a way to live with them. Every pain they face, changes them. Augustus tells, “Pain demands to be felt” (57). Being a cancer patient, pain is not a new thing to experience. Suffering becomes a prominent part of this novel. All the characters suffer. Hazel and Augustus read a lot and Hazel especially reads her most intimate novel *An Imperial Affliction* to get some comfort out of her disease. This suffering also makes them wiser than any other normal youngsters of their age. Hazel quotes from *An Imperial Affliction* in Support Group:

There will come a time, when all of us are dead. All of us. There will be no one when there are no human beings remaining to remember that anyone ever existed or that our species ever did anything. There will be no Aristotle or Cleopatra, let alone you. Everything that we did and built and wrote and thought and discovered will be forgotten and all of this will have been for naught. May be that time is coming soon and maybe it is millions of years away, but even if we survive forever. There was time before organism experienced consciousness, and there will be time after. And if the inevitability of human oblivion worries you, I encourage you to ignore it. God knows that’s what everyone else does.

(12-13)

Dying, loss of faith, sink in the very bottom of the Pacific then never being able to lift back, and gloss over the meaning of life are the most decidedly often discovered as big deals in human beings. “Depression’s not a side effect of cancer, it’s a side effect of dying” (3). The value of life may be acute for cancer survivors, numbers of them get down, frustrated, and frightened beyond belief. Even, they stop believing in the existence of God because of suffering. Virtually, misery and dying are indeed not good circumstances. However, those also can be meant something else for people to learn about being persistent. Margules says:

In one sense, suffering is certainly not good. Rather, it is a sign of the abnormality of the world. However, in another sense, suffering can be turned into a good deed, a moral value, by the way a person bears up under it. Suffering can “make” or “break” a person, either ennobling or degrading him or her. (3)

This maturity to learn things and accepting the fate as it has become their reason to live. Hazel also enjoys the encouragement thoughts that hang all over Augustus’s home, in which one specifically reads, Without pain, How could we know joy?” (35). The agony and ache experienced by the characters does terminate their mental health and it results in a lot of clashes in dealing the relationships. After all the sufferings in their life, the characters also undergo the conflicts in relationships.

Chapter Three

Conflicts in Relationship

A conflict is a struggle and a clash of interest, opinion, or even principles. Conflict will always be found in society; as the basis of conflict may vary to be personal, racial, class, caste, political and international. Conflict may also be emotional, intellectual, and theoretical in which case academic recognition may or may not be a significant motive. There are many types of conflicts. A story may deal with a conflict within a single person, a conflict among people, a conflict between people and society, between people and nature and so on. Conflict refers to a person and his/her life situation.

Conflict is the element of the story which shows the concerns of the character. As human beings, all have life goals that they wish to come true. But life is not simple as that because there is always an obstacle when they reach their goals. That may be conflict with nature, or society, or even ourselves. Conflict occurs when a person fails to fulfill their desires. It is natural to human, since they have to face the obstacles that lie between their desires and their goals or dreams, and when the satisfaction of human's desires is rather impossible to reach, that is the moment when human undergo the conflict.

The conflict of the human happened because human has a limited and restricted capacity to satisfy most of their needs. When human endure the conflict, this can cause human to react and brings out the extremes of human energy, human may take action, decision, response, and interactions toward the conflict which they are facing. Conflict is a struggle which grows out of the interplay of the two opposing forces in plot. The character, usually the protagonist, may be involved in conflict of

four different kinds, namely a struggle against the forces of nature, a struggle against another person, a struggle against society as a force, and a struggle for mastery by two elements within the person.

There are two kinds of conflict such as internal and external. Internal conflict is a struggle of the character with his/her mortality, fate, desire and belief. And it must be resolved by the character alone. Internal conflict is also known as man versus self. Internal conflict is necessary for good characters, but it's the least complicated form of conflict. Unlike internal conflict, external conflict deals with the problems of the world issues such as community, nature, government and other characters. External conflict manifests itself as man versus other man, man versus nature, man versus society and man versus fate.

Young Adult Fiction are often occupied with conflicts. It deals with the difficult teenagers, who are mostly mystified with their life. A study conducted in America says Chores, taking care of family property, poor parenting, separation of parents due to divorce, setting limits, enforcing rules, fear for future, or even TV/ Video games can create conflicts in a teenager. In majority they find it difficult to cope up their wishes with their everyday life. When teenagers fail to balance this, it results in emotional conflicts. The meaning of life is something fundamental for human being.

There are many conflicts throughout the book that cause the characters pain. At the beginning of the book Hazel runs into a conflict with herself because she cannot decide if she should open up to a boy she just met named Augustus. She feels that she should not start a relationship with him because if she died then she would hurt him because she left him, but on the other hand she wants to start a relationship

because she really likes him and he makes her happy. This conflict is Character versus Self.

Another conflict towards the middle of the book would be when Hazel is fighting her cancer and when her lungs fill back up with fluid. She goes into the hospital and is fighting for her life but she ends up being ok after a few days in the hospital. This conflict is Character versus self/Disease. Furthermore, the previous conflict led to another conflict because she wants to travel to Amsterdam but the doctors do not want to send her because they are afraid that her lungs will fill back up with fluid during the trip. She convinces the doctors to let her go and her lungs did not fill up with fluid on the trip. This conflict is Character vs. Character.

Another conflict that was towards the middle of the book was when the author Van Holten would not tell Hazel and Gus what happens after the book ends when he promised he would to both of them. They traveled all the way there and ended not getting the answers they were promised from Van Holten and they were really disappointed and mad. This conflict is Character versus Character. Lastly one conflict would be when Augustus is dying from his cancer. After the trip to Amsterdam Augustus goes into the hospital and was fighting for his life against cancer. But he ends up dying from the cancer at the end of the book. This conflict is Character versus Self/ Disease.

In *The Fault in Our Stars*, Green has brought out the emotional conflict of parents, conflicts with friends, and the conflicts in romance. Hazel Grace faces her first conflict when she was diagnosed with cancer at the age of thirteen, she felt, “the diagnosis came three months after I got my first period. Like: congratulations! You’re a woman. Now die” (24), which leads her to quit her public schooling. She attends a

school that is run by her community. So, this already isolates her from the society and her friends. She is unhappy either attending the support group, because she finds it useless. However, her mom insists her to attend it saying that she deserves a life. But Hazel instead asks her to get a fake id for her, so that she could go to pub and live like a teenager.

Hazel Grace insists her mom to let her life as she wishes. Like all sick children, Hazel, displays an unusual maturity. Hazel understands others and says,

I liked my mom, but her perpetual nearness sometimes made me feel weirdly nervous. And I liked Kaitlyn, too. I really did. But three years removed from proper full-time school exposure to my peers, I felt a certain distance between us. I think my school friends wanted to help me through my cancer, but they eventually found out that they couldn't. (45)

The hardest thing she finds about this disease is putting her parents in pain. Her mother remains, worries, lives, sleeps, eats and breathes her daughter's every feeling. Hazel feels incredibly bad about this. She finds it easy to endure the physical pain but not the emotional one. She could not tolerate her parents suffering because of her. Hazel flashes back several times to the moment when she was 13, dying in the ICU, and her mom leaned over her, destroyed with tears and said, "It's okay, let go" (116), and behind Hazel, she cries, "I won't be a mom anymore" (117).

Hazel's mom is present almost constantly, sitting outside the support group, resting on the end of Hazel's bed, waiting in the hotel room on the teenager's trip to Amsterdam. "It kills me" (100), says her dad realizing that his daughter cannot live a normal life. Hazel's life is inextricably tied up with her mom's. Hazel accepts the

truth to say, “I was the alpha and omega of my parents suffering” (116). Hazel’s dad behaves so emotional, when she is about to leave to Amsterdam, as he may be thinking that he might not see her anymore. In Amsterdam, Hazel’s mom lets her to go on a date with Augustus, because her mom wants Hazel to live her life happily, until she lives. She wanted to see her daughter live her life like any normal teenager.

Hazel develops an intense connection with *An Imperial Affliction*. She had read that novel a million times. It is about a girl named ‘Anna’ who suffers out of a rare blood cancer. She eventually gets treatment and the book ends unexpectedly, because Anna might have died or fallen too sick to write this book. This book impresses Hazel, as it truly portrays the cancer. But apart from the story, she wonders about the other characters and their future too. Hazel is curious to know about Anna’s mom and her connection with the Dutch Tulip man, Anna’s friends and her dog named Sisyphus. The only thing that really comforts Hazel was this novel, *An Imperial Affliction*.

Hazel sees the book *An Imperial Affliction* as a reference to her own life; she does not want to die without the security of knowing that her parents will be fine. The main character, Anna, as revealed later in the book, was Peter Van Houten’s daughter who died of cancer at the tender age of eight. Having obsessed by the book, Hazel suggests *An Imperial Affliction* to Augustus Waters telling him, “so welcome to the sweet torture of reading *An Imperial Affliction*” (54).

The most significant fragment of this novel is the tragic romance between Hazel and Augustus. Though they both struggle with the terminal diseases, they are not similar. They both are unique in their own means. While, Augustus decides to live a heroic life, Hazel wants to remain an unknown girl. She has no intention to hurt

anyone including her parents after her death, so is not ready to occupy their life. Hazel cries;

I'm like. Like. I'm a grenade, Mom. I'm a grenade and at some point I'm going to blow up and I would like to minimize the casualties, okay? ... I'm a grenade... "I just want to stay away from people and read books and think and be with you guys because there's nothing I can do about hurting you; you're too invested, so just please let me do that, okay? I'm not depressed. (99)

This comparison makes Hazel to get a doubt in getting into a relationship with Augustus. She fears that her death could leave him in gloom forever. But the moment they get into relationship, Hazel and Augustus becomes the most romantic lovers in the universe. Augustus love for Hazel is very genuine unlike most of the teenagers. Augustus and Hazel 's love for each other is different from other teens because there is no happy ending on the horizon. There is no thinking about the future because they don't have a future, they only have the present. They have whatever time is given to them. Gus is more open than Hazel. He does not hide his love and jumps right in.

Hazel is more withdrawn. She never declares her love, even after she is certain of it. He reads her "I fell in love the way you fall asleep: slowly, and then all at once" (125), from *An Imperial Affliction*. Augustus, after knowing Hazel's enthusiasm for *An Imperial Affliction*, he surprises her by giving her 'wish' which an organization called The Genie Foundation, grants for the dying children by taking her to Amsterdam to meet Peter Van Houten. It's even the smallest moments, like Gus slowly helping out Hazel and her oxygen to many steep stairs of the Anne Frank

house. Those moments are when we truly see the compassion and selfless love, he has for her.

Cancer appears as a conflict in Augustus and Hazel's limited love story. Though it is the common bond that brings the two together, it is also the beast that is killing the lovers. Augustus reveals to Hazel about the cancer that has reappeared in him in Amsterdam. Green writes Augustus feeling as:

"The world," he said, "is not a wish-granting factory," and then he broke down, just for one moment, his sob roaring impotent like a clap of thunder unaccompanied by lightening, the terrible ferocity that amateurs in the field of suffering might mistake for weakness. Then he pulled me to him and, his face inches from mine, resolved, "I'll fight it for you. Don't you worry about me, Hazel Grace. I'm okay. I'll find a way to hang around and annoy you for a long time". (214-15)

The main conflict of cancer could be a metaphor for us essentially killing ourselves. After Augustus dies Hazel says that "The cancer, which was made of him, finally stopped his heart which was made of him" (266). From the time of their first meet, both Hazel and Augustus maintained their dignity at every course. There is mutual respect and understanding as well as sometimes brutal honesty within Hazel and Augustus relationship. Hazel and Augustus respect each other because of the circumstances and adversity they have. Both overcome and continue to fight through.

Augustus and Hazel, both understand the journeys the other has taken to get to where they are and to become the people they want to be. Even within the friendship stage of their relationship Augustus and Hazel are honest with each other. They are honest about their sickness, about their emotions, their experiences, and about how

they see themselves and view those around them. Ultimately, when Augustus dies, Hazel is left alone in the end of the novel, but realizes that although she cannot control her circumstances, she can make her own decisions and choices.

The relationship between Isaac and Monica proves to be a false one. Their relationship fails when Isaac was about to remove his only eye to become a fully blinded person. After the operation he cries to Hazel, “ ‘ Always’ was a promise! How can you just break the promise?” (60) and Hazel replies him “she didn’t want to dump a blind guy,” (60). The upset Isaac murmurs “I just wish the whole thing hadn’t happened sometimes. The whole cancer thing.” (76).

More than all these conflicts, the most important conflict was created by Peter Van Houten, the author of *An Imperial Affliction*. Hazel devotes most of her time in reading the story of Anna and her life. When Augustus says that he got a reply for his mail from Van Houten, Hazel feels extremely happy and curious at the same time. She flies from America to Netherlands to fulfill her wish just to learn the end of her beloved novel and its characters. But to her shock, Van Houten behaves extremely offensive. He was fully drunk and to the worst he insulted Hazel and Augustus for their sickness.

Young Hazel had developed a close bond with the novel, *An Imperial Affliction* and she had come all the way from America to Netherlands to learn the end of the story. But Van Houten says:

. . . perhaps, but I was under the misguided impression that you were incapable of transatlantic travel. I was trying to provide you some comfort, I suppose, which I should know better than to attempt. But to be perfectly frank, this childish idea that

the author of a novel has some special insight into the characters in the novel ... it's ridiculous. (191-192)

Later in the end of the novel, Green reveals the reason for Van Houten's outrageous behavior. He had lost her eight-year-old daughter to cancer. "'My daughter,'" he said, "she was eight . Suffered beautifully. Will never be beatified'" (285). This is also the conflict of cancer. The internal conflict for Van Houten happens at the last part of the story. He has to make decision of whether to make the last wish of Augustus happen. The wish of Augustus was for him to make an eulogy for Hazel. He actually refused but after his secretary said that it was for his dead daughter, he actually reads it and made the wish of Augustus happen.

The Fault in Our Stars not only explores the ways in which cancer affects those who are diagnosed, but also shows the ways in which their families and friends react to their diagnoses. The parents of the young people living with cancer react to the loss of their children in different ways.

Hazel fears that her parent's life also would turn like Van Houten, after her death. She believes that her sickness would kill her at any time and her parents will be left alone, her mother will no longer be her mother and she cannot do anything to help with this. But her mother comforts her saying, "As long as either of us is alive, I will be your mother," ... "Even when you die, I will still be your mom. Have you stopped loving Gus?" ... "well, then how could I stop loving you?" (296-297). Monica might have dumped and stopped loving Isaac, but the other love built in the novel are stronger to the core. Augustus says to Hazel, "It would be a privilege to have my heart broken by you" (176).

Hazel and Augustus are nearly perfect together; like many of the characters of Green, they are nearly impossibly perceptive and witty, like the kinds of smart kids no one actually knew in high school but everyone wishes they did. In a typical cancer book, their insight and unvarnished way of looking at the world would be a noble side effect of cancer.

In *The Fault in Our Stars*, a part of the novel's heartbreak is that readers will find themselves wishing more time for Hazel and Augustus, with Hazel and Augustus just as the characters themselves do. The world is not a wish-granting factory, as Hazel and Augustus often remind each other. Nevertheless, life does not have to be perfect to be extraordinary. The feeling of sorrow and sadness appears a lot in the novel as most of the characters live with knowing what will happen tomorrow.

In order to make a cancer novel *The Fault in Our Stars* more appealing and popular for the teen readers, it is essential to give optimistic feeling of writing. Green succeeds in obtaining that feeling. In spite of the conflicts they have, the optimistic and pessimistic feeling of characters helps them to survive.

Chapter Four

Lament of an Optimist

Optimism is a mental attitude characterized by hope and confidence in success and a positive future. Optimists are those who expect good things to happen, where pessimists instead predict unfavorable outcomes. Optimistic attitudes are linked to a number of benefits, including better coping skills, lower stress levels, better physical health, and higher persistence when pursuing goals. Optimists tend to view hardships as learning experiences or temporary setbacks. Even the most miserable day holds the promise for them that "tomorrow will probably be better". Always seeing the brighter side of things, they may feel that they experience more positive events in their life than others, finding themselves less stressed.

There has been a great deal of research on optimists and pessimists. Research has shown that an optimistic worldview carries certain advantages. Studies regularly show that optimists are more likely to maintain better physical health than pessimists, including a 50% lower risk of cardiovascular disease and greater survival rates when fighting cancer. Some studies have also linked a pessimistic with higher rates of infectious disease, poor health, and earlier mortality. Optimists do not give up as easily as pessimists, and they are more likely to achieve success because of it. People with optimistic attitudes are more likely to continue working toward their goals, even in the face of obstacles, challenges, and setbacks. Such persistence ultimately means that they are more likely to accomplish their goals.

Optimists also tend to experience less stress than pessimists or realists. Because they believe in themselves and their abilities, they expect good things to happen. They see negative events as minor setbacks to be easily overcome and view

positive events as evidence of further good things to come. Believing in themselves, they also take more risks and create more positive events in their lives. Optimism is generally a positive characteristic that confers a number of physical and mental health benefits. But this does not mean that it does not have a few potential pitfalls.

Sometimes excessive optimism can lead people to overestimate the likelihood that they can experience good things while avoiding bad things. The optimism bias suggests that people often underestimate their risk of experiencing negative outcomes. This can sometimes lead people to engage in risky behaviors that actually increase their chances of having a bad outcome. Toxic positivity, sometimes tends people to overvalue positive feelings while ignoring or even repressing negative ones. It can also cause people to invalidate the emotional experiences of people who are going through difficult times.

Optimists can avoid some of these pitfalls by focusing on maintaining a healthy, realistic approach to positivity. Rather than focusing only on "staying positive" and ignoring other emotions, the goal should be to try to look on the bright side while still acknowledging the difficulties of the situation. Optimists are people who hope that good things happen to them. Optimism is the opposite of pessimism, while pessimism is a feeling of helplessness.

Individual who are optimistic are able to produce something better than the past, not afraid of failure, and trying to still challenge another try when failed again. There are two types of optimism, explanatory style optimism and dispositional optimism. Explanatory style optimism is a psychological attribute that indicates how people explain to themselves why they experience a particular event, either positive or negative, or in another word the way people mentally explain the things that happen

to them. An optimistic explanatory style has been found to be associated with good outcomes in health and achievement. Then, dispositional optimism can be defined as an expectation that better and desirable things will happen than bad things will happen to us in the future. This is an expectation and hope that can also be a part of someone's personality traits, as there are some people who are inherently more optimistic than pessimistic. Those types describe how the optimism effect someone's life.

Positivity is positive attitude in facing any problems in life. *The Fault in Our Stars* is a story about teenagers who suffer from cancer and they meet each other in the Support Group. They face many problems in life because the cancer is a deadly disease. Green focuses the positivity of facing cancer in this novel. The reasons of the characters who have cancer, increase their positivity in this novel are, they can meet another person which gives them some motivation. Another thing that makes them to be positive in facing cancer is that, they believe in God who gives them something that might have the positive power behind everything they are facing.

Green centers positivity as the major theme of the novel *The Fault in Our Stars*, because he wanted to show that by positivity, someone can get the good thinking of how to face his or her destiny. The characters show great courage and strength. Their cancer robbed them of their sight, but despite this they still kept their sense of humor and adapted their life to cope with their disability. Developing a positive attitude in them does not allow their mind to entertain any negative thoughts or doubts.

Hazel's perspective on life changes quite quickly. Throughout the book, Hazel was pessimistic and looked down on life and suffered from internal conflict with herself. She was not outgoing and preferred to stay at home rather than living her life

and meeting new people because she had to learn to come to terms with accepting that she will die at a young age. Even when she joined the cancer supporting groups, it was her mother who forced her to do so. When she meets Augustus at the cancer supporting group, her view changes as August's positive and unique outlook on life influences her perspective on her situation.

Augustus slowly starts to get her to open up, allow people into her life. Through him, she even changed her own view on love and learned how to love. Because before she meets Augustus, she did not want to fall in love or to have an intimate relationship with anyone, as she felt she is like a grenade will explode in any moment and hurt the people she loves. Hazel used to be obsessed over the thought of what would happen to the people around her when she dies. But When Augustus's cancer reappears, Hazel realizes that she is no longer the "grenade" in the relationship and anybody can be a grenade and that the relationship is worth it to be experienced rather living in fears of hurting people. therefore, she starts cherishing life and becomes grateful for the time they have left together.

Augustus taught her how to live in the moment and not to over think and be depressed of things that might not happen. This shows how Hazel has grown immensely towards the end of the story. The final words of Hazel at the end of the of the story shows how much Hazel grew spiritually throughout her journey. Once Augustus dies, she ends up writing a eulogy and, in the eulogy, she says "I do". By "I do" she means that she does not regret choosing Augustus and being in a relationship with him even though she knew the relationship will not last long. She accepted and wanted to be in a spiritual marriage with Augustus. Though the marriage is symbolic, it is nevertheless real.

Hazel's words "I do," are significant in a few ways. For a start, they mark the first and only instance of Hazel using the present tense during her narration the novel. This change in tense is notable because it indicates that Hazel does not see Augustus's death as an end to their love for one another. The idea ties into the fear Hazel talks about with her mother, whom Hazel once overheard lamenting that she wouldn't be a mother anymore after Hazel died. Through these scenarios, the novel suggests our relationships don't end with death. Just as Hazel's mother reassures her that she'll still be her mother even after Hazel dies, Hazel acknowledges with her words that her relationship with Augustus will continue despite his passing.

Hazel's belief is that the universe is indifferent to human life and suffering, and this view feeds her with the thoughts on the meaning of existence and the possibility of an afterlife. As Hazel suggests to her father during their conversation, she doesn't think that anything happens for a meaningful reason and that her consciousness persists in any way after death. Her father's view, which he explains in the quotation, is much more open-ended. Because the universe seems predisposed to creating consciousness, it appears to want to be observed. While this perspective doesn't go so far as to propose a god presiding over the universe, it does imply that the universe is in some way conscious of the life in it. It moreover says people don't have the information or specialist to say for certain that a person's awareness is temporary.

Hazel does not have a motivation and drive in living her life. That is exactly why she has a pessimistic character and a negative view on life. Yet, after meeting Augustus Waters her life drastically changes and she has a new spirit to live her life

meaningfully. It can be seen through her statement about the quote in Augustus' home.

There's a great quote in Gus's house, one that both he and I found very comforting: Without pain, we couldn't know joy. "I went on spouting bullshit Encouragements as Gus's parent, arm in arm, hugged each other and nodded at every word. Funerals, I had decided, are for the living" (272-273).

From the statement above, it shows that Hazel Grace received the positive result from the quote and also Augustus' parents. After seeing the quote above, she feels like she is alive. She uses the quote to give her such a way to her to be brave and enthusiastic in living her life fully. Before seeing the quote in Augustus' house, Hazel was a pessimistic person. Yet this characteristic is changed due to external influence that is to follow the quotes in Augustus' house. Therefore, it affirms that she has an external motivation. Furthermore, that quote in Gus' house makes it clear to Hazel that in order to know the value of something in life, one has to see the opposite side of it. In other words, if one cannot know the pain and suffering of this life, they cannot truly see the blessings of joy in their life.

In the earlier part of the story, Hazel Grace is a girl whose life has very little drive. But she still ends up finding a positive light in her dark days. At the beginning of the novel, Hazel Grace thinks bitterly about the world. That there was a deeper negative meaning for everything. After meeting Augustus Waters, she sees the value of life in a positive way. She tries to live her life happily. She avoids her pain and tries to look stronger. It is because she did not want to make people whom she loved feel sad and cry because of her.

The book *The Imperial Affliction* gives her motivation to stay healthy and not thinking about her death, so that she has a power and energy to think positively about her condition. Because if her condition is good and her illness can be better than before, she admitted to travel to Amsterdam in order to meet the author of the book Peter Van Houten and to know the ending story, so that the spirit of Hazel Grace grow up because she thinks that she can reach her dream soon. The book gives her motivation and also it is the proof of an extrinsic motivation because the book is triggering factor of her to put a wish to be fulfilled and cherish life to make sure that she was the chance to fulfill the wish.

Augustus Waters gets the motivation from his family. His parents hang several motivational quotes in their house. Augustus Waters feels like he has a high spirit and encourages him in living his life fully. Because of living in the middle of an optimistic family, he is influenced to maintain the optimism to himself. It can be seen through the conversation between Augustus and Hazel Grace. Augustus Waters has received motivation from his parents, but also see that he has grown up in a family who has highest spirit towards life. This is one of the reasons that no wonder he is accustomed to living his life with bliss and high character. Ultimately, repeated reinforcements of positive attitudes from his parents mentioned before are motives for his valid optimism.

Augustus is a caring and optimistic person. He has a high drive to perform his activities even though he has cancer. He still cherishes his life and tries to do everything in order to leave some marks after his death. One of the main drives of his is to make his girlfriend Hazel feel happy and comfortable because he feels deeply in love with her. This is evident in Augustus' statement when he says "I'll fight it. I'll

fight it for you. Don't you worry about me, Hazel Grace. I'm okay. I'll find a way to hang around and annoy you for a long time" (216). It shows that Augustus source of motivation is Hazel.

Augustus wants to fight it all because of her. He also does not care if he has his illness. He just thinks about Hazel and always wants to be with her, because he has found her as a blessing in his life. Since Augustus loves Hazel, he feels that they belong to each other. Much like Hazel, being aware of their limited time on earth, they both want to share their feeling of love and belonging to each other. As a result, Augustus continuously pushes beyond his pain and suffering to make sure that his loving soulmate is comfortable and contented of his existence and fulfills her need of love and sense of belonging.

Optimism is a mental attitude that is characterized by hope and faith in success and a positive future. Optimists are those that expect positive things to happen, where negative results are expected by pessimists instead. A variety of advantages are linked to positive attitudes, including improved coping skills, lower levels of stress, better physical health, and higher determination while achieving goals. Also, hardships tend to be seen by optimists as learning opportunities or temporary setbacks. For them, even the most miserable day holds the hope that "tomorrow will probably be better."

Optimism is associated with positive outcomes in one's life in general, possibly as a result of processes that promote and maintain Psychological Well-being. There is significant positive correlation between optimism and psychological well-being and there is insignificant difference between male and female adolescents on experiencing optimism and its effect on their psychological well-being. Ultimately, optimists are more likely than pessimists to engage in positive health practices. One of

the obvious characters that exercises optimism in the novel is Hazel Grace. Hazel remains an optimist despite having in a deadly illness which is lung cancer. No matter how much pain she goes through, she chooses to ignore the pain. Despite the realization that she is hurt, Hazel has found optimism as a coping mechanism to deal with her cancer. As it is evident in her constant acting that everything about her is fine

Hazel suffers an incurable cancer that will undeniably lead her to her end, Hazel wants to believe, and wants others to believe, that she can bear that pain and that she is just fine. By saying that she is fine, Hazel denies that she is sick and wants to enjoy her limited time on earth with her loved ones. She chooses to see the bright side and to lead others on the same path. After choosing to be an optimist, not only she started to see her own life through a more positive scope, but she also started loving and appreciate her parents that always give the encouragement vibes through her illness and it can be seen from her thought, “I wanted to make my parents happy” (8). From the previous statement, it shows that hazel loved her parents so much. She did not want to make them feel sad and hurt their feelings. All that she wanted is to make her parents feel happy and blessed with the existence of Hazel Grace. The effect of being an optimistic character on her psychology can be seen throughout the novel.

Augustus is probably the most optimistic character in the novel. Augustus never gives up on anything. he is living his life gratefully, as a result he always built up his spirit for himself and also to others. always tries to make himself feel courageous. Augustus Waters actually has high enthusiastic nature. he always tells other people, especially his friends that he is fine and always fine. he is living his life with full of positive reinforcement and he wants to show other people that he is strong

enough to face his life even though he is sick. this energy can be related to his characteristics as an optimistic person. He is optimistic about his health condition even though he has suffered a lot of diseases, including the one that is life-threatening and permanent (osteosarcoma). Because of that, he does not let his disease affect his happiness.

Motivations of the characters play an important role in their life to be alive. In other words, both characters had similar determinants that kept them going forward and made their life easier in order to reach their goal. Besides that, the effect of family and friends is apparent in the novel. Thus, characters rely on each other's strengths, family and friends' support, and optimism.

In conclusion, the research can be helpful for those who are having tough times in their lives. Also, it indicates a message and points that no matter what it is that one is going through in their lives, it is never a solution to give in to their agony and misery just as Augustus kept his optimistic behavior to inspire others. Another lesson that the research gives is that happiness and a meaningful life will not knock on your door, but you have to work for it. Ultimately, this research can motivate the readers to go through the difficult times that they might encounter during their lives and to help them focus on the bright side of life and think in an optimistic manner so that this gives them the strength to overcome their shortfalls, sufferings and hardships.

Chapter Five

Summation

Literature comes from the Latin word ‘litera’ which means ‘acquainted with letter’. Study of literature is but the study of man’s struggles and aspirations, which of late, have assumed desperate proportions because of host of reasons- social and philosophic, in the broadest sense of terms. Studying English Literature opens up a world of inspiration and creativity. American literature is literature predominately written or produced in English in the United States of America and its preceding colonies. American literature was the era of colonizing the continent.

John Green was born on 24th of August in 1977, in Indianapolis, Indiana. He started his educational journey at Lake Highland Preparatory School, where he completed his elementary and middle schooling. He was admitted to Kenyon College, where he gained a double major in religious and English studies. In 2000, He was enrolled at the University of Chicago Divinity School to become a priest. He also worked at a children’s hospital that proved a good experience for his future career. The miseries of the people and the life-threatening situation that he witnessed in the hospital made him rethink the choices of his life.

Green is a recent popular name in the American young adult fiction. *The Fault in Our Stars* is considered to be his outstanding by far along with other notables. The time he spent among children with terminal – illness stimulated him to become a writer. After establishing his career as a writer, John’s creative, witty, and philosophical ideas brought variety to the literary world. His work primarily focused on the experiences and feelings of real people in real situations. Marked with the

blend of expectations and reality, his work, *The Fault in Our Stars* was fulfilling his expectations about his creative abilities.

The Fault in Our Stars tells the story of young love with no sense of futurity, no belief in a happily ever after. Green rejects the sentimental clichés that tend to structure cancer narratives, about the nobility of sufferings and struggle, and the redemption that validates pain and loss. The result is a novel where love is inextricably bound up with fear, death, and merciless physical pain but somehow worthwhile. The tone of the novel is blunt.

Hazel Lancaster of age sixteen and Augustus Waters of age seventeen, meet and fall in love at a support group for teens with cancer. Augustus, once a rising basketball star, has lost a leg to bone cancer, and Hazel carries an oxygen tank everywhere she goes because of thyroid cancer that has spread to her lungs. The two are attracted to each other immediately; they share a bright, restless intelligence and a skeptical view of the insipid platitudes that adults use to whitewash the horrible reality of their diseases. Augustus pursues Hazel determinedly from the beginning, but she is hesitant to begin a romantic relationship, despite being deeply attracted to him.

Cancer is a disease in which abnormal cells divide uncontrollably and destroy the body tissue. Cancer not only affects the victim physically, but also brings up a wide range of feelings that are not used to dealing with. *The Fault in Our Stars* is a cancer novel, there are so many characters suffering from the terminal disease. Including the protagonist Hazel, Augustus Waters, Isaac, Anna Van Houten and Caroline Mathers are also the victim of cancer. For a novel about kids dying of cancer, suffering is a prominent part of the character's lives.

Being a cancer patient, pain is not a new thing to experience. Suffering is a prominent part of this novel. Green shakes the universal beliefs, being young means mostly likely being healthy. Observing a teenager battling a disease than an old person battling a disease is hurting. The suffering is not only felt physically, it affects them mentally as well. The cancer survivors find it difficult to differentiate the term ‘sympathy’ and ‘love’.

Green’s experiences of working in Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus as a student chaplain, is sure an urge to write this book. Having witnessed the sufferings of children with life-threatening illness had forced him to write *The Fault in Our Stars*. The character Hazel Grace Lancaster is a huge inspiration for Green from Esther Grace Earl. She died at the age of sixteen due to thyroid cancer. Prior to her death in 2010, Earl became friends with Green, who credited her for inspiring him to complete the novel *The Fault in Our Stars*.

Suffering becomes a prominent part of this novel. All the characters suffer. Hazel and Augustus reads a lot and Hazel especially reads her most intimate novel *An Imperial Affliction* to get some comfort out of her disease. This suffering also makes them wiser than any other normal youngsters of their age. “Depression’s not a side effect of cancer, it’s a side effect of dying” (3).

Conflict is the element of the story which shows the concerns of the character. There are many types of conflict. A story may deal with a conflict within a single person, a conflict among people, a conflict between people and society, between people and nature and so on. There are two kinds of conflict such as internal and external. Young Adult Fiction are often occupied with conflicts. It deals with the difficult teenagers, who are mostly mystified with their lives.

There are many conflicts throughout the book that cause the characters pain. At the beginning of the book Hazel runs into a conflict with herself because she cannot decide if she should open up to a boy, she just met named Augustus. She feels that she should not start a relationship with him because if she died then she would hurt him. Another conflict towards the middle of the book would be when Hazel is fighting her cancer and when her lungs fill back up with fluid. Furthermore, the previous conflict led to another because she wants to travel to Amsterdam but the doctors do not want to send her because they are afraid that her lungs will fill back up with fluid during the trip.

Additional conflict that was towards the middle of the book was when the author Van Houten would not tell Hazel and Gus what happens after the book ends when he promised he would to both of them. They travelled all the way there and ended not getting the answers they were promised from Van Houten and they were really disappointed and mad. Last conflict would be when Augustus is dying from his cancer. After the trip to Amsterdam, Augustus was fighting for his life against cancer. But he ends up dying from the cancer at the end of the book.

The hardest thing Hazel finds about this disease is putting her parents in pain. Her mother remains, worries, lives, sleeps, eats and breathes her daughter's every feeling. Hazel feels incredibly bad about this. She finds it easy to endure the physical pain but not the emotional one. She could not tolerate her parents suffering because of her. The most significant fragment of this novel is the tragic romance between Hazel and Augustus. Though they both struggle with the terminal diseases, they are not similar. They both are unique in their own means. While, Augustus decides to live a heroic life, Hazel wants to remain an unknown girl.

The important conflict was created by Peter Van Houten, the author of *An Imperial Affliction*. During their meet in Amsterdam, Van Houten behaves extremely offensive. He was fully drunk and to the worst he insulted Hazel and Augustus for their sickness. Later in the end part of the novel, Green reveals the reason for Van Houten's outrageous behavior. He had lost her eight-year-old daughter to cancer. Hazel fears that her parent's life also would turn like Van Houten, after her death.

Green centers positivity as the major theme of the novel, because he wanted to show that by positivity, someone can get the good thinking of how to face his or her destiny. Hazel was pessimistic and looked down on life and suffered from internal conflict with herself. When she meets Augustus at the cancer supporting group, her view changes as Augustus positive and unique outlook on life influences her perspective on her situation. Augustus slowly starts to get her to open up, allow people into her life. Hazel now realizes that she is no longer the "grenade".

Augustus Waters gets the motivation from his family. His parents hang several motivational quotes in their house. Augustus feels like he has a high spirit and encourages him in living his life fully. Because of living in the middle of an optimistic family, he is influenced to maintain the optimism to himself. It can be seen through the conversation between Augustus and Hazel. Augustus continuously pushes beyond his pain and suffering to make sure that his loving soulmate is comfortable and contented of his existence and fulfills her need of love and sense of belonging.

Works Cited

- Green, John. *The Fault in Our Stars*. New York: Penguin, 2012.
- Artha, Dewi Juni, and Widya S. "Optimism and Pessimism of Hazel Grace in John Green's Novel "The Fault in Our Stars". KnE Social Sciences. 18 Jul. 2019. Accessed on 16 Feb 2022, DOI:[10.18502/KSS.V3I19.4847](https://doi.org/10.18502/KSS.V3I19.4847)
- K. Bhatnagar, Manmohan, editor. *Twentieth Century Literature in English*. Publishers and Distributors, 2000.
- Campbell, Patty. "Campbell Scoop: Reflections on Young Adult Literature". *Goodreads*, Scarecrow Press, 2010, Accessed on 14 Feb 2022, [Campbell's Scoop: Reflections on Young Adult Literature by Patty Campbell \(goodreads.com\)](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13014076-Campbell-scoop-reflections-on-young-adult-literature-by-patty-campbell)
- Denby, David. *American Sucker*. *Goodreads*, Back Bay Book, Accessed on 16 Jan, 2022, [American Sucker by David Denby \(goodreads.com\)](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13014076-American-sucker-by-david-denby)
- Gurden, Meghan Cox. *Darkness Too Visible*. *The Wall Street Journal*. 4 June, 2011, Accessed on 16 Jan, 2022, www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702303657404576357622592697038.
- Margules, Dan. "ScripTips: The Fault in Our Stars." *Goodread*, 16 Sep, 2014, Accessed on 16 Jan, 2022, [The Fault in Our Stars by John Green \(goodreads.com\)](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/13014076-The-fault-in-our-stars-by-john-green)
- Gaffney, M. Loretta. *Young Adult Literature Libraries and Conservative Activisms*.

Googlebooks, 1 Feb, 2017, Accessed on 16 Jan, 2022,

Young Adult Literature, Libraries, and Conservative Activism - Loretta M.

Gaffney - Google Books

Scott, A. O. "Young Love, Complicated by Cancer." *The New York Times*, 5 June,

2014, Accessed on 19 Jan, 2022, 'The Fault in Our Stars' Sets Out to Make

You Cry - The New York Times (nytimes.com)

Freedom of Choice: A Study of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*

A project 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

by

FRANCY WISHNY. G

(REG. NO. 20APEN09)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Power of Choice	12
Three	Destiny Vs Free Will	23
Four	Feminist Perspectives	34
Five	Summation	44
	Works Cited	50

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Freedom of Choice: A Study of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*** 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 is a work done by Francy Wishny. G in the year 2021-2022 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Betsy
Dr. A. Josephine Alangara Betsy

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Guide

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

S. Vennila
Examiner 27/05/2022

Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Assistant Prof. of English
Sarah Tucker College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 627 007

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Freedom of Choice: A Study of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmanian 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.

Thoothukudi

May 2022



Francy Wishny. G

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to thank Lord Almighty for His guidance and grace he bestowed upon me during the course of my research.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, Dr. A. Josephine Alangara Betsy, for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, encouragement and meticulous proof reading and contributing immensely towards the completion of this project.

I thank the Librarian St. Mary's College, who extended help in the use of the library for the reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided. My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love and financial support and to the staff members of the Department of English and my friends for their moral encouragement towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

This project entitled **Freedom of Choice: A Study of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*** dramatizes the perpetual conflict between the good and evil of two families namely Trasks and Hamiltons. John Steinbeck was an American prolific and a naturalistic writer whose works convey his enthusiasm and the curiosity about the world.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of John Steinbeck's life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of the author's work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Power of Choice** highlights the struggle of the characters that they face by their own choice of life and the other major themes such as biblical motifs, family, identity, love and lust.

The third chapter **Destiny Vs Free will** deals with the rivalry between the two generations of Cyrus Trask which contrasts with the biblical characters Cain and Abel.

The fourth chapter **Feminist Perspectives** focusses on the contradictory feministic characteristics of Liza Hamilton and Abra Bacon. It also highlights the immoral traits and the femme fatalism of Cathy Ames.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters. It also presents the narrative technique employed by the writer and validates the study.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature, with its perfect reproduction of life, is an ideal medium into which the writer infuses his own feeling, be it prose or verse. It picturizes society, voices one's opinion with the soul aim to achieve. Joseph Conrad in the preface to *The Niggers of the Narcissus* (1897), commands on the significance of the writers and the writing texts in human life. "My task which, I am trying to achieve, by the power of written word to make you hear, to make you feel- it is, before all, to make you see. That- and no more, and it is everything" (6). Literature is said to be the mirror of life. Literature when interwoven with the fields as history, philosophy, sociology, psychology is a discipline wherein language is used as a medium of expression so as to interpret man: the existence and culture, personality and individual differences.

American literature is considered as the most popular literature across the world. It reflects the practical condition of people and society. As pamphlets, poems and other convenient forms of literatures were written, people began to read and write a lot, as their knowledge increased. American literature was born with the development of free capitalism in United States. It is more dramatic and more individualistic and liberation of personality. Since United States is a multi-ethnic united nation, there are many different national cultures in American literature. Therefore, the style of American literature is very complex and diverse. Mostly American literature reflects beliefs and traditions that come from the nation's frontier days. The pioneer ideals of self-reliance and independence appear again and again in American writings.

American authors have great respect for the value and importance of the individual. They tend to reject authority and to emphasize democracy and the equality

of the people. American writers have always had a strong tendency to break with literary tradition and to strike their own traditions. Americans wrote their own narrative history and crafted their own glorious heroic past purposely inducing the sense of American nationhood to rise above the clutches of Britain. The revolutionary period is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Paine. It was in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the nation's first novel was published. An early example is William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* which was published in 1771. With an increasing desire to produce uniquely in American literature and culture, a number of new literary figures emerged, perhaps most prominent being Washington Irving and Edgar Allan Poe.

The Modern period was a time of flourishing art and extravagant living that acted as a prelude to Great Depression. The period was characterized by the rise of science and increasingly rapid technological progress. It was an era of boldness and fast paced living. The period includes the Reformation and the disastrous Thirty Years' War which was considered as one of the most destructive events in the history. It was the time when the authors began to earn American International acclaim and experimented with various styles of writing. Most of their works focus on the confusion and thoughts of Americans, especially during the two World Wars and the Great Depression. The chaotic literature revealed the unstableness of Americans' mindset as they attempted to understand what was going around them.

Whatever be the instrument- novel, poem, canvas, play was found to be complicated. T.S Eliot's most famous poem, *The Wasteland* (1922) quotes that, "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (434), which is a metaphor for modernist form. It recognizes the range of allusions such as literary, philosophical and theological which has captivated the critics and readers since the day it has appeared. Modernists

emphasize, on radical individualism which can be seen in many literary manifestos issued by various groups within the literary movement. The cultural history of humanity creates a unique common history that connects previous generations with the Modernist re-contextualization of the individual with the social heritage that can be seen in the ‘mythic method’ which T.S Eliot expounded in his discussion of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1920).

Some of the major contemporaries of the modern period are T.S Eliot, Gertrude Stein, Hilda Doolittle, Paul Laurence Dunbar, William Faulkner, Joseph Conrad, Ezra Pound, W. B. Yeats, Earnest Hemingway, Scott Fitzgerald, Robert Frost and D. H. Lawrence. Modernist Literature can be viewed large in terms of its formal, stylistic and semantic movement away from Romanticism examining subject matter that is traditionally mundane in which a prime example is *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1915) by T.S Eliot. E. E. Cummings was an experimental poet. Carl Sandburg was optimistic about America’s future; he expressed his passion for the rhythm of a modern city in *Chicago Poems*. The ‘Lost Generation’ is a term coined by Gertrude Stein to refer to a group of writers who felt alienated to the world. The group included Earnest Hemmingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Gertrude Stein, John Dos Passos and William Faulkner.

Earnest Hemingway was probably the most famous representative. However, his writing style was usually plain, his novels and stories were compared to an iceberg (only one-eighth of the work can be seen, the rest is hidden). His novelette *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) has won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1954. The moral of the story is that “a man can be destroyed, but not defeated.” F. Scott Fitzgerald was an important figure of the modern period who was known for his book *The Great Gatsby* (1925). The book reveals the negative aspects of the roaring twenties. William Faulkner

was one the most important writers of American south. His writings concentrated on the fall of Southern aristocracy. He wrote *Sound and the Fury* (1929), *Light in August* (1932) and *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936).

The Great Depression Era, which was the period of economic crisis in 1930's was perhaps the vast universal alteration of circumstances. The causes of depression were many and mutually reinforcing. The major upheaval of the era was the crash of stock market and that certainly contributed to the depression, although by itself, it may not have used it. In the 1950's, major dramatists, notably Arthur Miller, Edward Albee and Sam Shepard developed the American theatre. In the 1960's, novelists such as Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, and Joseph Heller examined the Jewish experience in American society. Ezra Pound was one the most complex writers in the American history. He was involved in pioneering new styles and movements which were the major elements of imagism or vorticism. His most important work is "The Cantos" which was written between 1915 and 1962.

Starting from 1915, the period is known for the phase of social criticism. Van Wyck Brooks was the most influential critic for twenty years. His early works have encouraged the rise of matured, serious and philosophical criticism Likewise, Theodore Dreiser was one of the great American writers to depict the dismal of the urbanized society in favor of common men and women that turn to be victims. Dreiser's characters impersonate his pessimism that he could hardly hide in such works as *Sister Carrie* (1900). Sherwood Anderson was known for his easy style and form of fiction by his contemporary young novelists including Hemingway, Faulkner and Wolfe. Emily Dickinson, a timid woman poet who confined herself in her house almost all of her life, tried her pen at the problems of war in poems such as *Success is Counted Sweetest* (1864) and *My Triumph lasted till the Drums* (1935).

American writers expressed disillusionment following the World War I. Earnest Hemingway became famous with the *Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) as he won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1929. American poetry reaches a peak after World War I, with such writers as Warfare Stevens, T. S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Ezra Pound and E. E. Cummings. American drama attained international status at the time with the works of Eugene O'Neill, who won the Pulitzer Prizes and Nobel Prize in 1920 and 1937. Only by means off Civil War could this young country achieve unification once and for ever, and Stephe Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) which offered a true-to-life description of fighting in the Civil War. Pre-World War I treated novels as a narrative framework.

Both World War II and Vietnam War left a mark on American history. Human strength and harsh futile realities were seen through the eyes of the people. Americans experienced the brutalities of war and so they lost their esteem. They saw a world of gloominess. The sad ruthless reality is portrayed in all contemporary American fiction. From the end of World War II until the early 1970's, many popular works like Harper Lee's, *To Kill a Mocking Bird* (1960) were produced in modern American literature. America's involvement in World War II influenced works such as Norman Mailer's, *The Naked and the Dead* (1948), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961) and Kurt Vonnegut Jr.'s, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). In a period of exploration of the religious and the literary responses to the war, John Steinbeck pulled back from modernism, not because he wanted to rebel against it, but because his own experiences at a variety of jobs and his immediate sympathies were not oriented in that direction.

John Steinbeck was born in Salinas, California, in 1902. He grew up in a fertile agricultural valley about twenty-five miles from the Pacific Coast. In 1919 he went to Stanford University, where he enrolled in literature and writing courses until he left in

1925 without taking a degree. He moved to New York City where he found himself as a construction writer. During the next five years he worked as a journalist and wrote his first novel, *Cup of Gold* (1929). After marriage he published two fictions, *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932) and *To a God of Unknown* (1933). His third novel, *Tortilla Flat* (1935), captured the imagination of the public. It is a rambunctious, humorous, picaresque story of peasants, drinking parties, love affairs, hardships and simple persistence in a life that binds the characters into a community.

In Dubious Battle is based on the historical events from peach and cotton strikes in California in 1933. *Of Mice and Men* novel is a story about two migrant labourers and friends who dream of owning their own farm. *The Grapes of Wrath* is the most finest and ambitious novel of Steinbeck which tells the story of a dispossessed Oklahoma family and their struggle to carve out their new life.

Steinbeck received his love of literature from his mother who was interested in arts. His favorite book, and a main influence on his writing, was Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1485), a collection of the legends of King Arthur. Steinbeck decided in high school that he wanted to be a writer. During World War II John Steinbeck served as a correspondent for the *New York Herald Tribune* (1966). The three powerful novels of John Steinbeck of the late 1930's, *In Dubious Battle* (1936), *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and the books considered by many the finest, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939), focused on the Californian laboring class. Steinbeck travelled to Mexico to collect marine life with his friend Edward. F. Ricketts, a marine biologist. Their collaboration resulted in the book of *Sea of Cortez* (1941), which describes the marine life in the Gulf of California.

Steinbeck's creativity and composition were highly influenced by Miss. Hawkins and Miss. Cupp. He was also tutored by two inspirational women named

Margery Bailey and Edith Ronald Mirrielees. They taught him various lessons of logical and truthful writing which are reflected in his works. He was much influenced by California, where he lived, as nine of his works are based on some parts of California. After the suffering of two significant losses which were the death of Edward Ricketts and the separation and divorce from his second wife Gwyn, Steinbeck began writing *East of Eden*.

John Steinbeck won the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award for his novel, *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1940. He won the California author Award for *Tortilla Flat* in 1935 and for *In Dubious Battle* in 1936. Despite of fifty thousand copies of *East of Eden* sold annually, the novel's popularity encountered resurgence in 2003 after being named an Oprah's Book Club pick.

The novel *East of Eden*, published in 1952, is a sprawling multilevel story of three generations of the Trask family, intertwined with the Hamilton family. The narrative voice also comments on the flow of American history from the Civil War to World War I. The novel has four parts. Part One, covering the period from 1862 to 1900 opens with an evocation of Salinas Valley and a description of its early settlers, leading up to the arrival of Hamiltons and a little later, The Trasks. The central narrative is the fictional biography of Adam Trask from his birth during the Civil War until his death in the last year of World War I. His youth is dominated by his militant and satanic father, Cyrus Trask, and his dark and sardonic half-brother Charles. Another mysterious and evil character is Cathy Ames who betrays him by sleeping with Charles.

Part Two, covers the period from 1900 to 1902, opens with a half-nostalgic and half-critical evocation of the year. It shows the great changes in Adam Trask. He comes west to the Salinas Valley to begin a new life in the company of his wife whom he

falsely perceives a symbol of purity and goodness. There she gives birth to twin boys, and afterwards deserts her husband after shooting him when he tries to stop her from leaving. She soon becomes a whore popularly called “Kate” in Salinas. Samuel Hamilton urges Adam to return to life by accepting his sons, Caleb and Aron.

Part Three, the action of the novel covers the period from 1911 to 1912 and moves forward on its own, and one becomes acquainted with Hamiltons –Samuel, Liza and their eight children, particularly Tom, Dessie and Olive. Some other characters and events involving them are interesting and Steinbeck himself has stated that all of them are true. Adam Trask becomes half-alive after many years of spiritual coma. In this part, there are discussions about the Cain and Abel story from the Christian myth. However, in addition to the discussions, there are also the narrations of some events like Adam’s confrontation with Kate, the first meeting of Caleb and Aaron with Abra, and the death of Samuel Hamilton.

In Part Four- the period after 1912, the novel concentrates on the story of Adam Trask and his sons. The narrative events move rapidly through the period just before World War I, and in the early war years, with emphasis on Adam’s appointment to the draft board, Caleb’s speculation in beans, Kate’s suicide, Aaron’s death and Adam’s paralyzing stroke. An important part of the narrative deals with Caleb’s struggle between good and evil, which reaches its crisis when Adam refuses to accept his gift. This sets in motion a series of tragic events like Caleb’s decision to show Aaron his mother, Kate’s suicide, Aaron’s death and Adam’s paralysis.

However, Cal seems to overcome his Cain heritage through Lee’s spiritual guidance and Abra’s love. The climax of *East of Eden* ends with a powerful and intense scene, in which Cal receives his “Timshel” blessing from Adam and releases Cal from

his guilt. It gives him the chance to choose freely between the forces of good and evil, which ultimately emphasizes the importance of an individual human soul.

During the years of writing, the Trasks became prominent. The apparent failure to relate the two families and the awkward mixture of allegory and romanticism weakened an impressive work. *East of Eden* is not a compact novel like *Of Mice and Men*, not brilliant sociological fiction like *Grapes of Wrath* and *In Dubious Battle* and not a temperately ironical story of the disreputable who are more lovable than the respectable like *Tortilla Flat*. It gangles, yet is full of vitality as one is carried forward by a narrative flow that encompasses vulgarity, sensibility, hideousness and beauty.

Literary historians have some difficulty in categorizing John Steinbeck and his works because he neither belongs convincingly to a recognized group or trend. Along with Dos Passos and James T. Farrell, Steinbeck has sometimes been considered as a social-protest writer of the nineteen thirties. Yet the generic hallmarks of social protest fiction with revolutionary messages, and characters and actions designed to express that messages are rarely seen in his works. In his works of the nineteen thirties and in other works, he has been described as “realistic or naturalistic.” He wanted the readers to be able to relate their own lives to his works.

Mark Schorer claims the novel’s public popularity as “probably the best of John Steinbeck’s novels” (Mark Schorer, *New York Times Review*, 1952). Many other literary critics found a lot to criticize typical of the dichotomy between the literary and public establishment’s reception of Steinbeck’s works. Samuel. F. Morse, labels Steinbeck a “moralist” as an insult and denies that the story’s thematic treatment of good and evil has any artistic merit. Morse asserts that, “*East of Eden* reveals much more clearly than any of the other novels which have preceded it that John Steinbeck is

a moralist. He is in a sense, more moralist than novelist.” (Samuel Morse, *Hartford Courant*). Robert De Mott succinctly characterizes the various benefits of Steinbeck’s method in the novel, *East of Eden* as he observes that,

Steinbeck granted himself license to explore the psychological and moral implications of an individual actions and predestines to trace the historical course of his native are- California’s Salinas Valley from fabled Eden in the in the mid-nineteenth century to its emergence at the end of World War I at the brink of a less glamorous but more realistic age. (37)

East of Eden proved to remain highly popular in public as it shot to the second spot on the bestseller list again. Steinbeck had won numerous honours and awards including Pulitzer and Nobel prizes. He then won the New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award for *Of Mice and Men* in 1938. The Nobel Prize in Literature is won in 1962 “for his realistic and imaginative writings, combining as the do sympathetic humor and keen social perception” (4).

Chapter two deals with the thematic analysis of the novel as it depicts morality, love, family, loneliness, religion and myth. The forthcoming chapter also puts forth how the chief characters fit the above key features of the novel.

Chapter Two

Power of Choice

East of Eden represents an attempt to create a work of important literary and mythical significance. The novel treats mankind's most basic enigma: the presence of evil in the universe and the cause of man's curse in the eyes of God. Steinbeck has referred to numerous philosophical insights including those of interrelations between power and weakness, good and evil as well as those between love and hatred. He considers every characters' evilness individually and as a problem of human will on the whole. The novel clearly explores ideas centering around the ideologies of the US such as determinism, free will, family, individual identity, the value of hard work and the battle between humans and rustic terrain.

The novel deals about the essence of being human, about religion and family. The major theme revolving around the whole novel is the interminable contest between the good and evil among the society of Salinas Valley and each characters of Trask and Hamilton families. It also portrays each character's divergent personalities. Steinbeck examines this theme as the story of mankind itself. Along with the biblical allusions in *East of Eden*, Steinbeck emphasizes the story of Cain and Abel through the characters of Cal and Aron Trask. The novel centres around the idea of the Hebrew word "Timshel", which denotes "thou mayest".

Steinbeck constitutes the ideas of love, parental approval, and the meaning behind life fulfilment into one wonderfully written novel. Critics have accused the novel of amateurishness and inconsistency in its structure. Morality plays a vital role as a theme in, *East of Eden*. One of the most prominent characters of the novel is Lee, a Chinese American servant for Adam Trask and his family. Lee does more than he is

expected, even though of just having a job title of ‘servant’. He remains as a superior assistant till the end of the novel. He is more of a philosophical person. When Cathy shoots Adam in his arm, Lee is the one who offers the most needed help to Adam. Lee prevents Adam from dying because of stress, and alongside Samuel helps him from depression.

Lee takes care of Adam’s newborn sons and also improves Adam’s morals while getting fond of the two little boys. Although Lee wasn’t the biological father of Aron and Cal, Adam’s sons, he takes much responsibility over them and he remains to be the reason of how they grow up to be. Lee decides to move to San Francisco and pursue his dream of opening his own bookstore.

One of the fundamental ideas of the novel is the freewill of a person to overcome the evil. The idea of free choice is encapsulated by Lee but certain other characters deny the fact that one has freewill of choice. Cathy Ames’ character shows that there is only evil in this world, who portrays a manipulative and a sadistic trait. She exploits other people’s human weaknesses to her own advantage as she gets to immerse in it. However, Aron’s character portrays that he is only able to face the good in life. Cal struggles in the dilemma between these two extremes. Cal is able to go forward into a new life along Abra, confident enough that he could control his own destiny.

East of Eden challenges the validity of dual thinking, as Adam epitomizes thinking in absolutes and bending the world to fit preconceived categories. Lee explains to Samuel, contrasting him with Adam “You see what is, where most people see what they expect in life is when you are one of the rare people who separate your observation from preconception” (161). Consistent with the novel’s theme of free will, Adam eventually overcomes his preconceived expectations and affirms Cal’s portrayal for

good in the novel's final scene. His invocation of 'timshel' clearly has enormous significance for Cal, whose internal struggles with the free will determinism and the pressure to conform to his father's expectations continue, but its significance for Adam equally liberated goes acknowledged.

The novel focusses on the verge of self-determination, which is clearly portrayed by the two characters namely, Cal Trask and his mother, Cathy Ames. Cal is traumatized by the knowledge that Cathy is his mother and he fears to urge to do "bad things" as he got his genetic ties, he claims that, "I hate her because I know why she went away. I know, because I've got her in me" (445). Cal struggles to overcome certain natural impulse because of his genetic predisposition. He is availed by Lee for this task and he asserts him not to take the lazy way in his life. According to Steinbeck, humanity is neither predetermined by righteousness nor by any genetic ties, but can exercise the freedom to choose one's course of life. He rejects the concept that evilness could be passed down through blood relations.

The characters of the novel deflect from the path of truthfulness. Charles doesn't reveal the truth about Cathy's seduction on Adam's wedding night. To win an important job and an ill-gained fortune, Cyrus lies about his Civil War record. Adam and Lee lie about their mother Cathy, from Cal and Aron. Also, Cal keeps his business projects from his father. Adam is not truthful to himself by excusing Cathy's depraved behaviour. When he finally knows the truth, he feels relieved and exhilarated.

Anger and rejection are the two main components of themes in the novel. The maternal absence and paternal rejection leads Charles in his wrong path. "When a child catches adults out- when it first walks into his grave little head that adults do not have divine intelligence, that their judgements are not always wise, their thinking true, their

sentences just- his world falls into panic desolation” (22). Cyrus educating and preparing Adam for the Army and spends countless hours of time with him, he excludes Charles from these conversations and forbids him to enlist.

The central thought in the novel is that notwithstanding the mistakes made of the parents, the children are not doomed by their fate but have their own free will. “It is a tedious job to build them up again; they never quite shine. And the child’s world is never quite whole again. It is an aching kind of growing” (22). Cyrus’ love for Adam creates a jealousy in Charles which continues beyond childhood. Charles rebukes Adam upon returning home from war as well.

For no discernable reason, Cyrus portrays a clear preference for Adam over Charles. As he gets to admit that he favors Adam saying, “I love you better. I always have. This may be a bad thing to tell you, but it’s true. I love you better” (30). Cyrus prefers Adam’s birthday gift to the gift Charles gives him. As he never uses the knife which was given by Charles but keeps the puppy until his death which was given by Adam even as it was blind and unable to walk. He also invites only Adam to visit him in Washington. This creates a vengeance for Charles against Adam. Charles gets angry and attacks his brother, Adam. Charles is marked with a scar in his forehead.

Adam fails at his refrigeration business venture and loses his fortune. Likewise, Adam portrays the same kind of arbitrary favoritism in the relationships with his own sons, Aron and Cal. Adam grows up in a way being fragile and cowardly. Cal grows up struggling to be in the path of good amidst the temptations towards evil. Adam perceives Aron as aspiring and propitious but dismisses Cal as slothful and aimless. Adam does realize his partialness only in his deathbed as he acknowledges his mistake and gives his final blessing to Cal. Cal’s substantial and archetypal rejection is at the

hands of his father, Adam. “Cal doggedly lighted bill after bill until all are burned and waited for Lee to comment, but Lee did not speak or move” (567). Although a definitive act of rage, Cal’s fervent act of anger are far less cruel-objected than those of his uncle and mother.

Steinbeck’s father failed in his flour mill business, lost his job and fell into depression. This affected him a lot as he adored him and saw him as a role model. His father is like the one puts up a wall between his family and himself. This made Steinbeck feel very rejected by his father. Despite his father’s negligence, Steinbeck chose to be a good father. As in *East of Eden*, Samuel says,

The greatest terror a child can have is that he is not loved, and rejection is the hell he fears. I think everyone in the world to a large or small extent has felt rejection. And with rejection comes anger, and with anger some kind of crime in revenge for the rejection, and with the crime guilt- and there is the story of mankind. I think that if rejection could be amputated, the human would not be what he is. (271)

Another subject dealt in the novel is love. The love which is supposed to be passionate and overwhelming, is portrayed in a harsh and bewildered. Even the love depicted by the characters is seen to be befuddled. Sam Hamilton loves a girl from Ireland but loses her love somehow, which is not detailed in the book, ever since the incident he has never reminded the same. Adam’s love for Catherine is totally misguided but still is consuming. He is deeply in concern with his love as he feels alive when she is with him and dead when she leaves him. But to some degree their love can be defined as perils of unrequited love.

The characters in the novel are mostly deprived of love. Charles seeks his father's love as he feels repudiated by his own father. Both Adam and Charles also are deprived of their motherly love as she has abandoned them. Cyrus' tough love for Adam is what despises him. In *East of Eden*, rejected love is transformed into hatred. This can be seen in the character Charles, as he shows his festering anger to his stepbrother Adam. The irony is that Adam who is loved by his father did not love his father back, but his rejected son Charles loves his father no matter what.

The absence of love has left a void only to be filled by hate. Adam Trask encounters the feeling of love throughout the novel. He either has his love rejected by the people he cares about or rejects the love of people who care about him. When Adam was young, Cyrus loved him but he didn't reciprocate the love. He was neither loved by his brother nor mother but only by his father. His father has punished him before but trains him to become a soldier, so Adam hates him. Moreover, he didn't come back from the army until his father's death.

Later when Adam grew older, he loved Cathy insanely, as she was his "image of beauty and tenderness, a sweet and holy girl, precious beyond thinking, clean and loving, and nothing Cathy did or said could wrap Adam's Cathy" (135). Cathy did not love him back so when she left her, Adam couldn't let go the love of his life. She gets to shoot him and abandons her husband and her children. Although Adam survived without her, he was demoralized for the rest of his life because he still loved her. Lee recognizes the faults in her and is greatly grieved by her. Charles tries to warn his love-struck brother of the unhealthy relationship with Cathy but Adam refuses to listen to him.

Cathy's evilness in *East of Eden* seems to be intense and all consuming. She displays a character who has sexually perverse tendencies from her early age. Aron grows up yearning the love of a mother. He is goodhearted and easily susceptible to hurt. The sheltered Aron has a great deal of facing the reality and evil in the world. Cal feels fiercely envious of Aron's preference for him in the family. Aron is destroyed by the revelation of the fact that his mother is a whore, which is purposely divulged by Cal knowing that Aron is weak enough to know the fact. As the author claims that,

Aron was a dogged, steady, and completely fearless fighter, particularly when he was crying. He did not attempt to hide his disposition. It was concealed by being the opposite of his appearance. He was unchanging once a course was set. He had a few facets and a very little versatility. His body was as insensitive to pain as was his mind to subtleties. (422)

Aron's despair stems largely when he comes to know that his father has been lied to him so many years by claiming that she was dead.

Love plays a prominent role in the novel. Aron falls in love with Abra which seems to be an idealized one. Abra is seen as a perfect idol in the eyes of Aron. Though Abra thinks that he doesn't love her for who she is, she has to be all good because in addition to being Aron's girlfriend, she got to be a stand-in for his mom. as Abra says, "I figure Aron needed a mother more than Cal did. And I think he always blamed his father" (494).

East of Eden displays a profound uneasiness with the deterministic potential of inheritance. In expressing a distrust of inheritance, the novel cites instances of both economic and biological inheritance. The novel consistently gives a note that money gives only a superficial value. It also puts forth the dangers of working and living only

for money. In *East of Eden*, Steinbeck asserts the importance of honesty, genuineness and curiosity towards work.

The money that Cyrus makes by capitalizing on his fictitious war record resurfaces throughout the narrative, functioning more as a curse than a blessing. When the money passes to Charles and Adam, Charles expresses a deep reluctance to accept it. He does eventually take it, but it seems clear that he never spends any of it which brings him extra worry than pleasure. Charles passes his portion of money to Adam and Cathy. However, Adam loses most of his money in lettuce business.

The Hamilton's are poor and they have their land as barren whereas the Trask's are rich and have a fertile land. It is consistently mentioned in the novel as Adam would have been utter lazy if he hadn't been rich. Since he is rich, he has been less criticized. There is a distinction made between the work for love and work for money. As Sam loves to invent, but he loses money on some greedy lawyers and his patents who embezzles his profit. Will Hamilton, is interested in business is also intelligent to be contemptuous of such ventures. According to him, the only thing worthy of pursuit is money.

The inheritance of the total family finally goes to Cal. While the novel doesn't indicate Cal's frame of mind towards inheritance after the deaths of Adam and Aron. Cal has already succeeded over the negative inheritance when he gets to burn the money in order to replace what Adam has inherited and lost on the lettuce. The succession over inheritance is more obvious in the novel's treatment of Cal's biological inheritance. The warnings against dualistic thinking, absolute reliance on inheritance and narrow vision that expects conformity contrasts with the Old Testament in which one cannot break the predetermining impositions of their fathers.

Each in their own way, Charles and Cal are an epitome of a spirit of capitalism, accumulating some remarkable wealth through a competitive impulse but either through their cleverness or hard work. Charles dedicates himself to the farm, by getting up early in the morning and working furiously throughout the day. Cal shows some impressive business shrewdness in his choice of his investments and associates.

Charles ironically comments that he had “the competitor’s will to win over others, which makes for success in the world” (20), which could just be applied to other characters like Cyrus, Cathy and Cal. Charles in his early behavior, had the fierce competitiveness towards Adam. When Adam wins Charles over peewee, Charles is driven to fury and beats him up to unconscious with the bat, portending the past envy-driven murder attempt. This sense of competitiveness manifest into violence in him during his young age as it remains with him throughout his life.

Cal focuses on money as he thinks which would win love, but it creates great segregation between him and Adam. As Cal invests money not only in his business but also on the hopes of being accepted by his father, he is been devastated by his father’s rejection of the gift. Similar contrasts can be made between the characters Will and Cathy- as these characters also serve as the allegorical representation of the capitalist spirit. Aron and Cal get to succeed financially in their life through a vicious sense of competition and a readiness to exploit each other but both of them are presented as characters being unhappy and inhuman in a corrupt way.

Steinbeck attributes many identity crisis throughout the novel. One of the characters with complex identity in the novel is, Lee. He speaks English fluently but who has his origin as Chinese and is born in California. He thinks that people may find it difficult to come in terms of Chinese accent with his American way of speaking to be

in accordance to expectations. The novel was written during the time when America happened to reconsider the thoughts of sexual and racial identity. Steinbeck cross examines gender and sex, and what consequences it has on an individual's identity. People gained attention on counter-cultural feminism during this period.

Catherine is not taken seriously by many men she gets to meet. She takes advantage and manipulates them without getting detected. Lee's mother dresses herself as a man in order to go with her husband to work on railroads in America. She works hard and as effectively as a man would and is discovered to be a woman when she gets to give birth and is killed. Dessie Hamilton's dress shop is also signified as a place where women could laugh riotously. It is remarked as a place where a woman is under no pressure as they are just treated as a human and not gender based.

Steinbeck introduces the change to the very backstory of the novel. Each character comes from different background as the novel has several plotlines. As a result, the book has several generations of period which includes three different wars across American history. Steinbeck doesn't just concede the change so much as he laments and comments on it. The most transpicuous incident is when Adam Trask decides to buy a Ford. He had been fine without one before, but after the death of Samuel, Adam gets to display a difference between that era and the year without Samuel by investing in the new form of technology.

In *East of Eden*, Steinbeck focusses on the human struggles that are faced by each individual. What did not change between the works of Steinbeck in 1930's and *East of Eden* is that the nature of human struggles. It wholly, cross examines the collective experience of humankind. Steinbeck's significance of compassion for humanity, a manifesto of belief, strength and empathy are given more importance when

compared to the notion of humankind. The novel totally exhibits the universal struggles, the concept of sentimentalism, triumphs and desires of a humankind. When compared to Steinbeck's other literary works, *East of Eden* showcases a contradictory philosophical explorations of human morals and emotionally appealing that contains a valuable lesson about each individual's duty.

Chapter three deals with the biblical allusions of the novel *East of Eden*. It contrasts the characters of the novel with the biblical characters named, Cain and Abel as explained by Steinbeck.

Chapter Three

Destiny Vs Free Will

Good versus evil is an endless struggle, conflict and war in human's life. Evil has plagued the lives of creatures and has existed throughout all of time. Good coexists with evil and there can be no thing such as 'good' unless there is evil and vice versa. In many shapes and forms of life, both good and evil are manifested. It is always within and around us. Good is something which is morally right. Someone who is good will always choose to be right nevertheless of whether or not anyone will know. People who live with morality will go out of their way and think about how they could help others and world around them.

In contrary, evil is considered to be morally an offensive behaviour or acts which deliberately cause harm to others. People only tend to think about themselves and use others to their own benefit. The main difference between good and evil deed is that one brings about pleasure while the other causes misery and disappointment. "And this I believe: that the free, exploring mind of the individual human is the most valuable thing in the world. And this I would fight for: the freedom of the mind to take any direction it wishes, undirected" (144).

In *East of Eden*, the characters dramatize the struggle for the choice between the good and evil as a whole and within the individuals of the Trask and Hamilton families. The characters of the novel, generation after generation wrestle with evil. The tale is written from the view of the Christian tradition which indicates that every human being since Adam and Eve and Cain and Abel has encountered the choice between good and evil. In *East of Eden*, the relationship between good and evil is found in many

different ways through the characters, as contrasted to the characters in the book of Genesis.

East of Eden is seen as a re-enactment of Cain and Abel story, as it has many similarities with the Trask and Hamilton families. The title *East of Eden* comes from the biblical tale when “Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land east of Eden” (Gen.4.17). The novel is really about the fact that Cain has been kicked out of Eden, and that he got to somehow figure out how to survive in the cruel, mean world. Adam and Eve, the original man and woman on earth commits the first sin on earth and are expelled from Eden Eve gives birth to Cain and Abel. The brothers are, therefore, born in east of Eden, in a land where Cain commits his first sin.

Each major characters from *East of Eden* represents a respective character from the story of Cain and Abel. Ranging from the period between the American Civil War and the World War I, the tale illustrates the life of two generations of brothers. The first generation consists of the good-natured Adam Trask and bad-tempered brother Charles. The second generation consists of Adam’s sons, the soft-mannered Aron and quick-tempered Caleb. This is because the good-mannered Trask brothers are favoured and the bad-tempered Trask brothers develops envious tendencies and a recurrent concept of sibling rivalry.

In the Garden of Eden, men became aware of the virtue and vice after eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Since then, humans had the choice to fall prey to sin or to rise about it and find God’s favour. Cain and Abel story is the oldest tale about the sibling rivalry. Cain was Adam and Eve’s first born, and gets the job of being a farmer. Meanwhile, his younger brother, Abel is a hunter, when both brought an offering to him, “Cain presented some of the land’s produce as an offering

to the Lord. And Abel also presented some of the firstborn flock and their fat portions. The Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious and he was downcast” (Gen.4.3-5). When Yahweh accepted Abel’s offerings, but rejected those of Cain, he was hurt and this aroused anger in him. In a jealous rage, Cain murders his brother, Abel.

The strife between siblings portrayed in *East of Eden*, is a natural hatred towards each other which is also due to the inheritance passed from parent to the child. Lee is Adam’s Chinese-American. Though born in United States and being pretty smart, he lives a life on the margins, because of being a Chinese and living in America, as it was meant for whites only. He educates and takes care of Caleb and Aron very well and also influences each member of the family in a positive way. He acts as a peacemaker and stabilizer of the family. He also seems to have an exceptional knowledge of the Bible. He knows so much that he even knows that it is incorrectly translated in all of the English language Bibles.

Lee calls the tale of Cain and Abel as “symbol story of the human soul” (302). Lee claims that, “This is not theology. I have bent towards Gods. But I have a new love for that glittering instrument, the human soul” (301). He reveals to the other men the outcome of the research he did on the meaning of the word *timshel*, the word that God utters to Cain when exiling him to the lands of east of Eden. According to one of the translations of the Bible, God orders Cain to triumph over sin, while according to another translation of the Bible, God promises Cain that he will defeat sin. He discusses this story

with Samuel and Adam that,

The American Standard Bible translation orders men to triumph over sin, and you call sin ignorance. The King James translation says this- it is when Jehovah has asked Cain why he is angry. Jehovah says, 'If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.' But the Hebrew word, the word 'timshel'- 'Thou Mayest'- that gives a choice. It might be the most important word in the world. That says the way is open.(305)

However, Lee's research has revealed that timshel means "thou mayest", which implies that God claims Cain that he has a choice whether or not to overcome sin. Lee illustrates this idea of free choice over evil a token of optimism which is prominent to the human condition. Apparently, Lee didn't mean 'thou must' but "thou mayest" which implies that he is not fated to be an Abel or Cain and that it is his decision to choose his own path- to sainthood or doom.

The characters whose name starts with the letter C like Charles, Cathy Ames, Cal and Cyrus Trask somewhat incorporates Cain's evil characteristics while on the other hand, the characters names which begins with the letter A resembles the good characteristics of Abel. Samuel Hamilton is a powerful force of good and familial strength in the novel. Cyrus Trask, being the one-legged is the corrupted father in the novel, who commits the "original sin" which instigates the action of the novel.

The possession of the Trask family depicts the idea of the primal sin. According to the Christian tradition, since the decadence of the scriptural Adam and Eve, the sin has been inherited to human generations. In the novel, Cyrus Trask leaves his property because he earned it through dishonesty, to Charles and Adam. This symbolic burden

of sin leads Adam to death. Cal reveals the truth to Aron about his mother. Cal, also decides to leave his own family's heritage of sin and evil by the freedom to choose its own moral path.

Steinbeck constitutes another conflict between the good and evil which is the valley. The valley is encompassed with the sunlit and delightful Gabilan Mountains to the east which is filled with beauty as it indicates birth, maternal and love. The bleak Santa Lucias Mountains to the west suggests the "unfriendly and dangerous" sentiments, death and night. "The Santa Lucias stood up against the sky to the west and kept the valley from the open sea, and they were dark and brooding- unfriendly and dangerous" (7). The most important is the biblical setting of Salinas Valley in 'East of Eden'.

Once Charles Trask explodes while trying to move a large rock from a yard. During this process he gets to cut his forehead with the wrecking bar with which he used to pry the stone. The wound heals but however it leaves a weird scar in his forehead which looks more darker than his skin. This also symbolizes the Cain sign from the tale of Cain and Abel as God puts a mark on his forehead after He discovers Cain's murder of his brother Abel. In this respect the sign, is not a form of curse or punishment but a sign of protection. Charles expresses the scar in his letter to his brother Adam as he says, "I don't know why it bothers me. I got plenty other scars. It just seems like I was marked" (54).

There is an initial contrast between these two heads of the families which also persists in the forthcoming generations. Cyrus Trask loves his son Adam more than his other son, Charles. This becomes the root cause for Charles to act immorally against his own brother. Cyrus favours Adam's gift of a puppy over Charles' gift of a luxurious

knife even though which Adam brought was a stary puppy. Cyrus always favours Adam in general. He makes Adam to get trained as a military officer but not Charles. He even force Adam in order to get enlisted in the military army just like once he had the same profession. But Charles was expected to stay at home and make a business out of his family farm. Even Cyrus gets to admit the fact that he loves Adam more than Charles. In a frustration towards his brother and consumed by jealousy, Charles beats Adam ruthlessly.

Hamiltons seem to be loving while Trasks are fraught with discord and hostility. But Charles, unlike Cain, doesn't kill his brother. For the moment, evil and good are in a conflict as Adam and Charles are locked up in a struggle in which evilness has the upper hand. Having the choice- between the good and evil, virtue and sin, anger and acceptance is the what makes a mankind great. Steinbeck suggests that to be a fully human, a person should give a tough fight against the evilness that one faces in life. He also claims that in order to live a life wholly, a person should undergo all the phases in life.

The second generation is Adam's sons Caleb and Aron. Caleb seems to have a dark and jealousy character, sometimes even has the evil personality. He is portrayed in the novel as for, "one moment he was dedicated and pure and devoted; the next he wallowed in filth; and the next he groveled in shame and emerged rededicated" (447). His brother Aron is the favoured son of Adam who has the good personality but ends up dead because of Cal's action. They really have some contrasting characters when compared to each other. Aron was such a delicate person who was easily to be loved by everyone around him. Like Cyrus, Adam too clearly favoured one of his sons named Aron.

Cal finds out the truth about his mother Cathy Ames, that she is alive. Adam being the father, lie about his wife who have abandoned her family and works as a prostitute. But Cal keeps the secret within himself rather telling it to his brother, since Aron is a soft-hearted person, he wouldn't be able to bear the of the truth about his mother. Once when Adam failed in his lettuce business, Cal gives him money as a gift, but Adam refuse to accept it. Cal in his anger and disappointed on the response of his gift, he couldn't bear with his jealousy of Aron. Cal shows Aron that his mother works as a whore.

Aron being naïve about this, he chooses to go to war. He dies in the war and his father suffers from stroke on hearing about the death of his son. Since Cal chose evil against good he suffers from guilt and is disappointed for the rest of his life. He even regrets on his actions saying, "Dear Lord, let me be like Aron. Don't make me mean. I don't want to be" (380).

Cal have inherited his character and behaviourism from his mother Cathy Ames, likewise Aron has inherited his character from his father Adam who is a mild-tempered person. Cal is probably the toughest fighter of all characters. Cyrus Trask, who is the elder of the family decides to choose evil when he steals money as a U.S arm administrator. Also, Charles surrenders jealousy of his brother Adam. Even though the good and evil are mixed up together in most human beings, more important is that even those characters in the novel which are firmly in one or other of the opposing sides are drawn strictly together. "Each of them, good and evil, has a kind of magnetic pull for the other" (7). So it is because of the strange processes of life, which locates Charles, who is a representative of evil in close proximity with Adam. Through their boisterous interactions, Adam is forced to look for his own destiny far from his brother.

Steinbeck claims that the struggle between the good and evil is a perpetual battle which is the true human story of all mankind of their thoughts and actions in this tale. “We all have only one story. All novels, all poetry, are built on the never-ending contest in ourselves of good and evil” (413). The characters’ struggle in *East of Eden*, is very obvious as they grow and get to learn how the people in the world grow and learn to be harsh and unjust to each other.

Steinbeck elucidates in *East of Eden* the belief that man, as a whole is part of the continuous stream of good and evil. The narrator has written that when a person turns and looks back at his life “a man will have left the hard, clean questions: “Was it good or was it evil? Have I done well- or ill” (413). The novel portrays the inseparability of good and evil and the importance of the man’s free will in his life and also to overcome the choice of evilness. *East of Eden* depicts both optimistic and pessimistic characteristics of life. This optimism in the novel, even the author’s gloomiest account of Great Depression with a powerful sense of hope.

There is much greater power in goodness and every human being has the will power to resist it. According to Steinbeck, such power of choice is the choice of one’s own way. Thus ‘timshel’ becomes a Steinbeck’s cryptograph for individual responsibility and moral decision. Human beings have a choice where there is choice there is freedom. Lee was the first to understand this concept and takes this as an apt source of inspiration for Adam and Charles: “but think of the glory of the choice! That makes a man a man” (304). The technical term of the Hebrew word is “timsholbo”, which means “you will rule in him” (377). But the translation of the word ‘thou mayest’ was not the most accurate one.

The contrast between the novel and the biblical story is made clear by Steinbeck's choice of the first names of the both generations of Trask family Charles and Adam and Aron and Cal. In Genesis Abel is the keeper of sheep and Cain cultivates the land. In the novel Charles is a farmer, and Caleb invests in the bean harvest. In Genesis, Adam refuses Cain's gift from harvest instead he gets to choose Abel's gift of a lamb. In *East of Eden*, Cyrus refuses Charles gift of a costly knife and prefers Adam's gift of a strayed pup.

The same situation is repeated on the whole in the next generation with Aron and Cal. In Genesis, Abel is murdered by his brother Cain when God rejected his offering and in the novel Charles attacks his brother, Adam repeatedly with a bat. This indicates that Charles also have mortally wounded his brother. In the next generation, there seems to be a similar pattern where Caleb's jealous indirectly murder his brother, Aron.

Lee believes that the story of Cain and Abel is important as it is about the rejection that he thinks is the root cause for all the evil that grows. As Abra says to Adam Trask that, "it's awful not to be loved. It's the worst thing in the world. It makes you mean and violent and cruel. And that's the way Cal has always felt, Mr. Trask. All his life. Maybe you didn't mean it that way; but it's true. You never gave him your love. You never asked for his. You never asked him for one thing" (272). With such a rejection in their life resulted in wrath, with wrath comes the crime as the form of revenge. Also, guilty conscience is resulted from the rejection of their fatherly love. Lee considers this to be the story of mankind, an unavoidable cycle. Steinbeck declares to the reader it is up to each individual which path one takes, because 'timshel' is always open to everyone. It is their choice to choose between good and evil.

‘Timshel’ indicates that despite individuals can have evil tendencies they do not need to follow them. The choice lies within us. It might be the most important word in everyone’s life. The choice of evil is not inevitable until the choice is made. The characters in the novel face several possibilities to choose ‘timshel’ and overcome evil. Finally on his death bed, Adam whispers ‘timshel’ to his son Cal, enabling him to choose his own way and freeing him from his fear of predisposed to evil. Love and goodness are inseparably intertwined and the endure. As Cal confesses to his father that, “These were my stupidities: I thought the good are destroyed while the evil survives and prosper” (595).

Steinbeck didn’t establish Charles and Caleb totally as a bad character. In fact, Cal finally admits to Adam Trask that, “I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.” (301). At some plots of the novel they are depicted as very sympathetic for the people to read, as they show their love for family, not only for their father but also for their brother, whom they eventually hurt. Both of them gets to regret at the end of the plot as Caleb regrets his actions very much, he goes to his father Adam and he asks for forgiveness. But it is never done by Charles, although he has many regrets over his own actions towards Adam and his father Cyrus, which is very obvious.

Aron and Liza Hamilton are devout Christians in the novel. In certain ways, Caleb’s return to his father has biblical roots. Like in the parable of the prodigal son in New Testament, Caleb receives forgiveness from his father for his repeated betrayals. The biblical brotherhood struggle, which was ended when Cain murdered his brother, Abel carry on with the Trasks and Hamiltons in *East of Eden*. This foreshadowed the conflicts between the Trask and Hamilton brothers. Adam and Aron seem to resemble

Abel whereas Charles and Caleb are similar to Cain. However, the novel ends in a positive way, because Cal accepts the obligation of free will and of free choice between good and evil. The monotonous act of choosing the evil path has been portrayed for two generations.

Aron's death made Cal realize the important lesson which is highlighted in the book- one's own nature is not determined by one's personality and lineage, it is determined by one's own choices. Such is the choice which Cal takes in his life. He finally chooses to act better and try to be better but all of that has no meaning until he stops hating himself. In the end, Cal makes the choice to find something good about him and magnifies it.

The next chapter deals with the female contradictory characters namely Liza Hamilton, Abra Bacon and Cathy Ames. It also highlights the femme fatalism and the immoral traits of Cathy Ames.

Chapter Four

Feminine Beauty

Feminism is much of a modern notion within legal circles, which aims to eradicate any prejudice against women's rights. Women have a crucial part in the world of history. Their ideas, beliefs, thoughts, struggles and lives, in general, have shaped the contemporary world. Literature had witnessed the roles of women evolving through ages. Literacy was strictly limited, and the majority of those who could write were male. However, women contributed to oral folklore in folk songs, poetry, stories and literature in general. In earlier times, female characters are portrayed with gender stereotypes and gender inequality. Male writers have encoded female characters as agents of moral corruption and contamination in their society.

Victorian era was dominated by writers who treated women as angelic figures-mentally innocent and physically weaker and are nothing less than the household commodities. The critic Wanda Fraiken Neff claims that, "Not only were working women regarded as problem. All women were a problem" (11). Many authors such as Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna and Elizabeth Gaskell at the time tried to address the issues in order to get some actions to be taken by Parliament. Patriarchal perception of female characters has produced hardship, not only as it is practiced from the traditional perspective in real life, more specifically, by male writers themselves in their writings.

An act of violence towards women by men is due to the urge of domination and control. As for radical feminists who believed that violence against women was the cause for domination, they normally studied this cause from the aspect of physical and sexual assault. During the modern period, the widening of gender equality paved way for the rise in portrayals of diverse and different sought of female characters. In the

period of twentieth century, tales were written on female characters which included murderesses and proxy witches. After the World War I, novels were mostly of anti-male both in the sense that they attacked male technology, law and politics and that they belittled masculine morality.

The tension between tradition and modernity, and religion and secularism was particularly marked in the fields of women's rights. The distinction between biological sex and gender as a social construct had a huge impact on the feminism in 1940's which had a huge impact on the feminist thinking. Arguing that the women's biology should not determine her life, feminist writers such as Betty Frieden and Germaine Greer described and challenged the image of idealized femininity imposed on women by upbringing, education and psychology urging them to challenge the stereotype.

The American feminist Anne Koedt argued in her essay, *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm* (1968), claims that it was men who shaped attitudes towards and opinion about female sexuality because men defined women's sexual activity only in terms of their own desires. Historians such as British born- Sheila Rowbotham highlighted the exclusion of women from history. The article, *Femininity Begins at Home*, reinforced the image of women as sexual objects and homemakers. Freud's thoughts created an impact on feminine mystique as he attributed all the problems faced by women to sexual repression.

While art and stage made way for modern Film Noir, many works were written on the cultural of femme fatale. The characterization of femme fatale was a response to "the massive entry of women into the work force which was encouraged during the war and then was suddenly discouraged at war's end" (20). During the modern period, it was also obvious that women had fewer behavioral and income options than her gender

counterpart, which explains the need for scheming tactics by the seductress in the first place. During the stage of development of femme fatale characters, it was portrayed as women were largely concerned with finances, both as means of liberation and affirmation.

Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, depicts the changes in time. The main social and cultural values of time in the realistic portrait of American society can be perceived in the novel. The three women with contradictory characteristics are depicted in the novel. They are Cathy Ames (Kate), Liza Hamilton and Abra Bacon. According to their traits, they are considered as three different strata of women in society. Liza Hamilton is Samuel Hamilton's wife and the mother of nine children. She is a strict, moral woman who just loves her husband and her family very much. Steinbeck marvels on her ability to grow this many children, make their clothes, feeds them and she also instills them with good and iron morals in life all at the same time.

Liza Hamilton is represented as a traditional woman who represents a domestic life with strict religious beliefs. "It was well known that Liza Hamilton and the Lord God held similar convictions on nearly every subject" (165). She devotes herself wholly to the family as a good wife and mother throughout her life. But Samuel shows disrespect for his wife, Liza. When he comes home late from dinner at Adam Trask's ranch Liza is clearly upset the following morning. She moves like a "caged leopard" (177), while making breakfast. Despite knowing that he has done wrong Sam walks into the kitchen only announcing, "I'm late mother" (178). He doesn't apologize to his wife for his mistake. Furthermore, his actions show a refusal to accept any such responsibilities and a blatant belittling of his wife's feelings.

A man who truly respected how his wife felt would probably apologize or at least would give her space, knowing that most likely she would not be in a mood to serve him breakfast. Then surprisingly, she not only complies but does so automatically. While her obedience to Samuel is already a submissive action. She is made even more weak by the fact, that she does so without thinking. Such characteristics of Liza depicts her as a flat, weak woman who is helpless against her husband and lacks the ability of cognition. The inequality between Samuel Hamilton and Liza marriage is very obvious. But she is the yin to Samuel's yang. He only depends on her when he needs a healthy dose of realism.

Liza's dedication to her family and her desire to make all her children feel loved and nurtured emphasizes her motherly persona. At first, Samuel is portrayed as though he does value the females and their opinions or more specifically Liza and hers, when he states that "She has a say" (167). Yet as the conversation continues, he immediately contradicts himself. When Samuel says that Adam has a rarity of opinions as a gift, he means that he is lucky to have a wife who lacks opinions, who does not contradict her husband, who remains submissive and subordinate.

Liza has a strong repugnance towards alcohol. She "hated liquors with an iron zeal" and regarded drinking any alcohol "as a crime against a properly outraged deity" (42). Her disgust is so strong that is widely known throughout the whole community in Salinas Valley. Samuel also disrespects his wife again and often drinks throughout the novel. Her identity is lost and Steinbeck depicts a pivotal figure by developing such a weak and subordinate character.

Abra Bacon is the love interest of Aron Trask from a very young age. They court for a long time, but Abra begins to recognize that Aron loves an idealized version

of her, and doesn't love her for what she really is. She develops a close relationship with Lee, whom she adopts as a father figure, for she has always felt rejected by her own father. Eventually she falls for Caleb, because he is both bad and good, and can understand that she is both bad and good too. Steinbeck identifies Abra Bacon's shift into maturity in *East of Eden* providing her as a strong female character. Therefore, he has rejected societal norms of the time.

Throughout the novel, Abra dedicates her life to being Aron's wife, which depicts that she is traditional and a submissive woman. However once Abra flees for the Army, Abra's dedication to Aron has also fled as she claims, "I think I love you Cal, I'm not good, because you're not good" (596). Then Abra realizes that she has fallen in love with Cal. This meaningful shift demonstrates a maturity in her character. Once she figures out that her father has embezzled money from his company, she discovers that she had bad within herself too. She is portrayed neither so-traditional nor so in contrast to the norms of the society.

The traditional woman reflected in most mid-century texts would never claim such a maturity comparable to Abra's. She is the sole reason for Cal's redemption at the end of the novel, which portrays such inner-strength. Even when Cal is about to run away and wants to take Abra with him, she convinces him not to leave his father as she says, "We're going back to your father's house" (597). Her love for Cal develops immense maturity within her. Abra has saved Cal as she dismisses all the conventional gender roles submissive women play in 1950's.

Cathy Ames, the wife of Adam Trask is portrayed with the characteristics of a monster. She is depicted as the embodiment of evil. Her nature contributes to the role as a femme fatale, a manipulative and a seductive woman who lures men astray through

stereotypical feminine qualities. She discovers the key to control anyone through her impulses. As she says that, “They thought they were so smart. They looked at me and thought the knew about me. And I fooled them. I fooled every one of them. And when the thought they could tell me what to do- oh! that’s when I fooled them best” (457). Even at the age of ten she takes advantage of two boys through their sexuality and then frames them to get what she wants. This behavior continues for the rest of the life, as she spends most of it in whorehouses manipulating the owners until it is clear that she is the one who truly runs the establishment.

Steinbeck uses Cathy as a vessel to vent his animosity towards neurotic, dominating, manipulative and conscienceless woman. While a female antagonist is not inherently problematic, Cathy’s misogynistic representation of the female antagonist is detrimental to the feminist agenda. The women in *East of Eden* were molded in the images of women in Steinbeck’s personal life. Cathy’s lack of morality and empathy represents women as immoral. Cathy’s continual choices of evil highlights her irredeemable character. Despite the theme that accountability of action is sole responsibility of the actor, Cathy’s actions are often described as thoughtless due to Steinbeck’s continual mentions of how she was born a monster. Cathy contradicts ‘timshel’ because she is unable to choose good. Even after her attempts to amend her wrongdoings in the past by signing her possessions to Aron, Cathy finds redemption overwhelming, choosing instead to end her life.

The role Cathy plays further diverges from tradition when taking into account how other female archetypes fit into societal expectations. She even hates her concerned parents. One da she steals all the money from her own house, pours the chicken blood on the floor, sets the house on fire and locks the house on the outside on her way out. The house burns down, killing her parents who are trapped inside. When people find

the chicken's blood they believe that Cathy has been murdered. Even after getting married, she abandons her husband and her children. After years later, when Cal meets her mother, Cathy, he asks her that, "Did you ever have the feeling like you were missing something? Like as if the others knew something you didn't- like a secret they wouldn't tell you? (461).

Even though Cathy being the main cause of tortures of Trasks, she also has certain brave and bold traits within her. She is portrayed as a beautiful carefree woman who just sees herself and her desires even when she becomes a mother. Her character has some complexities that lay in her nonconformity and moving unlike the natural path of femininity. As a wife she doesn't care about her husband's emotions and as a mother she doesn't have any feeling to her newborn children. The main focus is on her beauty and actually on her body. Her body is depicted as her lethal weapon that she uses it in a completely unconventional way, contrary to traditional expectations of female body.

Steinbeck gives the description of Kate's beauty as he focusses on the body, beauty and the charms of women as he describes that,

Cathy had from the first a face of innocence. Her body was a boy's body, narrow-hipped, straight-legged, but her ankles were thin and straight without being slender. Her feet were small and round and stubby, with fat insteps almost like little hoofs. She was a pretty child and she became a pretty woman. Even as a child she had some quality that made people look at her, then look away, then look back at her, troubled at something foreign. She moved quietly and talked little, but she could enter no room without causing everyone to turn toward her. (58)

Steinbeck stresses by giving a long description of Cathy's physical appearance which indicates the importance of her feminine beauty in understanding her identity and personality as an evil character. It is also that Kate with her innocent childish beauty often deceive gullible men like Adam. Like Mr. Edwards, Faye finds herself seduced by Kate's sweet and unassuming nature, "Faye, the essence of motherhood, began to think of Kate as her daughter. She felt this in her breast and in her emotions. She did not want her daughter to be a whore. It was a perfectly reasonable sequence" (223).

Cathy has everyone's trust in a way this is powerful, as she can get whatever she wants. By mixing truth amongst her lies, she makes everything sound believable and therefore no one doubts anything she says. What Cathy wants out of Faye is her fortune, as Faye has accumulated much wealth from being the owner of a successful brothel for years. When Faye declares Cathy as her daughter and writes her into her will, Cathy begins scheming and planning Faye's death. She poisons her slowly over time and simply blames it on her illness. She never raises suspicion because she is so careful in planning. "At first, they had to tie Kate down to keep her from hurting herself. And she forgot completely about the will. It was Trixie who finally remembered" (251).

Cathy is a sociopath with no real conscience as she is able to live her adult life in control of a situation through her scheming manipulation of sexuality. The very important fact in this regard is that all of the men around Kate include Adam who claims deeply loves Kate just want gain access to her beauty and it seems don't care about her personality as a human, when the writer wants to portray the repulsive image of Kate at the time of her encounter with Adam in the brothel he writes: "Adam looked down at her hand and saw it wrinkled as a pale monkey's paw. He moved away in revulsion" (247), as it is clear just with seeing her ugly appearance Adam disillusions from the

ideal picture that he made in his mind of Kate and not her terrible deeds like shooting Adam or abandoning newborn children.

Cathy's rebirth as Kate rejects the religious influences that other character's face: she does not experience redemption as a sinner and prostitute; instead, Cathy is condemned further. Cathy is a sociopath with no real conscience as she is able to live her adult life in control of a situation through her scheming manipulation of sexuality. Cathy's rejection of gender roles is exemplified by her belief that she "forever wanders in a world which makes no sense by her own standards" (263).

Cathy's personality at the end of the novel is left unanswered whether what was the main source of her anger towards men and what is the reason behind all her mischievous deeds in life, still remains a question. Kate kills her parents, shoots Adam, deserts her sons, works as a prostitute, poisons Faye and blackmails her clients, behind all of these criminal actions must be a very strong motive, a very significant driving force but Kate neither explicitly nor implicitly doesn't point out her main motivation.

The other characters in *East of Eden*, totally contrasts with the Cathy's character. Kate in several aspects is in sharp contrast with Liza Hamilton who is a traditional woman and in complete accordance to the idealistic picture of perfect woman. Unlike other sexually passive characters such as Alice Trask and Liza Hamilton, Cathy is sexually confident and uses sex for pleasure and manipulation instead of procreation. Liza Hamilton unlike Kate is completely dependent woman despite her active presence in her family The contrast created from the schism between Cathy and the other female characters punishes atypical women. In particular, this can be seen in Cathy's mental state. Even from her childhood, Cathy desired the control she derived from stability and manipulation.

The greatest punishment exerted onto Cathy is seen in her last days when she is driven to suicide. Steinbeck narrates her death, describing how “she grew smaller and smaller and then disappeared” (338). Cathy’s imagined disappearance connects to the extent that her true identity is repressed. Cathy’s self-imposed destruction was her ultimate understanding of the world around her. Finally, she understood that to be different was to be punished. For all her badness we shouldn't be too hard on Cathy. She may lack any semblance of a conscience whatsoever, but evil itself is not exclusive to her. “Perhaps we can't understand Cathy, but on the other hand we are capable of many things in all directions, of great virtues and great sins. And who in his mind has not probed the black water?” (144).

Chapter Five

Summation

American literature is considered as the most popular literature across the world. It reflects the practical condition of people and society. American authors have great respect for the value and importance of the individual. Americans wrote their own narrative history and crafted their own glorious heroic past purposely inducing the sense of American nationhood to rise above the clutches of Britain. The Modern period was a time of flourishing art and extravagant living that acted as a prequel of Great Depression. Steinbeck's creativity and composition were highly influenced during that period.

The novel *East of Eden*, published in 1952, is a sprawling multilevel story of three generations of the Trask family, intertwined with the Hamilton family. The central narrative is the fictional biography of Adam Trask from his birth during the Civil War until his death in the last year of World War I. His youth is dominated by his militant and satanic father, Cyrus Trask, and his dark and sardonic half-brother Charles. Adam Trask comes west to the Salinas Valley to begin a new life in the company of his wife whom he falsely perceives a symbol of purity and goodness. There she gives birth to twin boys, and afterwards deserts her husband after shooting him when he tries to stop her from leaving. She soon becomes a whore popularly called "Kate" in Salinas.

In addition to the discussions, there are also the narrations of some events like Adam's confrontation with Kate, the first meeting of Caleb and Aaron with Abra, and the death of Samuel Hamilton. Steinbeck has referred to numerous philosophical insights including those of interrelations between power and weakness, good and evil as well as those between love and hatred. He considers every characters' evilness

individually and as a problem of human will on the whole. The major theme revolving around the whole novel is the interminable contest between the good and evil among the society of Salinas Valley and each character of Trask and Hamilton families. It also portrays each character's divergent personalities. Steinbeck constitutes the ideas of love, parental approval, and the meaning behind life fulfilment into one wonderfully written novel.

Lee takes care of Adam's newborn sons and also improves Adam's morals while getting fond of the two little boys. Although Lee wasn't the biological father of Aron and Cal, Adam's sons, he takes much responsibility over them and he remains to be the reason of how they grow up to be. One of the fundamental ideas of the novel is the freewill of a person to overcome the evil. Aron's character portrays that he is only able to face the good in life. Cal struggles in the dilemma between these two extremes. Cal is able to go forward into a new life along Abra, confident enough that he could control his own destiny. Cathy Ames' character shows that there is only evil in this world, who portrays a manipulative and a sadistic trait.

The novel focusses on the verge of self-determination, which is clearly portrayed by the two characters namely, Cal Trask and his mother, Cathy Ames. Anger and rejection are the two main components of themes in the novel. The maternal absence and paternal rejection lead Charles in his wrong path. Cyrus educating and preparing Adam for the Army and spends countless hours of time with him, he excludes Charles from these conversations and forbids him to enlist. Adam does realize his partialness only in his deathbed as he acknowledges his mistake and gives his final blessing to Cal. Cal's substantial and archetypal rejection is at the hands of his father, Adam.

Another subject dealt in the novel is love. Sam Hamilton loves a girl from Ireland but loses her love somehow, which is not detailed in the book. Adam's love for Catherine is totally misguided but still is consuming. *East of Eden* displays a profound uneasiness with the deterministic potential of inheritance. Charles and Cal are an epitome of a spirit of capitalism, accumulating some remarkable wealth through a competitive impulse but either through their cleverness or hard work. Steinbeck attributes many identity crisis throughout the novel. The novel was written during the time when America happened to reconsider the thoughts of sexual and racial identity. Steinbeck cross examines gender and sex, and what consequences it has on an individual's identity.

Each character comes from different background as the novel has several plotlines. The most conspicuous incident is when Adam Trask decides to buy a Ford. He had been fine without one before, but after the death of Samuel, Adam gets to display a difference between that era and the year without Samuel by investing in the new form of technology. In *East of Eden*, Steinbeck focusses on the human struggles that are faced by each individual. It wholly, cross examines the collective experience of humankind. Steinbeck's significance of compassion for humanity, a manifesto of belief, strength and empathy are given more importance when compared to the notion of humankind.

The characters dramatize the struggle for the choice between the good and evil as a whole and within the individuals of the Trask and Hamilton families. The characters of the novel, generation after generation wrestle with evil. *East of Eden* is seen as a re-enactment of Cain and Abel story, as it has many similarities with the Trask and Hamilton families. The title *East of Eden* comes from the biblical tale when "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of

Eden” (Gen. 4.17). Charles Trask explodes while trying to move a large rock from a yard. During this process he gets to cut his forehead with the wrecking bar. This also symbolizes the Cain sign from the tale of Cain and Abel as God puts a mark on his forehead after He discovers Cain’s murder of his brother Abel.

Cal have inherited his character and behaviourism from his mother Cathy Ames, likewise Aron has inherited his character from his father Adam who is a mild-tempered person. Steinbeck claims that the struggle between the good and evil is a perpetual battle which is the true human story of all mankind of their thoughts and actions in this tale. There is much greater power in goodness and every human being has the will power to resist it. According to Steinbeck, such power of choice is the choice of one’s own way. Thus ‘timshel’ becomes a Steinbeck’s cryptograph for individual responsibility and moral decision. Human beings have a choice where there is choice there is freedom.

Finally on his death bed, Adam whispers ‘timshel’ to his son Cal, enabling him to choose his own way and freeing him from his fear of predisposed to evil. The life of two families the Trasks and the Hamiltons with regard to changes in time is depicted. The main social and cultural values of time in the realistic portrait of American society can be perceived in the novel. There are three women with contradictory characteristics are depicted in the novel. They are Cathy Ames (Kate), Liza Hamilton and Abra Bacon. Liza Hamilton is Samuel Hamilton’s wife and the mother of nine children. Steinbeck marvels on her ability to grow this many children, make their clothes, feeds them and she also instills them with good and iron morals in life all at the same time.

Such characteristics of Liza depicts her as a flat, weak woman who is helpless against her husband and lacks the ability of cognition. The inequality between Samuel

Hamilton and Liza marriage is very obvious. Abra Bacon is the love interest of Aron Trask from a very young age. Steinbeck identifies Abra Bacon's shift into maturity in *East of Eden* providing her as a strong female character. Cathy Ames, the wife of Adam Trask is portrayed with the characteristics of a monster. She is depicted as the embodiment of evil. Her nature contributes to the role as a femme fatale, a manipulative and a seductive woman who lures men astray through stereotypical feminine qualities.

Even at the age of ten she takes advantage of two boys through their sexuality and then frames them to get what she wants. This behaviour continues for the rest of the life, as she spends most of her life. Cathy's rejection of gender roles is exemplified by her belief. The other characters in *East of Eden*, totally contrasts with the Cathy's character indeed. Kate in several aspects is in sharp contrast with Liza Hamilton who is a traditional woman and in complete accordance to the idealistic picture of perfect woman. Cathy's personality at the end of the novel is left unanswered whether what was the main source of her anger towards men and what is the reason behind all her mischievous deeds in life, still remains a question.

Kate kills her parents, shoots Adam, deserts her sons, works as a prostitute, poisons Faye and blackmails her clients, behind all of these criminal actions must be a very strong motive, a very significant driving force but Kate neither explicitly nor implicitly doesn't point out her main motivation. Cathy's imagined disappearance connects to the extent that her true identity is repressed. Cathy's self-imposed destruction was her ultimate understanding of the world around her. The understood that to be different was to be punished. For all her badness we shouldn't be too hard on Cathy. She may lack any semblance of a conscience whatsoever, but evil itself is not exclusive to her.

The novel, *East of Eden*, portrays that it is wholly the man's will to choose good or evil. The novel is mostly about the relationship between fathers and sons, between brothers and to some lesser degree also between husband and wives. The strife between the siblings is mostly of enmity and the natural hatred towards each other is also depicted in the novel. Some more researches can be done on gender roles and feminism in, *East of Eden*. Even though the novel depicts particularly evilness, there are also many righteousness, virtues and morality which could be dealt with the characters of the novel.

Works Cited

- Boozer, Jack. "The Lethal Femme Fatale in the Noir Tradition." *Journal of Film and Video*. Vol. 51, no 3-4. Los Angeles: University of Illinois Press, 1999, www.jstor.org/stable/20688218.
- Bryan, Aubrey. Critical Essay on *East of Eden* in *Novels for Students*. The Viking Press, 1969. www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/east-eden.
- Byron, John. *Cain and Abel in Text and Tradition: Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the First Sibling Rivalry*. USA: Brill, 2011, pp. 63-67.
- Colaner, Coleen, et al. *Feminism begins at Home*. Springer Science Business Media, 2015. doi:10.1080/01463373.2014.965839.
- Elangbam, Hemanta Singh, *John Steinbeck's Novels: A Critical Understanding*. Adhyayan Publishers & Distributors, 2009.
- Freidan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1983.
- Hayeshi, Tetsumaro. *John Steinbeck: A Dictionary of his Fictional Characters*. New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1976. www.worldcat.org/title/john-steinbeck-a-dictionary-of-his-fictional-characters/oclc/2738226.
- Mangan, Lucy. *The Feminism Book*. USA: DK Publishing, 2019.
- Nawale, Arvind. *Feminine Fragrance: Reflections on Women's Writing in English*. Author Press Global Network, 2012.
- Neff, Wanda Fraiken. *Victorian Working Women: An Historical and Literary Study of*

Women in British Industries. AMS Press: New York, 1966, pp. 112-14.

Steinbeck, John. *East of Eden*. London: Penguin Books, 1980.

Upot, Sherine and Syed Mashkoor, editors. *John Steinbeck: A Centennial Tribute*.

Surabhi Publications, 2004.

The Metaphysical Isolation of Disabled Individuals: A Study of Carson

McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*

A Project 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

by

JEFINA. R

(Reg. No. 20APEN11)



PG and Research Department of English

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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

Thoothukudi

May 2022

Contents

Certificate

Declaration

Acknowledgement

Preface

Chapter	Title	Page
One	Introduction	1
Two	Racism as a Social Pathology	14
Three	Loneliness as a Unifying Factor	30
Four	Isolation as a Defence Mechanism	43
Five	Summation	58
	Works cited	

Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **The Metaphysical Isolation of Disabled Individuals: A Study of Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*** 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 is a work done by Jefina. R, during the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

B. Serena Margaret
Dr. B. Serena Margaret

Associate Professor of English

Guide

A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the English Department

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

S. Vennila
Examiner 27/05/2022

Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Assistant Prof of English
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 627 007

Lucia Rose
Dr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi-628 001.

Declaration

We hereby declare that the project entitled **The Metaphysical Isolation of Disabled Individuals: A Study of Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter***, submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the Degree of Master of Arts in English, is my original work and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar.

Thoothukudi

May 2022

R. Jefina

JEFINA. R

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge and thank all who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind and the strength in order to complete the project.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging us to take up a research-oriented study.

I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. The research-oriented ambience inspired me to pursue the intellectual exercise of writing the project.

I thank, Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, Dr. B. Serena Margaret, Associate professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank all the faculty in our department who supported and encouraged me to complete my project.

I thank Dr. Vinitha, Librarian, St. Mary's College who extended help in the use of the library for the reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, support and to my friends for the moral encouragement towards the completion of my project.

Preface

The project entitled **The Metaphysical Isolation of Disabled Individuals: A Study of Carson McCullers' *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*** explores the grief of the disabled people who bear the brunt of racism, their feeling of loneliness, their friendship with the people who share a similar plight and their isolation from the society which turns a blind eye to them.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the origin of American literature, the biography of Carson McCullers and the epigrammatic abstract of the novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*.

The second chapter **Racism as a Social Pathology** discusses the themes of the novel such as Racism, Injustice, Individual versus Society, Failure of Love, Failure of Communication, and Despair highlighting the incidents which bring out the realisation in every individual of the fact that the heart is a lonely hunter.

The third chapter **Loneliness as a Unifying Factor** elaborates on how man suffers from loneliness arising out of his differences of being from the society which does not include him as its part, how he gets physically and mentally affected, how he identifies himself with the persons who have similar difficulties and how disability leads to the loss of lives.

The fourth chapter **Isolation as a Defence Mechanism** explores how the socially isolated man tries hard to overcome the causes of his loneliness from the society.

The final chapter, **Summation** consolidates the ideas discussed in the preceding chapters thereby validates the study.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is a word often so loosely applied that it may be well at the outset to define what we mean by it. The origin of literature, which is extracted from Latin literature, is “letter” and therefore seems to refer fundamentally to the written or printed word. It is useful to consider literature broadly as verbal art, leaving upon the question of whether the words are written or spoken. To entitle any, it may be a thing to be classed as literature, it must be so written that apart from the meaning expressed, its mere elegance shall be such as to give pleasure. Neither wealth of thought gives a work a right to be called literature unless the information and the thought be attractively expressed. The true literary man is an artist, using his words and phrases with the same pleasure and care as a painter uses his colours; and whoever aspires to win literary fame must pay the closest attention not only to what it says.

There is first the literature of knowledge, and secondly the literature of power. The function of the first is to teach; the function of the second is to move. The first speaks to the mere discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always through affection of pleasure or sympathy. Literature may be categorized based on a variety of systems, including language, national origin, historical period, genre, and subject matter. Literature is a structure of human utterance in words. Certain forms of writing are comprehensively valued as belonging to literature as an art.

American Literature refers to works of literature written in the English language in America. Since America was a series of British colonies on the Eastern Coast of the Present-Day United States; its literary tradition began as linked to the broader tradition of English literary texts. After the Second World War, America has emerged as a political superpower but also as a centre of construction and deconstruction. The Cold War between the two superpowers has deeply affected the intellectual climate of the nation and it suffered from acute internal conflict. Like other national literature, American literature was sculpted by the history of the country that produced it. America was only a group of colonies dispersed along the Eastern seaboard of the North American continent-colonies from which a few hardy souls hesitatingly travelled Westward.

By the end of the 19th century, it had taken its place among the strongest of the world-its riches so interconnected with those of other nations that naturally became involved in two world wars and following these conflicts, with the issues of Europe and East Asia. Meanwhile, the growth of Science and Industry, as well as the interchange in way of thinking and feeling, performs many changes in people's lives. All these elements in the enlargement of the United States moulded the literature of the country. The history of American literature starts with the advent of English-speaking Europeans in what would become the United States.

At first, American literature was naturally colonial literature, by authors who were Englishmen and who thought and wrote such. John Smith, a soldier of fortune, is recognised for originating American Literature. All 17th century American writings were in the means of British writings of the same period. In

the years to the beginning of the 18th century, both dramas and novels of some historical significance were produced. Though theatrical groups had long been active in America, William Hill Brown wrote the first American novel, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789). A flood of sentimental novels followed the end of the 19th century.

After the American Revolution, American writers were encouraged to come up with literature that was truly native. The little magazines that helped to increase the poetry of the era also provided growth for its fiction. They printed daring or unconventional short stories and published thrash upon prominent writers. *The Dial* (1880-1929), *Little Review* (1914-29), *Seven Arts* (1916-17), and others motivated Modernist transformation.

American Culture is not only determined by its fast-paced lifestyle, fashion, and “to-go” coffee cups. It is also a culture of various diversity, different religions, races, and ethnicities. It is a culture that cherishes competition and political correctness, and also tries to impose the freedom of speech. The definition of culture is the content of many debates, but many will admit that culture is many things that are set in how they act, what they eat, how they tell right from wrong, what music they hear, and what clothes they wear. More than 300 million people dwell in The United States, forming it the third-largest country in the world, and also one of the great culturally diverse countries.

Throughout its history, American culture has been determined by many dissimilar cultures like Native American, Latin American, and others. Religious diversity is also another feature of the American Culture, and many different religions are followed in the United States; with Christianity being the most

important religion. Americana is a term that deals with the history, geography, and folklore of an exact part of American Culture. Even today, the popular culture of America is very powerful and evident all over the world. Truly many things explain American Culture, but the real beauty is in its diverseness and contradictions and all the different people and cultures that made it a unique country.

Carson McCullers was born on 19th February, 1917, in Columbus, Georgia. Her original name is Lula Carson Smith. She is an American writer of novels and stories that depict the inner lives of lonely people. Her father was a watch repairman who raised his family on modest means. Carson is a gangly, sensitive child, she was painfully aware of her unpopularity among her peers. Parties were unendurable ideals for her. She wore dirty sneakers while others wore dainty heels. She flees into music, sometimes playing her piano four or five hours a day. She dreamt of becoming a piano player until she endured her first round of rheumatic fever at fifteen, and her ambition turned to the more serene art of writing.

She went to New York City to study at Columbia and New York Universities, and in 1937 she married Reeves McCullers, a writer whom she had met in Georgia and with whom she was to have a long and complicated relationship at the age of twenty. Her life after that was darkened by pain, illness, and disaster. And by the age of twenty-three, she had completed her first novel, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. Shortly after it was published in 1940, she became New York's new literary star. Despite her literary fame, she endured many personal troubles with her husband. They divorced in 1940. Due to this, her husband ended up committing suicide in 1953.

By that time, she was affected by pleurisy, pneumonia, rheumatic fever and strokes had caught up to her. For the later twenty years of her life, she was immobilized on her left side. She died of an enormous cerebral discharge of blood on 15th, 1967. McCullers's style is often represented as Southern Gothic, as the mass of her works takes place in the Southern United States. Her works are highly consistent in their themes and moods. McCullers's bibliography includes five novels, two plays, twenty short stories, poetry, and more than two dozen non-fiction piece. Spiritual Isolation and Loneliness have always been the central topic of the works of the Southern American writer Carson McCullers.

Her superior literary creation lies in that, she not only incorporates the theme of isolation between lines of her works but also hardly echoes and strengthens that theme by use of intense narrative skills. *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* is such a masterpiece on loneliness, decorated and filled with elegant narrative strategy framed within this work. McCullers portrays characters from many aspects, and her narration from multiple perspectives in this work, not only greatly glorifies the work's narrative tension and aesthetic effect, but also deeply reflects the internal confusion and lonely state of mind of those people living in the American South after the Civil War.

Her works have been transformed into plays and movies, leaving a precious sacred wealth for future generations. They paddle in the waters of rejection and unreturned love, of loneliness and alienation, but often, too, of sympathy for a world in search of beauty as in the music that fills her novels. Carson manages to depict the power structures of race, gender, and class in the society of her time. It emphasised her awareness of those systems of power merge and are at work simultaneously. This is thus a mere example of how the

novel is concerned with converging power structures and their effects on the lives of the novel's characters.

Evans and most other writers too; declare that the works of McCullers are based on loneliness caused by isolation and unbeloved. Evans says that, McCullers uses allegory to evoke a conceptual, symbolic picture of life, and her message is that:

While love is the only force that can unite men, love is never completely mutual and is subject to time, diminishing with the death of the love object. The single consolation is that love, while it lasts, is beneficial to the lover, affording him temporary relief from his solitude. (303)

The most famous novels of McCullers are *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (1940), *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1941); *The Member of the Wedding* (1946); *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1951); *The Square Root of Wonderful* (1958); *Clock without Hands* (1961); *Sweet as a Pickle, Clean as a Pig* (1964). All her stories deal with the metaphysical isolation of individuals and their craving to transcend this isolation through love. Love is the key to a grand transformation of leaden existent into gold, but the exalted state is ruined because love is so solemn required. Though this feeling may stem from McCullers's early fears and dependence on her mother, it strikes a universal emotion. The fact that McCullers projects this terrible sense of unreturned love into all kinds of human relations except that between mother and daughter may be evocative in itself.

McCullers successfully generalises the state of metaphysical isolation as an eternal human condition. Her first novel, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, in 1940, has Mick Kelly as its child character, who is attached to John Singer, the

deaf-mute, who, she, fancies, understands and sympathises with her difficulties. McCullers projects Jake Blount, the ineffectual social troublemaker, as a would-be Marxist revolutionary, but he may seem like an overgrown disheartened child. Copeland is the more believable character, representing the peculiar difficulties of the educated African American in the South, who has incarnated white society's criticism of black cultural traits. His daughter's black dialect and careless attitude shamed him, and he frowns at what he considered the imprudent productivity and emotionality of the black youth. John Singer shares their universal need to love and converse with a kindred spirit. The evocative quality of this story is obtained partly from the impression of getting an inside look at multiple personalities.

By the time Carson started *Reflections in a Golden Eye*, in 1941, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* is about sex and its various distortions. These characters are lonely, isolated, directed by subconscious desire. The story concerns two army couples, a houseboy, a rather ant young man, all of them somewhat unusual, and a horse. Carson's next work, *The Ballad of the Sad Café*, in 1951 was a more successful treatment of archetypal myth, with its psychodramatic overtones moderated this time by humour. The setting is a lonesome southern village little more than a trading post with a few dull, unpainted buildings.

The Mortgaged Heart in 1971, consists of stories, poems, and essays that McCullers wrote in her late teens. Perhaps the notable entry is "*The Mute*", a story that eventually evolved into *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. Altogether, the collection offers a glimpse of McCullers' earliest writing days, innate talent, and affinity for outsider heroes and heroines. McCullers final novel, *Clock Without*

Hands in 1961, has some echoes of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, once again she sets her story in a small Georgia town, where one individual-black newcomer Sherman Pew is the link between a cast of repressed and lonely characters. Pew's arrival drives some to destruction and others towards absolution, as each man argues with his private demons and obsessions.

John Ernest Steinbeck was born in 1902, an American novelist. Steinbeck wrote 31 books throughout his career. His novel *Cup of Gold* in 1929; *The Pastures of Heaven* in 1932; *To a God in Unknown* in 1933. *Tortilla Flat* in 1935; *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1939, about the migration of a family from the Oklahoma Dust Bowl to California, won a Pulitzer Prize and a National Book Award. His most popular novels include *Of Mice and Men* in 1937; *The Pearl* in 1947; and *East of Eden* in 1952.

Eudora Welty who was born in 1909, is an American short-story writer and novelist whose work is mainly focused on the regional manners of people inhabiting a small Mississippi town that resembles her birthplace and the Delta territory. Welty appeared at Mississippi State College for Women before shifting to the University of Wisconsin, from which she graduated in 1929. Her distribution grew steadily after the publication of *A Curtain of Green* in 1941, a volume of short stories, two of her anthologized stories, *The Petrified Man* and *Why I Live at the P.O.* In 1942 her short novel *The Robber Bridegroom* was published; *The Wide Net and Other Stories* in 1943; *The Ponder Heart* in 1954; *Losing Battles* in 1970; *The Optimist's Daughter* in 1972; are collections of short stories, and *The Eye of the Story* in 1978 is a book of essays. *The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty* was published in 1980.

Dorothy Agnes Bennett who was born in 1909 was an American author, Bennett studied astronomy and anthropology at the University of Minnesota. Upon graduating with a B.A. in English in 1930, she moved to New York. Bennett herself wrote several Golden Books, that explain the world to children in a gentle, non-dominating tone: *The Golden Almanac*, illustrated by Masha in 1944; *The Golden Encyclopedia*, illustrated by Cornelius De Witt in 1946; *A Planetarium for New York* in 1935; *The Book of the Hayden Planetarium, the American Museum of Natural History* in 1935; and *Sold to the Ladies! Or, the Incredible but True Adventures of Three Girls on a Barge* in 1940.

Tennessee Williams who was born in 1911, is an American dramatist whose plays exhibit a world of human frustration in which sex and violence underlie an atmosphere of romantic gentility. Little Theatre groups produced some of his work, which motivated him to study dramatic writing at the University of Iowa, where he earned a B.A. in 1938. His first identification came when *American Blues* in 1939, a group of one-act plays, won a Group Theatre award. William's major play, *A Streetcar Named Desire* in 1947, won a Pulitzer; *Camino Real*, a complicated work set in a mythical, exemplar town; *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in 1955, *The Night of the Iguana* in 1961; *Suddenly Lost Summer* in 1958 and *Sweet Bird of Youth* in 1959.

Flannery O'Connor who was born in 1925, is an American novelist and short-story writer whose works, usually set in the rural American South and often treating of alienation, concern the relationship between the individual and God. O'Connor grew up in an eminent Roman Catholic family in her native Georgia. After graduating from Georgia State College for Women in 1945, she studied creative writing at the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop. Her first

novel, *Wise Blood* in 1952; *The Violent Bear It Away* in 1960, The delayed publication of *The Habit of Being* in 1979 a book of her letters; *The Presence of Grace and Other Book Reviews* in 1983.

Sylvia Plath who was born in 1932, is an American poet. She issued her first poem at the age of eight. She entered and won many literary competitions. She entered Smith College on a scholarship in 1951. In 1960 shortly after she came back to England with Hughes, her first collection of poems appeared as *The Colossus*, which received good reviews. In her novel, *The Bell Jar* in 1963; *Ariel* in 1965; Plath became one of the most popular American poets. The appearance of small collections of previously unpublished poems, including *Crossing the Water* in 1971 and *Winter Trees* in 1971 was welcomed by critics and the public similarly. *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams*, a book of short stories and prose, was published in 1977.

The novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, follows a deaf man, John Singer, and the people in a small mill town who reveal in him for over a year. Like much of McCullers's work, the novel is set in Georgia, where she grew up. McCullers wrote the novel while disabled and recovering from one of many illnesses she suffered throughout her lifetime. The third-person omniscient narrator begins the novel by representing two deaf mutes who never leave one another's side. The first is a large, possibly mentally disabled Greek man who owns the local fruit store. His name is Antonopoulos. His friend is a thinner man by the name of John Singer; Singer works as a silverware carver. He is well-regarded in town for being polite, well-dressed, and nicely groomed. When they leave one another, the two men simply look into each other's faces, nod, and go their separate ways.

One day, Antonopoulos's doctor forbids him to drink wine. Soon after, Mr. Antonopoulos shows signs of mental illness, namely anti-social behaviour and a lack of self-control. After making several public scenes, a cousin has him impulsively committed to the state's psychotic asylum. Singer tries to defend Antonopoulos from the police, but they lack the patience to translate his gestures and signs. Without anyone to understand him, Singer falls into depression. Singer comes each day at the New York Café, a restaurant opened late and owned by Biff Brannon. Biff is an abnormal kind and sharp-eyed man. He tries to help those who are facing hard times.

Meanwhile, Jake Blount visits the town. Blount is a loud, younger man who is loyal to labour rights movements. He, like many unemployed men during the depression, is an alcoholic. One day, he drags his friend, a black doctor and community leader named Dr. Copeland, to New York Café. They exchange ideas about socialism and a more just society until Copeland is calm and trustworthy, a reader of the philosopher Baruch Spinoza. Jake, meanwhile, quickly diverges from a well-spoken man to a rude drunk. Blount then starts speaking to Biff, and the two became acquainted. But it doesn't take Blount long to start mistreat Biff's benevolence when it comes to the tab.

One day still drunk Blount decides to tell Singer his life story. Because of his muteness and deafness, Singer is observed as someone who can't understand another person. But Blount didn't know until the next day that Singer couldn't hear his story at all. Still, he stays convinced that Singer understands him on a deep level. With Blount recovering at his place, Singer checks into a dirty local inn. There, he comes across Mick Kelly, a gangly tomboy who resembles McCullers in appearance and interests. Mick is thirteen and the daughter of the

motel's owner. She loves music and is willing to travel anywhere the bus goes to hear it. Occasionally, she tells Singer, she travels to the concert in the city. She stays outside the nearest windows and bends in the shrubbery throughout the performance. She, like Blount, is isolated and Singer is happy to give the look that he is listening.

A couple of weeks into high school, Mick holds a dance at the motel in an attempt to win some friends. She borrows a masquerade costume and high heels from her sisters. She spends hours enhancing the house with autumn colours and paper leaf cut outs. As a party activity, Mick arranges a game where all the boys select a girl to walk around the block jointly. The room is silent as the boys planned on whom to choose. Finally, Mick is selected by a boy named Harry. While they go for their walk, the younger neighbourhood children take note of the party. They ruin Mick's plan for an exclusively high school event, and the party quickly descends into disorder. All the decorations are in ruins and Mick hurts herself.

Singer visits Antonopoulos in the mental hospital. He is excited to see his friend and brings gifts and food. But when he arrives at the hospital, Antonopoulos is nowhere to be found. A nurse tells Singer that Antonopoulos is dead. Singer returns home and shoots himself in the heart. The four people who considered Singer for companionship now must face the world alone. Their fates are discussed in the final section of the novel. Copeland is in bad health and will likely die soon. Singer's sudden death has left Copeland reeling for answers. His son is unjustifiably in jail. This Copeland leaves town for a family farm far away.

Jake runs away from a race-based conflict at the Sunday Dixie Show. As a wanderer, he knows that if the police were to find him, he would be blamed for the racial violence, which resulted in many injured and some dead. He is angry with Singer for killing himself. Jake has one last meal with Biff at the café, then heads to a larger city somewhere in the south where he can be lost in a crowd. Mick's new job is degrading and she can't focus on music anymore. If she thinks about Singer's suicide, she falls apart the only bright side is that Singer left her his radio. He died in debt, so she will have to continue paying installments on it, but gives Mick hope for the future.

The novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* ends with Biff Bannon working by himself at his restaurant. He feels less connected to Mick now that she is more of an adult. He misses Blount's antics. He thinks about the injustices Dr. Copeland experienced. Despite his fear and isolation, Biff resolves to find some inner strength to face the next day.

The second chapter deals with the critical analysis of the novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* and the themes of the novel are analysed. The themes are taken into consideration with reference to the theories of Racism, Individual and Society, Injustice, Failure of Love, Failure of Communication, and Despair.

Chapter Two

Racism as a Social Pathology

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers is a tragic but beautiful story about genuine human feelings and emotions. It tells us about isolation, loneliness, friendship, love, despair, longing, regrets, and many other things which either make us suffer or fill our hearts with joy and happiness. It is as touching and heart-shattering as life itself. John Singer is one of the main characters of the story and it is impossible to not relate oneself to him. It is true that people who don't have any problem with hearing and speaking can't fully understand deaf-mute people.

Their world is full of mysteries and secrets for hearies. Not to mention that there are so many questions about life as a deaf-mute person one might be ashamed to ask. However, this experience isn't so alien for those who can hear and speak. It happens often that we, people who don't have any trouble with hearing and speaking, fail to find needed words or don't know how to voice our thoughts. Blount has been always suffering from this problem. He has read a lot of "wise" books, and learned an impressive number of sophisticated ideas, but couldn't express them in such a way; so that others would believe and follow him.

John Singer couldn't either speak or hear, but he could read lips and be genuinely interested. His big heart allowed him to cope with numerous barriers in communication. His story proves that a compassionate heart is more effective than the ear. John's story is also interesting from a psychological point of view. Singer and Antonopoulos's close relationship read literally is the result of two men realising they must stick together if they want to be understood and supported, but over the years some critics have suggested that McCullers may

have used deafness and muteness as an abstract allegory to describe the alienating experience of being homosexual in the 1930s.

Singer is animated, open, serious, and curious. Antonopoulos is cold uncommunicative, and occasionally self-indulgent. This suggests that what binds the two men together is not true friendship, understanding, or love, but instead the simple fact of their shared disability. Antonopoulos's behaviour becomes erratic and unpredictable, Singer is flustered and confused by his friend's increasingly sullen and adversarial disposition and this fact makes him feel like the person he'd thought to be his constant, steadfast, predictable companion.

Even though Antonopoulos has family in town, no one really cares for the man the way Singer does. This demonstrates the depths of their isolation, and the difficulty on the horizon for Singer as his friend pulls further and further away. Though Singer is desperate not to be separated from his friend, it is clear that Antonopoulos is a burden to his cousin. It might seem to be strange that he considered to be his friend dies. Antonopoulos is sent away. It's already clear at this early point in the novel, that society is not built for men like Singer and Antonopoulos, and even though Singer tries to help his friend up until the very last moment they have together, Antonopoulos seems to have completely walked himself off from help or friendship.

Spiros Antonapoulos proves to be a terrible friend in the end but it doesn't matter to Singer. His life ends the day he finds out that his friend is no longer alive. It turns out to be that a life without any hope is a useless one. The other characters' stories are less tragic than Singer's but not less mesmerizing. Biff defends his choices to his wife and couches his interest in Blount as

empathy and kindness, he also admits to a kind of sickened fascination with the man's downward spiral. It is clear that communication between Biff and his wife has broken down and they can't hold a conversation very long at all.

Mick is precocious yet shy around Singer, while Blount doesn't temper his anti-capitalist rants around anyone even a child. She is a feisty tomboy who's often lonely in spite of being surrounded by a huge family and a house full of boarders. Mick like Blount has a fascination with Singer, an attraction that will become a central motivation throughout the book. Mick seems torn between loneliness and a desire for solitude. She doesn't feel connected to anyone around her and longs for peace and quiet so that she can be alone with her thoughts, her music, and her day-dreams, but at the same time, her desire for a relationship with Singer shows that she does want to share some kind of connection with someone else.

Portia, Kelly's family housekeeper, and cook is isolated from her family which reflects Mick's own feelings of isolation from her family, in spite of the fact that the two situations are obviously very different. Jake Blount's loneliness and despair from the night before are somewhat ameliorated by Singer's kindness and generosity. Jake senses the fundamental loneliness Singer must experience, Jake Blount, throws away his dirtied bloodied overalls. He is ashamed of his behaviour the night before and over the last several days. Blount wants to make a new start, and as he connects with Mick and Portia, he takes an early step towards getting to know the people in his community.

Jake is only concerned with spreading his message even if it falls on ears unable to process or use the information they're receiving. Jake's inability to clearly express his ideals to people who truly hear, understand, and support him

is his character's central struggle. Doctor Copeland is clearly kind, curious, and empathetic, but also quiet lonely. He is isolated from his children, and it seems that only Portia ever comes to visit. His family seems to be an area of his life in which he is disappointed and unfulfilled. Like Blount, Copeland feels overwhelmed by the self-appointed task of educating and galvanizing his community in hopes of leading them toward revolution.

It is somewhat ironic that all these lonely characters seek out the same person for comfort; their relationships with Singer make them a kind of community, but they are so focused on their own individual issues that this connection isn't apparent to them. Each of the four main characters has their own separate reasons for making their initial visits to Singer's room, but what keeps them coming back is the feeling of being seen, heard, known, and, above all accepted. Singer is a mirror for their insecurities and anxieties, and he helps each of them to see themselves a little bit more kindly.

It is difficult not to feel sorry for them when they are sad and broken, to be happy for them when they have something to look forward to. Carson McCullers's characters are not flawless, they make mistakes and are not always right, but they are people with big hearts and aspirations. This book teaches its readers an important lesson in compassion, respect, and equality. The main priority should be kindness. It is no wonder that Biff, Mick, Jake, and others talk about loneliness so often. The problem is that a contemporary person is so self-absorbed that it is difficult for him/her to notice that others need him or her.

The thematic content of McCullers work is compatible: All her stories deal with the metaphysical Isolation of individuals and their distressed need to go beyond this isolation through love. Each of the five main characters in *The*

Heart is a Lonely Hunter aims to break out of his or her isolated existence. Each character is so very different: the deaf-mute John Singer cannot communicate with most of the world because he cannot speak. Mick Kelly cannot communicate with anyone in her family because they do not share her intelligence and ambition; Biff Brannon is left alone when his wife dies. Doctor Copeland is isolated from his family and other family and other black people because of his education and viewpoints. Jake Blount is alone in his radical social viewpoints and in the fact that he is a newcomer in town.

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter reflects that complexity and though McCullers's book sometimes uses the language of racism, it does so in pursuit of revealing exactly how racist thought and speech keep society's most vulnerable members down and prevent them from healing, advancing, or receiving the justice they deserve. Doctor Benedict Mary Copeland, the black doctor who is one of the novel's main characters, is the character whose experiences directly intersect with the theme of racism, inequality, and injustice. Doctor Copeland longs to inspire the black community in his town to stand together against white people, institutions, and principles which oppress them.

According to Steve Jones, Racism is something that's done to others, it's a confection, it's a socially-engineered notion. Race, however, is supposedly something objective, scientific. People looked at this problem of race and racism, and they saw how people could see the difference and use it against people. What Jones offers is the sense that we can free ourselves, because we can imagine things in a different way. That doesn't mean that racism suddenly disappears. Many instances of racist behaviour directed at people of colour take the form of "microaggressions," which are verbal or behavioural sights,

generally subtle and often unintentional or unconscious, that communicate stereotypes toward a person of colour and thus indicate an implicit bias based on race.

Racism is social, not “native,” it is general and not “individual,” and it is tragically ineffective. In a remarkable meditation on a subject in the trouble of American life, Albert Memmi analyses racism as a social pathology, a cultural disease that prevails because it allows one segment of society to empower itself at the expense of another. Racism moves beyond individual influence and taste to engage the broader questions of collective behaviour and social responsibility. For Memmi, the structure of racism has four “moments” the negative valuation forced on those who differ; the generalizing of the negative valuation to an entire group; and the use of generalisation to legitimize bitterness.

Doctor Copeland’s story is also about systemic injustice and police cruelty. His son Willie is jailed for violence and sent to work on a chain gang, Willie angers a guard during a work assignment. As a result, the guards lock Willie and two other prisoners in a cold shed and string them up by their feet. The guards leave the men in the shed for days, and by the time they let Willie and the others out, Willie’s feet have become decomposing and must be cut off. Willie’s horrifying trouble further agitates and angers Doctor Copeland. The doctor dreams of organising the black community through ideology, non-violence, and passion. McCullers illustrates the failure of society to care for its most criticised individuals, and even shows how it actively brutalizes and terrorizes them. Injustice is in the forms of racism, sexism, classism, genderism, and nationalism.

The theory contends that human injustice is produced when oppression, mechanistic dehumanisation, and exploitation create structured inequality in opportunities to address human needs, leading to wrongful need deprivation and the resulting serious harm. According to the Subaltern theory, the injustice involves interconnected political, social, economic, and cultural factors that disarrange dynamically and create varied outcomes of discrimination and oppression. The practice of conscribing another person to a distinctly unequal identity of “Other” is the root substance of social, and political injustice.

McCullers considers how those forces create hostility and distance between the Individual and Society. McCullers’s characters come up against apathy or even outright cruelty, and they also fight against the defeatist instinct to become apathetic or cruel themselves. McCullers insists that American Society is arranged to suppress individual thought and action as a means of sustaining the capitalist status, and dignity, and securing the dominion of the ultra-wealthy few over the oppressed masses. McCullers uses the course of her major characters to illustrate how society overpowers individuality, forcing its individual members struggle as they might against the status to resign themselves to lives as cogs in a racist, capitalist machine.

Jake Blount is an aggressive, hostile drunk who comes to town looking for work at the start of the novel. Jake, an anti-capitalist, believes the South is suffering at the hands of the North and longs for a revolt that will bring about the end of capitalism in America. McCullers presents Jake as not just anti-establishment, but as fundamentally incapable of living in society. Even though McCullers presents Jake as unstable and uncertain, she is obviously invested in his unorthodox ideas and sympathetically portrays his inability to get people to

see his point of view. He longs to share the truth about society with the people he meets, but he is unable to fulfill his purpose;

It was good to talk. The sound of his voice gave him pleasure. The tones seemed to echo and hang on the air so that each word sounded twice. He swallowed and moistened his mouth to speak again. He wanted suddenly to return to the mute's quiet room and tell him of the thoughts that were in his mind. It was a queer thing to want to talk with a deaf-mute. But he was lonesome. (59)

Doctor Benedict Copeland stands alone against the larger society of which he's apart. As a black man living in the Deep South, Doctor Copeland must fight daily with prejudice, cruelty, and violence aimed at him, his family, and his community. Doctor Copeland believes that there are ways in which black Americans can rise up and change the way others perceive them, and hopes that through devotion to Marxism and the pursuit of education, the black community in his town will be able to flourish. He harboured hopes of being a beam of change in his community, but by the end of the novel. His society has forsaken and forgotten him.

Mick Kelly is a loner at school, and while she throws a successful prom party to gather all her classmates, she finds herself feeling awkward and uncertain of herself throughout the festivities; she ultimately ends the night alone, listening to a neighbour's radio alone from the dark of their backyard. Mick, like Jake Blount and Doctor Copeland, is only resisting the pressure to conform to society to a certain point. Most difficult of all, she must drop out of school and leave her music in order to devote all her time to work. Mick stood against society for as long as she could, but in the end, she too was forced to

either become a part of society's machine or watch her family suffer in poverty. The individuals who populate the novel are lonely on a subjectivity level and they stand alone.

Emilie Durkheim believed that society applies a powerful force on individuals. People's norms, beliefs, and values make up a collective consciousness that ties individuals together and creates social integration. For Durkheim, the collective consciousness was crucial in explaining the existence of society; it produces society and holds it together. At the same time, collective consciousness is produced by individuals through their actions and interactions. Society is a social product created by individuals that then exert a coercive social force back on those individuals.

'Love hurts' is a good way to simply convey her complex theme in the novel. Characters have trouble with a relationship based on love, whether the relationships are with family members, friends, or romantic partners. Love is complex, an ever-changing concept that has developed over time. Different cultures, societies, and eras have attached different values to the word and have different outlooks on the concept. McCullers would say that love is always problematical and that people must not be just "settled" to avoid loneliness; it's better to be alone than to be trapped in an unhealthy relationship of any type.

Family relationships in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* can best be expressed as strained. In the Kelly family, no one seems to have time for meaningful relationships with anyone else. The two older sisters, Hazel and Etta, do seem to have a bond, but it is based on external things. The parents love their children, but they are also oddly absent from their kids' daily lives. Only Mick is a steady presence for the young boys, George and Ralph, and her love for both

is fierce. She also has a pitiful, loving realisation about her father's need to spend time with her,

Now she just suddenly knew that she knew about her dad. He was lonesome and he was an old man. Because none of the kids went to him for anything and because he didn't earn much money, he felt like he was cut off from his family. And in his lonesomeness, he wanted to be close to one of his kids- and they were all so busy that they didn't know it. He felt like he wasn't much real use to anybody. (92)

Biff has an unhappy marriage and unnaturally strong love for his dead mother. In this later theory of Freud, the separation from the parent is required for us to be able to experience love but it is not sufficient.

Doctor Copeland has pushed his family away and is never able to stop criticising them and he just shows that he loves them. In turn, they cannot open themselves up to him, fearing more pain. According to Sigmund Freud, the person who is attached by his friend seeks to preserve agency, individuality, and personal autonomy. The friendship that best shows this strained kind of love is between Singer and Antonapoulos. Singer's love for his friend is pure, yet it is unhealthy. He does not get love back; his love blinds him as to just how narcissistic and unkind Antonapoulos is. In the beginning obsessive stages of love relationships in which love is mutual, the person seeks an unhealthy level of unity and relatedness.

As far as romantic love goes, there are no good models for it in the book. Biff and Alice Brannon are unhappy and don't even have intimate relations anymore, and Biff has inappropriate feelings for Mick throughout most of the

novel. According to Freud, if a person is used to the obsessive feelings of being in love, and then he suddenly feels nothing but the occasional closeness and sexual attraction. When Mick has sex with Harry, the only result is that they both feel unhappy. This type of behaviour is, in fact, predictable in avoidant individuals, who are more likely to never fall in love or to experience only low strength of love.

The theme of the failure of communication pervades the novel. People think that they are communicating well and mostly feel satisfied with their communications when in fact their ideas are not being heard or understood by others. Attention denotes a state of physical as well as mental preparedness and alertness on the part of an individual as may be determined through keen observation of his body postures and positions. It cannot be held continuously with the same intensity for a longer duration. *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* opens with an image that draws attention to the central preoccupations of Singer's narrative, the limits of expression, and his love for Antonapoulos: "In the town, there were two mutes and they were always together. Early every morning they would come out from the house where they lived and walk arm in down the street to work. The two friends were very different" (1).

Opening the novel with two mutes brings early focus to the challenges of communication, which are worsened when the closeness of the pair is destabilised by the conflicting description that they were different. Singer to whom everyone loves to talk, cannot hear; and chooses not to speak. He can read lips and appears to be empathetic with everyone's point of view, yet he admits several times that he doesn't understand at all what people are talking about,

He talked and talked. And although his hands never paused to rest, he could not tell all that he had to say. He wanted to talk to Antonapoulos about all the thoughts that had ever been in his mind and heart, but there was no time. His grey eyes glittered and his quick, intelligent face expressed great strain. Antonapoulos watched him drowsily, and his friend did not know just what he really understood. (9)

Behavioural expressions in the form of facial expressions and non-verbal communications cannot be understood as a sufficiently objective, reliable, and valid instrument for identifying and measuring one's emotions. According to I. A. Richards, two people in a conversation could fully understand what each other meant if they had a lifetime of identical experiences. Of course, that's not possible. Even identical twins have comparison fields that grow increasingly diverse as they grow older. But communication is best when both parties have a long and varied acquaintanceship, close familiarity, and lives whose circumstances have often corresponded, in short, an exceptional fund of common experience.

Since long-term interconnectedness is rare and not easy to attain. Richards suggested a variety of linguistic ways that people may create a greater region of shared experiences and thus avoid talking past each other. In a case of situational irony, Singer is in the same situation as Antonapoulos understands him all. Singer also likes to write to Antonapoulos, who cannot read; "You remember the four people I told you about when I was there... They are all very busy people. They are so busy that it will be hard for you to picture them. I do

not mean that they work at their jobs all day and night but that they have much business in their minds always that does not let them rest” (194).

This indicates the simple manner in which Singer would likely speak if he were able to. When Jake was scouting around for a job in a hurry, he asked Singer; “Are there any other deaf-mute people here?” he asked. You have many friends? Singer was still smiling. He did not catch on to the words at first, and Jake had to repeat them. Singer raised his sharp, dark eyebrows and shook his head” (52). Yet no one is dissatisfied when the people they express ideas to do not respond. People get fulfilment simply by being able to “get it out.” They feel understood, but perhaps they are only interested in understanding themselves. Similarly, those who believe they have big messages that others must hear and accept specifically, Blount and Doctor Copeland talk a lot to people. Both are very emotional about the fact that no one seems to listen to them. No one understands.

McCullers suggests that the problem with the way most people communicate is that it is a one-way street. People need to speak; they need to express their ideas. But true communication involves the exchange of ideas, not just the expression of them. If people would care more about true conversation, perhaps their problems with isolation and relationships would greatly decrease. The conditions of the characters’ lives in this novel, however, suggest that true communication is impossible in the 1930s, with racial violence and economic stratification pushing people ever further apart.

Another theme is the despair, yearning for a better life. Mick Kelly is the fourth child of six from a poor family; and longs for something more. She seeks out neighbour’s open windows in the hopes of hearing classical music pour from

their radios; and tries unsuccessfully to construct the violin her family can't afford to buy. Mick is forced to quit school and take a job at a local departmental store when her younger brother gets into trouble. Slowly, her dreams begin to fade, and the labourlating is; compromise, and disappointment, which shows on the haggard faces of her parents, seem to descend upon her own.

Jake Blount also dreams of a better life, but his voracious socialism makes him a laughingstock and outcast from the community. Unable to hold any job for long, due to his alcoholism and aggression, Jake lives an impoverished and itinerant life, frustrated by the apathy of those around him, who disregard and ridicule his beliefs. Jake has pinned all his hopes on Singer, but Singer's final death makes his inner heart filled with great feelings of emptiness.

Singer was dead. And the way he had left when he first heard that he killed himself was not sad- it was angry. He was before a wall. He remembered all the innermost thoughts that he had told to Singer, and with his death, it seemed to him that they were lost. And why had Singer wanted to end his life? Maybe he had gone insane. But anyway, he was dead, dead, dead. (312)

He is almost worn-out, too terrified, having a dead feeling In the eyes of outsiders, Jake is just a drunkard, being at the bottom of the society. Jake is all the time longing for a better working environment and a harmonious society where social injustice can be solved successfully, but in vain. As a result, Singer's death makes him totally lose hope and leaves the town, much lonely and distressed. When Mick hears of Singer's death, she does not understand why Singer killed himself, but she tries not to let it bother her too much anymore. Likewise, Doctor Copeland envisions a more just world. Appalled by the racism

scarring the Deep South in which he was born and raised, he seeks to make a better life for his family and community. But his awes are quickly dashed when his son, Willie, is convicted of attempted manslaughter after a fight.

Willie endures cruel and unjust treatment in person, and when his father tries to appeal to the judge for help, he is brutally beaten by a racist sheriff. According to Erickson, the last psychological stage is despair. This stage includes; a retrospective accounting of one's life to date; how much one embraces life as having been well lived, as opposed to regretting missed opportunities. Those in late adulthood need to achieve both the acceptance of their life and the inevitability of their death. This stage includes meaning in one's life and accepting in one's life and accepting one's accomplishments, but also acknowledging what in life has not gone as hoped. It also feels a sense of contentment and accepts others' deficiencies, including those of their parents.

Even Biff Brannon, the most seemingly well-adjusted of the cast of characters, is not immune to the frustrations of regret and disappointment. When Biff's wife, Alice, dies early in the novel, his reaction seems callous, until it becomes apparent that a once deeply loving marriage had turned in later years to bitterness and animosity. Individuals who reflect on their lives and regret not achieving their goals will experience feelings of bitterness and despair. Erik Erikson believed if we see our lives as unproductive, feel guilt about our past, or feel that we did not accomplish our life goals, we become dissatisfied with life and develop despair, often leading to depression and hopelessness.

The third chapter explores the theme of Loneliness in the novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. It deals with the struggles of loneliness faced by the

characters of the novel and how it can be overcome. The concept of Loneliness and its remedy has been discussed.

Chapter Three

Loneliness as a Unifying Factor

Over the course of the novel, McCullers paints a portrait of the theme of Loneliness from different perspectives; spiritual, psychological, ideological, racial, and existential. As Mick Kelly, Jake Blount, Biff Brannon, and Doctor Benedict Mady Copeland individually seek companionship and validation from John Singer, they never realise or even stop to consider the fact that they are not alone in their feelings of remoteness and seclusion. They are each obsessed with their loneliness, unable to break or even see through it, yet unaware that it is the only thing uniting them with their seemingly distant, desperate fellow

townspeople. Many of the characters feel profoundly out of place and unable to connect even they should be closest to.

John Singer is perhaps the most lonely and isolated character in the novel. Though he is the central character, he is also a great mystery. Unable to communicate with those around him very easily, he instead shoulders an unusual role amongst the townspeople: he becomes a kind of silent cipher who offers to vent their problems and frustrations.

“And we are not alone in this slavery. There are millions of others throughout the world, of all colours and races and creeds...People who are almost as much in need as we are ourselves. This hatred is a great evil, and no good can ever come from it... The injustice of need must bring us together and not separate us” (173).

Loneliness is the only thing that bonds these very different characters together. McCullers suggests that their loneliness is a kind of gift: it binds these four individuals' fates giving them the opportunity to find the connections for which they're so desperately searching. Whether they will be able to make good on that gift and use it, however, is a different story and McCullers suggests that in some cases, preserving one's loneliness can become more important than finding a cure for it. As these four individuals make repeated visits to Singer's rooms at the Kelly boarding house, they lament their troubles, but rarely ask about Singer's own life and they are, until very late in the book, each unaware that the others undertake visits similar to their own.

These four individuals are ships passing in the night, too obsessed with their own sadness and isolation to realise that there are other people, right there in their community, looking for friendship, help, and solidarity. McCullers uses

dramatic irony to highlight the unnecessary suffering of her characters, suggesting that, perhaps, if they were to open themselves up to broader friendships, their loneliness might be diminished. At the same time, however, there exists an undercurrent of cynicism and even defeat within the book. McCullers' characters all end up just as lonely, if not even lonelier than they were at its start. They have failed to recognize the fact; they are unable to use it to bond with those around them.

Loneliness perpetuates itself; Carson McCullers suggests through *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, and because of this fact, it is the one experience that unites all of humanity regardless of race, class, or creed. People are doomed to “hunt” for connection and absolution alone, McCullers argues, ironically unable to see that the feeling which plagues them and makes them feel so isolated from those around them is actually the force bonding them, unknowingly to others.

Loneliness is located in the individual and how they feel. It explains why loneliness can be experienced within a crowd and that being alone does not necessarily mean being lonely. In this cognitive discrepancy theory of loneliness, cognition-how we get knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and emotions, explains the negative thoughts and feelings of loneliness experienced when our social relationships are unsatisfactory. Social loneliness is the absence of a network of friends, family or friends or community. Emotional loneliness on the other hand is the lack of a confidante or a trusting, loving relationship, even within a good social network.

Another type of loneliness, though probably less common, is existential loneliness. This is a feeling of separateness from others and is most commonly associated with people with a life-threatening illness or those experiencing

trauma. These types of loneliness are not mutually exclusive. They are likely to overlap and be experienced to different extents at different times. Loneliness may be an occasional, transient feeling that someone can manage or maybe more long-standing and chronic in nature. More significant emotional loss tends to correlate with feelings of anxiety. It is commonly thought that emotional loneliness is more acutely painful, social loneliness is experienced as a mixture of feeling rejected or being 'unacceptable,' coupled with a sense of boredom.

Most people experience the feeling of loneliness occasionally, and again, for most people, this is of little significance. On a spectrum, it is most likely to be associated with low intensity. Some people experience the emotional feeling of loneliness 'most or all of the time'. This is a chronic experience of loneliness and would clearly be most closely associated with the intense end of the spectrum. People describe thoughts and feelings of loneliness with words like anxiety, fear, shame, and helplessness.

These powerful emotions can influence how we act. They can create a downward spiral where loneliness causes someone to withdraw further from family and friends and so become lonelier. Loneliness can affect how we anticipate and interpret our social experiences. This can mean we are more apprehensive or fearful of social situations or pick up on social rejection cues too readily. Events in earlier life, personality types, and styles of coping all affect our risk of loneliness in later life. Young defined loneliness as: "The absence or perceived absence of satisfying social relationships, accompanied by symptoms of psychological distress that are related to the actual or perceived absence" (pp.171-172).

According to Young, there are at least three parts to loneliness; situational, chronic, and transient.

While loneliness is not a mental health issue in itself, mental health problems, particularly depression and social anxiety, can cause loneliness. In other direction, loneliness can cause mental health problems. There is a similar relationship with dementia, where loneliness can cause cognitive decline, while dementia can lead to people becoming lonely. Loneliness happens when the social connections that people want, don't match their actual experience of relationships with others. It is an important fact that we draw more on the insights from psychology than is currently the case.

Loneliness is associated with feelings of desolation, sadness, and shame, alongside the biased perception that one is disconnected from others. It can occur in the context of social isolation and persist beyond this and can be experienced even when others are physically present. As protection against harmful thoughts, isolation prevents the self from allowing this discernment to become repeated and possibly damaging to the self-concept. Being alone may leave older adults more vulnerable to loneliness and social isolation, which can affect their health and well-being. Studies show that loneliness and social isolation are associated with a higher possibility of health problems such as heart disease, depression, and cognitive decline.

Although loneliness has always been part of human existence, it has a relatively short history as a subject of psychological investigation. As developed by the psychiatrist John Bowlby during the second half of the 20th century, Attachment theory emphasises the importance of a strong emotional bond between the infant and the caregiver; it stands as a forerunner to contemporary

theories of loneliness. From that perspective, loneliness occurs when children with insecure attachment patterns behave in ways that result in their being rejected by their peers.

Those rejections hinder their development of social skills and increase their distrust of other people, thereby fostering ongoing loneliness. Attachment theory was the foundation for an influential psychological theory of loneliness developed by the sociologist Robert S. Weiss. Weiss identified six social needs that, if unmet, contribute to feelings of loneliness. Those needs are attachment, social integration, nurturance, reassurance of worth, sense of reliable alliance, and guidance in stressful situations. As would be predicted by attachment theory, Weiss maintained that friendships complement but do not substitute for a close, intimate relationship with a partner in staving off loneliness.

Bertrand Russel's proposition that love is the principal means to escape from loneliness;

Nature did not construct human beings to stand alone.... Those who have never known the deep intimacy and intense companionship of happy mutual love have missed the best thing that life has to give. Love is something far more than desire for sexual intercourse; it is the principal means of escape from loneliness which afflicts most men and women throughout the greater part of their lives. (122-123)

Loneliness is correlated with social anxiety, social inhibition, sadness, hostility, distrust, and low self-esteem, characteristics that hamper one's ability to interact in skillful and rewarding ways. Indeed, lonely individuals have been shown to have difficulty in forming and maintaining meaningful relationships. They are also less likely to share information about themselves with their peers,

and that helps to explain why they report a lack of intimacy with close friends. The cognitive approach to loneliness is based on the fact that loneliness is characterized by distinct differences in perceptions and attributions.

There are a number of psychological approaches that can help people with loneliness. The three with the most relevant research evidence are cognitive behavioural therapy, mindfulness, and positive psychology. These are not used as single approaches in isolation but used in a mixture that best suits the situation. These approaches have a much wider application in seeking to address loneliness. Cognitive behavioural therapy helps people understand their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours so they can change some of these to manage their difficulties.

Mindfulness can help people become aware of their thoughts during difficult times and choose to accept or reject them. Positive psychology promotes positive emotions, helping people to override negative feelings and thought patterns. These are the approaches that our work to date has established as most promising. Others may be effective but we know less about them, which is one reason why more research in this field would be valuable. These are the approaches that has established as more promising.

Psychological approaches have the potential to be used to tackle loneliness in three broad categories. Firstly, the individuals can understand how loneliness affects them and those around them and build this understanding in to their everyday lives. This can be promoted by public campaigning. Secondly, the organisations providing services for people who may be lonely can adjust their work to use some of the learning about the psychology of loneliness. There is a group of people with chronic loneliness which may be part of a complex set

of problems or due to difficult life events such as bereavement. This group may be best helping them alleviate loneliness using psychological techniques.

John seems to be very mute to others, despite his longing for communication. The only person with whom he communicates is his mute friend Antonapoulos. He is deeply attached to him other than anyone else. He used to share with him his feelings, but after he leaves, John becomes a loner. However, the characters in the novel seek solace from him for getting relief from their problems. Singer is significant to many other characters. Despite his own loneliness, he provides a sense of relief to others, unknowingly. Singer's personality is desperately passive and socially withdrawn. Though his co-characters find solace when spending time with him, he feels pressurised by his actions.

But for others, John is just a sounding board at whom they speak their thoughts without being judgemental. His passive nature makes them think of being accepted by the other. However, they do not realise that he is unable to express himself and he himself is a troubled man inside. The only friendship that Singer has is with his other mate, Mick Kelly. She finds herself reluctant to communicate with anyone. John acts as a comforting partner and confidante to Mick. Even though he fights with his own isolation in life, he gives Mick the needed solace. He turns to Mick for everything and projects his own insecurities and needs only to her.

She too understands John's passiveness to be kind and forgets to empathise with his feelings. She is deeply attracted to Singer, but the relationship does not last longer, as she finds her path in life. After Mick leaves him, he sees that the society is totally antagonistic to a deaf and mute person,

without emphasizing their feelings. The theme of loneliness is evident throughout the novel. Singer never changes to express his feelings to anyone. He never ever learns to communicate properly with his co-characters. Even after meeting new acquaintances after his best friend's death, he lives in loneliness. This lack of communication in John makes his life a lonely tragedy.

Each of the five main characters in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, strives to break out of his or her isolated existence. The reasons for each character's loneliness are very different; the deaf-mute John Singer cannot communicate with most of the world because he cannot speak; Mick Kelly cannot communicate with anyone in her family because they do not share her intelligence and ambition; Biff Brannon is left alone when his wife dies; Doctor Copeland is alienated from his family and from other black people because of his education and viewpoints and in the fact that he is a newcomer in town.

His mother had been born a slave, and after freedom, she was a washerwoman. His father was a preacher who had once known John Brown. They had taught him, and out of the two or three dollars they had earned each week they saved. When he was seventeen years old, they had sent him North with eighty dollars hidden in his shoe.... And all the while he studied and read and went to school. His father died and his mother did not live long without him. And after ten years of struggle, he was a doctor and he knew his mission and he came to South again. (130)

The Loneliness from which each character suffers is a combination of personal and environmental factors. However, all of the characters feel profoundly alone in some sense or another, and all of them desperately need to

communicate their feelings with somebody who understands them. All five, with the exception of Biff, confide in Singer the things that make them spiritually lonesome. Though it is never made clear, the only reason Biff does not discuss his personal conflicts with anyone. Biff still finds Singer's presence comforting. After talking to Singer, the characters almost always feel soothed.

Loneliness is synonymous with perceived social isolation, not with objective social isolation. People can live relatively solitary lives and not feel lonely, and conversely, they can live an ostensibly rich social life and feel lonely nevertheless. Loneliness is defined as a distressing feeling that accompanies the perception that one's social needs are not being met by the quantity or especially the quality of one's social relationships. Feelings of loneliness generally succeed in motivating connection or reconnection with others following geographic relocation or bereavement, for instance, thereby diminishing or abolishing feelings of social isolation.

Loneliness has serious consequences for cognition, emotion, behaviour, and health. The effects of loneliness seem to accrue over time to accelerate physiological aging. The impact of loneliness on cognition was assessed in a recent review of the literature. Loneliness has been associated with personality disorders and psychoses.

Feelings of loneliness were hypnotically induced, which indicates that loneliness not only increases depressive symptoms but also increases perceived stress, fear of negative evaluation, anxiety, and anger, and diminishes optimism and self-esteem. Negative social expectations, thereby setting in motion self-fulfilling prophecy in which lonely people actively distance themselves from would be social partners even as they believe that the cause of the social distance

is attributable to others and is beyond their own control. This self-reinforcing loneliness loop is accompanied by feelings of hostility, stress, pessimism, anxiety, and low self-esteem and represents a dispositional tendency that activates neurobiological and behavioural mechanisms that contribute to adverse health outcomes.

One of the consequences of loneliness and implicit vigilance for social threat is a diminished capacity for self-regulation. The ability to regulate one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour is critical to accomplish personal goals or to comply with social norms. In middle-aged and older adults, greater loneliness was associated with less effort applied to the maintenance and optimisation of positive emotions. Compromised regulation of emotion in lonely individuals explained their diminished likelihood of performing any physical activity, and loneliness also predicted a decrease in physical activity, and loneliness also predicted a decrease in physical activity over time.

Loneliness is the state of distress or discomfort that results when one perceives a gap between one's desires for social connection and actual experiences of it. Even some people who are surrounded by others throughout the day or are in a long-lasting marriage still experience a deep and pervasive loneliness. Loneliness poses serious threats to well-being as well as long-term physical health. Whether a person lives in isolation or not, feeling a lack of social connectedness can be painful. Loneliness can be described in different ways. A lack of authenticity in relationships can result in feelings of loneliness. For some, not having a coveted animal companion or the absence of a quiet presence in the home can trigger loneliness.

There's evidence that lonely individuals have a sort of negativity bias in evaluating social interactions. Lonely people pick up on signs of potential rejection more quickly than do others, perhaps better to avoid it and protect themselves. People who feel lonely need to be aware of this bias so as to override it in seeking out companionship. Feelings of loneliness and isolation affect people of all ages, although adolescents and the elderly may be especially likely to be impacted. A person can't die simply from feeling too lonely, lonely people have higher rates of mortality and certain diseases supports the idea that, over time, chronic loneliness can play a role in increasing the risk of dying.

People who are lonely can understand the reasons for their experiences in different ways. Attributional style is how people often unconsciously explain various life events to themselves. As Jake Blount explains his life events to Singer in the novel, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. This is important because how people understand the causes of their loneliness can have important effects on their self-esteem, expectations for the future, emotional reactions, and coping behaviour. Attributional styles are critical to the experience of loneliness and how it can be addressed. If people feel that they have little chance of being able to change their situation then they are much more likely to lose motivation to change.

These different attributional styles overlap with different styles of coping with loneliness. People who feel lonely can have biases in how they process their social experiences. This is called social cognition. It affects the way information about other people and social situations is processed, stored and applied. Those experiencing loneliness will vary in their social cognitions compared to those who are not lonely. They may be more inclined to process

information negatively and more attentive to social rejection cues. They may have greater fear of rejection, being a burden or a distrust of other people.

One common description of loneliness is the feeling we get when our need for rewarding social contact and relationships is not met. But loneliness is not always the same as being alone. We may choose to be alone and live happily without much contact with other people, while others may find this is a lonely experience. Or you may have lots of social contacts, or be in a relationship or part of a family, and still feel lonely, especially if you don't feel understood or cared for by the people around us. Feeling lonely isn't a mental health problem, but the two are strongly linked. Having a mental health problem can increase one's chance of feeling lonely.

Loneliness is both a cause and contributor to depression, and when loneliness and depression co-exist there is an increased risk of early mortality. This is important as depression is the most common mental health problem in later life. The relationship between depression and loneliness means that by alleviating one we may be able to reduce the other. Loneliness is also associated with anxiety, particularly social anxiety. It is a common type of anxiety disorder where a person feels fearful or anxious in some certain or all social situations, including meeting new people or exchanges within everyday situations.

Bereavement is one of the principal risk factors for loneliness. Support for bereavement plays a key role in tackling loneliness. Whilst family and friends are the route to alleviating for many, older people have reported the difficulties of talking about loneliness with them alongside grief. Timely bereavement support which includes discussions about loneliness have the potential to reduce loneliness and prevent it from becoming chronic.

The fourth chapter explores the main theme of Isolation in the novel, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. The analysis shifts towards the concept of how the society isolates an individual and then how an individual isolates himself or herself. The theme Isolation has been analysed with reference to theories.

Chapter Four

Isolation as a Defence Mechanism

Isolation undergone by each character in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* is a combination of personal and environmental factors. However, all of the characters feel intensely alone in some sense or another, and all of them desperately need to communicate their feelings with somebody who understands them. Throughout the novel, McCullers introduces the reader to four extremely

complex and interesting characters battling with the isolation and struggles they face. Singer's lack of response leaves the characters around him with a confidence. It is almost as if he is a mere diary to them; he listens, and they share everything. Despite his own sense of isolation, the characters use him as a mechanism to battle their own remoteness.

Singer is a spectator, even when it comes to his own life. And the way he watches movies is how he acts with other people. He just takes it all in without really connecting with what he sees. The problem with being an observer is that it means Singer will always be just a bit removed from what's going on, a bit isolated from the world around him. Mick is lonely and bored possessed with music. She is a young girl who is struggling with finding herself, sharing her thoughts and feelings, and growing in an impoverished household that is trying its best to keep going. She uses music as her escape and uses it to battle with the isolation she faces, along with her confidant John Singer.

Mick Kelly has four siblings and she feels unable to really connect with anyone other than her young brother, George, and even seems to enjoy her own isolation. She makes an attempt at giving a party for her school friends; but winds up spending the end of the evening as she spends most other nights alone on a neighbour's lawn, listening to the distant sounds of music on the neighbour's radio. Jake Blount is wrestling with social isolation brought on by his frequent drunkenness and resultant bad reputation but he also feels a deeper kind of loneliness. Blount is a radical who believes capitalism is evil and doomed and his intense, far-left beliefs make him an anomaly and indeed a kind of threat in his sleepy Southern mill town.

All five with the exception of Biff, confide in Singer the things that make them spiritually lonesome. Though it's never made clear, the only reason Biff does not discuss his personal conflicts with Singer is most likely because Biff himself is unable to articulate these personal conflicts. Biff Brannon longs for children and a family, but after his wife Alice dies, he finds himself unsure of whether he'll ever be able to give the love he has in his heart to another person. Regardless, Biff still finds Singer's presence comforting. After talking to Singer, the characters almost always feel comfortable.

His fascination with his niece, Baby, and his neighbour Mick veers toward the inappropriate but McCullers suggests that Biff isn't sexually interested in the young girls, but rather simply so saddened by the thought he might never have children that he becomes obsessed with his daughter figures. Doctor Copeland is respected and well-loved in his community, he is the only medical professional who treats the black community and he takes pride in his work. Doctor Copeland finds himself feeling isolated from his community and his family, most acutely from his daughter, Portia. He is both ideological and socially isolated, and furthermore has strained relationships with most of his children.

Minor characters also feel isolated. Mr. Kelly longs for just one of his children to give him the time of day. After the horrible accident in which Baby is shot, George feels he must lock himself away from the rest of the world. Harry Minowitz is as much of an outsider among his peers as Mick is. McCullers's big point here is that everyone faces isolation and must learn to be make peace with his or her own unique personality. In fact, read in his light, Singer's suicide is unavoidable, as he is unhappy the moment his friend leaves town. McCullers

prizes individuality and believes this is the secret to escaping any suffering arising from the inevitable feelings of loneliness and alienation everyone experiences

According to Sigmund Freud, in psychoanalytic theory, Isolation is a repression in which the individual screens out painful feelings by recalling a disturbing or painful event without experiencing the emotion associated with it. For people of all ages, social connection is vital to survival. They're hardwired to depend on one another for support. When they don't get the connection they need, they're sadder, sicker, and more at risk of early death. As Singer longs for the love from Antonopoulos an unkind man, he is depressed and goes to visit him in the assault, and after hearing the news that Antonopoulos has died, Singer commits suicide himself due to his depression that he is left alone.

Isolation is a defence mechanism in psychoanalytic theory first proposed by Sigmund Freud. While related to repression, the concept distinguishes itself in several ways. It is characterized as a mental process involving the creation of a gap between an unpleasant or threatening cognition, and other thoughts and feelings. Freud illustrated the concept with the example of a person beginning a train of thought and then pausing for a moment before continuing to a different subject. His theory stated that by inserting an interval the person was "letting it be understood symbolically that he will not allow his thoughts about that impression or activity to come into associative contact with other thoughts." As a defense against harmful thoughts, isolation prevents the self from allowing these cognitions to become recurrent and possibly damaging to the self-concept.

This lack of connection is more common than many people realise. According to a survey, more than three out of five Americans feel chronically

lonely. It's normal for anyone who feels socially isolated to struggle with mental health, but there are steps they can take to cope with isolation and feel more connected. Social isolation can affect nearly every aspect of our mental health. Loneliness is different to social isolation. Social isolation is not necessarily a negative experience. It is a relatively objective measure of the number of relationships someone has. Studies show that feelings of isolation can be linked to; suicidal attempts, restless sleep, decreased ability to regulate eating, more stress, and greater difficulty paying attention and doing complete tasks.

People of all ages are vulnerable to the effects of social isolation. Older adults are vulnerable emotionally and cognitively. Social isolation can cause up to a 40% increase in dementia risk. Yet it is hard to deny that the ending of this novel, is not sorrowful and eye-opening. McCullers's intriguing takes on isolation starts with surrounding characters but ultimately ends in the greatest isolation of the one who aids the rest.

A particularly devastating consequence of feeling socially isolated is cognitive decline and dementia. Feeling socially isolated impairs the capacity to self-regulate, and these effects are so automatic as to seem outside of awareness. Isolation has been defined as an objective state whereby the number of contacts a person has can be counted, whereas loneliness is a subjective experience. While the terms may have slightly different meanings, both can be painful experiences and have a harmful impact on the individual. Social isolation is a term often used interchangeably with loneliness.

Social isolation describes the absence of social contact and can lead to loneliness. It is a state of being cut off from normal social networks, which can be triggered by factors such as loss of mobility, unemployment, or health issues.

Isolation can involve staying at home for lengthy periods of time, having no access to services or community involvement, and little or no communication with friends, family, and acquaintances. There are many contributing factors to social isolation. Many things can prevent people from leaving the house and having contact with other members of society, such as long-term illness, disabilities, transport issues, unemployment, and economic struggles, or domestic violence.

Some may be physically able to go out and meet people but are inhibited from doing so by factors such as depression, social adversity, becoming a caregiver for a loved one, or bereavement. Any of these factors can be barriers to forming and maintaining social networks and can lead to loneliness and isolation. Social isolation relates to a lack of social contacts and interactions with family members, friends, or the wider community, and results in diminished health and well-being. And yet many interventions aimed at enhanced social participation are not effective because they do not match the needs of the socially isolated older adults themselves.

Little is known about the experiences of socially isolated older adults and their need for help and support. The social network literature recognises a wide variety of definitions of social isolation, where social isolation and loneliness are not always clearly separated. Social isolation is intentionally distinguished from loneliness. Loneliness and isolation do not always coexist. Socially isolated persons can experience intense feelings of loneliness, but not all socially isolated people experience such feelings. Likewise, one can be lonely without being socially isolated. Yet, loneliness can be conceived as a risk

factor for social isolation, because persons who deal with prolonged feelings of loneliness often see their social network shrink.

Social isolation is when we do not interact socially with others. It does not require physical isolation. Feeling socially isolated and lonely are different concepts and yet they are interconnected. Social isolation takes two forms; Socially isolated by choice, and feeling socially isolated. Many people of all ages live alone and are socially isolated. When we have little or no contact with other people for extended periods of time and we start missing having more people around us, we are feeling socially isolated. Some people have a high need for a number of people to interact with, and how often they meet up; others only need a few people and less frequency.

Feeling socially isolated is a feeling of emptiness or distress about being by ourselves. Social isolation can affect anyone. However, the people who experience the highest levels of social isolation would be those who: are typically discriminated against by being in the minority; are already experiencing a mental health or physical health problems; have undeveloped social skills; are not able to understand social cues; have not had many meaningful relationships in the past to draw on in difficult times. Loneliness helps people who feel socially isolated to understand themselves and the people around them and to work to improve their healthy interactions with people.

Physical isolation is the circumstance of being alone and physically cut off from people where we live. Physically isolated people often can have ways of communicating with other people through telephone or using the internet, and can sometimes still get visitors, like the characters in the novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, Mick Kelly, Jake Blount, Biff Brannon meet Singer and

communicate with them about their life events and how they are isolated. John Singer visits his friend Antonapoulos to communicate with him. The extent of our well-being depends on the circumstances of our physical isolation.

Physical isolation can create social isolation, emotional isolation, or loneliness. Physical isolation takes two forms; Physically isolated and satisfied, and physically isolated not by choice. Many people of all ages live alone and are physically isolated. Even on the rare times, they feel loneliness as a temporary lapse in their happiness, they have confidence that they can reach out to other people, and through those connections, they will feel positive for a significant period of time afterward. Change happening to people they know could start them worrying about how many contacts they will have and the fear of not being able to visit heightens their awareness of being alone, such as John Singer is afraid to lose his friend Antonapoulos, worrying that he can't have contact with him like before. This made Singer feel physically isolated.

Physical isolation is sometimes used as a form of punishment or as a way of diffusing a deteriorating behaviour. The combination of the person's ability to cope alone, the length of time of being alone, the place where the isolation occurs, and who is doing the isolating, will be a determining factor on whether more damage than good is being done. Social isolation is when they do not interact socially with others, like the characters in the novel, but feel comfortable interacting only with John Singer. It does not require physical isolation. Feeling socially isolated and loneliness are different concepts and yet they are interconnected, one can exacerbate the other, or they can be simultaneously causing distress.

For people of all ages, social connection is vital to surviving. They're hardwired to depend on one another for support. When they don't get the connection they need, they're sadder, sicker, and more at risk of early death. As Singer gets sad when he doesn't get the proper connection with his friend Antonopoulos and also dies of depression after hearing the news of his friend's death. This lack of connection is more common than many people realise. It's normal for anyone who feels socially isolated to struggle with mental health, but there are steps they can take to cope with isolation and feel more connected. Social isolation can affect nearly every aspect of your mental health as Jake Blount in the novel.

People of all ages are vulnerable to the effects of social isolation. No matter how old they are, it's important to recognise when they struggle with social isolation. To cope up with isolation, they should try to; Acknowledge their feelings, that is sometimes it seems easier to ignore their feelings when they're struggling, especially when it feels like they have no one to talk to. They should take some time to acknowledge that things are hard. If they need to, reach out to a therapist. Being outdoors is beneficial to their mental and physical health. The natural light can help to boost their mood and the vitamin D in sunlight can ease symptoms of depression.

Social isolation represents a lens through which to investigate these behavioural, neural, hormonal, cellular, and genetic mechanisms. What was especially surprising was that social isolation was as strong a risk factor for morbidity as smoking, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, and high blood pressure. The social control hypothesis was posited to explain the effect of isolation. There are two reasons to regard the social control hypothesis as insufficient. First, the

studies of isolation and health behaviours indicate that social control does not explain many of the effects of isolation in humans.

Second, experimental studies in nonhuman social species indicate that isolation has direct, deleterious psychological effects. Perceived social isolation is a more important determinant of deleterious outcomes than is the variation in objective social isolation that is seen in population-based studies; and the effects of perceived isolation in these longitudinal studies share much in common with the experimental manipulations of isolations in nonhuman social species. The importance of social contact has long been recognised as a fundamental need for humans. The concept of isolation is used throughout the lay and scientific literature and has a primarily negative connotation for humans.

Isolation has been theoretically defined as a state in which an individual experiences a reduction in the level of normal sensory and social input with possible involuntary limitations on physical state or movement. Systematic studies of isolation using this concept can ultimately enhance the knowledge base and contribute to the quality of life for isolated persons. Isolation is the experience of being separated from others. It may result from being physically separated from others, such as when a person lives in a remote area. Isolation can also result from being emotionally removed from a community like the characters Mick Kelly, Jake Blount and Doctor Copeland.

An isolated person may experience loneliness or low self-esteem. Over time, a person may develop social anxiety, depression, or other mental health concerns. The right therapists can help individuals build social skills and connect with others. Therapy can also help people recover from the effects of isolation. Social isolation is an absence of social relationships. It is distinct from

solitude, which is simply the state of being alone. Social isolation can occur in solitude or in the vicinity of others. Another name for isolation is Solitude, it is a lack of contact with people.

It can have both positive and negative effects, depending on the situation. Short-term solitude is often valued as a time when one may work, think, or rest without being disturbed. Solitude can be chosen or forced, healthy or unhealthy. Social isolation describes an unwanted and often harmful experience. A person may be experiencing social isolation if they; avoid social interaction due to shame or depression, they spend extended periods of time alone, they experience social anxiety or fears of abandonment at the idea of social interaction, they have only limited or superficial social contact, they lack important social or professional relationships, and they develop severe distress and loneliness.

Emotional isolation occurs when someone is unable or unwilling to share their emotions with others, as the character John Singer in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* is not able to share his feelings to any of the other characters especially his close friend Antonapoulos,

He wanted to talk to Antonapoulos of all the thoughts that had ever been in his mind and heart, but there was not time. His grey eyes glittered and his quick, intelligent face expressed great strain. Antonapoulos watched him drowsily, and his friend did not know just what he really understood..... Just before the bus pulled away from the kerb he turned to Singer and his smile was very bland and remote, as though already they were many miles apart. (9)

Someone may be reluctant to discuss anything but the most superficial matters. Without emotional support, they may feel “shut down” or numb. Emotional isolation can occur due to social isolation. Yet a person may feel emotionally isolated despite having a social network. Even though relationships are necessary for our well-being, they can trigger negative feelings and thoughts.

Emotional isolation can act as a defense mechanism to protect a person from distress. Someone in an intimate relationship can also feel emotional isolation. One or both partners may feel alone within the relationship, rather than supported or fulfilled, as Alice feels isolated because of her husband Biff Brannon in the novel and he too feels isolated because Alice doesn’t leave him near her. “Alice it was her hair, she used never to let him sleep with her when he rubbed oil in his scalp” (26) Infidelity, abuse, and other trust issues often cause such feelings. A couple’s counsellor can help partners identify the source of their distress. The couple can then work to improve communication and rebuild trust.

The role of gender in isolation is complex. Men tend to be more isolated than women as the characters John Singer, Jake Blount, and Doctor Copeland feel isolated in the novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. Despite this isolation, men are less likely to admit to feeling lonely. Western cultures often socialise men to be tough and stoic, even at the expense of emotional connection. Homophobia can deter men from seeking out friendships with other men. Sexism may cause them to devalue friendships with women. Cultural and social factors can also isolate women. The women are the minority at work or school, they may feel left out, as the character Mick Kelly is ignored by the students of her school in this novel.

Social media promises to help users feel more connected. It doesn't mean that social media use is always harmful or that all people who use social media feel isolated. For some people, social media offers access to a sense of community and belonging. This can be especially true for marginalised individuals who might have trouble connecting with people in their physical location. Social media may be a factor in loneliness when it replaces in-person connections. Social media is just one form of interaction, or when it increases access to meaningful relationships, it may reduce isolation.

Isolation can increase the risks of mental health issues such as depression, social anxiety, and low self-esteem. Isolation and mental health issues can also interact with one another. A person may develop depression because of intense loneliness, then even feel more isolated because of their depression. Extreme isolation can have catastrophic effects on mental health. Humans are social animals who need human contact to thrive. And sometimes even to survive. Inmates held in solitary confinement, especially for extended periods of time, may experience hallucinations, insomnia, and difficulty.

Whitt argues that by using Christian imagery, McCullers assigns Singer the role of a Christ figure depersonalised by his visitors and fellow townspeople, and "because Copeland, Mick, and Blount create Singer to meet their needs, their God is not divine. He is all too human... isolation damns Singer. His song is never heard" (34-5). Whit argues that this is what ultimately leads to Singer committing suicide, "the failure of expression" (34) and he refers to him as "the loneliest hunter of them all" (29) Laurie Champion in her work argues that Singer is a symbolic Christ only in regard to the novel's central theme, the spiritual isolation.

McCullers mythical characterisation of Singer as Christ demonstrates the individual's isolation from humanity, Racism is the result of human isolation. And in the end, all individuals are lonely hunters. Social isolation is a state of complete or complete lack of contact between an individual and society. It differs from loneliness, which reflects a temporary and involuntary lack of contact with other humans in the world. Social isolation can be an issue for individuals of any age, though symptoms may differ by age group. Social isolation has similar characteristics in both temporary instances and for those with a historical lifelong isolation cycle.

All types of social isolation can include staying home for lengthy periods of time, having no communication with family, acquaintances, or friends, and wilfully avoiding any contact with other humans when those opportunities do arise. Moreover, the social interactions of individuals who feel socially isolated are more negative and less subjectively satisfying. This contributes to a vicious cycle in which the person becomes more and more isolated. True social isolation over years and decades can be a chronic condition affecting all aspects of a person's existence.

Social isolation can lead to feelings of loneliness, fear of others, or negative self-esteem. Lack of consistent human contact can also cause conflict with friends. The socially isolated person may occasionally talk to or cause problems with family members. In the case of mood-related isolation, the individual may isolate during a depressive episode only to 'surface' when their mood improves. Relationships can be a struggle, as the individual may reconnect with others during a healthier mood only to return to an isolated state during a subsequent low or depressed mood.

Whilst every individual will experience isolation at some point in their lives to a certain degree. Older people are particularly vulnerable to experiencing social isolation. Although isolation is associated with a reduction in health status and therefore a decreased quality of life, findings suggest that concepts may have independent impacts on health and therefore should be regarded as individual characters.

Chapter five sums up- the important aspects dealt in the previous chapters

Chapter Five

Summation

McCullers successfully generalises the state of metaphysical isolation as an eternal human condition. *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, is a tragic but beautiful story about genuine human feelings and emotions. It tells us about isolation, loneliness, friendship, love, despair, longing, regrets, and many other things which either make us suffer or fill our hearts and many other things which either make us suffer or fill our hearts with joy and happiness. It is as touching and heart-shattering as life itself. John Singer is one of the main characters of the story and it is impossible to not relate oneself to him. It is true that people who don't have any problem with hearing and speaking can't fully understand deaf-mute people.

John Singer couldn't either speak or hear, but he could read lips and be genuinely interested. Singer and Antonopoulos's close relationship read literally is the result of two men realising they must stick together if they want to be understood and supported, Singer is animated, open, serious, and curious. Antonopoulos is cold, uncommunicative, and occasionally self-indulgent. This suggests that what binds the two men together is not true friendship, understanding, or love, but instead the simple fact of their shared disability. Antonopoulos's behaviour becomes erratic and unpredictable, Singer is

flustered and confused by his friend's increasingly sullen and adversarial disposition and this fact makes him feel like the person he'd thought to be his constant, steadfast, predictable companion.

Even though Antonopoulos has family in town, no one really cares for the man the way Singer does. This demonstrates the depths of their isolation, and the difficulty on the horizon for Singer as his friend pulls further and further away. Though Singer is desperate not to be separated from his friend, it is clear that Antonopoulos is a burden to his cousin. Antonopoulos is sent away. The other characters' stories are less tragic than Singer's but not less mesmerising. Biff defends his choices to his wife and couches his interest in Blount as empathy and kindness, he also admits to a kind of sickened fascination with the man's downward spiral. It is clear that communication between Biff and his wife has broken down and they can't hold a conversation very long at all.

Mick is precocious yet shy around Singer, she is a feisty tomboy who's often lonely in spite of being surrounded by a huge family and a house full of boarders. She doesn't feel connected to anyone around her and longs for peace and quiet so that she can be alone with her thoughts, her music, and her day-dreams, but at the same time, her desire for a relationship with Singer shows that she does want to share some kind of connection with someone else.

McCullers projects Jake Blount, the ineffectual social troublemaker, and John Singer who share their universal need to love and converse with a kindred spirit. The evocative quality of this story may obtain partly from the impression of getting an inside look at multiple personalities. Portia, Kelly's family housekeeper, and cook are isolated from her family which reflects Mick's own

feelings of isolation from her family, in spite of the fact that the two situations are obviously very different.

Jake Blount's loneliness and despair from the night before are somewhat ameliorated by Singer's kindness and generosity. He is ashamed of his behaviour the night before and over the last several days. Jake is only concerned with spreading his message even if it falls on ears unable to process or use the information they're receiving. Doctor Copeland is clearly kind, curious, and empathetic, but also quite lonely. He is isolated from his children, and it seems that only Portia ever comes to visit.

It is somewhat ironic that all these lonely characters seek out the same person for comfort; their relationships with Singer make them a kind of community, but they are so focused on their own individual issues that this connection isn't apparent to them. Each of the four main characters has their own separate reasons for making their initial visits to Singer's room, but what keeps them coming back is the feeling of being seen, heard, known, and, above all accepted. Singer is a mirror for their insecurities and anxieties, and he helps each of them to see themselves a little bit kindlier.

The thematic content of McCullers work is compatible: *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* reflects that complexity and though McCullers's book sometimes uses the language of Racism. According to Steve Jones, Racism is something that's done to others, it's a confection, it's a socially-engineered notion. Race, however, is supposedly something objective, scientific. Doctor Benedict Mary Copeland, the black doctor who is one of the novel's main characters, is the character whose experiences directly intersects with the theme of racism, inequality, and injustice. Doctor Copeland longs to inspire the black community

in his town to stand together against white people, institutions, and principles which oppress them.

McCullers considers those forces create hostility and distance between the Individual and Society. McCullers uses the course of her major characters to illustrate how society overpowers individuality. Jake, an anti-capitalist, longs to share the truth about society with the people he meets, but he is unable to fulfill his purpose. Mick stood against society for as long as she could, but in the end, she too was forced to either become a part of society's machine or watch her family suffer in poverty.

Failure of Love is a good way to simply convey her complex theme in the novel. Characters have trouble with a relationship based on love, whether the relationships are with family members, friends, or romantic partners. Love is complex, an ever-changing concept that has developed over time. McCullers would say that love is always problematical and that people must not be just "settled" to avoid loneliness; it's better to be alone than to be trapped in an unhealthy relationship of any type.

The theme of the failure of communication pervades the novel. People think they are communicating well and mostly feel satisfied with their communications when in fact their ideas are not being heard or understood by others. According to I. A. Richards, two people in a conversation could fully understand what each other meant if they had a lifetime of identical experiences. But communication is best when both parties have a long and varied acquaintanceship, close familiarity, and lives whose circumstances have often corresponded, in short, an exceptional fund of common experience. In a case of situational irony, Singer is in the same situation as Antonopoulos and

understands him all. Singer also likes to write to Antonapoulos, who cannot read.

McCullers paints a portrait of the theme of loneliness look like from different angles; spiritual, psychological, ideological, racial, and existential. As Mick Kelly, Jake Blount, Biff Brannon, and Doctor Benedict Mady Copeland individually seek companionship and validation from John Singer, they never realise or even stop to consider the fact that they are not alone in their feelings of remoteness and seclusion. John Singer is perhaps the most lonely and isolated character in the novel. Though he is the central character, he is also a great mystery.

The effects of loneliness seem to accrue over time to accelerate physiological aging. Loneliness has been associated with personality disorders and psychoses. According to Young, there are at least three parts to loneliness; situational, chronic, and transient. While loneliness is not a mental health issue in itself, mental health problems, particularly depression and social anxiety, can cause loneliness.

There are a number of psychological approaches that can help people with loneliness. Cognitive behavioural therapy helps people understand their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours so they can change some of these to manage their difficulties. Mindfulness can help people become aware of their thoughts during difficult times and choose to accept or reject them. Positive psychology promotes positive emotions, helping people to override negative feelings and thought patterns.

Psychological approaches have the potential to be used to tackle loneliness in three broad categories. Firstly, the individuals can understand how

loneliness affects them and those around them and build this understanding into their everyday lives. Secondly, the organisations providing services for people who may be lonely can adjust their work to use some of the learning about the psychology of loneliness. There is a group of people with chronic loneliness which may be part of a complex set of problems or due to difficult life events such as bereavement.

John seems to be very mute to others, despite his longing for communication. The only person with whom he communicates is his mute friend Antonapoulos. He is deeply attached to him other than anyone else. He used to share with him his feelings, but after he leaves, John becomes a loner. However, the characters in the novel seek solace from him for getting relief from their problems. Despite his own loneliness, he provides a sense of relief to others, unknowingly. Singer's personality is desperately passive and socially withdrawn.

His passive nature makes them think of being accepted by the other. The only friendship that Singer has is with his other mate, Mick Kelly. She finds herself reluctant to communicate with anyone. John acts as a comforting partner and confidante to Mick. Even though he fights with his own isolation in life, he gives Mick the needed solace. Each of the five main characters in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, strives to break out of his or her isolated existence. The reasons for each character's loneliness are very different. Support for bereavement plays a key role in tackling loneliness. Timely bereavement support which includes views on loneliness have the potential to reduce loneliness and prevent it from becoming chronic.

In *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, each of the character undergoes isolation, a combination of personal and environmental factors. However, all of the characters feel intensely alone in some sense or another, and all of them desperately need to communicate their feelings with somebody who understands them. Singer's lack of response leaves the characters around him with a confidant. It is almost as if he is a mere diary to them; he listens, and they share everything. Despite his own sense of isolation, the characters use him as a mechanism to battle their own remoteness.

Singer is a spectator, even when it comes to his own life. And the way he watches movies is how he acts with other people. He just takes it all in without really connecting with what he sees. She is a young girl who is struggling with finding herself and sharing her thoughts and feelings. She uses music as her escape and uses it to battle the isolation she faces, along with her confidant John Singer. Mick Kelly has four siblings and she feels unable to really connect with anyone, and even seems to enjoy her own isolation. She makes an attempt at giving a party for her school friends; but winds up spending the end of the evening as she spends most other nights alone on a neighbour's lawn, listening to the music with a neighbour's radio.

Jake Blount is wrestling with social isolation brought on by his frequent drunkenness and resultant bad reputation but he also feels a deeper kind of loneliness. Biff Brannon longs for children and a family, but after his wife Alice dies, he finds himself unsure of whether he'll ever be able to give the love he has in his heart to another person. Regardless, Biff still finds Singer's presence comforting. After talking to Singer, the characters almost always feel comfortable.

People of all ages, are hardwired to depend on one another for support. When they don't get the connection they need, they're sadder, sicker, and more at risk of early death. As Singer gets sad when he doesn't get the proper connection with his friend Antonapoulos and also dies of depression after hearing the news of his friend's death. This lack of connection is more common than many people realise. People of all ages are vulnerable to the effects of social isolation. No matter how old they are, it's important to recognise when they struggle with social isolation.

To cope up with isolation, they should try to, acknowledge their feelings, that is sometimes it seems easier to ignore their feelings when they're struggling, especially when it feels like they have no one to talk to. They should take some time to acknowledge that things are hard. Emotional isolation occurs when someone is unable or unwilling to share their emotions with others, as the character John Singer in *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* is not able to share his feelings to any of the other characters especially his close friend Antonapoulos,

Emotional isolation can occur due to social isolation. Yet a person may feel emotionally isolated despite having a social network. Emotional isolation can act as a defense mechanism to protect a person from distress. Someone in an intimate relationship can also feel emotional isolation. One or both partners may feel alone within the relationship, rather than supported or fulfilled, as Alice feels isolated because of her husband Biff Brannon in the novel and he too feels isolated because Alice doesn't leave him near her.

Social media may be a factor in loneliness when it replaces in-person connections. Social media is just one form of interaction, or when it increases access to meaningful relationships, it may reduce isolation. Isolation can

increase the risks of mental health issues such as depression, social anxiety, and low self-esteem. Isolation and mental health issues can also interact with one another. All types of social isolation can include staying home for lengthy periods of time, having no communication with family, acquaintances, or friends, and wilfully avoiding any contact with other humans when those opportunities do arise.

After the analysis on the aspects of loneliness and isolation in the novel, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*, it is clearly stated that people of all age groups suffer from loneliness and isolation and become mentally affected, suffer from high blood pressure, heart disease, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, lack of sleep, Alzheimer's disease, and even death. The steps to overcome the struggles of facing loneliness and isolation and survive happily in the society without any health issues or death throws light on the McCullers' ability to the novel *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*.

Works Cited

- Barran, Baroness Diana. "The Psychology of Loneliness: Why it matters and What we can do." *Campaign to End Loneliness*, July 2020.
- Brennan, Dan. "Social Isolation and Mental Health". *WebMD*, 11 Nov. 2021.
www.webmd.com/mental-health/social-isolation-mental-health/
- "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers: Theme of Loneliness."
Your Home Teacher, WordPress. www.whatistheurl.com/the-heart-is-a-lonely-hunter-by-carson-mccullers-theme-of-loneliness/
- Hawkley, C. Louise, and Cacioppo, T. John. "Loneliness Matters: A Theoretical and Empirical Review of Consequences and Mechanisms." *Ann Behav Med*, 30 Dec. 2013.
www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3874845/

- Kim, Ann Zimmerman and Callum, McKelvie. "American Culture: Traditions and Customs of the United States." 21 Dec. 2021.
- McCullers, Carson. *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter*. Penguin Classics, 2000.
- McClary, Jeffreys Theresa M. *Modalities of Injustice in the Subaltern Discourse*, Western Kentucky University, 2016.
- S. K. Mangal. "General Psychology." *Rohtak*, Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1 July. 1988.
- Tikkanen, Amy. "Lula Carson Smith". *Britannica*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 15 Feb. 2022. www.britannica.com/biography/Carson-McCullers
- "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter Study Guide". *Course Hero*, 14 July 2017. www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Heart-is-a-Lonely-Hunter/Themes
- Tanner, Alexandra. "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter Themes". *Lit Charts*, 14 May 2022. www.litcharts.com/lit/the-heart-is-a-lonely-hunter/themes
- Webster, Grace Virginia. "The Style of Carson McCullers: Realism and Symbolism". *Oklahoma State University*, May 1960.
- Zhao, Yang, "An Analysis of the Characters in The Heart is a Lonely Hunter". Atlantis Press. Nov 2016. www.atlantispress.com/proceedings/metes-16/25862906
- Zhang, Duan. "Narrative Perspectives in The Heart is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers". *Cultural Communication and Socialization Journal*. 26 May 2020.

Reclaiming Identity: A Study of Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*

A Project 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

submitted by

JEYA SHREE. P

(REG. NO. 20APEN12)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Racial Consciousness	15
Three	Altar of Sacrifice	28
Four	Milkman's Journey	40
Five	Summation	54
	Works cited	61

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Reclaiming Identity: A Study of Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfilment 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 Jeya Shree. P in the year 2021-2022 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

Betsy
Dr. A. Josephine Alangara Betsy

Guide

S. Vennila
Examiner *27/05/2022*

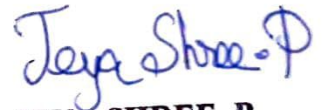
Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Assistant Prof. of English
Sarah Tucker College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 007

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Reclaiming Identity: A Study of Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*** 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 genuine effort and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Thoothukudi

May 2022


JEYA SHREE. P

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to **Lord Almighty** for the wisdom, peace of mind, and strength which He bestowed upon me, during the course of my study.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head, Department of English, for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide **Dr. A. Josephine Alangara Betsy**, Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I thank **Dr. K. Vinitha**, Librarian, St. Mary's College who extended her help in the use of the library for the reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided.

I am indebted to my parents for the great comforts I enjoyed and the good education they have provided me. I thank them for their trust, moral support and benevolence

PREFACE

Toni Morrison's one of the powerful writers of African-American literature. Her novels have made black history contemporary and brought black literary experience into American mainstream. Toni Morrison's novels reveal the attempts of the black people to sustain their mental sanity and spiritual health, social life and political strife in the midst of slave holding and dominating white civilization. With both a Pulitzer and a Nobel prize to her credit, no American writer is more distinguished than Toni Morrison and no one tells the story the way Toni Morrison does.

The project entitled **Reclaiming Identity: A Study of Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*** comprises of five chapters.

The first chapter **Introduction** discusses the origin and function of African -American literature. It examines how Toni Morrison rose to being the first Nobel Laureate from the African -American community.

The second chapter **Racial Consciousness** deals with the concept of racism as a Social problem and its effect on individuals through the characters in *Song of Solomon*.

The third chapter **Altar of Sacrifice** discusses the sacrifice of women in *Song of Solomon*.

The fourth chapter **Milkman's Journey** marks how Milkman's journey to find his ancestral history plays an important role in changing his thoughts of women in general.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up the important aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is a term that describes written and spoken material. Literature describes the culture and tradition of people and language. Literature is a blueprint for human society. It may vary from generation to generation. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Truth of Intercourse* says, "The difficulty of Literature is not to write, but to write what you mean; not to affect your reader, but to affect him precisely as you wish" (122). African-American literature is a body of literature that emerged from the Africans who were oppressed in America. As a branch of literature, it began in the eighteenth century with the work of writers as Phillis Wheatley. The African-American literature is mostly autobiographical and is dominated by spiritual narrative.

In African-American literature, Slave narrative is a new genre that developed in the middle of the nineteenth century and it is slave narrative. It accounts the experience of the escaped slaves and their lives in the south, their struggle towards freedom is displayed in those writing. These works highlight the suffering of an individual under slavery. At that time the debates over slavery led to impassioned literature on both sides, with two novels such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe representing the view of the abolitionist of the evil of the slavery. In African-American literature, the slave narratives were integral. It is divided into three distinct forms: tales of religious redemption, tales of inspiring the abolitionist struggle, and tales of progress. The blacks in America were offended when they were addressed as 'nigger', 'black ass' and 'negro' by the Americans. Many African individuals were destroyed by the white men by their background and culture. Education

and employment were prevented for the Blacks in the American society. They were doubly marginalized in every means. The solution to all racial problems was achieved only after the passing of Civil Rights Act in 1964. Even then some racist citizens tormented the poor migrants.

Pioneers of African American writing include Gayle Jones, Rashes Clark, Ishmael Reed, Jamaica Kincaid, Randall Kenan, and John Edgar Wideman are the poets who have also garnered attention. Rita Frances Dove won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1987. From 1933 to 1995, Dove served as Poet Laureate of the United States. In 1994, Cyrus Cassells *Soul Make A Path Through Shouting* was nominated for Pulitzer Prize. Cassells was recipient to the William Carlos Williams Award. Natasha Trethewey won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry with her book *Native Guard*, 2007. Edward P. Jones won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *The Known World*, 2004. His novel was about a black slaveholder in the antebellum south. Young African-Americans novelists include David Anthony Durba, Kalisha Buckhanon, Karen E. Quinones Miller, Tayari Jones, Mat Johnson, Colson Whitehead, and packer. African-American literature has gained added attention through the work of talk show host Oprah Winfrey. She repeatedly has leveraged her fame to promote Literature through the medium of her Oprah's Book club.

In the 20th century African American writings changed its focus into the plights of African women. As her position within the family is the focal point of this unending spiral of relationships, it became their primary concern. At the same time, the Black women writers wrested for recognition and had to fight against stiff opposition from their own male counterparts and this led to a constant criticism of any male characters created by these writers. Among

them, the three prominent women novelists are Paul Marshall, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker.

Alice Walker is an American novelist who coined the term 'Womanist' to mean "A black feminist or feminist of colour". As a poet, Walker treats a range of themes like freedom and individual expression, suicide, spirituality, love, the power of activism, ecology and civil rights.

Her novel *The Color Purple* (1982) for which she won the National Book Award for hardcover fiction and Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1983. It is a feminist work about an abused and uneducated African American women's struggle for empowerment. *The Color Purple* was praised for the depth of its female characters and for its eloquent use of Black English Vernacular.

Zora Neale Hurston was an influential author of African American literature and anthropologist who portrayed racial struggles in earlier literature. Of Hurston's four novels and fifty published short stories, plays and essays, the most notable work is *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937).

The major themes issued in this literature are Racism, Slavery, Gender issues, social equality, Religion, African American culture, Segregation, Migration and Feminism. The early Theme of African American literature was to be a citizen in post-revolutionary America, because they often faced resistance in their political and social autonomy from white public.

Toni Morrison was born on February 18, 1931 at Lorain, Ohio, United States of America. She is an American writer noted for her examination of black experience within the black community. She received Noble Prize for Literature on 1993. Morrison grew up in the American Midwest in a family that possessed an intense love of and appreciation of black culture. After

teaching at Texas Southern University for four years, she taught at Howard from 1957 to 1964. In 1965 she became a fiction editor and from 1984 she taught writing at the State University of New York at Albany, leaving in 1989 to join the faculty of Princeton University.

With Toni Morrison's writings one comes to definite turning point in the history of Black women's literature. Toni Morrison's works are fantastic earthy realism. They are deeply rooted in history and mythology. Her work resonates with mixture of pleasure and pain, wonder and horror. Primal in their essence, her characters come out with force and beauty of the gushing water, seemingly fantastic but as basic as the earth they stand on. They erupt, out of the world, sometimes gently often with force and terror. Her work is sensuality combined with an intrigue that only a piercing intellect could create.

Her novels are known for their epic themes, exquisite language and richly detailed African American characters who are central in their narrative. Morrison is keenly aware of her potential influence in the generations of African Americans. She occupies a central place in 20th century. Her epic themes and characters, her unique and sophisticated style of storytelling, and her ability to recreate urgent, long silenced voices have expanded about the complex, often confusing relationships between race and gender in contemporary society her main concern is to define the beauty and brutality of human condition and evoke the pathos and tragedy of human life.

Not isolated from culture and history, Toni Morrison through her fiction has been maintain and communicating important cultural values which otherwise might be lost. Her works reveal a blend of realism and fantasy, unsparing social analysis and passionate philosophical concerns and therefore

it is not a surprise that many critics label her work as “magical realism”. The stories of her novel are represented as ways of creating sense out of the chaos of reality for her characters and for readers as well by providing significant information about reality. Fictions, according to her have powerful epistemological effect and aesthetic firmness, besides providing opportunities for certain sorts of imaginative play and most importantly for giving the information for living.

At the 2012 ceremony, Obama said: “Toni Morrison’s prose brings us that kind of moral and emotional intensity that few writers never attempt. From ‘*Song of Solomon*’ to ‘*Beloved*’, Toni reaches us deeply using as a tone...’ lucky to be following along for the ride.”

Obama mourned her as a “national treasure.” He said in a statement: “Her writing was not just beautiful but meaningful – a challenge to our conscience and a call to greater empathy.”

But even though he is at this moment missing what America needs, there is Toni Morrison lighting a path forward: “This is precisely the time when artists go to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self- pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal.”

Toni Morrison’s novels have examined the general socio-psychic interaction with reference to the black reality in America. The wounded Black psyche white duress is perhaps the strongest theme of Morrison’s novels. Morrison’s richly textured fiction reflects her special and unique vision – a vision which is neither white nor male. In fact, it is a Black woman writer’s distinctive feminine vision. Being an African American woman, Toni

Morrison has projected African American feminist consciousness in her writings.

From her first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970), brought Morrison many respectful reviews. She has not second looked back since then. Her second novel, *Sula* published in 1973, gained her national recognition. *Song of Solomon* (1977) became a best seller and paved a path for its authors entry into the list of noted contemporary novelists. It became the second black novel since Richard Wright's *Native Son* to become a Book-of-the -Month Club selection. It also won the National Book Critics Circle Award. The fourth novel the best-selling *Tar Baby*, was published in 1981 and was the recipient of the Bookers Award. Her fifth novel *Beloved* (1987) won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988. Her sixth novel, *Jazz* published in 1992, a year before Toni Morrison was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature. Her seventh novel, *Paradise* was published in 1997, and her first after winning the Nobel Prize for literature in 1993. Her eighth novel, *Love* was published in 2003. Her ninth novel is *A Mercy* in 2008 it was the best novels of that year. Her tenth novel, *Home* published in 2012. Her eleventh novel, *God Help The Child* published in 2015. Her last novel, *The Source Of Self -Regard* was published in 2019.

Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* tells of a little black girl who wanted to rise up out of the pit of her blackness and see the world with blue eyes. It reveals the tragic effect of racial prejudice on the black girl, Pecola Breedlove, yearning to assert her individuality in a community which fails to recognise her identity. The shattering effect of racism on the black girls is pertinent in Morrison's fiction.

Her next novel *Sula* tells of a woman who refuse to confirm to community mores. The novel depicted two black women friends – Sula and Nel-both black, both smart, both poor, raised in a small Ohio town. The novel follows the life of Sula, of free spirit, who is considered a threat against the community. She defines herself outside of the sex, class, race definition of the society.

Her third novel *Song of Solomon* was hailed by critics as a major literary achievement. It was based on an African American folktale about slaves who can fly back to Africa when they choose. Morrison fictionalises this folktale through the character of Solomon who is the great grandfather of Milkman Dead. It tells a story of a character named Milkman Dead, who is search for his families lost fortune discovers instead his family history. The novel is at once a romance of self -discovering, a retelling of the black experience in America that uncovers the inalienable poetry of that experience and a family saga a luminous in its depth and universality.

In her next novel *Tar Baby*, Morrison attempts to heal the traditional rift in American fiction between representational realism and the symbolic mythological dreamscape. The novel is suffused with her tense and passionate enquiry, revealing a whole spectrum of emotions underlying the relationship between black men and women, white men and women and black and white people. *Tar Baby* takes place at the Caribbean Mansion of a white millionaire Valerian Street and focuses on the themes of a racial identity, sexuality, class and family dynamics.

Her fifth novel *Beloved* was inspired by the true story of a black American slave woman, Margaret Garner who escaped with her husband

Robert from a Kentucky plantation and sought refuge in Ohio. Morrison's most successful novel which received the Pulitzer Prize *Beloved*, is the story of Sethe, a mother who kills her daughter Beloved rather than have her grow up a slave. The book explores the theme of the black American's return to slavery -the novel's complex interweaving of past and present produce a compelling portrait of a black families struggle with devastating and inescapable effects of slavery.

Once again Toni Morrison has given us a novel of daring, fascination and power. *Jazz* is a land mark on the American literary landscape- A profound love story of haunting passion bittersweet lyricism and refined sensuality of its powerful style. Focusing on the story of an aging couple and the loss of love they experience, *Jazz* is a rich combination of history, legend, reminiscence and a mysterious voice whose identity is a matter of each reader's imagination a voice which captures the black urban life in the most human terms.

Paradise, her seventh novel, focuses on all black town called Ruby in Oklahoma and a violent attack that a group of men make on a small all female community at the edge of the town. The idea of where Paradise is, who belongs in it. Weaving, together folklore and history, memory and myth, Morrison beautifully renders a meditation on race, religion and gender.

Her eighth novel *Love* was a complicated story, where the various forms of love are catalogued in a concatenation of elegant structure. The story centres on Morrison's great theme, the intimate relationships that women have and how they can be damaged by the random cruelties of fate and time. The story spans the twentieth century, from the proud black communities of the

segregated South, to the much less glamorous modern black communities and in doing so it examines the effects of integration on ordinary black people.

Her ninth novel *A Mercy* follows an Anglo-Dutch adventurer who takes in a young girl named Florens after being traded in a debt payment. With the ability to read and write, she works on his farm, searching for connection and protection from her fellow workers in a kind of parable, a pilgrim's flattering path toward reconciliation.

Her tenth novel *Home* Frank Money, a young black veteran of the Korean war, returns home only to be thrust back into America's race wars while also dealing with the specter of combat. He eventually finds himself in his once -hated Georgia hometown to save his abused younger sister—a journey that seems to be his saving grace.

The first of Morrison's novels to be set in the 21st century, *God Help The Child* The last novel of Toni Morrison deals with the subject of colorism. Its main character, Bride, is a gorgeous and confident dark-skinned woman, but her features cause her fairer- skinned mother to withhold love and instead subject her to abuse. Once again Morrison delves further into the tension inherent in among mothers and daughters, the rifts that lurk in even the most intimate relationships.

Toni Morrison's male characters betray, more than her women characters do, which is the impact of racism. Castrated, stymied, emasculated and psychically fragmented, her men are for the most part grotesque. Women have endured better the dispossession and disenfranchisement that are woven into generations of slave history. The degeneration of the male began with slavery, an individual and a collective tragedy. Women, as breeders of a work

force, enjoyed relative importance, but men were fathers merely in name. In more recent times, women found a means of livelihood in menial jobs, but men found the life of denied opportunities and deferred hopes unbearable. Powerless to find easy solutions to the insurmountable problems of life, men sought refuge in regression, the oblivion of drugs and alcohol, aggression and sadism, narcissism and acquisitiveness as survival strategies to preserve their fragile identities.

Song of Solomon, a rich and empowering novel published in 1977 that focuses on black life across America, follows the path of Milkman Dead, a young black male in search for his identity. Toni Morrison's gift of storytelling clearly shines through her poignant writing, as she presents Dead's search for his culture and history, impeded by the society he lives in. *Song of Solomon* not only focuses on African American community life, it is also a stark depicter of everyday white oppression. The novel earned Toni Morrison a National Book Critics Circle Award and an American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award.

In contrast to her earlier works, *Song of Solomon* encompasses a wide variety of black communities across America, from the liberal Midwest to the old-fashioned and somewhat conservative South. It is a novel that arouses consciousness in the face of an African American struggle of confinement into a life of possibility. *Song of Solomon* is also Morrison's first novel to be written through a male protagonist view, and the narrator's extraordinary manner of weaving in and out creates an even more spellbound lure into the novel's plot. This technique follows in part from the author's interest in folk storytelling traditions; Morrison patterns the novel after a Yoruba folktale

about African-born slaves who could fly back to Africa whenever they wanted. Morrison alludes to other ancient storytelling and folk-art traditions as well. The title itself comes from the Song of Songs (or *Song of Solomon*) in the Old Testament, a rhapsodic love poem consisting of addresses between a lover and a beloved. The lyrics of the *Song of Solomon* as presented in the novel are a variant of a Gullah folktale, further emphasizing the importance of oral tradition. Interestingly, Morrison may have taken this interest in roots and history even further with the name of Solomon, as that was the name of her own grandfather, a former slave.

Mr. Smith, an insurance agent and member of the merciless Seven Days society, attempts to fly away from the No Mercy Hospital roof, and plummets down to his death. In wake of the commotion surrounding his suicide, Ruth Foster becomes the first African-American woman to give birth inside the hospital. Her son, Macon Dead III, the protagonist of the novel, is soon awarded the unflattering nickname of Milkman, so dubbed because Ruth nurses him well past his infancy. In his childhood, Milkman befriends Guitar and becomes acquainted with his aunt Pilate, a relationship Milkman's father forbids. Milkman's father, Macon Dead II, is motivated by money, and he tells his son to, Own things. And let the things you own own other things. Then you'll own yourself and other people too . Soon, the effects of a prosperous and privileged upbringing leave Milkman naive and egocentric with no spiritual identity.

In his teenage years, Milkman begins a romantic relationship with Hagar, Pilate's granddaughter. Professionally, he assumes the responsibility of acting as his father's helper, which involves fetching the rent

money and calculating the account books. In his spare time, Milkman continues to form what appears to be a close-knit friendship with Guitar. Eventually, Guitar confides he is part of the Seven Days society, a group of black males that kill whites as acts of revenge. Although Guitar justifies his actions by proclaiming white people are evil and unnatural, Milkman realizes the depths of Guitar's anger and warns him against losing his humanity. Guitar and Milkman's friendship soon grows strained.

Macon Dead II unexpectedly learns of what Pilate considers her inheritance, hanging in a green sack from the ceiling. Macon beguiles Milkman into burglarizing Pilate's home by offering him half of what is in the sack. Both men believe that Pilate's green bag is filled with gold nuggets which she stole from a cave in her adolescence. Milkman convinces Guitar to be his partner in crime; Guitar is easily persuaded as he needs funds to carry out his deadly Seven Days assignment. To their dismay, the sack contains nothing but human bones, and as a further annoyance, both men are jailed only to be released when Pilate personally comes in to the local police precinct to explain the situation. Milkman's confrontation with the police awakens his comatose character, and he decides to pursue his chase for the gold.

Embarking on a trip to Pennsylvania in order to find the gold, Milkman is bitterly disappointed when the cave he explores is empty. He does, however, come across some of Macon's old acquaintances, such as his midwife Circe and Reverend Cooper, an old friend of Macon Dead I. Circe informs Milkman that his grandfather's real name was Jake, and that his grandmother was an Indian woman by the name of Sing. Now, more so in

quest of his family history than the gold, Milkman ventures down to Shalimar, Virginia.

As a newcomer in a small Southern town, Milkman faces some hostility but he quickly learns to feel affection for the intimate rural community setting. Though Milkman doesn't know it, he is being tracked by Guitar, who wants to murder him for supposedly stealing his half of the gold. In Virginia, Milkman discovers his family history, passed on from generation to generation through the form of a song. It is revealed that Milkman's great-grandfather is the legendary Solomon, who flew back to Africa in order to escape the slave plantation life. As a result of his departure, Solomon leaves behind his wife Ryna and their twenty-one children. Solomon's son, Jake, comes to be raised by Heddy, an Indian woman who also has a daughter by the name of Singing Bird. Once grown, Jake and Singing Bird flee North on a wagon full of free slaves.

Milkman's time in Virginia is a spiritual awakening, and he returns north as a newly compassionate and altruistic human being. News at the home front is dismal, as Hagar has died of a broken heart on his account. To counterbalance Hagar's tragic death, Milkman informs Pilate that the bones she has been carrying in her sack are those of Jake, her father. Milkman and Pilate then travel to Shalimar, Virginia to bury Jake's remains when a bullet intended for Milkman accidentally kills Pilate. Devastated at his recent loss but spiritually reborn, Milkman leaps towards Guitar, knowing that if "you surrendered to the air, you could ride it "(337).

The theme of universal oppression is reiterated in *Song of Solomon*. There is hardly any obvious aggressive protest against such oppression except

for Guitar and his gang's meaningless militancy against the whites. Tension is created in the novel, between the characters due to Guitar's terrorist actions. In the vast scope of the novel Morrison has clandestinely harped on one thing- that the loss of identity, the feeling of insecurity and above all susceptibility to any kind of oppression arises from the rootlessness of people themselves.

Macon Dead attempts to copy and the middle-class respectability of the white society. The family's weekly outing in a car is a parody of such pseudo-sophistication. Macon Dead's rigidity in denying both himself and his family the richness of his own culture, almost forcing them to accept the values of a culture not their own brings about a disintegration in the family. Milkman, Macon's son revolts against the rigidity, cruelty and perversion in his family. Rather, he sways towards his father's sister, the bohemian Pilate. Pilate is the diametric opposite of Macon Dead. she lives in the outskirts of the town with her daughter and granddaughter and sells wine. The members of the Pilate household love each other dearly and are very protective about on another. It is with the help of Pilate that Milkman sets out on the ultimate quest in search of his roots. They are proud of their African ancestry and are liberated through the *Song of Solomon*, their African ancestor.

The following chapter highlights the quality of a woman through Milkman from *Song of Solomon* who he did not have any respect for woman. It also deals with change of hearts on woman.

Chapter Two

Racial Consciousness

Racism, also called racialism, is a belief that humans may be divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called “races”; that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, intellect, morality, and other cultural and behavioural features; and that some races are innately superior to others. The term is also applied to political, economic, or legal institutions and systems that engage in or perpetuate discrimination on the basis of race or otherwise reinforce racial inequalities in wealth and income, education, health care, civil rights, and other areas. Such institutional, structural, or systemic racism became a particular focus of scholarly investigation in the 1980s with the emergence of critical race theory, an offshoot of the critical legal studies movement. Since the late 20th century, the notion of biological race has been recognized as a cultural invention, entirely without scientific basis.

Historically, those who openly professed or practiced racism held that members of low-status races should be limited to low-status jobs and that members of the dominant race should have exclusive access to political power, economic resources, high-status jobs, and unrestricted civil rights. The lived experience of racism for members of low-status races includes acts of physical violence, daily insults, and frequent acts and verbal expressions of contempt and disrespect, all of which have profound effects on self-esteem and social relationships.

Racism was at the heart of North American slavery and the colonization and empire-building activities of western Europeans, especially in the 18th

century. The idea of race was invented to magnify the differences between people of European origin and those of African descent whose ancestors had been involuntarily enslaved and transported to the Americas. By characterizing Africans and their African American descendants as lesser human beings, the proponents of slavery attempted to justify and maintain the system of exploitation while portraying the United States as a bastion and champion of human freedom, with human rights, democratic institutions, unlimited opportunities, and equality. The contradiction between slavery and the ideology of human equality, accompanying a philosophy of human freedom and dignity, seemed to demand the dehumanization of those enslaved.

By the 19th century, racism had matured and spread around the world. In many countries, leaders began to think of the ethnic components of their own societies, usually religious or language groups, in racial terms and to designate “higher” and “lower” races. Those seen as the low-status races, especially in colonized areas, were exploited for their labour, and discrimination against them became a common pattern in many areas of the world. The expressions and feelings of racial superiority that accompanied colonialism generated resentment and hostility from those who were colonized and exploited, feelings that continued even after independence.

Racism elicits hatred and distrust and precludes any attempt to understand its victims. For that reason, most human societies have concluded that racism is wrong, at least in principle, and social trends have moved away from racism. Many societies have begun to combat racism by raising awareness of racist beliefs and practices and by promoting human understanding in public policies, as does the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights, set forth by the United Nations in 1948. In the United States, racism came under increasing attack during the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, and laws and social policies that enforced racial segregation and permitted racial discrimination against African Americans were gradually eliminated.

Despite constitutional and legal measures aimed at protecting the rights of racial minorities in the United States, the private beliefs and practices of many Americans remained racist, and some group of assumed lower status was often made a scapegoat. That tendency has persisted well into the 21st century.

Because, in the popular mind, "race" is linked to physical differences among peoples, and such features as dark skin colour have been seen as markers of low status, some experts believe that racism may be difficult to eradicate. Indeed, minds cannot be changed by laws, but beliefs about human differences can and do change, as do all cultural elements.

In the opening chapters of the novel, Milkman's low level of consciousness in regard to his people's race and class oppression manifests itself in his nickname. Macon Dead III acquires it as a result of his extended nursing period, for instead of helping him to more attune to his mother and her needs, this lengthy bonding proves ineffectual in a society that promotes selfish individualism above love and concern for humankind: Milkman is emotionally estranged from Ruth Dead as he is from all women whom he interacts. Even at age thirty-one, he knows very little about women, an ignorance made evident by his inability to distinguish his sisters from his mother. Nor can he be conceived of women as human beings, not even his

mother: “Never had he thought of this mother as a person, a separate individual, with a life apart from allowing or interfering with his own” (75). Women, in general, have only as “need providers” for Milkman. Therefore, his act of urinating on Lena becomes an act symbolic of his pissing on all women, Hagar in particular.

It is Hagar who is most exploited. while she genuinely loves Milkman, he loves her solely as a receptacle in which to empty to his lust, seldom taking her anywhere except the movies. Eventually, even sex with her becomes a bore, being, “so free, so abundant.” So, as a pimp taking leave of his whore, Milkman pays Hagar for twelve years of service and writes her a thank you letter, reminding her that they are first cousins and self-righteously telling himself that he is performing a selfless act. From *Sula*, Milkman-in this liminal stage- shits on those around him, particularly the women of the novel.

Pilate is no exception. From her, as from Hagar, he receives a love both free and abundant. Wallowing in it, Milkman feels for “the first time in his life that he remembered being completely happy” (47). Most important, it is because of Pilate the pilot that he is steered in a conscious direction. Through her acknowledgement of, dignity in, and proudness of her Africanness, despite her lack of material wealth, Milkman gets his first lesson in race and class consciousness: “while she looked as poor as everyone said she was, something was missing from her eyes that should confirmed it”(38) Like Pilate, Milkman must learn to respect his African self and to realize that money does not ensure happiness. Instead of killing the potential savior of his people as does her biblical namesake, Dead Pilate breathes life into Milkman. It is she who first forces him to confront his identity as the living dead who sucks the life force

from his people; from her he learns the essence of life. Devouring the fruity, yolky core of life and speaking in a voice that reminded Milkman of little round pebbles that bumped against each other, Pilate is nature personified. She is, in fact, earth mother. What Milkman gives her in return for life is the murder of her daughter and the theft of her father. Significantly, it is not until the Shalimar Hunt, when he learns the importance of whispering to the trees and the ground, touching them, “as a blind man caresses a page of Braille, pulling meaning through his figures” (278), that Milkman appreciates the life that this earth mother provides him.

As the community voice of the novel, the Greek chorus, Freddie’s evaluation of the Dead is valid: “A dead man ain’t no man. A dead man is a corpse” (81). At this point in his life, Milkman Dead is neither a man, nor a human being in general. He is both psychologically and emotionally dead.

Additional manifestations of Milkman’s low level of consciousness are his overall state of confusion and his association with things behind him. His disconcertedness is best exemplified by his obsession with flying. Yet while he seems bombarded with images of flight and imbued with a natural sense of flying, he experiences feelings of flying blindly.

By the time Milkman was fourteen he had noticed that one of his legs was shorter than the other. when he stood was about barefoot and straight as a pole, his left foot was about half an inch off the floor. So, he never stood straight; he slouched or leaned or stood with a hip thrown out, and he never told anybody about it- ever The deformity was mostly in his mind. (62)

In spite of Milkman's lack of consciousness, he seems instinctively aware of the importance of the past, for he is obsessed with things behind him. In fact, "it was becoming a habit this concentration on things behind him" (35). Moreover, he is aware that everyone moves in the opposite direction as he, "going the direction as he that he was coming from" (78) a suggestion that they already have knowledge of their past, which directs them to their future. However, he is not yet prepared to turn his instinctual awareness into a conscious search for his history.

Not only do the general characteristics associated with Milkman help the critic assess the protagonist's level of consciousness in the opening chapters of the novel, but also particular characteristics in regard to his race and class consciousness prove invaluable clues. In regard to race, the extent of Milkman's consciousness can be gauged by several factors – his relationship with the local community as well as his awareness of national event that affect African people. So isolated is he from his people that he is the last to know about the relationship between Henry Porter and his sister, First Corinthians; he is the last to know about the seven days; and he is the last to know about Emmett Till's murder. Once he is aware of these occurrences, he at first shows little concern for all except that which affects him directly, the courtship between Henry Porter and first Corinthians. Milkman is bored by all other events, revealing his complete estrangement from the community. When informed the vicious murder of the fourteen-year-old Till, a murder which elicited the sympathy of the both Europeans and Africans worldwide, Milkman replies: "Yeah, well, fuck Till. I'm the one in trouble" (88). Such statements as this reflect Milkman's need to develop the race consciousness, which will

allow him to see himself and other African people as one, having a common identity, a common history, and a common struggle.

Milkman's awareness of race is made more poignant by his personal confrontation with the police. Stripped of his dignity, emasculated like millions of other African men throughout the world, Milkman is overwhelmed with shame:

Shame at being spread- eagled, fingered, and handcuffed But nothing was like the shame he felt as he watched and listened to Pilate. Not just her Aunt Jemima act, but the fact that she was both adept at it willing to do it – for him. (209)

This incident helps Milkman to distinguish between those Africans who assume the role of the Uncle Tom or the Aunt Jemima as a way of life and those who do so as a way of survival. While he feels proud of Pilate, who sacrifices her dignity to free him from jail even when he was prepared “to knock her down if she had come into the room while he was in the act of stealing” (209) from her, he feels ashamed of his father, who “buckle [s] before the policemen (209). And the fact that he sees more dignity and life in the poor Pilate than in the rich Macon increases his class consciousness. That is, the incident crystalizes for him the way in which capitalism, with its emphasis on money and status, affects African people who ascribe to its values: they will always be petty capitalists, puppets “with an accommodating ‘we all understand how it is’ smile” (209).

This incident with the police is the second that contributes to Milkman's developing class consciousness. The first results from the appearance of a white peacock, symbolizing both the race and wealth of the ruling class in the

United States. Ironically, this peacock appears while Guitar and Milkman are planning to rob Pilate's "gold." Significantly, it is Milkman who first sees it, "poised on the roof of a long low building that served as headquarters for Nelson Buick" (178). Equating both flight and money with freedom, Milkman asks Guitar why a peacock can't fly. His friend replies, "Wanna fly, you gotta give up the shit that weighs you down" (179). Although Milkman is not yet fully conscious of the connection between the diamondlike tail of the peacock and the "gold" he is planning to steal from Pilate, Dead weight that will only impede his search for identity, this incident does contribute to his growing class consciousness.

Milkman's postliminal stage, which marks the height of his consciousness, is characterized by his initiation into a new society, the society of the Shalimar hunters. Like the preliminal and liminal stages, this stage is symbolized by linguistic, psychological, and physical changes. As his race and class consciousness develop so does his language. Irresponsible, individualistic statements such as "yeah, well, fuck Till," which characterize his preliminality and which symbolize his complete insensitivity to the plight of African people, are replaced by the Africanized voice of collective communion, a communion shared by living matter. Psychologically, Milkman accepts the responsibility of adulthood and Africanhood: "He had stopped evading things, sliding through, over, and around difficulties" (271). Having learned to respect the natural world more than the material one and having gained the ability to laugh at himself, Milkman has become a psychologically balanced individual.

After “the pain in his short leg [becomes] so great he began to limp and hobble” (275), physically, milkman becomes balanced as well: he no longer limps; both legs are equal.

In regard to race, his high level of consciousness is exemplified on two occasions, when he learns of his grandfather’s murder and when he participates in the Shalimar hunt. Milkman first learns of his grandfather’s murder from Pilate, but he hears these details during a time when his race consciousness is at its lowest level. When he hears of the murder a second time, from Reverend Cooper, he asks, infuriated, why the Danville Africans did not seek revenge: “And nobody did anything? Milkman wondered at his own anger” (232). His anger is aroused on this occasion because of his heightened awareness of himself in connection with other African people.

During the hunt, Milkman’s class consciousness sharpens as well. Learning the insignificance of money and status when juxtaposed with a true communion with African people, Milkman commits class suicide. While it is true that the seeds of his decision to bond with the African masses instead of those having his wealth and status are planted when he first meets Pilate, his conscious decision to do so germinates from his Shalimar experiences.

First, the initiate must be stripped of all that is psychologically and physically associated with his old society. This initiation rite entails a physical descent into a cave, an enclosing or engulfing that usually signals a baptism and an imminent rebirth. Milkman experiences both. Entering Hunters cave with all the material, artificial trappings of capitalist society-- a wad of money, an expensive watch, a beige three-piece suit, a “button-down light-blue shirt and black string tie” (227), a snap brim hat, a suitcase with a bottle of scotch,

and beautiful Florsheim shoes – Milkman emerges an offspring of nature, with water-ruined suit, soggy shoes and a broken watch.

Second, the initiate must be cognizant of the mores of the society. In Milkman's case, he must learn that he cannot exploit the people. He can neither show or nor receive gratitude with money. Because humanism is a traditional African principle valued more than money and held in esteem more by the African masses than the African petty bourgeois, Circe, Fred Garnet, and the Shalimar community are offended by Milkman's capitalist behaviour:

He hadn't found them fit enough or good enough to want to know their names, and believed himself too good to tell them his. They looked at his skin and saw it was as black as theirs, but they knew he had the heart of the white men who came to pick them up in the trucks when they needed anonymous, faceless laborers. (266)

Just as important as the principle of humanism, Milkman must learn egalitarianism, the inherent equality of every human being. Prior to the hunt, he thinks himself so superior to the Shalimar people that he seems them not as unique individuals, but as one large anonymous group. For instance, with the Shalimar men in hearing distance, he condescendingly asks the storeowner if one of the men can help him: "He looked at the men sitting around the store. 'You think maybe one of them could help with the car?' he asked Mr. Solomon" (265).

Third, he must put his newly learned humanistic theories into practice by participating in the rituals of the new society. Milkman does so by agreeing to go on the hunt, a ritual that proves to be a psychological and physical test of strength, allowing him to shed his old capitalist – oriented ideology and

replace it with a new people-oriented, nature-oriented ideology. In the true spirit of baptism and rebirth, Milkman rethinks his past behaviour and contemplates the new life awaiting him, a life that will allow him, like the men of Shalimar, to commune with all of nature's children:

... and the animals could talk to them, what didn't they know about human beings? Or the earth itself for that matter. It was more than tracks Calvin was looking for—he whispered to the trees, whispered to the ground, touched them, as a blind man caresses a page of Braille, pulling meaning through his fingers. (278)

His new, revolutionized consciousness enables him to confront and to regret his old way of life: "The consequences of Milkman's own stupidity would remain, and regret would always outweigh the things he was proud of having done" (335).

Significantly, it is not until after Milkman has revolutionized his consciousness in regard to race oppression and class exploitation that he sheds his sexist views of women. Prior to this increased awareness, Milkman, as his name suggests, milks the life of women, giving them in nothing return. As pointed out, so reactionary in his view of women that he has difficulty distinguishing his mother from his sisters and rarely thinks of any of them. Pissing on Lena, squealing on first Corinthians, spying on Ruth, stealing from Pilate and murdering Hagar – all are evidence of Milkman's low level of consciousness. At the time he commits these acts, he is not aware of the oneness which connects African people, that pissing on Lena is like pissing on himself, that the sexual exploitation and murder of Hagar are the sexual exploitation and murder of himself.

Quite noticeably, his consciousness in regard to women begins to rise when he discovers some of his mother's past and heightens even more after his participation in the hunt. Earlier, Guitar had warned Milkman against exploiting women by relating an incident in which Guitar killed a doe; "A man shouldn't do that" (85). This warning, however, goes unheeded until Milkman takes an active interest in his mother's well-being: "He remembered Guitar's story about killing one.... hMilkman felt a quick beat of something like remorse" (122). But like the prickly feeling he gets in his knee, this fleeting sense of sympathy reflects only the beginnings of growth and healing, not the completion of them. Significantly, "He shook it [the feeling of remorse] off and resumed" (122), his old way of thinking, talking, and acting. That is, he proceeds to kill the doe. In this case, when he discovers Ruth at her father's grave site, he kills her with words.

It is not until Milkman has stripped himself of the ruling class's views of race and class superiority that he is able to see women as his equals. This rite of passage is not complete until the Shalimar hunt, during which Milkman first becomes conscious, then ashamed of his exploitation of Hagar, "whom he'd thrown away like a wad of chewing gum after the flavour was gone" (277). It is only after this event that he fully understands the reciprocal nature of human relationships.

Perhaps the most significant evidence of Milkman's awareness of the principle of reciprocity as related to women is his commitment to guide Pilate to Shalimar to bury her father's bones, just as she had guided him to bury the Dead in him. In fact, with his revolutionized consciousness which prizes humanism and egalitarianism—he becomes the pilot, the source of life. Thus,

the name “Milkman” is transformed to signify that which is positive, not negative. the protagonist becomes the Milkman who is capable of carrying the source of life for those in need. Milkman’s race and class consciousness develop sufficiently to allow him to recreate self, it never reaches the point where Milkman moves beyond self-healing to “other-healing.”

Women as an epitome of sacrifice is showcased in the following chapter Altar of Sacrifice. It further explains selfless decisions woman in Milkman’s life had to take in order to keep him safe.

Chapter Three

Altar of Sacrifice

The success of Milkman's journey depends in large part on the string of female bodies, figuratively and literally that he leaves along his path. The women form a long line of mothering and nurturing that culminates in Milkman's renewed sense of himself; they become sacrifices on the altar of his possibilities. Comparable to the blood sacrifices in *Sula*, those in *Song of Solomon* are striking in those female characters are consistently the victims. That victimization begins with Ruth, whose deviant actions to get pregnant are not enough to save her future relationship with her husband or her son. In order to give birth to Milkman, Ruth must forever give up physical relations with Macon. In order to keep Milkman alive, she must intensify her role as mother, only to relinquish it forever when he becomes an adolescent.

Ruth's primary function in the novel is to give birth to Milkman, not to establish a relationship with him—certainly not beyond the long period of nursing. She is important to his story only as long as her body serves his needs (or as long as she can nurse him without discovery); once those needs are served, he casts her aside emotionally, as he will later similarly discard Hagar. Ruth has very little reality for Milkman, and she is not drawn so that our sympathies are overly aroused in favour of different treatment. Yet here is a woman who lives somewhat of a martyred life, or certainly a cloistered one, for Macon's rejection of her after Milkman's death essentially turns her into a nun. She has given her all on the altar of her male offspring, whose future, set beside hers, is judged to be significantly more worthy of consideration. Not

exactly a pathetic figure, Ruth is nonetheless a sacrificial one, for her life must fade into the background as Milkman's rises to the forefront.

In the language of fairy tales, she becomes an expendable helper who gives safe passage to Milkman from conception to birth, but whose importance lessens as Milkman learns to fend for himself. Her emotional sacrifices for her son are perhaps more stultifying than those of Corinthians and Magdalene, but the sisters nonetheless find their futures compromised to Milkman's. Their father becomes bored with them when he gets the opportunity to begin shaping Milkman in his image of entrepreneur. Though Macon sends Corinthians to college, that does not signal any intrinsic evaluation of her worth on his part; it is simply what a man of his means can do for his children, even if they are female. He sees the image of what being middle class means; he is unconcerned about his daughters as girls or as women. He will continue to take care of them, as the weaker, more useless sex, but they do not spark his interest, and they hold out to him no promise of the family line being continued. Also, as an extension of the war with his wife, he would more naturally identify with Milkman, a potential convert to his viewpoint, than with his daughters.

From the time Milkman urinates on Lena's dress during the family's customary Sunday drive, his desires take precedence over those of his sisters. Even before he is consciously aware of his power as male, he is able to get his way as the youngest child in the family. When he learns that his father wants him to collect rents and become his apprentice, he quickly adopts the same attitude toward his sisters that Macon has. He allows them to wash, cook, clean, and care for his other housekeeping needs without any consideration for

them as individuals who may wish to do something else with their lives. When Milkman knocks Macon down for hitting Ruth, and when he tells of Corinthian's affair with Porter, he is not doing so out of love for his mother or his sister. As Lena says of the fight with Macon, Milkman was not protecting his mother: "You were taking over, letting us know you had the right tell her and all of us what to do" (216). On the night of their conversation, when she is thirty-one, Milkman finds himself talking to a sister "to whom he had not said more than four consecutive sentences since he was in the ninth grade" (211).

Another set of Morrison's "twins," Lena and Corinthians are almost as ineffectual as the Dewey's. Corinthians is unable to determine her destiny until she is well into middle age, and Lena is never able to determine hers. Buffeted by external forces, they are unwilling helpers in the destiny that awaits Milkman, but helpers nonetheless. Without the vividness of their deprivations and constrictions, we would have less of a sense of Milkman being his father's chosen one. Either to win their father's approval, or his tolerance, or because they have no choice, Corinthians and Lena are trapped in the house on Not Doctor Street. Their entrapment leads in part to Milkman's growth and freedom; they therefore become other victims symbolically and literally sacrificed on the altar of Milkman's quest for manhood and identity. Like Florence Grimes upon the arrival of Gabriel in James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953), Lena and Corinthians must be sacrificed to the future that only the male offspring can have. Though Corinthians escapes in middle age, the little happiness she may now find has been undermined by years and years of subservience to someone else definition of reality.

Milkman meditates at one point upon what he has “deserved” (276) or not as his lot in life, and he has acted throughout as if his mother and sisters were put upon earth because he deserved their services. They are almost nonentities, except when he needs a clean towel or fresh linen. Servants more than sisters in the height from which they are condescendingly viewed, Lena and Corinthians content themselves for most of their lives with existing in the tiny spaces into which Macon and Milkman have shoved them. Without value to brother or father, and without any animating love for their mother, Lena and Corinthians exist as shadows whose substance can be measured only by its fading from them into their brother’s future.

Of all the female sacrifices made for Milkman’s growth and development, Hagar’s is the most pathetic and Pilate’s the most tragic. Milkman essentially destroys Pilate’s family, for once Hagar and Pilate are dead, Reba is lost; unable to care for herself, she will probably be institutionalized. Still, the women make no effort to stop the destruction of their family, which begins with Hagar. Their leniency and desire to give Hagar whatever she wants combines with Milkman’s selfishness to ensure her downfall. While her desires might be simple enough to see Milkman as her quintessential fulfilment, Hagar fails to recognize that he cannot be counted on to reciprocate her passion or her love. She is an adventure for him, a toy he is content to play with over the nearly twenty complacent years of his adult adolescence. When he tires of the toy, he dispassionately tosses it aside. His proclivity for white women and for black women of his own social standing relegates Hagar to a small niche in Milkman’s life; “she became a quasi-secret but permanent fixture” (97–98). The relationship of the two families to each

other also dictates the quasi-secret status. Certainly, Ruth would be appalled to know that Milkman is sleeping with his first cousin's daughter, and Macon would be livid not only about this son having gone into Pilate's house but having become Hagar's lover. By contrast, Reba and Pilate simply accept life as it is. Though coquettish at first, Hagar shortly becomes Milkman's for the taking, a priceless jewel diminishing its own value by its failure to value itself. She is one of the reasons Milkman is able to "stretched his carefree boyhood out for thirty-one years" (98). Hagar is his expected sexual outlet in the way that his sisters are his maids convenient and exploitable. When she centre's her whole life upon Milkman, placing "duty squarely in the middle of their relationship" (98), he tries "to think of a way out" (98).

Like Plum, Hagar has acquiesced in the ritual of destruction in which she is victim. Having granted to Milkman total control of her life, she similarly grants him control of her death, which his termination of the affair amounts to. His decision to remind her that they are cousins, that "she needed a steady man who could marry her" (98) because "he was standing in her way" (98) is the pouring of kerosene on an already burning mind. His hypocrisy disguised as concern is a transparent rationalization designed to effect his own freedom, which he does by sending Hagar a dismissal letter:

He went back to his father's office, got some cash out of the safe, and wrote Hagar a nice letter which ended: "Also, I want to thank you. Thank you for all you have meant to me. For making me happy all these years. I am signing this letter with love, of course, but more than that, with gratitude" (99).

Guaranteed to gall any self-respecting woman, the letter reeks of distance and emotional coldness; Milkman can send it to Hagar only because he does not value or respect her. In the absence of any sense of family or communal commitment, Milkman dismisses Hagar as easily as he perhaps dispossesses his father's tenants.

Macon Dead has put Milkman in training to be callous, and Reba and Pilate have unconsciously assured Hagar's victimization:

Neither Pilate nor Reba knew that Hagar was not like them. Not strong enough, like Pilate, nor simple enough, like Reba, to make up her life as they had. She needed what most coloured girls needed: a chorus of mamas, grandmamas, aunts, cousins, sisters, neighbour's, Sunday school teachers, best girlfriends, and what all to give her the strength life demanded of her—and the humour with which to live it. (307)

Without encouraging her to see some reality outside of Milkman, some reality outside of their taking care of her, she is destined to acquiesce in her own destruction just as Milkman is destined to execute that destruction. Her "graveyard love" (128) for Milkman literally becomes that. As sacrificial victim, her fate is sealed. As victimizer, Milkman has other choices. Certainly, Macon has taught him to value money above people, but he and Guitar, who is concerned about people, have been friends for more than twenty years by the time Milkman dismisses Hagar. Guitar's concern and the antimaterialistic philosophy he has spouted off to Milkman for years have at least ensured his exposure to something other than his father's sentiments. While Hagar has

little choice in the path she follows, Milkman does not wish to make the choice that would suggest responsibility and caring. He continues carefree and unattached, finding and taking sexual favours wherever he pleases. His immaturity contains an inherent viciousness antithetical to Hagar's desire for a more committed relationship.

Hagar's sacrifice is complete when she makes Milkman's will superior to her own. As Milkman lies in Guitar's apartment, unmoving as Hagar approaches with the knife, she knows at last that she can no longer evoke any emotion from him, not even the fear that has driven her to pursue him month after month, and certainly not the pity she deserves. Yet the insensitive Milkman can only see her failure to kill him as a triumph of masculinity over femininity, of his incredible sexual powers over the susceptible Hagar. His final words to her are striking in their utter callousness

“If you keep your hands just that way,” he said, “and then bring them down straight, straight and fast, you can drive that knife right smack in your cunt. Why don't you do that? Then all your problems will be over.” He patted her cheek and turned away from her wide, dark, pleading, hollow eyes. (130)

It is ironic that Guitar, the executioner, is more sympathetic to Hagar than Milkman. When he takes the nearly comatose woman from his apartment after her attempt on Milkman's life, he maintains that Hagar has been “Pitiful. Really pitiful” (152) and asserts that “it had to be something more” (152) that Milkman has done to her, because “that girl's hurt—and the hurt came from

you” (152). Incapable of feeling the pity that Guitar does, Milkman claims that his friend is “meddling”(153) and “criticizing” him unfairly.

By the time Milkman pauses in those dark woods to think about Hagar, many emotional light years and hundreds of miles away, she is already bringing her ritual of death to an end. He concedes that “if a stranger could try to kill him, surely Hagar, who knew him and whom he’d thrown away like a wad of chewing gum after the flavour was gone—she had a right to try to kill him too” (276–77). The accurate image of having thrown her away like chewing gum comes too late to help Hagar, but it serves its purpose in pushing Milkman toward maturity. The pattern is set in a way that Milkman thrives in direct proportion to Hagar’s demise. As he learns more about his relationship to her and the rest of his family, her physical essence decreases in value. For each stage on the journey that brings enlightenment to Milkman, that enlightenment comes directly from Hagar’s lifeline.

When he discovers in Shalimar, Virginia, sitting in front of Solomon’s General Store that the children are singing about his great-grandfather, he moves into a realm of self-awareness that makes it impossible for him to treat anyone else as he has treated Hagar. Almost in keeping with that progression, Hagar dies. Another victim on his search for self, she has helped Milkman in substantial ways by being an outlet for his negative emotions and a symbol around which he gathers his reflections. Once he truly understands and accepts that people cannot be ill-treated with impunity, then she is no longer needed. Her purpose served, she dies before Milkman can return to act out any of his newfound knowledge about how to deal with his family and with people in general.

A helper who has not known the extent of her assistance, and whose giving leads to her own death, Hagar presents her body as one of the bridges over which Milkman walks into his own humanity and manhood. Her physical sacrifice is the culmination of Pilate's prophetic prediction on the occasion when Ruth has come to her house to ensure that Hagar would not attempt to kill Milkman again. As Hagar and Ruth stood arguing about their value to Milkman, Pilate has said: "And he wouldn't give a pile of swan shit for either one of . . . He ain't a house, he's a man, and whatever he need, don't none of you got it" (137- 138). More specifically related to Hagar's death, Pilate comments to Ruth: "Ain't nothing going to kill him but his own ignorance, and won't no woman ever kill him. What's likelier is that it'll be a woman save his life" (140). Her comment needs some modification, for it is not a woman, but several who save Milkman's life. Hagar is one of them; she dies in order that he might grow—and perhaps, too, because there is no realistic place for her. Even if Milkman returns to the North, enlightened, with a proposal of marriage to Hagar, chances are they would not be able to execute that desire. Also, the extent of Milkman's transgressions warrants a more striking lesson than a mere forgiving and making up. Hagar's death points out the emotionally destructive binge Milkman has been on all his life. Morrison does not spare him from having to confront the trauma resulting from that crime.

Hagar, another body Milkman has left in his "flying" pursuit of his great grandfather, is like Ryna or one of the twenty-one children Solomon left on his flight to Africa. Like Ryna, the desertion leads to insanity and death. But, also like Ryna, who lives on in the tales of Ryan's Gulch, Hagar will live on in the lessons she has taught and in the box of her hair Pilate gives to

Milkman as an indication that he must take responsibility for “the life he had taken” (332). Victims in the examples of their fates, both Hagar and Ryna enable Milkman to transcend the possibility for future victimization.

These pathetic women and the losses do not measure up, in the final balance, to the loss of Pilate’s life in Milkman’s quest for identity, family, and value beyond gold. Teacher, nurturer, surrogate mother, keeper of the blues tradition, Pilate has always placed value on altruistic human relationships. In all of these roles, she gives voice to the value of human connectedness. In singing “O Sugarman” (300) she serves as the herald for Milkman’s birth. In singing with Reba and Hagar, she articulates the pain Macon feels and soothes his wounds. In singing at Hagar’s death, she voices the pain of loss in sound rather than lyrics. And in singing the “*Song of Solomon*” (303) she places stress on the intricate ties to African and black American history that unite all generations of those scattered in the Diaspora. In her voice is the blending of secular and sacred traditions, natural and supernatural concerns.

She values human relationships, but she recognizes human limitations. When the absence of a navel finally “isolates” Pilate, “she gave up, apparently, all interest in table manners or hygiene, but acquired a deep concern for and about human relationships” (149). When Guitar shoots her, her only regret is: “I wish I’d a knowed more people. I would of loved ’em all. If I’d a knowed more, I would a loved more” (336). That this tower of selflessness should fall, even for an enlightened Milkman, is difficult to acquiesce to. Yet it is consistent with Pilate’s prediction about who would save Milkman’s life, and it is consistent with the traditional demise of the helper/guide once the initiate has learned all the helper has to teach. Milkman has definitely learned the

value of family and of human relationships, and he has learned that escape from a situation does not lessen responsibility for it: he is as guilty for Hagar's death as Solomon has been for Ryna's insanity and for whatever happened to his twenty-one sons. He can now effectively take his teacher's place, become the guru rather than the seeker after knowledge held by the guru.

Such a refined interpretation, however, does not alter the evaluation that Pilate joins the other women in Milkman's life in being made a victim to his health, to his growth into a positive sense of self. Milkman's inability to convince Guitar that there is no gold, combined with Guitar's warped sense of community commitment, brings about the ironic circumstances surrounding Pilate's death. Pilate and Guitar have believed in essentially the same things, in commitment and human relationships. Guitar has approached the motherly in his feelings for Hagar, and he has deeply sympathized with the destruction wrought upon her. That he should kill Pilate in his effort to shoot Milkman makes her the victim of communal, familial, and individual values, brought together in the man who loves community enough to kill for it and the one who loves family enough to die for it.

A free spirit whose body has never weighed her to the earth, Pilate is triumphant in that, by sacrificing her own life, she will bring to an end the sequence of events, both historical and contemporary, that have divided her family and caused so much grief in it. And by setting in motion the events in which Guitar is ready to die for his cause, she also succeeds in eliminating the driving force behind the hatred practiced by the Seven Days. Her victimization, therefore, might have its worth in the larger picture of familial and communal good. And in the folk patterns that inform the novel, it is

frequently a good, much-to-be-missed person whose sacrifice has the power to renew. Thus, Pilate can do for Milkman what no one in *The Bluest Eye* could do for Pecola Breedlove and Lorain, Ohio. Not only does she sing the lore of her culture, she lives it as well.

Milkman began his quest in search of gold as a misogynist in *Song of Solomon*, but later as he learns his ancestral traits and the value of woman by the end of the novel. The next chapter Milkman's journey in detail states the refinement he went through in his conversion from misogynist.

Chapter Four

Milkman's Journey

The Bluest Eye and *Sula* depicted characters in search of something they could never achieve, on journeys of seeking that left them insane, complacent, or dead. Pecola's search for blue eyes shows that the archetypal fairy tale pattern of seeking is antithetical to, and ultimately cannot allow fulfilment for, members of black communities. Pauline Breedlove's search for an identity outside of her blackness and her black heritage also ends in disaster, for that reversal is similarly antithetical to her true existence. The journey north for Pauline and the journey inward for Pecola both backfired. Sula's wandering can also be viewed as an aborted attempt to find meaning in her existence; unable to do so on southern or northern soil, she returns to her home in the North, more out of resignation than accomplishment.

In her first two novels, therefore, Morrison depicts no pattern of seeking that leads to contentment for her characters. They are driven, disturbed, unsettled from the beginnings to the ends of their journeys. With Milkman Dead in *Song of Solomon*, Morrison culminates her pattern of reversal and simultaneously allows Milkman to find meaning in a territory that her previous characters have shunned or escaped.

Few characters in African-American literature chart their courses from north to south, for the myth informing their actions invariably pictured the North as the freer place, where money was plentiful and liberty unchallenged. So, they usually went north, to that earthly land of milk and honey.

In *Song of Solomon*, therefore, Morrison debunks one myth and creates another. Born in the North, and heir to the material advantages that generations of blacks identified with that territory, Milkman Dead must find meaning for his life by reversing the pattern, by going south, back into the territory of his ancestors. There must also be a reversal in his expectations on that soil. Initially, he goes searching for gold, as many generations of blacks came north in hopes of improving their material wealth. But the South is not the land of riches, of physical, tangible goods waiting for those seeking their fortunes. It is the land of blood and death, of slavery, of countless generations of Africans tied to brutal and unrewarding labour, of intangible instead of tangible wealth. Milkman ultimately returns to the South for things that he can carry away only in his mind, in his conception of self, in his contentment with communal and familial history, and in his satisfaction with knowing and being who he is.

Milkman's journey is one that works because he forges out of it a blueprint for knowing himself. By going against the traditional archetypal movement and structuring a more personally rewarding one, Milkman earns our respect as he discovers his identity. Though his journey may share certain features with some of the mythological quests, it is nevertheless more distinctive than imitative.

Milkman's major problem is that he has been too complacent in his northern, middle-class existence, far removed from the stock of black people in the South who were tied to his ancestors who moved north. In order for Milkman to appreciate those roots, to become receptive to his past, he must be stripped of external symbols of separation. His city ways and attitudes have to

change; Morrison effects the change by showing their uselessness on southern soil. Milkman undergoes a devolution from which he can be reborn as a sensitive human being. The stripping process begins with his arrival in Danville, Pennsylvania, where he hopes to find leads on where Pilate has left the gold. His emotions, clothing, accessories, and manners are all signs of the distance between him and the people whose help he needs.

Emotional readjustment signals the onset of many changes. For the first time he is put in the position of trying “to make a pleasant impression on a stranger” (229) when he goes to Reverend Cooper’s house asking about Circe. That slight discomfiture gives way to tale swapping when Milkman discovers that Cooper has known his father, yet it is nonetheless a prediction of the adjustments Milkman will have to make on his journey.

His trip to Circe’s house and to the cave induce physical discomfiture to match the earlier emotional one; the literal stripping process begins. His city hat gets ripped off by tree branches. He must take off his shoes and socks in crossing the stream to the cave, and his bare feet are “unprepared for the coldness of the water and the slimy stones at the bottom” (249). He soaks his fancy pants and cigarettes, and breaks the “gold Longines” watch his mother had given him: “the face was splintered and the minute hand was bent” (250). His fancy shirt becomes soaked with sweat, as does his face, for which he uses his tie as a handkerchief. Upon discovering no gold in the cave, he screams in anger, and the bats in the cave startle him into a run, “whereupon the sole of his right shoe split away from the soft cordovan leather” (252). He uses his tie to strap the shoe together and lashes his way through branches and weeds back to the stream and the highway where he has been scheduled for a pickup. His

watch now gone, he can only gauge by the sun that his ride has probably come and gone.

Although he has been stripped of several items of his city clothing, Milkman has not learned much from his adventures. His disrespectful manners show that he is still insensitive to Southern hospitality. The man who prides himself on being able to give the worn and tattered Milkman a ride back into Danville has his gesture thrown in his face when Milkman tries to pay him for one of his Cokes. The man's face "changes" as he insists that, he "ain't got much," but he "can afford a Coke and a lift now and then" (255). His love for gold has blinded Milkman to the little courtesies of life, to the small favours that poor people relish performing for one another. His greed is his only motivation: "The fact was he wanted the gold because it was gold and he wanted to own it. Free" (257). A long way from the changes that will be necessary for his growth, Milkman has at least begun the physical movement that will eventually be matched by an emotional and spiritual change.

Milkman's sojourn in the wilderness of Danville has been difficult for him emotionally and physically, almost as if the very environment thwarts the unhealthy motives, he has in looking for the gold. At this stage, the journey backfires more than it move forward. Yet Milkman discovers some things in the process. He knows that the gold is no longer in the cave, and he surmises that Pilate had probably returned with it to her ancestral home in Virginia. Though he moves in that direction without a clear sense of where he is going or a significantly altered psyche, his willingness to continue the journey is itself noteworthy, for he has at least not been deterred by the obstacles he has

encountered. They are mere preludes to what he must overcome the closer he gets to the object of his quest.

Journeys, by their very nature, pose obstacles for questers. There must be some test to gauge that the seeker is worthy of reward, as well as to determine if he or she has the stamina and the will to continue the quest. Whether posed by humans or gods, the tests, if passed successfully, earn respect for the seeker and enable him or her to make progress on the journey. For Milkman Dead, northern black rich man, the tests involve humiliation designed to teach him that his status does not separate him from the national corpus of black humanity. They show that his pride is disproportionate to his achievements, that he must learn to value those toward whom he is disdainful, and that he needs more assistance than his previous independence has allowed for. Because of the extent of his arrogance and the height of his separation from the blacks he meets, his tests have to be especially humbling. The black men in Shalimar, Virginia, are more than willing and able to effect his reassessment of his position in the world.

Milkman insults their ways and denies their humanity within a few minutes of his arrival in town. Bred to insensitivity concerning the customs of the South, his very ignorance is a weapon he wields against the men. He casually mentions that he will buy a new car if the old one cannot be repaired, thereby making the men dwell intensely upon their poverty and limited abilities to take care of their families. "He hadn't bothered to say his name, nor ask theirs, had called them 'them' . . . his manner, his clothes were reminders that they had no crops of their own and no land to speak of either" (266). His money highlights their poverty, and his easy survey of their women threatens

the fragile bonds they can still use to claim their manhood. When he locks his car, in a town “where there couldn’t be more than two keys twenty-five miles around ” (266), they know he is like the white men for whom they sit and hope for a day’s work: “They looked at his skin and saw it was as black as theirs, but they knew he had the heart of the white men who came to pick them up in the trucks when they needed anonymous, faceless laborers” (266).

A man whose mere presence calls into question their own claims to manhood can only be tested in the same arena. Milkman has the power, manner, clothes, and money the black men identify with white men; therefore, they focus their first test on his sexual capacity is he as much a man in sexual matters as the signs suggest, or can he be a “faggot”? If they can humiliate him with insinuations about homosexuality, and perhaps embarrass him or drive him away, they can restore to themselves some of the lack of manhood his presence makes them feel. The ritual of transference is old, though its specific manifestations may be unique. If Milkman leaves the scene, then the men will feel justified in not helping or accepting him. If he can hold his own and somehow survive their insults, then they will stop the ritual testing and tolerate him, perhaps even accept him into the community.

The men in Solomon’s General Store begin their test with a verbal assault, in the tradition of one of the oldest forms of contest within black communities. Rather than playing the dozens, which would reflect subtle, less direct attacks, they confront Milkman with insults aimed not at his mother but specifically at him. From the assertion that “pricks is . . . wee, wee little” (267) in the North, they seek confirmation from Milkman and move on to insults about homosexuality and sexual perversion. Milkman pleases the spectators by

succumbing to the physical battle they have all anticipated, but he is little match for his knife-flashing opponent: “Milkman did the best he could with a broken bottle... and so did his pretty beige suit, and he probably would have had his throat cut if two women hadn’t come running in screaming ” (268). Having given his adversary a “jagged cut” over his eye, sufficient to induce profuse bleeding, Milkman is left in the hot sun, tending his wounds and reflecting on the incident as the others casually go their way.

Milkman’s ability to hold his own with the bottle earns him a tinge of respect, but not enough for the fun to end. The measure of his worthiness s worthiness continues in the older men’s invitation to him to join them in a night hunt. Milkman cannot walk away from the challenge and still claim superiority, so he boasts that he is the “best shot there is” (269). The claim is a vestige of pride held on to in an impossible situation. The pride has to be tempered at the same time that the men must reevaluate their feelings toward Milkman. Change on his part will bring him closer to them and, on theirs, will encourage them to respect him at a mutual, horizontal level rather than a hierarchical one. The coon hunt tests Milkman’s courage and endurance, simultaneously forcing him to be dependent upon individuals he has scorned. Their familiarity with the territory, equipment, and procedures highlights Milkman’s greenness. He does not foresee the noise that loose change in his pocket would make during a hunt, and he shows his lack of night sight by bumping into Calvin as they walk along a trail listening for the dogs. Milkman’s city body, worn down by the earlier testing and his general fatigue, eventually gives out, and he finds himself alone in the dark woods, too weak to do anything but sit and reflect upon the circumstances that have brought him to

that point. The hunt therefore assumes a triple purpose. It is a part of Milkman's journey south, a part of the ritual testing, and most important, a part of his journey inward, his "hunt" for the best within himself. His reflections show some of the strongest signs of growth, among them his recognition that he has treated his family and Pilate's badly. He literally experiences a dark night of the soul in which he realizes that none of the things separating him from the men hunting with him are of any use to him:

There was nothing here to help him not his money, his car, his father's reputation, his suit, or his shoes. In fact, they hampered him. Except for his broken watch, and his wallet with about two hundred dollars, all he had started out with on his journey was gone:

. . . His watch and his two hundred dollars would be of no help out here, where all a man had was what he was born with, or had learned to use. And endurance. Eyes, ears, nose, taste, touch— and some other sense that he knew he did not have: an ability to separate out, of all the things there were to sense, the one that life itself might depend on. (277)

Milkman is learning lessons that he will not truly be able to value until later, but his current predicament has caused a previously unmatched reflection on his part. Guitar's attempt to strangle him to death shortly after these reflections makes Milkman realize even more the fragile nature of the material goods he has clung to throughout his life.

That brush with death seems to sharpen Milkman's desire to live. He is able to find his way in the darkness to the spot where Calvin and the other men

have treed a bobcat. A more expansive symbol of Milkman's newfound awareness than a coon would perhaps be, the bobcat becomes a measure of Milkman's acceptance into the group of hunters, into the kind of courage that has taken him through his path in the woods. The bobcat also culminates the ritual of acceptance; by allowing Milkman, the initiate, to pull out its heart, the men incorporate him into their fraternity and forgive him his former superiority over them. He can now joke easily with them, admit that he was "scared to death" (280), describe that condition graphically for them, and enjoy becoming the butt of their jokes.

At the literal level of the hunt, however, Milkman has again held his own, and the men are fair-minded enough to recognize it; they now share food and company with him and provide him with the first lead to finding information about his grandmother, Singing Bird. Finally, they send him to a woman who completes his process of initiation into their community.

Sweet, as she is more than appropriately named, is one of the "pretty women" Milkman has been brash enough to observe upon his arrival in Shalimar. Now that he has proved his manhood on their terms, the men judge him to be ready to sleep with one of the local women. She becomes one of the rewards for the quester having successfully completed his quest. Hers is a ritual of reclamation for him, which involves purification before lovemaking. She washes away the blood of the fight and the dirt and grime of the evening's hunt, thus formally baptizing him into official acceptance in Shalimar. And she willingly presents herself as the prize he has won for battles endured. Such a formulaic analysis, however, is mitigated by Sweet and Milkman thoroughly enjoying their sharing, especially Milkman, who is awakened to a new sense

of awe in physical contact with a woman. “What she did for his sore feet, his cut face, his back, his neck, his thighs ... was so delicious he couldn’t imagine that the lovemaking to follow would be anything but anticlimactic” (285). It so far exceeds his expectations that he offers to give her a bath in return, an action far removed from anything he has done for Hagar and, in its sharing, anything he has done for any of the women in his life.

Having been tested verbally, physically, emotionally, and sexually, Milkman is better prepared, more sensitized to recognize that his family history is more important than any gold he could seek. His tests have taught him that human beings are not to be dismissed or ill-treated with impunity. As a part of the tie that binds him to all living beings, especially people of African descent, he can no longer use his money to separate himself from the Saul’s of Shalimar, or his city-slicker shoes to separate him from the Calvin’s, or his condescension from the Sweets of the world. They all tie him to a communal and familial heritage that goes back to Africa, and they represent, in their various states of development, some portion of his grandfather’s journey from Virginia to Pennsylvania. The first Macon Dead’s hope for better things drove him from the stifling South, a hope shared by the people who are still living there and being similarly stifled by poverty. And his travel on a wagon, so far distant psychologically and economically from Milkman Dead, reflects the very soil and work to which the people of Shalimar are rooted. Milkman has been shocked into the recognition that he will not be allowed to break the circle of connectedness extending generations before his own existence.

His rediscovery of his humanity makes him sensitive enough to Susan Byrd’s information to realize that the children in Shalimar are singing about

his great-grandmother, Ryna, and his great-grandfather, Solomon. He deciphers names and connects their songs to Pilate's blues song about Sugarman. The puzzle of family history becomes more engaging than searching for gold. Knowing one's name, being able to call it in spite of personal or institutional distortions, becomes all important to Milkman. He understands that names have "meaning," as Pilate has understood by putting hers in her ear. He comes to understand why people in Michigan insist upon calling the street on which he lives Not Doctor Street, why they value the nicknames he has heard in the pool halls and barbershops all his life. The names, taken "from yearnings, gestures, flaws, events, mistakes, weaknesses" (330), all "bear witness" to the concreteness, the reality of black people's lives in spite of the census bureau or the post office or drunk recorders. Inherent in the tradition of which the names are a part is the penchant of black people to adhere to their own reality in spite of almost insurmountable obstacles. By arriving at this state of awareness, Milkman can link his own family names to others representing black history and struggle. The golden threads tying him to his family history are far more valuable than the original gold he has sought

Milkman's growth on his journey is measurable. He changes from a self-centred middle-class bore to a man genuinely able to share in a physical relationship as well as in societal and communal interchanges. He realizes how wrongheaded he has been about his father and mother and how he has used all the women in his life, especially Hagar. He had put his whims and desires before those of his sisters and had discounted their needs to be more than the older siblings of Macon Dead's chosen offspring. He had judged his mother harshly and had ignorantly tried to chastise his father. He had violated Pilate's

home by stealing from her and continued that violation by journeying hundreds of miles to find gold he believed she had hidden. Yet in the darkness on the coon hunt and in later scenes, faults, Milkman comes to know many of his limitations and faults, in human relationships. He has been especially abusive to Hagar.

In his egotistical focus on self, he had “gone off and left” Hagar in the same way that his great-grandfather had gone and left Ryna. In fact, Milkman’s reflections upon Hagar spur his recognition of his family in the song sung by the children. In his remorse over Hagar, he begins to feel a sense of family responsibility and commitment negated in his great-grandfather’s action of flying away from his family.

Throughout his life, Milkman has been “leaving” his family—through his disdain and hatred for his mother and father, through his condescension toward his sisters, and through his now recognized mistreatment of Hagar. He has left a string of bodies like his great-grandfather left Ryna and Jake, Milkman’s grandfather. Where the paths converge signals a new beginning for Milkman, but it may be an ambiguous one. The exhilaration he feels upon learning that Solomon could fly is matched by the tragic circumstances surrounding that fantastic event. The celebration of flying simultaneously highlights Ryna’s insanity and the fatherlessness of Solomon’s twenty-one sons. Happiness in the knowledge of flight leads to the enigma of unhappiness in the consequences of the flight. Flying, then, becomes a selfish celebration of the freedom of an individual judged against the enslavement of twenty-two people. The selfish path Milkman has followed throughout his life parallels the flight of his great-grandfather and its symbolic implication.

When Milkman arrives at the discovery of his great-grandfather's flying abilities, he has two options. He can continue the path of Solomon (celebration without commitment), or he can use the kinship as a sign to renew his ties to his family. The journey cannot work for Milkman unless some reversal occurs; flight itself must be made secondary to commitment. If he merely celebrates flight, then he runs the risk of separation and of continuing to follow in his great-grandfather's flight pattern. If he puts commitment first, then he will show allegiance to Pilate, who has repeatedly maintained that "You can't just fly on off and leave a body" (147). Emotionally, it is clear that Milkman, through his reflections and seeming changes of attitudes, follows Pilate. But the attraction to flying makes him confront Guitar in what may be a fatal end to the lessons he has just learned.

In confronting Guitar, Milkman may be flying off and leaving a body again (Pilate has specifically asked him to look after Reba), but he does so with a desire for commitment, an understanding of what his role should now be in his family. And perhaps he understands his communal role as well, if we view his soaring toward Guitar as an act of love. He does take Guitar with him; if their flight ends in death, it can be viewed as Milkman having saved Guitar from himself and from the gradually warping executions he carries out. The death could also be viewed as vengeance, thereby creating a situation in which Milkman acts for family because Guitar has killed Pilate instead of neglecting them. The problem with this latter view is that it would mean that Milkman has adopted Guitar's eye-for-an-eye philosophy, which is unacceptable under any circumstances. What is clear from the final scene is that Milkman is thoroughly changed from the selfish little creature he started

out to be; he has reevaluated himself and his relationship to his family, and he has progressed in healthy ways.

He transfers of value from material to immaterial things, from things to people, and from directionless activity to purposefulness all suggest that Milkman's journey has worked for him in ways that no other journey in Morrison's novels has worked for any other character. He finds in the South, in the land of his African forebears, the key to appreciating his family and to understanding how he came to be. His enlightenment, no matter the cost, is well worth the trip.

The next chapter consolidates the ideas that have been discussed in the previous chapters.

Chapter Five

Summation

Toni Morrison in her novels has explored various possibilities for the African-American. The fabric of her texts do not show any loud protest against the manifold oppression of society nor do they offer any radical solution to the multiple problems of the blacks. Through her novels she clearly says that the multiple oppression is not confined to only one class or community it is universal and largely due to the individual and community's lack of response to and participation in its own native culture. This soft but firm voice of Toni Morrison has forced the world recognize her, not as a marginalized African-American woman writer but as an important voice in the mainstream of world literature.

Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* presents a family history which invariably reflects the collective history of African Americans. The novel is basically the story of Milkman Dead's search of his roots. He undertakes a long and strenuous journey from North to South searching for the gold that his father and aunt hid in the grotto in the South. He departs from Detroit Ghetto and reaches his destination, Shalimar, a village in West Virginia passing through Danville, Pennsylvania where his father grew up. He travels from his parent's house, which is prosperous with material property, in the industrial North, to his ancestor's humble house marked by its agrarian culture. He navigates physically and spiritually to the history of his ancestors where he temporarily rests to feed his mind from its affluent assets establish his identity.

His experience in the Shalimar Hunt indicates the great transformation in his character. It helps his consciousness to rise to its crest. His awakened consciousness regarding race oppression and class exploitation paves the way for the sprouting of his consciousness regarding gender. During the early stages of his life women receive variegated forms of ill treatment from him. For instance, he pisses on Lena, shrieks at first Corinthians, and spies on Ruth, robs Pilate and kills Hagar. This vicious treatment, which he has meted out to women who had served his welfare, signifies his lack of gender consciousness, his crippled view of women is totally changed.

With self-awakening he comes to value the great assistance he had received from women like Pilate and Hagar. He begins to respect women and the poor blacks. His new attitude entails his renunciation of the commodified way of life. He begins to embrace the feminist trend that called for equal rights for men and women. Man's subsistence is concomitant with their counterparts, and the converse of it is also true. They are tied by a reciprocal kind of bond. His vision of women is radically changed. He develops parity as his new attitude towards men and women. His former biased view of women is buried forever. He develops a reciprocal relationship with a woman. Morrison presents a situation from which one can easily discern his gender awareness. He guides Pilate to Shalimar to inter her father's bones. The reciprocity is manifested through Pilate's guidance to bury the dead in him and Milkman's direction of Pilate to bury her father's carcass. He becomes a source of life and acts as a catalyst for women.

Milkman's thirst to drink his ancestor's history is saturated by Reverend Cooper, Circe and other old men who remember the Two Macon

Dead's and express great reverence for them. Reverend Cooper, his father's childhood friend tells him that he knows the whereabouts his ancestors. These words thrill Milkman because it affords him an opportunity to know about his family's past. At this juncture, his consciousness rises to a higher level regarding to racial oppression. They make a feast and drinking party in honor of Milkman. This is the first time that Milkman was basks in the glorious history of his ancestors and feels a great sense of euphoria. When he listens to Shalimar's children's song, he realizes that it resembles the song sung by Pilate. He learns about critical epochs that grave impact on blacks like the Civil War, the Reconstruction period and the Great Migration.

During his journey, Milkman overcomes many impediments that obstruct his trip. He successfully enters into Pilate's house which is characterized to be a place filled with darkness as it had a sack of gold which was robbed from someone. Likewise, he goes through a greenish black tunnel to reach the Butler's mansion to meet Circe. He overcomes the mortifying minor mishaps of his track to the cave. Finally, he enters the cave that is inhabited by bats. He is physically bruised and exhausted by troubles he encountered in the woods he survives the knife and broken bottle fight in Shalimar. His arrogant demeanor, which disparages and vilifies black people, and his vulgar flaunt of wealth instigates them to challenge him to fight outside the general store. He sorts Guitar's attempt on his life. He participates in the hunting expedition of bobcat with King Walter's elders. When the hunting expeditions ends the hunter gives Milkman the lion's share, the heart of the animal, to show that they have accepted him as a member of the

community. When he leaves the party, he feels his psyche is molded by his adventurous decision and action he adopts.

Milkman's resort to the act of introspection and contemplation enables him to discover his true self which is marked by high confidence. The emanation of his self is patiently seen from the change in his character, which epitomizes his emerging awareness. He stops limping anymore, which indicated his emerging identity. He develops rapport with human beings, animals and trees, which alleviate the pain of his loneliness in the woods. Traversing hinderance, he encounters in his journey makes him an archetypal hero.

The discovery of his great-grandfather Solomon's ability to fly provides him with joy and exhilaration because he sees in it materialization of his childhood dream. Becomes so happy that he thinks he need a wide sea to bathe him. The image of the vast sea demanded by him can be constructed as indication of his desire to cleanse himself from the impurities that colored his formal life. While he was wandering, a thought floats in his mind, which instigates him to remember Ryna Gluch and the voice of carrying woman. Automatically he makes a connection between Hagger whom he has left behind when he flies back to Africa. Both the woman dies desolately as their hearts are broken by the departure of their men. At this juncture he realizes that he is the cause of Hagger's death because of his manic preoccupation with flying makes him to leave behind causing her to meet her tragic end to die in forlorn condition. He acknowledges his responsibility for her death and his willingness to receive just punishment.

He vacillates between a strong craving to fly and his reluctance to emulate Solomon's model. Pilate helps his psyche from dithering by telling him that there are other ways of flying. While interring the bones of Pilate's father, Pilate is killed by a bullet shot from Guitar's gun that targets Milkman. Suddenly a bird swoops down and takes Pilate's earring. Symbolically speaking, Pilate's souls soar high without leaving the ground. In her dying moments Pilate asks Milkman to sing and he sings the song of his ancestors. He realizes why he loves her without leaving the ground, he has learnt from her that one can't fly on off and leave the body. He emulates her model not Solomon's.

He benefits from his flight in the form of some quirks, which radically change his vision of life. He gets rid of his overwhelming fear of death that deters his quest for self. Pilate's death in his arms stifles his fear of death and implants a strong sense of his willingness to accept death. He also learns love from Pilate's words on her dying day. He embraces Pilate's role and becomes a guiding spirit for others. He asks Guitar to renounce hatred as it destroys and consumes its bearer. He exerts his efforts to wear him away from violence.

Juxtaposing his earlier life marked by narcissism with his acquired one growing out of his retrospective act, he realizes that the bad feelings he had received from other such as Guitar hatred and Hagar's vengeance are attributed to some foibles in his own personality and that they are not culprits. He realizes his previous relationship with others was based on the attitude to enjoy his life with people who share their happiness alone. He eschews his abnegation of responsibility for the suffering of others. He belatedly realizes that he is to blame for Hagar's tragic death. He decides to carry with him

Hagar's box of hair which symbolizes his new awareness of the past. His act can be constructed as an act of expiation and repentance for his past. He atones for the severe hurts he had inflicted on the psyches of others particularly of women. He feels a sudden rush of affection from the people who scarified themselves for his sake. Of course, Milkman rises to his awareness when he comes to the stage of outgrowing his vanity, self-veneration and the feeling of apathy for others.

In sum, Milkman commences his life with a very low level of awareness about the triptych of race, class and gender. Such ignorance leads to an absence of self-awareness, which deters his journey towards his identity. His self-realization is hampered by his embrace of the materialistic and acquisitive philosophy that he imbibed from his father. When he gives up money-oriented thinking, his conscience rise to a higher level and beings to commingle with African masses. His biased view of women is totally changed; this prompts him to develop an equalitarian and humanistic view of man and women. All these together pave the way towards the recovery of his true self. Interestingly as individual, he overcomes the impediments he encounters in his trip and succeeds in constructing his distinct identity. His journey is crowned with the sprouting of his spiritual identity, connecting him to the past incorporating him to present, and peeking him to the pinnacle of self-discovery. Milkman succeeds in navigating the perilous sea and reaches his destination.

By the end of the journey and after, it is easy to see an axiomatic metamorphosis that colors his character and mould his psyche, leading him to the realization which gives a glimmer of hope to blacks, that one day they

would absolve their collective soul from the incapacitating and debilitating forces which maim and thwart their collective identity. He eliminates his egoistic vision of life and implants altruism and philanthropy that is based on accepting the rights of others. He breaks free from the avid materialism that seduced and enslaved him. He identifies his own foibles and expiates for his sins. Ultimately, he emerges as a triumphant hero who traces the genesis of his rich history and culture and succeeds in identifying with the community spiritually and physically. He bathes his soul in the glorious history and agrarian culture of his ancestors, which Morrison embalms in mystery. He learns to fly without even leaving the ground. He establishes his identity and find meaning in life. So, his journey is successful at all levels through he is deterred by variegated impediments. He emerges as a totally changed a man, a New Milkman.

WORKS CITED

- Berry, Wes. "Toni Morrison's Revisionary 'Nature Writing': Song of Solomon and the Blasted Pastoral." *South to a New Place: Region, Literature, Culture; Southern Literary Studies*. Ed. Suzanne W. Jones, Sharon Monteith, and Richard Gray. Louisiana State UP, 2002.
- Clark, Norris. "Flying Black: Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye, Sula and Song of Solomon." *Minority Voices: An Interdisciplinary journal of Literature and Arts*, 1983, pp. 51-63.
- Cooper, B. E. "Milkman's Search for family in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*." *CLA Journal*, pp. 145-147.
- Curtis, Mary C. "Commentary: The lesson of Toni Morrison: Words matter." *Chicago Tribune*, Tribune Content Agency, 10 Aug. 2019, www.chicagotribune.com
- De Arman, Charles. "Milkman as the Archetypal Hero: Thursday's Child has Far to Go." *Obsidian*, issue 6, 1980.
- Lis, Anna. Miller, W.C. ed. "Song of Solomon Summary." *GradeSaver*, 14 November 2007. www.gradesaver.com/song-of-solomon/study-guide/bibliography.
- Morrison, Toni. *Song of Solomon*. Vintage, 1998.
- Peach, Linde. *Macmillan Modern Novelist: Toni Morrison*. Macmillan, 1995.
- Smedley, Audrey. "Racism". *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 22 Oct. 2021 www.britannica.com/topic/racism.
- Smith, Valerie. "The Quest for and Discovery of Identity in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*." *Southern Review*, 1985.
- Sumana, K. *The Novels of Toni Morrison*. Prestige Books, 1998.

Wikipedia contributors. "African-American literature." Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, 22 Apr. 2022.
www.wikipedia.org/wiki/African-American_literature.

Dislocation and Alienation in Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant*

A project 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

By

R. Kitheri Roshiba

(REG. NO. 20APEN13)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Cultural Conflicts	12
Three	Familial Relationships	22
Four	Style and Techniques	34
Five	Summation	43
	Works Cited	49

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Dislocation and Alienation in Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant*** 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 is a work done by R. Kitheri Roshiba during the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department
Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

N. Sumathi
Dr. N. Sumathi

Guide

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

S. Vennila
27/05/22
Examiner
Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Associate Prof. of English
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Dislocation and Alienation in Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmanian 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.

R. Kitheri Roshiba

R.Kitheri Roshiba

Thoothukudi

May 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the **Lord Almighty** for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, and strength in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank our Institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. N. Sumathi**, Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project. I thank the faculty of the Department of English for their valuable input in teaching and moulding us.

I thank **Dr. Vinitha** the Librarian, St. Mary's College who extended help in the use of the library for the reference work.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents and friends for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

The project entitled **Dislocation and Alienation in Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant*** highlights the traumatic experiences faced by the immigrants in an alien land owing to cultural clashes. It also analyses various dilemmas the protagonist undergoes regarding the relationship with her male counterparts and negotiates with this transition in their own ways.

The first chapter **Introduction** briefly exposes Manju Kapur as a great novelist. It throws light on her other works and the characteristics of her novels.

The second chapter **Cultural Conflicts** enumerates upon the identity crisis, loneliness, sense of exile and cultural displacement faced by the immigrants.

The third chapter **Familial Relationships** focuses on the premarital and extra marital affairs of the two immigrant characters in the novel due to the impact of western culture.

The fourth chapter **Style and Techniques** discusses the techniques used by Kapur in order to show the complexities of the immigrant experiences.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up the previous chapters and gives a suitable conclusion to the project.

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

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Indian English Literature is the expression of a sensibility, firmly rooted in the traditional, going back to the very dawn of civilization and yet throbbing in its live links with the very modern and the contemporaneous. While the Indian literature is intrinsically part of the continuum that constitutes the Indian mind-set, both thematically and stylistically the expression of this sensibility is in perfect consonance with the modern as well as the post-modern framework.

The first three decades of the 19th century marked the beginning of English writing in India, but it was a period of slow incubation. Indian writing in English is one of those voices in which India speaks of its own culture, heritage and modernization of value and systems. It's rapid growth, increasing popularity and award winning creative contributions. Justify the truth that the Indian English literature provides an opportunity to make a deep dive in Indian consciousness and sensibility. Indian English literature refers to that body of work by writers from India, who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of numerous regional and indigenous languages of India is also linked with the works of writers of the Indian Diaspora born in India but residing elsewhere.

Indian English literature or Indian literature in English has attracted a widespread interest recently both in India and abroad. It is now realized that Indian English Literature and Commonwealth Literature are in no way inferior to other literatures. Indian English Literature has luxuriant growth in the post-modern period. The post-modern writer had thoroughly contributed to the development of Indian

English Literature. The old Indian Literature especially Sanskrit Literature was famous for its political and religious writing.

Indian English Literature is two hundred years old. Critics from America and England have also appreciated Indian English novels. Sri Aurobindo is the first writer in Indian English Literature. The triumvirs Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan were the novelists who laid foundation for the Indian English Fiction by their tremendous contribution and different literary style. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was the first Indian to write a novel in English. He was also the founder of modern school of Indian fiction. Meenakshi Mukherjee observes:

The novel in India can be seen as the product of configurations in philosophical, aesthetic, economic and political forces in the larger life of the country. Despite obvious, regional variations, a basic pattern seems to enlarge from shared factors like the puranic heritage, hierarchical social structure, colonial education, disjunction of agrarian life and many others that affect the form of novel as well as its content.

(86)

The present collection of essays in this volume of the anthology of Indian writings in English takes a refreshingly fresh and innovative look at this literature. Indian English literature has thus had a Janus-facedness about it, the ubiquitous modern context inevitably interacting intermittently with the pristine Indian legacy in its multifacetedness, promoting each literature to resolve/synthesize the twin verities in his own way. This makes Indian English literature of not merely artistic but also sociological, cultural and philosophic worth.

Indian novelists have used the language which is not their own. They have used English language to spread the message. This language has certainly provided them an opportunity to reach all over the world and to make sure that they do not remain confined to their region, to their people and to their country. An overlooked part of Indian Writing in English is poetry. Rabindranath Tagore was the first poet to write in English. The prominent poets of twentieth century are Dhilip Chitre, Kamala Das, A.K. Ramanujan, Nissim Ezekiel and Meena Kandhaswamy.

The Indian writer explains the customs and traditional attitude of the Indian social context. The new woman writer who arose in the nineteenth century was Manju Kapur. She was born in Amritsar on 25th October 1948. She graduated from the Miranda House University College for women and completed her M.A in 1972 at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada and an M.Phil. at Delhi University. He currently works as a professor of English where she is a teacher of English Literature at her alma mater Miranda House College, Delhi. She teaches English at Delhi University under the name Manju Kapur Dalmia.

On the horizon of Indian Writing in English, Manju Kapur has emerged as a new novelist in the world of fiction in the 1990s. Manju Kapur has indeed created sensation in the literary world by voicing the inner tribulation. She is a modern writer with modern views and notions and is the most talked about and appreciated contemporary Indian English Woman novelist like Shashi Deshpande, Arudhati Roy, Gita Hariharan, Anita Nair, Shobhaa De. B.K.Das in his Twentieth Century Literary criticism explains; "Women have been present in literature from their (male's) view point but now women have taken the reins in their hands and they are now days presented in the writings of female writers from their point of view" (143).

Kamala Markandaya (1924 - 2004) was a South Indian novelist. Her works are more realistic in nature. She points out how the socio-economic conditions affect most of the women. She concentrates on modernity in the conventional world and its consequences. Her works include *Nectar in the Sieve*, *Some Inner Fury*, *Possession*, *The Golden Honey Comb*, *A Handful of Rice* and *In Pleasure City*. Kamala Markandaya has portrayed women in a traditional outlook.

Nayantara Sahgal (1927) is one of the few Indian women writers who immediately caught attention of the literary world. Her women characters belonged to a wealthy and upper class Indian society. Politics was in her blood, so one of the important political events from India forms the backdrop of her each novel. Her notable works are *Time to be Happy*, *This Time of Morning*, *A Situation in New Delhi* and *The Day in Shadow*. She dealt with issues concerning women that later became the major issues in the feminist movement launched in the sixties.

Women novelists have played a crucial and major role in enhancing the quality and quantity of the Indian English fiction. They have also added the women's perspective and feministic dimensions to the novels. Contributions of women can never go unnoticed. In fact, the works by women writers constitute a major part of the contemporary Indian writings in English. Past two decades have witnessed feministic writings in Indian English literature. Women writers dive deep into the inner lives of marginalized women and have brought light to the problems faced by them.

Manju Kapur is an avid writer and a widely travelled person. She has successfully portrayed the conflict of tradition and modernity in her characters. Kapur wears a sari and a bindi, but argues that western dress plays an important role in leveling caste divides in Indian society. Although Kapur's marriage initially caused

waves with her husband's traditional Marwari relatives, today she lives with them in a joint family structure. She describes the smaller western family unit as 'non-fictional' by comparison. Kapur is cautiously optimistic, but remains realistic about its present. In the novels of Manju Kapur, all women characters undergo a significant alteration and has controlled over their thinking and freedom. Her writing is merely an analysis of female character and cultural identity. Manju Kapur describes the female character in a real way.

Shashi Deshpande was a well-known and renowned novelist and story teller. Like other writers, she is committed to social causes and responsibility. Her novels are women oriented and represent real Indian society. She shows how the traditional Indian society is biased towards women. She believes that men and women write differently. In the beginning of *That Long Silence* (1989) she says "... I somehow feel that anybody who reads this, would know this is a woman writing" (1). Her works include *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, *If I Die Today*, *Roots and Shadows* and *That Long Silence*.

Anita Desai is different from other women novelists. She has presented psychological exploitation in her women characters. Her protagonists are mainly lonely and sensitive. According to Anita Desai writing is a process of "exploration of language: how much can language do, how far can it pretend human experience and feelings." Her notable work *Fire on the Mountain* is about three women and their complex experiences in life. Anita Desai's characters are drawn from the Indian middle class families. She is remarkable for the sensible portrayal of the inner life of her female characters.

Bharati Mukerjee is another prolific woman novelist where novels explore tensions of alienated middle class women. She focuses on themes such as women's oppression, quest for identity, family relationships, breakdown of traditional and social biases. Her protagonists are victims of racism, sexism and other forms of social evil. Her notable works are *The Tiger's Daughter*, *Wife*, *Darkness*, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* and *The Sorrow and The Terror*. Her notable works are *The Tiger's Daughter*, *Wife*, *Darkness*, *Days and Nights in Calcutta* and *The Sorrow and The Terror*.

Manju Kapur's writings often deal with women's status in Indian society, especially within the marital context. She has won the 1999 Commonwealth Prize for her First Novels for her debut novel *Difficult Daughters*. It was published in 1998. Like her illustrated contemporaries, Kapur has foregrounded women's lives in her novels which depict both the external and internal dimensions of female-community. These novels offer a fascinating glimpse of women's consciousness and their interrelations.

Kapur's remarkable five novels are *Difficult Daughters*, *A Married Woman*, *Home*, *The Immigrant* and *Custody*. *A Married Woman* (2002) was shortlisted for Encore award. The story revolves around Astha, the protagonist. The novel depicts an unconventional bonding between two females who fail to sustain it. Her novel *Home* (2006) was also shortlisted for Hutch Crossword Award. Her works has been translated into German, Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, Hebrew, Marathi and Hindi. *The Immigrant* (2008) has been shortlisted for the India Plaza Golden Quill Award and the DSC Prize of South Asian Literature. This novel gives a contemporary Indian outlook, in a story interweaving issues of family, love and arranged marriage. In *Custody* (2011), Manju Kapur has presented two aspects of female picture,

infidelity and infertility. She comments: “A woman should be aware of self-controlled, strong willed, self-reliant and rational, having Faith in inner strength of womanhood. A meaningful change can be brought only from within by being free in the deeper psychic sense” (06).

Kapur’s first novel *Difficult Daughters* was published in 1998 and won the Best First Book Commonwealth Writers Prize (Eurasia Section) for 1999 and has gained wide publicity both at home and abroad. It is successful both commercially and critically not only in India but also on the world market. The location of this novel is primarily set in the India of the 1940’s. This novel does not concentrate on partition issues though it is set around the time of partition. It can also be read profitably as a postcolonial and feminist novel. *Difficult Daughters* is a feminist discourse not because she is a woman writing about woman but because Kapur has understood a woman both as a woman and as a person pressurized by all kinds of visible and invisible contexts. Through her protagonist Virmati, Kapur explores the growing concern and awareness of woman in society and shows her concern towards their empowerment. It offers a critique of Hindu nationalism, religious communalism and pretension of nationalism.

In her novel *A Married Woman* (2002), Kapur depicts the story line of Astha, an educated, upper-middle class, working Delhi woman who struggles to keep her identity intact with seeking equal opportunities within and without the familial threshold. It is a beautiful, honest and seductive story of love and deep detachment, set at the time of political and religious turmoil. It is a work of investigative reporting on the most controversial and political issue of demolition of Babri Masjid and a woman’s obsession with love and lesbianism. It also touches upon political events like Rajiv Gandhi’s assassination. It is a kind of narrative on a woman’s incompatible

marriage, resultant frustration and contemporary political turmoil in its historical context.

Kapur's third novel *Home* (2006) is dedicated to her children Amba, Maya, Katyayani, and Agastya. In this novel, she presents several issues such as female victimization, the inner conflict within self, the cry for identity, economic oppression, commercial exploitation, physical abuse and lack of personal freedom.

Kapur's fourth novel *The Immigrant* (2010) is partly set in India. The central characters in the novel, Nina and Ananda are both NRIs drawn to new lives in Canada in the seventies. In this novel, she presents a wide range of issues such as marital relationship, adultery, difference between eastern and western culture, man- woman relationship both sexually and psychology and the life of immigrants. It is a portrait of an arranged marriage, where both the parties are content with arrangement and are willing to make it work. Beyond marriage, it is an examination of immigration and how the people of similar groups respond to a change of world.

Her fifth novel *Custody* (2011) narrates the story of Roman and Shagun, a married couple with two children, eight year old Arjun and three year old Rooth, who enjoy a privileged life. Soon Shagun meets Ashok Khanna, Raman's boss, they immediately fall in love Shagun has to decide what she wants to do, or what she can do. She asks Raman for divorce but he turns into a vengeful person. In another part of Delhi Ishita's marriage collapses because she cannot have children of her own. She tries to find some satisfaction and a sense of identity in social work but she abandons it when she meets the divorced Raman. Since she is drawn to him she believes she can be happy as a step mother. In the second half of the novel, the story focuses on the children, the bitter legal battle and the price of freedom. Manju Kapur is one of those

comparatively rare Indian-resident women novelists of social fiction widely read both in India and in the West. Kapur's novels primarily feature middle-class, urban, young Indian women at the turn of the century and into the new millennium, providing rich material depicting and reflecting the changing attitude of Indian women. Increasingly Indian women are having careers and salaried jobs and they leave the private sphere of home to join the public sphere beyond, becoming financially independent.

Manju Kapur is one of the most renowned women writers of the contemporary era in India. She not only portrays the vulnerable condition of women in Indian society but also delineates how they are being kept ignorant about education and emancipation. In her novels, she gives outlet to the gender discrimination still openly prevalent in the field of education. Especially modern-day women authors are now expressing themselves freely and boldly on a variety of themes such as feminism, diaspora, social and economic forces, gender relationship and lesbianism.

Feminism is defined as cultural, economic and political moments that are focused towards establishing legal protection and complete equality for the women. In Indian writing, feminism has been used as a modest attempt for evaluating the real social scenario as far as women are concerned. Feminist criticism has its focus on patriarchal power structures. Feminism does not particularly talk of equality and rights of a woman but it is more about compassion, respect and understanding from the male counterparts. The main cause for the dissatisfaction of the women in the present society is the superior attitude of the men. In her novels, women have suffered in silence and feminism talks exactly about that. Women have affirmed their fundamental rights and have realized where they exactly went wrong.

The aim of feminism is to create a niche in the world of literature, ensuring equality of opportunity for women in all spheres of life. It also aims at breaking down the differences of gender and to discover a different vision of gender and society. Feminism demands women to have feminist consciousness as it is an essential aspect of women's past. Kapur has a soft corner for women like all other feminists. An element of feminism runs through the veins of her novels, especially in the realm of biological, sexual and cultural aspects.

Feminism is multicultural and diasporic. It is a proven fact that women, in general, are subject to patriarchal oppression and patriarchy operates in different ways in different countries. It is also true that women's problems are shaped by their class, race, nationality, religion and many other factors. It is a complex issue involving implications at various levels. The woman being treated as 'the angel in the house' and the woman being placed on the 'pedestal' are some of them.

Today a woman has also become a direct money earner and she is not only confined to household works. The women of modern era think on different lines and that is what is portrayed in the novels of the Indian women authors. Indian women writers expose the feminine subjectivity and apply the theme that ranges from childhood to complete womanhood. These women writers say that feminism means putting an end to the silent sufferings of women. Women writers in India are moving strong and swift, matching the pace of the world. We see them in full bloom spreading their own individual fragrance.

The term Diaspora suggests that one's own room of language, culture, tradition in the host country. The immigrants suffer rootlessness and also identity crisis. The conflict in them becomes very strong and they have to fight it. They have to

pick up the new culture, if they intend to stay there a longer time. Migration of the people from one country to other is easy in transportation but hard to adjust in alien culture, far from one's homeland. The people who live in alien culture are very connected to their root and to their respective native countries.

Manju Kapur is one of the most prominent and popular contemporary novelist of Indian English Literature. She illuminates the struggle between men and women for power and offers a possible solution to it. Manju Kapur is a widely travelled ardent reader. Through her characters, she highlights the complexity in family life. She remains very candid and truthful in presenting the women and the challenges they face in their personal, religious and socio-political levels.

The second chapter is based on the Cultural Conflicts of the characters in the novel. There is a deep analysis on the identity crisis of Ananda and Nina.

CHAPTER TWO

CULTURAL CONFLICTS

Indian English Literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the languages of India. Diaspora is an emerging word in literature. Literature produced by the diaspora writers explores the diasporic life. The word 'Diaspora' means scattering or the dispersion of the people from their home land. The Indian Diaspora plays a considerable role in highlighting the complications of diasporic occurrence in literature. It stands for every immigrant who has migrated to different countries across the globe seeking for better fortune. Diaspora aims to examine the dislocation as well as conflict between generations and cultural identities.

The psychological term 'Identity Crisis' is defined as 'a period of uncertainty and confusion in which a person's sense of identity becomes insecure, typically due to a change in their expected aims or roles in society. The question of identity has remained a source of conflicts and has led to wars in history. The search for roots has been a recurrent journey throughout humanity's history, defined and explored in literary works. Cultural identity according to Stuart Hall, "the idea of one shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry held in common"(3). Manju Kapur's novel *The Immigrant* explores the immigrant's sense of identity and belongings through the characters of Ananda and Nina. The novel brings up the elements of identity crisis in the context of migration. This novel mentions all the troubles and traumas faced by immigrants abroad.

The theme of *The Immigrant* is the experience of being out of place, of being in exile. The novel in essence focuses on the duality marring the lives caught in the contrary transactions between the East and West with all its consequential maladjustments, missed prospects and the psychological ordeal characterizing immigrant lives hanging precariously between two dissimilar worlds.

Manju Kapur's novel *The Immigrant* deals with the story of two immigrants, Nina and Ananda. The novelist chose Canada as the background for her novel, and discusses the Indian diaspora in Canada. The characters in her novel, inspite of their divided souls try to construct their identity as Indian diaspora in Canada. The immigrants or the expatriates, in most cases, are citizens of two countries. So they somehow shift their focus between their social and cultural identities which are in a way unstable and fluid. Despite living in a foreign land for a considerable amount of time, their identities are connected directly or indirectly with their old homelands. The novel explores the issues of alienation and the quest for identity. It discusses common themes of alienation, dislocation of Indian culture, diaspora and quest for identity. It reflects loneliness and the search for self-identity.

The Immigrant is based on Delhi in North India for the first half of the novel, and in Halifax in East Canada for its later half. The novel is set in the seventies in Indira Gandhi's India and Pierre Trudeau's Canada. At that time, India was going through much social and political reform. Indians are known to value their morals and ethics but their attitude changes when they are in a foreign land. Nina is alienated and dislocated from the Indian culture and finds puzzled in the quest for identity as Kapur writes: "At present all she is, is a wife, and a wife is alone for many hours. There will come a day when even books are powerless to distract. When the house and its convenience can no longer completely charm and compensate. Then she realises she

is an immigrant for life” (122). Nina moves to Canada because of her political and social turmoil in India. The story starts in the year when Nina and Ananda meet and marry and continues to span over approximately the first three years of the marriage.

A gradual crisis of identity started between the couple Nina and Ananda. Arguments, blame, guilt, indifference and ultimately infidelity all ensue to create a much different atmosphere within their marriage than that of the beginning. Although the novel is divided into two parts, Nina’s life thematically divides the story. In the first half she holds on to her Indian identity, values and customs. In the second half Nina returns to school for postgraduate studies at the local University and in doing so, after much finding of ‘feet’ gradually finds her own independence and identity in Canada.

Ananda, the male protagonist determined to be a fully-fledged citizen of Canada. Nina’s character Manju Kapur comments that:

Nina was almost thirty; Friends and colleague consoled her by remarking on her radiant complexion and her black hair, but comfort was cold. Nina’s Skin knew it was thirty, broadcasting the fact at certain angles in front of the mirror. Her spirit felt sixty as she walked from the bus stop to the single room where she lived with her mother. Her heart felt a hundred as it surveyed the many years of hopeless longing it had known. (1)

In *The Immigrant*, Ananda undergoes such immigrant experiences. He was practising as a dentist in Dehradun and he never thought that he would leave India. Although his uncle was practising in Canada but he has no clue about his future. It is because from the moment of his birth, Ananda had been surrounded by the rituals of

his caste. Before he left home, his parents did their best in order to reinforce the practice of a lifetime.

He was a Brahmin, his body must never been polluted by dead flesh. Low caste boys in the college hostel might try and tempt him towards non-veg, Cigarettes and alcohol, should he deviate from the pure habits they had stilled in him, his mother's heart would break. (14)

Ananda's parents die in a road accident and after that his uncle forces him to come to Canada because he has settled in Halifax for the past twenty years. In India, he will not be able to recover from this loss but in Canada he can make a fresh because this country is full of opportunities. His uncle receives him and asks from him, "Why do you think that there is such a brain drain in India?" he demanded. India does not value its minds-unlike here. Otherwise you think we are not patriots? But there even the simple task of daily life can bleed you dry" (18). As Ananda walks in Canada he finds empty spaces and he starts thinking and comparing this with India. Ananda was used to the hustle bustle and crowd of India but he found no crowd in Canada so he was feeling strange.

India has great heritage of culture from the classical age. At abroad, Indians are connected with Indian culture and traditional way of life accordingly with to social system. In Canada, Indians are connected with their country and culture through India Club. By the medium of India Club, these people gather in Canada occasionally to celebrate the Indian festivals like Holi, Diwali and many more. This celebration provides them cultural and homely atmosphere by their language, dresses and very attitudes towards rituals and traditions. Ananda was wondering that his uncle was celebrating Diwali with his children and he saw small images of Ram, Sita,

Lakshman, and Hanuman on a raised dais. In Halifax Ananda joins a dental college where he breaks all the taboos. He drinks alcohol in the college and slowly begins to find that he is entering in the new world after his degree. Now Ananda could observe changes in his behaviour that he was changing. He has started thinking about marriage, that if he marries a local girl, whether he would be able to adjust himself or not.

In Canada, a wife has to support her husband but if she demands equality, she will be shouldered with many responsibilities. Nina too undergoes such immigrant experience in an alien land. She, at home has to stand against the setup of the Indian middle class in the Indian society, and she has also to fight against her loneliness, frustration and the western culture. Manju Kapur focuses on the NRI Immigrants where men and women are uprooted and forced to move to live in some alien land. Consequently they suffer from frustration, disappointments and nostalgia. Ananda's profession as a dentist in Canada is useful whereas Nina's teaching degree is useless in Canada. The couple seeks neither to understand nor love each other. Nina finds that she is not only ill prepared for the cultural gulf she encounters, but also the wide open distances in her barren relationship. Nina suffers a two-fold alienation. In a foreign land, with no one to talk to but the husband, she feels rootless. This displacement is not merely a change of address but is also socio-cultural. Moreover, their marriage fails to give them children. From this begins a woman's struggle for her existence.

Nina's reading habit fails to keep her engaged and she like other aliens feels alienated and caught in the flux of eastern and western values. All immigrants need better life but the realization is that east is east and west is west and never shall meet. Like all other immigrants Nina also feels isolated because she has lost her home and her job. She cries, "I miss home-I miss doing things. I feel like a shadow. What am I

but your wife?” (233). After her marriage with Ananda, Nina goes alone to Halifax and her first experience at the Toronto airport has been very unpleasant because when she reaches Toronto at the immigration clearance counter, “she is less than human. Suppose they found a way to kill her? That would be one less unwanted immigrant” (106).

The immigration woman examines each page of her passport suspiciously. Nina claims that she has married a citizen of Canada and that is required to be verifying despite the paper work. The immigration woman officer asks her real sort of senseless questions that make her feel edge. Nina fights against all odd and risks a convincing conclusion to get acquainted with people and to become familiar in her surroundings. Many factors are responsible for changes in any immigrant personality. Immigrants change their personality because they live under the pressure of postcolonial ideology and without changing themselves, they can't live in a developed country.

Nina starts to wear jeans and t-shirts. Even though she is not comfortable in her western outlook but she does not give up the new trend and arrival. Apart from her own husband, everyone else in the story finds her traditional clothing exotic and beautiful. In order to fully adapt herself in the winters of Halifax, she hates the way western cloths make her feel and look, and feels a part of her identity as an Indian slowly slipping away. Just to make friends and for her survival, she leaves her identity and the most valued culture. The novelist has beautifully described this situation,

As immigrants fly across the oceans they shed their old clothing, because Clothes make the man, and new ones help ease the transition. Men's Clothing has less international variation; the change is not so

drastic. But Women who are used to wearing western cloths find themselves in a dilemma. (152)

Nina was not satisfied with her married life and had extra marital affair with Anton. At this stage, she started thinking about India where she did not expect to meet one's entire needs and there was no force on man-woman relationship, love and fulfilment. For an immigrant, it is very difficult to balance between two cultures and he or she keeps swinging like a pendulum from one culture to another from home country to immigrant country. Before her marriage, she was identified as lecturer but things are different in the new place. She is no more a lectures and she is now identified as Nina Sharma and not by her individuality.

Being vegetarian is also an important part of Nina's identity and habits. When she find outs that Ananda eats meat, she feels betrayed at this behaviour which she interprets as misrepresentation. To her, vegetarianism is the core of the culture and believes that food connects them to the memories of India. The author emphasizes that the act of cooking and eating Indian food in the novel symbolizes the shared consumption of Indian. Nina comments:

Turmeric, yellow turning into brown as it bubbled in hot oil, red chillies that crackled as they roasted, onions and garlic that turned pink then brown, releasing sweet sharp smells, tomatoes that became soupy as they were swished around, cumin and coriander that gave out pungent flavours, these smells and imagined sights travelled across the world from North India to Eastern Canada to kick her sharply in the stomach. (139)

However towards the end of the story where Nina feels tainted by her own infidelity with Anton, a fellow student, she takes parts of eating fish, and eventually meat. She thus parallels her fidelity and vegetarianism to all that is pure and Indian.

Manju Kapur has described immigrant psyche not only through the eyes of Ananda and Nina but through the interest of Mand in whom Ananda has extra marital relations. Anada is portrayed to have two main things on his agenda throughout the novel. The first one is his need to assimilate into Canadian culture as soon as possible by becoming non-vegetarian, enjoying Canadian cuisine, celebrating Christmas and Thanks Giving, changing his name to a westernized 'Andy', his mannerisms and glorifying all things in Canadian while nullifying the Indian ones. He also tries to encourage Nina to do and be the same, not for the integration in Canada but she is not so noticeably Indian. Secondly, his obsession with his premature ejaculation leads him to constantly worry over everything that surrounds it, fertility, sexual performance and gratifications, fidelity, and his relationship with his wife and her feminist journey through her own self-discovery.

While Nina's journey throughout the novel is to find her identity as a woman and immigrant in Canada, Ananda's journey is to find a solution to his premature ejaculation. The story ends with Ananda finding a solution to his sexual issues and Nina finding her new identity through her journey as an immigrant in Canada. Nina eventually finds out about Ananda's infidelity and chooses to leave the marriage and start her life a new in the province of New Brunswick. She prepares her mind to take library degree. Later, she gets admission as a fee waiver.

Manju Kapur beautifully portrays the predicament of the characters that are forced to live in the midst of two different cultures. Both Ananda Sharma and Nina

Sharma are Indian by blood and flesh but as the novel develops, they are seen attempting to incorporate the Canadian traits into their personality. The central characters of the novels exhibit the signs of Indianness but they are compelled to wear alien culture. Manju Kapur completes this novel with Nina's statement,

Perhaps that was the ultimate immigrant experience. Not that any one thing was steady enough to attach yourself to the rest of your life, but that you found different ways to belong, ways not necessarily lasting, but ones that made your journey less lonely for a while. When something failed it was a signal to move on. For an immigrant there was no going back. When one was reinventing oneself, anywhere could be home. Pull up your Shallow roots and move. Find a new place, a new friends, a new family. (330)

Though the novel *The Immigrant* takes up the seventies as its background, the feelings of isolation and dislocation that Manju Kapur portrays would surely strike a chord with the present-day Indian immigrants trying to adjust to the life in the West on the one hand and life of the West on the other hand. The couple plays out a simultaneous existence in two cultures and face varied problems at different stages on the road to their assimilation of a new culture. They suffer different kinds of losses – of identities, familial love, economic security, social status and feel insecure about the preservation of their own religion. Nina's initial failure to strike a balance between her American and Indian identity brings in an identity crisis in her life. This results in cultural isolation that leads to personal isolation as well.

Manju Kapur has brought the diasporic issues in the circumference of this piece of novel and she has interwoven the theme of diaspora throughout the novel.

Life of immigrants and their problems in adopting is clearly picturized in this work but she does not suggest any solution to the problems faced by the immigrants rather she leaves the readers to chisel out with it. They don't find a way to fight against all the odds and stand firm without a flaw. Instead, they take it as an opportunity to be a part of the new world. They live to survive; their survival is based on their changing attitude. Nina has not valorized the life in the new world but she simply differentiates between the life in the homeland and abroad. It is true that an individual gets in trouble after immigration but gradually with the mingling of the new culture, it also opens up new routes and new ways of thinking which assist in development and ultimately it depends upon the attitude of the person how to tackle with the obstacle that comes in between from migration to settlement. Their change of attitude, acceptance of the truth and the quest to please the people around them gets them ruin. When they realize that the identity they have lost in aspiring the new, they come to know that identity has made all the differences in their life.

The third chapter focuses on Familial Relationships between Ananda and Nina's marital life. The project also reflects the contemporary women writers and their works.

CHAPTER THREE

FAMILIAL RELATIONSHIPS

The decade of the 90's witnessed the publication of a number of novels by Indian women writers, which appear remarkable for their portrayal of the varied facets of Indian womanhood both traditional and modern. Society is a web of human relationships networking with each other to make the world a better and healthier place to live in. Marriage brings forth a new relationship, when two individuals, from different families come together to live as husband and wife. The husband-wife relationship has occupied great importance as compared to many other forms of human relationships and it is considered as sacred in Indian culture. The society plays a pivotal role in accomplishing meaningful interaction between man and woman.

After Indian independence, women vied with men to become economically independent and therefore took up jobs in various capacities. The concept of feminism is a development and a movement which began in the late 1990s as a force. It began as an attempt to describe and interpret the experience of women life and problem highlighted in literature especially in the form of novel. It also began as an attack towards male ideas about women as seen in literature. It rejects the ideas of men about women. Therefore feminism is an attempt to remove the small space of women given by the male writers in the society.

Due to newly earned economic independence the woman also became a partner along with the man in managing the affairs at home. Apart from the husband-wife relationship, there are other types of man-woman relationship in the society. They include platonic friendship, premarital relationships and extramarital affairs. All these relationships are highly discouraged by the society. Many married men and

women, in order to fill up the spaces created by non-adjustment in their married lives, try to seek in other people what their spouses are believed to be lacking.

Most of the critics tried to define feminism. In literary Historiography, feminism means digging at the past a newness from the women's point of view. However, feminism is also considered as cultural, economic, and political movements that are thoughts about freedom, security, and complete equality of women. In Indian Writings in English, feminism has been used for evaluating the real pictures of Women. Pre-marital infatuation between persons of the opposite sex is also known as 'puppy love'. In premarital relationship if one of the pair is sincerely involved and the other is not, then the affair proves to be a disaster. In such cases, the female partner suffers the most for she generally takes the matter more seriously. At the end it is the female who is left trained and is scarred.

Extramarital affairs of the husband are sometimes due to the wife herself, who drives him to adultery by constant nagging or not satisfying his sexual needs, and at times by completely neglecting him. In most cases of extramarital relationship, generally the husbands are guilty. One of the obvious reasons for such violation in women is a long and deliberate neglect by her man. In such situations, the moral bindings imposed by religion and ethical code of the society would guide the defaulters to the proper destinies. As regards to sexual relationship other than marriage, it is a crime defined as 497 of Indian Penal Code. According to the religion, it is the most condemnable sin. This is a cultural construct which deeply influences religion. This sudden change took place only because of the impact of western culture in India.

Considering the concept of feminism, Indian women novelists have played an important role in Indian writing in English. They have given a new dimension to Indian Literature. In the galaxy of Indian English Literature, the women novelist who have occupied the most important place are Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande, and Anita Desai who have chosen feminism as their main theme of writing. For example, in some of the novels of Anita Desai like *Voices in the City*, she has focused on the complexities in the relationship between a man and a woman. She has tried to depict the psychological aspect of the protagonists. So by writing about women's problems, the women writers try to create awareness among women.

In the 17th century, John Locke and Thomas Hobbes had observed that the maternal-child bond was a primary relationship, compared to the child's relationship to the father. French Utopian socialists of the 1830s and 1840s challenged the "natural order" stating that in the Romantic tradition, the only natural order was the mother-child bond, paternity being a legal bond defined by civil law. Women's voices are often difficult to discern in the ancient world, but classical Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato sometimes claimed to be feminists. Sappho might be considered a feminist by today's standards.

Astell is the feminist writer, was certainly one of the earliest feminist writers in English, whose analyses are as relevant today as in her own time, and moved beyond earlier writers by instituting educational institutions for women. Astell and Behn together laid the groundwork for feminist theory in the 17th century. The Age of Enlightenment was characterized by secular intellectual reasoning, and a flowering of philosophical writing. The French Revolution focused people's attention everywhere on the cry for equality, and hence by extension, but a more limited way, inequality in the treatment of women. In 1791, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the

Citizen elicited an immediate response from the writer Olympe de Gouges who amended it as the Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen, arguing that if women were accountable to the law, they must also be given equal responsibility under the law. She also addressed marriage as a social contract between equals and attracted women's reliance on beauty and charm, as a form of slavery.

Kapur also deals with the role of women as daughter, wife, and mother. She is a trend setter and she has brought the women protagonists from the shackled suffering of women to daring and amazing women. She has given women a new image of boldness. Kapur's heroines negotiate for their independence and find a respectable place in society. The heroine is mentally advanced in the real sense of the world, whether she is Virmati (*Difficult Daughters*), Astha (*A Married Woman*), Nisha (*Home*), Nina (*The Immigrant*), or Shagun (*Custody*).

Manju Kapur writes about the problems faced by the immigrants in abroad. The problems are totally different from women to men. Women suffered the attitude of her husband. They are compelled to tolerate the torture of her husband. There is no way to escape from that because she is an immigrant. Women have adjusted and accepted more and more. They are far away from their homeland and the traditions and conventions substance much for them. They have to adjust in new circumstances which are not favourable for them all the time. In the nineteenth century, the problems of the immigrants were commonly money-oriented.

Kapur mostly talks about the theme of feminism. Through this novel, *The Immigrant* she presents the female body as a physical site which has to live between the conflicts of mind-body dualism. She explains how society demotes woman to a secondary position by recognizing the woman with the body and with the mind. The

central character Nina trusts the superiority of life and the mind but it makes and compulsory to feel insufficient and insecure and relent to the patriarchal demands upon the body though Nina is financially self-reliant, yet like all other Indian daughters, she is a burden on her mother. She is an archetypal Indian daughter who represents the liability, or a responsibility. Her mother would like to arrange her marriage and fulfil her responsibility. In India, daughters suffer because of this mind set of the parents who would like to free themselves by performing their duties by marrying their daughters as soon as possible.

Manju Kapur's *The Immigrant* develops deep on man-woman relationship. The novel set in India and Canada in the mid- seventies revolves around the marital relationship of Ananda and Nina. It focuses on man-woman relationship in two different aspects, first in sexual aspect and second is psychological. In sexual aspect Kapur has shown premarital and extramarital relationship in the novel. In premarital relationship Rahul, the boyfriend of Nina, ignites the fire of sex in her. Ananda also enjoys premarital relationship with Sue. In extramarital relationship, Nina finds a partner called Anton, whereas Ananda too finds a partner called Mandy.

Nina's first mature love affair beings with Rahul, a professor who is fifteen years elder to her, "fifteen years older than her, a teacher in the English Department at the Arts Faculty" (6). She devoted herself physically and emotionally to him but only dejection was the result. She expects the same love and devotion from his pair but Rahul had always made it clear that he wanted to have his cake and eat it. "Like all cakes this one was chewed, mashed into pulp and swallowed" (6).

Later a marriage proposal from Ananda Sharma, a dentist in Halifax, Canada puts Nina's mother ease. The initial relationship between Nina and Ananda takes

place through the exchange of letters. After their marriage the setting of the novel changes from India to Canada. At first in marital relationship Nina and Ananda are very happy in their small world, which is made more beautiful by their grocery shopping in the evening, dinning out at the restaurant and being happy in the company of each other. One thing which makes Nina surprise is Ananda's self- sufficiency and independence in doing the house hold chores. Since Nina does not work there this becomes natural for her to do daily chores for her husband but Ananda has been accustomed in doing his work by himself and does not ask to do it for him.

The lack of dependency often makes a couple less attached to each other. It is the Canadian way of life where husband and wife share each other's work. It is different from the way Indian marriage works. Being from India and adapting the western way of living could be quite confusing for any first generation immigrant. Ananda and Nina have one thing in common that is loneliness in absence of their families.

Ananda, on the other hand is fighting his own battles in Canada. He suffers from pre-mature ejaculation which has resulted insignificant sexual activity in his life. Nina has experienced sex with her ex-boyfriend Rahul, fifteen years older than her, who enjoys a physical relationship with her and moves on with his life. This becomes a reason for her to be physically dissatisfied with Ananda whom she considers as a perfect husband. She immediately begins to compare Ananda with Rahul, which makes her feel emptier than before. Nina is very keen to become a mother soon. Her husband's sexual inadequacy and his awkwardness in accepting it and getting treated rather than spraying anaesthesia on his reproductive organ to elongate the climax makes her feel disheartened and gives up the idea.

Ananda too suffers from an inferiority complex and being a male, he would never disclose his feelings to his wife. It is one of the reasons which prevent him to meet the gynaecologist Dr. Abbot as he fears about the revelation of his condition. He has already been in relationship with western girls owing to their outspoken nature in their dissatisfaction with his sexual performance. This is one of the main reasons for him to find an Indian wife who would respect him in every way and would never contest his sexuality. He is therefore taken back when Nina openly tells him that there is a scope for some improvement in their physical relationship. "The tragedy was that he was only exploring the possibility of sexual therapy now, when marriage restricted his choices. For a brief moment he looked at Nina's sleeping form with hatred." (185)

Ananda secretly goes to California for two weeks sexual therapy. There, he learns tricks to control his climax from a surrogate partner to cure himself. Nina feels betrayed when she learns about the treatment from him. Her worries are short-lived when she notices the improvement of Ananda's performance in the bed. This happiness is not able to last longer when her husband fails to satisfy her. Nina wonders if she is fitting into the role of an ideal Indian wife who keeps silent about these situations and would never consider it as an obstacle in married life. "Nina felt imprisoned by the stress, and assured him that there were other things besides sex in marriage. Relationship had to develop, feelings had to be shared, surely he understood that? It was only her tension about a child and her age that drove her to find solution. Otherwise she knew, things took time, of course she did." (183)

The problems in her marital life make Nina miserable and frustrated, so she works part-time in the Halifax Memorial Library and joins a women support group who address the problems of the members and counsel each other. This group is made on the strengthening beliefs of women on the ideologies of feminism. This makes

Nina less guilty about her desires and inspires her to find her feet in Canada. She also wants to divert her attention from her husband and fight her loneliness since she knows she cannot have a child soon. "I miss home-I miss doing things. I feel like a shadow. What am I but your wife?"(233).

Frustrated and dissatisfied, Nina enrolls herself for a degree in Library Science which guarantees her employment and independence in the foreign country. Ananda with his newly found confidence regarding his sexual performance after his visit to San Francisco begins an extramarital affair with Mandy, his young receptionist. It makes him avoid his wife and so he does not mind her going to work. In fact, he is the one who creates distance between him and Nina, in order to spend his time and money on his girlfriend, who has left him awestruck and given him physical satisfaction. His relationship with his wife has always been formal and he has always been under a pressure to maintain a clean and professional reputation with his wife.

Mandy encouraged him to be wild, free, uninhibited, and playful. With Nina, he was his mother's son, his sister's brother, the good husband, playing out a role he had been trained for since childhood. Nina years in Canada had not dimmed the need for this person. No wonder he had not been able to succeed with white before. He needed to stabilize this part of his life. There were many unseen pressures that had spoken through his body. (239)

He likes to explore his wild side with Mandy with whom he feels young and playful. His adultery reaches its peak when he sends his wife to India for a vacation. Ananda becomes more experimental and enjoys one night stand with random women. Nina befriends Anton who is a Russian staying in America. Their friendship turns into

a steamy affair and Nina discovers sexual gratification with Anton which she has failed to find with her husband.

She goes on with her relationship with her 'friend with benefits' while being a good wife to Ananda. At this juncture, their relationship turns hypocritical when they began to cheat each other. Surprisingly, the spark of physicality which has been absent in their relationship finds its way into their respective affairs leaving both happy and satisfied but guilty at the same time. Soon Nina realizes that Anton is no better than Rahul and is only interested in sex than anything else. When the truth dawns upon her, she feels exploited and gives up her relationship with Anton.

However, worse things happen when Anton rapes her in Ottawa while they are out on a study tour. In addition to her sorrows, she comes to know about her mother's death in India. After her mother's last rites, she feels broken and depressed because she comes to know about Ananda's secret affair when she discovers a golden hair on her pillow. This revelation breaks her from inside and she realizes the fruitlessness of Indian values in the absence of Indian surroundings and people who leave the sacred bond of marriage. Thus, she breaks all her ties and goes to New Brunswick hoping for a job and get independence from Ananda and her Indian roots which have begun to haunt her.

Manju Kapur is highly skilled in dealing with the domestic issues. The female heroes of her novels risk the safety of marriage, family and household in the quest of autonomy which is suffocated by the burden of family duties. All her women character undergoes various dilemmas regarding their relationship with the male counterparts and are bound to negotiate with this transition in their own ways. Some of them abandon their relationship with their lovers or husbands while others give

away the cultural trap of honour and acceptance in the society. Kapur is sometimes labelled as the 'chronicler of Indian families'.

Finally, Nina arranges for a job interview at the University of New Brunswick, and it is irresolute if she will return to her Halifax life or not. It feels, though, as if she is now ready to take control of her destiny. The bewilderment of Nina goes on, and the pattern of the stability for immigrant people like Nina endures from the alienation and the quest for identity in shaping individual identity. The conflict between Indian culture and Western influence results in the emotional predicament for the people. Kapur's works remind the readers of Showalter's third phase of the feminist writing-tradition, the female phase. She is of the opinion that the recent women writers portray women as dissatisfied with their cultural values and so they resolve to defy and defile the norms and values of their culture and come out to lead the life of independence. They challenge their conventional beliefs which, they firmly believe, relegate them to the secondary status in the society and not allow them to be treated on par with men. They show their protest against the unfair treatment and finally attain liberation in life.

In *The Immigrant* Kapur brings forth the element of dissent between the husband and wife in a vivid manner, but she failed to show a solution to it. Few female characters adjust with the traditions inside the family and few female heroes' revolt against these traditions. Revolution can be taken for grant, but few female protagonists never think of changing their husbands. They instead follow the same path of infidelity. To prevent oneself from this type of burden, it is not correct to follow the same path of the husband.

The protagonist can try to change the character of their husbands. But Kapur is more interested in showing the female characters has modern feminists. Through other characters, she exposes the traditional aspects. It is an open secret that there is a conflict between tradition and modernity and those traditional characters are always slave in the hands of their husband.

In the twentieth century, the problems faced by the immigrants are psychological. They are abroad for better hopes and a better life. They would like to enjoy a happy and wealthy life. But they suffer from emotional distress. They have failed in their approach. Their problems have been complex than the other. Women have also become the victims of men in a foreign country. Men settled abroad come to their motherland to select the bride who might help them in their career and business. They cannot endure abroad without money. The pomp and show of the abroad also lure the immigrant woman to become the Victims of their cobweb.

Feminism is the persuasion that all people should be treated equally heedless of religion, gender and sexes. It is based on the high evaluation of women as human beings and rejects the assignments of roles based on gender. Feminists generally may vary in their opinion towards the females. Feminists are represented as intellectual, ethical, and political position that can be espoused by women or men. It provides a major justification for the development of the women's studies and makes explicit its most fundamental assumptions.

Manju Kapur writes about women's lives through the eyes of a woman. She has presented the problems of the Indian woman in a male dominated society. Her novels highlight the issue of patriarchy, which denies a woman's voice and freedom. She portrays a truthful picture of the unpleasant condition of the Indian women, their

great suffering, care and anxieties, their shy or modest character, violent or aggressive, humiliating and degrading treatment in a male dominating society. It also shows the women's marathon struggle for seeking the sense of 'identity' in a totally averse and ungrateful society.

Manju Kapur's women are no longer confined within the four walls of the family and traditional values. They dare to break down the conventional perceptions and traditions of the patriarchal society. In their quest for identity, the bold women characters of Kapur are presented by as real women of flesh and blood who have their emotions and sentiments. She also presents the tension and problems that follow as the other bad event of divorce. The family structure breaks and falls apart into pieces with divorce.

The fourth chapter deals with Style and Techniques in *The Immigrant*. It also focuses on women's freedom, independence and how women emerge as empowered women after many trials and tribulations.

CHAPTER FOUR

STYLE AND TECHNIQUES

Indian English writers utilize a variety of writing styles and techniques to make their readers feel or react in certain ways. Different writing styles are used by the writers to achieve specific goals like converting the reader while telling a story, or giving information. Some writers use one or two writing styles whether it would be to change the reader's mind, to explain how to complete a task or to simply tell a story.

Women writers have added a new dimension to Indian-English fiction, with their deep perception of men and matters. They have dealt with the place and position of women in the Indian society and their problems and plights from time to time. They have analysed the socio-cultural modes and values that have given Indian women their role and image along with their surroundings.

Manju Kapur follows a unique style of writing and has a broad thematic focus. She has been consistently adhering to this standard right from the time she published her first novel. Her novels explore the complex circle of the Indian family and reveal many issues that are deep rooted within the family such as the revolt against the age old traditions, quest for identity, the problems of marriage and the women's struggle for her survival.

Manju Kapur's female characters are mostly educated, aspiring individuals confined within the limitations of a conservative society. Whether or not a girl has the right to make her own choices in life is a concern dragged this way and that for a long time in our country. Kapur's women try to be her and yet do not wish to break up the

family ties. In a realistic way, Kapur has described the Indian male perception of woman as a holy cow even though she is not very interested in history.

As a writer of the new generation in an atmosphere of the nation's socio-political flux, Kapur has rewarded the truth in her narratives. She describes it with the eagerness to change the Indian male perception on the traumas of her female protagonists from which they suffer, and perish in their triumph and her novels deal with women's issues in the present context.

Kapur has the ability to provide a thorough understanding of her characters without even talking about them. She shows this through her presentation as exactly who they are by the way they behave. So the philandering wife is lovely to look at, but instead of sympathizing with her isolation one could feel a dislike for her shallowness and self-absorption, even without a single negative word of description.

Kapur's talent lies gently at pushing the reader into the heads of her female protagonists. She manages to do so in the immigrant too as she provides a complex portrait of the men in this novel, particularly Ananda with his unacknowledged sexual limitations. However, while Nina comes across as the deeper characters in many ways, her negotiation of Ananda's 'limitations' and the immigrant's 'possibilities' are best left to the readers to spice for neither Ananda nor the other men in the novel are reduced to make fun of.

Manju Kapur like her protagonist teaches in a college. She has had a traditional upbringing like Nina. Nina's mother is much obsessed with her marriage than her education-likewise Manju Kapur's mother also had a similar obsession. Manju Kapur uses flashback technique in her novel in her description of the past life of Nina's mother.

Like her other novels, *The Immigrant* is about middle-class Indian Immigrants in the 'West'. Kapur uses a linear narrative, something that has come to be disturbingly associated with Indian English 'women's writing' over the years, *The Immigrant* is a novel with a straight, broad, seemingly placed narrative flow, under whose surface lurk the currents of significant and, at times, during issues.

Kapur is primarily concerned with the problems of the recently emerging urban middle class. The female protagonists of her novels protest against male domination and the marginalization of women. Man has dominated woman to his will, used to promote his sexual enjoyment but never has he elevated her to her genuine rank. A woman is a woman and she must remain not as a man's shadow self, 'an appendage', an auxiliary and the unwanted and neglected other. A woman is held to represent the otherness of man, his negative. Kapur supported this idea that a woman is never regarded as an autonomous being since she has always been subordinate and in relative position in our society.

Indian women were proactive during the independence movement, and entered public and political life before many of their western counterparts. They have even begun to voice their concern on the global tide entering India and its impact on gender and family relations. More than half of the population of the world is made of women but she is not treated equally with man despite innumerable evolutions and revolutions. In this male dominated society, she plays many roles such as a wife, mother, sister and home maker. She is expected to serve, sacrifice, submit and tolerate each ill against her peacefully. The novels of Kapur voice effectively the sentiments of women and their self- introspections. The facts raised by Kapur are worth research and enquiry. She describes an ideal image of women amid all the thick and this maintain their chastity and humanity and do not leave anyone destitute. Kapur's

novels are full of Indian vocabulary, loan translation, use of repetition and linguistic creativity with regard to Indian English.

Kapur is much concerned about the language she uses. She is quite distinct from her contemporaries as she has sufficiently brought regional influences in her writings showcasing the prominence of Indianisation in the individuals. Kapur's novels include a number of Hindi and Punjabi words, phrases and expressions and her influence in this respect is arrested by the fact that more works written in English by Indian authors have incorporated semantic items from diverse languages of India.

Kapur has presented a view of authentic India, inhabited by all regional people varying in their languages. Kapur reveals a picture of the society by the treatment of the language and delineation of the characters and this is to impress the readers. Through her Indianized language Kapur confidently presents the real India as perceived by the common man. Kapur has preferred to use their own style of language, which integrates the idioms, metaphors and the vocabulary in order to make their characters very prominent. She discussed the sensibilities of women with a daring portrayal of their strong disobedience against patriarchal domination and a clear call for the protection of their suffrage.

The Immigrant is a quasi-autobiographical novel. Manju Kapur and Harish's relationship parallels India's struggle for freedom, and eventually with the independence along with the partition of country. Dialogue plays a crucial role in the novel. Kapur describes the appearance, gestures, actions, habits, and manners through dialogues and convey the sense of individual identity. Her dialogues are very realistic and fragmentary showing the concern of innocence.

Manju Kapur's novel *The Immigrant* lightly displays the impossible transformations of the traditional configurations of the Indian soil and the adoption of a new version of a multicultural mix in the alien landscape. It also elaborates on the journey of the protagonist Nina from innocence to experience to assimilate and take up new challenges in life by breaking the mythical social ties by the foul betrayals and culture shocks of the alien features.

Besides these characteristic beliefs, there are other interesting elements which add liveliness to the celebratory aspects which Manju Kapur inculcates in all her novels. Through her characterization, like many of her contemporaries, Manju Kapur fixes for herself the status of a modern feminism. All her novels come out as a perfect specimen of radical feminism wherein many of her female characters other than her protagonists stand as an excuse to her offensive and feminist ideology.

Manju Kapur's writing style is mind blowing and soul shaking. The mind of the reader evokes the plight and struggle of Indian women. The woman in the novels of Manju Kapur is personified as a new female who struggles against the social and evil customs. The novel, *The Immigrant* explores the awful loneliness of woman and the immigrant experience in the country.

Manju Kapur vividly presents the feminist issues in a feminist style. Her writings explained the understanding of feminist literature. In her works, Kapur depicts the psychological trauma of the modern woman living in the society which seldom allows her to articulate herself. In her novels, she employs such narrative technique which helps her convey her message to the readers more convincingly and authentically.

Manju Kapur's preoccupation with the theme, characters and process finds ideal evidence in her novel. As her purpose is to describe the female psyche entrapped in the oppressed mechanism of the closed society, she uses women as central characters in her narratives. All female protagonists, whether they are girl children or married women, articulate a feminist discourse of subjugation of the individual self, and attempt to rebel against male power-structures.

Kapur in her narrative scheme expertly handles the use of the combination of the first person and the third person narration to lend authenticity and the characters such as her fears and aspirations, ultimately highlight the unacceptable gender discrimination prevalent in the society. It helps the narrator articulate herself by her desires, hopes and dilemmas. Kapur's subtle use of the first person narrative technique compels the reader to draw into the story magnetically and subsequently creating a sense of empty and emotional identification.

The first person narrative technique asserts and attacks the suffocating torturous patriarchal set-up. The use of the first person narrative helps the novelist to expose the gender bias that formulates the substance of the novels. Significantly, Kapur in her novels shifts the narrative from the first person to the third person whenever the first person narrator fails to narrate the story. This double narrative helps to lend authenticity to the portrayal of the character's inner self.

In the third person point of view, there is the omniscient narrator who knows thinking about character, and gives a realistic picture of their mental trauma with remarkable objectivity. This narrative technique enables the writer to penetrate into the innermost recesses of her heroines psyche and convey their most secret thoughts to the reader. In her novels, Kapur uses the technique to explore the character's minds

minutely and thoroughly. Nina reveals her feelings of nostalgia and alienation in Canada by recollecting the pleasurable moments of her life in India. Kapur uses evocative language to reveal sexual dissatisfaction due to her husband's patriarchal attitude as she describes:

Home. That was what she wanted. The park, the tress, the harbour, the view, everything was so pretty, but it failed to satisfy her heart. Maybe if her mother could share it with her, it would have made a difference. She could imagine her thin worn face, her gnarled hands, happy in her happiness. (176)

Kapur uses evocative language to reveal sexual dissatisfaction due to her husband's patriarchal attitude as she describes,

Long moments were spent gazing at her in the mirror, in tiled bathroom, she looked dazzling. Her bare skin, the curves of her body, her black hair falling over her shoulders, all were delectable. Desire rose in her as she communed with her reflection. (178)

As Manju Kapur presents the problems and situations of middle class Indian women, she uses the language of middle class that is simple and lucid. Through such usage of language, Kapur highlights the protagonist's fears and the rebellion against the patriarchal ideology. She focuses on women in the patriarchal setup as central characters of her narrative. The themes of gender yearning for selfhood are successfully dealt within the feminist narrative technique. So Manju Kapur contributes significantly in restructuring fiction from male orientation towards female orientation by highlighting women's predicament, and by delineating the psyche of her characters in a feminist discourse.

Thus Manju Kapur's style and technique makes the readers think about the frustration and nostalgia of an immigrant. Manju Kapur artistically and effectively presents feminist issues in feministic language. Both the texture and the structure of the novel and also her theme, characters, plots, titles and narrative technique are filled with feminine sensibilities.

In her writings, Manju Kapur has emphasised on the issues in the context of patriarchy; inter-religious marriage; family bond, male-female bond, co-existence of past and present. She has narrated her women protagonists as victims of biology, gender, domestic violence, and circumstances. Kapur thinks that, there is a man within every woman and a woman in every man. When, womanhood is fragmented. A major pre-occupation in recent Indian women's writings has been a delineation of Inner life and subtle relationships. In a culture where, individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas and marital bliss and the women's role at home is the central focus. It is interesting to see the emergence of not just an essential Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural diversion.

Manju Kapur writes about her personal experiences, problems spaces and identity crises. She writes what today's women can relate easily and see her novels as of their own life. She deals with the traditional and modernist ethos, women trying to find their identity. Her women characters like Nina argue for the values like freedom of thought and expression, liberty from oppression and marginalization and equality. The perspective of woman in Indian English fiction as the silent sufferer and upholder of the tradition and cultural values of family and society has under gone a tremendous change and is no longer presented as a passive character. Manju Kapur's novels present women who try to establish their own identity.

A psychological identity relates to self-image, self-esteem and individuality. Anthropologists have often employed the term “identity” to refer to the idea of selfhood based on uniqueness and individuality which makes a person different from others. The construction of an individual sense of self is achieved by personal choices regarding who and what to associate with such approaches are liberating in their recognition of the role of individual in social interaction and the construction of identity. Indian women are connected to and denied by the societal and cultural norms of a particular familial structure. A woman is never regarded as an autonomous being since she always occupies a subordinate and relative position.

Indian women are having careers and salaried jobs, leaving the private sphere of home to join the public sphere beyond, becoming financially independent, and this in turn has led to socio-cultural adjustments needing to be made. , Indian women are negotiating for ever more personal autonomy also, and breaking away from the traditional confines of what constitutes a good Indian girl, challenging definitions of modesty and shame and dishonour, rewriting the concept of Indian-ness and femininity. These themes and topics are at the core of Kapur’s writings, rendering them extremely topical and pertinent in current debate and discussion. In fact, Kapur’s writings track and chart, and then restart, new domestic territories in the heartland of the Indian households and joint families, mapping new conventions and changing social spaces.

The final chapter Summation sums up all the four chapters and presents an overall view of the points and arguments that are discussed in the previous chapters which are taken for the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Manju Kapur's novel *The Immigrant* has interwoven the theme of diaspora throughout the novel. Life of the immigrants and their problems in adopting the alien culture are clearly discussed in the novel, but she does not suggest any solution to the problems faced by the immigrants rather she leaves on the readers to chisel out with it. They do not find a way to fight against all the odds and stand firm without a flaw instead they take it as an opportunity to be a part of the new world. They live to survive and their survival is based on their changing attitude. Manju Kapur has not valorized the life in the new world but she simply differentiates between the life in the homeland and abroad.

The first chapter 'Introduction' sums up the brief history of Indian literature in English. The researcher has discussed the conflict between traditionalism and modernism. Indian English literature or Indian literature in English has attracted a widespread interest recently both in India and abroad. It is now realized that Indian English Literature and Commonwealth Literature are in no way inferior to other literatures and Indian English Literature has luxuriant growth in the post-modern period. The post-modern writer had thoroughly contributed to the development of Indian English Literature. The old Indian Literature especially Sanskrit Literature was famous for its political and religious writing. The brief introduction at the biography of the author is eminent for any research work and thus the entire details of the author and her works are mentioned in this chapter.

Manju Kapur's writings often deal with women's status in Indian society, especially within the marital context. She has won the 1999 Commonwealth Prize for

her First Novels for her debut novel *Difficult Daughters*. It was published in 1998. Like her illustrated contemporaries, Kapur has foregrounded women's lives in her novels which depict both the external and internal dimensions of female-community. These novels offer a fascinating glimpse of women's consciousness and their interrelations.

The second chapter 'Dislocation and Cultural Conflict' focuses on the predicament of the characters that are forced to live in the midst of two different cultures. The psychological term 'Identity Crisis' is defined as 'a period of uncertainty and confusion in which a person's sense of identity becomes insecure, typically due to a change in their expected aims or roles in society. The question of identity has remained a source of conflicts and has led to wars in history. The search for roots has been a recurrent journey throughout history. Manju Kapur's novel *The Immigrant*' explores the immigrant's sense of identity and belongings through the characters of Ananda and Nina. The novel brings up the elements of identity crisis in the context of migration. This novel mentions all the troubles and traumas faced by the immigrants abroad.

Ananda and Nina portrayed by the author are Indian by blood and flesh but as the novel develops, the characters attempt to incorporate the Canadian traits into their personality. *The Immigrant* revolves around the story of two immigrants, Nina and Ananda. Manju Kapur chose Canada as the background for her novel, and discusses the Indian diaspora in Canada. The characters in her novel, inspite of their divided souls try to construct their identity as Indian diaspora in Canada. The immigrants or the expatriates, in most cases, are citizens of two countries. So they somehow shift their focus between their social and cultural identities which are in a way unstable and fluid. Despite living in a foreign land for a considerable amount of time, their

identities are connected directly or indirectly with their old homelands. The novel explores the issues of alienation and the quest for identity. It discusses common themes of alienation, dislocation of Indian culture, diaspora and quest for identity. It reflects loneliness and the search for self. The central characters of the novel exhibit the signs of Indianess but they are compelled to wear alien culture. Manju Kapur expresses how womanhood is exploited and manipulated by traditional causes, cultural barriers, gender bias, and the most inevitable biological factors. Manju Kapur articulates on the individual role of culture, tradition and marriage to access and ascertain the status of women belonging to three consecutive generations.

In the third chapter 'Gender Relationships' the researcher has thrown light on how the society plays a pivotal role in accomplishing meaningful interaction between man and women. It also highlights the problems faced by the immigrant in their marital relationships.

The status of women in India has become paradoxical. After Indian independence women vied with men to become economically independent and therefore took up jobs in various capacities. Women have access to professions like medicine, teaching and politics and they also have the right to own a property. Among some social classes, women are extremely powerful. Yet there is a long history of women being oppressed by men, delegated to playing subordinate roles. Gender inequality is pre dominant in India, women are not free and equal, but neither are members of subordinate castes and communities, landless people, displaced people and for many other groups. Education often is identified as essential to women's empowerment. It can empower them by providing women with knowledge and skills.

Women in India are subjected to violence, abduction and are physically and mentally abused. The most commonly used methods of violence are threats to abuse their children or abuse women in front of their children, as well as observing or hearing the rape of the women. The consequences of domestic violence can result in physical and mental pain and thereby leading to death. Domestic violence not only makes them feel insecure at home, but also endangers their independence, self-development and human rights.

The fourth chapter 'Style and Technique' beautifully highlights Manju Kapur's narrative style. Narrative style is a type of writing where the writer narrates a story. Manju Kapur follows a unique style of writing and has a broad thematic focus. She addresses many issues that are related to the middle class women. Her female characters are mostly educated, aspiring individuals confined within the limitations of a conservative society.

Manju Kapur follows a unique style of writing and has a broad thematic focus. She has been consistently adhering to this standard right from the time she published her first novel. Her novels explore the complex circle of the Indian family and reveal many issues that are deep rooted within the family such as the revolt against the age old traditions, quest for identity, the problems of marriage and the women's struggle for her survival. This novel is a long prose narrative which serves as an effective medium for the portrayal of human thoughts and passion. Literature produced by women are totally different from the literature produced by men. When a woman creates a story of domestic bliss, sorrow, love, pain, separation and divorce there is certainly a difference.

Manju Kapur asserts that a woman has been a metaphor of sufferings from time immemorial until the present day, yet the problems only vary. But the sufferings are certainly inherited from the past that manifest in multifarious dimensions. Manju Kapur has made a strenuous effort to register the real political issues, their aftermaths and the role of social institutions in motivating the participation of the school and college students in the freedom struggle. Kapur has carefully asserted the intricate details of the forgotten revolutionary incidents in the freedom struggle and the important events of the pre-partition period.

The present study is just a sample to show the condition of a few tampered women in the Indian scenario in the midst of well progressed and progressing women in this modern fast developing computerized world. While many women make use of every progressive opportunity they come across in their lives only very few fall into such traps and spoil their lives.

Like her other novels is about middle-class Indian Immigrants in the 'West'. Kapur uses a linear narrative, something that has come to be disturbingly associated with Indian English 'women's writing' over the years. *The Immigrant* is a novel with a straight, broad, seemingly placed narrative flow, under whose surface lurks the currents of significant issues.

Manju Kapur's style and technique makes the readers think about the frustration and nostalgia of an immigrant. Manju Kapur artistically and effectively presents feminist issues in feministic language. Both the texture and the structure of the novel and also her theme, characters, plots, titles and narrative technique are filled with feminine in and even focus on women in the patriarchal setup as central characters of her narrative.

Summation also brings out the researcher's findings. The researcher hopes that this project may pave way for the future researchers to pursue their research on Feminism, Discourse Analysis, Marxist Approach, and A Psychological Analysis.

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Self Esteem	11
Three	Women Power	24
Four	Narrative Techniques and Characterisation	35
Five	Summation	45
	Works Cited	

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Analysing the Importance of Women Power in Madeline L'Engle *A Wrinkle in Time*** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfilment 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 Leena Grace G during the year 2021-2022 and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar.


Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi


Ms. M. Mangalaeswari

Head of English Department
Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Assistant Professor of English

Guide


Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


27/05/2022
External Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Analysing the Importance of Women Power in Madeline L'Engle *A Wrinkle in Time*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the Degree of Master of Arts in English, is my genuine effort and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar.

Thoothukudi

May 2022

Gi. Leena Grace

LEENA GRACE G

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am extremely grateful to the **Lord Almighty** for His guidance and grace in completing this project successfully during the year 2021-2022.

I would like to express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research-oriented study. I thank my institution for the values I received and the knowledge I acquired in the course of study.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am deeply grateful to **Ms. M. Mangalaeswari**, for her untiring help, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank our librarian for her extended help in the use of the library for reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided.

I thank the staff of the department of English for the good learning experience and the academic ambience they provided.

I am indebted to my parents for the great comforts I enjoy and the good education they have provided me. I thank them for their trust, moral support and benevolence.

PREFACE

The project **Analysing the Importance of Women Power in Madeline L'Engle *A Wrinkle in Time*** entitled comprises of five chapters.

The first chapter, **Introduction** deals with the origin of science fiction in general, L'Engle's biography, and epigrammatic abstract of the novel *A Wrinkle in Time*.

The second chapter **Self Esteem** discusses the problems about the characters who want to fulfill their needs, and self esteem as a mechanism that stimulates self-development of main character of L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*.

The third chapter **Women Power** elaborates thematic view of importance of women and the power to face every struggle in life with self-confidence and love as a key tool of L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*.

The fourth chapter analyses the **Narrative Techniques and Characterisation** of L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time*.

The final chapter, **Summation** consolidates the ideas discussed in the preceding chapters.

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

**Biculturalism and the Issue of Ethnocentrism explored in
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah***

A Project 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

Submitted by

NANCY CARMEL. D

(REG. NO. 20APEN15)



PG AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	The cause of unhomeliness	13
Three	Inhumanism	26
Four	In medias res	39
Five	Summation	49
	Works cited	55

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Biculturalism and the Issue of Ethnocentrism explored in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfilment of the requirement of Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature, is a work done by Nancy Carmel. D in the year 2020-2022 and that it has previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the department

Ms. X. Amala Steffi

Guide

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Principal

External Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled “**Biculturalism and the Issue of Ethnocentrism**” explored in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Americanah*” submitted to St. Mary’s College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the Degree of Master of Arts in English, is my genuine effort and that, it has not previously formed the basis of the award of any degree, diploma or similar.

Thoothukudi

May 2022

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Carmel D.', with a stylized flourish at the end.

NANCY CARMEL. D

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom he bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, and strength to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank our institution for the values we received and the knowledge we acquired in the course of study.

I thank, Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi, Head of the Department for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide Ms. X. Amala Steffi, Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance, and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I extend my thanks to Dr. Vinitha the Librarian, of St. Mary's College who extended help in the use of the library for the reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided.

I am grateful to all the staffs in my department for always being a pillar of support. My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

The project entitled comprises of five chapters.

The first chapter, **Introduction** deals with the concepts of commonwealth literature and establishes the intricate details about Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

The second chapter, **The Cause of Unhomeliness** establishes how an external conflict of a country invades the personal space of home by Homi K. Bhabha's concept of Unhomely.

The third chapter, **Inhumanism** discusses the principles of humanism and how a migrant suffers bitter taste of inhumanism in a foreign land for being a migrant.

The fourth chapter, **In medias res** analyses the efficiency of the narrative technique used in *Americanah*.

The final chapter, **Summation** consolidates the ideas discussed in the preceding chapters.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

Harriet Ann Jacobs, also called Harriet A. Jacobs, from Edenton, North Carolina, U.S Washington, D.C. was an American abolitionist and a slave narrator. She is one of the most famous African-American slaves during the time of the Civil War. Her autobiographical account, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is an eloquent and uncompromising narrative of her struggle for self-identity, self-preservation, and freedom for herself and for her children from slavery. It chronicles the remarkable odyssey of her dauntless spirit and faith which carried her from a life of servitude and degradation in North Carolina to liberty and reunion with her children in the North.

Jacobs contributed to the genre of slave narrative by using the techniques of sentimental novels "to address race and gender issues." She explores the struggles and sexual abuse that female slaves faced as well as their efforts to practice motherhood and protect their children when their children might be sold away. In the book, Jacobs addresses White Northern women who fail to comprehend the evils of slavery. She makes direct appeals to their humanity to expand their knowledge and influence their thoughts about slavery as an institution.

Jacobs composed *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* after her escape to New York, while living and working at idle wild, the home of writer and publisher Nathaniel Parker Willis. Jacobs suffering and her struggle to make a sense for her life and her children among all horrors enabled her win the authorship to her novel as an autobiography by a female slave. It was written at a time when education for slaves was considered very dangerous against

slavery in the nineteenth century United States for it would enable the slaves to discover the truth and ask for their liberation.

Harriet Jacobs was the first slave woman to write her own experiences living under slavery, and is one of many hundreds of slave narratives that were written during the antebellum period. She was treated badly as she was abused, mistreated, assaulted, and beaten. She discovered all the black history of American slavery to show the true meaning of freedom for herself and her children through her decisions which resulted from her sufferings.

When we trace African American Literature it is a body of literature produced in the United States by the writers of African descent. African American literature has become an inevitable part of American literature and culture. It explores the issues of freedom and equality of blacks. The genre began during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with writers such as poet Phillis Wheatley and orator Frederick Douglass and continues today with writers such as Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou and Walter Mosley being ranked among the top writers in the United States. African American literature tends to focus on the themes of particular interest to black people, the role of African Americans within the larger American society and issues such as African American culture, racism, religion, slavery, freedom, and equality. African American writing has tended to incorporate oral forms, such as spirituals, sermons, gospel music, blues or rap.

The strong presence of African American literature has paved way for the emergence of Native American, Asian American, and Chicano American streams of literature. It is only with the significant representation of African American literature that the American society stands to be cleansed from the

problem of racial discrimination. African American literature has examined the problem of racial discrimination in all its philosophical, existential and epistemological aspects. It has travelled from mid eighteenth century with slave narratives to the current times with all its socio-literary exuberance initiating a literary and cultural transformation in the fabric of American society.

The African American writers sought to demonstrate the proposition all men are created equal" in the declaration of Independence which required that black Americans be extended the same human rights as those claimed by white Americans. In advance over the high point of slave narratives, African American literature was dominated by autobiographical spiritual narratives. The genre known as slave narratives in the nineteenth century were accounts by people who had generally escaped from slavery, about their journeys to freedom and the ways they claimed their lives.

The African American female literature is an educational tool used in America by women of African descent. This use of education became very popular to African American women around the eighteenth century and is becoming even more popular in the twenty-first century. Their writings became a platform for many African American women to speak out their own opinions that involves society and being a woman in society. Social issues discussed in their books include racism, sexism, classism and social equality which marked its trace for the Harlem Renaissance.

The Harlem Renaissance marked a turning point for African American literature. The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920 to 1940 brought new attention to African American literature. It was a great period of flowering in African

American literature and the arts were influenced by the writers who came from North in the Great Migration and those who were immigrants from Jamaica and other Caribbean Islands. Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes are the two most influential writers to come out of the Harlem Renaissance, a number of other writers also became well known during this period. Before the American civil war, the literature primarily consisted of chronicles by people who had escaped from slavery; the genre of slave narratives included accounts of life under slavery and the path of justice and redemption to freedom.

A sub - genre of African American literature which began in the middle of the nineteenth century is the slave narrative. African American literature is dominated by autobiographical narratives and reached its peak by slave narratives. Slave narratives depicted the personal experiences of slaves who had escaped from slavery and developed in the middle of the nineteenth century. Their common motifs included physical and psychological abuse of slavery by white owners and quest for freedom and education. Slave narratives gave the people who lived in the North a glimpse of the slave relationships with each other, the bond and love between family members and respect of the elders. To present the true reality of slavery, a number of former slaves such as Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass wrote slave narratives, soon became a mainstay of African American literature. Some six thousand former slaves from North America and the Caribbean wrote accounts of their lives, with about 150 of these were published as separate books or pamphlets.

Slavery in the United States of America and its colonial predecessors lasted for almost two hundred and fifty years, from the first enslaved Africans brought to the colony of Virginia in 1619 to the constitutional abolition of

slavery in 1865. Such a long period of slavery inevitably influenced literature written during that time. In fact, an entirely new genre arose during the era of slavery: the slave narrative. According to Donna M. Campbell of Washington State University, slave narratives are “the stories of enslaved people recount[ing] the personal experiences of antebellum African Americans who had escaped from slavery and found their way to safety in the North”).

Slave narratives became one of the most controversial, but also one of the most influential genres in American literature. The usual purpose of such stories was to show the reality of the life of the slave in America and to convince people that slavery had to end. Harriet Jacobs was the first enslaved African-American woman to author her own narrative. Before that writers such as Sojourner Truth had her story narrated through scribes because she was an illiterate.

The autobiographies of former slaves in America are the foundation of the African American literary tradition. It gives a glimpse into the very lives of the slaves themselves and also a way of getting us to understand the nature of slavery. There have been several debates around the authorship of slave and the motives of slave narratives.

In the case of authorship, former slaves were constantly doubted and questioned about the authenticity and veracity of their stories and writings. The role of abolitionists was very important in authenticating the authorship of the slave narratives. White abolitionists found it necessary to layout well-defined conventions and formulae for writers to follow for in most cases potential narrators did not possess literary skills;

the abolitionists took up the task of recording the oral narratives of the fugitives.

One of the defining characteristics of the slave narrative is the testimonial or letter of authenticity generally written by a white editor or abolitionist friend of the narrator. In order to be published, black authors had to be endorsed by whites who could testify to their credibility and the authenticity of their stories.

Another defining characteristic of the slave narrative is a phrase such as “Written by Herself” in the narrative’s title, and an opening statement such as “I was born. . . ,” followed by a place of birth, but no birth date. The body of the narrative generally includes vague references to the narrator’s parents, descriptions of a cruel master or overseer, descriptions of whippings and other brutal treatments, and accounts of slaves being sold on the auction block.

Other distinguishing characteristics of the slave narrative are its simple, forthright style; vivid characters; and striking dramatic incidents, particularly graphic violence and daring escapes, such as that by Henry “Box” Brown, who packed himself into a small crate and was shipped north to waiting abolitionists.

Slave narratives are patterned after the biblical story of the Jewish people’s escape from Israel and their subsequent journey to the Promised Land. Consequently, slave narratives often assume a religious framework and explore several common themes, such as the quest for freedom, the search for home, redemption and salvation, the search for deliverance from evil, and the crossing of boundaries. Because slaves were legally denied the right to read and write, often under penalty of disfigurement or death, American slave

narratives also focus on the quest for literacy, which was often linked with the quest for freedom. (Slaves who could read and write were more likely to escape, because they could forge their own passes and read about the successful escapes of other slaves.)

Like the Negro spirituals, slave narratives have had a profound impact on contemporary American literature. And like the spirituals — which often contain secret codes decipherable only by enslaved blacks — they were considered dangerous and subversive by slaveholders, who feared that they might incite slave revolts and riots.

Historians estimate that more than 250 organized slave revolts and conspiracies took place in what is now U.S. territory, and thousands more occurred in the Caribbean and in Central and South America. The leaders of slave revolts were often seen as murderers and lunatics by whites. Among blacks, however, they were usually viewed as heroes and martyrs, although some slaves saw them as dangerous to their own survival. The most infamous slave revolts were those led by Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner. Although all three men were ultimately apprehended and executed, their courage and daring inspired other blacks to fight for their freedom and to cling to the hope that they, too, would someday be free.

In 1800, Gabriel Prosser, a slave living on a plantation in southern Virginia, vowed to escape the brutal treatment of his master, Thomas Prosser. He organized a plot in which approximately 1,100 slaves were to take Richmond. Prosser envisioned that his “army” would eventually be joined by as many as 50,000 more. As the time for the revolt drew near, two of the slaves warned authorities of the plot. As a result, Prosser and 35 other slaves

were executed, and the Prosser conspiracy gained national attention. Governor James Monroe described it as “unquestionably the most serious and formidable conspiracy we have ever known.”

Several years later in South Carolina, Denmark Vesey, a slave who had purchased his freedom in 1800 with money from a winning lottery ticket, led another uprising. Vesey, who was a native of St. Thomas in the West Indies, worked as a carpenter in Charleston, South Carolina. Over a period of seven months, he planned an uprising to “liberate” the city, encouraging slaves to seize weapons, commandeer ships, and sail for the West Indies. Vesey’s plot attracted more than 9,000 slaves and free blacks, but several slaves betrayed him, leading to the arrest of 131 blacks and four whites. In the end, at least 35 men, including Vesey, were executed.

By far the most notorious and successful slave rebellion was led by Nat Turner in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1831. Turner was born in Southampton County on October 2, 1800, the same year Prosser led his rebellion and Vesey was freed. Turner was raised by his mother and paternal grandmother after his father ran away, and he was 31 years old when he led his infamous rebellion, often called his *insurrection*.

Turner, who was the slave of Joseph Travis, was a preacher who saw visions and felt divinely inspired to lead his people to freedom. He plotted his revolt for six months, sharing his plan with only four others. On the day the revolt was to take place, he and his men gathered in the woods and then began their raid by attacking the Travis plantation and killing the entire family. By the following morning, Turner’s group, which had grown to 60, had travelled through the county, killing at least 57 whites. As the revolt progressed,

Turner's "army" continued to grow. They were finally stopped on their way to Jerusalem, the county seat, where they had hoped to gain additional support and replenish their ammunition. Thirteen slaves and three free blacks were hanged, but Turner was not captured until two months later, less than five miles from where the raid had begun.

Thomas R. Gray, a lawyer and plantation owner assigned as Turner's defence counsel, interviewed Turner during his trial and later published *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, a pamphlet containing the story of Turner's rebellion from his own point of view. (William Styron later wrote an award-winning novel by the same title, which drew much controversy from blacks who claimed it presented a totally distorted view of Turner.) Gray made no attempt to defend Turner and called no witnesses to testify on his behalf. As a result, Turner was hanged on November 11, 1831. His corpse was skinned and his flesh was used for grease.

Turner's revolt led to harsh laws throughout the South, further restricting the limited freedom of blacks. It also spurred blacks and abolitionists into action and increased tensions between the North and South. Instead of engaging in organized revolt, many slaves ran away in order to escape the bondage of slavery.

In their book *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* historians John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger explore this form of rebellion. Franklin and Schweninger describe three categories of runaways: *absentees* (slaves who left the plantation for a few days or weeks); *outliers* (slaves who hid in the woods for months or even years); and *maroons* (slaves who established camps in remote swamps and bayous). The authors also discuss the role of "term

slaves” (slaves who were to be set free at some future date) and free blacks, who sometimes helped others escape. According to the authors, the “typical” runaway was a young male plantation hand between the ages of 13 and 29.

One of the primary methods of escape for runaways was the infamous Underground Railroad, a secret network of blacks and whites that illegally helped fugitive slaves reach safety in the North or Canada. The network, also referred to as the “Liberty Line,” used railroad terms to describe its operations. For example, guides were referred to as “conductors,” hiding places were “stations” and groups of slaves were “trains.” The “Liberty Line” generally ran from Virginia and Kentucky across Ohio or from Maryland across Pennsylvania to New York, New England, and Canada.

From 1830 to 1860, it is estimated that nearly 9,000 fugitives passed through Philadelphia and nearly 40,000 through Ohio. The most famous black conductor was Harriet Tubman, who was often compared to the biblical character of Moses because she made at least ten trips North over a period of ten years, leading more than 200 slaves to freedom.

In addition to running away, slaves also used more subversive tactics to escape slavery, such as self-mutilation and arson. And mothers sometimes killed themselves and their children to save them from slavery, as Jacobs alludes in her novel. Because slave narratives document the horrors of slavery as experienced by ex-slaves, they serve as a powerful tool for exposing the brutalities of the chattel slave system, which defined people as “property.” The narratives also served as a testament to the courage and dignity of black men and women who were perceived by their “masters” as subhuman creatures without souls.

Slave narratives first appeared in the United States around 1703, but most were published during the era of abolitionism, from 1831 to the end of the Civil War in 1865. One of the most prominent slave narratives published during this period was Frederick Douglass' *Narrative* (1845). Other narratives of this period include William Wells Brown's *Narrative of William W. Brown, Written by Himself*; *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vasa, the African*; and *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave*.

After 1865, over 60 book-length narratives were published, including Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*, and James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. Under the federal government's Work Projects Administration, the largest single group of slave narratives was collected. The collection gathered in the South in the mid-1930s includes 2,194 oral histories of elderly ex-slaves.

Slave narratives can be broadly classified into three distinct forms: tales of religious redemption, tales to inspire the abolitionist struggle, and tales of progress. The tales written to inspire the abolitionist struggle are the most famous because they tend to have a strong autobiographical motif. Many of them are now recognized as the most important literary figures of all the nineteenth century writings by African Americans, with two of the best-known being Frederick Douglass's autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* which was published in 1854 and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs (1861).

The first African American novel published in the United States was Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859). It expressed the difficulties of lives of

northern free blacks. *Our Nig* was rediscovered and republished by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in the early 1980's. He labelled the work fiction and argued that it may be the first novel published by an African American. Parallels between Wilson's narrative and her life have been discovered, leading some scholars to argue that the work should be considered autobiographical. Despite these disagreements, *Our Nig* is a literary work which speaks to the difficult life of free blacks in the North who were indentured servants.

When Harriet Jacobs wanted to tell her story, she lacked the skills to write the story herself. She had learned to read while young and enslaved, but, at the time of her escape to the North in 1842, she was not a proficient writer. The subject matter of her book - sexual abuse of slave women - was a taboo in the mid-19th century, and Harriet had struggled over whether or not to expose herself so publicly. But she realized the significance of her story and decided to go ahead, although she wrote under the pseudonym, Linda Brent, and assigned fictitious names to everyone mentioned in the book.

Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs wrote in a similar way, by sharing their compelling stories that consisted of many hardships and obstacles. The two authors depicted their life stories in their biographies. To some extent, Douglass actually wrote his first autobiography in order to communicate, among other things, how he became so eloquent that many people asked themselves if he could ever have been a slave. Harriet Jacobs, even though she did not have such a spectacular rise in the anti-slavery circles as Douglass, was in her own way remarkable for she wrote her autobiography herself and claimed this achievement in the title of her text. Their narratives were able to attract attention and point out on the savagery of slavery. In

adapting her life story to this genre, Jacobs drew on women writers who were contemporaries and even friends, including well-known writers Lydia Maria Child and Fanny Fern.

Harriet Jacobs is one of the most famous African-American slaves during the time of the Civil War. She is famous for several reasons. Most notably, she wrote her own autobiography documenting the experiences of her life as a slave in North Carolina during the antebellum period of the United States. Harriet was actively involved with the abolition movement before the launch of the Civil War. During the war she used her celebrity to raise money for black refugees. After the war she worked to improve the conditions of the recently-freed slaves.

Harriet Ann Jacobs was born at Edenton, North Carolina, in 1813 to Delilah, the daughter of Molly Horniblow (Aunt Martha), the slave of Margaret Horniblow, and to Daniel Jacobs, a carpenter, the slave of Dr. Andrew Knox. When she was six years old, Jacobs' mother died, and Jacobs was taken into the household of her mistress, Margaret Horniblow, who taught her to read, spell, and sew. When she was 12, Margaret Horniblow died and willed Harriet to her five-year-old niece, Mary Matilda Norcom (Miss Emily). As a result, Harriet and her brother, John S. Jacobs (William) moved into the household of Dr. James Norcom (Dr. Flint). Shortly after Jacobs' arrival to the Norcom house, her father dies. Feeling sad and alone, Jacobs' life is made even more unbearable by Norcom's determination to make her his concubine. Desperate to escape Norcom, Jacobs entered into a sexual relationship with Samuel Tredwell Sawyer (Mr. Sands) at 15, with whom she had two children: Joseph and Louisa Matilda (Ben and Ellen).

Undaunted, Norcom continued to pursue Jacobs. When she repeatedly rejected his advances, he sends her to work on a plantation several miles from Edenton. Secure in the knowledge that her children are safe with her grandmother, Jacobs adjusts to plantation life, but when she learns that Norcom plans to send her children to the plantation, she runs away, hiding out at the homes of friends, both black and white. Thinking she has escaped, Norcom sells Jacobs' children and brother to a slave trader, unaware that he is acting on behalf of Sawyer, who allows them to return to Jacobs' grandmother's house. Determined to be near her children, Jacobs spends seven years hiding in her grandmother's attic, where she passes the time sewing and reading the Bible.

Between 1838 and 1842, three events occurred that convinced Jacobs to escape. Sawyer took Louisa Matilda to Washington, D.C., to live with him and his new wife, Lavinia Peyton, and then sends her to his cousins in Brooklyn, New York. Jacobs' brother John ran away from Sawyer, his master. Aunt Betty (Aunt Nancy) died, plunging her grandmother into near-inconsolable grief at the loss of her daughter. Following her escape, Jacobs spent several years as a fugitive slave, alternately living in Boston and New York and supporting her children by working as a seamstress.

In 1849, Jacobs moved to Rochester, New York, where she helped her brother run an antislavery reading room, office, and bookstore in the same building that also housed the offices of Frederick Douglass' newspaper, *The North Star*. In Yellin's "Introduction" to her 1987 edition of *Incidents*, she notes that "the breadth of the references to literature and current events in *Incidents* suggests that during her eighteen months in Rochester [Jacobs]

read her way through the abolitionists' library of books and papers" which included "the latest and best works on slavery and other moral questions." During this time, Jacobs also began working with a group of antislavery feminists, which led to her meeting with the abolitionist Amy Post. Post became one of her closest friends and encouraged her to publish her story, despite her understandable reluctance to reveal her painful private life to the public.

Jacobs escaped from slavery at 27 but started writing her book 10 years later, following numerous attempts to gain support for the publication of her manuscript. She had initially sought support from Harriet Beecher Stowe, who had gained renown with her publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But instead of helping her, Stowe offered to include Jacobs' story in her book, *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Disappointed and determined to tell her own story, Jacobs began compiling her narrative in 1853, completing it in 1858.

After travelling to Boston to obtain letters to abolitionists abroad, she sailed to England to sell her book. She was unsuccessful, and she returned home and approached Boston publisher, Phillips and Sampson, who agreed to accept the manuscript, and then went bankrupt. Undaunted, Jacobs sent her manuscript to Thayer and Eldridge, another Boston publisher, who agreed to publish it on the condition that it included a preface from Lydia Maria Child. Jacobs' friend, William C. Nell, introduced Jacobs to Child, who agreed to write the preface and act as Jacobs' editor. Shortly after the contract is signed (with Child acting for Jacobs), Thayer and Eldridge also went bankrupt.

At this point, Jacobs decided to purchase the plates of her book and publish it herself. It was finally published in 1861 by a third Boston printer. In

1862, the English edition, *The Deeper Wrong*, was published in London. Jacobs explored such themes as the horrors of sexual abuses by her master, the bond with her grandmother, and her love for her children. It has generally been considered to be a precursor of the black feminist narrative. Following the publication of her book, which received little public acclaim until it was rediscovered more than 100 years later as part of the new renaissance of black women writers, Jacobs spent the remaining years of her life as an activist, supporting herself by working as a seamstress and later running a boarding house in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After her brother's death in 1875, Jacobs and her daughter moved to Washington, D.C., where Louisa Matilda, following her mother's example, helped organize meetings of the National Association of Colored Women. Jacobs died on March 7, 1897, in Washington, D.C. She is buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge.

Harriet Jacobs stands as a testament to women everywhere who struggles for freedom and survival, demand dignity and respect, and refuse to settle for less than equal representation and full participation in society.

In addition to the extraordinary incidents of her life as a heroic woman who fought for and won freedom for herself and her two children, one of the most intriguing aspects of Jacobs' life revolves around her relationship with her editor, Child, who was frequently cited as the "real" author of Jacobs' book by critics who believed that Jacobs' style was too sophisticated for a former slave who lacked formal education. But Child insisted that she did very little editing, crediting Jacobs with authorship of the manuscript. As further evidence that Jacobs wrote the narrative in her own words, Yellin cites numerous letters written by Jacobs, which exemplify an identical style. By

encountering scepticism concerning the originality of her work, Jacobs who is credited to be the first black woman to write a book-length narrative suffered the same criticism as her predecessor Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784), the first black woman to publish a book of poetry.

The usual criticism levelled against African American literary criticism is that it tends to be programmatic and prescriptive. All the significant African American writers chose to employ an appropriate mode of representation to advance the cause of African American creative expression. Accustomed to heavily edited slave narratives that were mass-produced by the abolitionist movement, nineteenth-century readers shunned Jacobs' narrative because of its content as well as its form. Jacobs' use of dialogue in the text was particularly offensive to the nineteenth-century reader, who believed that dialogue fictionalized autobiography. Literary scholars also rejected the text, dismissing it as a highly fictionalized account of the slave woman's life, one that was modelled on popular romantic fictions of the time.

First published in 1861, *Incidents* was "discovered" in the 1970s and reprinted in 1973 and 1987. Since then, several editions of *Incidents* have been published. The most complete and comprehensive version of the narrative is the 1987 Harvard University Press edition, edited by Jacobs' biographer, Jean Fagan Yellin, a professor at New York's Pace University. (The second edition is scheduled for release in April 2000.) In addition to her efforts to establish the authenticity of Jacobs' narrative, Yellin also brought *Incidents* to the attention of readers, scholars, and critics who had long ignored or dismissed the work because it failed to meet the standards of the male slave narrative, as defined by male critics such as Robert Step to and James Olney.

After being ignored by scholars for decades, the text was re-discovered by Professor Jean Fagan Yellin, who published her study of the narrative in 1981. Since that time, scholars such as William Andrews, Sidonie Smith, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and others have written extensively about the Jacobs' autobiography. A scholarly re-reading of the text has shed considerable light on the history of the narrative, its authenticity, and its unusual form. Modern scholars also reject the earlier assumption that dialogue fictionalizes autobiography. Jacobs' use of dialogue is considered to be a brilliant, if misunderstood, attempt to re-create the context in which the incidents of her life take place.

The renewed interest in the Jacobs text has resulted in a more liberal definition of autobiography, which now includes numerous texts by writers previously not entitled to the autobiographical "I" of the dominant culture. Subsequently, the definition of the universal human subject has been expanded to include those who were previously marginalized as other.

Armistead Lemon describes Jacobs's narrative as "the most widely-read female antebellum slave narrative 3). Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* can be taken as an illuminating example of the slave narrative genre, revealing the characteristics of this literature, such as the structure and pattern of the story, and the literary and rhetorical devices used. Jacobs's narrative conveys the most important aspects of the genre, enabling the reader to gain a clearer perspective on the lives of the enslaved. Slave narratives emphasized the horrific impact slavery had on enslaved people. In their article on slave narratives, Allyson C. Criner and Steven E. Nash observe that "[slave]

narrators [describe] slavery as a condition of extreme physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual deprivation²).

Incidents is the most sophisticated, sustained narrative dissection of the conventions of true woman-hood by a black author before emancipation ... Jacobs used the material circumstances of her life to critique conventional standards of female behaviour and to question their relevance of applicability to the experience of black women. (47)

Chapter Two

Dehumanizing Effects of Slavery

Harriet Jacobs under the pseudonym, Linda Brent, narrates the hardships of slavery in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Not only does Jacobs expand upon the horrors of the toxic and violent relationship between slave and master but also upon the life of a female slave. Using her own harrowing experiences, she describes the dehumanizing effects of slavery as an institution, and how these emboldened her to escape from her southern slave-master Dr. Flint, and to risk everything in seeking emancipation in the Northern States. It is with an unquenchable conviction that she highlights the poor conditions in which slaves are held, and the inherent evil nature of slavery itself, that requires total eradication from human society.

When Jacobs has determined to convince the world of the devastating and dehumanizing impact of slavery on women, she decides to document her horrific experiences as an enslaved African woman. Because she wanted to protect those individuals who might be hurt by her exposé, she assumed the pseudonym Linda Brent and, with the assistance of her editor, L. Maria Child, wrote what was to become one of the most powerful narratives of the slavery experience from a female perspective. In the book, Jacobs addresses White Northern women who fail to comprehend the evils of slavery she makes direct appeals to their humanity to expand their knowledge and influence their thoughts about slavery as an institution.

Jacobs showed that enslaved women had a different experience of motherhood but had strong feelings as mothers despite the constraints of their position. Jacobs was clearly aware of the womanly virtues, as she referred to

them as a means to appeal to female abolitionists to spur them into action to help protect enslaved Black women and their children. In the narrative, she explains life events that prevent Linda Brent from practicing these values, although she wants to. For example, as she cannot have a home of her own for her family, she cannot practice domestic virtues.

Much of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* was devoted to Jacobs's struggle to free her two children after she escaped. Before that, Harriet spent seven years hiding in a tiny space built into her grandmother's barn to see and hear the voices of her children. Jacobs changed the names of all characters in the novel, including her own, to conceal their true identities. The villainous slave owner "Dr. Flint" was based on Jacobs's former master, Dr. James Norcom.

Jacobs's main focus in her *Incidents in the life of a Slave Girl* depicts everything her autobiographical protagonist, Linda, endures as a slave. Linda, the first-person narrator, starts the story with the phrase "I was born a slave" (8) frames all the subsequent events. It is a long journey with many obstacles, and only the strongest make it to the happy ending. In addition to the structure, as a slave narrative it has a specific story pattern, depicting the events related to loss of innocence, phases of servitude, pursuit of education, acts of sexual abuse, and escape attempts.

Major themes in *Incidents* include the economics of slavery; the quest for freedom; pain and suffering both physical and emotional; self-definition; self-assertion; community support and family loyalty, (generally lacking in slave narratives by men); and writing as a means of freedom, self-expression, and resistance. Also significant is the issue of literacy, which was often used as

a metaphor for freedom, because slaves who learned to read and write were often the ones who ran away, as that of the letters Linda writes while hiding in her grandmother's garret which play an important part in her eventual escape. Other themes include the moral conflict between slavery and Christianity, Colour prejudice and racism, the bond of motherhood, family loyalty, and abandonment.

Incidents can be divided into five distinctive parts each focusing on significant events in Linda's life. Consequently, the structure deviates from that of the traditional slave narrative. Although some chapters focus strictly on Linda's story, others provide social, political, or historical commentary. The work also offers a new perspective on historical events such as the Nat Turner insurrection. It is unique in that it addresses specific audience, white women in the North and speaks for black women still held in bondage.

The story pattern shows divisions that provide more details, breaking down the stages of the narrative. In the initial stage of Jacobs's story, a few events occur that are essential for Linda's character development. When introducing the protagonist, Jacobs stresses the time when Linda begins to learn about the world around her. For example, she discovers she is a slave only at the age of six, after both her parents die. Linda's pursuit of education commences with her first mistress, who is very kind to her and teaches her how to read. Linda says, "My mistress had taught me the precepts of God's Word," (10) meaning that even her religious knowledge comes from her first owner. Linda's education in the initial stages is an essential foundation for the stage of crisis because, once taught to do the right thing, Linda is reluctant to commit immoral acts. Knowing her childhood circumstances and the little

education she receives helps the reader better understand Linda's moral dilemma in the stage of crisis and transition.

After briefly talking of her earliest childhood, her parents and her brother, Jacobs begins her book with the history of her grandmother. At the end of the book, Jacobs relates the death of her grandmother in 1853, soon after Jacobs had obtained her legal freedom, using the very last sentence to mention the "tender memories of my good old grandmother." Molly Horniblow obtained her freedom in 1828, when Jacobs was about 15 years old, because friends of hers bought her with the money she had earned by working at night.

In Jacobs's autobiography there are two slaves who dare to resist their masters physically, although such an act of resistance normally is punished most cruelly: Her uncle Joseph (called "Benjamin" in the book) throws his master to the ground when he attempts to whip him, and then runs away to avoid the punishment of a public whipping. Her brother John (called "William") is still a boy, when the son of his master tries to bind and whip him. John puts up a fight and wins. Although the "young master" is hurt, John gets away with it. Other slaves mentioned in the book, women as well as men resist by running away, although some have to pay dearly for that. Jacobs's uncle Joseph is caught, paraded in chains through Edenton and put in jail, where his health suffers so much that he has to be sold for a very low price. Jacobs also tells of another fugitive who is killed by the slave catchers.

While physical resistance is less of an option for enslaved women, they still have many ways of resisting. Molly Horniblow, Jacobs's beloved grandmother, should have been set free at the death of her owner in 1827. But

Dr. Norcom, Jacobs's abusive master and the son-in-law and executor of the will of Molly Horniblow's owner, wants to cheat her out of her freedom, citing debts which have to be settled by selling the deceased's human property. Norcom tells the enslaved woman that he wants to sell her privately in order to save her the shame of being sold at public auction, but Molly Horniblow insists on suffering that very shame. The auction turns out according to Molly Horniblow's plans: A friend of hers offers the ridiculously low price of \$50, and nobody among the sympathizing White people of Edenton is willing to offer more. Soon after, Jacobs's grandmother is set free.

Both Harriet Jacobs and her brother John frustrate the threats of their master by simply choosing what was meant as a threat: When Dr. Norcom throws John into the jail, which regularly serves as the place to guard slaves that are to be sold, John sends a slave trader to his master telling him he wants to be sold. When Norcom tells Harriet to choose between becoming his concubine and going to the plantation, she chooses the latter, knowing that plantation slaves are even worse off than town slaves.

Harriet Jacobs also knows to fight back with words: On various occasions, she doesn't follow the pattern of submissive behaviour that is expected of a slave, protesting when her master beats her and when he forbids her to marry the man she loves, and even telling him that his demand of a sexual relationship is against the law of God.

As Craig White suggests that a slave narrative genre has three stages in its structure: the initial, the transitional, and the climactic, in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* the first stage presents the author's personal experience as a slave. The transitional stage involves a moment of crisis in the narrator's life,

some kind of challenge that has a big impact on the person. The final stage is the climactic stage, which most often depicts a successful escape from the slave owner. Linda, the first-person narrator, starts the story with the phrase “I was born a slave”. Such a beginning immediately gives the reader a perspective that frames all the subsequent events. It is an essential initial idea that extends throughout the text.

The transitional or crisis stage in Jacobs’s narrative is the moment when Linda makes the decision to become pregnant by Mr. Sands, a white man who likes her. Jacobs asks her “virtuous reader” not to judge her harshly because “the slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standards as others” (888). Linda knows that what she is doing is immoral, but this is the only strategy that enables her to protect herself from Dr. Flint’s harassment and to save her future child from being sold.

Finally, the climactic stage of Harriet Jacobs’s narration is Linda’s achievement of real freedom. Even though she has escaped her owner, Linda remains a hunted fugitive until she “[is] sold at last,” when her friends pay Dr. Flint’s relatives to stop chasing her; this is the moment when Linda begins a truly free life (898).

The three stages of the slave narrative appear in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, showing periods of Jacobs’s life as a slave, from birth until freedom. The story pattern shows divisions that provide more details, breaking down the stages of the narrative. In the initial stage of Jacobs’s story, a few events occur that are essential for Linda’s character development. When introducing the protagonist, Jacobs stresses the time when Linda begins to learn about the world around her. For example, she discovers she is a slave

only at the age of six, after both her parents die. Linda's pursuit of education commences with her first mistress, who is very kind to her and teaches her how to read. Linda says, "My mistress had taught me the precepts of God's Word," meaning that even her religious knowledge comes from her first owner.

Linda's education in the initial stages is an essential foundation for the stage of crisis because, once taught to do the right thing, Linda is reluctant to commit immoral acts. Knowing her childhood circumstances and the little education she receives, helps the reader better understand Linda's moral dilemma in the stage of crisis and transition. Slave narratives are rich in rhetorical devices. Slave narrators often use concrete imagery to create memorable images in readers' minds. For instance, if the goal of a slave narrative is to depict the miserable life of enslaved African Americans, imagery is essential in portraying the mistreatment of the enslaved, the poor conditions in which they had to live, and all the rigorous labour imposed on them.

Chapters 1 and 2 describe the narrator's childhood and the story of her grandmother until she got her freedom. The narrator's story is then continued in chapters 4 to 7, which tell of the longing for freedom she shares with her uncle *Benjamin* and her brother *William*, *Benjamin's* escape, the sexual harassment by *Dr. Flint*, the jealousy of his wife, and the lover who she is forbidden to marry. Chapters 10 and 11 tell of her affair with *Mr. Sands* and the birth of her first child.

Chapters 14 to 21 tell of the birth of her second child, her removal from the town to *Flint's* plantation, her flight and her concealment in her

grandmother's garret. The nearly seven years she had to spend in that narrow place are described in chapters 22 to 28, the last chapters of which concentrate on the fate of family members during that time: the escape of her brother *William* (chapter 26), the plans made for the children (27), and the cruel treatment and death of her aunt *Nancy* (28). Her dramatic escape to Philadelphia is the subject of chapters 29 and 30. Chapters 31 to 36 describe her short stay in Philadelphia, her reunion with the children, her new work as nanny for the *Bruce* family, and her flight to Boston when she is threatened with recapture by *Flint*.

Chapter 35 focusses on her experiences with northern racism. Her journey to England with *Mr. Bruce* and his baby *Mary* is the subject of chapter 37. Finally, chapters 38 to 41 deal with renewed threats of recapture, which are made much more serious by the Fugitive Slave Law, the "confession" of her affair with *Mr. Sands* to her daughter, her stay with Isaac and Amy Post in Rochester, the final attempt of her legal owner to capture her, the obtaining of her legal freedom, and the death of her grandmother.

The other chapters are dedicated to special subjects: Chapter 3 describes the hiring out and selling of slaves on New Year's Day, chapter 8 is called *What Slaves Are Taught to Think of the North*, chapter 9 gives various example of cruel treatment of slaves, chapter 12 describes the narrator's experience of the anti-Black violence in the wake of Nat Turner's Rebellion, and chapter 13 is called *The Church And Slavery*.

As for the women slaves are concerned they suffered severe emotional damage, because they were the victims of the owners. They treated them as objects, yelled at them, and humiliated them. This torture caused the slaves to

feel as if they were an object, in which any person could take over them. They had the worse, whenever they were taken apart from their children. Jacob states: Both men and women were given punishments but women were brutally assaulted and physically abused since they were less physically able to do things like men could. On the contrary, the women had it worse than men did.

Regarding sex, the female slaves, were the ones to suffer more; because not only were they forced to do hard work, but also were forced to have some type of sexually contact. This occurred mostly, with females age 15 years and older. Jacobs gives a supportive statement, “My master met at every turn, reminding me that I belonged to him, and swearing by heaven and earth that he would compel me to submit to him,” he develops how in most cases, they were sold or rented with men like 12 years of age difference.

As Linda laments the birth of her daughter Ellen, she says “Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Why was slavery far more terrible for women?” Because, as Jacobs' story so poignantly illustrates, in addition to the horrors and brutalities endured by enslaved men, women bore the added anguish of being wrenched from their children. To compound their pain and degradation, enslaved women were often used as “breeders,” forced to bear children to add to their master's “stock,” but denied the right to care for them. In fact, it was not unusual for the plantation master to satisfy his lust with his female slaves and force them to bear his offspring. As Linda points out, children from such unions were often sold to protect the honour and dignity of the slaveholder's wife, who would otherwise be forced to face the undeniable evidence of her husband's lust.

When Jacobs describes how Linda goes to Dr. Flint to announce that she wants to marry a free black man, her words to the master sound like words of a mature woman who is ready to start a family and knows what she wants in life. This conversation happens in the fifth chapter of the narrative. However, in the tenth chapter, the reader learns that at this point Linda is “a poor slave girl, only fifteen years old” (887). This discrepancy creates dissonance in the mind of the reader who is probably white and middle class because Linda’s age and her behaviour are not congruent. The irony helps Jacobs convey that the demands of slavery forced girls to mature into womanhood too early.

Although Harriet Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* falls under the umbrella of the slave narrative genre and conforms to most of its characteristics, Albert Tricomi, a professor of English at the State University of New York at Binghamton, argues that Jacobs’s narrative has several unique qualities. Tricomi says that Jacobs’s story “absorbs many features of the biographical and the fictional slave narrative” (620). For instance, despite being based on her real-life story, the book does not completely represent Jacobs’s biography. Harriet Jacobs changes the names of every character in her story in order to protect the real people she talks about in the book. The author’s substitution of names may make readers question whether all the events in the story are equivalent to what happened to Jacobs in reality. Yet, because the author follows most of the best traditions of the slave narrative genre and she herself is an ex-slave and a woman, her story is still trustworthy and reliable as a portrayal of slave life.

As for as the imagery is concerned Jacobs uses concrete imagery to create memorable images in readers’ minds. For instance, if the goal of a slave

narrative is to depict the miserable life of enslaved African Americans, imagery is essential in portraying the mistreatment of the enslaved, the poor conditions in which they had to live, and all the rigorous labour imposed on them.

Harriet Jacobs pays considerable attention to the small details. For example, when Linda is hiding from her master in a garret, she describes the place precisely: “The garret was only nine feet long and seven wide. The highest part was three feet high, and sloped down abruptly to the loose board floor” (892). This short description of a place where Linda spends seven years as Caitlin O'Neill, a scholar in African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, comments is “crucial to [Linda's] activist's beginning and is the site of her self-actualization” (O'Neill 56). Mention of the exact dimensions of the tiny room, where the woman has to spend the greater part of a decade, enables readers to visualize the garret and imagine the intensity of Linda's desire to be free, given that she is willing to live in such darkness and constriction to avoid slavery's worst abuses.

Apart from imagery, slave narratives often use satire or irony as one of the main rhetorical devices for story development. In her research on the rhetoric of slave narratives, Lynn A. Casmier-Paz, a professor in the English Department at the University of Central Florida, claims that Jacobs's identification in her title as a “slave girl” contradicts the wise voice of the narrator as she reports the events in the story (107). Moreover, Casmier-Paz relates that most covers of early editions of the book depict an old woman, not a girl (107). Such contrast creates ironic contradiction that emphasizes how quickly enslaved girls had to grow up.

In describing the economics of slavery, historians point out that although male slaves were generally valued for their labour and physical strength, females were valued for their offspring. When Jacobs wrote her narrative, she addressed the women of the North, hoping to make them aware that, unless they spoke out in protest, they were just as guilty as Southern slaveholders of supporting and perpetuating the system of slavery.

When Linda has numerous opportunities to escape, she chooses to give up her freedom and her own life to save her children. Harriet Jacobs shows how the institution of slavery dehumanizes an individual both physically and emotionally. Based on Jacob's statement: "Slavery is bad for men, but is far more terrible for women." It can be identified that even though men had their struggle, women had it worst.

Another characteristic of Jacobs's writing is her use of language. Language, especially use of dialects, is an important part of a slave narrative because the characteristic speech patterns of the enslaved show their identity. However, Jacobs, as Tricomi notes, "represents herself and her family as speakers of Standard English" (625). Usually, authors of slave narratives stress how their speech differs from their masters' because of a lack of education. With her use of proper English, Jacobs could intend to show that Linda is educated in order to make her narrator more credible to her readers, who were predominantly white people. However, the author does use dialects and classical representation of "the black dialect" (625).

In the eighteenth chapter, "Months of Peril," Jacobs includes a dialogue with Betty that is full of the traditional depiction of the slave language. Betty says, "Honey, now you is safe. Dem devils ain't coming to

search dis house” (Jacobs’s ch. 8, par. 1). Despite not using dialects in portraying Linda’s speech and that of her close relatives, Jacobs still follows the classic pattern of the slave narrative genre in which black dialect is a prominent part of the story.

Slave narratives are often divided into chapters or sections that have numbers or titles. Harriet Jacobs’s narrative is typical in this respect. As Maria Holmgren Troy, suggests that “fragmentation reflects the fashion in which slave families are repeatedly broken up” (20). Linda does not realize for a long time that she is a slave as she is not separated from her family. In the beginning, she says, her parents “lived together in a comfortable home ... [and] I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise” (879). Linda’s relatively happy childhood allows her to avoid the emotional trauma of family separation. However, later in life Linda, like Jacobs, does experience separation, first from her lover and later from her children. Jacobs’s use of chapters reminds the reader of the rapid and sometimes tragic changes that slave owners imposed on the enslaved. North Carolinian researchers Marcella Grendler, Andrew Leiter and Jill Sexton assert that “slave narratives were an important means of opening a dialogue between blacks and whites about slavery and freedom” (Grendler, Leiter and Sexton par. 3).

The emergence of the slave narrative genre enabled the enslaved to express themselves, to show the reality they had lived in. Harriet Jacobs was one of the first female slave writers to tell her story to a large readership. Even though she did not always conform to all the expectations of the genre, her work is still one of the best examples of the slave narrative. Jacobs’s use of irony, dialect, fragmentation and other literary devices commonly used in the

genre of slave narrative help people even today understand the horrific human cost of slavery.

Chapter Three

Religion as a Justification for Slavery

In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Jacob exposes some of the harsh realities of the Christian faith and practice in both the South and the North. She describes how Christian slave owners invoke and manipulate biblical texts on submission to authority to reinforce and perpetuate attitudes of subservience among slaves. In this way, Christianity becomes a tool of oppression in the context of the institution of slavery. She distinguishes the Christianity practiced by the slaves and the hypocritical one practiced by the slave masters. Slave masters, are presented as hypocrites whose practices were contrary to Christianity's fundamental principles of brotherly love, humility, compassion and respect towards other Christians. Although slave owners taught their Christian slaves to heed to and practice the teachings of Christ as delineated in the Bible, their treatments of slaves were not consistent with the main biblical teachings of love and humanity.

Like many other slave narratives, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is infused with religious references and poses a scriptural challenge to slavery. The role of religion in slave communities and in African-American history is complex. There exists a range of white slaveholding Christianity on the religious self-understanding of recently arrived African slaves as well as on later generations of African Americans. Religion is integral to most early nineteenth century black literature and oratory and the role played by diverse religions in early black activism is rigorously debated by scholars. Harriet Jacobs constructs her story within an explicitly religious framework and

directly condemns slave holding Christianity by claiming the validity of a more genuine Christianity. Her own religious views show some interesting internal conflicts that illustrate how difficult it was for enslaved Christians to embrace such traditional protestant people as submission and self-denial.

Christianity, the Bible, prayer and religious meetings were important in the lives of slaves in America. Generally, slaves were introduced to the Christian faith by their masters and, sometimes white family members of the household. African-American religion played dual roles in the lives of black people in America: a place of hiding and security from white dominance, and secondly as the people's identity. This duality puts in light a new religious reality that largely influenced the religious practice in the slave community and significantly accounts for traces of paradox in the expression of Christianity in the era.

In her autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs describes the youth of her alter-ego, Linda Brent, as a slave in the American South. The narrative often meditates on the existence of slavery within a society that purports to fulfil Christian principles. Linda observes the hypocritical Christianity practiced by her owners and the white community, who use religion as a justification for slavery. At the same time, she describes the sincere religious convictions that allow slaves to preserve dignity and strength even in the midst of constant degradation. In doing so, Jacobs affirms her own Christian faith while arguing that religion can be used to excuse evil just as easily as to promote justice.

Linda observes that her owners and much of the white community around her use Christianity to increase their social status and consolidate

power over their slaves. Early in the narrative, Linda recalls that her first mistress taught her the Christian commandments to “love thy neighbour as thyself” and to treat others as she wants to be treated. However, the mistress’s religious commitments don’t stop her from leaving Linda to the Flints in her will, plunging her into decades of turmoil. Linda concludes that “she did not recognize me as her neighbour”; the mistress’s piety has enabled her to feel righteous without alerting her to the injustice of owning slaves.

Linda notes ironically that Dr. Flint frequently goes to church and donates to the collection box, but the devout image he cultivates in this way has no bearing on his willingness to own slaves and his predatory behaviour, especially towards Linda. This hypocrisy is characteristic of many slave-owning men in the narrative. Another time, Linda and some friends begin to attend services organized for slaves by the local Methodist church. The pastor, Reverend Pike, reads from a Biblical text that urges servants to obey their masters, and during his sermon berates the assembled group to work harder and faster, because God sees their “laziness.” Here, the church establishment is actively mobilized to give legitimacy to the institution of slavery.

At the same time, Christianity is an enormous source of emotional strength for Linda and other members of the black community. In one particular disturbing incident, Linda describes a white woman mocking at the bedside of a slave who is dying while giving birth to her master’s illegitimate child; she says that there is no heaven for “the like of her and her bastard,” but the woman responds calmly that “God knows all about it, and He will have mercy on me.” In this situation, religious faith allows the slave to respond to

these appalling insults with calm resolve, and to meet her death with tranquillity.

As she grows up, Linda is guided by her grandmother's strict religious teachings. It's her emphasis on the importance of chastity that makes Linda so determined to stand up to Dr. Flint. One of the narrative's most touching moments comes when Linda and her grandmother pray together before her escape; in this case, Christianity cements their bond and gives them courage before a decisive action.

Although Linda at first feels she's violated the precepts of religion by having an illegitimate affair, she later says that "God alone knows how I have suffered; and He, I trust, will forgive me." Here, her sincere faith helps her cope with the social stigma of unwed motherhood; for Linda, Christianity is not about gaining social status but maintaining her dignity and self-respect in the face of constant oppression.

Because she lives in an extremely religious society and is a devout Christian herself, Jacobs invokes Christianity throughout her narrative. For her, religion provides moral support and the promise of divine justice, which is particularly important given that society offers no such people like her. However, even as she extols the virtues of Christianity, she is highly critical of people who use Christianity neither for personal growth nor to help others, but for the self-serving end of justifying slavery.

Linda also observes how the white pastors from North hypocritically accepted the Southern Christianity's use of the Bible to justify the institution as well as the high-handed attitudes of slave masters. One episode that illustrates Linda's reproach is how a clergyman from the

North who was invited by the slave owners of the South to preach to their slaves presented slaves positively after being taken around by slave owners to observe the living conditions of a few privileged slaves who are living in relative comfort. Surprised by the clergy-man's sudden change of attitude, Linda describes him as a "northern man with southern principles" (169). She finds this attitude, which most Yankees seemed to adopt on coming to the South, as hypocritical: They seem to satisfy their conscience with the doctrine that God created the Africans to be slaves. What libel upon the heavenly Father, who "made of one blood all nations of men!" (170) Several episodes in Jacobs' narrative touch on this inconsistency in the attitudes and practices of slave owners, white public officials and even pastors.

The first concern of Linda's observations is about what she saw as relaxed attitude of the Methodist church in appointing people to leadership positions in the church and the economic motives of some of these appointees. A case in point is the appointment of the town constable as the leader of a Methodist class meeting that she attended and the 'unchristian' that he exhibited towards the class members. For Linda, the constable appears to have accepted to perform Christian duties not out of commitment to the faith but for the amount, "fifty cents" (199). Linda comes to this conclusion because she observed that the constable does not even show any sign of empathy, love or care to the congregation. She portrays him as an unsympathetic and insensitive person who took pleasure in the suffering of others as shown in the way he responded to a grieving woman slave whose children had been taken

away from her. Linda narrates that after the woman told her heart-breaking story and expresses her desire for God to take her life, the constable “become crimson in the face with suppressed laughter, while he held up his handkerchief, that those who were weeping for the poor woman’s calamity might not see his merriment” (200). Thus, Linda describes him as a “white-faced, black-hearted brother” (199).

Another incident where Linda expresses her shock is when she found out that Mr. Flint’s, her high-handed and wicked master, had joined the congregation of the Episcopal Church. The fact that a man such as Dr. Flint joins the church makes Linda question whether Christianity had an impact on the character of people at all. She saw no positive change in the attitudes of Dr. Flint after he joined the church. When Dr. Flint asked her to join the church, Linda answered sarcastically that she already found enough sinners in the church and hopes she “could be allowed to live like a Christian” (204) outside it.

Harriet Jacobs repeatedly presents the irony of religion in the institution of American slavery in her work. She presents several of the contradictions and hypocrisy she encounters. Right from the beginning, Jacobs identifies a paradox in the teachings of her mistress. Jacobs praises her mistress for the things she taught her as a slave including blessing her memory for the happy times she spent with her; she further expresses her surprise and how she lost hope by the decision that was made by her late mistress to send her to serve someone else instead of liberating her. Linda’s mistress taught her the precepts of God’s word in the words of the Bible “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as

thymself...Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them” to which Linda retorts “But I was her slave” (128). The text above is found in Matthew 7:12 and has come to be known as the ‘Golden Rule’ prescribing the way people, especially Christians ought to relate with one another in reciprocity, fairness and equality. To make someone a slave will mean that one can also in like manner be made a slave but this was not the way Linda’s mistress related to the Biblical principle. By Linda’s response, Jacobs sees the apparent contradiction in the meaning her mistress sought to convey to her and what she thought was the objective meaning of the scripture. Also, one gets the impression that the word “neighbour” either had more than one meaning or one exclusive meaning ascribed by the slaveholders. The latter seems more plausible in this case as Jacobs notes; “I suppose she did not recognize me as her neighbour” (128). Jacobs is compelled by the actions of her mistress to conclude sarcastically that perhaps slaves are not considered neighbours and the reference in the bible regarding loving and doing good to one’s neighbours refers to an exclusive group of people including her mistress’ kind and does not apply to slaves.

The sheer relativism that characterized the use of scriptures especially by the slaveholders presented the Bible as a manual for legitimizing the institution of slavery, justifying their unjust actions towards the slaves and moulding the slaves into conformity with their wishes. This is so because, of the two, the slaveholders were literate and custodians of education. Any formal means of learning was the exclusive preserve of the slaveholders.

Slaves considered it a rare privilege to be taught by their kind owners to read and write because it was unlawful for a slave to have education. Therefore the disproportionate use of the precepts of God by slaveholders may not only have aided them to get away with the unjust treatments they meted out to the slaves but also exerted an influence on the way the slaves viewed the Bible and Christianity in general because they were their Bible teachers. A paradox is found in the passage where Jacobs points out how slaves are taught to believe concerning the North. First of all, some of these slaves have been made to believe and accept that they are inferior and will be punished at any attempt for “running away from a kind master” (168). This statement is a comment made by a slaveholder when they returned from the North and told the slaves in the South about life for the free slaves in the North. Jacobs, after the slaveholder’s comment on life in the North, states that “slaveholders pride themselves upon being honourable men; but if you were to hear the enormous lies they tell their slaves, you would have small respect for their veracity” (168). This is another example of how and why the lives of the slaveholders cannot be trusted especially when the writer presents the lack of truth in their words and actions in general. Slaveholders create the impression that being a slave in the South is a better life and option compared to being free in the North and some of the slaves believed this impression and lived by it.

Jacobs goes ahead to describe how freedom can make a man free but yet because many of the slaves have been made to believe that there is no worth in exchanging slavery for freedom, there is difficulty in

persuading the slaves to believe otherwise especially in order to protect their families. In short, slaveholders have made it clear in their actions towards the slaves that slavery is better and more valuable than life itself. Here lies the paradox: by implication, every slaveholder is free; that freedom is what entitles them to have chattel slaves because a slave could not own another slave. Therefore, to suppose as slaveholders in the south did, that slavery was better in the south than life and freedom in the north is not only an exploitative deception but also a contradiction of their own status as free men.

One wonders why the slaveholders did not swap places with their slaves if it was good an option to be a slave. This can be said to be a calculated attempt by the slaveholders to use such philosophical statements to administer hegemony over the slaves. It also follows from the above mentioned contradiction that the slaveholders sought to create a social context within which to mediate a reconstruction of the status of slaves that negotiates a new identity; one that sees a free man in a slave in the South as opposed to one devalues the freedom of a slave in the North. Thus the quest for self-identity sought by the slaves through their struggle for freedom and emancipation was diminished and an imposed identity was placed, at least, on most of the slaves who believed and settled with the status quo.

In the event of the death of Linda's father, her grandmother tries to console and comfort her, as it is a difficult period for her. Her faith as a little girl is being tested by death, which has taken away her father, mother, mistress and friend. Her faith crumbles and she eventually rebels

against God. Her grandmother, in an attempt to console her, makes this remarkable statement: “who knows the ways of God? Perhaps they have been taken from evil days to come” (130). In a later statement made by Linda’s grandmother in relation to the status of her grandchildren as slaves, Linda admits that her grandmother literally fought to make them accept their status as slaves as the will of God and that God “had seen it fit to place them under such circumstances; and though it seemed hard, [they] ought to pray for contentment” (138). When placed side by side, the two statements reveal some contradictions. In the first statement, it is clear from her grandmother’s rhetorical question “who knows the ways of God?” (138), that no finite human mind can know God’s ways, including herself. In the second statement, however, grandmother seems to know the ways of God as it relates to the slave status of her grandchildren enough to vigorously entreat them to settle with it.

It is also significant to note that it is paradoxical to claim that a situation such as slavery, with its consequent denial of comforts and human dignity in the antebellum south, is the will of God while admonishing the slaves to pray to the same God who supposedly willed it for them to grant them appeasement. This inconsistency indicts the quest of her grandmother for her own freedom and affirms rather than condemns the practice of slavery from the biblical point of view. The tendency to relativize Christian teachings both by slaves and slave masters severely undermined the authority of the Bible as an objective moral framework for life. The reasoning of Jacobs and her siblings in reaction to what their grandmother said leans forward to what can be termed an

objective proposition of the Bible “it is much more the will of God for us to be situated as she was [in freedom]” (138).

Another incident from chapter 4 from a conversation between Benjamin and his grandmother when they went to visit him in jail, illustrates the degree of contradiction on the issue of forgiveness. After his attempted escape proved abortive, Benjamin is recaptured and imprisoned by his master and the entire experience is distasteful to the poor slave. When asked about the role of God in withdrawing a decision to commit suicide when he was captured, Benjamin’s admission that he forgot about God when hunted like an animal triggered his grandmother’s response was, “Don’t talk so, Benjamin, Put your trust in God. Be humble, my child, and your master will forgive you” (144). Benjamin disagreed with his grandmother’s persuasion that he should ask for forgiveness from his master. He said, “Forgive me for what, mother? For not letting him treat me like a dog? No! I will never humble myself to him. I have worked for him for nothing all my life, and I am repaid with stripes and imprisonment. Here I will stay till I die, or till he sells me” (144). As the dialogue shows, Benjamin and his grandmother agree that there is an offense for which forgiveness must be sought. However, they disagreed on who ought to be apologizing and asking for forgiveness.

Benjamin, like other like-minded slaves, believes that the slave owners should be the ones to apologize and ask for forgiveness from their mistreated slaves. He therefore does not see the logic in asking for forgiveness from a man whose delight is to treat him as an animal. His resolution to not humble himself and ask for forgiveness from his master

can be considered as a reflection of the paradox embedded in his grandmother's gentle persuasion. Again when Benjamin was asked if he ever thought of God, he answered, "No, I did not think of him. When a man is hunted like a wild beast he forgets there is a God, a heaven" (144). He points out that his only focus was how to get out of his struggle and get beyond the reach of his attackers whom he referred to as "bloodhounds" (144). In this situation, we see how the slave Benjamin expresses his views of God in times such as what he described to his grandmother.

One would expect that as they believed and trusted God, they would constantly depend on him more especially in times of trouble but this slave makes us aware that even a slave in his desperation to be free sometimes does not look up to God. On the one hand there is a profession of faith in God but on the other hand, especially as it was inevitable in Benjamin's case, to seek divine intervention, the expressed action or reaction betrays the confessed faith in God, revealing a paradox of a kind. Jacobs draws attention to yet another paradox in chapter 5 where she notes; "If a pastor has offspring by a woman not his wife, the church dismisses him, if she is a white woman; but if she is colored, it does not hinder his continuing to be their good shepherd" (204). Within the context of Christianity at the time, this pronouncement was most likely a creed by which the affairs of the formal church community were conducted. The substance of this self-made religious ideal hangs on the belief that a pastor's culpability for the offense of having a child from an adulterous relationship is based on the skin colour and status of the woman with

whom the act was committed. In essence, the act is not an offence deserving dismissal if the woman involved is a black slave. This shows that the interpretation of certain parts of the bible was manipulated to satisfy selfish interests. The language in the creed above also accentuates the discursive practices that reveal the power relations in the slave era society. This discursive practice shows the assertion of power and designates the social status of slaves and slave owners, thus bringing the marked social stratification of the era into focus. In incidents, Jacobs equally presents a character whose lifestyle is different from what she appears to be. Mention is made of Mrs. Flint who is a member of the church, part of its several services, and also partaker of the Lord's Supper (132).

According to Linda, "she is not one who appears to be living in her Christian frame of mind and the reason is simply because she acts inhumanely and seems to passively watch the cruel treatment of her slaves" (132, 133). She also has an attitude that can be described as insensitive especially her attitude towards her servants when dinner was not served at an exact time. This is an opposite reflection of the life that is expected of Christians.

Jacobs describes slaveholders in a way that presents them as very horrible and insensitive people. She explains how women are considered nothing unless they were able to produce for their masters and how these slave owners who show how mean they are, profess to be "Christians" (175). This is considered hypocrisy and one of the masters mentioned in this page boasted in the name and standing of a Christian yet could be

heartless enough to shoot a woman right through the head. His authority demands that no one questions him, as the belief is that no slave is ever valued and that a master has the right to do what he pleases with his slave who is also considered his own property. The other reason a master would care less for his slave or place no value on him is simply because the master has hundreds of them and has nothing to lose.

Jacobs uses the master's self-proclaimed Christianity as a point to clearly reveal what she believes as the true perception and reality of Christianity: "the young lady was very pious and there was some reality of Christianity...her religion was not a garb put on for Sunday and laid aside till Sunday returned again" (175). This, in Jacobs's opinion, was an example of the hypocrisy that was evident in the lives of the whites in the community as they were concerned more with the external show of their Christianity instead of the inner character. In chapter 13 of Jacob's work, she points out that religion was used as a tool to prevent murder as the masters came to a conclusion that the slaves needed enough of religious instructions to prevent them from murdering their masters.

There is the mention of three churches - Methodist, Baptist and Episcopal- in place which, in their own way, made arrangements to hold services for the black slaves although there was a bit of difficulty to decide a suitable place for them to worship. Jacobs gives an example of the Rev. Mr. Pike and how he always gave out the portions of scripture to which he wished the black slaves read and respond. For example, "Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ"

(198). A good look at his entire sermon shows how he addresses slaves as though what all they do is only to steal and disobey their masters. There was not a line that was addressed to masters. Scriptures and sermons of this kind created the impression to slaves, especially those who could not read and write, that their masters were justified in the way they treated their slaves and how right the notion that slaves were just properties and made to work and serve. This way of preaching and the use of the bible by slaveholders led some slaves to distinguish between their master's bible Christianity and the slaves own experiential Christianity.

Thus throughout her book, Harriet Jacobs, *In Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, revealed American slave owners everywhere were hypocrites, and calling themselves Christians was the greatest sin of all.

Chapter Four

African American Women

African American women have traditionally moved a myriad of obstacles in their quest to success. From the moment African women set foot on America's shores, they have contended with both racism and sexism. During these struggles to survive, they often scaled the walls to confront barriers caused by the other. An accurate picture of the status of African American women cannot be formed by simply focusing on racial hierarchies. There have always been the issues of power and gender within the African American community.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the black woman's place in history and society has been problematized by racism, sexism, and in many cases classism. Though some black women have managed to surface to the forefront of certain political movements, stereotypes of immorality and inferiority have kept most on the fringe. The black woman, who found it difficult to "fit in" society because of her unique experiences, encountered the same dilemma in her place in literature. Literature, called a mirror of society, often reflected societal restraints, leaving the black woman and her condition voiceless or only partially revealed. The existing genres of the nineteenth-century that black women occupied were the domestic / seductive genre of white women and the slave narrative genre of black men.

The African American women's historical role has been to provide nurturing comfort to her children and family, to hold on even though the world around her may be coming apart. One in four African American women is uninsured. This lack of health insurance, along with other socio economic

factors, continues to contribute to the dire health issues African American women face. The level of educational attainment for African American women has risen very slowly and still sits at a significantly lower level than that of white women. African American women owned businesses continue to grow despite significant financial and social obstacles. African American women continue to have higher rates of unemployment than white women and continue to have lower amounts of weekly usual earnings and median wealth compared to their male counterparts and white women. According to Williams, African American women vote in greater proportions than do African American men-nearly two of every three Black voters in 1992 were women. Similarly, African American women are rare among the higher ranks of Black businesses

While African American women have a rich history of leadership in their communities, they are underrepresented in all levels of government. African American women writers' works are most often both subtle and vociferous, dissenting voices against the tradition which demands female subordination. In today's African American literary world, one can find two kinds of exclusive black women writers. African American women writers have been an inspiration to this world by bravely sharing their stories, struggles, and triumphs. The nineteenth century was a formative period in African-American literary and cultural history. Prior to the Civil War, the majority of black Americans living in the United States were held in bondage. Law and practice forbade teaching blacks from learning to read or write.

Even after the war, many of the impediments to learning and literary productivity remained. Nevertheless, black men and women of the nineteenth century learned to both read and write. Moreover, more African-Americans than we yet realize turned their observations, feelings, social viewpoints, and creative impulses into published works. In “Times”, the nineteenth-century printed record included poetry, short stories, histories, narratives, novels, autobiographies, social criticism, and theology, as well as economic and philosophical treatises. Unfortunately, much of this body of literature remained, until very recently, relatively inaccessible to twentieth-century scholars, teachers, creative artists, and others interested in black life.

Prior to the late 1960s, most Americans had never heard of these nineteenth-century authors, much less read their works. Most of the nineteenth-century titles reprinted during the 1960s and 1970s, however, were by and about black men. A few black women were included in the longer series, but works by lesser-known black women were generally overlooked. The last two decades have witnessed an explosion of interest in writing by and about black women. In response to this interest, the Schomburg Centre, in collaboration with Dr. Henry Louis Gates and Oxford University Press, published the thirty-volume Schomburg Library of Nineteenth Century Black Women Writers in 1988. The Schomburg Centre is pleased to make this historic resource available to the public. It was created to share poetry, short stories, histories, narratives, novels, biographies, and autobiographies authored by nineteenth-century Black women writers, and honoured women such as Effie Waller Smith, Jarena Lee, Josie D. (Henderson) Heard, and Susie King Taylor, Harriet Jacobs, Elizabeth Keckley, and Sarah Jane Woodson Early.

Williams' Dessa Rose employs remnants of both the nineteenth century domestic novel and the slave narrative, but as an author of the twentieth-century in the black women writers' tradition, she goes far beyond those parameters. These genres often had to be modified, expanded, or altered in some way to capture her life, experiences, and thoughts in writing.

Black women writers of the nineteenth-century, because of the parameters of these two genres, had to pave their own way and make their own traditions for writers yet to come; but this did not occur without cost and compromise in telling their complete stories. They were aware of society's definition of a "lady" and therefore tried to conform to it in their writings. They often used the domestic genre of white women to tell their stories. This collection is now out of print, but there is a continuing need to make works by 19th-century black women writers available to scholars, students and the general public alike.

African American women's autobiographies display a quite different orientation toward self and others from the typical one demonstrated in autobiographies by black men. Jacobs writes a slave narrative in which the strongest characters are not the masters but the female slaves. She reveals her vulnerability and difficult struggle toward selfhood and girlhood. Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1856), describes the horrible and inhumane slave experience through the voice of a "fictitious" narrator, a girl named Linda.

The audience for Jacobs' autobiography was the white American readers of her time. Writing an autobiography from a black female's perspective was itself an act of rebellion, since slaves were forbidden to read or write. Using a

fictional narrator gave the author distance that she needed between herself and everyone, including even the most ardent white abolitionists, many of whom were not ready to believe that a female slave could have written such a memoir. Jacobs' narrative strategies are simple and straightforward, yet the use of Linda, with her reasonable, timely voice, allows Jacobs to reconstruct the horrors of her slave life and her life as a runaway in ways that her readers could access easily, and could believe. By couching her story in fiction, Jacobs could relate the facts of her life.

Jacobs in her autobiography reinvents the miserable slave period to arouse peoples' consciences and awareness to fight against slavery. As an autobiographer, Jacobs feels the need to document her sexual oppression, but she doesn't want the focus to be exclusively on her personal story. Slavery, the "Peculiar Institution" of the South, caused suffering among an innumerable number of human beings. To expose slavery as a "pit of abominations" not only helped to undermine it, but by educating African Americans Jacobs frustrated the very idea of African American inferiority upon which slavery had been built. *In Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, is thus not only an account of the experiences she endured as an enslaved African American woman, but also, in light of her public activities as an educator and abolitionist, a text intended to enlighten white Northern women on why and how American slavery should be abolished.

Exposing in shrewd detail the institution of American slavery ostensibly meant, for Jacobs, exposing, among others things, her sexual abuse "for the world to read. With the same daring approach that she used to teach her uncle Fred to read and write, she intended to educate the hearts and minds

of women in the North on the issue of African American enslavement and the notion of racial equality. Harriet Jacobs had no formal education and she recognized the limits of her informal education as a slave, a fugitive slave and later a free African American woman. Like Jacobs, many enslaved African Americans yearned to gain knowledge, but most slaveholders forbade it. Instead, they attempted to reinforce a “sense of innate inferiority” among slaves so as to mould them into being obedient and submissive. Part of Jacobs’ educating enterprise included teaching white women of the North to challenge their value assumptions, especially when considering the experiences of enslaved African American women. Thus, we can see that African American women like Harriet Jacobs were at the centre of African American education in antebellum America.

African American women in the North contributed to educational initiatives in their communities and they also spoke out on political issues. Their direct involvement in the antislavery reform movement arguably expanded the meaning of abolition to include educational opportunity and the fight for racial equality. However, being an antislavery activist in the North did not necessarily imply agreement with the notion of racial equality. Indeed, many white antislavery activists who vehemently opposed the institution of slavery did not view African Americans as equals. For example, membership in female antislavery societies was often closed to African American women. To resolve entrenched racial assumptions regarding membership, some white female antislavery societies reluctantly incorporated African American women. Unfortunately, as historian Julie Roy Jeffrey notes, African American

women were too often, regarded as an addition and an afterthought, if not second-class members.

Yet, African American women who joined antislavery societies alongside white women demanded respect, forcing white women to face their own racism. For those white women who believed in the struggle against slavery as well as the fight for racial equality, a real sense of interracial cooperation they encountered various problems, ranging from financial hardships to a lack of resources, as they tried to establish and run independent schools. Despite the white hostility directed toward African American education, African American women like Sarah Mapps Douglass and white women like Prudence Crandall devoted themselves to teaching and, in urban areas where a large African American population existed quite a few independent schools progressed.

The African American community in Alexandria raised the money needed to complete the building by hosting a fair, which enlisted the help of free African American women. This particular move was a strategic one by Jacobs, not only for its intended value to teach self-reliance, but also to break the tension among free African Americans who “feared “ the “great influx of degraded contrabands would drag them all down to the same level in social estimation. White Northern women often overlooked these class tensions, but Jacobs, acutely aware of them because of her experiences in the South and the North, wanted to address them head-on in order to mobilize and unite the community. Harriet Jacobs also wanted African Americans to learn the value of self-sufficiency and autonomy, two characteristics Northern white women often ignored in their teaching.

One way to promote these values was on the practical level by privileging the autonomy of African American institutions. According to Jacobs, the freed people discussed the issue “sensibly” and then voted “parliamentary style,” to have African American teachers manage the school. Throughout *Incidents*, Jacobs embodied a unique abolitionist spirit from girlhood to womanhood, from slavery to freedom. Her life’s work was to make African American people visible. She chartered education as a viable objective and carved out a space for African Americans that did not deny their experience, their voice, or their humanity but instead envisioned them as citizens of the nation. Her approach to education evolved from the moment that her mistress taught her to read and write.

Harriet Jacobs was a pioneer, not only for her activism as an abolitionist, but also, because of her educational aims, an incredible force that helped to shape post-Civil War life in America. Her collective points of view deflect attention from her personal circumstances to the effects of slavery has on all women victimized on the Southern plantation. Slavery is much worse for women, according to Jacobs: “Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortification peculiarly their own” (79). This observation from Jacobs articulates the emotional burdens put upon the black women.

Ironically, for slave mothers, New Year’s Day approaches with enormous pain and sorrow, because, far from being a joyful holiday, it is a traditional day to trade slaves. The pain of being separated from their children is devastating to all slave mothers. Black women were denied the right to

choose their mates, and even to protect their children. The slave narrative's purpose is to expose injustice and inspire political action. Scenes of degradation can contribute to that end, but Jacobs also wants to present her as dignified a way as possible.

Focusing on the effects of slavery on others and women in particular helps Jacobs maintain a sense of privacy. Her narrative strategy-shifting from personal experience to the universal problems of female slaves-effectively broadens the scope of her reader's interest. By incorporating other voices into her text, Jacobs creates a concentric relational web with Linda in the centre. Based on such a network, the reader can relate Linda's peril to her people, and ultimately perceive the cause of the tribulation-slavery as an institution. This notion of collective selfhood built through other voices facilitates Jacobs' narration and her political purpose. She locates the slave's miserable experiences in the larger context of woman's emancipation, encouraging "the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South" (145). Here, Jacobs draws an emotional connection through writing from a gender perspective. Regardless of race, colour, or ethnicity, women as a gender, have common concerns, such as children, family, friends, and sexual abuses.

Denouncing the slave master's heinous behaviour is not Jacobs' only objective; her attention to mother's agony over the suffering of her new-born baby builds solidarity with her female readers. The institution of slavery made it impossible for African-American women to control their virtue, as they were subject to the social and economic power of men. Jacobs showed that enslaved women had a different experience of motherhood but had strong feelings as

mothers despite the constraints of their position. Mothers in the South undergo forceful separation from their children, while mothers in the North enjoy happiness with their children. The sharp contrast led by this inhumane institution should intrigue the interest and sympathy from mothers in the North.

Jacobs was clearly aware of the womanly virtues, as she referred to them as a means to appeal to female abolitionists to spur them into action to help protect enslaved Black women and their children. In the narrative, she explains life events that prevent Linda Brent from practicing these values, although she wants to. For example, as she cannot have a home of her own for her family, she cannot practice domestic virtues. If a slave mother has a beautiful daughter, she bears an extra burden. This girl will soon become the victim of those licentious masters who will corrupt her with foul words: "If God has bestowed beauty upon her [slave girl], it will prove her greatest curse. That which commands admiration in the white woman only hastens the degradation of the female slave" (27).

Jacobs constructs a bond among all women, an elemental feminism, which can aspire to the complete and reciprocal communication of feeling because it believes in universal sentiment, native human responses that are not bound by circumstance. Given her audience, Jacobs is careful not to alienate the white female abolitionists by insulting or blaming their sisters in the South. In chapter II, Jacobs describes one female slave whose "nearly white" child is mocked and cursed by her mistress. While recognizing the mistress's cruelty, Jacobs is prudent in her phrasing: "From others than the master, persecution also comes in such cases" (12). Jacobs condemns the behaviour of female

slave owners, but her appeal to a white female audience prevents her from castigating female slave masters as freely as she does male masters. There may be a touch of compromise here, or it may be that Jacobs sees women as being nearly as deeply bonded and disenfranchised as slaves.

In any case, as a woman, Jacobs asserts two kinds of solidarity absent in male narratives: motherhood and sisterhood. In order to protect her daughter from suffering sexual assaults and her boy from being humiliated, Jacobs conceals herself for seven years in her grandmother's garret, which is only nine feet long and seven feet wide, with no access for either light or air. It is motherly love that supports Jacobs while she is in hiding. Linda is more than the proverbial "angel of the house". Her femininity entails the moral and spiritual strength to fight against slavery.

Jacobs employs two strategies in building her specifically multi-racial sisterhood: she identifies common grounds between the two groups, and she is careful to express gratitude toward her white benefactors. In the first chapter, Jacobs refers to her mother's mistress and her mother as "foster sisters" because they both are fed at the breast of Linda's grandmother. Here, it is the slave economy that undermines sorrel intimacy. Linda's childhood under this mistress is described as happy without "toilsome or disagreeable duties" (5).

Coming at the beginning of her narrative, this portrait lays the emotional groundwork for future solidarity and harmony among women of different colours. Jacobs is indebted to one white mistress who shields her from the hunting of Dr. Flint's family. She heartily expresses her gratitude toward this generous woman: "How my heart overflowed with gratitude! Words choked in my throat; but I could have kissed the feet of my

benefactress. For that deed of Christian womanhood, may God forever bless her” (103). This demonstrates that women of different colours could be tied together without the racial, political, and economical barriers. The mistresses are also the victims of the patriarchal system, and unfortunately, they have to affirm their social positions at the price of denying the humanity of slaves.

In her autobiography, Jacobs includes a chapter about the death and funeral of her aunt Betty (called “Nancy” in the book), commenting that “Northern travellers ... might have described this tribute of respect to the humble dead as ... a touching proof of the attachment between slaveholders and their servants”, but adding that the slaves might have told that imaginative traveller “a different story”: The funeral had not been paid for by aunt Betty’s owner, but by her brother, Jacobs’s uncle Mark (called “Philipp” in the book), and Jacobs herself could neither say farewell to her dying aunt nor attend the funeral, because she would have been immediately returned to her “tormentor”. Jacobs also gives the reason for her aunt’s childlessness and early death: Dr. and Mrs. Norcom did not allow her enough rest, but required her services by day and night. Venetria K. Patton describes the relationship between Mrs. Norcom and Aunt Betty as a “parasitic one”, because Mary Horniblow, who would later become Mrs. Norcom, and aunt Betty had been “foster-sisters”, both being nursed by Jacobs’s grandmother who had to wean her own daughter Betty early in order to have enough milk for the child of her mistress by whom Betty would eventually be “slowly murdered”.

Jacobs presents her as struggling to build a home for herself and her children. “This endorsement of domestic values links *Incidents* to what has been called ‘woman’s fiction’”, in which a heroine overcomes hardships by

finding the necessary resources inside herself. But unlike “woman’s fiction”, “*Incidents* is an attempt to move women to political action”, thus stepping out of the domestic sphere at that time commonly held to be the proper sphere for women and joining the public sphere. Jacobs discusses “the painful personal subject” of her sexual history “in order to politicize it, to insist that the forbidden topic of sexual abuse of slave women be included in public discussions of the slavery question.”

In telling of her daughter’s acceptance of her sexual history, she “shows black women overcoming the divisive sexual ideology of the white patriarchy”. Jacobs attempts to clarify that slavery is the vile fruit of patriarchy that causes the sufferings of both black and white women. Thus, black and white women should fight together against these two unjust institutions. The publication did not cause contempt as Jacobs had feared. On the contrary, Jacobs gained respect. Although she had used a pseudonym, in abolitionist circles she was regularly introduced with words like “Mrs. Jacobs, the author of *Linda*”, thereby conceding her the honorific “Mrs.” which normally was reserved for married women. The *London Daily News* wrote in 1862, that Linda Brent was a true “heroine”, giving an example “of endurance and persistency in the struggle for liberty” and “moral rectitude” The new interest in women and minority issues that came with the American civil rights movement also led to the rediscovery of *Incidents*.

Chapter Five

Summation

Harriet Ann Jacobs also called Harriet A. Jacobs, Afro-American abolitionist and auto biographer who crafted her own experiences into an eloquent and uncompromising slave narrative. She was born into slavery, she still was taught to read at an early age. She was orphaned as a child and formed a bond with her maternal grandmother, Molly Horniblow, who had been freed from slavery. While still in her teens Jacobs became involved with a neighbour, Samuel Tredwell Sawyer, a young white lawyer by whom she had two children. When she refused to become her owner's concubine, she was sent to work in a nearby plantation. In an attempt to force the sale of her children, Jacobs escaped and spent the next seven years in hiding. After escaping to the north in 1842, Jacobs worked as a nursemaid in New York City and eventually moved to Rochester, New York, to work in the antislavery reading room above abolitionist lecture tour with her brother; Jacobs began her lifelong friendship with the Quaker Reformer Amy Post. Post among others encouraged her to write the story of her enslavement.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl are an autobiography by a young mother and fugitive slave published in 1861 by Harriet Ann Jacobs. Jacobs used the pseudonym Linda Brent to narrate her first- person account. Jacobs contributed to the genre of slave narrative by using the techniques of sentimental novels to address race and gender issues. She explores the struggles and sexual abuse that female slaves faced in the plantations as well as their efforts to practice motherhood and protect their children when their children must be sold away. This text opens with an introduction by Harriet,

which states her reasons for writing an autobiography. Her story is painful, and she would rather have kept it private, but she feels that making it public may help the antislavery movement. A preface by Lydia Maria Child states that the events are true. Periodic sentences are a little invention from ancient Greek rhetoric. They are tightly crafted masterpieces keeping the readers in suspense until the last word. The readers have got to keep all these clauses in their head as they read through the sentence and finally put them all together at the end. She uses “I” and she does not provide any information that she couldn’t personally know. The nineteenth-century view of marriage as a husband protecting and honouring his wife’s dignity and purity has no chance in slave communities. This text also portrays about family and community. The central theme of this book is very different from the majority of slave narratives which is the experience of slavery from the point of view of slave women. Jacobs argues throughout that slavery as experienced by women is much more harsh and terrible than slavery experienced by male slaves. Slavery is a dehumanizing, depraved systems that seeks to reduce its participants to nameless, faceless brutes. Despite the prosperity of some slaves to fall a prey to rage, depression, or stupor, many were able to survive due to support of their family and others in the black community.

Harriet exposes some of the same realities about religion in both the north and the south. She explains that religion was a way for slave holders to keep their slaves in check - minkisters delivered sermons about obeying their masters- and to assuage their pricked consciences. This text showcases the rich heritage of African history, tradition, and religion that fused with their American counterparts. Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible

for women. Women were expected to be housewives, yet black female slaves had little choice in this matter. By desiring her own home, Brent defies the master narrative in the sense that she expects the same fruits out of life that her white counterparts enjoy. She proves her arguments through the presentation of her own life and the way that she has to cope with not only the burden common to all slaves but also the horrendous experience of being used sexually, and having absolutely no opportunity to resist such treatment. One of the most ethically troubling sections of this narrative is when she anticipates criticisms that her will have of her submitting to this situation and she defends herself by stating that her audience of presumably mostly white readers, whom she calls virtuous readers with perhaps an element of mockery, has never had to face the reality of her situation, where she is entirely subject to the will of another. This account raises deeply troubling questions about the pragmatism of morality in deeply disturbing situations such as slavery, and also one person's ability to judge another if they themselves have not experienced that situation. This text makes it clear that there is no such thing as a good slave master because participating in the very act of slavery destroys one's morals and values almost without expectations. As Dr. Flint demonstrates, slave holders can be absolute monsters with no capacity to love to feel sympathy for the poor treatment and abuse they inflict on their slaves. Mr. Sands probably would have not followed through with his promise to free his own children if Brent had not badgered him about it.

In essence, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* makes it clear that slavery takes away one's morals, and, perhaps most importantly, one's capacity to love even the capacity to love your own child. Brent emphasizes

that slaves also suffer moral decay as a result of the slaves system. Because slaves have no control over their day-to-day life as well as their destiny, they have no ownership over their sense of self or their actions. Thus it's not slave fault that they have been dehumanized by the slave system. Because of this dehumanization they have no reason to adhere to the moral standards of normal society. Male slave narratives had focused heavily on the physical abuse suffered at hands of their masters Brent illuminates a different aspect of torture endured by female slaves. Because Brent worked indoors and was not subject to the beatings and hardship that occurred in the fields on a daily basis, it was important that she was able to convey the psychological torment that she was subject to by Dr.Flint. Another aspect of this psychological abuse was the simple fact that most often slaves, as mentioned above, did not have the power of choice over their destiny. Thus, when one feels like his or her life is being controlled by other forces and that's exactly how Brent felt while enslaved this can be extremely physiologically damaging to one's sense of self. While slavery was terrible for both men and women, the lettered suffered its own particular tragedies. Women and even young girls found that their body was not their own they were looked up as sexual objects that existed for their masters to enact their most depraved sexual fantasies upon. They were taunted and insulted, as in Harriet's case, or outright raped. Many were made to bear children of their white masters, all the while being deprived of marriage to the men that they would choose for themselves. Furthermore, any child born to a slave woman would be also a slave, no matter the position of the father. Harriet notes that slave girls simply did not have the opinion of being virtuous since their virtue was under constant assault.

Slave mothers also felt the keen and wreaking pain of seeing their children beaten or sold, or if they were girls, experience the same woes as they did. It is impossible to exaggerate how terrible slavery was for slaves. Many were beaten, raped, forced to work in terrible conditions for long hours, deprived of family ties, and had to deal with harsh weather and little or no food. Harriet's entire tale gives voice to the immorality and degeneracy of the system that would eventually spark a bloody war and prove untenable. However her book is also valuable in that it speaks of another problem with slavery. It is just as corrupting for white people. Indeed, the entire South and even the North were affected by the cancer of slavery. Slave masters were licentious and vicious and their wives were jealous and cruel. Children of slave owners learned too early about violence and sex and as they aged they became indoctrinated into their parents' system. Even white people like Mr. Sands and Mr. Throne, who did not practice outright violence, were callous and racist. Lies and hypocrisy were rampant. Christianity was diluted and perverted in the mouths of southern ministers and their congregants. Overall, slavery was corrupting to everyone in its reaches. Jacob's story is so dramatic, so vividly illustrative of the unthinkable horrors and trials of slavery the sickening violence, the waste of potential, the unpredictability of lives lived according to a slave owner's caprices that it almost reads as a text. She emphasizes that the life of a slave woman is incomparable the life of a slave man, in the sense that a woman's sufferings are not only physical but also extremely mental and emotional. Whether or not a slave woman is beaten, starved to death, or made to work in unbearable circumstances on the fields, she suffers from and endures horrible mental and emotional. Whether or not a slave woman is

beaten, starved to death or made to work in unbearable circumstances on the fields, she suffers from and endures mental horrible mental torments. Unlike slave men these women have to deal with sexual harassment from white men, most often their slave owners, as well as the loss of their children in some cases. Men often dwell on their sufferings of bodily pain and physical endurance as slaves, whereas women not only deal with that but also the mental and emotional aspect of it.

Men claim that their manhood and masculinity are stripped from them but women deal with their loss of dignity and morality. Females deal with the emotional agony as mothers who lose their children or have to watch them get beaten as well as being sexually victimized by white men who may or may not be the father of their children. For these women, their experiences seem unimaginable and are just as difficult as any physical punishment. The understanding of the life a slave woman is far beyond the knowledge of the common people. In the book, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, she brings up three arguments to support her views on anti-slavery: the moral conflict between slavery, and colour prejudice. Throughout Jacobs's biography, she also uses key themes such as power struggles and feminist views to portray slavery to persuade to the women in the north that slavery is indeed corrupt. Slavery is of the main themes of narratives. These types of narratives were a dominant literary factor used in the early works of Afro-American literature. The two main themes being portrayed throughout the narrative are the coming together of African and American cultures and the corrupting power of slavery. The narrator of the novel Linda, the slave girl displays the African history, tradition and religion mainly slavery and its cruelty. Harriet Jacobs

explores the theme slavery through the character Linda. She lived as a slave till her death. She never had freedom and happiness in her life. Many have misused Linda through the fake of slavery. If Linda's parents had not died, she would have lived happily throughout her life. Linda had a many struggles in her life as a slave likewise her children had in their life. The main subject matter is sexual abuse of slave women which was a taboo in the mid nineteen century.

Works Cited

- Aly, Mona. "American Drama." *JSTOR*. 2 Sep, 2013, pp. 1-17.
- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Harriet Jacobs." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 3 Mar. 2022, www.britannica.com/biography/Harriet-Jacobs.
- Course Hero. "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Study Guide." *Course Hero*. 28 Nov. 2016. www.coursehero.com/lit/Incidents-in-the-Life-of-a-Slave-Girl.
- Dodson, Howard. "19th Century African American Women Writers." *New York Public Library*, 6 Oct, 2009, www.libguides.nypl.org/African-american-women-writers-of-the-19th-Century
- Guerra, Maria. "Fact Sheet: The State of African American Women in the United States." *CAP*, 7 Nov, 2013, www.americanprogress.org/article/fact-sheet-the-state-of-african-american-women-in-the-united-states/
- History of American Woman. "Black Women Writers Through Civil War And Reconstruction." *History of American Woman*, <https://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2021/01/black-women-writers-of-the-19th-century-2.html>
- Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Thrift Edition, Dover Publications Inc, 28 Dec. 2001.
- Kabria, Baumgartner. "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Education and Abolition." *Ethnic Studies Review*, vol. 32, no. 2.
- Osborne-Bartucca, Kristen. "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Themes." Editor Christine McKeever, *GradeSaver*, 30 January 2013, www.gradesaver.com/incidents-in-the-life-of-a-slave-girl/study-guide/
- Smith, Mitzi J.. *Insights from African American Interpretation*. Fortress Press, 1 May. 2017. Pp. 45-59.

Yi , Luo. "African-American Life Writing: Harriet Jacobs and bell hooks." *Master Thesis*, 2001, <https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/1457>

Child Soldiering Absolution: A Study of Uzodinma Iweala's

Beasts of No Nation

A project submitted to

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

Thoothukudi

affiliated to

MANONMANIAM SUNDARANAR UNIVERSITY

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

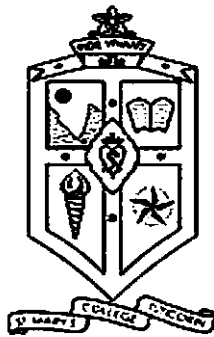
for the award of the Degree of

Master of Arts in English

by

PONSHEEBA A.

(REG. NO. 20APEN16)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Dejection and Corruption of Innocence	10
Three	The Nostalgic Comfort in Analepsis	22
Four	Resilient Hope and Redemption	35
Five	Summation	41
	Works Cited	

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled “**Child Soldiering Absolution: A Study of Uzodinma Iweala’s *Beasts of No Nation***” 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.

Thoothukudi

Ponsheeba A.

May 2022

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **“The Depiction of a Child Soldiering Absolution in Uzodinma Iweala’s *Beasts of No Nation*”** is submitted 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 during the year 2021-2022 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department of English
Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Guide

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

S. Vennila
27/05/2022
Examiner
Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Assistant Prof. of English
Sarah Tucker College (Autonomous)
Thiruvattur - 627 007

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am extremely grateful to the Lord Almighty for his guidance and grace in completing this project successfully during the year 2021-2022.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study.

I thank Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi, Head of the Department of English, for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi, Head of the Department of English for her untiring help, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank all staff in the Department of English for their untiring support.

I thank Dr. Vinitha, Librarian and the staff for their extended help in the use of the library for reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided.

I am indebted to my parents for the great comforts I enjoy and the good education they have provided me. I also thank them for their moral support and benevolence.

PREFACE

Uzodinma Iweala is a Nigerian American novelist. He is a doctor but determined to be a writer. His graduate thesis named *Beasts of No Nation* is an impressive and powerful debut. Written in a point of view of a child soldier fighting in an unnamed country, he preserves his childhood through his soldiering and retains some hope. The present study entitled **Child Soldiering Absolution: A Study of Uzodinma Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation*** has been organized into five chapters.

The first chapter **Introduction** concisely gives an account of African American Writing in English, Uzodinma Iweala's life and his works.

The second chapter **Dejection and Corruption of Innocence** deals with the agitation of being a child soldier. The trauma and demolition of innocence is explained.

The third chapter **The Nostalgic Comfort in Analepsis** deals with wavering memories that shields his humanity.

The fourth chapter **Resilient Hope and Redemption** explains the resolution of innocence from the prevailing turmoil.

The fifth chapter **Summation** gives the summation of all the four chapters.

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook

Eighth Edition for the preparation of the project.

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is an embodiment of written works of a culture, language, people or a period of time. It is classified on the basis of language, origin, historicity, genre and subject matter. Literature is a creative writing of artistic value. It's purpose is to enlighten, to protest, to challenge, to educate, inform, comfort, confront, express and even to heal in some culture. It is a tool to yield entertainment, education, commands, ideas and suggestions. It is a storehouse of all knowledge and wisdom.

The emergence of African American literature is due to the colonial consequences, uprooting the indigenous culture and rerooting a foreign culture. African American literature starts with narratives by slaves in the pre-revolutionary period focused on freedom and abolition of slavery. African American literature sprouts from the oral traditions such as sermons, speeches, songs and tales. The earliest African American literature was focused on the indelible stain of slavery on the American soil. The writers focus on themes of slavery, emphasizing the cruelty, indignity and the ultimate dehumanization of slaves. They are mostly written by slaves who had escaped into freedom. The problem of race and color tension has pushed Africans to take literature in hand to establish a place for themselves. The fictions of African Americans reflect the brutality of colonizers, issues of slavery, revolutionary war and the psychological impacts experienced by the natives. Pens and papers help to voice out their need of blacks' political freedom. Every African American writer have two personality traits. He is born to a worldview which is mythopoeic, ritualistic, hierarchical, authoritarian, folk-oriented, oral and tribal. But by a historical

accident he has become aware of a culture that is rational; actuality oriented techno-scientific, pragmatics and endowed with an established discourse. The tradition, its past and present relevance, its juxtaposition with the alien tradition has to find a place. This is achieved by the literary geniuses from the Continent, making the Eurocentric world look at them in a new light.

African American literature plays an important part in American life, history and culture. The main literary expression of the Negro is the heinous actions of the colonizers and its consequences that followed. The free Africans in the North and those who had escaped from slavery in the south, make their mark upon the time and awakens the conscience of the nation. Their lack of formal educational attainments give their narratives a strong and rough-hewed truth, more arresting factors and fictions. The dramatic upheaval in material condition of African Americans is reflected in the literature they produced. Rapid industrialization and migration into cities like Chicago and New York create favorable conditions for a reinvented identity. While the theme of servility to dignity is always present in African-American literature, New Negro Movement during the Harlem Renaissance emphasise radicalism verging on militancy in both politics and arts. Writers saw literature as a tool to bring socio-political changes.

In the twenty-first century, African American writers are not torn between masking and opening their expressions. Their literary genres include prose, poetry, novel as well as drama, song as well as spectacles. The Black Arts Movements give rise to a set of journals like Negro Digest, the Journal of Black Poetry and Third world Press. In addition, autobiography flourishes in the contemporary period. It embodies horrors of slavery, child soldier, segregation and discrimination fostered the continuity of black imagination in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights and Black Arts Movement take a great role in the development of Nigerian American contemporary literature. Many famous Nigerian American novelists include Tope Flarin, Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, Uzodinma Iweala, Tochi Onyebuchi, Tomi Adeyemi and Chinelo Okparanta. They write about their personal experiences and the black people situations in the American society. They used their fiction and poetry to end child violence, segregation and protect civil rights.

Chinelo Okparanta as a bold novelist employs themes such as lesbianism, religiosity, adultery and happiness. Her first novel *Under The Udala Trees* is a gripping novel about a gay women's coming of age in Nigeria during a Nigerian civil war. She deftly negotiates a balance between a love story and war story. Her honors include the 2013 Society of Midland Authors Award, the 2013 Caine Prize for African Writing and 2014 Lambda Literary Award for Lesbian Fiction. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is the most prominent writer who succeeds in attracting a new generation of readers. She is inspired by Chinua Achebe and Buchi Emecheta. Her known novels include *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half Of The Yellow Sun*, *Americanah* that explores the young Nigerian encountering race tension, relationships between men and women, gender roles and traditions, sexism and single motherhood. All of Adichie's books contain short phrases in Igbo when applicable. Adichie also crafts a safe space for voices that are often unheard. Every character in her novels has a voice that either supports or challenges a common thought or pre-made assumption.

Tochi Onyebuchi is a Nigerian American science fiction, fantasy writer. He gives out his law career influences in most of his novels and it were directly dedicated to young adults. In 2020, he has published his first book aimed at an adult audience, *Riot Baby* where Onyebuchi drew on his experience as a lawyer in setting much of the novel at Rikers Island in New York. He finally

published his first novel, *Beasts Made of Night*, in 2017. His other novels are *War Girls*, *Crown In Thunder* and *Rebel Sisters*. Tomi Adiyemi as a Nigerian American writer and content writer is known for her debut novel *Children of Blood and Bone*, the first in the legacy of Orissa trilogy. She also won Andre Norton Award for her young Adult science fiction and fantasy novels. Tope Folarin is a Nigerian-American writer and Executive Director of the Institute for Policy Studies. He won the 2013 Caine Prize for African writing for his short story *Miracle*. He has served on the board of the Hurston/Wright Foundation in the United States. His literary contributions include *A Particular Kind of Black Man*, *Miracle*, *The Summer of Ice Cream*.

The themes of African American literature starts from the oral narratives of the victims of slavery and colonialism. Its subject matter is influenced by migration, hard labour, lynching, women's suffrage movement and wars like civil war, independence battles. Current themes in the modern Nigerian American literature are multifaceted. It focuses on the gender equality, magic realism, socialism, deconstruction of oriental beliefs, psychological study of a victimized individual, scientific attempts in a upbringing age and humanism. The themes originates from the arena of colonialism, liberation, nationalism, tradition, displacement and rootlessness in African Literature. Most Nigerian American literature is an expression of its country's social change. The social change that Africa has been subjected to since the colonisation of the country are the cultural, political and missionary influences and its present state of achieved independence with a growing awareness of both national identity and modern problems. Place and experience of displacement are both important features of African literature. It has originated against the background of a complex history of colonization and decolonization. Displacement caused by colonization can take on several forms which are physical displacements, figurative displacement.

The figurative displacement is visible in the relationship of black African writers writing to African literary canon which has been mostly dominated by white African writing.

The other forms of displacements include the displacement brought about by the appropriation of land by European colonizers, the displacements resulting from the forced removals under certain apartheid laws as well as the displacement caused by imprisonment or resulting from hostile political policies. This is evident in Uzodinma Iweala's prominent novel *Beasts of no nation*.

Uzodinma Iweala is a Nigerian-American writer, researcher, doctor, entrepreneur, filmmaker and chief executive officer of the Africa Centre, a culture and policy institution. Uzodinma Iweala is the biological son of Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, the current Director General of the World Trade Organization. He first grew up first in northwest D.C., and then later in the northern suburbs of D.C in a very Nigerian household. His family is originally from southeastern Nigeria and he has spent a lot of time growing up in Nigeria. He moves back to New York from Lagos after spending six years in Nigeria, two years in Abuja, while the rest in Lagos. He was known as a gifted student while at St. Albans in Washington DC. He has furthered his studies to Harvard College, where he is graduated magna cum laude in English and American Literature and Language in the year 2004. He also graduated as a medical doctor from college of Physicians and Surgeons in 2011. Uzodinma Iweala who is an author and entrepreneur, is the CEO and editor in Chief of Ventures Africa. It's a platform for news, discussion about African business, policy, lifestyle and innovation. He is the CEO of The Africa Center, which is dedicated to promoting a new narrative about Africa as well as its Diaspora.

Despite being a graduate of medicine, Uzodinma Iweala has an undying passion for story writing. He believed storytelling is his calling. There was a point in his life where he wished that he could get rejected at med school, in order to venture into storytelling full time, where his impact will be felt and where he could transform the world with his pen. Uzodinma Iweala has received the Los Angeles Times Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction. The author won the Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Eager Prize for Best Undergraduate Short Story in 2003, Horman Prize for Excellence in Creative Writing in 2003, The Le Baron Briggs Prize, The Hoopes Prize awarded for outstanding undergraduate thesis in 2004, Dorothy Hicks Lee Prize for Outstanding Undergraduate Thesis in 2004.

Iweala's literary works are *Beasts of No Nation* (2005), *Our Kind of People* (2012), *Speak No Evil* (2018). Iweala's first book *Beast of No Nation* which was published by Harper Perennial. The book takes its title from Fela Kuti's 1989 album with the same name. It is a story of Agu, a child soldier who fought in a civil war of an unnamed West African country. The book is published in the year 2005 and gets adapted into a film in 2015 and directed by Cary Fukunaga which starred America's star actor, Idris Elba. Uzodinma Iweala's *Beast of No Nation* were mentioned by The New York Times, Time Magazine and Rolling Stone.

Iweala's second novel, *Speak No Evil* (2018) explores the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality and the diaspora through the story of Niru, a Nigerian-American high-school senior living in a middle-class suburb of Washington, D.C., who comes out as gay to his white straight friend Meredith. Niru must learn how to negotiate his many identities like being a black man in America, being the child of Nigerian immigrants, coming from a middleclass background, as well as being gay. The protagonist is forced to confront many ways in which he is

privileged, as well as disenfranchised. Iweala also interweaves themes of religion, cultural dislocation, mental health, police brutality, and complication of identities.

The author's return to his native continent has produced his third work *Our Kind of People*, a nonfiction account of the AIDS crisis. Iweala embarks on a remarkable journey in his native Nigeria, meeting individuals and communities that are struggling daily to understand both the impact and meaning of the disease. He speaks with people from all walks of life. Their testimonies are by turns uplifting, alarming, humorous, and surprising, and always unflinchingly candid. *Our Kind of People* goes behind the headlines of an unprecedented epidemic to show the real lives it affects, illuminating the scope of the crisis and a continent's valiant struggle.

After *Beasts of No Nation* was published, Uzodinma Iweala made it known that his whole world shifted, perspectives opened, because not only did he get a taste of something that he would always dreamed of which was being able to publish but also got to see the whole of possibilities of people in the arts. Being published and getting some attention for it just opens up doors to the whole artistic world for him.

Iweala's *Beasts of no Nation* may be grouped under the category of 'new African novels', which employs a unique methodology that captures the themes of children in war situations, violence, trauma and distress to illustrate the cataclysmic effects of civil wars on state survival in Africa. A major characteristic of the new African novelists is the urge to renarrate civil war events either as witnesses or as second-hand observers with little regard to historical realities.

The third generation African writers are benefitted from the antecedence in which young characters are used to demonstrate acts of resistance in their different societies. In the book, *World's of Hunt* Kali Tal asserts that "Literature of trauma is written from the need to tell and

retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it real both to the victim and to the community. For trauma survivors, writing their story then serves as a validation and cathartic vehicle” (137). There is a certain humorous component to the language of *Beasts of No Nation*, a result of the onomatopoeias, the often witty images, and a sort of irony such as the scene of Commandant helping some people to be dying which, coupled with the brutality of the novel, emphasises the absurdity of the situation of child soldiers. Though the lack of specificity can sometimes be wearisome, the novel allows for a stronger emphasis on the emotional dimensions of Agu’s story, which achieves the level of classical tragedy without losing sight of that bush. The narrative commences in the midst of an extremely violent and inexplicable war, during which his mother and sister flee and his father is killed. Agu is then abducted by a second group, rebel fighters who force him to become one of them: a soldier. From this moment on, Agu’s life is a journey through all sorts of violence and brutality, led by the chilling figure called as Commandant who abuses him in all possible ways. Through the lens of Agu’s innocently poetic voice, a world of horrifying violence is picturised. It is the Commandant who detachedly explains to him that killing is like falling in love.

Despite the brutality of this scene, there is a certain lyrical component to the narration, which makes it even more devastating. The association with Agu also extends to protective feelings, which makes his skill at killing-to-not-be-killed morally ambiguous. Agu finds refuge in a rehabilitation camp by the ocean where he receives some of the help he needs to deal with the loss of his innocence and childhood to war. Agu is staying in a place where he has new clothes, can get food daily, and read books. With the help of an American named Amy and a priest named Father Festus, Agu is dealing with what has happened to him. While Agu talks about being a

soldier, he also tells her that he is always thinking about his future, how he wants to be a doctor or an engineer.

Beasts of No Nation goes to great length to demonstrate the loss of selfhood suffered by soldiers. Being a child, Agu experiences a particularly deep sense of dehumanization as a member of the rebel army. One of the most distinctive elements of *Beasts of No Nation* is the voice and language of Agu. As the novel is written from a first person point of view, every word is filtered through Agu and his experiences. Though written in English, correct grammar is not always incorporated and words are often mismatched or missing from sentences. Another source of energy in *Beasts of No Nation* is the stream of conscious style in which the novel is written. In this style, the thoughts of the character are presented and the mental processes are highlighted.

Another element is the subtle allusion that adds depth to the text. *Beasts of No Nation* highlights how children increasingly became participants in twentieth-century conflicts. Primarily in developing countries or those regions that were war-prone, children were forced to serve in both governmental and rebel forces in numerous places. In addition to the psychological effects of the situation, including the killing, violence, constant fear, and sexual abuse, the children are treated brutally, often malnourished, given drugs, and exposed to physical labors that their young bodies cannot fully handle.

This thesis entitled **The Depiction of a Child Soldering Absolution in Uzomdinma Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation*** aims at the portrayal of affliction of being a child soldier, how he evocates to survive in the tormented place and in the end, his innocence is rescued.

The next chapter named **The Child Soldier: Dejection and Corruption of Innocence** deals with the turmoil at a young age as a child soldier. The psychological trauma, the victimisation, the exploitation of innocence is explained briefly.

Chapter Two

Dejection and Corruption of Innocence

There are many indexes that distinguish one nation of the world from the other, but one particular thing all nations share without quibble is war and fears of war. The global media space is awash with war-related fatalities, as well as strained diplomatic relationships among nations. But the most tragic dimension of these incalculable human disasters is the conscription of children, who, obviously, are dependent and developmentally immature, to fight in these wars. The establishment of conscription of children into wars and other forms of brutalities is not only evil, but also accoutred in nauseating abhorrence.

'Child soldier' in its conceptualisation has been problematic and inadequate, as it fails to capture the realities of children actively engaging in armed conflicts. This is partly because of the inherent problems associated with the definition of the term 'child'. In many societies for instance, there is no single fixed chronological age at which young people are initiated into the rituals of warfare. In fact, in some climes where war is especially valourised, young people independently

set their pace and determine when they want to take up the adult role of warriors. Also, in some societies, young people are consciously socialized into highly violent behaviour, and children who exhibit signs of bravery are highly celebrated. In the book, *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection*, it is mentioned that, “Child Soldiers are any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members” (86).

The term ‘soldier’ also poses another problem when considering the definition of ‘child soldier’. This is because the term ‘soldier’ tends to conjure up archetypal symbols of uniformed men with extensive military training in active combat. This image counters the realities of most of the inadequately trained and outfitted child soldiers who fill the ranks of rebel groups in postcolonial wars. As a literary motif, the child soldier figure has become a sad remark on the devastating impact of incessant warfare on the polity of modern Africa. According to Molara Wood, the inspiration to pen this chilling and compelling narrative came on the author, after listening to a painful and heart-rending story of a young Woman who was conscripted into war. According to her, “...Uzodinma Iweala was inspired by an encounter with a young woman who was once embroiled in a conflict. Somewhat predictably, given the wars that have ravaged Africa in recent times, the woman’s involvement was as a child soldier” (145).

Beasts of No Nation narrates the story of Agu, a young boy from an unnamed country in West Africa, who has been conscripted into warfare. As war arrives in his village, his mother and sisters are evacuated by the United Nation Peace Keepers, leaving him and his father, who are later forced to join in the fight. His father asks him to run away but he is quickly rounded up by

other soldiers who make him to join in their rebellion. To be properly initiated into the war, Agu is ordered by the commander to slaughter an enemy.

At the initial stage, he feels guilty for his action but later rationalises it as something expected of a soldier. He would like to stop the unending chain of killings but he knows that if he stops, he will be killed by the commander. The pain emanating from this story prompts the creative delineation of the protagonist's encounter, thus underscoring the traumatising details of experiences of children in the context of war. Agu, the protagonist, expresses the pain and agony concerning the sufferings of innocent children who are turned to pawns in the hands of those who are supposed to protect them. Leigh Gilmore in the book *The Limits of Autobiography* says that, "Trauma as the unrepresentable to assert that trauma is beyond language in some crucial way, that language fails in the face of trauma, and that trauma mocks language and confronts it with its insufficiency" (6).

Agu's loss of his Parents is a shattering experience which expels the peace, love and security offered by his family and inaugurates the chaos and lawlessness which mark his life as a child soldier. The loss of family coupled with other existential pressures in times of war, force the children into armed groups thereby blurring the distinction between voluntary and forced recruitment. Under the debilitating circumstances of war which leaves the entire villagers sad, Agu's lamentation in his place of hiding with other villagers at the commencement of the war, he says, "There are too many of us that our fear is just smelling and the whole room is just tasting like salt. Outside, I am hearing bullet everywhere and shouting and screaming . . . The door was locked and I am trapped. We are all trapped because of the bullet outside" (86).

In the heat of the war and, after being separated from his mother and only sister by the UN Peace keepers, he is forced to join the rebel army but runs into a hiding, on the order of his father.

He is later found by Strika and other soldiers and dragged before a wicked commandant, who promises to take care of him and help him, if he joins them in the fight. He says, "...if you are staying with Me, I will be taking care of you and we will be fighting the enemy that is taking your father...what Am I supposed to be doing? So I am joining. Just like that. I am a soldier" (11). From the quote above, it could be noted that the breakdown or absence of kinship security and dependency will certainly increase the vulnerability of children in war times. This is the situation where Agu became dependent on the patronage of military commander as a way to transform his physical vulnerability and economic desperation.

Relatedly, the protagonist-narrator Agu's decision to be a child soldier is entirely his choice. Apart from his search for protection, Agu's enlistment into the armed force is also driven by his desire to avenge his father shot at the beginning of the war. Having become a child soldier, Agu is determined to make the most of his new status to mercilessly exact revenge for his father's death. The point being made is that the desire for revenge evinces a conscious choice to embark on a particular action rather than an indication of lack of agency. It is important to emphasize that in making the decision to enlist in an armed group, the child soldier are not oblivious of the attendant risks. In this regard, Agu steels his resolve to fight and kill or be killed because that is what being a soldier entails. It bears due stress that the child soldier's decision to enlist in an armed group in the face of his stark awareness of the attendant risks, evidences a conscious choice in the midst of competing alternatives, even if the alternatives are not so rosy in themselves.

The seed of the protagonist's voluntary agency as a child soldier is planted long before the war, when as an infant, Agu's mother read him biblical stories such as the military confrontation between David and Goliath. From then, he begins to fantasize becoming a soldier, Simulating

soldier roles when playing with other kids: “we are playing that we are soldier like we are Sometimes seeing in movie and with stick and using them as a gun to be shooting at each other. . . .” (38). As Agu grows up, he is convinced that to be a soldier was to be the best thing in the world. And when he finally realizes his ambition to become a soldier, he stresses that he is no longer a child, thereby underscoring the point that his soldiery mission is not a product of childish impulse having attained social manhood by going through the initiation rites. This paradox of a child soldier seeing himself as an adult and behaving like one explains the description of psyche of Agu.

It is a superior-inferior kind of relationship characterised by coercion and cruelty, instead of mutual reciprocity. It becomes obvious that Agu, long separated from his parents and found alone in a secluded place, has no other option than to obey the commander. His first assignment is to hack a man to death and, this is how he narrates this gory event

Bloody fool, he is saying to me. Come here and bring that matchete. He is dragging Me to the enemy soldier. Do you see this dong! He is shouting. You want to be a Soldier enh? Well-kill him. KILL HIM NOW! ...Kill him now because I am time oh. If You are not killing him, enh, Luftenant will be thinking you are a spy. And who can Know if he won't just be killing you. (18)

This spotlights the abhorrent depravities of wartime and its predation on children. The situation also heightens the complexity of the reaction to a child soldier as a victim and a victimiser. Above all, it underscores the terrible strain under which child soldiers live. They could act only how the surroundings orders them to act. Their body and brain becomes the product of the culture in which

they are in. In the book, *The Body Social* it is said that, "The body is both an individual creation, physically and phenomenologically, and a cultural product; it is personal and also state property" (26).

With this last order, Agu descends the machete on the enemy's head. The commandant assures him that it is just like killing a goat by bringing this hand up and knock him well. He takes Agu's hand and brings it down so hard on the head. In *Sacred Violence* Paul Kahn states that, "When soldiers see themselves as pure victims, their experiences too, approximates that of torture. This is why the internal logic of combat is torture" (176). From this point, Agu begins to rationalise killings and maiming as the right thing to do in the war front. His idea is that he is a soldier and soldiers are not bad if they are killing. This actually reflects the fascination of guns for young soldiers and the power that it exercises on their mental instability.

The psychological impact on young Agu is enormous. This singular act is powerful enough to smash his psyche, but it is held together by his inner desire to retain his humanity. Agu says, he wants to stop hurting people in the war as the thought of it makes him vomit uncontrollably and feels like someone is using a hammer to hit his head. Yet, Commandant reminds him that maiming and killing people is like falling in love and the moment he was into it, it becomes difficult to quit. However, Agu is not sure the feeling he has within him amounts to falling in love because he is not really sure of the emptiness he feels within him. The process of integration into the mentality of the war commences with the first killing, and the belief that the actual killing of the enemy is nothing else than taking revenge for what the enemy has done to family and friends. This belief is constantly given to Agu by the rebels.

Agu as the voice soon realizes that being a child soldier means obedience without questioning orders, And that being turned into a child soldier means acting and following orders blindly. This fact implies the state of innocence being blinded into a violent life without realizing what is actually going on. This is corroborated by Agu's inability to speak when confronted with the realities of war. The strategy of instilling blind obedience into the boy soldiers pays off when Agu is forced to Consume drugs and is made to believe that war only revenges what has been done to them. He says, "Yes it is good to fight. I am liking how the gun is shooting and the knife is chopping. I am liking to see people running from me and people screaming for me when I am killing them and taking their blood. I am liking to kill" (56).

Violence in war situations can be compared to the dynamics of illnesses. Agu is the victim of violence, enter into roles that he cannot negotiate. His behaviour during the violence of war is in stark contrast to their civility. Even if Agu and Strika tell each other that they are not bad boys, they continue killing because they have to, but this killing climaxes when Agu, assured that he is only revenging his family, an indication that out of his senses he only sees what they might have done to his family. The fact that he can't be sad because that would mean not being able to fight which intensifies the feeling of being exposed to the violence of war and the disastrous consequences of soldier's behaviour/being brainwashed.

The violence includes the Commandant raping Agu, a clear indication of the situation erupting into violence. Agu as a child soldier also suffers victimisation at the hands of his warlords. Agu's victimisation takes the form of sexual abuse. He is frequently abused by his commander. Agu narrates his ordeal, especially how they are forced to strip the clothes and are subjected to different kinds of sexual molestations by Commandant and the unit leaders. On their part, the

commander and other Rebel leaders brainwash the him to believe that rendering sexual services is part of their duties and responsibilities to their military leaders because he is supposed to obey the order. Sexual victimisation amounts to rape; Agu's victimisation is sodomy. It is clear that he detest the act but have to submit because of the insecurity of his lives. There is evidence that they could be killed if he refuse to submit his body. The first time he is assaulted by his commander, Agu narrates that he was helpless and could not struggle, knowing that otherwise he would be killed by the rebels, even though the act hurt him physically and psychologically.

Good soldier is following order anyway and it is order for you to let me touch you like this. I Don't want to be good soldier, but I am not saying that. I Don't want to be soldier at all. I don't want his finger creeping all over my body. I don't want His tongue to be touching me and feeling like slug should be feeling if it is on your body. (84)

Their animal-like look and behaviour seems to stem from what war and drugs have turned them into: obedient machines and in Agu's case, a voiceless victim. When the Luftenant is stabbed by one of the women, Agu realizes that the only way not to be fighting is to die. Since he does not want to die, he keeps fighting. As Agu travels from innocence to brutality, he is introduced to the ingestion of gunpowder as a means of desensitisation, of easing their minds from the pressures and traumas of violence. Agu narrates how every one of them is encouraged to consume gun juice, a kind of hard drug that tastes like bullet, Rock, pencil, sweet and sugar cane combined and makes the child soldiers feel stronger, braver and easily lose their sense of humanity and compassion for people. Under the influence of this substance the throats, foreheads and hands of the child soldiers burn like the fire of gun and it makes them stop at nothing to maim and kill once they are given the command to do so.

Agu and Strika, under the influence of gunpowder, kill and maim gleefully. There is an inner urge in them that only the flow of blood can satisfy. Agu admits that he has perfected the art of slitting open pregnant women to be seeing who is a girl and who is a boy. Under the influence of gunpowder, Strika rapes a woman who is old enough to be his mother: “Strika is pulling down his shorts and showing that he is man to this woman while I am holding her one leg and another soldier is holding the other. She is screaming DEVIL BLESS YOU! DEVIL BORN YOU!” (48). He then brutally amputates the arm of his victim’s daughter. She dies immediately.

Agu then indiscriminately uses his machete on the woman’s body after he is told that she is the enemy who killed his father. It is satirical that Agu as a child soldier who has a mother and younger sister whom he loves and misses to mercilessly murder an innocent woman and her daughter who have done him no wrong, because Commandant tells him that the woman is his enemy. The effects of drugs on child soldiers during war times can be conceptualised as another manifestation of illness behaviour.

Though only about nine to twelve years old, Agu goes through many of the experiences adult soldiers do. Much of his time is spent going through mundane activities, such as loading and unloading trucks, traveling, guard duty, eating (when there is food), and sleeping, while knowing conflict is always imminent. Every routine action has an underlying stress, because an enemy could attack any time. The reasons why the rebels are fighting and what they are fighting for remain unclear. As a child Agu is not capable of understanding or explaining the large political context of the war—his experiences are limited to the day-to-day struggle to survive. The conflict is reduced to small skirmishes such as attacks on trucks and the raiding of small villages. The bigger picture

is only hinted at when Agu sees a map of his country in the compound where the rebels make camp.

Agu is a child, he experiences a particularly deep sense of dehumanisation as a member of the rebel army. Even though Agu does not like what he has to do as a soldier, he knows that he has to be subservient to the demands of the Commandant and the group of rebels to which he has been forcefully attached. All his actions are determined by the need of the collective, from the killing to the marching to the time he sleeps and eats. If Agu or any of the other soldiers fail to meet these demands, they are accused of being a spy and dealt with accordingly. It is a choice between losing self and being beaten or dying. In the book, *New Perspectives on African Childhood*, it is stated that, “In Iweala’s novel, Agu navigates, and resists, events that happen to him and works to reconcile his belief in his own goodness (and innocence) even when forced to commit atrocities” (85).

For Agu and his fellow boy-soldier Strika, this process of dehumanization goes a step further. Agu does what he must to survive but is aware that he has little control over himself in the process. He retains his humanity in the survival process. Agu’s craving for a normal life is a feeling that sounding aloud in the novel. Children should be at home with their families, Iweala implies, not committing massacres on the Battlefield. The writer blames the war for destroying the boy’s home and ripping his life to shreds, converting him into a monster against his will.

Disgusted by what he has become, Agu wishes to run “away, far far away to where no one can be finding me or Seeing me and I will be staying there to the end of time when God is coming to judge the dead and the living” (133). Agu’s Christianity gives him a moral compass. Unfortunately,

not even this compass can point him away from the horrors that suffocate him. Iweala paints a portrait of a helpless child stuck in a hellish wilderness and pleading for rescue.

Agu's conscientiousness and remorsefulness are gateways to his humanity. His straightforward acknowledgment of his culpability makes him potentially pardonable. By using the first person perspective, Iweala gives the direct access to the boy's thoughts, candid experiences and raw feelings, untarnished by the potential adornments. As a result, Iweala deliberately subjects through Agu's torture, child soldier's pain, anger, lust, despair and Shame. The writer intentionally shocks by unflinchingly depicting the psychological agony of the child soldier.

Iweala uses Agu's personal tragedy to underscore Juvenalian satire. It vividly describes the atrocities that lead to Agu's afore-described psychological turmoil in order to picturized the experience and better comprehend the unfathomable horrors of child soldiering. The most symbolic of such horrors is the process of initiating a child into the ranks of murderers. These war realities haunt and weigh Agu down emotionally and psychologically, and occasionally trumps up feelings of suicide in him. In his conversation with the white woman, Agu Confesses thus: "I am telling her, I am hearing bullet and screaming in my ear and I am wanting To be dying so I am never hearing it again" (141). This repetition of traumatic experience in the flashback can itself be traumatising to the deepest, if not life-threatening; it is at least threatening and can ultimately lead to deterioration. Agu's child-soldering creates a dysfunctional idea of Childhood and thus, creating negative thoughts, feelings and poor mental development against what should have been a dynamic and evolving process of child's potentialities. Agu helps to project a gory ambience of traumatised

childhood who tragically exists as both victims and perpetrators of the gravest acts of fatalism in war situations.

The next chapter entitled **The Nostalgic Comfort in Analepsis** attempts to explain the wavering memories that makes all pieces fall into right place. His past memories is the survival pills Agu takes amidst the heinous act of brutality and soldierhood. How Agu oscillates to the comforting past and disturbing present is explained in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

The Nostalgic Comfort in Analepsis

Beasts of No Nation is a difficult and grim novel. But, it is easy to empathise with Agu because it is presented with Agu's thoughts and feelings and also how he is struggling with the morality of what he is being forced to do. Set in an unnamed African country in the middle of a violent conflict, the novel follows the evolution of the protagonist- narrator Agu. In the first scene of the narration Agu, a young boy not older than twelve, is abducted from his village by the militia and turned into a child soldier for the armed forces. The narration follows Agu through his war experiences until, in the last part of the novel, it is informed that Agu is already in a rehabilitation camp. At this, the entire narration could be understood as part of his therapeutic sessions at the

camp. Agu embodies as a victim of this war, but at the same time he also perpetrates many acts of violence himself.

Iweala sees fiction as the only narrative form in which one can deal with such an enormous disturbing and revolutionary topics. He himself asserts that fiction permits him to take liberties into the leap of imagination. Rosen explains in *Armies of the Young*, “The images disturb us because they confound two fundamental and unquestioned assumptions of modern society: war is evil and should be ended; children are innocent and should be protected” (1). Unwillingness to stick to the constraints of particularity, his freedom to explore and being common is apparent in his choice of an unnamed country as the setting of his novel.

At the formal level, Iweala uses some post-traumatic techniques in his novel to partly mimic the effects of trauma. First of all, it does not have a conventional linear Sequence. The narration is immediately thrown into the action since the story starts when the rebels find Agu, who was in hiding, and force him to join them. It begins as,

It is starting like this. I am feeling itch like insect is crawling on my skin, and then my head is just starting to tingle right between my eye, and then I am wanting to sneeze because my nose is itching, and then air is just blowing into my ear and I am hearing so many thing: the clicking of insect, the sound of truck grumbling like one kind of animal, and then the sound of somebody shouting TAKE YOUR POSITION RIGHT NOW! QUICK! QUICK QUICK! MOVE WITH SPEED! MOVE FAST OH! in voice that is just touching my body like knife. (1)

Iweala uses flashbacks to show what Agu's life was like before war broke out. A flashback occurs when a scene in the book shifts to actions and situations that happened before the beginning

of the story. For example, the first few chapters of the novel consists of Agu's experiences as he is forced to join the Commandant's band of rebel soldiers. As he struggles to understand what is happening to him, he thinks back to what happened before the war reached his village. In the third chapter, Agu describes his life with his mother and father, how he learned to read from the Bible, his education, and what happened on Sundays. At the end of the chapter, Agu states that such memories that is, his flashback are important.

The novel begins in medias res with the rebel attack, but it then flashes backwards to cover the past while also describing Agu's war experiences. This contradiction between Agu's memories of his idyllic childhood and his contemporary war reality further increases the horror and darkness of the story. These sometimes pop up without warning but they are also often announced by Agu who states that these memories come back to him when he closes his eyes. He says, " Behind my eye I am seeing how one day, the younger children began to be growing thinner" (75). Agu also suffers from hallucinations in which he sometimes conflates his memories of his life before the war with his memories of the atrocities he committed. He utters, "I am hearing my name and then everything is map and I am standing inside the world looking at Commandant just looking at me. I am saying, yes Sah! Yes Sah! I am shouting and standing tenshun and trying to look like I am prouiding and strong" (130).

The abandoned school they are using as a shelter thus triggers in Agu a memory of the school he went to before the war and a memory of one of his killings. Furthermore, the story is narrated in a non-linear way. Flashbacks are an important backdrop to the brutal images of warfare. In these, Agu remembers his childhood upbringing, life in his own village, the family dynamics and the events leading to his abduction. Three adult characters, namely his father, his mother and his primary school Teacher, feature prominently in Agu's memories and all of them are characterized

by their educational level and how they are connected to Agu's own education, his will to learn and the pride he takes in educational achievements. Elaine Scarry in *The Body in Pain* rightfully says, "War and torture have the same two targets, a people and its civilization as they were called earlier, the two realms of sentience and self-extension" (61).

Regarding his mother, a devout Christian, Agu remarks that she did not go to school for long enough. It is her who teaches him how to read even before he starts school, using the only book she is able to read: the Bible. Agu rejoices every day when she picks the holy book. While she reads very slowly, Agu points at words for her to repeat in order for him to learn. After a while he is able to read by himself. He likes to read so much that his mother starts to call him a professor.

During the short recalling of this episode, Agu repeatedly compares his mother to his father. And even though she is the one who enables him to read, while his father is fast asleep, Agu stresses that his mother is uneducated and slow in comparison to his father, who is a school teacher. His father is his childhood role model and the one he wants to impress through his achievements. He says,

I was sitting with my father and not my mother and I would be reading to him what I am teaching myself from The Bible. I was wanting to show him that I am big enough to be going to school so I can be learning everything that he is knowing that is making everybody in the village to like him so much. (26)

He understands why his mother narrates the story of the first assassination in the earth. He wonders how he used to love the stories of Cain and Abel, David and Goliath. The mother foresees the upcomings that are about to happen to the place and her son. She mentally prepares her son for the brutality. Agu smiles at wonder how her mother describes the killings and make him aspire for

a soldier. He envisions the scenes in his head as he is standing there looking at how the armies is shining in gold and bronze in the sun. He reminiscences, "...how Goliath is laughing until David is cutting off his head. I am seeing all of these thing when she is reading and thinking that I am wanting to be warrior" (26).

Agu's education is linked to respect and appreciation by others. He wants to achieve the status which he sees embodied by his father. Therefore, Agu's urgent wish is to go to school at an early age, given that for him, formal education is the key element to become as accomplished as his father. When finally his father attests that Agu is big enough, measured by his ability to cross his right arm over his head and touch his left ear, he, Agu, brags that he is the smartest child for he is already able to read and will just need to learn how to write. Throughout Agu's reflections, being able to read and write is seen as the equivalent of education and smartness, both posing as a key to unlock further knowledge. Conversely, the fore mentioned grammatically incorrect narrative style that Agu employs stands in a stark contrast to Agu's self-assessed abilities.

In primary school Agu encounters Mrs. Gloria, his teacher, for whom he reminiscences happy memories as well. But during the course of the war, these memories fade into dreamlike landscapes. In one of his memories, Agu recalls how Mrs. Gloria encouraged him to study and offered him future perspectives such as going to university and becoming a doctor or an engineer and those perceptions which Agu carries with him throughout the whole novel.

The narrative of the novel starts at the point when Agu's former life and his education process are brutally disrupted by war. His father gets killed and he is forced to join the rebel forces. With regards to Agu, the reader can follow two parallel, yet conflicting processes. The novel portrays how hard he has to fight to maintain some of the abilities, mores and ideas he had acquired in pre-

war times. There is a constant tension between his descriptions of himself as an animal, a beast, and a thing and his frequent flashback memories into his pre-war childhood. The latter serves as a re-assurance of his upbringing and his human identity. The flashbacks which reveal his educational process at home and in school also fulfil this reassuring role.

Agu's retelling of how he learned to read with the Bible is introduced through his confirmation of the Christian faith by the lines, "So I am thinking, how can I be bad boy? Me, bad boy-somebody who is having life like I am having and fearing God the whole time" (24). The preceding episode illustrates how Agu attempts to restore confidence in his inherent goodness. The prospect of becoming a doctor or an engineer, as instilled in him by Mrs. Gloria, encourages him to plan a future beyond the war that he is participating in. His wishes are expressed in the lines,

I am thinking to myself of all the thing that I will do when the war is over and I am alive.
And I am thinking that when it is over, I can be going to university to study. I think I am wanting to be Engineer because I like how mechanic is always doing thing to the truck and I like to be watching even though there is no chance for me to try what they are doing. And sometimes I am thinking that I want to be Doctor because then I will be able to be helping people instead of killing them. (74)

While perpetuating violent acts and falling prey to violence himself, Agu tries to make sense of the situation. Therefore he clings onto the subject position he had formed already. However, the boy he once was is almost gone because his childhood is deeply disrupted by war. Indeed, when Agu realizes that he is no longer the child he once was in his village, he nevertheless still holds onto the same future plans. Obviously, the school education that he would need to fulfil these plans remains a missing link between the current reality of war and his future dream of having a

profession. While he tries to preserve his past, Agu experiences life with the rebels, a situation in which he acquires a very specific set of skills. He learns how to survive in this hostile environment, and subsequently how to fight and to kill.

Agu is clearly still a child in terms of his age, but his war experiences go beyond the usual knowledge of an individual of his age. Beyond his horrific mastery of warfare, the most important thing that Agu learns, though, as the plot of the novel evolves is to emancipate himself from the rebel stronghold into which he is embroiled. His memories slowly evolve into guilt. Nigel C. Hunt in his book *Memory, War and Trauma* says that, “It may be the guilt that is causing the problem that the Memory itself is manageable, but the guilt cannot be reconciled. This demonstrates the complexity of the problems experienced by people with these kinds of memories with these kinds of memories” (147).

Although he, initially, did not join the armed forces voluntarily, Agu’s attitude towards the rebels and becoming a soldier is not entirely negative. Rather he admits that “I am liking how it the machete is feeling in my hand, like it is almost part of my body” (15). The weapon as part of his body is first of all a boost of power. One of his flashbacks, the description of a soldier parade he had witnessed in his village explains the partly positive perception of the rebels and especially the figure of the commandant. But as the war rages on, Agu’s stance changes dramatically. He realizes that real war is neither comparable with child’s play nor with the glorious depictions of wars and fighting in movies on which the playful interpretations of the boy soldiers were first based. But he also notes that his knowledge is rooted in his distinct experiences. The flashbacks of his former life with his family are haunting Agu to the point where he wants to scream out loud telling them how war distorts everyday reality. He screams in words that, “I am wanting to open

my mouth and scream so that everybody is waking up and listening to all of the trouble this war is bringing, but my mother and my father are keeping quiet so I am keeping quiet also” (74).

Agu tries to learn more about Strika, who has not spoken a word since they met. He draws pictures to communicate and through them Agu learns that Strika’s parents have been brutally killed. This reminds him of murdered father and his best friend Dike. He closes his eyes and thinks back to life in his village and how young boys would spend a year learning a dance for a ceremony that would make them men. Agu remembers what happens at the yearly ceremony, including the various dances and the food. At the end of his remembrance, he notes that he is still in the war. He thinks if the war is not coming, then he would be man by now.

Closing his eyes again, Agu remembers what happened shortly before the war reached his village. The schools closed because there was no longer a government. One morning after the schools closed, he went to Dike’s house to play. Agu found that the family cook was the only person left in the house. The cook tells Agu that Dike and his mother left the night before to meet Dike’s father in a town far away. Agu is upset that Dike did not tell him he was leaving.

Agu then remembers that after the government collapsed, children grew thinner, including his own younger sister. People came back to the village; then more new people moved there. One day, Agu’s father learned that his school was to be closed and that he was without a job. Another day, his father rushed home and the family immediately hid in the church with the rest of the village’s inhabitants. The church’s pastor and the chief of the village agreed that everyone should leave and assured the villagers that the United Nations would come soon to help evacuate. That night, Agu’s mother made a big dinner, then packed to leave. During the night, Agu heard his parents having a heated discussion that turned into an argument. His father said he would not leave, and he wanted

Agu to stay with him. His mother disagreed with this plan. The next day, however, only Agu's mother and sister leave on the United Nations trucks. It is the last time that Agu sees them.

For the men and boys who stay behind after the females leave, life in the village is lonely. Soon the war comes to them, and as they go out to confront the enemy, Agu's father tells him to run the other way as fast as possible. With gunfire overhead, the men and boys leave their hiding place. Agu listens to his father and runs. Agu sees death as he runs, including his father's: "I am seeing bullet making my father to dance everywhere with his arm raising high to the sky like he is praising God" (72). Back in the present, Agu still cannot believe what has happened to him. When Agu and the other soldiers set camp in a building that he recognized a paper. There, Agu sees a map of his country and remembers his school again. He remembered his life before the war. Of the good times in class lectures when their teacher mistress Gloria was teaching them how to read and write. It reminded him of his great love for learning even now that he was a child soldier and the hopes for education is desperate. By the intake of gun juice, Agu and Strika are not on their good phase. Agu and Strika find a woman and her young daughter hiding in a house. Agu feels conflict as the woman calls them the devil, because he does not see himself that way. He remembers a creation myth about the founding of his home village that involved conflict and change.

The creation of his village starts with a great warrior and his army fighting with an enemy in the bush. They are fighting for many days yet none becomes the winner. The war continues for ages until the warriors get tired and ends the fight by feasting. They are rejoicing well and gets to sleep. But in the night, an enemy attacks a warrior which makes him run for his life to river. The river goddess embraces and comforts him. At the moment he witness the divine countenance, he is falling in love right there. Since then he never thinks of his village and plans a happy big family

with his beloved. The goddess is pregnant with twins with great might which comes from their father as a warrior and mother as a goddess. The twins are blessed born with power of shapes shifting.

The twins take shapes of different animal each day. When one is becoming ox to drink water from the river, the other becomes a leopard to hunt for his family. As leopard finds an ox in the shore, it gives a dead bite on the neck and ox gives a fatal wound on leopard's heart with two horns. Their father and mother come back to find the kids dead. The mother screams with the same pain as the woman Agu and Strika encounters in the present. Agu relates the screams from the myth to the screams of the woman. Agu sees the woman as his enemy. After Strika decapitates the girl, Agu kills the woman.

Agu developed an allegory of trees that described the various types of soldiers. The Iroko is big and strong and stands out in the forest. Agu wanted to be this type of soldier who is strong and does not bow down to anyone. The other kind of tree is the tree with climbing plants is viewed as being strangled by that climbing vine. This type of soldier is a slave and bound to his master as Agu is to the Commander.

Time and again, Agu struggles with his shattering psyche as he tries to hold on to his humanity. He suffers painful hallucinations that threaten his sanity. His inner mind resolves to battle the dark weight of trauma is what pulls him through his experience as a child soldier. Susan Sontag says in her book *Regarding the Pain of others*, "It is because a war, any war, doesn't seem as if it can be stopped that people become less responsive to horrors. Compassion is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action, or it withers" (101). Only Agu is able to complete this journey. He symbolises the very few child soldiers who manage to survive the horrible ordeals

of war. Agu, as the war hero, lost so much to the war but he never fails to lose his humanity because he consciously holds on to it. As the war hero, he lives to tell the story of the war because he engages with what psychoanalysis refers to as ‘sublimation’. Sublimation is a defence mechanism of an unconscious psychological space that reduces the anxiety that may result from unacceptable urges or harmful stigma. Agu uses his flashbacks and memories as his sublimating weapon.

Agu has survived the harrowing experience of war because he unconsciously relates to what Sigmund Freud termed sublimation, in other words a ‘talking cure’. This ‘talking cure’ simply refers to catharsis that is the purgation of emotional tension after an overwhelming experience. The term psychoanalysis also refers to a type of treatment where a psychoanalyst, having listened to the patient, formulates opinions with which they explain the unconscious basis of the patients’ symptoms, health and character problems. The healing process involves the patient telling the psychoanalyst various thoughts and feelings.

The dominance and the turmoil makes the novel as a postcolonial text. It specifically focuses on the issue of internal colonialism, identity crisis and unhomeliness. Reflecting to the story between Agu and the Commandant, some specific terms can be applied to describe it, violence, exploitation and domination. Besides domination, the relation between Agu and the Commandant can also be considered as one example of colonialism. The internal colonialism occurred also because the colonized obtains the power and authority left by western colonialism. Indirectly, the western colonialism has contributed towards the birth of the internal colonialism among the ex-colonized people. The Commandant’s characteristics represent the figuration of the colonizer. He is exploitative, dominative, violence and superior. Meanwhile, Agu’s characteristic

reflects the figuration of the colonized. Since he is also a child, his character is more innocent, weak, easily dominated, exploited, inferior and easily Manipulative..

Another tragic consequence of Child-soldiering is loss of identity, as children are always forbidden to use their birth names or any known name related to their families and communities. They are given new names that identify them with their roles in the war. A young boy is named Preacher, because he carries a Bible around and even uses it as pillow, and another, Griot because he tells stories, especially stories about his community before the war. Agu actively sheds his civilian identity by breaking with their previous civilian lives and redefining himself as soldiers. His identity under the influence of the war has been severely affected by the violent conflict, an identity that has to be rediscovered and rehabilitated.

Agu gradually adapts to the place of rebels. He becomes one among them. His humane self knocks him at times and he identified his place as foreign. This abandoned feel flows to the another postcolonial study of ‘unhomeliness’. Unhomeliness is a vibe experience as homeless though being at home. He says, “I am like the older men and how they are carrying gun and always looking so tough like they are in movie and I am trying to be acting like them, but sometimes I am thinking of my home” (13).

The novel itself can be explored by employing an Eco critic approach. There are some depiction of nature in the novel which affected by the war. The novel emphasizes the destruction of the vast jungle in Africa during the campaign against the government forces. Agu explains that bushes and grasses gives him the feel of home. These natural encounter reminds his raw self and he flashes back to his childhood days to survive.

Iweala incorporates flashbacks to similar ends at several points in the novel to show what Agu has lost and help the character retain his sense of humanity. There is a subtle allusion that adds depth to the text. Agu says that he has watched soldiers fighting in war movies and that his experiences are vastly different than what he saw on the big screen. Iweala names one soldier in the Commandant's group after a war movie hero Rambo. Agu admires Rambo for his nonsense, fearless fighting style. Rambo eventually replaces the Luftenant as second-incommand after the Luftenant dies. In the end, it is Rambo who kills the Commandant and leads the remaining soldiers away from their bereft situation. The novel's Rambo has many qualities associated with the movie hero played in the Agu's past.

Agu's speechlessness in the rehabilitation camp is complex. The basic plot is constructed around an odyssey of the protagonist-narrator who has lost his unit and is searching his soul in comforting nostalgia. While shifting the bestiality of dictatorships to other forms of bestiality in war, and especially those perpetrated by children as fighters, the title indicates a correlation between different levels of structural and physical violence. Despite all the dramatic outer action that takes place, the focalisation is on Agu's inner perspective. His oscillation between the comforting past and disturbing present picturise the humanity he is holding on. The open ending and Agu's position of in-betweens neither adult nor child, knowing and un-knowing – shows the impossibilities of the formation of a coherent self in a war setting and confession of how the string of memories preserves him in a humane self.

The next chapter **Resilient hope and Redemption** explains the resolution of chaos in the mind of Agu. It deals with the redemption and relocation of humanity as rehabilitation center rescued him from the living hell.

Chapter Four

Resilient Hope and Redemption Anticipation

The image of the African child soldier has emerged as a persistent and complex representation of both real-world and war-time atrocities of Africa. The child soldier narratives view the child as a mini-adult to the sentimentalized child and it change the way war perceives the children and the childhood. Children are often valued for their insight into adult issues. Children are also greatly loved and cherished by their families. Child characters in fiction tend to challenge notions of power, social discourse, and cultural practices in ways that transcend adult norms and expectations. Such is the character of the child soldier, who is constantly negotiating, questioning or even resisting these cultural and social constructions, even by virtue of its own self.

Beasts of no nation is inextricably bound to inherent, violent, non-innocent, and an ultimately unredeemable black child. Agu navigates, resists, events that happen to him and works to reconcile his belief in his own goodness even when forced to commit atrocities. It captures his innocence and childlike worldview. Agu's speech in the novel functions to highlight his psychological struggles with the horror he sees and later, he commits. Between Strika's silence and Agu's pidgin English, there is the rhythm that narrates the consciousness of the victims. It is quite easy to sympathise with Agu because Iweala depicts him as a tender-hearted and Christian boy who is constantly struggling with what he is being forced to do. Agu does commit atrocities, but it is always apparent in the novel that he does these things because he is being forced to do them or because he has become fierce due to the drugs. When Agu has time to think about it, he tells that he does not want to do all these things and that he desperately wants to leave this war behind. Understanding that he is more a victim than a perpetrator, it readily empathises with Agu.

The novel *Beasts of No Nation* opens with the symbolic birth scene as Agu lays in a fetal position in the corner of a small building and articulates, “I am opening my eye. Light coming through the dark through a hole in the roof, crossing like net above my body” (1). This seemingly benign scene is shattered when Agu is suddenly being beaten by Strika who then drags him on the road. Strika is another child soldier who is conscripted into the rebel group and later becomes Agu’s friend. He does not speak which is his way of dealing with the trauma and survival mechanism. In the opening scene, it witnesses the paradoxical birth into the realm of death, the death of his childhood, of innocence, and the physical death he will learn to inflict on others.

Agu continuously reminds his moral centre by saying he is not a bad boy. He examines his actions in the context of his belief in his own goodness throughout the novel. He understands his circumstances challenge what he was taught about moral behaviour, yet he holds on to his innate goodness, rationalising what he is forced to do with how a soldier should behave. In the novel, Agu experiences a loss of innocence, but necessarily not a loss of childness. Agu’s few, brief voice-overs do a little to convince his resistance to the violence he is required to perform. One of the traumatic experiences of Agu is his rape by Commandant. In this scene, Commandant wears a scarf covers his head, similar to the way women wears a veil. This feminisation is to appear less intimidating and to mask the carnal corruption underneath. Agu mentions how in that state of feeling defiled, he feels he did not want a good soldier at all. That’s where the fall of humanity happens for Agu which makes him incapable of redemption. After the rape, Agu loses his hold of goodness. He no longer kills but he no longer convinces himself as a good boy. The assault also emboldens Agu not to defend the Commandant when he is shot dead by the boy Rambo. After he escapes, he hopes to recapture his goodness even though he is aware of his corruption.

Nevertheless, Agu keeps hoping that he might be able to run away from the war until he sees a map of his country. He realises at that point that the war is spread throughout the whole country and that increases the hopelessness of his situation. Agu believes that only death can release him from the war but this is fortunately not the case. Rambo, one of the rebels, kills the Commandant and leads the others away from the front lines. Rambo shouts to the other rebels after the murder by saying, “QUICK QUICK QUICK! MOVE FAST OH! MOVE WITH SPEED! HOME HOME! WE ARE GOING HOME!” (153). This seems a rather easy solution to the Commandant’s oppression and Agu also wonders why they did not think of it before and he utters, “Commandant is dead. It was so easy to be killing him. Why we are not doing it before I am not knowing, but I am not wanting to think about that right now. I am tiring too much” (155). After Strika dies, Agu decides to leave the group and he finds shelter in a rehabilitation centre.

Agu is taken through a procedure at the rehabilitation centre that encourages him to keep talking about his experiences, to keep letting out the repressed monstrous thoughts that are capable of destabilising him further. He meets Amy, a white American woman who wants to help Agu by listening to his story. She is telling him to speak. Having been through an experience which in its nature defies articulation, however, he does not want to speak and only silence remains. Agu does not want to talk to Amy since he is like an old man and she is like a small girl because he was fighting in the war and she is not even knowing what war is. He thus feels that she will never understand what he has been through.

As a result of his war experiences, Agu thinks of himself as an old man and he claims at several points in the text that the war destroyed his Childhood. He says, “All we are knowing is that before the war we are children and now we are not” (46). The war also lessened Agu’s faith in God. He has become more sceptical and when the priest asserts that God is still alive in this place, Agu

says, “I do not know if I am believing him, but I am liking to hear it” (174). The Bible, which used to be his favourite book and he considers the Bible as the one that is holding all of the other books up. But now, it is merely being used to be holding the drawing down on the desk so the fan is not throwing them everywhere. Despite his terrible past, Agu firmly believes that he will have a positive future. He wants to go to university and become a Doctor or Engineer. Even when he was still in the rebel group, Agu already affirmed that he had a future and that he wanted to be a doctor because then he will be able to be helping people instead of killing them and then maybe he will be forgiven for all his sins.

Agu realises that things have somewhat changed Commandant is dead, and there is no more shooting and fighting, only calm. But then, the memory of his best friend, Strika, hounds him and he regrets the events leading to the death of Strika whom he considered a close ally who protected him from ‘all the thing trying to kill him’ just as he also protected him. In the midst of his hallucinations, Agu clings to the strength of love to pull him through. Although war makes him lose his moral sanity and religious piety, Agu is still clear about the past, before the war began and the future. He is still clear about the love that existed in his family and in his village.

He knows that a normal society is governed by love, that killing and maiming are not normal. His hope for ultimate redemption survives the war unbroken; it is captured in the closing part of his narration when He relates that the doctor at the rehabilitation centre allows him to tell her his feelings and his thoughts about his future, especially his dream to go to university. He also tells her of his wish for oblivion in the face of his recurring war memory, and how he plans to overcome it.

The novel's conclusion questions whether these former child soldiers can be rehabilitated and whether redemption is possible. The book makes one doubt if Agu really can work through his trauma since it is so enormous. He mentions, "I am seeing more terrible thing than ten thousand men and I am doing more terrible thing than twenty thousand men" (174). Agu also believes that due to these atrocities he has grown beyond the world of adulthood, and entered into the realm of the monstrous. It is observed that Agu no longer refers to himself as human, but that he calls himself some sort of beast or devil or even this thing. He thus sees himself as an animal or an object, but the humane Agu took a long time to turn up.

Iweala already gives an answer to this question by incorporating the myth of the Dance of the Ox and Leopard in his novel. This myth is about twin brothers who can change into any animal form. One day, the brothers metamorphose into a different animal: one becomes an ox and the other a leopard. Because they do not recognise each other, the brothers fight and both are mortally wounded. While they lay dying, the brothers change back into their human form and realise that they have killed each other. It is noted that Agu calls himself a leopard when they are on their way to attack a village a few pages before the explanation of this myth and that in Igbo, an ethnic language of Nigeria, Agu means leopard. By referring to this myth, then, Iweala seems to suggest that once humans transform into beasts, into killers, there is no possibility of redemption. Agu has turned into a beast and there is no going back.

It is demystified as Agu still holds his moisture in the abyss of his heart. This is evident when he confesses to be a doctor in the near future and he wishes to kill his sins by the doctoral social help. He challenges the archetypes of rugged nature imbibed soldiers. He revolts the craftiness of the psyche when he has never failed to sail in the boat of flashbacks. As Cathy Caruth says in her book *Trauma explorations in memory*,

While the traumatized are called upon to see and to relive the insistent reality of the past, they recover a past that encounters consciousness only through the very denial of active recollection. The ability to recover the past is thus closely and paradoxically tied up, in trauma, with the inability to have access to it. And this suggests that what returns in the flashback is not simply an overwhelming experience that has been obstructed by a later repression or amnesia, but an event that is itself constituted, in part, by its lack of integration into consciousness. (152)

His nostalgic comfort makes him humane and human. It masks him from the beast that he can possibly become. The last line of the novel, however, implies that some form of redemption is possible, he concludes by saying, “I am all of this thing, but I am also having mother once, and she is loving me” (142). Even though he has committed terrible atrocities that caused him to become a beast or a thing, Agu nevertheless asserts that he has a mother who still loves him and will always love him. The use of the present tense in this concluding sentence is hard to read without great pain because Agu does not know what happened to his mother and because he will probably never see her again. But this concluding line turns a new leaf for Agu. He beholds the dream of his childhood and he reminiscences the mortal sacrifice his father has done to spare his life. The last sentence does offer a glimmer of hope for Agu’s future.

The next concluding chapter entitled **Summation** presents the struggles, memories and redemption which are explained in the previous chapters. It shows the linear graph of Agu from abyss of pain to the paragon of euphoria.

Chapter Five

Summation

African American literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by writers of African descent. The genre traces its origins to the works of late eighteenth-century writers reaching high points with slave narratives, the Harlem Renaissance, and the war narratives continuing today as the core of modern writers. Among the themes and issues explored in African American literature is the role of African Americans within the larger American society, African-American culture, racism, slavery, trauma and equality. African American writing has also tended to incorporate oral forms such as spirituals, sermons, gospel music, blues, and rap. It is an attempt to refute the dominant culture's literature and power. After the end of slavery and the American Civil War, several African American authors continued to write slave and war narratives about the condition of African Americans in the country. Toni Morrison, Zora Hudson and Uzodimna Iweala belong to these category of writers.

The chapter one Introduction deals with the detailed account of African American literature and the author. It covers the themes and central ideas of the respective literature. It briefly encapsulates the contemporary authors, the author and the book taken for the study. Uzodimna Iweala is an award-winning writer, filmmaker and medical doctor. As the CEO of The Africa Center, he is dedicated to promoting a new narrative about Africa and its diaspora. He is the CEO and editor-in-chief of Ventures Africa Magazine, a publication that covers the evolving business, policy, culture, and innovation spaces in Africa. His books include *Beasts of no nation*, a novel released in 2005 to critical acclaim and adapted into a major motion picture. His powerful novels and presentations offer audiences a visceral view of current events and moments through history, which provide an opportunity to reflect, to feel, and to engage.

The interest and activism on behalf of child soldiers have grown in the past ten years. The African child soldier narrative can take on the form and the purpose of the spiritual education of one person. The stories in this genre of literature follow the progress and development of their marginalized protagonists as they experience the horrors of war and change as a result, prematurely progressing towards adulthood. The child soldier narrative is a blatant call to recognize human rights violations.

The second chapter deals with the sudden flip of the life of Agu in the novel. Written from the perspective of a child, *Beasts of No Nation*, leaves the problem of child soldiers lingering timelessly in the past, present, and future of African countries, in general. The summary states that the story follows Agu, a young boy in an unnamed West African nation who is recruited into a unit of guerrilla fighters as civil war engulfs his country. There is no exact location and no set time for this fictional account of the war in Africa. Agu is stripped of some complexity in his setting. The ambiguity of Agu, his culture, location, and language makes the novel as a multi-layered commodity. Agu has a pidgin English voice. The dialect in this is employed to reinforce the youth of the speaker.

The third chapter describes the analepsis in which Agu's character is progressed. There remains an unresolved coherency in his development. He describes instances of life before the war, instances when he was with his mother in town and he describes by saying, "seeing men walking with brand-new uniform...shouting left right, left right, behind trumpet and drum, like how they are doing on parade and so I am nodding my head yes" (11). He also discusses how his mother would recount stories and be always reading to him from the Bible. He remembers his school life, his best friend Dike, playing football with his friends, attending Sunday school, and the relaxing lifestyle that consumed Sundays in the village. This reminiscing demonstrates the difference in his

life as a soldier. His longing, at times, for life before the war broke out, before becoming a child soldier who rapes, slaughters, and sniffs drugs is clear. The continuation of memory helps him in claiming his personhood; his mind is not entirely lost in war and he is not completely beastialised as the novel's title suggests. He uses the habits of his past life to show how he was a boy who did not kill and confirms that he was not bad, as the childlike phrase declares how he is trying to achieve self-determination after soldierhood. The American rehabilitation clinic proves the location for his attempt to reclaim his rights, using his memory to reclaim his childhood innocence.

Though Iweala relates the thoughts, concerns and hopes of Agu, it is still possible to feel distanced from Agu and disconnected from him as a result of the limited character development. It is seen when Agu and some of his fellow rebel soldiers attack a house, they find a mother with her daughter inside. He proceeds to help his comrades in the rape of their victims. . Here, he is a different person from the character that reminisced about his mother's Bible stories before. The effects of drugs, war, and death make him easily switch between personalities. As a result of these influences, he is a boy developing in an unnatural manner, his innocence stolen, and he accelerates toward adulthood. His development has not been entirely logical but he as a person has progressed. The lack of full character development, as a youth consumed by the violent stasis of war, leaves Agu to become an isolated figure against the dark canvas of African war. His lack of logical development may suggest that Agu's story is only told to expose the problem of child soldiers in western Africa, where the novel takes place, or even Africa in general.

The fourth chapter discusses the process of redemption in Agu. Brainwashed and drugged Agu is used as an object, stripped of agency and self-determination, by the Commandant who tells him what to think and do. He is literally objectified through multiple instances of rape by the Commandant. When Agu stands guard over the Commandant as he sleeps, Rambo approaches

intending to kill the Commandant. However, Agu has lost his agency and at first keeps his guard, protecting the Commandant against the pending danger, even though he longs for a life in which he does not fight. He has been objectified in a world where he has no control and he has become a product of war, left dependent on an army family and at times disillusioned. While the commander is teaching Agu to kill, he tells him to not think about the kill as it would turn his head into the inside of rotten fruit. The statement ‘inside of a rotten fruit’ is a metaphor because it represents the psychological trauma arising from the guilt of killing. He also teaches Agu that killing a person is the same as falling in love.

The American aid worker plays the role of the adult witness, who finds a need to intervene, and watches over Agu and provides him with a listening ear. In a rehabilitation clinic, which Agu metaphorically refers to as heaven. When it seems like all hope has been lost and the youth willpower continue to march on and enters to take on a savior role. Iweala refers Agu’s questioned innocence and reinforces how he holds the ray of humane hope.

Iweala, in an effort to present a human rights violation has written a narrative of individualized suffering and the commodification of Agu, an agency-less object of warfare. Agu is a hostage to misfortune and so not responsible for his actions, he does truly feel the need to redeem for his sins. He says that the Bible holds no meaning for him anymore, but the idea of redemption is universal. He understands that as a soldier, he committed a lot of sins, and wishes to be a doctor and save lives as an act of redemption. The struggles, pain and hunger give an open opportunity to flip the humanity switch. But, he does not kill the logical sensibility and humanity. He copes up with the present as he is scared of his future. When his flashbacks march in his psyche, it topples down the pain in him. By the assistance of reminiscences, he breathes freedom and reaches the destiny of El Dorado.

Beasts of No Nation grants a rare insight into an intolerable situation. It provides a context to give a better understanding of what is truly going on and offers a potential solution. Agu finds his peace with his own accurate assessment of himself as a beast.

Works Cited

Iweala, Uzodinma. *Beasts Of No Nation*. Harper Collins, 2005.

Caruth, Cathy, Editor. *Trauma Explorations in Memory*. The John Hopkins University Press, 1995, pp. 152

Gilmore, Leigh. *The Limits of Autobiography: Trauma and Testimony*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001, pp. 6.

Hunt, Nigel C. *Memory, War and Trauma*. Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 147.

Kahn, Paul. *Sacred Violence: Torture, Terror, and Sovereignty*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2008, pp. 176.

Rosen, David M. *Armies of the Young: Child Soldiers in War and Terrorism*, Rutgers University Press, 1994, pp. 1.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, Oxford University Press, 1987, pp. 61.

Sontag, Susan. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003, pp. 101.

Synnott, Anthony. *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Society*. London: Routledge, 1993, pp. 26.

Tal, Kalí. *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, pp. 137.

Wessells, Michael. *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006, pp. 86.

Valera, de. *Perspectives On African Childhood: Constructions, Histories, Representations And Understandings*. Vernon Press, 2019, pp. 85.

Wood, M. Review-Uzodinma Iweala: *Beasts of No Nation*. *War in African Literature Today*. Ibdan, Heinemann, 2008, pp. 145.

A Psychology Study of Shashi Deshpande's *The Binding Vine*.

A project 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

by

M. PRATHIBA MERCY

(REG. NO. 20APEN17)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Psychology of Women	10
Three	Characterisation	20
Four	Motherhood	31
Five	Summation	41
	Works Cited	47

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Psychological Study of Shashi Deshpande's *The Binding Vine*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmanian 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.

Thoothukudi

May 2022

M. Prathiba Mercy
M. Prathiba Mercy

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, and strength in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank our Institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. N. Sumathi**, Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I thank, **Ms. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project. I thank the faculty of the Department of English for their valuable input in teaching and moulding us.

I thank **Dr. Vinitha** the Librarian, St. Mary's College who extended help in the use of the library for the reference work.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

The Binding Vine exposes clearly the unpleasant and the embarrassing situations that exist in the life of women through the women characters. Shashi Deshpande's women suffer silently for the well-being of their personal and family life. The title itself states that the women characters in the novel spread the vine of love and bind themselves in the society to seek liberation from their mental worries.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Shashi Deshpande her life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of her work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Psychology of Women** focuses on the women who are traumatized by various tragedies in their life. How they overcome and bind themselves in their life in a positive way.

The third chapter **Characterization** analyses the characters in detail and tells how they suffered.

The fourth chapter **Motherhood** describes the relationship between the mother and children.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and brings out the researcher's findings.

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

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Indian English Literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Indian Literature in English evolved alongside the consolidation of British imperialism in India. The early Indian English Literature began with the works of Henry Louis Vivian Derozia and Micheal Madhusudan Dutt followed by Rabindranath Tagore, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao who contributed to the growth and popularity of Indian fiction. Indian English Literature has attained an independent status in the realm of world Literature. Wide range of themes were dealt with in Indian Writing in English.

Indian literature reflects Indian culture and tradition, social values and even Indian history through the depiction of life in India. Indian English literature may be defined as literature written originally in English by authors Indian by birth, ancestry or nationally. Its contribution to the world literature is largely due to the profusely creative literary works generated by Indian novelists in English. Their works contemplated and deliberated on multifarious range of issues like nationalism, freedom struggle, social realism, individual consciousness etc., This literary movement being fortified by the output by novelist and distinguished itself as a remarkable force in world fiction.

Indian writing in English achieved a great number of admirable positions for its commendation goes to a good number of women writers whose pens have spilt much ink in fetching to light the agonies of women's life, left untouched by their male counterparts. The myriad expressions of their feminist works expose the bruises of

women's soul and their miseries as individuals. The women writers in India project the plight of the women, suffering from the conventions of patriarchal society and express the quest of women to assert their selfhood in a society prejudiced in favour of men. These women writers liberate their female from the confinement of men and give them a new birth to emerge out of the dominancy into the openness of assertion. Their expository and creative writings have significantly encouraged and shaped the feminist's struggle to empower women and help them transcend their deprived status. These feminist writers are audacious explorers of female psyche, make strenuous efforts to renounce and emancipate their women from the conventional patterns of patriarchal society.

Indian women novelists in English have made their permanent mark in the field of English fictions. They are being conferred on not only national but international awards also. In most of their writings, they have tried their best to free the female mentality from the age long control of male domination. In short, in their novels, the protagonists are mostly women characters desolated and isolated by an entirely sapless, hypocritical and insensitive male domination. The Indian women writers expressed the role and position of women through their writings in English, have enlightened the literature with its quality and vividness. The Indian women writers have concentrated their themes around sociological, diasporic elements, feminine subjects, science and technologies, explorative writings, and much more.

Many women writers have made debut contribution in the field of Indian English Literature and earned world-wide name and fame. Many of them have won prestigious awards, honours and recognition. Many Indian women writers like Ruth Jhabvala and Anita Desai are late immigrants while others, like Jhumpa Lahiri belongs to the second generation of Indians abroad. Most expatriate writers have a weak grasp

of actual conditions in contemporary India, and tend to recreate it through the lens of nostalgia. Their best works deal with the Indian immigrants, the section of society they know at first hand. Sunithi Nam Joshi, Chitra Benerji, Divakaruni and Bharathi Mukherjee are the oldest, and naturally, the most prolific writers like Jhumpha Lahiri, Manju Kapoor, Kiran Desai, and Arundhati Roy they all have written novels of Magic Realism, Social Realism and Regional fiction, they benefited from the increasing attention when their fiction has received National and International awards. They have probed into human relationships. In order to make the process of changes smooth and really meaningful, women writers have taken upon themselves this great task.

The third generation of Indian English women writers like Nayantara Sehgal, Anitha Desai, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Gita Mehta, Bharathi Mukherjee, and Jhumpha Lahiri who hold centrality in the contemporary literary Scenario. They have made a distinct mark on the World literary scene with their rich cultural heritage and skilled language control. They have received national and international recognition, fabulous royalties and prestigious awards.

The novel *The Binding Vine* is written by an award-winning Indian woman novelist and short story writer Shashi Deshpande. Her novels generally have women as the protagonists. This made everyone describe her as a feminist writer. Shashi Deshpande was born in the year of 1938 in Karnadaka. Her father Shriranga was an eminent Kannada dramatist. She received her early education at a protestant mission school in Karnataka. Since childhood, she was fond of English literature and used to read various types of English books. Particularly she liked the works of Jane Austen. Later, she studied Economics in Mumbai and graduated in Law from Bengaluru. In Mumbai, she studied journalism at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Shashi Deshpande's first anthology of short stories was published. Two years after, her first novel *The Dark*

Holds No Terrors was published in 1980. In 1996, her famous novel *A Matter of Time* was published where she unfolds the different experiences of women in India. She has written four children's books, a number of short stories, and nine novels, moreover several discerning essays. M.E. Derrett claims that "Most of the Indo-Anglian novelists were born in India, they have either lived or have been educated in the West. And so, there is a certain de-Indianisation of their attitudes" (124).

Women writing in English in India do not form a coherent group. They come from various cultural linguistic and geographical backgrounds. The wholesale identification of woman writers as feminists do not work either, thus Mridula Garg, a Hindi writer observes:

Can the novels written by women in India really be called feminist or are they merely novels written by writers who happen to be women? If by feminist writing we mean text that project a unique world view different from the historically accepted world view of men, then most writing by women in India cannot be called feminist. It looks at women as unique class. (407-24)

Shashi Deshpande is one of the prominent Indian women writers. She won a prominent place in Indian writing in English Literature after winning the award of Sahitya Akademi for her novel *That Long Silence*. Deshpande, the living dynamic writer explores and exposes the vivid picture of women in traditional Indian society. Her major novels include, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *Roots and Shadow* (1983), *That Long Silence* (1988), *The Binding Vine* (1992), *A Matter of Time* (1996), *Small Remedies* (2000), *Moving On* (2004) and *In the Country of Deceit* (2008). The themes of her novels revolve around women and their struggle, entrapped between

tradition and modernity. Deshpande's novels talk about the arrival of new Indian women eager to challenge rebelliously against the patriarchal society. Deshpande's women characters are strong and they take bold decisions to survive in the challenging society, which makes her essentially a feminist novelist. Her novels are about women who try to understand themselves, their history, their roles and their place in this society.

Deshpande's novels reveal her acute sensitivity to the issues involving women and her tremendous sympathy for them who suffer in solitude. Her novels present multitasked women who do not refer to a particular section of society but they represent universal womanhood. Compared to other female writers, Deshpande portrays an authentic picture of Indian women. Deshpande's imaginary characters appear to us as our next-door neighbours. Her women protagonists are victims of the prevalent gross gender discrimination, first as daughters and later as wives. Her sincere concern for women and their oppressive lot is reflected strongly in all her novels. The undercurrent themes of all the Deshpande novels are women acts as a patriarchal figure and carry out patriarchal ideology which is detrimental to women progress and peace. K. M. Thakkar opines that "Women are considered to be weaker sex or fair sex. In Patriarchal society they have no role to play except the role of wife and mother" (3).

Shashi Deshpande is concerned with feminist issues in her novel. The protagonists are a realistic depiction of the anguish and conflict of the modern educated middle-class women. Caught between patriarchy and tradition on the one hand, and self-expression, individuality and independence on the other, her protagonists feel themselves lost and confused and explore ways to fulfil themselves as human beings. Deshpande's concern and sympathy are essentially for the women. She has given an honest portrayal of her fears, sufferings, disappointment and frustrations. Besides

revealing the women's struggle to secure self-respect and self-identity, the author lays bare the multiple levels of oppression, including sexual oppression. Deshpande's primary concern for the women makes her a feminist writer. Amitav Roy the Indian novelist comments thus:

Mostly Deshpande's heroines are in search of equality of sexes. But the female characters seek their solution always within the range of family. she seeks to assert thereby that the in equality of sexes is neither a biological imperative nor a divine mandate but a construct. As the principal and seminal concern of feminism is to assert the being ness of women and her novels are concerned with women's quest for self, [...]

(23)

The Dark Holds No Terrors is an example of men who are intolerant about playing a second-fiddle role in marriage, and how their manhood gets hurt when their wives gain a superior status in society. Manu feels embarrassed and insecure with the rising status of his wife, Saru. The novel narrates the story of a marriage on a rock and it focuses on the world of a successful doctor, Sarita. Sarita is economically independent but she is a middle-class wife. Sarita's husband, Manu feels embarrassed with the success of his wife. The male ego and Indian tradition destroy the life of Sarita. Sarita is made conscious of her gender at her early childhood. Finally, Sarita compromises with her husband Manu.

Shashi Deshpande's seminal work, *The Legacy*, a collection of short stories, is the authentic recreation of India. There is nothing sensational or exotic about her India any Maharajas or snake charmers. She does not write about the grinding poverty of the Indian masses but she describes another kind of deprivation which is emotional the woman deprived of love, understanding, and companionship is the centre of her work.

That Long Silence portrays the true feminist condition of middle-class Indian women. It is not an imaginary story but the story of every middle class educated woman in India. Jaya, the protagonist is an educated middle - class woman who lives with her husband, Mohan and two children, Rahul and Rati. She is the typical Indian woman in the present century that is confined between her realization and restriction. The novel is about Jaya's hopes, fear, aspirations, frustrations, frustrations in life. It wins Sahitya Akademi award to Shashi Deshpande.

A Matter of Time is a multi-generational tale exploring the intricate relationships within an extended family covering four generations of men and women. It is a story which moves around Arundhati, an eighteen-year-old girl struggling to understand the broken relationship between her parents, Gopal and Sumi, and a strained and oppressive relationship between her grandparents, Shripati and Kalyani. It is a fearful and horrifying story of the loss, pain and agony of Indian women caught in the trap of Indian patriarchy.

The Binding Vine written by Sashi Deshpande is the narration of Urmi, who was grieving over the death of her baby daughter and surrounded by the loving care of her mother, Inni and her childhood friend and sister-in-law, Vanna. Through her grief, Urmi is drawn into the lives of three very different women. As the stories of these women unfold, so does a tale of quiet courage and strength.

The first woman Urmi is drawn to her long-dead mother-in-law, Mira who exists only in the notebooks she has left behind, discovered by chance in a dusty storage trunk. Mira's journals and poetry reveal the pain of a vibrant young woman trapped in an unhappy arranged marriage, and of a gifted writer whose work, because she is a woman, must remain shrouded in secrecy and silence. Then there is Kalpana, the survivor of a brutal rape and a young woman who has also been silenced. As she hovers between life

and death in a hospital ward, Kalpana is watched over by her impoverished mother, Shakutai, with whom Urmi forms an unlikely bond of mutual comfort. The lives of three women who are “haunted by fears, secrets, and deep grief” are bound together by strands of life and hope a binding vine of love, concern, and connection that spreads across chasms of time, social class, and even death. Basavaraj Naikar opines that “Urmila is bound by the vine of sympathy with Shakutai and her unlucky daughter, Kalpana, in the present, she is also bound by the same vine with her own mother-in-law who lived in the past” (16).

Memories from the past stray to Urmi’s mind and a journey to the past helps Urmi uncover mysteries about herself, but not her past alone: “The past is always clearer because it is more comprehended”. One theme that was stressed in her book is rape – both as a random violent act and within marriage. The disgrace is not the girl’s, the disgrace is the criminals. That is not how it is. It’s really the dilemma which Urmi, the narrator, faces because, if she makes it public, it’s possible the family is going to be affected, and if she does not, you know it’s like saying the woman is the one who is in disgrace, who has done wrong. When Bhaskar, a doctor in the hospital, raises the question of why it’s so important for women to marry, his question is raised right after Shakutai pleads with Bhaskar not to release the report of rape because it would ruin Kalpana’s chance of marriage. In his eyes, she is focusing on false significance. She should be more concerned with the fact that her daughter is lying in a hospital bed unconscious. Reputation becomes everything for a woman.

The issue that has mattered the most is the conflict between the idea women have of themselves and the idea that society imposes on them of what being a woman is. And there’s a struggle to conform to this image, the guilt when you can’t do that.

Though, the characters are women, they represent the human being lurking inside. And that human being is often a lonely one though not one who is alone. It is a loneliness deep rooted in their souls. It is a result of being honest with oneself.

A question Urmi often asks herself is why does she feel the need to forget her dead daughter? Women are tied to their children, and the binding vine, as written by Mira, signifies the umbilical cord to which mother and child are physically connected. Urmi is emotionally numb in the beginning after the realization that her daughter is really gone: “what’s broken cannot be mended.” She learns, however, that pains can be mended after she learns to reach out to those who need to find their own strengths.

Shakutai’s decision towards the close of the book, to reveal the truth about her daughter’s rape gives her a new sense of liberation. *The Binding Vine* beautifully brings about the feelings, which are left unspoken in the Indian women, and shows the pursuit of love in their journey of life. It’s a triumphant story of victory and defeat, when women find their voices.

The next chapter deals with psychology of women and the struggles and tragedies women face in life and how they bind themselves in their life.

CHAPTER TWO

PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN

In *The Binding Vine*, Deshpande attempts to explore the psychology of women who are traumatized by various tragedies in their life. *The Binding Vine* narrates the story of women who struggle to emancipate themselves from the confinement of patriarchal Indian social structure that circumstances their being. Deshpande using stream of consciousness technique weaves the tale of three different women and their journey of life.

The Binding Vine starts with a four-line verse from Mira's poetry and focuses primarily on Urmi's grief and her discovery of Mira's writings.

The fragrance of the night-queen
crosses the hedge of thorns
touches the pinnacle of the shrine
and is no longer mine. (1)

Urmi has lost her one-year-old daughter Anusha and is inconsolable. Nothing can cheer her or divert her attention from her daughter. She is flippant, angry, irritated and even hysterical. This state of mind is revealed not only through Urmi's assessment of her situation but also through her words, actions and reactions.

The Binding Vine opens with Vanaa, trying to soothe Urmi's ruffled nerves. She reminds Urmi of the time when she was learning cycling in Ranidurg and fell off her bike and got hurt. To this Urmi's rejoinder is "Once? I must have fallen at least a dozen times" (1). Vanaa feels hurt at Urmi's deliberate attempts to belittle her but she continues the conversation. Urmi is sharp enough to know that Vanaa is trying to evoke Urmi's childhood memory of her heroic attempts to get over pain and suffering and to tell her indirectly that after all, she has been a brave girl and now she should live up to

that image. As Urmi tells in the first few lines, she wants to break this image of being a heroic woman, she would rather be an ordinary woman and be able to express her feelings, than a superhuman figure forced to repress her grief.

Vanaa digs up old things, blames herself for what she must have said during their girlhood days and indulges in self-pity. This is, indeed, unlike Urmi who has always been self-willed, strong and different from other girls. At this point we learn that during her childhood Urmi had deliberately rejected the expensive and beautiful dresses her mother got for her and preferred to wear the ill-fitted ones stitched for her by her Baiajji. Urmi takes the readers back in time to refer to Baiajji. She remembers her days at Ranidurg in the palatial house of her grandparents; the happy days of girlhood abandon when life was smooth and Baiajji and Aju's love gave meaning to living.

Urmi experiences small pleasures like occasionally cleaning and airing the big house, sharing the joke about the darbar hall, the everyday excitement when the train passed by, eating raw tamarind despite Baiajji's warning and rushing to Vanaa's house in the neighbourhood to play. All these pleasures vanished slowly with time. Baiajji died and then Aju and Urmi's world changed. But, the most painful thing is the change brought in by Anu's death. Death leaves emptiness and a silence that is impenetrable. Urmi is so much under nervous tension that she bangs her head against the wall and gets hurt. Vanna tries to console Urmi and states:

Vanna bursts out, 'Talk! Say something! Why don't you say something?'

'What?'

'Anything. Just speak. Don't keep it bottled within you.

why don't you cry, Urmi? It's unnatural not to cry. (13)

Amrut, her brother and Inni, her mother are worried over her state of mind but when they show concern, Urmi reacts sharply, making it clear that she does not like to be fussed over. Harish, Vanaa's husband examines her and finds her asthmatic. He offers to intimate Kishore Urmi's husband but Urmi stops him. She assures them that she would recover in a couple of days and when Amrut comes to ask her if he could now leave for Delhi, Urmi tells him categorically, "I'm trying to get back to normal I know I have to go on living" (22). With this resolution coming from Urmi says that, "No, I must reject these memories, I have to conquer them. This is one battle I have to win if I am to go on living. And yet my victory will carry with it the taint of betrayal. To forget is to betray" (21).

Amrut feels a little confident about his sister Urmila. The brother and the sister slide back in time and remember Baijji, her decoctions as a miracle cure all childhood ailments and the taste of those decoctions. Amrut asks her why she was arguing with Inni in the morning and from their exchanges it is clear, that Urmi is often impatient with their mother. Their conversation veers back to Papa's death and how Inni was shattered. They tell each other that time is a great healer and Urmi will get over the pain. The monsoons set in and Bombay has torrential rains.

Vanaa, her two daughters Mandira and Pallavi, Urmi, Kartik and Inni watch a movie when Priti, their relative comes to their home. They all discuss the movie, remember how Urmi's Papa was often impatient with the children when they watched the rubbish, as he used to call films. Vanaa reveals how, as a child, she was fascinated by the Urmi-Amrut duo sister and brother, and their sophisticated parents.

In a flashback, Urmi recollects how Akka had once brought Mira's trunk containing her diaries, poems, papers and old photographs. They all had got inquisitive about this far-off figure-Mira. Mira was Kishore's mother. As Akka sings one of Mira's

poems, the atmosphere is charged with enthusiasm. That night after the children go to bed, Akka narrates Mira's story and in the course of her narration, she reveals her wounds as an unloved wife who was brought only to give a mother to infant Kishore. Urmi gets involved in reading Mira's verses and her diaries and she re-creates her long-dead mother-in-law as a plain looking girl with aspirations to do something in life.

Mira had not been happy in her marriage because her husband's love was a trap, it did not give her individual freedom but suffocated her by over-riding passion. and Urmi reminisces about an incident of their childhood and comments on the nature of truth. When Urmi opens Mira's diary, she notices what Mira wrote that "This book is mine as all can tell, if you steal it you will go to hell, the girl who wrote 'Strictly private and confidential' on her books" (40). the childish behaviour makes Urmi to laugh. This warning note was written in her diaries many times in different hand writing. It is like Mira's warning to the readers.

Urmi comes to know about the story of Kalpana who is in the hospital. She is lying in an unconscious state. The epigraph from Mira's poem, focuses on women's innate fear of man-the male-and we surmise that despite all the talks of equality and emancipation, a woman is vulnerable. Kalpana's mother is hysterical as she pleads with the doctors not to report the matter as a rape-case. Urmi's heart goes out to the wailing mother who senses that the woman is alone and she offers to escort her home in a taxi. This is how Urmi comes to know more about Shakutai, a peon in a girls' school. She lives in a Chawl along with her children-Kalpana and Sandhya. Prakash, her husband has deserted her for another woman and Shakutai has no male support except Prabhakar, her younger sister's husband. Despite her mother's displeasure and Vanaa's sane advice, Urmi gets involved in Kalpana's case. She often visits Shakutai, talks to Dr. Bhaskar Jain about Kalpana and elicits important facts from the police officer.

Urmi realizes how each one reacts to the question of rape. Shakutai is afraid of social stigma and wants to believe that it was not rape. The police officer is unwilling to register and considering it as a rape case because such cases become complicated for the officers. The society blames the victim instead of the rapist for the crime. Prospects of marriage of girls and boys in the family are jeopardised for no fault of theirs. The police, entrusted with the task of enforcing laws, go to a great length to help the rapists. The following extract lays bare their attitude succinctly:

The police officer argued with him (Dr. Bhaskar) why make it a case of rape? he asked. She's going to die anyway, so what difference does it make....? We don't like rape cases, the man said. They are messy and troublesome, never straightforward. But forget that and think of the girl and her family. Do you think it'll do them any good to have it known that the girl was raped?. (88)

Urmi gets to know many things about Kalpana from Shakutai. Kalpana was a good-looking child, and Sulu her aunt was attached to her. When Kalpana was growing up, Sulu offered to take her to her house to look after her and educate her. The offer was good from Shakutai's angle also. She wanted her children to get education and settle in life. But after a while, Kalpana had come back and had refused to go to Sulu. Shakutai had cursed the obstinate girl, without even looking into the cause of her refusal. Urmi notices that something was wrong at Sulu's place. Shakutai said to Urmi that,

I argued with her, I scolded her, I beat her but was no use. She wouldn't go back. "Die then," I said, "What do I care? What can I give you but dry chapatties and one set of clothes?" Whereas Sulu – what would she not have done for her?' Suddenly it bursts out of her.

‘Sometimes, Urmila, I think I was cruel to the girl; but I did it for her.

(111-112)

Kalpana was smart and fond of dressing up well. She worked in a shop and often decked herself with nail polish and lipstick. Shakutai felt that she invited male glances and called for trouble. According to her, a girl must know fear, must stay within the social limits and must not aspire to fly high. According to her Kalpana was punished because she broke all these rules. Urmi refuses to agree with these views. Mira and Kalpana have inset stories of Papa, Amrut, Shakutai and Dr. Bhaskar. The third part begins with the epigraph of the season.

The wheel of seasons turns,
the monsoon river flows turbid and red,
the lightning flashes its splendour,
the rainbow arcs in celebration,
all things are as they were.
Only I, unmoving, becalmed,
have changed. (102)

The weather changes but the pattern of rain and flowing waters and billowing clouds remains unchanged year after year. Mira had seen changes. She was now an expectant mother. Mira's relations with her mother, whose self-effacing character Mira does not like. She does not want to be like her mother, and does not approve of her mother's advice. Instead, Mira rebels in her own ways, within her own limits-she says no to her husband, she rejects her new name Nirmala after marriage, and she often reveals her discontent. For women of her time, Mira's demands have no meaning. According to them, she is mad. The only thing that gave her joy was her approaching motherhood. Unfortunately, Mira died in childbirth, leaving her son Kishore and her

writings. Urmila understands how self-confidence of a vivacious girl can be shattered by the Indian institute of marriage system which transforms her into a fearful and nerves woman. But Shanthi Sivaraman observes in her book *Women in The Binding Vine* “Urmi is different...want to assert herself and not crawl before man” (136).

Shakutai comes to Urmi's house and as Urmi gets busy in making tea, Shakutai tells her the story of her marriage, her journey from the village to Bombay and her life with her husband, who was a good-for-nothing fellow and never gave Shakutai a home. They shared a room with his cousin where she gave birth to her children, she cooked, worked at a shop and in fact did everything to run the household. She was over-worked and it was only when Sulu came to stay that she got some help. Shakutai revealed her dreams to Urmi that,

This was one of my dreams, to have gas to cook on. It

makes cooking easy, doesn't it?’

‘very’

‘And my other dream was to have this,’ her hand goes to

her neck, where her string of black beads has sunk into the

creases in her throat, mangalsutra made in gold. (110)

As a young bride, Shakutai had two dreams-to have a gas connection for cooking and to get a Mangalsutra in gold. The dreams were never realized. Since her husband left her for another woman, she discarded the idea of having a gold mangalsutra, and she could never afford to get a cooking gas connection on her salary.

Amrut stays in Delhi and loves a Tamilian girl named Radha. Amrut came to know his mother Inni is likely to object to the marriage, as she wants a Maharashtrian daughter-in-law Urmi makes fun of Amrut love and speaks.

And can you believe it, Vanaa, he doesn't intend telling

Inni about Radha.'

'What's there to tell?' Amrut mumbles.

'Don't be dishonest. Inni's on the prowl, I'm warning you. She told me about her friend Malini's daughter...'

'And someone's niece...'

All "Nice, our type, Maharashtrian girls". Instead, poor

Inni, she's going to get a Tamil girl ... (132)

Urmi promises her brother to help his love and she remembers how she fell in love with Vanaa's brother. Urmi tries to find out Mira's resemblance in her son Kishore and Urmi remembers Mira's verse about her approaching motherhood.

The Binding Vine has a verse with an optimistic tinge. Whatever the troubles of life and assaults of existence, all humans are attached to life. Mira had reconciled with life but life was snatched away by death. Kalpana loves life, but she is struggles between life and death. The novel ends with an optimistic view. Urmi persuades Shakutai to publicise the case and gets it done with the help of her journalist friend Malcom. The television coverage follows the press reports soon. That arouses hot discussions in the media which is not entirely sympathetic. A section of men sticks to the opinion that rape happens because women go about exposing themselves. This opinion is shared by the misinformed, backward section of women like Shakutai. To that Radha, the fiance of Urmi's brother Amrut, retorts: "I think men's minds are like public lavatories full of dirty pictures" (182).

The publicity given to the rape case comes both as a curse and a blessing. It is a blessing, because it generates public opinion; and curse, because Sulu commits suicide when she realizes that her husband Prabhakar has committed the crime. Urmi feels deeply sorry for Shakutai. She can empathise with her but cannot do anything

further. While Urmi is passing through these problems, she talks freely to Dr. Bhaskar, seeking in him a good listener. Somehow, Dr. Bhaskar imagines that Urmi is unhappy in her marriage and he indirectly proposes to her. Urmi is shocked at his boldness. Dr. Bhaskar Jain, a sympathetic listener steps in her life in that situation. He understands her feelings and helps her accept her loss. Her near ones like Innies and Vanaa dissuade her from going out with Bhaskar but she revolts against traditional limitations to assert her individuality. Bhaskar takes her to his residence and introduces her to his mother and tells her that he wants to get marry Urmi but Bhaskar's mother has another choice. Bhaskar states:

My mother wants a "Sweet, homely, fair convent educated girl"
for me, and she'll get her, never fear.'
'So there are no problems'
'None. Except that I've gone and fallen in love with a
dark, sharp – tongued married woman. (160-161)

Kishore is remote and reticent by nature but he is a loving husband and a devoting father. Urmi realizes that she loves Kishore, despite her disillusionment with him and his long absences. Another burden, lifted off Urmi's heart when Inni tells her that it was not Inni but her father who sent Urmi to Ranidurg. Urmi understands the pain of her mother and empathizes with her. Urmi realizes the paradoxes of life. Baijaji was tender and loving but could wield power and be cruel. Inni was sophisticated but submissive. Papa loved Inni but was harsh in his decisions. Urmi liked Dr. Bhaskar's warm companionship, but she loved Kishore. Urmi thinks that,

I remember Kishore's face when he first saw Anu, I think of Akka crying
for Mira, of Inni's grief when Papa told her about his illness, of Papa's
anguished face watching her, of the touch of grace there was in

Shakutai's hand when she covered me gently at night while I slept, of the love with which she speaks of her sister, of Sandhya....

Is this it, 'the spring of life' Mira was looking for?. (203)

Life with all its vagaries and troubles has its tender moments that make it worth living, worth clinging to. *The Binding Vine* beautifully depicts 'the urge to survive' on the face of adversity.

The next chapter deals with the characterization in the novel *The BindingVine* in a detailed manner and explains how women suffered and spread the vine of love to everyone in the family.

CHAPTER THREE

CHARACTERIZATION

Shashi Deshpande in her novel *The Binding Vine* sketches clearly the unpleasant and the embarrassing situations that are existing in the life of women through the women characters. She states that they are suffering silently for the well-being of their personal and family life. Shashi Deshpande has given a suitable title for the novel *The Binding Vine*. The title itself states that the women characters in the novel spread the vine of love and bind themselves in the society to seek liberation from their mental worries.

Shashi Deshpande studies the issues and problems of contemporary middle-class women. Her heroines are sensitive, intelligent and career-oriented. Through her novels, she expresses the frustrations and disappointments of women who experience social and cultural oppression in the society. The novel *The Binding Vine* has three strands running parallel. These are the stories of three suffering women; they are different in age and time. They are Kalpana, who is unconscious. Mira, who is dead, and Urmi who discovers the meaning of life through the stories of Kalpana and Mira. The journey starts with Urmi and many characters join her. The main plot is about Urmi and her grief at her daughter Anu's death. The stories of Kalpana and Mira are the sub-plots. They join with the main plot.

The protagonist Urmi in *The Binding Vine* struggles and fights for herself and for other women as a representation. The characters in the novel create a good relationship within their limits and also expect some space as individuals within their family. They want to be beside their husbands but not under them as slaves. Though Urmi is educated, she expects her husband to understand her feelings and emotions and

share words of consolation. She wants to own her place in the male dominated society. She does not go for compromise for her self-respect.

Urmi is a lecturer in college and she is married to Kishore who is a merchant. In the beginning of the novel, Shashi Deshpande introduces the protagonist in the scene where Urmi is worried and mourned due to the loss of her daughter. The members of the family try to persuade her and make her come out of the grief. None of their words fall in her ears. Being a mother, she could not forget her dead daughter Anu as soon as others do. She thinks that forgetting her daughter is like betraying her. Urmila knows that she knows very well that her daughter is not going to come alive. In spite of knowing the reality, she struggles to forget her, recollect her experiences with her daughter which haunt her therefore she wants to be left alone. Urmi tells her family members that, “keep quiet, then I am not asking anyone for consolation. Am I? I am trying to deal with my grief myself. I do not need anyone” (23).

When Urmi is in the grief of the death of her daughter, Vanaa her friend, talks of a small incident of their girlhood days. When Urmi was learning cycling in Ranidurg, one day she had fallen of the bicycle and hurt her knees. Urmi angrily asked her “What are you trying to say Vanaa? Why don’t you say it straight off?” (8). Actually, Vanna is trying to shift her mind from her grief, but Urmi is not in the mood to be soothed by such remarks. She refuses to let go her pain. She replies to Vanaa, that the past was a small hurt compared to the agony of losing her daughter. She says, “This pain is all that’s left to me of Anu. Without it, there will be nothing left to me of her; I will lose her entirely” (9).

Urmi tries to forget the past and live in reality. With this mental struggle, she comes to a conclusion that she has to navigate her life herself. She expresses

sorrowfully that her victory will have stains of betrayal which is caused by the action of forgetting her dear daughter. As a mother she neither forgets her daughter nor keeps on repenting on her grief throughout her life. This state of mind brings her mental stress. When stress becomes incessant, it turns to be mental depression. This state of mind, in the depression may even instinct to commit suicide sometimes. Urmi's statement that the presence of many people who are there to console will not help her in any way. Being an educated woman, she tries herself to console and keep the memories of her daughter aside. Urmi states that, "Do not see it then, go away and leave me alone. Why do not you all leave me alone? Do you think it helps to have you watching me all the time?" (14).

Urmi has a strong will to lead a happy life. She makes up her mind for the sake of her son who expects her care and affection. He may be a driving factor for her life. If he had not expected her love and care for him, she would have been either a victim to her depression or got lost in the crowd. Urmi has married a man whom she loved. Yet she hates her married life. Though she is a well-educated person and bread winner, she does not want to go against the tradition. The man-woman relationship gets into progress on the basis of mutual understanding, care, love, concern and timely communication but in the case of Urmi, there is no understanding and communication. Owing to this reason, their relationship becomes fragile and disintegrated.

Kishore her husband is not bothered about thinking of Urmi. Neither he tries to understand nor he gives a solution. He is bothered only about the physical pleasure. Real love does not exist between Kishore and Urmi. As Kishore fails to show real love for her, she tries to alienate from Kishore. Urmi expects a lot from Kishore but his answer is only silence. The desire of Urmi is not completely fulfilled. Whenever she

expects love and care from him, she gets only disappointments. Sigmund Freud in his Theory of dreams,

Dreams, are all forms of "wish fulfilment" attempts by the unconscious to resolve a conflict of some sort, whether something recent or something from the recesses of the past. Because the information in the unconscious is in an unruly and often disturbing form, a "censor" in the preconscious will not allow it to pass unaltered into the conscious. (9)

she has made many trials and attempts to change Kishore's attitude. Finally, she decides that Kishore cannot be changed. Unless he gives his heart to her truly and takes steps to understand the feelings of Urmi, they cannot lead a happy and prosperous life. Urmi's yearning for his relationship is intense to quote: "I will never reach. I have lived with the hope that someday I will. Each relationship, always imperfect, survives on hope. Am I to give up this hope?" (141).

Mira in *The Binding Vine* is also one such woman who bears the oppression and sexual assaults of her husband silently, where these women are crumbling under the weight of their sorrow. So, some incidents which set the tone of this novel *The Binding Vine* express the tremendous familial and cultural pressures which succeed in making women both silent and invisible. Mira has secret dreams to be a poet. She aspires to write and she does write. But she cannot make them public. Her poems are hidden in a trunk. Her voice is muted by the social norms. Her demands to get her individuality are not recognized.

Mira has revealed through her writings that she has been trapped in an unhappy marriage at the age of eighteen by her husband who became 'single minded' in his pursuit after seeing her in a wedding. Urmi learns that her mother-in-law has subjected

to rape by her husband every day. This anguish finds expression in a number of poems written by her. She disliked every form of physical intimacy because her marriage is only a dark-clouded with fear. The torture of living with an obsessed man all her life made her recluse. The entry in her dairy is a case in point. She expresses her perturbed mind:

He knows what I'm doing and he angry with me. I don't mind his anger,
it makes him leave me to myself, it is blessed when he does that. But he
comes back, he is remorseful, repentant, he holds me close, he begins to
babble. And so, it begins please,' he says, 'please, I love you' and over
and over again until he has done. I love you. (67)

As a result, Mira began to loathe the word "Love" because it has brought only pain and suffering in her life. So, Mira meekly submitted to her husband's needs, despite the urge to defy him. She cast her feelings in her poems, when she is renamed as Nirmala after marriage, that strongly asserts her individuality in her poems.

According to Urmi, the predicament of Mira, her mother-in-law, is like that of a lamb waiting to be butchered by her tender age of eighteen, though she wants to study further and develop her poetic talent. But her husband's manipulative behaviour succeeds in getting her as his wife. He is obsessive only about her body and fails to establish an emotional bond with her. Because of this loveless marriage she develops a physical intercourse with her husband. In one of her poems, she presents her fear of sexual act:

But tell me, friend, did Lakshmi too

Twist brocade tassels round her fingers

And tremble, fearing the coming

Of the dark-clouded, engulfing night?. (66)

A husband's right over his wife body is socially acclaimed and it becomes a wife's duty to satiate the physical needs of her husband. Shashi Deshpande in her novels makes a scathing attack on such a tradition that dictates that a husband has a right to satisfy his biological needs irrespective of the wife's unwillingness, thus, sanctioning crimes like marital rape. As Indrani Jaisingh, an eminent lawyer opines, "It is assumed that by marrying a man, a woman has given her consent to sexual intercourse with her husband at any time. Thus, even if he forces himself on her, he is not committing an offence of rape as her consent is assumed" (17).

Mira symbolizes female oppression. Through her poems she attempts to create an imaginative space for herself in the patriarchal tradition and to make herself a model of female survival in her created world. Her poetry reveals the strength of her conviction and her own assertion. Like a modern woman, she rebels against the norms in a tradition bound society and struggles to establish her own individuality and social status.

Deshpande sketches the plight of a raped girl, Kalpana, who is cursed by her own mother for her rape state in the hospital. Shakutai, the mother of Kalpana realizes Kalpana's boldness, her waywardness is not there as one of her sexual violations; rather it is her own maternal uncle, who lets the beast out of him and tries to silence her by raping her. Ignorantly, she blames her own daughter, for bringing such shame and dishonour to their family. Mulk Raj Anand says,

The plight of Indian women cannot be fully true. No woman in our land is beyond the threat of rape, because of the suppressed energies of the male through the taboos of the patriarchy, which deny sex before

marriage and make male young into animals who assault and positive victim, when possessed by lost. (109)

The protagonist Urmila is shocked when she learns that even the mother of the victim of rape keeps silent and wants to hush up the matter. But Urmila, unlike other women, does not want the man who has wronged Kalpana. She meets Shakuntala, as Shakutai in the hospital where Vanna works. Earlier shakutai tells Urmila that her daughter received injuries in a car accident. But Vanna, sister-in-law of Urmila, and Dr, Bhaskar, the doctor in charge of Kalpana, examines her and reports that Kalpana was raped and, in the process, badly injured. so, she is lying like a heavy weight neither dead nor alive. But Shakutai is not in a position to accept the truth that someone has wronged her daughter. On the other hand, she protests that “It’s not true, you people are trying to blacken my daughter’s name” (55). Shakutai also appeals to the doctor not to make a fuss of the issue and cries.

On Vanna’s request Urmila escorts Shakutai to her house and with this, their acquaintanceship develops, and Urmila keeps visiting her regularly to enquire about Kalpana. Shakutai looks like a typical Indian woman who blames her daughter only for what has happened to her. Shakutai thinks that dressing up in a modern way, using lipstick and being stylish made her daughter bring this cause. When Urmila hears about this, she took pity on Kalpana and states “What’s wrong with lipstick, Shakutai?” (146). But Shakutai says that:

Urmila, it’s not only the lipstick. Here noys are like ... they’re like dogs painting after bitches. And if you paint and flaunt yourself, do you think they’ll leave you alone? Ever since Kalpana grew up, I have had to live with this fear. But Kalpana doesn’t understand. (146)

Shakutai feels that it would unnecessarily attract male attention and asks, she applies makeup, men will not leave her. But Kalpana's ideas of life are different from those of her mother's. She was on the threshold of her youth and had her own income. She loved to dress well and move around freely. Her mother's fears came true now, because Kalpana becomes the victim of lust and she is brutally beaten and raped.

The virtues of 'Virginity and Chastity' are firmly rooted in our society since ages, making rape the most serious, disgusting and horrible of all the crimes. In the novel, the police officer registers the case of Kalpana as an accident and not as a Rape-Victim. He interrogates, "She's going to die anyway, so what difference does it make whether on paper, she dies the victim of an accident or a rape" (88). So, this inhuman treatment towards women is shown in this form of loneliness, negation and rejection from the society and members of their own families is projected through the lives of Akka, Vanna, Mira, Shakutai, Urmi and Kalpana. At the end, Shakutai realizes that it is not her daughter's wilfulness which is responsible for what has happened to her but her own blindness and ignorance. Shakutai seems right when she blames Kalpana because in Indian society only girls are blamed for their rapes. They will be called characterless, shameless or low-women. This is how women are always blamed for their rapes. It's either their clothes or their attitude which is considered responsible for their sexual assaults and nothing else. Shakutai's discourse exposes the place of women in the society.

Deshpande's novels present all the dimensions of life. She combines the old with the new connection. Shakutai, a poor woman, whose teenaged daughter has been a victim of rape and leads a life full of miseries and she is struggling to adjust in such unbearable conditions. Her husband leaves her for another woman. Urmi reveals the life of Shakutai and she does not know what binding exists between her and Shakutai

that attracts her. She realizes the strong emotional bonds that find a mother with her child. She finds an unlikely bond of mutual comfort. Her mind is full of grief at the loss of her daughter and she compares her grief with Shakutai's. Shakutai tells her the story of her marriage, and her life with her husband, who was a worthless fellow and never gave Shakutai a home. She does not know about her husband's job and about what he is doing. After her marriage, she waits a year for her husband. Then she decides to go to Bombay and she knows the bitter truth of her life. Her husband is not working anywhere and he is a drunkard. She cannot bear the bitter truth of her life and tells that, "That's been the greatest misfortune of my life, Urmilla, marrying that man" (110).

Shakutai hears that her daughter is raped. She requests the police not to report the case as a rape case. "No, no, no....It's not true, don't tell anyone. I'll never be able to hold up my head again, who'll marry the girl.... I have another daughter, what will become her..? (58-59)". She knows the philosophy of this world very well that the world never blames the men's hollow conventions of society and religion that support them and not the women. At the time of Kalpana's birth, she does not want the child is she pleased when her sister sulu offers to take the child to her house. Urmi knows how irritated the child's departure is for her mother. After the suicide of Sulu, she behaves hysterically and Shakutai is always the victim of society and destiny too.

Sulu, the sister of Shakutai, has no child, and her husband may be marrying another woman for this reason. After the suicide of Sulu, Shakutai says to Urmi, "Sulu was frightened, she was always frightened because she had no children. she was afraid he would throw her out, take another wife" (192). She is happy when Shakutai accepts her proposal of Kalpana's marriage with her husband but Kalpana does not agree and she is raped by her husband. Sulu cannot express herself when she realizes that her husband but Kalpana does not agree and she is raped by her husband Prabakar is the

culprit, and she commits suicide. Sulu lives in depression, and Shakutai says “After marriage she changed. What if he does not like this, what if he wants that, what if he is angry with me, what if he throws me out? What kind of life is it?” (195).

Another minor character is Akka, the mother-in-law of Urmi, marries a person only to be a mother of infant Kishore Urmi’s husband. Inni, the mother of Urmi leaves her daughter willingly. Urmi’s father does not consider her to take the decision about their daughter. Inni’s daughter vanaa is a good friend of Urmi. Akka had a little fear that vanaa was left alone if she gets married but she was happy that her best friend becomes her sister-in-law. She remains silent until the end, she cannot revolt, and she remains repressed. Urmi understands the pain of her mother and empathizes with her.

The novel presents a typical aspect of dispossessed womanhood through the character of Akka, who is the youngest sister of Indu’s grandfather. Indu, a sensitive, educated and liberated woman, questions and challenges Akka’s authority and considers Akka a callous and domineering woman. She hates and challenges Akka’s domination. She thinks that: “There was only one thing she wanted and that was to dominate” (68). Then Indu comes to know about the pathetic story of Akka after her death through Narmadaattaya, daughter of Indu’s grandfather, that Akka had a terrible past hidden away in the vaults of the family narrative; a past of marital rape as a thirteen years old wife, of betrayal, and of her revenge on a dying husband. At the age of twelve her marriage has performed with a man of thirty years old. As a married woman Akka was expected to bear children but she had many miscarriages due to kind of life she led. Her mother-in-law has made her life miserable for her inability to give birth to a living child. Her early marriage, her miserable life with her mother-in-law, her childlessness and her husband’s obsession with other women, and her widowhood are the various blows that Akka receives in her life, which imposes Akka to follow a strict rule as to

how a girl should talk, dress and behave. In spite of being a victim of gender oppression, she imposes the same victimization on all the women in the family. Similarly, Indu is painfully aware that she is not different from the women at home.

Vanaa the friend of Urmil, also sister-in-law for her. She was a social worker. Vanaa married to Harish and has two children Pallavi and Mandira. Urmil and Vanaa are friends from childhood. when Vanaa works in a hospital as a social worker Urmil meets Shakuntal and Kalpana Urmil get to know about the rape case. Vanaa and her husband are both working but there is always a guilt in her mind about her parenthood. She feels that she is not giving justice to her children.

The women characters in the novel long for their recognition from the male dominated society. They need their freedom and fight for their individualities. They wish mutual love from their men but not their mere lust. The need to express one's feeling and to be heard by the society is the urge for the present-day women. Urmil draws society's attention to her protest and sees less pain in attempting to change the societal roles and attitudes. The novel has an implied expression that the women's harassment in the society overcomes even the mother's grief on the death of the daughter. At the end of the novel, Urmil is seen recollecting the bonds of love that provide "the spring of life" for human survival.

The next chapter deals with motherhood, ie the relationship between a mother and a daughter.

CHAPTER FOUR

MOTHERHOOD

The Binding Vine deals with the sense of belongingness in a woman towards her family, but, simultaneously, there is an urge to have a room of her own. To a woman, motherhood is conducive to her fortitude, followed by the preordained servitude towards her family. Shashi Deshpande in *The Binding Vine* has given the graphic details about the women characters. The novel deals with ideas of women solidarity, female bonding and value of sisterhood in a male-dominated culture, the basis for their bonding. All those women need, to share with one another, the vast reservoir of women's experience, culture and ideas. It shows the persistent truth of how all the human beings in life-like parents and children, relatives and strangers, men and women are bound by the vine of emotional regard and how the tender vine of human understanding, empathy and sympathy binds all of us.

Shashi Deshpande's *The Binding Vine* in terms of its intricate mesh of mother daughter relationships constitute the female bonding in novel. What does being a mother's daughter and a daughter's mother imply in a hegemonic man's world is the question that Deshpande attempts to articulate through the various daughter-mothers in the novel. The heritage that these women pass on generation after generation is that of dependence and yet the tenacity with which the dependent vine clings and survives is the triumph of womanhood.

Vanaa, an educated modern working woman faces the challenges of upbringing her children. She is flabbergasted to know that her children demand her attention and not their father's. Her esprit de corps is preordained by her male counterpart. Gradually, she finds it difficult to handle the responsibility of her office and home simultaneously.

Vanna points out her husband Harish that, “Urmi why is it nobody thinks of blaming Harish? He’s never around, but it is never his fault” (75). Parenthood comprises a mother and a father, but it is the woman who becomes the connecting link between the family members. Urmi states, “I don’t know. Sometimes I think it’s woman who takes parenthood seriously; men don’t, not to the same extent, anyway” (76).

Women are taught to sound born bonafides. Their endowments of submission give the man a superior hand over them, A woman’s sense of insecurity leads to her submission. The word compromise is meant for women as the decision made by men is fate accumplicy for her. She never dares to question it. Similarly, a thing happens with Vanna:

Two is enough. But Urmi, she said, her face wishful, ‘I’d have loved to have had a son’ ‘You should have told Harish that’ ‘I did. And he quoted population figures at me.

And he said, one, surely I’, not the kind of woman who craves for sons, am I? And, two, what makes me think the next one will be a boy? He’s right, only...I wouldn’t have minded taking a chance’. It was her face when she said that, that made me furious. I burst out, ‘you let hi, bulldozer you, you crawl before him. (81)

A mother’s concern for her children always snaps her mouth and ties her hands. Children are tying her hands. Children are related with their parents’ reputation. A mother always wants to protect her children from misery and defame. Shakutai had to swallow the bitter pill of her daughter being dishonoured. She does not want this incident to become a burning question, otherwise, Kalpana’s future life will turn into a blind alley. So, she becomes reluctant to make a report to the authorities of law: “If a

girl's honour is lost, what's left? The girl doesn't point a finger at her, Doctor, she turns to him, "even if it is true, keep it to yourself, don't let anyone know of it. I have another daughter, what will become of her?" (59).

A mother is more protective towards her daughter as compared to that of a son. She wants to give her the best in life, even those things which she has failed to achieve in her life. Her daughter, leading a happy married life, seems to be the utmost aim of her life. Shakutai had suffered a lot in her married life. The only thing which she had got from her married life was trauma, misery and children. Nevertheless, she wanted her daughter to get married. Dr. Bhaskar is unable to get the whole idea of it:

Women are astonishing. I think it takes a hell of a lot of courage for a woman like that even to think of marriage. Have you seen her husband Kalpana's father? No? I have. Well, He lets out his breath in a laugh. 'A poor specimen. Vandana tells me he deserted this woman long back. What has she got out of marriage except for the children, of course? And yet, she is longing for her daughter's marriage'. 'One always hopes one's children will get more out of life than one has. And women like Kalpana's mother do find something in marriage.

'What'.

'Security. You're safe from other man. (87-88)

Shakutai considers her daughter as impertinent as she was not biddable to her mother's warnings and cautions about the male dominated society. To her, Kalpana is juvenile delinquent with an iron will. Kalpana is not ready to submit before the gender discrimination poised by the society. She concluded that she will achieve panaceas only

by leading an independent life. Urmi contemplates about a mother's overweening concern about her daughter:

we dream so much more for our daughters than we do for our sons, we want to give them the world we dreamt of for ourselves. 'I wanted Kalpana to have all I didn't, Shakutai told me. But Kalpana wanted none of her mother's dreams. She had her own. Mira too:

To make myself in your image

was never the goal I sought. (124)

Kalpana always refuses to live the life of her mother. She wants to live the life of her mother. she wants to build a world of her own. Her vivacity towards life gives her the image of infant terrible. Shakutai never appreciates Kalpana's manner of facing her life. She blames her: "I kept telling her, men are like animals. But she went her way. You should have seen her walking out, head in the air, caring for nobody. It's all her fault, Urmila all her fault" (147).

Shakutai, being a mother, wants to create a wall of protection around her daughter. So, she does not digest her daughter crossing the limits set by her. But Urmi, being the distant spectator, visualizes the whole situation:

Caring for nobody? No, that's not true. Kalpana is young, at an age when her existence is still a miracle to her. And therefore, she walked out of that ramshackle building with gaily painted nails and lips, brightly coloured clothes and sleek, shining hair, loudly proclaiming the miracle of that existence. All young people do it. But Kalpana was raped and her mother says it happened because she flaunted herself. (148-149)

Shakutai fails to understand her daughter's urge to come out of that devastating ramshackle atmosphere. She is dishonoured not because she flaunts herself, but because of her uncle's obsession for her. He wants to possess her either by fair or foul means. Shakutai and Sulu are the two female protagonists in the novel whose life has become pathetic due to progeny. Neither they are accepted at home nor in the society. If such women are dependent on their male counterparts, they survive a pathetic life. Shakutai points out: "Sulu was frightened, she was always frightened because she had no children. She was afraid he would throw her out, take another wife" (192).

Sulu always considers Kalpana as her own child; looks-after her with great care and affection. She is stunned when her husband proposes to marry Kalpana. She has no other choice but to carry the proposal to Shakutai as beggars and borrowers cannot be choosers. Sulu acquiesces to her husband's infidelity because she lacks her independent individuality, and so, is ready to give Kalpana the status of mistress in her own house. Sulu tries to hide her husband's infidelity, whereas Shakutai combats it. Her motherhood gives her strength and volition to live. Shakutai recalls:

After marriage she changed. She was frightened always frightened. What if he doesn't like this, what if he wants that, what if he is angry with me, what if he throws me out....? Nobody should live like that, Urmila, so full of fears. What kind of life is it? "I don't have your courage, shakutai, "She used to say to me. But was I born with this courage? I learnt, I had no choice, I had to have courage or stop living. But Sulu....?. (195)

Sulu represents those women who are the epitome of submission because, to them, husband is the sheltering tree and one can't perceive beyond that.

The Binding Vine also projects women like ‘Mira’ who finds a ray of hope in the blind alley of her married life. Urmila, who goes through the poems of Mira, finds out: ‘Love!’ I can hear Mira’s voice, scornful and angry. She never wrote any poems about love. Yes, that is odd, most women poets do. But Mira didn’t. There’s not a single one about love. Didn’t she believe in love?” (82).

Motherhood to Mira is not an outcome of the mutual understanding between her and her husband. It is imposed upon her. Mira says, “He forced himself on her despite of it; it is out of this that Kishore was born” (83). Motherhood to Mira proves to be beatific. All her sufferings are pacified with the thought of the incoming child. Mira’s relationship with her husband is in commotion. She has no hope of improvement or resurrection in this relationship. Mira, who used to be a girl full of vivacity towards life, suddenly develops an aversion towards it. Her early poems are full of enthusiasm and have new approaches towards life.

Her aim of becoming a poetess is shattered as soon as she ties the nuptial knot. All her dreams are crushed and she finds herself surrounded by depths of solitude. she writes:

They called me mad
 they, who cocooned themselves
 in bristly blankets
 and thought themselves warm
 when I spoke of my soul
 that boiled and seethed
 they called me mad

they, who were entranced
 by a single white ray of light
 when I spoke of the magic
 of the seven colours in a prism. (99-100)

Mira's dreams and aspirations are oppressed by the traditional indoctrination which states that the duty of married woman is to keep her family satisfied. Simone de Beauvoir defines femineity: "To be feminine is to appear weak, futile, docile. The young girl is opposed to her spontaneity and replace it with the studied grace and charm taught her by her elders" (376).

Mira holds her mother responsible for her pathetic state. Her mother has no stand in the family. In spite of being a mother, she never takes decisions about her children. She is more like a care taker of the house with no right of decision making. Men are supposed to be decision makers of the family. Mira recalls the attitude of her mother. Her mother is well acquainted with Mira's misery and trauma as her married life has become aberrant. She never says a word of reprisal and always remains a distant spectator. Mira knows both of them are sailing in the same boat. Like any other traditional woman, Mira too, is confined to the four walls of the house. Mira is reduced to a tongue-tide valet de chamber. With the passage of time, the concept of submission is inculcated in her. She is in an imbroglio surrounded by despair and devoid of the power of becoming an iconoclast. She writes: "Whose face is this I see in the mirror, Unsmiling, grave, bedewed with fear? The daughter? No, mother, I am now your shadow" (64).

Motherhood changes the way a woman contemplates. This change is evident in the poems of Mira. Her poems describe the titillation of her incoming child:

Tiny fish swimming in the ocean of my womb

my body thrills to you;

churning the ocean, shaking distant shores

you will emerge one day

Lightening flashed through the front door

And I who was stone quivered.

Bridging the two worlds, you awaken in me

A desire for life. (136)

Mira does not taste the flavour of motherhood as she dies after giving birth to her son, Kishore. Her husband lays down the foundation stone of gender differentiation. To her, Kishore is of paramount importance, and is vain glorious to possess a son. Vanaa strives to gain her father's preference for his son. There are no expectations from Vanaa as she does not exist for him. She points out: "Well, I'm lucky, my father expects nothing from me. In fact, I wonder whether he knows I exist" (192).

Vanaa is finally encouraged by Akka who is the substitute for Mira in the family. She nurtures her mind with the prospects of career. Inni is also a mother character who longs for her daughter for years. Early marriage leads to early motherhood. Inni, being a girl herself, is unable to look after her child properly. Urmi recollects: "I was frightened of you Urmi. It bursts out of her, I was too young, I was not prepared to have a child. And you were not easy, you used to cry all the time, I didn't know how to soothe you" (199).

Urmi's mother Inni decided to take care of her child Urmi. But she needs the propitiation of Diwakar her servant, unacceptable to Urmi's father. Serving as the decision maker of the house, he moves Urmi to his parental home. Even her tears and yearnings do not placate her husband. Inni states: "I begged him, Urmi, I cried, I promised him I'd never leave you alone, but he wouldn't listen. Nothing would make him change his mind" (192).

A woman who carries the child in her womb and goes through the gestation period to bring the child forth in this world, loses the string of her child's life and hands it over to her male counterpart without any resistance. Urmi presented as a spectator of all these women characters in the novel *The Binding Vine*. She contemplates on their conditions and situations and helps us to reach the conclusion. Through all these women character, one idea propels out that it is not possible either for a traditional, or a modern woman to break the family bondage. Through her fortitude, patience and tolerance, she should saddle the family ties but not at the cost of her self-respect and dignity. She should try to maintain her independent individuality. The novel signals towards the urgency required women as well as the girl child.

The final chapter 'Summation' sums up all the four chapters and presents an overall view of the points and arguments that are discussed in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Indian literature reflects Indian culture and tradition, social values and even Indian history through the depiction of life in India. Indian English literature may be defined as literature written originally in English by authors, Indian by birth, ancestry or nationally. Its contribution to the world literature is largely due to the profusely creative literary works generated by Indian novelists in English. Their works contemplated and deliberated on multifarious range of issues like nationalism, freedom struggle, social realism, individual consciousness etc. This literary movement being fortified by the output by novelist and distinguished itself as a remarkable force in world fiction, science, technologies, explorative writings, and much more.

Indian women novelists in English have made their permanent mark in the field of English fiction. They are being conferred on not only national but international awards. In most of their writings, they have tried their best to free the female mentality from the age long control of male domination. In short, in their novels, the protagonists are mostly women characters desolated and isolated by an entirely sapless, hypocritical and insensitive male domination. The Indian women writers expressed the role and position of women through their writings in English, have enlightened the literature with its quality and vividness. The Indian women writers have concentrated their themes around sociological, diasporic elements and feminine subjects.

Shashi Deshpande's novels generally have women as the protagonists. This made everyone describe her as a feminist writer. Shashi Deshpande was born in 1938 in Karnataka. Her father Shriranga was an eminent Kannada dramatist. She received her early education at a protestant mission school in Karnataka. Since childhood, she

was fond of English literature and used to read various types of English books. Especially the works of Jane Austen. Later, she studied Economics in Mumbai and graduated in Law from Bengaluru. In Mumbai, she studied journalism at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Shashi Deshpande's first anthology of short stories was published. Two years after, her first novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* was published in 1980. In 1996, her famous novel *A Matter of Time* was published where she unfolds the different experiences of women in India. She has written four children's books, a number of short stories, and nine novels, moreover several discerning essays.

Shashi Deshpande is one of the prominent Indian women writers. She won a prominent place in Indian writing in English Literature after winning Sahitya Akademi award for her novel *That Long Silence*. Deshpande, the living dynamic writer explores and exposes the vivid picture of women in traditional Indian society. The themes of her novels revolve around women and their struggle, entrapped between tradition and modernity. Deshpande's novels focus on the arrival of new Indian women eager to challenge rebelliously against the patriarchal society. Deshpande's women characters are strong and they take bold decisions to survive in the challenging society, which makes Deshpande essentially a feminist novelist. Her novels are about women who try to understand themselves, their history, their roles and their place in this society.

In Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Binding Vine*. Urmi, the narrator grieves over the death of her girl child. Urmi is surrounded by the loving care of her mother, Inni and her childhood friend and sister-in-law, Vanna. Through her grief, Urmi is drawn into the lives of three very different women. As the stories of these women unfold, so does a tale of quiet courage and strength.

The second chapter 'Psychology of Women' has dealt with the women characters and the unpleasant and the embarrassing situations they have faced. She

states that they have suffered silently for the well-being of their personal and family life. Shashi Deshpande has given a suitable title *The Binding Vine* for her novel. The title itself states that the women characters in the novel have spread the vine of love and bend themselves in the society to seek liberation from their mental worries.

The protagonist Urmi in *The Binding Vine* struggles and fights for herself and for other women as a representation. The characters in the novel create a good relationship within their limits and also expect some space as individuals within their family. They want to be beside their husbands but not under them as slaves. Though Urmi is educated, she expects her husband to understand her feelings and emotions and share words of consolation. She wants to own her place in the male dominated society. She does not go for compromise and give importance to self-respect.

Urmi has a strong will to lead a happy life. She makes up her mind for the sake of her son who expects her care and affection. He may be a driving factor for her life. If he had not expected her love and care for him, she would have been either a victim to her depression or got lost in the crowd. Urmi has married a man whom she loved. Yet she hates her married life. Though she is a well-educated person and bread winner, she does not want to go against the tradition. The man-woman relationship gets into progress on the basis of mutual understanding, care, love, concern and timely communication but in the case of Urmi, there is no understanding and communication. Owing to this reason, their relationship becomes fragile and disintegrated.

Mira in *The Binding Vine* is also one such woman who bears the oppression and sexual assaults of her husband silently, where these women are crumbling under the weight of their sorrow. So, some incidents which set the tone of this novel *The Binding Vine* express the tremendous familial and cultural pressures which succeed in making

women both silent and invisible. Mira has secret dreams to be a poet. She aspires to write and she does write. But she cannot make them public. Her poems are hidden in a trunk. Her voice is muted by the social norms. Her demands to get her individuality are not recognized.

Deshpande sketches the plight of a raped girl, Kalpana, who is cursed by her own mother for her rape state in the hospital. Shakutai, the mother of Kalpana realizes Kalpana's boldness. Her waywardness is not there as one of her sexual violations; rather it is her own maternal uncle, who lets the beast out of him and tries to silence her by raping her. Ignorantly, Shakutai blames her own daughter, for bringing such shame and dishonour to their family.

The women characters in the novel long for their recognition from the male dominated society. They need their freedom and fight for their individualities. They wish mutual love from their men but not their mere lust. Urmila draws society's attention to her protest and sees less pain in attempting to change the societal roles and attitudes. The novel has an implied expression that the women's harassment in the society overcomes even the mother's grief on the death of the daughter. At the end of the novel, Urmila is seen recollecting the bonds of love that provide "the spring of life" for human survival.

In the third chapter 'Characterization' Deshpande has attempted to explore the psyche of women who are traumatized by various tragedies in their life. *The Binding Vine* narrates the story of women who struggle to emancipate themselves from the confinement of patriarchal Indian social structure that circumstances their being.

Urmi has lost her one-year-old daughter Anusha and is inconsolable. Nothing can cheer her or divert her attention from her daughter. She is flippant, angry, irritated

and even hysterical. This state of mind is revealed not only through Urmi's assessment of her situation but also through her words, actions and reactions.

Urmi recollects how Akka had once brought Mira's trunk containing her diaries, poems, papers and old photographs. They all had got inquisitive about this far-off figure-Mira. As Akka sings one of Mira's poems, the atmosphere is charged with enthusiasm. That night after the children go to bed, Akka narrates Mira's story and in the course of her narration, she reveals her wounds as an unloved wife who was brought only to give a mother to infant Kishore. Urmi gets involved in reading Mira's verses and her diaries and she re-creates her long-dead mother-in-law as a plain looking girl with aspirations to do something in life.

Urmi comes to know about the story of Kalpana who is in the hospital. She is lying in an unconscious state. Urmi gets to know many things about Kalpana from Shakutai. Kalpana was a good-looking child, and Sulu her aunt was attached to her. When Kalpana was growing up, Sulu offered to take her to her house to look after her and educate her. The offer was good from Shakutai's angle also. She wanted her children to get education and settle in life. But after a while, Kalpana had come back and had refused to go to Sulu. Shakutai had cursed the obstinate girl, without even looking into the cause of her refusal. Urmi notices that something was wrong at Sulu's place.

The Binding Vine has a verse with an optimistic tinge. Whatever the troubles of life and assaults of existence, all humans are attached to life. Mira had reconciled with life but life was snatched away by death. Kalpana loves life, but she struggles between life and death. The novel *The Binding Vine* ends with an optimistic view. Life with all its vagaries and troubles has its tender moments that make it worth living, *The Binding Vine* beautifully depicts 'the urge to survive' on the face of adversity.

The fourth chapter has dealt the Motherhood in the novel. Shashi Deshpande's *The Binding Vine* is in terms of its intricate mesh of mother daughter relationships that constitute the female bonding in novel. What does being a mother's daughter and a daughter's mother imply in a hegemonic man's world is the question that Deshpande attempts to articulate through the various daughter-mothers in the novel. The heritage that these women pass on generation after generation is that of dependence and yet the tenacity with which the dependent vine clings and survives is the triumph of womanhood.

Motherhood to Mira is not an outcome of the mutual understanding between them. It is imposed upon her. "He forced himself on her despite of it; it is out of this that Kishore was born" (83). Motherhood to Mira proves to be beatific. All her sufferings are pacified with the thought of the incoming child. Mira's relationship with her husband is in commotion. She has no hope of improvement or resurrection in this relationship. Mira, who used to be a girl full of vivacity towards life, suddenly develops an aversion towards it. Her early poems are full of enthusiasm and has new approaches towards life.

Vanaa, an educated modern working woman faces the challenges of upbringing her children. She is flabbergasted to know that her children demand her attention and not their father's. Vanaa's *esprit de corps* is preordained by her male counterpart. Gradually, she finds it difficult to handle the responsibility of her office and home simultaneously. She points out "Urmi why is it nobody thinks of blaming Harish? He's never around, but it is never his fault" (75). Parenthood comprises a mother and a father, but it is the woman who becomes the connecting link between the family members.

The researcher's findings are as follows: A woman who carries the child in her womb and goes through the gestation period to bring the child forth in this world, loses the string of her child's life and hands it over to her male counterpart without any resistance. Urmi presented as a spectator of all these women characters in the novel *The Binding Vine*. Even though the female characters suffer in the novel *The Binding Vine* they get success in their life. Through Urmi's fortitude, patience and tolerance it is evident that a woman should saddle the family ties but not at the cost of her self-respect and dignity. She should try to maintain her independent individuality.

The researcher hopes that this project may pave way for the future scholars to pursue their research on feminism, Discourse analysis and Ecocriticism.

WORKS CITED

- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Translated and edited by H.M. Parshley,
New York, Vintage Books, 1974.
- Deshpande, Shashi. *The Binding Vine*. Penguin Books, 1993.
- Fathima, Fida. "Urmi: The Central Character." *Mouthshut*, 16 Apr. 2020.
www.mouthshut.com/product-reviews/Binding-Vine-The-Shashi-Deshpande-reviews-925070140.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. The Illustrated edition, Sterling Press,
2010.
- Garg, Mirdula. *Metaphors of womanhood in Indian Literature Alternatives*. 1991.
- Naikar, Basavaraj. *Women in the Novels of Shashi Deshpande*. Edited by Suman Bala,
Khosla Publishing house, 2001.
- Roy, Amitav. *A Novel of Social Commitment*. Prestige Books, 2005.
- Sivaraman, Santhi. *Women in The Bindindg Vine*. New Delhi, The Creative Books,
1998.
- Thakkar, K.M. *A Critical Study of Shashi Deshpande Writing*. The Cyber Tech,
Publication, 2014.

**Disquisition of Murder Mystery: A Study of Young Arrogance in Donna Tartt's,
The Secret History.**

A project 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

by

QUNISTA. A

(REG. NO. 20APEN18)



PG & Research Department of English

ST. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	A Study in Elitism and Murder	17
Three	The Psychological Framework of Greek Tragedy	35
Four	Regret and Realisation	46
Five	Summation	55
	Works Cited	

Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Disquisition of Murder Mystery: A Study of Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* As a Greek Tragedy** 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 is a work done by Qunista. A the year 2020-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

B. Serena Margaret
Dr. B. Serena Margaret

Associate Professor of English

Guide

A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department of English

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

S. Vennila
Examiner *27/05/2022*

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi-628 001.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Disquisition of Murder Mystery: A Study of Donna Tartt's *The Secret History* As a Greek Tragedy** 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

Thoothukudi

MAY 2022

A. Qunista

Qunista. A

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the **Lord Almighty** for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, wisdom and strength in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study.

I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. B. Serena Margaret**, Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance, encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank the faculty of the Department of the English for their valuable input in teaching and moulding us.

I thank **Dr. Vinitha** the Librarian, St. Mary's College who extended help in the use of the library for the reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

This project entitled **Disquisition of Murder Mystery: A Study of Young Arrogance in Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*** is an inverted detective story narrated by one of the six students, Richard Papen, who reflects years later upon the condition that led to the murder of their friend Edmund "Bunny" Corcoran. The novel explores the positions and lasting effects of Bunny's death on the academically and socially isolated group of classics students of which he was a part.

The first chapter, **Introduction** deals with the view of American literature and the literary fame of Donna Tartt's work, awards and achievement. It showcases the rudiments of her works and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **A Study in Elitism and Murder** highlights the problem of students group at the elite Hampden College Vermont lead to alcoholism, series of crime, murder and suicide.

The third chapter **The Psychological Framework of Greek Tragedy** shows how the students lost their self during Greek myth Bacchanal, which leads them to murder a farmer.

The fourth chapter **Regret and Realisation** describes the struggles to maintain themselves with one another after the murder.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby valuates the study.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

American Literature refers to the literary work produced in the United States and colonial America. Three or four decades ago, American Literature was defined as narrow in scope and suffering from a 'crisis in representation' of different voices in the American pantheon. American Literature, as important parts of world, has had a significant impact on the politics, culture, history and even of the people in the world. They are important reference objects for the development of literature in various countries in the world.

In the long period of historical development, Anglo-American literature abides by the law of literature itself, and with the change of political and economic environment, it has undergone many transformation and evolution, constantly creating literary genres that are compatible with the political and economic current situation. Therefore, American literature is more democratic and more individualistic and focuses on liberation of personality, as the United States of America is multi-ethnic United States there are different national cultures in American Literature. Therefore the style of American literature is very complex and diverse.

Prior to the Revolution, American colonial literature was deeply influenced by western religions. During this period, most of the American literary works were collected in churches. The American literary works of those period mainly focused on the selection of social environment, with the context closely unit to the background of the times. The U.S. independent revolution not

only completely changed the United States but also affected the capitalist colonial rule of the world at that time, and its influence continued into the present-day society. As early as the war of Independence, the European bourgeois enlightenment had laid down some national independent ideological foundations for the American colonial people and promoted the birth of American National literature. The most representative works of America in the period of the independent revolution advocate self-reliance as the core concept and advocate also patriotism and liberalism.

The most representative works are Thomas Jefferson's *Declaration of Independence* and Benjamin Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac*, the former focused on the urgent desire of the American people to all for freedom, national independence and national unification. With the continuous development of American society, the life of the citizens has become more and more colourful. The poetry and the opera are not enough to express the inner feelings of the people. Therefore, novels are the main forms of literature creation in their period.

The history of America started with the settlement of Jamestown in 1607. Since the literature of a country is intimately connected with its history. One has to observe the earliest times for an understanding of American literature. True be belles-lettres of literature of a purely aesthetic sense were written in America only at the latter part of the 18th century. But if recording of human experience can be termed literature what the early colonists wrote must be deemed an integral part of American literature. It is urged that the early writers were all Englishmen and hence what they wrote cannot be included in

American writings. But as M. C. Tyler says “notwithstanding” their English birth, these first writers in America were Americans. We may not exclude them from our story of American literature. “They founded that literature, they are its fathers, they stamped their spiritual lineaments upon it, and we shall never deeply enter into the meaning it back affectionately to its beginning with them”. It was in the late 18th and early 19th centuries that the nation’s first novels were published. With the war of 1812 and an increasing desire to produce uniquely American literature and culture, a number of key new literary figures emerged, perhaps most prominently Washington century poets were Walt Whitman (1819-1892) and Emily Dickinson (1830-1886). American poetry reached its peak in the early to mid-20th century.

In the pages of the early books we discover something important, the basic ingredient that make up the American character. The American spirit made up the American character. The American spirit is made up largely on the courage, the industry and the optimism, characteristics that inspire men and women with confidence in attacking any problem that may arise. They wrote in an altogether new setting and what they wrote naturally was influenced by their environment.

The mid-19th century saw the beginning of the great American Literature. The period 1850-55 marked American renaissance. New England was the centre of American writers. The 20th century American literature differs from that of the earlier American literature in so far that modern literature is complex and technically more sophisticated. It is varied in content, simple in language, realistic and individualistic in approach.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century a generation of women writers emerged in America. The development of feminine consciousness also depends on factors like the ability of women to live outside marriage in economic independence, access to equal education and the possibility of creating ‘women’s spaces.’ Further, acquisition of consciousness entails recognition of constructions of the ‘feminine’ in the dominant culture. A long history of educational deprivation and economic dependence on males had denied women avenues of self-knowledge. They had internalised feelings of inferiority, which had to be overcome before they could come into the state of being-in-consciousness. Obstacles had to be crossed and societal changes had to take place, to allow women to live in economic independence.

Donna Louise Tartt is a distinguished Roman Catholic American writer born in Greenwood, Mississippi and raised in the nearby town of Grenada. She was a bookish child, the eldest daughter of Don Tartt. Her father Don Tartt was a rockabilly Musician turned freeway “service station owner-cum-local politician”. When she was only 5 years old, Tartt started writing poetry. Because she was thought to be sickly, she spent many days home from school. She was particularly a fan of nineteenth-century British authors Charles Dickens and Thomas de Quincey. Tartt spent much of her time reading. At the age of 13, Tartt published her first work, a sonnet, in a Mississippi-based literary journal. As a teenager, she worked at the local library which enhanced her passion in reading. In 1981, Tartt entered the University of Mississippi, so her writing caught the attention of her professor Willie Morris.

After her first year at the University of Mississippi, Tartt was transferred to a private college in Vermont, Bennington College. There, she continued to enhance her knowledge of Greek and English literature. She also became friends with at least two future important novelists, Bret Easton Ellis and Jill Eisenstadt. Ellis was already working on what would be his defining novel, *Less Than Zero*. By the end of her years at Bennington, Tartt began to work on what would become her first novel, *The Secret History*. “Tartt says writing a book is one step beyond a Twain.” While living in New York City and Boston, Tartt continued to work on *The Secret History*. Ellis introduced Tartt to his literary agent, International Creative Management's Amanda Urban, who became Tartt's agent as well. When Tartt was about to complete the manuscript for *The Secret History*, Urban began a bidding war. A manuscript was circulated among those who knew about it, creating demand.

Tartt is famous for her portrayal of the real world of social class, social stratification, guilt and aesthetic beauty. The novelist brings out the realistic life of the bourgeoisie and their day to day struggle to cope up with the society. All her novels bring out the pain and the search of the protagonist's lost love and hope. Tartt creates her novel from common issues which deploy the reality of the world. She is the author of the novels *The Secret History* (1992) and *The Little Friend* (2002), which have been translated into thirty languages; *The Goldfinch* (2013), won Pulitzer prize for fiction and Andrew Carnegie medal for Excellence in Fiction in 2014. Bailey's Women's Prize for fiction. She is a graduate of university of Mississippi and Bennington and New York City.

Donna Tartt has won many prizes and awards for her novels. She got WH Smith Literary Award for the novels, *The Little Friend* in 2003 and the Pulitzer Prize (Fiction) for the novel. She has been considered as one among the 100 most influential people in 2014. *The Secret History* was nominated for a number of literary prizes. They included a nomination for the Orange Fiction Prize for *The Little Friend* in 2003 and a place on the long list for the 2003 International Impac Dublin Literary Award. In 2006, Tartt's short story *The Ambush* has been named as the Best American short stories 2006.

Tartt's other contribution to literature were *Tam o' Shanter*, *A Grater Snake*, and *A Christmas Pageant*, these work effectiveness depends on the author's artistic vision, philosophical beliefs and ethics. And non-fiction "Sleepytown: A Southern Gothic Childhood", with *Codeine* in 1992, *Basketball season* in 1993, and *Team Spirit: Memories of Being a Freshman Cheerleader for the Basketball Team* in 1994. The three short stories have suspense mystery where Tartt brings the confrontation of reality and imagination thus the suspense. To achieve the creation of suspense, Tartt draws the readers fully into the world of the story by laying the beautiful groundwork.

In prose, Tartt has largely written in neo-romanticism-inflected prose that borrows heavily from the styling of 19th century literature. This prose style is relatively uncommon in contemporary American literary fiction, particularly given a present tendency by fiction writers and literary critics to favour a brief and to-the-point prose style. This prose style also stands in stark contrast to her former classmate Bret Easton Ellis who is 20th century-inspired minimalist style in *Less Than Zero*, which incorporates a similar setting.

Tartt has an alarming ability to simply break into passages, short or long, from her favorite writings. She quotes, freely and naturally, from Thomas Aquinas, Cardinal Newman, Buddha and Plato as well as David Byrne of Talking Heads and Jonathan Richman of the Modern Lovers and many others. “I know a ton of Poetry by heart, When I was a little kid, first thing I memorized were really long poems by A. A. Milne ... I also know all these things that I was made to learn. I’m sort of this horrible repository of doggerel verse”.

In the decadent 1980s, Jay McInerney, Bret Easton Ellis, Tama Janowitz, Donna Tartt, and Jill Eisenstadt into a loose-knit group known ‘Literary brat pack.’ Tartt’s closest contemporary Bret Easton Ellis is a self-proclaimed satirist whose trademark technique, as a writer is the expression of extreme acts and opinions in an affectless style. Ellis employs a technique of linking novels with common, recurring characters. Author of four controversial novels including *Less than Zero*. He was often attacked for the intolerable violence in his novels, his character’s passivity, and his generally “devoid of morals” aesthetic, especially in 1991’s *American Psycho* which was so violent and bitter. *The Secret History* Donna Tartt and *Lunar Park* by Bret Easton Ellis have applied a new theory Gothic-postmodernism. Through a close reading of the two texts, the authors’ use of the Gothic and the postmodern characteristics and the ways in which they work together to create sublime terror, could be perceived well. It shows that sublime terror primarily takes three forms: the loss of self, the loss of reality and death.

Childhood trauma and recovery are also central to Jay McInerney’s *Bright Lights, Big City* (1984), a work of social satire which depicts the

hedonistic pursuit to pleasure among the yuppie denizens of the club scene whose mission in life is to have more fun than anyone else in New York. The social satire of *Bright Lights, Big City* is more than skin deep and it places the disintegration of the family in a broader context, one of culture degeneracy and decline. For example, the protagonist has a voracious addiction to the New York City: 'Killer Bees', Hero cops, sex friends, Lottery winners, Teenage Terrorists, Liz Taylor, Tough Tots, Sicko creeps, Living Nightmares, Life on other planets, spontaneous Human combustion, Miracle Diet and Coma Babies. This voyeuristic delight at the lurid aberration of late twentieth-century urban society is symptomatic of the protagonist's life.

Tama Janowitz is a contemporary satirist who was named as a member of the Brat pack, for her often grotesque depictions of his life. Her best known work is *'Slaves of New York'* (1986). Which was later adapted into a film in 1989. *Slaves of New York*, Janowitz's follow up to *American Dad*, is a collection of twenty-two short stories many of which originally appeared in the *New Yorker*. Tama Janowitz's focuses on the role of women in the twenty-first century. Her acerbic satires include *The Male Cross-Dresser Support Group* (1992), *A Certain Age* (1999) and *Peyton Amberg* (2003). Mallory Ortberg in his website "The Toast" eulogies Tama as "I consider every moment of my life spent unaware of the existence of novelist Tama Janowitz a complete and utter waste of consciousness... I would build a city of pearl and onyx for Tama" (34).

Tama's same satiric voice "is instantly recognizable," Robert Plunket noted in a review of her next novel, *The Male Cross-Dresser Support Group* for the *New York Times* Book review. Her novel, *By The Shores of Gitchee Gumee*,

she broke away from her customary New York setting to write about life with the Slivenowiczes, a wacky, dysfunctional family living in a trailer on the outskirts of a tacky resort town in upstate New York.

Jill Eisenstadt, like her contemporaries at Bennington, wrote in a sparse minimalist style influenced by such writers as Raymond Carver and Joan Didion. Her first novel, *From Rockaway*, published by Knopf in 1987. Is a coming-of-age tale about four teenagers from Rockaway Beach in Queens. The protagonist, Alex, escapes the working-class milieu with a scholarship to the fictional Camden College. While her three friends work menial jobs and live in the low, spending summer life is guarding and winters doing odd jobs. *From Rockaway* was translated into six languages and optional by film director Sydney Pollack

Tartt's first novel, originally titled *The God of Illusions*, and later published as *The Secret History* (1992). It set at a fictional college and concerns a close-knit group of six students and their professor of classics. The students embark on a secretive plan to stage a bacchanal. The narrator reflects on a variety of circumstances that lead ultimately to murder with the group. Critic A. O. Scott has labelled it as a 'murder mystery in reverse.' The murder, the location and the perpetrators are revealed in the opening pages of *The Secret History* "The snow in the mountains was melting and Bunny had been dead for several weeks before we came to understand the gravity of our situation.... It was one of the biggest manhunts in Vermont history" (1).

Her second novel, *The Little Friend* (2002) is about a mystery centred on a young girl living in the American south in the late 20th century. Her

implicit anxieties about the long-unexplained death of her brother and the dynamics of her extended family are a strong focus, as are the contrasting lifestyle and customs of small-town southerners.

Set in the early 1970s, *The Little Friend* focused on the life as twelve-year-old. Harriet lives in a small Mississippi town and becomes determined to avenge the death of her nine-year-old brother, Robin, which happened when she was an infant. Robin was found hanging in a tree in the yard of the family home. She explores racial and social life in the south in the late 1970s through the filter of the murder of Robin Dufresnes, which occurred twelve years earlier her difficult home life is also a significant focus as the family was devastated by the loss of Robin and never fully recovered. The life of Jesus Christ and some incidents from the Bible are explained to the children of the family of Cleves. The girl's experience makes *The Little Friend* very much a coming of age-story.

The Goldfinch is a novel of shocking narrative energy and power, and mainly focus on coming-of-age. It combines unforgettably vivid characters, mesmerizing language, and breath taking suspense, while plumbing with a philosopher's calm the deepest mysteries of love, identity, and art. It's a beautiful, stay-up-all-night and tell-all-your-friends triumph, an old-fashioned story of loss and obsession, survival and self-invention, and the ruthless machinations of fate. Theo's alienation from the family drives him towards addiction. *The Goldfinch* revolves around the concept of problems of the teenagers involving in crime, guilt, pain and addiction finally, ending up in suffering and alienation and hopelessness. Theo finds Hobie's art of 'Noah's Ark' to be the perfect arrangement of biblical images and Noah, the immense

conservator and the guardian of all those things which he has saved in his ark. “From my chair I had a clear view of Hobie’s Noah’s Ark: paired elephants, zebras; carven beasts marching two by two, clear down to tiny hen and rooster and bunnies and mice bringing up the rear” GF (848).

Tartt’s other writings are myth, novellas, short stories and prose. As of 2002, Tartt was reportedly working on a retelling of the myth of Daedalus and Icarus for the Canon gate Myth Series, a series of novellas in which ancient myths are re-imagined and re-written by contemporary authors. Tartt’s short story *The Ambush* is about a young girl who befriends a newcomer to the neighbourhood and grapples with fallout from the Vietnam War.

Tartt’s works contain a lot of literary themes in them. The recurring literary themes in Tartt’s novels are mainly those related to social class and social stratification, guilt and aesthetic beauty. The New Yorker’s critic, James Wood writes: “its tone, language and story belong in children’s literature”. Wood expands on his opinion on Vanity Fair “Tartt’s novel is not a serious one...it tells a fantastical, even ridiculous tale, based on absurd and improbable premises” (56).

Tartt’s novels are filled with high literary theme such as art, loss, culture, identity and love. The book-industry magazine Kirkus Review writes that the “symbolic echoes Tartt employs are occasionally heavy-handed, and it’s a little too neat that Theo discovers the work of the sublime Dutch master Carel Fabritius himself killed in a powder blast, just before the fateful event that will carry his mother away. Moreover, Kirkus called Donna Tartt’s *The Goldfinch* as an exemplar of the literature of disaster and redemption. Therefore, Tartt states

that everyone has commented on her novel. *The Goldfinch* as it was such a great book and the language was so amazing.

To explore the unsaid and unconscious aspects of Tarrt's character and situation there is a need for a theory as an analytical tool that would make clear the whole dynamics of the relationship between men, women and society. Psychological theories are systems of idea that can explain certain aspects of human thoughts, behaviours and emotions. Researchers of psychology create these theories to make predictions for future human behaviour or events that may take place if certain behaviour exists. Psychoanalysis structure influences the mental processes of the individual 'relating to the analysis of the human psyche'. Psychoanalysis is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as:

A therapeutic method, originated by Sigmund Freud, for treating mental disorders by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the patient's mind and bringing repressed fears and conflicts into the conscious mind, using techniques such as dream interpretation nature, free association. Also: a system of psychological theory is associated with this method.

Before Freud proposed a theoretical basis for understanding the vagaries of human behaviour the realm of the unconscious, or the subconscious as it was often called, provided a mysterious territory between conscious mind and the possibility of some further existence. Freud who says that 'The motive of human society is in the least resort an economic one,' and he made this statement in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. Literature by that

way serves as two edged weapon. It not only keeps the people in discipline, but is also a representation of all those who try to keep themselves in discipline and show the breaking of these codes of normal behaviour at various steps of time. This breaking is physical as well as mental or psychological. Through the scope of a psychoanalytic lens, humans are described as having sexual and aggressive drives. Psychoanalytic theorists believe that human behaviour is deterministic. It is governed by irrational forces, and the unconscious, as well as instinctual and biological drives. Due to this deterministic nature, psychoanalytic theorists do not believe in free will. "The unconscious of one human being can react upon that of another without passing through the conscious".

Carl Jung is well known as the forefather of psychoanalytical theory. He believed that religious expression was manifested from the psyche's yearning for a balanced state of consciousness and unconsciousness. Jung spent many years studying and practising with Sigmund Freud. Jung proposed a second and far deeper level of the unconscious, which he called Collective Consciousness. Native American and other resistance literatures in a desperate attempt to reclaim the past redefine history and assert their cultural identities. A powerful explication of this concept can be seen in Eugene O'Neill's *Emperor Jones*. Jung's theory has also been a cardinal formative influence on Northrop Frye's *Archetypal Criticism*. Jung also postulated the concept of the Self as constituting of the anima and the animus-the anima being the unconscious female component in men, and the animus being the unconscious male component in women

The Secret History by Donna Tartt is totally flabbergast novel about six students studying Greek at a college in Vermont where two of the students actually die. There is a lot going on from a mental standpoint in these characters, which Freud's theory can help with. Despite how horrific the events that happen are, a psychoanalytical approach to the novel allows understanding the mind of the characters. The novel also contains a good amount of foreshadowing to Henry's admission of killing someone. This leads one to see how Richard may have repressed some of the events he witnessed. Talking about the killing of the man during the bacchanal, Henry discusses how "duality ceases to exist; there is no ego, no 'I'" (186). Using Freud's theory, one can assess that this obsession with the idea could potentially be due to an unconscious desire to perform the deed. Henry, throughout the novel, is a quiet gentleman that Richard seems to be able to read well.

The Secret History is, amid its vast entertainingness, is serious book of college novel, the story of friendship and love. But the novel is also about destructive relationship and the intriguing Greek culture. *The Secret History* narrates the story of Richard Papen, a twenty year-old Californian, who in search for meaning in life and a sense of belonging leaves his uninspiring working-class home, his narrow minded, unsupportive, and distant parents and the dreary atmosphere of Plano, and heads to Hampden College in Vermont, attracted by its dream-like environment and the image of inexhaustible opportunities. As Richard moves from the West coast to the East, the direction of the traditional dream is reversed. Richard longs for a life of intellectualism and old world wisdom and finds these in a tightly knit group of Classics students. Adopting a false identity of a son of a wealthy oil baron, Richard

Papen gradually becomes acquainted with the group: Henry Winter, Bunny Corcoran, Francis Abernathy and the fraternal twins Charles and Camilla.

Having studied Greek in California, Richard is able to find some common ground with the group and navigate himself into their midst. The oddity of the group fascinates Richard. Led by their charismatic and mysterious leader, Julian Morrow, the seemingly mismatched members of the group are isolated both academically and socially, and for the most part physically, from the rest of the campus. At first it seems to Richard that the characters are bound together by their love of Classical languages and cultures. As the novel progresses, however, Richard senses a tangible tension within the group which, as Richard learns, originates in a brutal, yet accidental murder of a local farmer committed during a successful attempt to perform an ancient Bacchanalian ritual. At this point in the novel, Bunny, who did not participate in the ritual but has learned about it later, is on the verge of cracking. He has begun to harass and blackmail the others, taking advantage of their financial wealth and emotional weaknesses. When it appears that he might go public with his knowledge of the murder, plans for his elimination are made.

Richard, who by now identifies with the group and has been accepted as its member, is pulled into the events and finds no difficulties in participating in the murder. However, Bunny's elimination was not only an attempt to prevent him from revealing the murder of the farmer. Bunny's behaviour had shaken the cohesion of the group and undermined the importance and success of the Bacchanalian ritual. Nonetheless, the characters' efforts to restore unity and to continue their lives by murdering Bunny fails, as in the awakening guilt and

remorse they become increasingly antagonistic towards one another. Finally, as Henry caves in under the pressure and kills himself, the group is shattered and it disbands. *The Secret History* manifests the dangers of pursuing the dream with extreme measures. As such, by showing that the characters' dreams ultimately fail, the novel does not so much comment on the inherent failure of the American dream, but rather contributes to the definitions of the appropriate methods of dreaming. Throughout American history the ideals of the dream have been disseminated through various cultural artefacts, such as popular culture, and different American institutional and social systems. Moreover, the ideals of the dream have guided and coloured the actions, worldview and mentality of individuals and communities.

The Murder mystery encountered by Richard Papen among his classics friends in Vermont College and also after discovering of murder done by his friends which led to the development of guilt and apprehensiveness. That Bunny's elimination was not only an attempt to prevent him from revealing the murder of the farmer. Bunny's behaviour had shaken the cohesion of the group and undermined the importance and success of the Bacchanalian ritual.

Chapter Two

A Study of Young Arrogance

A Secret History by Donna Tartt is a mind-boggling novel. The main body of the novel is indeed a 'history' of sorts in that the narrator recounts the events of one academic year in chronological sequence. Problem of student groupism at the elite Hampden College Vermont lead to alcoholism, series of crime, murder and suicide. It commences with the murder of a student in the early days of April by five other students. They were studying Greek at a college in Vermont where two of them actually die.

Tartt reveals the murder of Bunny in the first page. There is a lot going on from a mental standpoint of these characters. It may seem obvious that the line of the narration would eventually lead to the arrest of these five students, however, it may only seem. To define this work solely as the murder mystery, the characters in the novel are richly nuanced. As they perform evil acts their lives are messy, plagued with alcohol and drug problems, mental health issues and unrequited love. Coming-of-age is typically associated with high school, how college students struggling to figure out what they want to achieve in school and beyond. The semantics of the novel is much deeper and not restricted to solving of a crime. In fact neither the state police nor the FBI are not able to solve this murder, two murders as a matter of fact.

The narrator in the novel is Richard Papen, a bookish loner, intelligent, sensitive, and ambitious. He recapitulates the events of some eight years previously with a detachment innate to his personality and reinforced by the

lapse of time. A twenty year-old Californian, who in search for meaning in life and a sense of belonging leaves his uninspiring working-class home, his narrow minded, unsupportive, and distant parents and the dreary atmosphere of Plano, California, and heads to Hampden College in Vermont, attracted by its dream-like environment and the image of inexhaustible opportunities. Richard lived his whole life in Plano California, a hot, dusty place, full of harsh, transparent light that exposed reality for what it was. Richard's hatred of his birthplace and desire for change of home explain his lengthy descriptions which he found in a passage in an old notebook, written when he was eighteen,

‘There is to me about this place a smell of rot, the smell of rot that ripe fruit makes. Nowhere, ever, have the hideous mechanics of birth and copulation and death – those monstrous upheavals of life that the Greeks call *miasma*, defilement – been so brutal or been painted up to look so pretty; have so many people put so much faith in lies and mutability and death death death.’ (9)

Richard excelled in Greek language in California and won a award from the classics department. It was his favourite class because that was one held regularly. By the trick of fate Richard came upon to see the brochure of Hampden College, Hampden, Vermont, which was two years old brochure in his closet. Indeed Richard doesn't know why he saved that letter, because it was pretty. He spent many hours staring at the photography, even to the late years Richard can remember those pictures, it was “like pictures in a storybook one loved as a child. Radiant meadows, mountains vaporous in the trembling

distance; leaves ankle-deep on a gusty autumn road; bonfires and fog in the valleys; cellos, dark windowpanes, snow” (10).

Richard tore the information form at the back of the brochure and started to fill it. The following month went by endless dreary battle of paperwork. His father refused to complete the financial aid paper; consequently he stole the tax returns from the small cupboard in a car in front of the passenger seat. Meanwhile some sort of guerrilla warfare was taking place for eight months. As long as many years have passed still Richard didn’t know how he ended up in Hampden.

At first Richard was bored of studying biology, his grades were very poor. Then Richard switched to English literature without the knowledge of his parents, he felt like “cutting his own throat by this” (8). After switching to literature Richard feels much better. When Richard finally makes it and goes to study at Hampden he realises that the actual campus does not fall short of his expectations, at least at first sight. In a very telling excerpt Richard explains how he could not sleep his first night at Hamden dormitories:

I sat on the bed during the twilight while the walls went slowly from gray to gold to black, listening to a soprano’s voice climb dizzily up and down somewhere at the other end of the hall until the last light of day was completely gone ... and I can’t remember the air ever seeming as high and cold and rarefied as it was that night, or ever feeling farther away from the low-slung lines of dusty Plano. (12)

Richard met with his academic advisor, a professor of French named George Laforgue and he told him that, he was intended to sign up for Greek studies. However, Laforgue objected by telling that “‘I am afraid there may be a problem,’ he said in accented English” (12). At first Laforgue asked Richard to take German or Italian classes, but Richard said that he would speak to the Greek teacher instead. Laforgue portrays Greek professor Julian Morrow as “his voice bore a hint of sarcasm” (13), and also he said brilliant professor. Furthermore Richard tracked down the Greek professor and asked Julian to take him to ancient Greek class. Suddenly his face fell and said “‘Oh. I’m sorry,’” (15) and Julian stated that his classes have already been filled with five students. Richard began to take other classes and meet other students on campus, and started a part-time job with a psychology professor named Dr. Roland.

Richard longs for a life of intellectualism and old world wisdom and finds these in a tightly knit group of Classics students. Adopting a false identity of a son of a wealthy oil baron, “On leaving home I was able to fabricate a new and far more satisfying history, full of striking, simplistic environmental influences; a colorful past, easily accessible to strangers” (5). Richard gradually becomes acquainted with the group: Henry Winter, Bunny Corcoran, Francis Abernathy and the fraternal twins Charles and Camilla Macaulay. The false identity of Richard was identified by Henry, “Don't worry. You hide it very cleverly,' he said, going back to his book. Then he looked up again. 'The others really don't understand that sort of thing, you know” (92).

The backgrounds of Richard’s companions at Hampden are similarly tragic in a mundane way. While Charles, Camilla, and Francis have grown up

amongst the upper-crust, academic aesthetics that Richard so doggedly pursues, they are just as dissatisfied with the disagreeable circumstances of their own lives. In the opening pages of the novel, when Richard is detailing the shortcomings of his own life in Plano, he contrasts it with the upbringings of his friends at Hampden. While he romanticizes some aspects of their early lives (tacitly admitting that his own perception of them may be somewhat warped) he is quick to establish that, like him, their parental circumstances are less than ideal. “Charles and Camilla are orphans... and Francis’ mother had him at seventeen and was largely absent from his childhood” (6). Also like Richard, any negative effects from these parenting situations are deemphasized in favour of other issues that seem to plague the three characters more severely. But where Richard takes the issue primarily with the poor aesthetics of his background over his insufficient support of his parents, Charles, Camilla, and Francis find fault with certain attributes of themselves, and seeks to conceal them. Charles and Camilla have been engaged in an incestuous relationship for a significant period of time, and Francis is gay, but only partially open about it, something that is particularly understandable given the novel’s 1980s setting. The tragic impact that these circumstances have on these characters is relatively less clear compared to Richard’s own circumstances, given that the novel is narrated exclusively from Richard’s perspective.

Henry Winter was said to be wealthy; and spoke a number of languages, ancient and modern, and had published a translation of *Anacreon*. A predilection for translating *Paradise Lost* into Latin verse in his spare time and keeping a Latin diary, but also has a talent, as it later turns out, for ruthless manipulation. He maintains a secretive and iconoclastic existence.

Edmund Bunny Corcoran is not a sophisticated intellectual and actually struggles with a number of learning disabilities. As a Student from Connecticut he takes great pains to keep up the family front of wealth and social stature which has fallen by the wayside. Bunny also comes from a family that has the appearance of wealth, but does not have access to any money and relies on everyone around him to subsidize his expensive lifestyle. “Bunny Corcoran was his name, Bunny being somehow short for Edmund. His voice was loud and honking, and carried in the dining halls” (17). Bunny starts studying ancient Greek to help with his dyslexia; his parents and teachers thought that it might help to read a different alphabet; he is more or less forced to take the subject.

Richard gains access to the close-knit group by showing off his knowledge of Greek. The students are in the College Library-the realm of knowledge-where Richard overhears them troubling themselves over which case of a noun to use in a translation of an English text to Greek. He provides them with the correct answer as if giving them a secret password through which he proves he is worthy of their attention and entrance into the group,

‘It’s not place whither, it’s place to. I put my money on the ablative case.’

There was a confused rattling of papers.

‘Wait,’ said Charles. His voice was a lot like his sister’s – hoarse, slightly southern. ‘Look at this. They’re not just sailing to Carthage, they’re sailing to *attack* it.’...

Suddenly something occurred to me. I closed the book and put it on the shelf and turned around. ‘Excuse me’? I said. Immediately they stopped talking, startled, and turned to stare at me.

‘I’m sorry, but would the locative case do?’

Nobody said anything for a long moment.

‘Locative?’ said Charles.

‘Just add *zde* to *karchido*,’ I said. I think it’s *zde*. If you use that, you won’t need a preposition, except the *epi* if they’re going to war. It implies “Carthage-ward,” so you won’t have to worry about a case, either.’ (21)

Charles started to look at the pages and Camilla was asking whether it is ‘exists for Carthage.’ Richard was confused by the sudden glare of attention. Bunny came grasped the Richard’s hand and asked how long he has been studying Greek. Though studying Greek for two years in California, Richard didn’t have the chance to get into classics group in Vermont. But Richard had been trying to get into the group, then Charles, Camilla and Bunny said to meet Julian again and instruct to “Take him some flowers and tell him you love Plato and he’ll be eating out of your hands” (22).

At Hampden College, Richard, not without difficulty, manages to gain entry into the select course of a charismatic but eccentric professor of Greek, Julian Morrow, where he meets a coterie of five elitist and somewhat pretentious students who are radically to change his life. At first they appear to

be innocuously dilettante, albeit spoilt by their moneyed backgrounds, but as the novel progresses, their negative traits gradually become more marked.

Julian is a mysterious professor, wealthy man who is deeply passionate about his subject. He teaches classics in Hampden College. He donates his salary back to the college, so he gets away with being very eccentric. Julian only teaches very small classes of handpicked students, he places his students on a pedestal, certain that they cannot do anything wrong, while he himself might have fallen under the scrutiny of the federal government. Morrow has ties with royalty and celebrities alike. Julian has a mysterious past, and when he finds out that his students have killed Bunny, he abruptly leaves the college and moves away. He proves to be cold and indifferent to Henry's death, and never sees any of his students again. Julian always insists his students need only one teacher, and, most importantly, they are geographically separated from the rest of the college since their class is situated in the far end of the campus, in a building which is abandoned. This place is called "the Lyceum" (15), "some sort of Platonic microcosm of what he thought a classroom should be" (34), and (sarcastically) "the Inner Sanctum ... The Holy of Holies" (579). Julian's world reminds one of a quaint little verse of unknown origin: "When eras die their legacies are watched by strange police and professors in New England guard the glory that was Greece."

The Lyceum is a reference to Ancient Greek Academics, most commonly associated with Aristotle. The Lyceum at Hampden is located near a grove of trees exactly like the original Lyceum in Classical Athens. While Richard wants to take a Greek class, as he went to see Julian in the Lyceum,

It was a small building on the edge of campus, old and covered with ivy in such a manner as to be almost indistinguishable from its landscape.... I walked along briskly, looking at the closed doors for numbers or names until I came to one that had a brass card holder and, within it, an engraved card that read JULIAN MORROW.... A face looked out at me. It was a small, wise face, as alert and poised as a question; and though certain features of it were suggestive of youth – the elfin upsweep of the eyebrows, the deft lines of nose and jaw and mouth – it was by no means a young face, and the hair was snow white. (15)

Alongside the quote from professor Laforgue (French professor) about Julian, this is illustrated by the interrogation Richard is submitted to by Henry before their first class. This shows how single-minded the members of the group are. What matters is what is important to them and they do not care very much about other people. Henry comments on this to Richard in his garden. He says: ““you don’t feel a great deal of emotion for other people, do you? ...It doesn’t matter, ... ‘I don’t either’” (556). After noting that the knowledge of these two characters, Henry and Julian, is as esoteric as it is, the fact that they are the leaders of the group based on this knowledge becomes interesting. Seen in this light, the knowledge that the others admire is not real knowledge but the illusion of knowledge.

After petitioning the professor and inserting himself into the group of five on several occasions, Julian Morrow accepts Richard as his student on the

condition that he drops all of his other classes; Richard is accepted into the programme. He is the keen observer of the students, Richard says, “Four boys and a girl, they were nothing so unusual at a distance. At close range, though, they were an arresting party – at least to me, who had never seen anything like them, and to whom they suggested a variety of picturesque and fictive qualities” (17). Henry Winter, a dark-haired, dark-suit-wearing, tall student appears to Richard as the genius and leader of the group. Twins Charles and Camilla appear to Richard at first as though they are boyfriend and girlfriend, but when Richard realises that they are siblings, Camilla becomes his unrequited love interest. Francis, who wears fake pince-nez and is described by Richard as “angular and elegant” (18), is a bisexual male who is not involved in a relationship. Finally, Bunny Corcoran, his voice “loud and honking” is a blond, preppy East Coast boy who Richard says sounds “like Thurston Howell on ‘Gilligan’s Island’” (20).

On the day of the lunch with Bunny, Richard ran into Judy Poovey another student from California, who shared her opinion of Bunny and the other Greek students. Judy liked Bunny, but was suspicious of the others because at a recent party, she had a confrontation with Camilla, and Henry and Charles ended up beating a friend of hers. Richard enjoyed a lavish lunch with Bunny, and both of them got very drunk. However, at the end of the meal, Bunny claimed to have no money, and expected Richard to cover the meal. When Richard explained that he could not, Bunny called Henry, who came to the restaurant to pay. The next day, Charles and Camilla told Richard about the lunch, explaining that Henry and Bunny are actually close friends. They also invited Richard to their apartment for dinner; at dinner, Henry, Francis, and

Bunny joined them, and the evening ended up being somewhat awkward. However, a few days later, Richard ran into Camilla at a party on campus, and she invited Richard to join them for the weekend at Francis's country house.

Although Richard gradually becomes accepted into the group, he continues to feel like an outsider. This sensation is boosted by the increasing tension within the group which Richard witnesses but for which he cannot find a reason. Richard is puzzled by the odd behaviour of others. Richard also occasionally noticed strange details, such as items out of place, and herbs and plants strewn about the house, but never took any of this too seriously. The first oddity was discovered by Richard, "One afternoon, of a large copper pot bubbling on the back burner of the stove, a peculiar smell emanating from it... The pot was filled with limp, almond-shaped leaves, boiling away in about half a gallon of blackish water" (102).

For the fall semester, Richard enjoys an idyllic academic life, filled with lively discussions about art, literature, and ancient philosophy, as-well-as cocktail parties, and croquet matches at Francis's country house. Not long after the Classics professor Julian leads a class discussion about the "terrible seduction of Dionysian ritual" (42), Henry encourages the twins and Francis to regularly sneak out of Francis' old family home in the countryside to which the students retreat on weekends in the middle of the night to attempt a Bacchanalian revelry.

Bacchanalia celebrations were in honour of the god Bacchus in ancient Rome. They involved heavy drinking and wild behaviour, as Bacchus is the god

of wine. Bacchanalia evolved in Southern Italy and had spread to Rome by the second century BCE.

‘Only this. To receive the god, in this or any other mystery, one has to be in a state of *euphemia*, cultic purity. That is at the very center of Bacchic mystery. Even Plato speaks of it. Before the Divine can take over, the mortal self– the dust of us, the part that decays – must be made clean as possible.’
(184)

Henry then relates to Richard the details of a Bacchanalian ritual that the characters had performed in the autumn, inspired by one of Julian’s lectures. The lecture had dealt with notions of the self and how the ancient Greeks had been able to throw themselves into a trance which would release their primitive, subconscious selves. Particularly Henry had been fascinated by the idea of losing oneself, as he experienced his life as a constraint. The whole Bacchanal thing is described as something sublime, spiritual, purging, being worth of sacrifice – the blood was spilled. There is only a slight hint on the part of the author that the bacchanal could not have been complete without bloodletting. The characters, then, had decided to attempt the ritual.

Knowledge for Richard as well as for the rest of the Greek students group is the vehicle through which they gain power in the context of college life. At the same time, their desire to acquire the knowledge of Greek and Latin is what brought them together in the first place. It is important to note that what brings these students together and makes them equals, not in class but in that they all belong to Morrow’s select cohort, is their shared desire to explore the

ancient languages of Greek and Latin, erroneously believing that this kind of knowledge would distinguish them from the rest of the students and that it would include them in a secret, obscure and mysterious ancient world (rites) accessible only to the initiated.

Henry encourages the twins and Francis to regularly sneak out of Francis' old family home in the countryside to which the students retreat on weekends in the middle of the night to attempt a Bacchanalian revelry. Apparently, Richard is too new to the group to have been invited to participate at all, and Bunny is left out of the group's activities after his lack of seriousness destroyed the group's effort to enter into the altered state they were working to achieve on previous occasions.

On the first day of Julian class after the winter break, Richard was stunned and relieved to see Charles, Camilla, Francis and Henry. However, Richard was confused he learned that when Charles and Camilla got stuck at a country house. Once Richard discovered that four of them Charles, Camilla, Henry and Francis had booked the tickets to Argentina. Without the money the group decided to cancel their trip. Henry then confessed to Richard that they killed someone. As he says that they tried many times to achieve a state of transcendence through intoxication, group sex, music, and generally removing all social constraints. One night on the country house, the four revellers successfully reached the altered state they have been seeking, and they accidentally killed a farmer just off the edges of the estate property. Over the next days and weeks, the farmer's murder was in the news.

They initially included Bunny in the plan, but became annoyed with him not taking the rituals seriously enough, and started leaving him out. After many false attempts, Henry, Charles, Camilla, and Francis finally achieved a sort of trance-like state in which they ran through the woods, having visions and attaining a kind of spiritual enlightenment. However, when they came to, they realised that they had somehow killed a farmer, although no one has a clear idea of how it happened. They were not sure of what to do and, they fled, leaving the body in the woods. Henry told Richard that they had almost gotten away with their crime, but Bunny intervened.

Henry and Francis also explained how Bunny found out about the crime. On the night of the bacchanal, Bunny and Richard had gone to the movies. Afterwards, Bunny decided to go to Henry's apartment to frighten him when he got home. However, Bunny fell asleep and therefore was still at the apartment when Henry, Charles, Camilla, and Francis arrived. Bloody and frantic, after leaving the body in the woods, they had driven directly back to Henry's apartment. They vainly tried to lie to Bunny, telling him that they had hit a deer with their car, but Bunny clearly did not believe them. By chance, a few weeks later, Bunny saw an article in the local paper mentioning a farmer who had been found dead on the night of November 10. Bunny realised that this was the same night he saw the other students returning in bloody clothes, and began to tease and taunt them with the idea that he knows they have killed someone. Since nothing was confirmed, Henry decided to take Bunny to Rome in order to pacify him and in hopes that Bunny would lose interest in his suspicions. However, Bunny grated on Henry with his insistence on spending a lot of money and failing to appreciate the beauty of Rome. Due to the stress, Henry developed a

severe migraine and was incapacitated in their hotel room for several days. When Henry woke up, he realised that Bunny had read his diary, in which he had written about the crime. Bunny now had his suspicions confirmed, and began to be more annoying than ever. Exhausted and desperate to get away, Henry abruptly left Bunny in Rome and travelled back to America by himself.

Bunny begins to tease the four revellers about their possible involvement in the killing. Bunny does not know, but he suspects, that they are culpable. Henry, unable to bear the teasing and heckling, convinces Francis, the twins and Richard that Bunny must be eliminated for their own protection. A plan to poison Bunny with mushrooms is scratched for a more opportunistic plan of pushing him over a ledge while he is on one of his regular hikes in the secluded woods. The remainder of the tale is a description of the paranoia and fear that the remaining Classics students feel after the murder of their peer. Plotting to kill their second victim, Bunny, in the academic space of the campus the students render the campus an *unheimlich*, uncanny terrain. Bunny, who is the 'bad student' and functions as their foil in their Secret History is nothing but a hindrance to them. He is not their intellectual equal and on top of that he dares to blackmail them relentlessly. They see no other solution but to get rid of him. In this respect, it is particularly ironic when they discuss killing him in the college's dining room which is called the Commons; the dining room is named the Commons to denote the democratic spirit of the University, a place commonly shared by people who are intellectually equal.

Richard is in part attracted to the other students in Greek class because they seem mysterious and standoffish. He is enthralled by the idea of sharing in

their secrets, but he also doesn't realise just how dark those secrets are. Richard will later learn that the secrets closely guarded by the group include murder, addiction, blackmail, and incest. While he initially believed having access to these secrets would give him a sense of belonging, Richard comes to realise that the secrets just leave him burdened and in jeopardy. The other students are placed in a position of peril as Bunny blackmails them with the information that they killed the farmer, and after he participates in Bunny's murder, Richard's whole future is in jeopardy if the crime is ever exposed. Richard also has to carry the weight of these terrible secrets, including witnessing Henry's suicide, burned into his psyche forever. The important point, though, is that they are paranoid and fearful that they will be caught; they are not guilty or remorseful about the killing. The murder of the farmer is quickly forgotten; however Bunny's disappearance drew attention of the authorities.

While all the friends gathered together at the hotel, Charles stormed into the room with a gun. He threatened to kill Henry, and while the other struggled to intervene, Richard was shot in the stomach. The noise had by then attracted hotel staff and other guests, who were in the process of trying to break into the room. Henry was able to get a hold of the gun, and then to everyone's shock, he shot himself in the head. Henry shoots himself, Charles falls to alcoholism, the group falls apart and Richard ruminates on how relatively unchanged his life remains.

Richard spent several weeks in hospital recovering from the gunshot wound, missing Henry's funeral. Richard started dating Sophie a fellow student in Hampden. They both moved back to California, where Richard went to

graduate school to study Jacobean tragedy. After certain days they broke up. While Richard was studying in California, he received a letter from Francis, clearly indicating Francis's intention to commit suicide. Richard rushed to Boston, where Francis was in hospital, recovering from having tried to kill himself. Francis explained that he had hidden his identity as a gay man from his conservative family, but his grandfather had found out and threatened to cut Francis off financially unless Francis married a woman. Francis reluctantly got engaged, but the strain of the secrecy led to his suicide attempt.

Camilla joined them (she had also received a letter from Francis) and the three friends spent several days together in Boston. Camilla explained that Charles had continued to struggle with alcoholism, and had gone to rehab. He met a woman there, and the two of them have been living in a small town in Texas. Charles and Camilla no longer had contact. Before he left Boston, Richard proposed to Camilla but she turned him down. Camilla had devoted her whole life to taking care of her sick and elderly aunt. She also unveiled the secret that she still loves Henry. Agitated, Richard parted from Camilla and drove back to California alone.

At the end of the novel, Richard provides updates on the lives of various minor characters in the novel. Julian had never been in contact with any of his students, and had declined to attend Henry's funeral. Francis went ahead with marrying his fiancée, and lives with her in New York. Finally, Richard recounts a dream in which he meets with Henry in some sort of underworld or afterlife which looked like "an old city, like London – underpopulated by war or disease. It was night; the streets were dark, bombed-out, abandoned" (627). Henry seems

trapped in some sort of limbo “I thought I’d find you here, said a voice at my elbow” (628). Richard was happy to see Henry after his death and acknowledges that he is unhappy, but Henry also points out that Richard is not happy either. Then Henry vanished from the place.

Chapter Three

The Psychological Framework of Greek Tragedy

The noble poets of Greece, who knew how to depict heroes, did not at all mind letting them weep when they were in the grip of pain. 'Tears are a sign of goodness in a man,' they used to say. I will not live with people whose hearts are stony and whose eyes are dry! I curse those who are happy and who want the unhappy only for a spectacle.

(Goethe, *Elective Affinities* [1809] 1999, p.112)

Aristotle says "Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude in language embellished each kind of artistic ornament. The several kinds being found in several parts of play in the form of action not of narrative through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions. Tragedy is 'a serious accident, crime or natural catastrophe' and 'a sad event, a calamity.' Tragedy: the idea of conflict, sacrifice, retribution, knowledge, fate as well as the characteristics: hamartia, narration, language and unity. It also has a direct reference to a Greek tragedy since much of its plot is based on Euripides' *Bacchae*: which is centred, as is *The Secret History*, around the God Dionysus: The God of wine, disguised, and ritual madness. Therefore, not only do *The Secret History*'s structure, plot and characters seem to resemble that of a Greek Tragedy, but through doing this, it encapsulates the characters' 'hamartia,' or fatal flaw which leads to their downfall.

Aristotle claimed that the moral and psychological framework of a Greek Tragedy is '*Hamartia*', or fatal flaw of the character, which is what, leads them to their downfall. In the first sentence of chapter one, Richard, the narrator, asks:

Does such a thing 'as the fatal flaw', that showy dark crack running down the middle of a life, exist outside literature?' and then answers 'I used to think it didn't. Now I think it does. And I think that mine is this: a morbid longing for the picturesque at all costs. (5)

Donna Tartt is an ideal candidate for a study on the use of Greek tragedy in the modern novel. Tartt began *The Secret History* whilst still at Bennington and chose to focus on classical ideas for her first novel, a story about two murders perpetrated by a group of classicists in a New England college, not too dissimilar from her own college. Indeed, *The Secret History* has been split into two books. Book one, portrays arduous, and is full of complications as Richard aspires to join the select clique and becomes an unwitting tool in their hands. The *peripeteia* forms a pivot, or climax, between the two books, where Bunny's murder becomes a point of no return for Richard. Book two, shows expansion or unravelling, where Richard is drawn further into the guilt-ridden world of his friends, with all the distrust, confusion and hubris that involves. The eventual catastrophe comes when Henry turns a gun on himself and commits suicide. At this point the group reaches *anagnorisis*, or recognition, of their awful crime and natural justice occurs. For the readers, they find this structure as unnatural, but were gripped throughout by the power of the narration. At no point does the

form feel forced or stretched in order to reach the set points, and though the novel took her ten years to write, the period has been justified by the depth of thought and skill that has gone into its creation.

Another aspect that Tartt shares with Greek tragedies is the emphasis on both knowledge and language. Aristotle in *Poetics* displays that tragedy can involve moments of recognition, in which characters change from ignorance to knowledge. This idea surrounds the plot of the novel, in which the threat of the recognition of society drives their action of murder, and haunts them afterwards. *The Secret History* uses many techniques favoured by the Greek tragedians and is also interwoven with extracts and references from the classics. Indeed Tartt's prologue uses the classic device of commencing a story in *medias res*, i.e. in the middle of the action. Her *medias res* is perfectly extracted from precisely midway in the storyline, at the end of Book One and the beginning of Book Two, where Bunny Corcoran is murdered. In her prologue, Tartt also gives the ending away, by naming both the victim and the murderers. This is another classical technique, as the ancient Greeks were much more interested in the 'Why?' than the 'What?' Indeed Richard Pape narrates the novel in the first person as a confessional memoir. He tells us, right from the start, that he has murdered and avoided justice, as have his friends. The novel then progresses into Book One, as Richard jumps back in time, (as is typical of a story commencing with *media res*) to relate the story of how he first met the other principal characters. Then the plot travels forward in a linear fashion (though with occasional flashbacks), until we find out that Bunny Corcoran was murdered to prevent him informing the police of a previous manslaughter committed by his classmates.

Book Two continues linearly to its conclusion and epilogue, where the story is neatly wrapped up, with all consequences explained. As with Aristotle, Tartt appears to find Plot of greater importance than Character. Her plotting is near perfect, but Tartt has been criticised for having somewhat flat and stereotypical characters. Perhaps this is because more thought has gone into these characters as 'classic types' than is, at first, obvious. Aristotle believed that heroes should show 'goodness,' i.e. they should not intend evil none of the group do (except possibly Henry), as the bacchanal was accidental, and the death of Bunny justified as the only way out. Henry further justifies his actions to Julian, by saying that Bunny '...wasn't a happy person in those last months...' (574) as if putting him out of his misery was actually a kindness.

If the characters do appear stereotypical, then Tartt has possibly intended them to be so. Aristotle also stated that characters should be true to type and behave in a manner that is appropriate to their status. They should also remain consistent. The very aspects that could label them as flat, in a modern sense i.e. their unchanging characteristics so typical of their type - Camilla's goodness, Francis's homosexuality, Charles' alcoholism, Henry's brilliance and Bunny's awful crassness - these characteristics are precisely the aspects that would make them successful in a Greek sense.

Richard, the principal character, is not a great or powerful man, but otherwise he is a typically Greek tragic hero. He is likeable and yet slightly flawed. He never intends murder, but gets drawn into it by his desperate desire to belong to this elite group, and so be better than from Ancient Greek (*Hoi polloi*) means 'the many', or common people. This is his hamartia, or fatal flaw.

Were he not so anxious to belong, he might not have made some of the decisions he did, nor be so easily led and manipulated by Henry. Richard's story goes from good to bad - he starts off as an able student setting out on his university career, and ends up in a rut of self-recrimination, an embittered, insomniac academic with ulcers, emotionally destroyed and unable to face people or life. Richard is stuck in his own personal Jacobean cloak-and-dagger tragedy, always aware of the necessity to watch his own back, for even at this stage in his life, new evidence may yet turn up.

Tartt's other characters are based more on those from Euripides than Aeschylus or Sophocles. For a start, she has allowed one principal female character, the twin Camilla. Had Aeschylus or Sophocles inspired Tartt, then the classics group would have been an all-male clique. It is also Euripidean that Richard, Camilla and her brother, Charles come from fairly normal backgrounds. They are not nobility, nor the great men of a classic tragedy. However, the classicists have developed a cult of elitism, and are distinct from the rest of the university student body as a result. Henry has achieved greatness through the brilliance of his mind and Francis does really come from a high society family. Bunny, the eventual victim of the group, is also very well connected, though actually poor. His character is set up from the start as an irritant. Bunny is famous around campus for being a party animal, and is loved by everyone, except those who actually know him. He has a knack for finding each of his so-called friends' pressure points: like a bloodhound, Bunny sniffs out Richard's shame in his nondescript Californian background and then belittles him at every opportunity. Bunny is a shameless sponge, but insists on calling Henry 'tight.' Homosexuality and incest are common Greek themes and

Bunny regularly picks on Francis as a homosexual, whilst Charles and Camilla are needed for their incestuous love. It is almost as if Bunny's irritating and cruel character demands the murder. *The Secret History* has been compared to Hitchcock's film 'Rope,' in which two men hold a party directly after a murder, which has been undertaken as philosophical experiment. One character remains dispassionate, whilst the other displays his guilt and crumbles under the strain. Members of Tartt's clique are similarly split – Camilla and her brother are so shaken by the farmer's murder that she becomes an elective mute whilst he starts to drink excessively. "It is a terrible thing, that we did," said Francis abruptly. 'I mean, this man was not Voltaire we killed. But still. It's a shame. I feel bad about it.' 'Well, of course, I do too,' said Henry matter-of-factly. 'But not enough to go to jail for it' (220), Francis and Henry were less bothered about the murder.

Francis does however eventually crumble and even the clinically cold Henry has some difficulty dealing with his friends' emotional breakdowns. For some reason, though, the reader is left fascinated by Henry, rather than horrified, despite the fact he has orchestrated all the crimes committed by the group. Perhaps this is because, of all the characters in this novel, Henry embodies Dionysian spirit – he is able to release the rational part of his mind to follow a theoretical Apollonian argument to its ultimate conclusion. We never truly believe Henry to be immoral, and therefore cannot hate him nor see him as a monster. Perhaps the fact that he is amoral, and genuinely believes he is correct in his intellectualising of the situation, allows us to forgive him his actions. We also share with Richard that yearning for a special friendship with someone so obviously above us in intellect, personality and demeanour. Like

Richard, one does not care that one is being manipulated, tricked into liking a murderer. The fact that may share page space with the Apollo-like Henry is enough. Julian Morrow is tutor to the protagonists. This character seems heavily based on Aristotle, but also appears to have similarities to an elitist Classics teacher, Claude Fredericks, who taught Tarrt at Bennington. Reminiscent of Aristotle, Julian is considered by his proteges to be almost otherworldly in his intellect and they have a quasi-religious respect for him. Julian himself, rather vainly, compares his one tutor one student method of teaching to that of Plato/Aristotle or Aristotle/Alexander. When the students' world collapses and Julian abandons his faculty, Richard hears a rumour: Julian has been appointed as royal tutor to the crown prince of Suaoriland, East Africa. Richard fantasizes:

But this story, though false, took on a curious life in my imagination. What better fate for Julian than someday being the power behind the Suoari throne, than transforming his pupil into a philosopher-king? I like to think that he - as Aristotle did - would bring up a man who would conquer the world. (626)

Richard has failed to acknowledge that his hero is actually a weak man, who, in reality has inspired five students towards a murderous bacchanal and then another murder to cover up the first: these are hardly the results of a great mentor. Julian, however, takes no responsibility for his students' actions, and appears horrified when he learns of their actions. Anxious to save his own reputation, Julian withdraws and this hurts Henry far worse than if his mentor had turned him in to the police. Henry loved Julian 'more than anyone in the

world', (586) and is devastated. Perhaps by the end of the novel, Julian has realised that his influence on his proteges was more that of Seneca (private tutor to Nero) than Aristotle. One can only hope that Julian himself turned down the Suoariland tutorship, for fear of creating one final uber-monster, a 'Henry' with absolute power - able to cause destruction on a national or international scale. One, a tutor called Georges Laforgue, tries to deflect Richard from his decision to study under Julian, where he fears Richard will become isolated.

'Nice-but-dim' student, Judy Poovey, warns Richard of Henry's violence, after Henry breaks Spike Romney's collarbone for coming onto Camilla at a Frat Party. Judy may be stupid, but she has an instinctive fear of the danger Henry presents, and that Richard is too reverential to notice. Judy also encourages Richard to eat and sleep, and attempts frequently to reintegrate him into college life.

Judy and LaForgue, reflect the views of the rest of the college, and in doing so, act as a chorus. It is interesting to note that of the two murders, the first, of the farmer who was accidentally killed in the Bacchanal, is treated off stage, as was typical of Greek tragedy. Traditionally, this was done in order to prevent the stage, as a holy place, from being sullied by death. A cart would then pull the bloodied corpses back onto the stage, this device was called *ekkyklêma*. In *The Secret History*, we hear about the farmer's murder in a reported fashion, as Henry involves Richard by telling him past events. However, Henry had considered taking the body with him in his car, but then rejected the idea as too dangerous.

The second murder is a more twentieth century style killing. It is selfish and pre-planned. The murder actually happens and this forces us to feel almost complicit in the guilt of Bunny's death. Interestingly, this murder really does utilise the ambulance to bring back Bunny's body, and hence brings fifth century drama and immediacy to an almost trivial modern murder. Donna Tartt rounds off her novel with an epilogue summarising the fates of all principal characters. Generally, the minor players live and prosper, having committed no major sin worthy of punishment. Judy Poovey becomes a cable TV celebrity with her own aerobics class. Frank and Judd buy out "The Farmer's Inn" and turn it into a very popular, college drinking haunt. Cloke Rayburn straightens himself out enough to graduate from law school and ends up working for Hugh Corcoran. Dr Rowland retires to after-dinner speaking, but not before almost destroying Richard's chances of going to graduate school by writing a recommendation for him in which he calls him 'Jerry' throughout. The outcome is different for the main characters. Now that Henry is dead, Charles, Camilla, Francis and Richard drift apart, 'as if some thread which bound us had been abruptly severed' (614).

In order to fulfil ancient Greek tragic form, it is necessary for them to be punished for their misdeeds and so, despite evading the law and criminal justice, they each sink into their own private worlds of despair and suffer an almost more vicious form of natural justice. Richard manages to scrape through his final year at college, gaining a degree in English Literature. Though not the most academic of the group, he is the only one to graduate, and specializes in the cheerless genre of Revenge tragedy. He moves back to 'godforsaken' California, the living hell he had tried so hard to leave as a young innocent

student just a few years back. Francis attempts suicide when his homosexual activities are discovered by his wealthy grandfather. When this fails he agrees to be married for the sake of his trust fund. The woman is a pretty blonde, cruelly nicknamed the 'Black Hole' by Francis's cousins, because 'the conversation turns into a vacuum whenever she walks into the room' (617). For Francis, this represents conscious emotional and intellectual suicide. Charles sinks, rather predictably, into a world of drink and drugs. His twin, Camilla, tries to take care of him at their grandmother's home in Virginia until he runs away and loses touch with his family and friends. Camilla can no longer embrace life with the guilt she carries, so she rejects finishing her studies in order to care for her Nana, thereby effectively burying herself alive in the mausoleum that is the old lady's Virginian house. What happens to Henry? That he struggles with Charles when the latter has tried to shoot him. Henry then turns the gun intentionally on himself and shoots. Though he is dead, the group cannot quite imagine life without him. Camilla admits that she loved him and still does. She cannot love Richard as a result. Francis intellectualises that Henry was too intelligent to simply die and that he must therefore have contrived an escape in a manner inspired by Sherlock Holmes.

Francis and Richard keep dreaming of Henry and seeing his ghost in the shadows. Ghosts are a popular tool of the tragic. As well as Henry's ghost, Tartt makes use of another classic Greek solution for her novel's ending. The characters want to see Henry again. He is, after all, the most enigmatic and exciting player in the cast. Euripides was famous for solving problems at the end of his plays by winching down a god from a crane who could magically solve any issues left unresolved. Aristotle believed this to be a poor ending to a

classic tragedy and thought Euripides much the worse for this contrivance. Aristotle believed that the story should provide the solution that fits with its own internal logic, not a quick fix from the gods at the end of the play. Donna Tartt uses a typically Euripidean ending. Unable to give modern readers more than the suspicion of a real ghost, Tartt uses the convention of a dream sequence to allow for some acceptable unreality in her epilogue. Richard experiences a surreal dream, set in a futuristic building in a war-torn city. A group of men observe a machine on a plinth, which slowly rotates, allowing the observers to see how the machine changes every few seconds, metallic parts clicking in and out to reveal first an Inca temple, then the Pyramids, and finally the Parthenon. Henry appears, with powder burns and the bullet hole still on his right temple. 'I am not dead,' he says. 'I am only having a bit of trouble with my passport'. (628). Richard asks Henry if he is happy and Henry replies, 'Not particularly,' he adds. 'But you are not particularly happy where you are, either' (629). The dream has allowed Tartt to show that both characters have reached the state of *anagnorisis* – they are aware of the awfulness of their deeds and their own personal guilt. Happiness is no longer an option for either of them. The tragedy is complete.

Chapter Four

Regret and Realisation

The Secret History explores the feelings of regret and realisation and how they complicate friendship. It is about a murder mystery of a different kind that Tartt chose to present the reader with the guilty murderers. The struggle of control, and the fear of losing it, that eventually spirals out of hand and ends up with the murder of Bunny Corcoran one of their friends. *The Secret History* is built up by minimizing the murders and emphasizing the consequences and feelings that surrounded them. That something which inflates the aspects of mental and emotional state of a person. Donna Tartt examines the complex layers of human emotion that are stirred up in aftermath of murder and that are where the emphasis of the novel lies: while murder is the backdrop of these narratives, it is the effect of murder on the lives of the characters.

The two murders in *The Secret History* and their aftermath also present two different versions of control. The first murder of an anonymous farmer was made in a state of total loss of control. Loss of control generally refers to lack of the ability to provide conscious limitation of impulses and behaviour as a result of overwhelming emotion. States of agitation such as fighting, screaming, and uncontrollable weeping are most often thought of as behaviour illustrative of loss of control. Involuntary immobility due to extreme fear, as is seen at times after life-threatening catastrophes such as earthquakes, tornadoes, and floods, is also a form of loss of control. Such patients typically tremble and appear desperately frightened.

The second one was the murder of Bunny Corcoran, it was committed to maintain control with nothing and no one else to blame afterwards. They murdered Bunny to keep his mouth shut from telling others, about the accident that happened during the ritual. Therefore, the impact of the two murders had on the perpetrators is in much contrast. The regret and remorse the group felt after the murders seem to be connected to how much in control they were. When discussing the first accidental murder the perpetrators are not very remorseful about it, nor willing to suffer any consequences:

‘It’s a terrible thing, what we did,’ said Francis abruptly. ‘I mean, this man was not Voltaire we killed. But still. It’s a shame. I feel bad about it.’

‘Well, of course, I do too,’ said Henry matter-of-factly. ‘But not bad enough to want to go to jail for it.’

Francis snorted and poured himself another shot of whisky and drank it straight off. ‘No,’ he said. ‘Not that bad.’ (220)

Even though they express remorse to some degree, as by saying “‘Really, it was more upsetting than you can imagine’” (190), it appears that the upsetting part is how the murder affected themselves rather than remorse for the person who lost his life and those who might miss him. Listening to his friend’s conversation Richard “felt sleepy” and was like “dyspeptic dream” (220) for him. This merely personal affect is strengthened by how they can calmly retell the story as a chapter they have put behind them, except for the fact that Bunny is being a nuisance and refuses to let this go. The aftermath of the second murder, where the group kills Bunny, is what really takes a toll on them and

puts them in a position where they are again forced to ensure control by avoiding the truth coming out on how Bunny died.

It is fundamentally different from the first one, where the group of friends planned and schemed to kill Bunny. They confront Bunny while hiking and Henry pushes him into a ravine to his death. One is the representation of an intoxicated and uncontrolled action whilst the other is a calculated move in order to regain and re-establish control. The Greek students' choice of conspiring to kill their friend in the democratic place of the college is especially important and renders their plans even more terrible as their cold, ominous utterances manage to subvert the spirit of equality and moral uplifting that the campus landscape promotes.

Despite how horrific the events that happen are, a psychoanalytical approach to the novel allows the reader to really understand the characters presented because it helps one to see into the mind of the characters. Which Freud's theory can help with? The best place to start analysing would be around the end of chapter 4. Henry admitted to killing someone after Richard guessed at it. As for why, Henry says that being able "to escape the mode of experience, to transcend the accident of one's moment of being" (182) was good enough to attempt the endeavour. Using Freud's theory, one can assess that this obsession with the idea could potentially be due to an unconscious desire to perform the deed.

Book I focuses on how Richard becomes enamoured with the students of a genial and mysterious Classics professor, Julian Morrow. They are Henry, their cold and brilliant leader, Francis, stylish and rich, Charles and Camilla,

lovely and ethereal twins and, finally, Bunny, the inconvenient wild card who we know is in for a tragic fate from the very first page. Unbeknown to Richard and Bunny, the other students take part in a Bacchanal in which they slaughter a farmer in frenzy. When Bunny finds out, the other students plot to silence him, and involve Richard in their machinations Book II focuses on the after-effects of Bunny's murder, as the characters' carefully curated personas unravel and the pressure builds up to a breaking point.

Henry, throughout the novel, is a quiet gentleman that Richard seems to be able to read well. It seems almost as though Henry would be the last person to partake in such an act, giving the sense that it was an unconscious desire that even Henry did not know about. The novel also contains a good amount of foreshadowing to Henry's admission of killing someone. Throughout the novel, Richard remarks about how certain things would make sense in the future and how "it is easy to see things in retrospect" (102). This leads one to see how Richard may have repressed some of the events he witnessed. He never quite dwelled on anything until the admission. He would dismiss the events indifferently but his future self would mention how he had wished he knew what was to come. Richard was fond of the group, it isn't difficult to understand why he may have repressed anything questionable or why he tried to keep himself out of issues, such as when Richard witnessed Julian and Henry talking discretely and Richard decided to leave and never mention it.

Talking about the killing of the man during the bacchanal, Henry discusses how "duality ceases to exist; there is no ego, no 'I,'" (186). In regards to ego, Freud describes it as the way we, as humanity, are most tied down to

reality. With Henry's apparent lack of ego in that moment, it raises the question of how we could even begin to function without ego. In accordance with Henry, we could lose all sense of morals and realities of the world and people around us. Henry describes that losing ego and himself altogether was "like being a baby" (187), which would confirm that it would be like having no moral compass whatsoever.

With all of this in mind, there was really none of the defence mechanisms Freud describes in either Henry, Francis or the twins regarding the bacchanal. All four of them didn't remember what lead up to the event but very much understood that they had killed a random man somehow. There was no repression or denial of it, except when dealing with Bunny for obvious reasons. None of them presented any projection or displacement of any kind. They simply understood what they had done and didn't take it out on anyone else. They only wanted to move past it without facing consequences, so they decided to take care of Bunny.

Continuing on with the novel in chapter 5, the group decides to kill Bunny off and stage it as an accident when Bunny begins to blackmail the others. In figuring out how to carry out this plan of killing their friend, Henry's demeanour begins to change in front of the readers' eyes. He begins to care less about his own life, which is apparent when Henry mentions how "the more I hear about luxury barges, the less terrible death begins to seem" (264). These subtle things Henry mentions can give the reader a sense of foreshadowing to Henry's suicide.

Leading up to the suicide was the arrest of Charles for drunk driving. While Richard was attempting to diffuse everything, they started talking about Henry and Richard posed the question of “not why he tells us what to do. But why we always do what he says” (505). It creates the idea that the other characters depend on Henry much more than they let on, especially when Charles can’t come up with a reason why. However, Charles starts to display an example of defence mechanisms onto Henry for why they’re currently in that situation. “I blame every bit of this on him” (505). Charles has said, showing how he has started to use Freud’s defence mechanism of projection. It has an overall interesting novel that shows how important the mind and its processes can be in all types of situations.

The Secret History is definitely not a traditional murder mystery, since the murderers are revealed already at the beginning of the book. Instead, the suspense in this book derives from the relations between the members of the group, who one by one start collapsing because of the pressure and guilt that their actions have caused them. Soon after Bunny's death the friends start drifting apart from each other and eventually the whole group is splintered. The tragic events finally lead to Henry shooting himself to death. All members of the group end up living far away from each other and leading miserable lives. Henry has always been the one in the group with the most agency and control, and his suicide shows him clinging to that control and self-assertion. He would rather die on his own terms, in a way that may seem heroic to him, rather than live in fear and chaos. The story has often been often compared to a traditional Greek tragedy.

The members of the group did not regret for the murder they have committed, instead they realised the importance of Henry after his suicide. They regret a little bit about Bunny's murder mostly they wanted to shut him. Realisation of their emotion toward Henry is very much touching. For Francis he keeps "expecting Henry to show up" (621). After Henry's suicide Richard began to see Henry face everywhere as well as Francis:

What was more, ever since arriving in Boston I'd kept catching glimpse of people I thought were him: dark figures dashing by in taxicabs, disappearing into office buildings.

'You know, I thought I saw him when I was lying in the bathtub,' said Francis. 'Faucet dripping, blood all over the god-damned place. I thought I saw him....' (622)

Julian says in one of his lecture about *Iliad*, there is a very moving passage the dead appear to us in dream, because that's the only way they can make us to see them; what we see is only a projection, beamed from a great distance, light shining at us from a dead star. In which Richard reminds of Henry. "There are such things as ghosts. People everywhere have always known that. And we believe in them every bit as much as Homer did. Only now, we call them by different names, 'Memory', 'The unconscious' (622).

Francis, Camilla, and Charles are all haunted in various ways by their past, and they become even more strikingly frozen in the past. Because Richard does not have family money, he has to maintain at least the guise of moving forward with his life, completing his degree and going on to graduate school, presumably with the goal of eventually working as a professor. Charles,

Camilla, and Francis never live up to their intellectual potential, and don't even complete their degrees.

Camilla, most strikingly, seems to commit to a life of seclusion and self-abnegation, living in isolation and taking care of her aunt. While her inner thoughts are not revealed, it seems that Camilla might be punishing herself for her role in the conflict between Charles and Henry, and Henry's death. Strikingly, when Camilla turns down Richard's proposal, she cites her loyalty to Henry. The others might be trapped by guilt, but Camilla is also trapped by love. She can't move forward, or attempt to build a relationship with anyone else.

The theme of being frozen in the past is most strikingly exemplified by Richard's dream of Henry. Henry seems to be stuck in some sort of limbo-like state, mentioning that he has trouble with his passport and can't move about. This odd comment might reflect Richard's subconscious feeling of being restricted, and unable to move forward with his life due to being trapped in the past. The comment might also reflect the role Henry occupies, because he is still such a vivid presence for his friends. Various mythologies suggest that ghosts or souls linger until their loss is accepted, and they can be released. Henry continues to have a liminal, ghostly kind of existence because he occupies such a strong place in Richard's life. Ultimately, Richard is living a life that is just as ghostly as the one he imagines for Henry. He is barely real, and untethered from the present because he can only find meaning in the past.

Chapter Five

Summation

The Secret History is a strange patchwork of a novel, blurring high and low culture, genre and tone. *The Secret History* makes readers imaginatively rationalise murder; literature shakes readers with fear and anxiety related to sublime terror. *The Secret History* provides readers with an exaggerated, early-warning view of just how bad things could get for themselves and for society, Tartt's entire text describes melancholy characters that have superficial relationships with each other, are numb and disconnected from "reality," and are desensitized to traditional notions of evil and wrongdoing. Surely it is no mistake that Tartt invokes the school setting a place in traditional boarding school and college novels where young adults achieve self-discovery and growth to highlight by contrast. The main body of the novel is indeed a "History" of sorts in that the narrator recounts the events of one academic year in chronological sequence.

The characters in *The Secret History* are shallow is simply empty. Tartt renders them as startlingly unwilling and unable to change, grow or react. They are passive, static and flat the main characters all seem as if they are "between two deaths," as none of them seem to live by signification. In this way, Tartt draws readers into her anxiety-ridden, exaggerated presentation to be fearful of and anxious about the characters and their actions. In the end, it is as if Tartt rather than the character Julian is suggesting, "What is unthinkable is undoable," as she seems to force readers to think the unthinkable so that we may work toward undoing the conditions that cause unimaginable acts before those

conditions cause damage. During the eight years that it took her to write the novel, America's fears and anxieties *The Secret History*, with all of its anxiety and fear.

The Secret History is an inverted detective story narrated by one of the six students, Richard Papen, who reflects years later upon the situation that led to the murder of their friend Edmund Bunny Corcoran wherein the events leading up to the murder are revealed sequentially. The novel explores the circumstances and lasting effects of Bunny's death on the academically and socially isolated group of classics students of which he was a part.

These specific movements all use terror as a discourse of power to attempt to change and disrupt our sense of reason and stability. *The Secret History* is, instead, a noteworthy entry into the tradition of the American murder mystery. It stands in contrast with the idea of the country's essential innocence, becoming a part of the alternative vision, recording fear, failure, despair, nightmare, crime, disease, and madness. *The Secret History* further immerses its readers in the underside of the American experiment, using the innocuous and seemingly idyllic campus setting to tell a story of murder, evil and inequality.

The mid-19th century saw the beginning of the great American Literature. The 20th century American literature differs from that of the earlier American literature in so far that modern literature is complex and technically more sophisticated. Tarrt reflects in her book, the theme of innocence vs sin or appearance vs reality. *The Secret History* shifts register several times between a world that is recognisable and rational, and between our culture and an ancient

one. The narrative opens up a different space of unbounded imaginative play. The novel requires of us, then the kind of faith that Henry realises he must have if his bacchanal is to work. The narrative then warms to its theme: Richard's bedazzlement with his surrounding and new friends makes possible his unwitting seduction into evil.

Though this may look like a simple hiking accident an unexpected and deep snowfall covers the body for days and an enormous manhunt is launched for Bunny involving local and federal police. Tarrt then anatomises their guilt and remorse, stepping up the suspense by dropping in several red herring as a detective follows one bizarre lead after another and the fate of Bunny's corpse acquires. Tarrt makes it clear that the aftermath of this realisation is difficult for Richard to withstand. Soon after Richard has his realisation about Henry and the group, he becomes free of them for a very long time: Charles eventually confronts Henry and the group with a gun, and, in the struggle over the gun, Richard is accidentally shot, and Henry ultimately shoots himself, thus irreversibly splintering the group.

Henry excuses himself, and the novel ends. While the dream is cryptic and difficult to interpret, Richard appears clearly enough to be left in an unsatisfied and uncertain position. While he has become fully disillusioned with the narrative at this point, in the absence of its influence, he seems ultimately unable to make sense of the Classics group, and everything that occurred between them Henry, being dead, is unable to help, even in his dream visitation. While he knows that his trust in aesthetics has deceived him, as evidenced by his discussion of his "fatal flaw" in the opening of the novel, without it, he ends

the novel without a clear way of making sense of the world. His assertion at the beginning of the novel that this “is the only story I will ever be able to tell” (2) further supports the idea that, rather than forming another narrative to make sense of his surroundings, he has instead lapsed into an uncertain position. This lack of resolution, while troublesome in its own way, nonetheless illustrates a clear response to the loss of so integral a narrative.

Richard, then, in contrast to some of Tartt’s other protagonists, leaves his narrative with a profound sense of uncertainty and unease. In *The Secret History*, Tartt’s protagonists respond to the dissolution of their narratives with a range of negative emotions, including resignation, despair, and denial. Thus, while Tartt emphasises the dangers of this self-deception, she equally emphasises the ability of truth and clarity to make them known. Thus, this triumph of truth in the face of deception perhaps endures as the main driving force behind the development of human character in Tartt’s novels.

Beauty was also the culprit behind Bunny Corcoran’s destruction. Bunny was the only one out of the classicists who did not aim to embody beauty through the interplay between Apollonian and Dionysian forces. Bunny fails to be beautiful because he indulges too much in the Dionysian, while possessing none of the Apollonian to balance it out. He is portrayed as the beast to Henry’s beauty, the Dionysian indulgence to Henry’s Apollonian order. Julian once said in his lecture ‘Beauty is terror. Whatever we call beautiful, we quiver before it (44). Additionally, Bunny was never concerned with appearances in the way that Richard was which is what sets them apart from each other. While Richard does everything possible to hide his socio-economic status, Bunny highlights his

own vulgarity through his dismissal of Apollonian restraint and self-control. All of this is why Bunny needs to die and die in a way out of his control, through the Dionysian influences that he indulged in life. *The Secret History's* broad themes include envy, guilt, isolation, manipulation, social class, and the link between beauty and terror. The friendship is ironically the strengthening bond that allows these students to commit violent acts.

Tragedy is one of the seven original stories of the world. *The Secret History* can be considered as a simple tragic novel. Donna Tartt, is very aware much of the Greek tragedy and has used the format and methods consciously. *The Secret History* is a debut remarkable for its hypnotic erudition and acute psychological suspense, and for the richness of its emotions, ideas, and language. These are the confessions, years afterward, of a young man who found at a small Vermont college the life of privilege and intellect he'd long coveted and rarely has the glorious experience of youth infatuated with knowledge and with itself been so achingly realised. Then, amazed, Richard Papen is drawn into the ultimate inner circle: five students, worldly and self-assured, selected by a charismatic classics professor to participate in the search for truth and beauty.

Together they study the mysteries of ancient Greek culture and spend long weekends at an old country house, reading, boating, and basking in an Indian summer that stretches late into autumn. Mesmerised by his new comrades, Richard is unaware of the crime which they have committed in his dreamy, unwitting presence. But once taken into their confidence, he and the others slowly and inevitably begin to believe in the necessity of murdering the

one classmate and friend who might betray both their secret and their future. Hugely ambitious and compulsively readable, this is a chronicle of deception and complicity, of Dionysian abandon, of innocence corrupted by self-love and moral arrogance; and, finally, it is a story of guilt and responsibility. An astonishing achievement by any standard, *The Secret History* immediately establishes Donna Tartt as a supremely gifted novelist.

WORK CITED

Tartt, Donna. *The Secret History*. 1992. London: Penguin Books, 2007.

David, Mary S. *A History of American Literature*. Beharipur, Bareilly, Literary Publication Bureau. 1969

Arkins, Brian. "Greek Themes in Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*." *Classical and Modern Literature* 15.3 (1995): 281-287. ILLiad. Web. 10 November 2012.

Hargreaver, Tracy, 2001. Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*. New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Goethe, J W, 1999, *Elective Affinities* [1809], Translated by David Constantine, Oxford World's Classics

McManus, Barbara, Aristotle's Theory of Tragedy, *Greek Tragedy*

pdfslide.net/documents/barbara-f-mcmanus-of-aristotles-theoryoutline-of-aristotles-theory-of-tragedy.html

Kapalan, James "Smart Tartt: Introducing Donna Tartt. 1992

Ellis, Bret Easton. *American Psycho*. New York: Vintage, 1991.

Scott, Anthony Oliver. (3 November 2002). "Harriet the Spy. *New York Times*. Retrieved August 10, 2016.

Augumenting the Inner Self: A Psycho-analytic study of Ruskin

Bond's *The Room on the Roof*.

A project 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

by

RACHEL.R

(REG. NO. 20APEN19)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

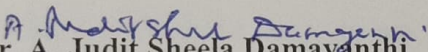
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	From Chaos to Career: Rusty's Journey	18
Three	Adolescence: Physical and Psychological	31
	Change in Rusty	
Four	Summation	45
	Works Cited	52

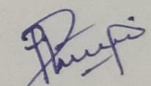
CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Augumenting the Inner self: A Psycho-analytic study of Ruskin Bond's *The Room on the Roof*** 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 is a work done by **Rachel.R** during the year 2020-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.


Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

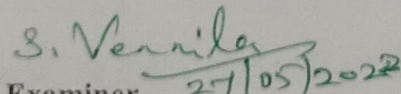
Head of the Department of English

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

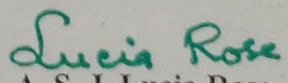

Ms. A. Patricia Romila

Assistant Professor of English

Guide


Examiner 27/05/2022

Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Assistant Prof of English
Sarah Tucker College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001


Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Augumenting the Inner self: A Psycho-analytic study of Ruskin Bond's *The Room on the Roof*** 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.

Thoothukudi


Rachel.R

May 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, and strength in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study.

I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, **Ms. A. Patricia Romila**, Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I thank the faculty of the Department of English for their valuable input in teaching and moulding us. My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

The Room on the Roof exposes clearly the lonely and the embarrassing situations that exist in the life of an adolescent through the character Rusty. Ruskin Bond's character Rusty suffer by his guardian and he feels like a lonely adult, which makes him to change from innocence to experience. The title itself states that the protagonist has a room on the roof where he is the king, who is helpless and he wants him to mingle with the Indian society which gives him a freedom and relieved from his mental worries.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Ruskin Bond and his life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of his work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **From Chaos to Career: Rusty's Journey** focuses on the adolescent Rusty who is traumatized by various tragedies in his life. It focuses on how he overcomes and mingles with Indian society and makes himself strong and experienced.

The third chapter **Adolescence: Physical and Psychological Change in Rusty** analyzes the physical and psychological changes in the character Rusty at the stage of adolescence

The fourth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and brings out the researcher's findings.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is the written work of a specific culture, sub-culture, religion, philosophy or the study of such written work which may appear in poetry or in prose or in novel. Literature is a tool to enlighten, to protest against something, to challenge, to educate, inform, comfort, confront, express and even to heal in some culture. The quality of literature is its suggestiveness, thus it appeal to our emotions and imaginations rather than to our intellect. Many Indian writers have chosen English as their medium of expression. It expresses a shared tradition, cultural experiences and Indian heritage. Indian English Literature has a relatively recent history which is only one and a half centuries old.

Indian English Literature is the embodiment of work by writers in India who pen strictly in the English Language and whose mother tongue is one of the languages of multilingual India. It is also associated with the works of the writers of the Indian diaspora. India and England had accorded with each other in trade, military and political affairs. During this period, England obtained wealth and empire of India and in return India got English language and the concept of constitutional government. Literature written and documented during this period was termed as Indo-Anglican Literature.

Novel has become the prominent literary form all over the world. The novel provides a matchless illusion of reality, a sense of the moment and of time passing

and a compelling vividness as of shared experience. It is the art of everyday life. The first novel reached India in the late eighteenth century and in the nineteenth century. India has many favourable cultural conditions: a large audience, an educated class, a new questioning of age, old socio-religious dogma, a consuming urge for knowledge and interpretation of society. Indian society is a group society and the West is still foreign. Hence individual dramas tend to have a broad social content. It projects the attention between the urban and rural, between minority groups, between the masses, between students and teachers, between the young and their middle-aged parents and guardians. Fiction of this kind is Indian in the deepest sense and it depicts the spirit of Indian society. It shows the individuals, whose experience is Indian culture. It is written with the eye on the object but without pandering to the national self-esteem of Indians or the gullibility of European intellectuals. The contemporary Indian novelists are Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, Amitav Gosh, Kiran Desai, Anita Desai, Nayantra sahgal and Ruskin bond. Each writer has his own style and technique while writing a work of art.

Indian writing in English came into survival after the collision of a vigorous and enterprising Britain and a stagnant and chaotic India. In course of time, the seed which was sowed by Lord Macaulay of announcing English in the educational system started to take root, and It started to bloom like a sweet rose and spreading its fragrance in each and every corner. From the historical perspective, Indian English Literature has passed through several terms such as Indo-Anglican, Indo-English, Indian writing in English and recently Indian English Literature.

The first book written by an Indian in English was *Travels of Dean Mahomet*, a travel narrative by Sake Dean Mahomet which was published in England in 1793. In its early stage, it was influenced by the Western art form of the novel. Early Indian writer's works are not a reflection of English literary patterns but highly original and intensely Indian in both theme and spirit. The first Indian novel was *Rajmohan's wife* written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and published in 1864. R.K. Narayan contributed over many decades and continued to write till his death. Mulk Raj Anand was similarly gaining recognition for his writing set in rural India but his stories were harsher and engaged, sometimes brutal, with division of caste, class and religion. Kamala Markandaya is an early writer who has often grouped with grand trio R.K.Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.

Raja Rao is the novelist of the metaphysical man. Man's relationship with reality is the main theme of Raja Rao. He adopts the autobiographical form of narration. His *Kanthapura* focuses on the intensity of Indian life, its physical immediacy, its traditional swaddling and its religious philosophies. Other luminaries who have enriched the Indo-English fiction are Khwaja Ahmed, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Vimala Raina and Khushwant Singh.

R.K. Narayan is the most unpretentious and unassuming of these novelists. Narayan is keenly aware of the absurdities and the incongruities in the human character and situation. His objective in his portrayal of characters. His ironic vision thus enables him to present his characters in their good as well as bad aspects. Like

Hardy's *Wessex*, Narayan's *Malgudi* is the matrix of tradition, the change in the physical world of *Malgudi* reflects and accelerates the inner change in the characters.

Mulk Raj Anand is the first writer to give Indian novel in English in a definite tone and texture. He explodes the myths afloat about India: the Yogis, Sadhus and Beggars and gives an earthy presentation of human conditions in our society. His novels are poems of suffering portraying impassionedly the inequality, poverty and exploitation of characters that are lovable, thwarted, sometimes grand, sometimes weak and thoroughly Indian. He found the raw materials for his creative works in his life experiences as child and youth. He took upon himself the role of an artist as the conscience of the race, the guide, the mentor. He is a renowned chief spokesman of the Indian English literary naturalism. Anand brought to India the new technique of stream of consciousness to India. According to him, human behaviour is determined by its social environment. His *Coolie* is the foremost folk epic of the Indo-English fiction. In his fictional world anybody could be a hero. His heroes are a plea for sympathy, service and sacrifice for the reconstruction of humanity.

Amitav Ghosh was born on 11 July 1956 in Calcutta and studied at Dehradun, New Delhi, Alexandria and Oxford. He received a doctorate from Oxford University. He worked as a professor in both India and in the US. He used complex narrative approaches to probe the nature of national and personal identity, particularly about the people of India and Southeast Asia. Ghosh has already bagged several prestigious awards for his works. Some of these awards are Prix Medicis Etranger for *The Circle of Reason*(1986), the Sahitya Akademi Award for *The*

Shadow Lines(1988), the Arthur C. Clarke Prize for Science fiction, *The Calcutta Chromosome*(1996), the Pushcart Prize for his essay “ The Much of the Novel through History: My Father Book Case”. Ghosh’s writing shares about the epic subjects of travel and diaspora, history and memory, political struggle and communal rampage, love and loss, while all the time crossing the generic boundaries between anthropology and artwork.

Anita Desai, born Anita Mazumdar, is an Indian novelist, who began to write in English at the age of seven and published her first story at the age of nine. She published her first novel, *Cry, The Peacock*, in 1963. She received a Sahitya Akademi Award for her novel *Fire on the Mountain* in 1978 and British Guardian Prize for *The Village by the Sea* in 1982. She uses the technique of symbolism in the novel. She portrays the inner feelings of female characters in her novel. Her works deal with contemporary Indian life, culture, clashes between the East and the West, generational differences and practical and emotional exile.

Arundhati Roy was born in Shillong, Meghalaya on 24th November 1961. She is a world fame Indian novelist, actress and political activist. She gives voice to the human rights and environmental issues. She works for television and movies in the early period of her career. She started to write her debut novel *The God of Small Things* in 1992 and finished it in 1997. She won the prestigious Booker Prize for literature on her much talked and much interpreted book *The God of Small Things*, a book which registered a tremendous sale all over the world. She has written not only fiction but also several non-fiction books including *The Cost of*

Living, Power Politics, War Talk, An Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire and *Public Power in the Age of Empire*.

Salman Rushdie is a British-American novelist and essayist of Indian descent. He was born on 19th June 1947 in Bombay city, Bombay presidency, British India. Rushdie published his first fantasy and science fiction novel, *Grimus* in 1975. His works are painted with Magical Realism. He won the Booker Prize for his second novel, *Midnight's Children* (1981). Rushdie has published many short stories in collection of *East West* (1994). He wrote a non-fiction book about Nicaragua, *The Jaguar Smile* (1987). His other famous novels are *Shame* (1983), *The Satanic Verses* (1988), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995).

The Indian English writers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Toru Dutt, Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Mulk Raj Anand, Nissim Ezekiel etc are unquestionably modern in their outlook and they got inspired by English literature, while Ruskin Bond is quite original in his thoughts. In spite of all the criticism, done by his uncle and aunt about his Indian friends and typical Indian life style, he remained determined not to leave all this deep-rooted Indianness. And about the attitude of his relatives he said that he was very much scared of their criticism of the fact that he had young Indian friends who wrote to him quite regularly. He also said that his relatives had wanted him to be more British in his performance and attitude.

Ruskin Bond is a well known Indian writer in English. He has written more than hundred short stories, six novels, three collection of verse and over thirty books for children. Bond has written two autobiographies. The first, *Scenes from a*

Writer's Life, covers the first twenty-one years of his life and the second book, *The Lamp is Lit*, narrates when Bond returned to India after a two year stay in England. Ruskin Bond received Sahitya Akademi Award for his book *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* (1992), and was honoured with the title Padma Shri (1999), for his life contribution to Indian Literature in English. He has been writing for the last fifty years in different genres of literature.

Ruskin Bond was born on May 19, 1934, at Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh. He is the eldest son of late Aubrey Alexander. His sister named Ellen, was a little handicapped child. Ellen lived with her grandmother but Ruskin Bond grew up with her father in Jamnagar (Gujarat), Dehradun and Shimla. He had his primary education in the boarding school of Mussoorie and Shimla. His father had to go one place to another due to his job and Ruskin Bond also accompanied him. When Ruskin Bond was eight years old, his mother Agnet Clerk left him under the guardianship of his father. Bond's relationship with his mother seems to have been very distant. He mentions her as young, pretty and fun loving, but unfortunately, she did not provide the stability and affection of a mother that the young Bond needed. Security and affection of a mother both were provided by his father, but the untimely death of his father made him spend a lonely childhood. The first twenty years of Ruskin Bond's life were significant regarding the development of his personality and writing skills.

His optimistic attitude towards life, made him attractive. Although he suffered much throughout of his life yet he never gave up hope and tried to fulfill

the dreams and ambitions of his father, because his father wanted to develop his personality as a writer. His father writes in his letter to Ruskin Bond,

I wanted to write before about your writing, Ruskin, but forget... you have written in very small hand writing, as if you wanted to squeeze a lot of news into one sheet of letter-paper. It's not good for you and your eyes... I know your handwriting is good and that you come first in class for hand writing, but try and form a longer style of writing. (28-29)

Bond has always been interested in all types of books. Some of his favourite authors include Charles Dickens, Emily Bronte, T. E. Lawrence, Rudyard Kipling and Tagore. His father loved him very much and wanted to make him a creative writer. He did not want to leave India but to build his career and improve his creative writing talent. He worked there as a junior clerk in Public Health Department. Bond was terribly homesick of India.

He worked in a travel agency, but he did not take much interest in the odd jobs and started writing, at the age of seventeen, he wrote his first successful novel *The Room on the Roof*, the novel got immense popularity and he was awarded a prestigious John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial Prize. It was the highest award for a young writer in Britain at that time. Although Ruskin Bond was basically from England and his forefathers were British, yet he always missed India and the friends at Dehra. His autobiography, *Scenes from a Writer's Life*, reveals his longing for the atmosphere of India,

... even though my forefathers were British, Britain was not really my place. I did not belong to the bright lights of Piccadilly and Leicester Square; or, for that matter, to the apple orchards of Kent or the strawberry fields of Berkshire. I belonged, very firmly, to peepal trees and mango groves; to sleepy little towns all over India; to hot sunshine, muddy canals, the pungent smell of marigolds; the hills of home; spicy odours, wet earth after summer rain, neem pods bursting; laughing brown faces; and the intimacy of human contact.(154-55)

He decided to return to India because he could not keep himself away from India any more. After returning from England he preferred to live in a small town Dehradun, away from the hustle bustle of a city life. The town helped him to revive the memories of his parents. This heavenly landscape helped him to get rid of this gloom. Ruskin Bond developed his habit of walking along the slopes with hand in his pockets. His early romance with Dehradun is revealed in hundred of his stories, essays, poems and sketches. He recollected pre- Independent Dehradun in the following words “When I was a boy in Dehra in 1940, the place looked like a fairy land. It has been the inspiration for all my stories and my love for it will make me alive here and keep writing about the town”(23).

When Ruskin Bond started writing, it was quite difficult to find a publisher who could encourage a new writer, so Ruskin Bond took interest in journalism. There were many magazines at that time like Statesman, The Tribune, The Telegraph, The Pioneer, The Leader, The Times of India, The Illustrated weekly,

which published his fiction. His children book began to publish in different parts of the world. His essays and articles which covered a variety of topics such as animals, nature, plants, ghosts and movies were published in the literary sections of The Sunday Statesman(Calcutta), The Hindu(Madras), The Tribune(Ambala), The Pioneer(Lucknow) and The Leader(Allahabad). Some even appeared in non-mainstream publications like Sainik Samachar, which paid him twenty five rupees for a thousand words

Ruskin's autobiographical work *The Lamp is Lit: Leaves from a Journal*, a collection of essays, episodes, and journal entries, is a collection of his survival as a freelance, this survival being as much the result of his stubbornness. He explains:

At twenty I was published author, although not many people had heard of me! And although I wasn't making much money the, and probably never would, it was the general consensus among my friends that I was an impractical sort of fellow and that I would be wise to stick to the only thing that I could do fairly well-putting pen to paper. (13)

Ruskin Bond wrote in the light of his own experience of life and he found impressions about things and people which had an ordinary effect on him and it was reflected in his work. He was sober by temperament that had an effect on his style. Ruskin Bond was a voracious reader, because his father introduced him to the wondrous world through books and thus he made reading his religion. He has read fifteen thousand books during his school days. He has produced a variety of works.

His thematic concerns is truly required to be assessed objectively with regard to the materials employed by him for human relationship, the man- nature relationship, nature itself, love, childhood, family life and Indianness among others. His first novel entitled *Nine Months* was written in the Boarding of Shimla. It was an account of his childhood “eulogies to my friends” he calls it but unfortunately it was confiscated by a teacher and never come into light.

Ruskin’s love for his maid is also retold in the short story *My First Love*, where a maid is the mother figure who takes care of his physical needs, and comforts him with fairy tales of princes, gardens and palaces. Ruskin fictionalizes his childhood experiences in the novella *Once Upon a Monsoon Time* and the short story *The Room of Many Colours*, which is actually the first half of the novella, covering the protagonist’s life in Jamnagar. Another significant event of his life was his acquaintance and friendship with Prem Singh. In *From Small Beginning*, included in *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* which is dedicated to Prem Singh and his family, Bond narrates how Prem Singh at the age of sixteen, asked for help in finding a job.

Ruskin Bond early short stories written in Mussoorie were mainly about the individuals he had met in the small towns and villages of hilly areas of India. Bond’s stories are autobiographical, Bond states the fact that there is more fiction than reality in his stories but he writes in first person to give authenticity to his stories. Ruskin Bond’s focus of attention is the issues of everyday life, he does not think much over social issues like his contemporary writers. The only social issues

he writes about is nature. He believes that others have dealt with issues such as caste and class more effectively than he can.

Many of Bond's stories display his love of nature. They show how man is associated with nature and how nature is being disrupted by modernization and scientific revolutions. In *All Creatures Great and Small*, Bond describes a grandfather's love for animals and nature. While this is not a true story, because in reality he never got the love of his grandfather, in his autobiography he only mentions about his grandmother. Bond is concerned with the rapid disappearance of forests and animal wealth. In *Time stops at Shamli*, he writes about a stags head mounted. He apparently does not like hunting rather he loves animals. Bond raised the voice in the favour of animals and suggested that there must be some rights of animals like human beings on earth.

Another common theme in Bond's first real experience with love happened when he was in England to make his career. He fell in love with Vietnamese girls, Vu Phuong. He describes her as a pretty, attractive and soft-spoken girl. Bond's love stories is always loyal and steady, the female is erratic, immature or susceptible to the social considerations of respectability, status, financial security and social approval.

Ruskin Bond is a living legend who has been portraying life and experiences through various genres of literature. Ruskin Bond has contributed in three generations of Indian school children into readers. His short-stories, poems and essays- even those written forty or fifty years back are widely authorized in school

texts and his books are recommended for reading in many schools throughout the country where English is the medium of communications.

The Room on the Roof is an adolescent novel written by Ruskin Bond, an Anglo Indian writer. Novel was first published in 1956. *The Room on the Roof* was written in Post-war period it explores the concerns of identity formation, alienation and rebellion against restrictions, personal autonomy and self-independence. *The Room on the Roof* is a semi-autobiography novel in which Rusty, the protagonist of the novel, like Ruskin Bond, seems to have assimilated the Indian Culture and made it his own. *The Room on the Roof*, in contrast explores the themes, home of isolation from both England and India being charged between the two cultures.

Rusty as a young boy, is deprived of parental love, Rusty is brought up by one of his guardians, Mr. Harrison. He studied in a reputed English medium public school in India. Rusty lives in a detached area which was under British Empire in Dehra, because his guardian Mr. Harrison never liked Indians and their neighbourhood. Mr. Harrison never left his domineering nature of racial superiority. He does not leave India, even though India is no more a colony of the United Kingdom in 1956. Many Britishers have gone back to make their career, as the author narrates: “the community consisted mostly of elderly people; the others had left soon after Independence. These few stayed because they were too old to start life again in another country...” (12).

Like so many elder Europeans who stayed in India. Harrison represents the domineering nature of colonizers, who always think about their own culture race

and society to be superior to others. Colonizers never considered inhabitants as the owners and never care about their cultures, language and traditions, even they did not bother to call the land with their names, they called the colonies as “New World” for them. In the novel, the character Mr. Harrison shows this type of domineering nature of colonizers.

Rusty was centre of attraction in the community because he was the only young boy among his neighbour. His guardian, Mr. John Harrison is one among the rigid Britishers, who dislikes Indians and their way of living. There is a separate market for the Anglo Indians and Rusty is not permitted by Mr. Harrison to go to Indian bazaar. A sweeper boy, an untouchable, is the only young Indian whom Rusty met and smiled in his life so long.

Rusty is keen on exploring the Indian bazaar and other famous side of Dehra. To fulfil his desires Rusty makes frequent visits to the bazaar secretly and finds some new good Indian friends, but this secret visits are discovered by his guardian. As a result his Anglo Indian guardian throws him out of the house hence Rusty becomes homeless and goes to reside with his new friend Somi for a few days. When Rusty wants to become financially independent, Somi finds him a job, teaching English to Kishen Kapoor, a spoiled child of Kapoor’s family, in exchange for room and meal. For the first time, Rusty gets what he desires most- a room of his own, his freedom, privacy, a man of his own and his dream of becoming a writer. He accepts the job and becomes Kishen’s tutor.

Rusty although has a British origin yet he suffers as others not only because he was an orphan but also for his interest in Indians, in Indian festivals and Indian tradition. He passes his life in his guardian's house as a subaltern he does not have freedom to speak or to defend himself before his guardian. He was living a life in which real joy of life was forbidden to him. Because for Rusty the real world was beyond the Clock Tower as author narrates "Clock Tower lay the bazaar and in the bazaar lay Indian. On the other side of the Clock Tower began life itself. And all the three-the bazaar, and Indian life itself-were forbidden" (18).

At the beginning of the novel, Rusty runs within the constricted domains of the European inhibited community, a world of perquisite and convenience that is not rooted in the soil of India. Rusty was living like a slave and everything was forbidden to him. He finds relief and escape from his confined Anglo-Indian world through the dreams.

Rusty takes help of defences of psychoanalytic theory, as Sigmund Freud concluded that our unfulfilled desires comes true in dreams in the same way Rusty was dreaming to get rid of his bitter present. He loves to live in dreams as author narrates: "He walked aimlessly along the road, over the hillside, brooding on the future, or dreaming of sudden and perfect companionship, romance and heroics" (13).

The novel *The Room on the Roof* brings down the conventions of the colonial novel as colonial literature was set on such perception that educated and cultured colonized must be ignored in the most of the colonial novel written by

Europeans, as they are inferior in everything. Instead, Indian characters were stamped as simple, irrational, duffer and lacking in self-discipline. They are portrayed as they can be loyal and faithful servants only not masters at all, to emphasize that natives are inferior to colonizers and they only fit to serve the superior. But by lampooning Mr. John Harrison, a British character in the novel, Ruskin Bond revokes this tradition of colonial novels and presents a variety of interesting Indian characters like Somi, Ranveer, Kishen and Meena and Mr. Kapoor. Rusty's friend is genuinely caring and their interracial friendship is based on equality and mutual respect. Rusty's only hope of survival away from his Anglo Indian world lies in the help he receives from his Indian friends and their families. Somi offers him all the things he possesses when he was alone in the world and ignored by his own people. As his guardian, Mr. Harrison always teaches him: "you belong here, to this house, this road and these people. Don't go where you don't belong" (31).

Rusty loves India and its people and he wants to assimilate in this culture so he is attracted to the affectionate hospitality of Somi, his mother and his friends in Dehra. Rusty is also a victim of post-independence era, he was struggling between two language, two countries and two cultures. Rusty is aware of the fact that he is different because of his white skin, yet he belongs to his friends, to India and to the entire universe. When a woman in a ferry boat asks him in the end of the novel: "what are you my son, are you one of us? I have never, on this river, seen blue eyes and golden hair" (182). Rusty replies with confidence. "I am nothing... I am everything" (182). Because he was sure that he was exile, a refuge from the

universe. Where nothing is sure and nothing is his own not even the Room on the Roof.

Rusty's initiation into the Indian world is marked by his participation in Holi, the Hindu spring festival, which signifies the regeneration of the earth, awakening of love among people and wiping away of social distinctions. Rusty is happy for the first time in his life and he releases his pent-up emotions by responding to the excitement of Holi, it was "something wild and emotional, something that belonged to his dream- world" (36).

Rusty participates in the rituals of an Indian festival, and crosses into that forbidden realm of India. Rusty, like the author, has not had any contact with Indian religions but he believes in the religion of humanism. Rusty worried about his future and he decides to leave India to make his career in his own land in England. He decides to go to the British High Commission in New Delhi to ask a help for an assisted passage to England. During his journey he stops at Hardwar to see Kishen to say him good-bye, where he comes to know that Kishen has run away from home and has become a thief after his mother's death, because he was disenchanted when his father remarried within a month of his mother's death. Rusty brotherly love for Kishen and Meena's faith in him that he would take care of her son when she would be away. He lives his rest of the life to follow a promise which he made with an Indian. Finally Rusty finds a "Home" and becomes a mature and self-assured young man, and faces all the difficulties of his life with hope and courage and assimilates in Indian Culture in the full acceptance and accepts his status in Indian from exclusively to cultural hybridity.

Chapter Two

From Chaos to Career: Rusty's Journey

The Room on the Roof, penned by the prolific author Ruskin Bond, is his first literary magnum opus. In the tradition of Bildungsroman, *The Room on the Roof* traces the development of the protagonist from a rootless young man into a mature adult on the threshold of a fulfilling profession. In this context, Satish C. Aikant says, Bond wrote *The Room on the Roof* when he was just 17, but even as a first novel, it is not an immature attempt but an accomplished piece of writing. Nostalgic and subtly humorous, it reveals the inner life of a lonely adolescent negotiating the complex process of initiation. The primary images from the *The Room on the Roof* echo throughout Bond's later works, lending unity and wholeness to his writing career.

Rusty is a parentless Anglo-Indian boy in his teenage. Having lost his parents, Rusty was raised under the care of his strict English guardian, Mr. John Harrison. Typically imperialist in nature and having the pride of the white race superiority over the Indians he does not want Rusty to mix with the Indians. Rusty finds himself in the situation of a caged bird. He has no friends to share his feelings. As a European boy, Rusty is described as "a pale boy, with blue-grey eyes and fair hair" (1). Rusty's different appearance adds further to his fear and his deliberate ostracism from society and Indian culture. Kailash Ahluwalia and R.P. Chaddah compare *The Room on the Roof* with William Blake's *Song of Innocence*,

William Blake in his *Songs of Innocence* shows like Bond what he describes as the original state of the soul taking his image of that perfect condition of being, the condition of childhood, a state of happiness, unity and self-enjoyment. Next he shows the soul about to leave its Eden, standing on the threshold of experience, full of intimations of that inevitable condition of morality, but not yet entering (except imaginatively) upon a state from which its uninitiated consciousness withdraws in horror. In his *Song of Experience*, the soul has eaten the fruit of knowledge and left its Eden forever. Its unity and integrity are destroyed. Experience is the contrary state of Innocence, a condition presaging disillusion, cruelty and the final destination. (29)

Under the controlling iron hand of his guardian, Rusty grows up timid and shy in a personality. He is stunted in social skills and cannot move freely with the people around him. He himself establishes a set of rules in his mind regarding socializing. He believes it to be his privilege as a foreigner in India. Despite losing his parents at a young age, Rusty is disciplined in his habits and demeanor. Rusty channels his entire grief into loneliness. He spent several bad years with his guardian which is a meaningless life with no companion to share his feelings.

Rusty is an introvert and so he cannot mingle with people. Luckily, through his newly built friendship, he creates his own identity. “He had his hands in his pockets and his head down which was the way he always walked, and which gave him a deceptively tired appearance. He was a lazy but not a tired person” (3).

Rusty's attitude is peculiar when compared with the children who grew up around their parents. He manifests extreme behaviour, sometimes aloof and depressed and at other times aggressive. One day when Rusty walks home, enjoying the showers of Dehradun, there comes a boy, Somi, on a bicycle who halts beside Rusty and offers to drop him in the town if he was going there. "‘Hullo,’ said Somi, ‘would you like me to ride you into town? If you are going to town?’" (3). Rusty at first refuses the offer but Somi forces Rusty to get on to the bicycle. On the way, Somi meets his friends Ranbir and Suri. The cycle speeds down the hairpin bends of Dehra. Rusty can do nothing other than holding his breath. But Suri shouts at the peak of his voice, "Mummy" while Ranbir asks him to shut up.

Certainly, this depicts Rusty's inability to emote as a result of his upbringing as which is in contrast to that of Ranbir and Suri. As soon as the cycle lands safely, Rusty gets down from it and starts walking after saying "thank you" (7). Somi calls him back and asks his name. He turns back with some hesitation and replies, "Rusty..." (8). Then he turns away and continues to walk as it is his usual habit with his hands dipped in his pockets. The people around Rusty try to make him interact normally but he hesitates and is rather disgusted at the very thought. Mrs. Harrison's comment on Rusty is that "He doesn't know what to do with himself" (9). On the other hand Mr. Harrison, while planning a trip to Delhi for his business needs, instructs his wife to make use of Rusty for any sort of work, as he would be away from town,

Rusty intended making the most of his guardian's absence: he would squeeze all the freedom he could out of the next few days;

explore, get lost, wander a far; even if it were only to find new places to dream in. So he threw himself on the bed and visualized the morrow ... where should he go — into the hills again, into the forest? Or should he listen to the devil in his heart and go into the bazaar? Tomorrow he would know, tomorrow....
(14-15)

When the guardian's car drove down the bend, Rusty starts to the town. By then, the missionary's wife asks him to do housework for her but Rusty escapes work by walking on the road towards the market. Rusty, no more a child, escapes from the situation in a manly manner:

The missionary's wife was rather taken aback, for Rusty seldom say no; and before she could make another sally the boy was on his way. He had a dreadful feeling she would call him back; she was a kind woman, but talkative and boring, and Rusty knew what would follow the garden work: weak tea or lemonade, and then a game of cards, probably beggar-my-neighbour. (17)

The market scene is disgusting to Rusty as it is unhygienic with the foul odour of cow dung. In that town, other than Rusty, a sweeper boy is European but he belongs to lower-class community. Being aware of the class of the sweeper boy and deciding not to mingle with him because of it indicates Rusty's qualities of being an adult, with ingrained class prejudices. Rusty goes through several emotions and he is muffled, obliged, helpless, lonely and sad because he is in

between his childhood and adulthood. In this connection, Bornali Nath Dowerah says:

It is not only about research for freedom, but the sense of home and space that Rusty has longed for. Earlier, when he was staying at his guardian's residence he had to follow certain rules. He was not allowed to interact with the sweeper boy who passed by his window. He was not allowed to go to the bazaar or mingle around with anybody. The feeling of hopelessness and loneliness haunted him every time that he tried to escape from the reality called life. (104)

During this time, he does not know who to follow or what would happen in his future. As he stops in front of the market, he gets caught in a debate between his mind and instinct. He knows that he would be in trouble if his guardian comes to know of his visit to the market. On the other hand, he feels tired and fed up of living life based on a set of rules he does not believe in. Mustering all courage, Rusty enters the market. As he ventures in gingerly, he is hit by a bicycle and falls into the gutter. Identifying Somi, Rusty shouts at him and Somi explains the circumstance for halting his cycle in this manner. Rusty is thus initiated into the true world of India. Once again Rusty proves himself a man by rebuking Somi with carefully chosen words, without losing control. Finally they both go to the chaat shop and at first Rusty find it dirty, unhygienic and disgusting but he places himself comfortably and gets ready to eat tikkees with Somi. Ranbir joined the two. Rusty

notices that Ranbir is least bothered about cleanliness or appearance. His hair is uncombed.

Rusty shares details about his life, his guardian's house, Malacca cane and his English culture. The story is listened by Ranbir and Somi with pity. Somi addresses Rusty saying, "Now we are friends, yes, best favourite friends!" (24). Rusty's response to Somi is a cordial one and he too greets the blossoming friendship. "Rusty continued to mumble under his breath, but he took the warm muddy hand that Somi gave him, and shook it. He finished the tikkee on his leaf, and accepted another. Then he said: 'How do you do, Somi, I am very pleased to meet you'" (24).

Ranbir after hearing Rusty's story invites him to their festival called "Holi". Holi is a festival when all barriers are broken - caste, religion, region and class. People mix freely. They all become alike when smeared with colour. Rusty's participation in holi is symbolic. It breaks the racial barrier. "Holi, the festival of colours, the arrival of spring, the rebirth of the new year, the awakening of love," (36).

At first Rusty refuses and tells them about his guardian's strict nature but then Ranbir continues with his invitation and is joined by Somi. Finally, he tells Ranbir to sound the drum as a signal from the forest behind the house. "I will be waiting in the jungle behind your house. When you hear the drum-beat in the jungle, then it is me. Then come" (29). The next day Rusty plans to go attend the celebration of Holi, the festival of colours. Rusty hears the sound of the drum from

the forest, which is his call to adventure and along with Somi goes to the market place to join the festivities. Bornali Nath Dowerah opines on the description of the bazaar as follows:

Here Bazaar has been represented as a colourful self-fascinating place which Bond tries to fantasize. In this regard, the bazaar, as real as it sounds and is seen, the author mingles it with fantasies. It is common in an Indian marketplace for gang of youths to gather, gossip and have fun. Similar is in the matter of Rusty's friends - Somi, Suri, Ranbir and later Kishen. In no time Rusty becomes an important part of the gang. In the novel, the bazaar is located on the other side of the Clock Tower. As he moves on, Rusty begins to feel the fascination through the noises, sounds, sights and smell. (105)

Thus, Rusty finds a congenial peer group which would shape his future and support him. The festival of holi releases him from the bondages of his guardian. Rusty finds that he is free now:

Rusty stared fascinated at the deep yellow nicotine stains on the fingers of his guardian's hand. Then the wrist moved suddenly and the cane cut across the boy's face like a knife, stabbing and burning into his cheek. Rusty cried and covered against the wall; he could feel the blood trickling across his mouth, he looked

around desperately for a means of escape, but the man was in front of him, over him, and the wall was behind him. (45)

Rusty, for the first time, takes part in a festival and enjoys it well. Rusty who finds that he could not control his anger, slaps his guardian hard, sending him flat to the floor. Then he starts hitting him hard on his face till he bleeds. Mr. Harrison looks as if he had been hit by a servant or some bazaar hooligan. Rusty walks out the house with the satisfaction of being a man for first time. This is the crisis which is the mark of the Bildungsroman. Satish C. Aikant apprises *The Room on the Roof* as bildungsroman thus,

The Room on the Roof is a coming-of-age bildungsroman that explores the typically adolescent concerns of identity formation, alienation and rebellion against authority. It is a complex novel that functions at several layers of experience and meaning simultaneously. Apart from its obvious autobiographical elements, it can be considered a pioneering 'adolescent' novel, written at a time when adolescent literature had not been recognised as a distinct literary genre. Across the many editions that the book has been through, Bond has never changed a word or made any revisions. It reflects the writer as he was when he wrote it- naive, trustful, eager for love and friendship. (24)

The boy listens to him silently in the beginning but soon bursts in anger. He pulls Harrison's legs. Mr. Harrison falls down. Then Rusty strikes him in the face

with the vase. The target is missed but the water flowers cover his face and he is hit in the side. Rusty holds his collar and slaps his face on both sides. Harrison is injured badly. This incident which follows the holi festival is a sequel of the former. Rusty mixes with the Indian people and with their help can break with the dying Anglo-Indian society and live independently. The beating of Harrison gives him the confidence that he can act independently,

Mad with the pain in his own face, Rusty hit the man again and again wildly and awkwardly, but with the giddy thrill of knowing he could do it; he was a child no longer, he was nearly seventeen, he was a man. He could inflict pain and that was a wonderful discovery; there was a power in his body - a devil or a God -and he gained confidence in his power; and he was a man!.
(46-47)

Thus, Rusty's departure from Harrison's house can be interpreted on two levels: the leaving of the emaciated Anglo-Indian society for the healthier Indian society and the departure from the stage of helplessness of a small boy to the stage of strong and energetic manhood. He, unlike his guardian, is without any feelings of racial superiority. Mr. Harrison represents the oppressive mindset of the colonizers but Rusty mingles with the colonized, paving the way for life in the postcolonial era.

Rusty is adamant about not going back to his guardian. He feels that he has grown up and become a man who can manage his own life. Rusty enquires a job for

him and proclaims that he would stay with him only till he gets a job for his survival. Somi plans to get Rusty a job as a teacher to Kishen, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Kapoor. Somi informs Rusty about the meeting with Mr. Kapoor that evening. Rusty is relieved that he would finally have a decent job. Arriving at the house, they see Kapoor in his green gown and in a drunken state. Mrs. Meena Kapoor, his wife, a young and pretty lady, discusses Rusty's responsibility towards Kishen, adding that he would be allowed to stay in the room on the roof. Rusty is elated to know this, realizing that he would no longer be a burden to anyone. Maslow says that an individual, who is contented in their needs, especially in their early life, appears to,

Develop exceptional power to withstand present future thwarting of these needs simply because they have strong, healthy character structure as a result of basic satisfaction. It is just the ones who have loved and been well loved, and who have had many deep friendships who can hold out against hatred, rejection or persecution. (69)

In his guardian's house, Rusty did not know the meaning of the word "tired" because he had too little work to become tired. But after taking up his job, he experiences exhaustion. Rusty finds that Kishen is like a kite without a thread which could control him. Rusty gets accustomed to the room and he starts to move freely with Kapoor's family. This gives a good chance to Rusty to develop his passion or infatuation for Meena. During adolescence, a person's requirement for intimacy and lovemaking with the opposite gender increases. Adolescents explore diverse ways to express love and longing for intimacy in relationships.

Rusty's love for Meena gives him the feeling peculiar to adolescence. He had ever felt like this before in his few encounters with women, be it the missionary's wife for whom Rusty did some gardening, or the woman in the market place. Rusty's unforgettable day is during the picnic in the jungle when he first touches Meena and feels her love too.

Rusty's life takes a turn on Meena's death and Kapoor's settlement in Lucknow. Meena and Mr. Kapoor met with an accident on the way to Delhi where Mrs. Kapoor was about to attend an interview. Kishen had been left under the care of Rusty by Kishen's parents in Delhi. Rusty gets a telegram from Kishen's aunt about Meena's death. Somi, who had left for Amritsar, was also temporarily away from Dehra, Suri also faces some miseries and Ranbir too shifts to Mussoorie. Rusty is again captured by loneliness and the state of isolation nearly kills him. Rusty opens the door of Mr. Kapoor's house and drinks whisky to get rid away from the mad state of loneliness.

Rusty decides that he must go to England to become a writer and to seek bright future as Ranbir, Kishen, and Somi have done by going to Mussoorie, Hardwar and Amritsar respectively.. Somi sends a letter to Rusty about his return to Dehra in the spring, asking Rusty to stay back. He also brings a ray of hope that bad days would end soon and the friends of Rusty would once again reunite. The letter is quoted in part here,

I know you feel like leaving India and running off to England,
but wait till you see me again, All right? You are afraid to die

without having done something, you are afraid to die, Rusty, but you have hardly begun to live. I know you are not happy in Dehra, and you must be lonely. But wait a little, be patient, and the bad days will pass. We don't know why we live. It is no use trying to know. But we have to live, Rusty, because we really want to. And as long as we want to, we have got to find something to live for, and even die for it. (159)

On his way to Delhi, Rusty stops to see Kishen at Hardwar, only to learn that Kishen had run away to become a thief after his father's re-marriage. Mr. Kapoor is rather an irresponsible man. He is lost in a bottle of wine. Meena's death in the car accident makes no impact on him; he marries early and sends Kishen to his aunt at Hardwar. Cut off from roots, Kishen becomes temperamental and rebellious. The result is that Kishen remains belligerent. Luella & Cole say in *Psychology of Adolescence*,

Delinquents are sometimes, although not always, emotionally unstable individuals, and they are abnormally sensitive to emotional tensions in their families or neighbourhoods. Unlike the neurotic, who may experience similar feelings, they do not allow themselves to be beaten by the world. They fight back. As a result they become aggressive, hostile, suspicious, jealous and quarrelsome. (319)

Kishen leaves his home and joins a gang of criminals. His story is an eye opener to the parents who do not carry out responsibility and make their home a troubled world. Rusty's brotherly love prompts him to search for Kishen. He also fulfils the trust that Meena had placed on him that he should look after her son. Rusty, once again, moves away from the narrow world of his personal miseries and problems to embrace the adult world of protecting and being responsible for another human being. He responds with the same loyalty, friendship, and generosity that were earlier extended to him. He finds Kishen and together they plan to return to Dehradun to start a new life. Kishen says: "Oh, we will find someone for you to give English lessons. Not one but many. And I will start a chaat Shop" (179). Here in these words of Kishen, Rusty forgets everything - England, fame and riches and asks "When do we go?" (179). The novel practically ends here.

The novel is simple in narration and very much traditional in technique. The development of the story is in chronological order. There is a little flashback and most of the characters except Meena and Kishen are types: they remain the same throughout the novel. But behind this simplicity of plot and narration, there is a complex world of adolescent, symbolized by the room on the roof.

Chapter Three

Adolescence: Physical and Psychological Changes In Rusty

Adolescence is a period of physical and physiological change. This growth furnishes the basis for emotional, social, intellectual and economic maturity. The term 'adolescence' is derived from the Latin word 'adolescere' which means 'to grow up'. According to Lester D. Crow and Alice Crow, "The period of transition from childhood to adulthood or from dependence on adult direction or protection to self direction is referred to as adolescence, adolescent age or adolescent period of development"(248-49). The author of *The Vanishing Adolescent*, Edgar Z. Friedenberg describes adolescence thus,

Adolescence is the period during which a young person learns who he is, and what he really feels. It is a time in which he differentiates himself from culture; though on the culture's terms. It is the age at which by becoming a person in his own right, he becomes capable of deeply felt relationships to other individuals, perceived clearly as such. (13)

The term 'adolescent' has a specific meaning in psychology. It should not be confused with the word 'teenager', although the periods of adolescence and teenage are almost the same. Teenage is the period between thirteen and nineteen. When a boy or a girl enters the age of thirteen, he or she is called a teenager and continues to be called so till the age of nineteen. The period of adolescence covers the years from thirteen to twenty and according to some psychologists up to twenty one.

Luelle Cole and Irma Nelson Hall made the chart on the stages of adolescents and it was accepted by leading psychologists, Preadolescence or late childhood 11-12 years (girls) 13-14 years (boys) ,Early adolescence 12-14 years (girls) 15-16 years (boys), Middle adolescence 15 -1 7 years (girls) 1 7 -18 years (boys) ,Late adolescence 18-20 years (girls) 19-20 years (boys).

According to Cole and Hall the main goals of the adolescents are Control of emotions by reason, Social adjustment, Independent adulthood, Financial independence, and Choosing a career. While pursuing these goals, the adolescent faces a number of problems. It is the responsibility of society to help the adolescent to achieve his goals and be responsible citizen of his country. All the important characters of Ruskin Bond such as Rusty, Somi, Ranbir, Sudheer, Kishen, Ruth and Suri are in their early adolescence

The Room on the Roof traces the journey of adolescent protagonist Rusty from dependence to independence, and diffidence to confidence. The novel deals with Rusty and his friends who are all between ten to sixteen. They are carefree adolescents free from the restraints of the adult world and are on the verge of the world of experience. They seem like the characters in William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* soon to be the part of *Songs of Experience*. Adolescence is the phase when boys and girls are found more aware towards their physical development. They go through tremendous physical changes. They observe their development as well as the physical development of others. If their growth is not normal or natural, they feel confused. For adults it may be a common or noticeable matter, but the

youngsters consider it as more serious. They study themselves in front of mirror. Bond shows this regular and natural habit of juveniles through Rusty,

Rusty spent much of his time studying himself in the dressing table mirror; he was able to ignore his pimples and see a grown man, worldly and attractive. Though only sixteen, he felt much older. He was white. His guardian was pink, and the missionary's wife a bright red, but Rusty was white. With his thick lower lip and prominent cheekbones, he looked slightly Mangolian, especially in a half -light. He often wondered why no one else in the community had the same features. (14)

Adolescence is not all about physical changes, but physical changes, indeed, proclaim the onset of puberty. In Ruskin's works, we find that adolescents are conscious about their body changes. In *The Room on the Roof*, Rusty becomes conscious about these changes when he attacks his guardian Mr. Harrison. Body changes bring a positive effect on Rusty. Even psychologists agree that when adolescents are described as 'Gender stereotypes', for a boy -physical changes are symbolized by greater strength, manly voice, building of muscles and increase in height. Favorable body changes make the adolescent confident about his image. When Rusty fights with his guardian and hits him over and over, he is relishing this new found confidence which has to sustain him in a world of problems and confusion.

This inner effect of physical maturity and psychological confidence is wonderfully brought out by Bond. New gained physical power is also important for a male child because it determines the acceptance among peers. We find that Rusty before his encounter with Mr. Harrison remained shy and lost. Even when opportunities came to build friendships, he refrained, but once he becomes aware that he is a child no more, gains in confidence and becomes more social. He forms friendship with sturdy boys like Ranbir and Somi and becomes more extroverts. Thus, Bond has wonderfully shown that favourable body changes at the start of adolescence not only help in building a confidence level psychologically, but also makes an adolescent socially more acceptable both in his own sex and the opposite.

Rusty's physical assault at the time of Holi festival can also be treated as a test of his stamina and temperament. When Rusty was invited to play holi, he hesitated at first because of the fear of his guardian, Somi and others started to make fun of him by calling him a snob. Somi teased Rusty about his clothes and appearance. When Rusty agrees to play holi, he is given heart approval from his friends. On the other hand, Suri was ridiculed because he had girlish appearance and habits. Physical changes come as a surprise even for the adolescents themselves. Once being aware of it, they start spending a lot of time in front of mirror, exploring their body. Rusty, when he settles in Mr. Kapoor's house, stands in front of the mirror and admiringly looks at his oiled body. The reason for loving the physical changes now, is not acceptability in one's own sex-group. He wants himself to look more handsome because he wants to attract Meena Kapoor - his

new found love. He now attributes the physical changes and growth to his falling in love:

When Rusty rubbed the oil on his limbs, he noticed the change in his physique. He had lost his puppy fat, and there was more muscle to his body; his complexion was a healthier colour, and his pimples had almost disappeared. Nearly everyone had advised him about pimples: drink dahi, said Somi's mother, don't eat fat, eat carrots, said Somi, plenty of fruit: mangoes! Said Kishen; not at all, Oranges; see a doctor, said Meena; have a whisky, said Kapoor; but the pimples disappeared without any of these remedies, and Rusty put it down to his falling in love.

(121)

The adolescents remove shyness before friends. They share every feeling freely, frankly with their companions. They generally avoid disclosing personal matters before adults because of shyness, fear or generation gap. Rusty in the absence of Mr. Harrison develops friendship with Ranbir and Somi. He tells them his life story and extends friendship and does not hesitate to share his personal matters with them. He also takes spicy food at bazaar which may be harmful to his stomach. He becomes a rogue like his friends and begins to live a carefree life forgetting every difference. Bond describes,

They ate chaat, a spicy salad of potato, guava and orange; and then gol-guppas, baked flour-cups filled with burning syrup.

Rusty felt at ease and began to talk, telling his companions about his school in the hills, the house of his guardian, Mr. Harrison himself, and the supple Malacca cane. The story was listened to with some amusement: apparently Rusty's life had been very dull to date, and Somi and Ranbir pitied for it. (27)

Rusty knows about the risk of mixing with Indians as Mr. Harrison has strictly ordered not to develop contacts with local people. Neglecting his instructions, the boy advances to join the wonderful world in the company of Ranbir and Somi. It also happens that his guardian returns from Delhi earlier than his schedule, or perhaps Rusty did not expect him back so soon. The boy soon forgets all his friends and fully pays attention on his guardian. The boy respects him not because of admiration but of fear. It is often noticed that the adolescents if frightened exceedingly, suppressed intensely, may rebel. They may be controlled by fear or force but in limit. If the limit is crossed and overpowered they, particularly boys may rebel and make counter attack too in their defense. Mr. Harrison in Rusty's case, makes use of overpower, and faces unexpected reaction of the boy. He hits the boy with a cane. The boy is ordered to bend over the sofa and receives unbearable strokes on his back. Bond narrates this scene realistically which indicates how a boy can turn to be violent against his elder,

The look of alarm on Mr. Harrison's face gave Rusty greater courage. Before the man could recover his feet and his balance, Rusty gripped him by the collar and pushed him backwards, until they both fell over on to the floor. With one hand still

twisting the collar, the boy slapped his guardian's face. Mad with the pain in his own face, Rusty hit the man again and again, wildly and awkwardly, with the giddy thrill of knowing he could do it: he was a child no longer, he was nearly seventeen, he was a man. He could inflict pain, that was a wonderful discovery; there was power in his body-a devil or a god – and he gained confidence in his power; and he was a man! (46)

Adolescence is a time when young adults begin to separate from their parents and develop their own identity. Acceptance by peers at this time is of utmost importance. The other teenagers in the group also have their ideas of acceptability borrowed from the culture and media. A boy who is very emotional and sensitive and cries over trifles will not be looked upon favourably. Adolescents who boast about their physical strength and powers have a borrowed idea that a male is supposed to be rough and tough. 'Crying' is a feminine characteristic.

Adolescents have strange ideas about sex. Some are very curious about it and inquire their friends. Some are confused and do not talk freely about it. Some even consider sex bad or mean to talk about it while some fear for adverse consequences of it. Their attitude towards sex depends mainly upon their environment, family back-ground, type of friends they have. Their approach towards sex is mainly affected by parents. However, today's adolescents differ from the earlier generations. They are more advanced today. It can be observed that they are bolder and more mature about sex.

Rusty after fighting with his guardian, runs away from home. He wanders in the deserted bazaar at night. No shop or stall is open. In the loneliness, Rusty finds a beckoning hand in a window. She is a prostitute. Rusty's condition is pitiable. He is still mad with anger and rebellion. He follows the sign of the woman at the window. The adolescent boy can't make out the situation. He reaches the woman's room in order to get some help. Instead, the woman expects a customer in the form of this boy. She touches the boy to excite him. Rusty's mental condition is disturbed after hand to hand fight with Mr. Harrison. He doesn't feel any excitement. For an adult sex may be a source of refreshing and up to some extent a remedy in bad mood. But for a growing up boy, it doesn't have any effect. Bond depicts the condition of an inexperienced boy in the matter of sex,

Reverently, and as respectfully as he could, Rusty sat down. The woman ran little fair fingers over his body, and drew his head to hers; their lips were very close, almost touching, and their breathing sounded terribly loud to Rusty, but he only said, 'I am Hungry.'

A poet, thought the woman, and kissed him full on the lips; but the boy drew away in embarrassment, unsure of himself, liking the woman on the bed and yet afraid of her....'What is wrong?' she asked. 'I 'm tired', he said. The woman's friendly smile turned to a look of scorn; but she saw that the he was only a boy whose eyes were full of unhappiness, and she could not help pitying him. (50)

However, the same boy takes initial step in love making with Mrs. Meena Kapoor in whose house he is sheltered on a room on the roof. In a picnic at jungle, he and Meena get an opportunity in the loneliness of the jungle. A different Rusty can be found here. He avoids his involvement in sex with the prostitute that is safe; and he takes risk to express his passion for Meena who is mother of his student Kishen. Besides, her husband and other boys are at just a little distance. Now he seems aggressive,

‘It is only a bird,’ she said, ‘of what are you afraid?’ But he was unable to release his hold, and she made no effort to free herself. She laughed into his face, and her eyes danced in the shadows. But he stifled her laugh with his lips. It was a clumsy, awkward kiss, but fiercely passionate, and Meena responded, tightening the embrace, returning the fervor of the kiss. They stood together in the shadows, Rusty intoxicated with beauty and sweetness, Meena with freedom and the comfort of being loved. (109-111)

It may be a part of Bond’s technique to create exciting atmosphere to give way to suppressed emotion during the loneliness of the picnic. In the short story *Love is a Sad Song*, he makes use of the same technique of going to natural and silent spots close to or in the forest where his characters get opportunity to let out their passion by kissing and embracing their beloved. He is far a more advanced Indian writer in depicting the element of sex in his fiction. After violent encounter Rusty leaves his house and European community for ever. He struggles for shelter, bread and butter. But with the help of Indian friends Ranbir and Somi he gets this

problem solved up to some extent. He is introduced to the Kapoors, Mr. Kapoor, his beautiful wife Meena and their only son Kishen. They offer him a room on their roof and work of teaching English to Kishen. He is appointed as a tutor for Kishen. The young boys Rusty, Ranbir, Somi, Suri and Kishen spend most of the time together. They enjoy every light moment of life in the company of one another. It helps Rusty to forget his past life of restrictions and torturing of Mr. Harrison. Bond throws light on other adolescent boys like Ranbir, Somi, Suri and particularly Kishen. Kishen gets more freedom after Rusty's appointment as his teacher. He is very naughty boy. His father Mr. Kapoor is found most of the time under the influence of wine. The boy makes use of his drunkard father by loafing every time, eating outside food at bazaar and spending money freely with his friends.

An important turn takes places in Rusty and Kishen's happy going life when Mrs. Meena Kapoor passes away in a car accident. The stern reality of Meena's death changes Rusty in a moment; he becomes an adult at once, a guardian to advice Kishen. Bond very faithfully portrayed the mental condition and behavioural pattern of the adolescent Rusty and the child Kishen in a critical situation when there is no support,

Kishen slept. He was exhausted - he had been walking all evening, crying his heart out. Rusty lay awake; his eyes wide open, brimming with tears. He did not know if the tears were for himself or for Meena or for Kishen, but they were for someone. Meena is dead, he told to himself, Meena is dead. If there is a God, then God will look after her; if God is love, then

my love will be with him. She loved me, I can see her so clearly her face speckled with sun and shadow when we kissed in the forest, the black waterfall of her hair, her tired eyes, her feet like jade in the lamplight, she loved me, She was mine.... (135)

In addition to that Mr. Kapoor remarries after a short period of time of his first wife's death. He does not prove to a good husband and a responsible father. It worsens Kishen's condition. He becomes an orphan in spite of his father's being alive. Any step parent can never take the place of the real parent. Ruskin Bond himself had gone through the same circumstances. After his father's death, his mother remarries an Indian, Mr. Hari Bond. He always missed his father and lost his mother's love even if she was alive. Kishen's becoming orphan makes him more carefree. Rusty's role becomes more important now. The growing up boy, Rusty has to perform the role of a guardian for Kishen. He himself is also shocked to hear the sad news of Meena's death. A seventeen year boy becomes mature all of a sudden. He begins to comment on life like a philosopher. Bond brings out his inner grief and thought process,

Rusty was overcome by a feeling of impotence and futility, and of the unimportance of life. Every moment, he told himself, every moment someone is born and someone dies, you can count them one, two, three, a birth and a death for every moment... what is this one life in the whole pattern of life what is this one death but a passing of time... and if I were to die now, suddenly

and without cause, what would happen, would it matter... We live without knowing why or to what purpose. (135)

Kishen's aunt takes him to Lucknow. Soon Rusty feels extreme loneliness as his other fast friend Somi also leaves Dehradun. Once he felt like the emperor of the kingdom in his room on the roof, but now it appears deserted and lonely. The grief of his beloved Meena's death becomes more painful in the absence of his friends. He thinks to go to England. But before he decides, he wishes to see Kishen. He reaches Haridwar at Mr. Kapoor to see Kishen. He comes to know there that Kishen has become a professional thief who robs people for some gang of pick pocketers. He is wanted by the police. An adolescent always requires shelter, love and direction of parents. Otherwise, there is strong possibility of his spoiling life in bad habits and criminal acts. Rusty moves from the house in order to search Kishen. He ultimately finds out Kishen who has changed a lot. His body looks very thin. But his mind works quicker. He succeeds to hide himself from the police. The society makes this homeless boy clever and practical. Rusty observes that before only one month he had clung to Rusty for protection; now Rusty looks to him for guidance. They plan to return to Dehra and start some work. Kishen suggests him to have students to teach and he himself will start a chaat shop.

Towards the end of the novel, Rusty changed as a wise senior and brings his friend Kishen back to normal life from the world of crime. Both friends come back to the paradise, the room on the roof to bathe at the water-tank and listen to the morning gossip, to sit in the fruit trees and eat in the chaat shop and make a garden on the roof. Of course, time has changed. They have separated from the owner of

the house Mr. and Mrs. Kapoor and some friends like Somi. They have many challenges and bread and butter is the first one. The great sign of relief is that they are together now, much experienced. There are struggles, setbacks, failures, but hope and optimism.

The Room on the Roof has earned fame for Ruskin Bond. In comparison to regular or traditional novels, this novel seems short in size with one hundred and fourteen pages. A larger autobiographical element can be observed here. The essence of entire novel can be felt in the following piece of verse by Charles Dickens speaks about the youth period in his poem *The Pure*,

The pure, the bright, the beautiful,

That stirred our hearts in youth,

The impulse to a wordless prayer,

The dreams of love and truth;

The longings after something lost,

The spirit's yearning cry,

The striving after better hopes...

These things can never die!. (1-3)

The Room on the Roof presents an interesting world of the growing ups. Here, readers come across so many leading features of the adolescents like their

physical growth, curiosity towards sex, making friendship, carefree life with friends, planning and struggling for earning, feeling of insecurity in the absence of parents and elders, developing bad habits, sense of rebellion, cherishing dreams for better future and many other. Bond himself is present in many of the scenes of the story. Some names of the boys have not been changed in the story like Ranbir and Somi who in real life had helped Ruskin Bond remarkably in his struggling days.

Chapter Four

Summation

The foregoing chapters have been attempting to show how Ruskin Bond has taken up highly sensitive issue of 'growing up' in his novels. Today India is presented in the writings of both Anglo-Indian writers and Indo English writers. The portrayal of India varies with different authors according to the requirements of their art and craft. Many writers have focused their attention only to the poverty of India, while others like Mulk Raj Anand, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Kamala Markandaya explore social problems of India and plead for the better. R.K. Narayan selects to be neither didactic nor bitter at India he sees; instead he adopts a comic stance and laughs at eccentricity of man. Raja Rao is all praise for Vedantic India and Manohar Malgonkar and Nayantara Sahgal assess India's history and politics. Arun Joshi and Anita Desai probe into inner psyche.

Among all these prominent writers, Ruskin Bond has a unique place because Bond has taken up a unique theme of 'adolescence'. Meena Khorana writes:

The interplay between Ruskin Bond's personal experiences and their artistic expression in a variety of children's books allows him to weave his literary works in a harmonious pattern, from the material of his life, Bond has fashioned two worlds: the secure and joyous world of the younger child, and the harsher realities faced by the adolescents. (115)

Ruskin Bond's creative period can be described as a post independent era. That was a time when 'Gandhian Whirlwind' had influenced political, religious, moral, social and economic thoughts. Although Bond did not address to any of these themes of Indian Renaissance, he retains his unique place as he has not limited himself to issues and problems of an era but he has taken up a universal theme of adolescence. Prabhat Kumar Singh writes in the preface to his work *Creative Contours of Ruskin Bond*,

Being alone from the harsh transactions of the world, Bond does appear lonely in the field of Indo Anglican fiction, but his loneliness is no burden because it turns into contemplative aloneness which he bears triumphantly cutting and binding by himself the crop of aesthetic delight like a solitary reaper. (7)

Ruskin Bond seems authentic in his account of children and adolescents because he passed through all the turmoil which is experienced by an adolescent. Ruskin Bond was a victim of disturbed family life. His parents were divorced. Bond could never be comfortable with his step father. His father died young and left Ruskin with the harsh realities of the world and struggle for existence. Ruskin, who was very sensitive by nature minutely observed and felt all the problems and aspirations of the adolescence; the result-a storehouse of wisdom in the form of his works.

Ruskin Bond has revealed the various facets of teenager's experience- their sense of belongingness, their career anxiety, their sexual explorations and

frustrations, parent-child conflict, day dreaming, peer groups, sense of nostalgia and sense of adventures.

In Introduction, Bond's biography has been explored and an effort has been made to know his thoughts, his psyche, and his attitude towards life. It is apparent that he is more interested in characters and in their innocence. The geographical background of Dehradun and Mussoorie has a long lasting influence on him. The simplicity, naivety and innocence of the region has easily crept into the characters that he had delineated. He is a creature of love and has, therefore, a sense of togetherness with his environment where the existence is phenomenally, governed by love, affection and sympathy. Nostalgia becomes an essential tool which chisels up his stories. He explores his past, his childhood not like a historian but like a poet.

In the second chapter, an in-depth study of Bond's psyche and life has been made and to relate him to his stories. He was the son of English parents, who after a time, spent most of their life in India, which with the passage of time created a different mental scope in which Bond grew up, not to be a writer with a fervent determination. It also appears from his biography that there was no family tradition and the name to be followed by him. He created his own way of life by experiencing inadequacies, pitfalls and weaknesses around him. He withstood suffering with stoicism and emerged an altogether a different being. He left behind his genealogy and freed himself from the conventional bonds, though he retained the name Bond. But strangely, it is the family that appears lingering in him and influences his writing. Unknowingly an entirely different attitude is formed and consequently the major process of thought is evolved.

The third chapter dealt with Rusty's journey from dark innocence to the light of experience has been emphasized. Discipline comes with age. As the child grows and sheds his veneer of innocence he experiences a kind of control in his life on the other hand, the make-believe world fascinates children who in their innocence enjoy every bit of illusion created by the writer. It has also been pointed out in this chapter that Rusty's growth from innocence to experience and physical change in the stage of adolescence. Rusty's nostalgic bent of mind, optimistically, forces him to stay in the grooves of innocence. The room of Rusty gave him shelter and also a feeling of selfhood. It was a room where he could explore his true essence, where he could give wings to his dreams and desires, a room of his own from where his journey to become a writer will begin. The room is a symbol of his liberation from the prison of restrictions in which he was imprisoned.

The novel, *The Room on the Roof* attracts us not for the reason that they throw light on Bond's life but because they faithfully depict the emotion, behavioural pattern and thought process of the adolescents. It is a story of an Anglo-Indian adolescent Rusty, who has lost his parents and is left alone in this world where he has no relative to support him. His first encounter is with his guardian Mr. Harrison, who is a tyrant and who chokes his natural growth.

Bond has chosen young boys as the main characters in the novel. The reason is obvious. A boy of seventeen could not but write about him and his comrades. The novel is autobiographical, hence true and sincere. While writing it Bond had no need to read a book on adolescent psychology. All that he wrote is largely a part of his own experience. Some of the characters have the same name they had in actual

life. Rusty is Ruskin and Somi is Somi. Some critics may comment that it is not fiction; it is a life history. Rusty opens his senses to the cultural synthesis of India by living in the village of Dehra. He interacts with diverse religions, experiences various cuisines, practices new customs, and clothes himself in different outfits.

An adolescent is different from a child. A child is entirely dependent on his parents or guardians. It can protest but is unable to revolt. Rusty, now an adolescent is a different boy. When he is physically assaulted, he revolts; he retaliates and beats Mr. Harrison severely. This encounter makes him realize that he has grown up. Adolescent's self assertion is wonderfully portrayed by Bond. It is the self assertion and the sense of having grown up that emboldens Rusty because he leaves his guardian's house and goes to his friend's house to seek his future. The sense of having grown up manifests in his love for Meena Kapoor and the role of being a guardian of Kishen. Bond has stated these facts, in terms of psychology and sociology through the room as the symbol of the adolescent world.

The central characters of the novel are Rusty and Kishen. Rusty begins a new life in Kapoor's house; it is a life of fun and frolic and, later on of growing up. His task is to teach Kishen, who is full of mischief and who does not consider Rusty to be his teacher or, at least, does not have the image that most children have in their mind of a teacher. For him, Rusty is a friend. Rusty and Kishen have no roof for shelter, but the Himalayan valley in which they wander is very much a home for them. Kishen found a father figure in Rusty but when he was separated from Rusty in *The Room on the Roof*, he became a delinquent. After getting Rusty back, he is normal and happy again. *The Room on the Roof* ends with Rusty and Kishen's

march toward Dehradun. After crossing the river they enter a forest. Bond treats adolescence as a passing phase.

The Room on the Roof recounts an adolescent journey, where Ruskin Bond self-assesses his own desires as a teenager who dreams of becoming a free Indian national. In this coming-of-age story, the author carefully paints the tribulations and ambition of introvert but adventurous Rusty, who lives with his guardian on the outskirts of Dehra, a north-Indian town which once served as a reclusive hub for the Europeans during the colonial period. Born and brought up in India, yet trapped in the enclosure of his community, Rusty's inquisitive mind strives to perceive the world outside. His life takes a different turn immediately after he comes in contact with miscellaneous Indian atmosphere of Dehra. Subsequent events lead us towards the self-discovery of the protagonist, who doesn't want to be cocooned in his guardian's strict European order.

The Research highlights the celebration of the self-identity, through the character of Rusty. The chapters meander through the journey of Rusty from being a moody, lost boy to being on the threshold of becoming a writer. It portrays how Rusty feels the urge to resolve his identity-dilemma because he is trapped in liminality between his Indian self and English one. It describes Rusty's identity crisis is the result of being orphaned when he was a baby and his guardian's reluctance to speak of his parents out of contempt. Moreover, identity crisis is inevitable to Rusty for he enjoys no close relationship with his guardian and he is unfamiliar with his guardian's companionship. It shows how Rusty slowly learns that a life free from colonial myth made him to realize the true oneness. The

chapters shows how Rusty's leap from his reclusive quasi-Englishness to become a responsible and free Indian citizen, promises him better scope.

Works Cited

Ahluwalia, Kailash, and R.P. Chaddah. "Blakean Overtones of Innocence and

Experience in Ruskin Bond's Novel *The Room on the Roof*." *Poetcrit*, vol.20, no. 1, 2007, pp. 25-29.

Bond, Ruskin. *The Room on the Roof*. Penguin Books, 1987.

---. *Scenes from a Writer's Life: A Memoir*. New Delhi: Penguin, 1997.

---. *Prologue, Rain in Mountains*. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1996.

---. *The Lamp is Lit: Leaves from a Journal*. New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1998.

Cole, Luella. *Psychology of Adolescence*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New Delhi: 1983.

Dowerah, Bornali Nath. *Home as a Fantasy/Reality Construct in Ruskin Bond's The Room on the Roof*. Vol.15. no.4. pp.102-08.

Friedenberg, Edgar Z. *The Vanishing Adolescent*. Boston Beacon Press. 1959.

Maslow, A. H. *Motivation and Personality*. New Delhi: Pearson Education, 1987.

Singh K, Prabhat. *The Creative Contours of Ruskin Bond*. New Delhi: Pen craft. 1995.

Dystopic Vision in H.G.Wells' Novel *The Time Machine*: A Study

A project 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

by

K. RAMYA

(REG. NO. 20APEN20)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO
One	Introduction	1
Two	Fear of Human Evolution	15
Three	The Elois and the Morlocks	30
Four	Satire	46
Five	Summation	57
	Works Cited	70

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project **Dystopic Vision in H.G.Wells' Novel *The Time Machine: A Study*** 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 is a work done by K.Ramya during the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Dr. L. Jacqueline Leo
24.05.22
Dr. L. Jacqueline Leo

Guide

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

S. Vennila
27/05/2022
Examiner

Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Sri Lanka
27/05/2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Dystopic Vision in H.G.Wells' Novel *The Time Machine* :A Study** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmanian 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.

Thoothukudi

May 2022


K .Ramya

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to **Lord Almighty** for the wisdom, peace of mind, and strength which He bestowed upon me, during the course of my study.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study.

I thank **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her support, in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. L. Jacqueline Leo**, Associate Professor of English for imparting knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I thank **Dr. Vinitha**, Librarian, St. Mary's College (Autonomous) for the help extended in the use of the library for the reference work.

My sincere thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

Herbert George Wells best known for science fiction novels was an English writer, journalist, sociologist, and a historian of the 19th century England. Prolific in many genres, he wrote dozens of novels, short stories, and works of social commentary, history, satire, biography and autobiography. In his novel *The Time Machine* he critiques the Victorians' fears of evolution. When Charles Darwin's theories were progressive in Wells' time, and terrified many of the upper class, he takes on the impossible task of imagining the future of the world.

The project entitled **Dystopic Vision in H. G. Wells' Novel *The Time Machine*: A Study** deals with H. G. Wells' deliberate debunking of the utopian fictions of the late nineteenth century.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the explanation of the genre science fiction, and how it is employed in *The Time Machine* along with the biography of the writer H. G. Wells.

The second chapter entitled **The Fear of Human Evolution** discusses the concept of "Degeneration" which is evolution in reverse, a dystopic vision of a troubled future. It recommends that current society change its ways lest it ends up like the Eloi, terrified of an underground race of Morlocks.

The third chapter **The Eloi and the Morlocks** dramatises the exploitative relationship between the owners and the workers of the Victorian England through an imaginary nameless scientist with his time machine and his travels to the year 802,701 AD. In the Eloi, Wells satirizes the Victorian decadence. In the Morlocks, Wells provides a potentially Marxist critique of capitalism.

The fourth chapter **Satire** focuses on the author's satirical view on the technology of his era and how the problem of class division would be worse than people imagine in the future if it persists.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

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

Chapter one

Introduction

Herbert George Wells best known for science fiction novels was an English writer, journalist, sociologist, and a historian. Prolific in many genres, he wrote dozens of novels, short stories, and works of social commentary, history, satire, biography and autobiography. One of the most creative and wide-ranging writers of the twentieth century, Wells wrote more than hundred books, including biology textbooks, collections of short stories and literary criticism, and studies of the world economy, British imperialism, and Russian communism. He was most prominent as a forward-looking, even prophetic social critic who devoted his literary talents to the development of a progressive vision on a global scale. A futurist, he wrote a number of utopian works and foresaw the advent of aircraft, tanks, space travel, nuclear weapons, satellite television and something resembling the World Wide Web. His science fiction imagined time travel, alien invasion, invisibility, and biological engineering. Brian Aldiss referred to Wells as the “Shakespeare of science fiction”, while American writer Charles Fort referred to him as a “wild talent”.

Herbert George Wells shortly called H. G. Wells lived in a society which was experiencing the clashes created by the transition of Victorian values to modernism. He was born in Bromley, Kent where his father was a shopkeeper and professional cricketer and Wells mother served from time to time as a housekeeper at the nearby estate of Uppark. In his early teens, Wells became a draper's apprentice, having to work in a basement for hours on end. When Wells father's business failed and to elevate the family to middle class status, he emerged at fourteen from what Wells calls ‘the valley of the

shadow', to 'the purgatory of the drapery'. Wells was apprenticed like his brother to drapery, spending the years between 1800 and 1883 in the Windsor and Southsea.

From recollection of those years came several of his best novels based on Wells' personal childhood experiences, when he literally spent a lot of their time underground with the working class. His own family would spend most of their time in a dark basement kitchen when not being occupied in their father's shop. Later, his own mother would work as a housekeeper in a house with tunnels below, where the staff and servants lived in underground quarters. A medical journal published in 1905 would focus on these living quarters for servants in poorly ventilated dark basements.

When current problems of sociology of international relationships of religion become insignificant in the face of newer problems, there remain the joyous misadventures of Mr Kipps, of Mr Polly. Wells graduated in B.Sc. with first class honours in zoology and afterwards went as assistant master to Henley house school St. John's wood in northwest London. There he had his experience as tutor, lecturer and demonstrator with incursions into journalism, proceeding him to a serious illness which ended his teaching career.

In 1893 Wells turned wholly to journalism and authorship and two years later published his first novel, *The Time Machine* a strikingly original book marked by unique inventive ability, prophetic vision and a knowledge of clear and vigorous English. Though it was a precursor of 'science fiction' it did not become a reputable genre at that time. In the following forty years Wells wrote scores of books. The list includes treaties on love and marriage, science and religion, peace and war, sociology, biology, politics, angels and mermaids,

astronomy and world history: the old world and new worlds to come; and even children's games. Wells' prodigal dispersion of energy, though creative literature was certainly better served by the early imaginative Wells than by his later political self. *The History of Mr Polly* (1910) still read with pleasure and profit while *The World of William Clissold* (1926) and its successors have become hardly more than an anchorage for library cobwebs.

Wells' eager restless inquiring mind unsettled him for orthodox fiction as the year went on. Though there is as much sound social criticism in the dyspepsia of Alfred Polly as in the diatribes of Clissold, the change in Wells' literary manner after 1910 was not wholly due to a decay of creative power. The word 'commitment' did not become a cliché in Wells' life time he was in the fullest sense a 'committed writer, but not a narrowly partisan one. Wells' manifesto of change (in his essay on *The contemporary novel*) made plain Wells' intention to abandon the weary Giant theory which posited that the novel was only a means of relaxation, a harmless opiate for vacant hours and vacant minds. Wells also dissented from the theory that the novel has an established form, in the sense in which a sonnet has formed.

Wells' first training was in Biology, and his thoughtful ethical matters took place in a fundamentally Darwinian context. He was also a frank socialist, sympathizing with pacifist views. His later works became gradually political and didactic, and Wells indicated on official documents that his profession was that of a Journalist. Most of his later novels were not science fiction. Some described that his lower-middle class life, led him to be exposed as a devotee of Charles Dickens. He begins his writing career in the short story

form and gained literary fame with *The Time Machine* the first scientific romance.

H. G. Wells became an overnight literary sensation with the publication of his novel *The Time Machine* which is about an English Scientist who develops a time travel machine. While entertaining, the book also explores social and scientific topics from class conflict to evolution. These themes reappear in some of his other popular works such as *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Invisible Man* and *The War of the Worlds*. *The Island of Doctor Moreau* tells the story of a man, who encounters a scientist conducting the horrible experiments on animals, creating new species of creature. In *The Invisible Man*, Wells explores the life of another scientist who undergoes a dark personal transformation after turning invisible. *The War of the Worlds* is a novel about an alien invasion that causes an extreme fright when broadcast on American radio. Wells continued to write fantastic fiction during his career, with a specific focus on utopian fiction in the early 20th century. He was well gazed not only in Britain but also in Europe. In the final fifteen years of his life Wells completed three works of autobiography which adorned his position as a cultural figure.

Wells himself was a socialist and was against the mistreatment and abuse of the working class, he believed that the class division that existed in the time should be abolished. His other science fiction novels include *The Invisible Man* (1897) which takes on Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*: a scientist, Griffin, succeeds in making himself invisible but finds it difficult to reverse the scientific process, just as Jekyll finds he can no longer keep his alter ego, Edward Hyde, at bay in Stevenson's story.

The Sleeper Awakes (1910) early futuristic dystopian novel was Wells' own reworking of an earlier novel, *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899). The 'sleeper' is a man named Graham who comes out of a coma after several hundred years to find that he is the richest man in the world. Wells' second science-fiction novel, *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896) is a vivisection of the titular doctor who fashions creatures from the body parts of animals. These creatures resemble men, but are actually monsters. *The War of the Worlds* (1898) is a pioneering work of 'invasion' Literature, which inspired countless film adaptations and was undoubtedly a major influence on all subsequent films and novels about aliens coming to Earth from space. The aliens in this case, of course, are the Martians.

The First Men in the Moon (1901) draws on earlier moon-voyage novels by Jules Verne, this is another of Wells' classic early scientific romances, though it often gets overlooked in favour of *The War of the Worlds*, and *The Time Machine*. In many ways this book forms a pair with the next book on our list of the best H. G. Wells novels. *The First Men in the Moon* sees men travelling to another 'world' and meeting the alien life-forms that exist there, our next novel sees the aliens coming to us...

In the Days of the Comet (1906) is one of Wells' utopian novels, which tells of a green comet when it comes into the orbit of Earth, releases 'green vapours' which spread peaceful feelings and a sense of contentment among the entire human population. This novel explores Wells' own utopian ideas involving socialism and free love.

The Food of the Gods (1904) focuses on genetically modified food (of sorts), 'Boom food', that can make all sorts of animals – insects, rats, and

chickens, as well as human beings -grow to many times their normal size. The book has been adapted for cinema on several occasions: *The Sleeper Awakes* cover the 1976 film won the Golden Turkey Award for that year and also scooped up the accolade of ‘Worst Rodent Movie of All Time’.

The Shape of Things to Come (1933) a prophetic later work by Wells predicted that there would be another world war within a decade of the book’s publication (after conflict in Eastern Europe erupted onto the world stage). Wells, and the world, had to wait just six years for his prophecy to come true.

In literature, the question of how class conflicts would resolve themselves was a popular one. Utopian stories such as Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* (1888) – wherein a man wakes from a hypnotic sleep in the year 2000 to discover America has become a socialist utopia, utterly free of class-based issues – and William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* (1890) which depicts a future where all work has become pleasurable – were popular in the late 19th century. Dystopian works like *The Time Machine* which posit degeneration, rather than continued, positive evolution as mankind’s future state were a response to the utopian fiction trend.

Jules Verne is often called “The Father of Science Fiction” along with H. G. Wells and Hugo Gernsback, as well as the second most translated author between Agatha Christie and William Shakespeare, Jules Verne had a profound influence on most of Europe and the genre of science fiction. Jules was a French novelist, poet and playwright. Jules notable works are *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864,) *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870), *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873).

Writers like Hugo Gernsback, Robert Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, Frank Herbert, Ray Bradbury were significant in the field of science fiction with their remarkable works.

The late nineteenth century was a time when many people believed that progress, especially technological progress, could solve many of humanity's seemingly intractable problems, such as disease, hunger, violence, and exploitation. Wells, a devotee of science, seemingly endorses this view at the beginning of *The Time Machine*, as the Time Traveller, an inventor, creates a machine that travels in the fourth dimension. However, as the story continues, readers see that the Time Traveller discovers a future in which the only thing that has progressed is humanity's savagery and thirst for self-destruction.

The idea of progress emerged contemporaneously with the formation of the sciences and professional scientists and was significantly spurred by the publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. Although the notion of evolution was heavily debated before Darwin, Christian beliefs about the creation of the universe held sway in the popular imagination. Holding fast to the Genesis-inspired version of the origins of humanity, the church opposed many ideas of progress put forth by natural historians and scientists because they did not coincide with the church's literal interpretation of the Bible. Such opposition also rationalized the inequality of classes, as humanity was seen as the object, rather than the subject, of change, and people were encouraged to accept their lot in life.

Darwin's theory of natural selection and Marx's description of history as a class struggle gave many people a new conceptual framework within which to think about change and, more specifically, to view change as progress. They

saw in both Darwin and Marx's theories the idea that humankind was improving with time, that its intellect was becoming more sophisticated, and that a classless society was inevitable.

Wells, however, did not equate progress with improvement, and the discoveries of the Time Traveller illustrate his belief that evolution does not necessarily mean evolution of morality or of the intellect. Wells' son and literary critic, Anthony West, sums up the writer's thinking on this subject in his essay "H.G. Wells":

Wells suggests that morals and ethics have their basis in man's behaviour as a social animal... The intellect on the other hand is amoral and ultimately recognizes the single value of efficiency, so that a continuation of the line of development that had made man a reasoning animal might ultimately make him more callous, indifferent, and cruel, not more moral.

The Time Machine had numerous incarnations, the first of which was a story called "The Chronic Argonauts," which Wells published in *Science Schools Journal* in 1888. The story achieved its final form in 1894. An adherent of evolutionary theory and a staunch advocate of women's suffrage and workers' rights, Wells was deeply influenced by his times. In the 1880s and 1890s, Britain's population was booming, roughly doubling between 1851 and 1901. The rise of industrialization was emptying the farms of residents and rural labourers, as people flocked to the cities and industrial towns to work in factories. By the turn of the century, more than eighty percent of Britain's population lived in urban areas. The shift from an agricultural to an industrial economy meant that England was now dependent on imports to feed its

growing population and that the landed gentry who relied on income from renting farmland now had to find another way to make money. As a city dweller and a Progressive man, Wells was sensitive to the working conditions of the factory labourer. His description of the Eloi and the Morlocks dramatizes the exploitative relationship between owners and workers in Victorian England.

Wells' time machine itself was a product of an imagination nursed on the extraordinary technological advances of his day, advances that fuelled industrial development and changed the complexion of the workforce. In the 1870s, for example, both the typewriter and the telephone were invented. These inventions enabled office work to be done more efficiently, work that fell overwhelmingly to women. Other inventions that altered the daily lives and thinking of Victorians include suspension bridges, the telegraph, subway trains, steamships, buses, automobiles, and electric lights. These inventions made travelling places and moving goods less expensive and opened up vistas of opportunity for entrepreneur and worker alike. Public transportation enabled workers to live farther away from urban centres, which were becoming increasingly crowded, unsafe, and unsanitary. These inventions also sped up the pace of daily life, giving it a kind of urgency previously unknown and adding to the sense that the world was spinning out of control.

The Time Traveller's initial response after landing in the future but prior to meeting the Eloi, underscores this thinking. He worries: "What if cruelty had grown into a common passion? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness, and had developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful?"(35). His fears partially come true after meeting

the creatures, for they have grown weak from not having to work or endure hardship, and since they had all the comforts of the good life provided for them, they had lost the impetus to strive. But the Time Traveller sees this "ruinous splendour" as a kind of paradise, where "One triumph of a united humanity over Nature had followed another"(48). This paradise, however, is not a cause of celebration but a reason for mourning.

Wells' depiction of the relationship between the Eloi and the Morlocks can be seen as a critique of the notion that "work" was a problem to be solved, rather than a necessary condition of humanity essential for the intellect to develop. Before Marx drew closer attention to the horrific working conditions of labourers, locating their misery in the historic struggle between capital and labour in writings such as *The Communist Manifesto* (1848), workers were largely resigned to their fate.

The working class would receive their reward not in this life but in the next. They waited for salvation, not progress, enduring hardship and suffering in their daily lives in the hope of securing a better one after they died. History was merely how one waited for the return of Christ. Wells mocks the Christian notion that life's purpose is to wait for salvation in his image of the winged sphinx, one of the first things the Time Traveller sees after "landing." The Sphinx of Giza, Egypt, has the body of a lion and the head of a king or god and is a symbol of strength and wisdom. By putting wings on it, Wells creates a kind of hybrid angel. Instead of representing God's messengers, however, the statue signifies a degraded civilization on the verge of extinction.

Wells, an occasional socialist, parodies communism in the Time Traveller's description of the Eloi, as what he initially sees as the perfect

communist society turns out to be little more than an updated and more perverted story of the haves and the have-nots from his own time. Humanity's mistake, Wells implies in the novel, is in believing that through science and technology they had conquered nature.

Nature, for Wells, was a stronger force than society, one that could not be subjugated. Overriding Wells' belief in the moral rightness of socialism was his belief that, ultimately, humankind could not contend with the force of nature. The Time Traveller spells this out when he muses on the Eloi:

I thought of the physical slightness of the people, their lack of Intelligence ... and it strengthened my belief in the perfect conquest of Nature. For after the battle comes Quiet. Humanity has been strong, energetic, and intelligent, and has used all its abundant vitality to alter the conditions under which it lived. And now came the reaction of the altered conditions.(50)

The “reaction” nature's revenge, came in the form of the evolution of two races of “people,” neither of which had any exemplary moral traits.

By locating progress as a provisional phenomenon contingent upon humanity's capacity to make moral choices, rather than as the purpose of history or evolution, Wells calls attention to the necessity for humankind to change its ways carefully, and with the future in mind. More than a science fiction story or a fantasy tale, *The Time Machine* is a cautionary tale of what may happen if unfettered capitalism is permitted to continue. By making a machine the thing that literally enables time travel, Wells was appealing to the increasing fascination of Westerners of the late nineteenth century had for the new and the mechanical. Electricity, steamships, the radio and telephone, and

numerous other technological inventions were changing the shape of what was thought possible and, Wells would say, blinding many to their very human responsibilities to use these inventions for the betterment of all rather than for the profit of a few.

Wells *The Time Machine* carries an important message that the division between the classes should be abolished before humanity ruins itself. During the time of H. G. Wells there was great division between the rich (upper leisured class) and the poor (working class). The working class would often be employed in lower class jobs, in nearby factories or mills. The working class was unfairly exploited, they were made to work ridiculously long hours, for the minimum amount of pay, and they were also situated in low class accommodation areas. Working class was cramped into small areas, in areas that were highly polluted as the accommodation was so close to the factories and mills. The average life expectancy of a working class person was extremely low, which was mainly due to malnourishment, because working class was not paid fairly; consequently they could not afford to buy food. While on the other hand the rich (upper/ leisure class) lived a life of pleasure and ease. The upper class could live an entire lifetime without working, or ever having to fend for them.

Being the opponent of capitalism and social class stratification, H.G. Wells presents his novel as a response to the pitfalls of the existing social order. It was first released in 1895, and it was an original publication by William Heinemann, released in London, 1895. Focusing on social and economic aspects of the narration is essential because it allows the reader to

conduct a comparative analysis of Wells' perception of the future with the current economic and social situation.

In the novel, Wells discusses extensively the problem of equality and humanity. Within this context, the author's socialist criticism focuses on the fact that the current society fails to embrace the principles of humanity and equality due to overt exploitation of human labour. Hence, the novel is Wells' interpretation of future society in which he strives to achieve humankind's perfectibility by introducing scientific discoveries. At the same time, the author resorts to realistic descriptions to the possible extent and combines it with the fantastic world. Further, as it is usually represented in Science Fiction novels, Wells introduces a kind of warning to humans who neglect ethical rights and principle of social equality. At this point, the book can be considered an interpretation of Social Darwinism theory, according to which humans tend to devolve. Additionally, while debating on the human equality, Wells associates Time Machine with a history machine to introduce symbols of social and economic degradation of the world's community.

From the capitalist perspective, Wells criticizes heavily the capitalist tendencies of his society. The author's dystopian outlook on human race and its future creates a common thread combining all the themes of the novel. Specifically, Wells notes, "Scientific people...know very well that Time is only a kind of Space"(12) . Although the phrase bears purely scientific character, it also sheds light on the existing system of social and political order. By means of time, Wells can look at the future and change it with regard to the mistakes made in the present. Moreover, the depiction of time also

points to the regression of life due to the detrimental effects of capitalist system.

Disapproval of this economic system was also explained by the author's adherence to communism principles in which there is no place for human inequality. There is also an assumption that Wells is not a socialist; rather he is the supporter of Marxist theory. Specifically, the author describes the proletariat as animals and this class leads to human devolution. Such a reference also explains the way Wells introduces the concept of humanity. Unequal treatment of people is also expressed through the existence of social class stratification. Nevertheless, the division of people in the novel bears both dystopian and utopian character, reflecting the continuous class struggle in the course of history. The dominating class follows utopian principles whereas inferior class lives in a dystopian world in the underground.

In this respect, the main idea of the novel consists in the confrontation between these two social groups, as well as between different modes of life. At the same time, the contrast existed between these two societies is represented in relation to anti-ethical frameworks employed to depict them. Consequently, the world presented in the novel is full of biases and contradictions: utopian world of the Eloi and the wicked society of the Morlocks.

Chapter Two

Fear of Human Evolution

H. G. Wells critiques the Victorians' fears of evolution in *The Time Machine*. When Charles Darwin's theories were progressive in Wells' time, and terrified many of the upper class, he takes on the impossible task of imagining the future of the world. The story features the Time Traveller (George), the main character of the story, and his many adventures in the year 802,701 A.D. The Time Traveller travels from the late 19th century to the future—802,701—to find both heavenly and hellish, both beautiful and sickening environments.

The novel *The Time Machine* is a class fable, as well as a scientific parable, in which the two societies of Wells' own period (the upper classes and the "lower orders") are recast as equally, though differently, "degenerate" beings. "Degeneration" is evolution in reverse, while Wells' dystopic vision in *The Time Machine* is a deliberate debunking of the utopian fictions of the late nineteenth century, in particular William Morris's *News from Nowhere*. Where Morris depicts a pastoral, socialist utopia, Wells represents a world in which the human struggle is doomed to failure.

The Time Machine has two main threads. The first is the adventure tale of the Eloi and Morlocks in the year 802,701 AD. The second is the science fiction of the time machine. The adventure story includes many archetypal elements. The Time Traveller's journey to the underworld, his fear of the great forest, and his relationship to Weena, mirror, imagery prevalent in earlier

literature which is strongly associated with the inner workings of the human psyche. The tale of 802,701 is a political commentary of late Victorian England. It is a dystopia, a vision of a troubled future. It recommends that current society change its ways lest it end up like the Eloi, terrified of an underground race of Morlocks. In the Eloi, Wells satirizes Victorian decadence. In the Morlocks, Wells provides a potentially Marxist critique of capitalism. The rest of the novella deals with the science fiction of time travel.

The narrator is a speaker through whom the author tells a story. This influences the story's point of view. Wells constructs an ingenious frame for *The Time Machine*, using, in essence, two narrators. The first is the “true” narrator, Hillyer, who introduces the Time Traveller and the other guests present at his house in the first two chapters, and who writes the concluding words in the epilogue.

The second narrator is the Time Traveller himself, who takes over the narration, beginning with the third chapter, and who disappears into the future at the end of the twelfth chapter. This narrative technique allows Wells to speculate about the future and at the same time voice his positions on topics such as politics and evolution through the voice of others and within the framework of an adventure story. This strategy makes potentially difficult ideas accessible to more readers. It also gives credibility to the Time Traveller's story, as Hillyer presents the story in the Time Traveller's own words.

The group of men, including the narrator, is listening to the Time Traveller discuss his theory that time is the fourth dimension. The Time Traveller produces a miniature time machine and makes it disappear into thin

air. The next week, the guests return, to find their host stumble in, looking dishevelled and tired. They sit down after dinner, and the Time Traveller begins his story.

The Time Traveller had finally finished work on his time machine, and it rocketed him into the future. When the machine stops, in the year 802,701 AD, he finds himself in a paradisiacal world of small humanoid creatures called Eloi. They are frail and peaceful, and give him fruit to eat. He explores the area, but when he returns he finds that his time machine is gone. He decides that it has been put inside the pedestal of a nearby statue. He tries to pry it open but cannot. In the night, he begins to catch glimpses of strange white ape-like creatures the Eloi and Morlocks. He decides that the Morlocks live below ground, down the wells that dot the landscape. Meanwhile, he saves one of the Eloi from drowning, and she befriends him. Her name is Weena. The Time Traveller finally works up enough courage to go down into the world of Morlocks to try to retrieve his time machine. He finds that matches are a good defence against the Morlocks, but ultimately they chase him out of their realm.

Frightened by the Morlocks, he takes Weena to try to find a place where they will be safe from the Morlocks' nocturnal hunting. He goes to what he calls the Palace of Green Porcelain, which turns out to be a museum. There, he finds more matches, some camphor, and a lever he can use as a weapon. That night, retreating from the Morlocks through a giant wood, he accidentally starts a fire. Many Morlocks die in the fire and the battle that ensues, and Weena is killed. The exhausted Time Traveller returns to the pedestal to find that it has already been pried open. He strides in confidently, and just when the

Morlocks think that they have trapped him, he springs onto the machine and whizzes into the future.

The Time Traveller makes several more stops. In a distant time he stops on a beach where he is attacked by giant crabs. The bloated red sun sits motionless in the sky. He then travels thirty million years into the future. The air is very thin, and the only sign of life is a black blob with tentacles. He sees a planet eclipse the sun. He then returns- exhausted, to the present time. The next day, he leaves again, but never returns.

Wells was a Socialist for most of his life with Communist leanings, he argued in both his novels and non-fiction works that capitalism was one of the great ills of modern society. Rapid growth in technology, education, and capital had launched the Industrial Revolution in the 17th- and 18th-centuries, and by the late 19th-century of “The Time Traveller,” England was a leading force in the new economy: while industrialists revelled in their unbounded wealth, groups of men, women, and young children toiled long hours for meager wages in dirty, smoke-filled factories. While Charles Dickens won sympathy for the poor by sentimentally depicting their struggle, Wells chose to incorporate a number of scientific both natural and social ideas in his argument against Capitalism.

Wells’ major target is the often elitist branch of evolution, Social Darwinism. In “*The Origin of Species*,” Charles Darwin argued that different environments encouraged the reproduction of those species whose varying traits best suited them to survive; their offspring, in turn, would be better adapted for the new environment, as would their offspring, and so on. Social Darwinism, developed by British philosopher Herbert Spencer, frequently

misapplied this concept of “natural selection” to justify 19th-century social stratification between the rich and poor. The catch-phrase “survival of the fittest” (actually coined by Spencer, not Darwin; Spencer also popularized the term “evolution”) does not mean the surviving members of an environment are the “best,” but merely the best fit for their specific environment (for instance, Spencer's pale British skin would not survive long in sun-baked Africa). Therefore, evolution does not lead to the “perfectibility” of any species, as is generally perceived, but to the increasing adaptability and complexity of a species. Social Darwinism ignored this idea and contended that the social environment was much like the cut throat natural environment, and that those who succeeded were biologically destined to do so and to continue in their march to human perfection. Conversely, those who failed were naturally inferior specimens of humanity.

In “*The Time Machine*” Wells shows first how far human evolution will go if capitalism continues unhampered: mankind will split into two distinct species, the ruling class (the Eloi in the novel) and the working class (the Morlocks). Furthermore, the advancements of civilization will not necessarily advance the species—quite the opposite, in fact. Their luxurious, carefree civilization has made the beautiful Eloi the weak, lazy, and stupid targets of the Morlocks; without an urgent need to survive, the Eloi have not needed to become more “fit,” but have instead regressed. Therefore, even though man may evolve to adapt to his environment, the changing environment itself may make that evolution ultimately undesirable. Social Darwinism does not take this into account, and Wells' portrayal of the Eloi serves as an ominous warning to the ruling class who believes it is striving toward perfection.

To counter the notion of evolution as perfection, Wells brings in the concept of entropy (from the Second Law of Thermodynamics). The principle of entropy states that systems tend toward disorder and loss of energy over time. The Eloi seem to embody the effects of entropy; they are lazy, have little physical strength, and grow chaotically fearful when the Morlocks are near. But Wells truly shows his hand in Chapter XI, where the Time Traveller advances thirty million years into the future and witnesses the universe's gradual dissipation of energy.

The Time Machine imagines how the social conditions of Victorian England would have evolved in the year 802,701. The story opens on a dinner party at the home of an eminent scientist, the Time Traveller, who explains to his assembled guests principles of science and maths that support the possibility of traveling across time, just as one would travel across space. His guests are upper class British men a doctor, a psychologist, a journalist, etc. and they greet his pronouncements with skepticism.

To demonstrate the validity of his ideas, the Time Traveller brings into the living room a small model of a machine. The psychologist, ever skeptical, depresses a lever and the machine disappears. The Time Traveller then reveals that he has almost completed a life-sized machine that will transport him through time. He shows the machine to the guests, but they remain skeptical.

The book's protagonist, who is never named and called only the Time Traveller, is a brilliant Victorian inventor who travels 800,000 years into the future. He finds that humans have evolved into two distinct species, called the Eloi and the Morlocks. The Eloi are peace-loving and childlike simpletons who are farmed and eaten by the brutal Morlocks, who live underground. This

short novel was Wells' first, and it made him famous. The work has influenced generations of speculative fiction writers and has twice been made into a motion picture.

The novel is told in the first person using a frame story about a dinner party. The narrator is a guest at the party, and the Time Traveller is the host. The Time Traveller recounts his adventures in the future to his guests beginning in Chapter 3. His story comprises the bulk of the novel. The novel concludes with a return to the scene of the dinner party, and the final chapter describes the guests' dismayed reactions to their host's tale.

The novel opens with a gathering of educated, upper-class men enjoying after-dinner conversation in an elegant home in Richmond, outside London. Their host, an inventor whom the narrator calls only the Time Traveller, describes his theory that people can travel in time. The guests are intrigued but skeptical. The Time Traveller shows the guests a clock-sized model of his time machine. He presses a lever on the device and it vanishes, astonishing the guests. Next, the Time Traveller escorts them to his laboratory and shows them the full-sized version of the device. The Traveller insists that none of the evening's events are tricks and that he fully intends to travel through time when the machine is completed.

The following Thursday, the inventor's guests assemble again. The host arrives late. His clothes are a mess, and his face is ashen. He claims that he has, since that very morning, experienced eight days of astonishing adventure in his time machine.

He describes climbing into the device and setting the levers to move forward in time. The hours begin to speed by. Day and night replace each

other, faster and faster, until they whirl by in a blur. Stopping the machine 802,000 years into the future, he discovers a race of diminutive, childlike creatures who are descended from humans. These are the Eloi, who enjoy a diet of fruit, spend their days idly, and are both mentally and physically weak.

The Traveller finds that his time machine has gone missing. A frantic search turns up few clues. He thinks the machine may have been hidden inside a large statue of a white sphinx. Despite his pleas, no one will go near the statue or help him open it.

A female Eloi falls into a stream and, seeing the lack of concern among the Eloi, the Time Traveller jumps in and rescues her. The two become friends. The woman, named Weena, grows devoted to him, and she follows him everywhere.

Early one morning, the Traveller notices white creatures on a distant hillside. These creatures are Morlocks, apelike with large eyes and pale fur. The Traveller learns that the Morlocks live underground, while the Eloi live aboveground. He climbs down one of the wells and finds there, underground, the machinery that keeps the Eloi alive. These machines are tended by the Morlocks. Several Morlocks try to capture him, and he narrowly escapes and returns to the surface.

The Traveller and Weena walk for many miles to a distant building on a hill. The building is an ancient, crumbling museum. Inside there are broken-down exhibits of extinct animals, old machinery, many scientific specimens, and books whose pages have long disintegrated. In the museum, he makes a torch and a weapon for himself out of the bits and pieces of machinery he finds there. He and Weena trek back toward her home. That night, in the dark forest,

they are set upon by Morlocks. The Traveller fends them off, but not before they capture Weena. He lights some camphor that he took from the museum, which further daunts them. The flames ignite a forest fire that forces everyone to retreat to a barren hill, and many Morlocks, stunned and confused, die in the conflagration.

The Traveller survives and returns to the garden with the mysterious white sphinx. The statue's large pedestal has been opened, and inside sits the time machine. The Traveller enters the pedestal just before it closes. Quickly, he reinstalls the machine's levers, sending himself far into the future, where he encounters a dying planet Earth: the sun glows huge and dull red, the air is thin, and the animals are monstrous. Terrified by what he sees, he sets the machine to travel backward to his own time, where he emerges and tells the story to his dinner guests. They refuse to believe him. However, the narrator is curious to learn more, and he returns the next day. He witnesses the Traveller and his machine disappear from the lab evidently, on another journey through time. The Traveller is never seen again.

The Time Traveller's initial response after landing in the future but prior to meeting the Eloi, underscores his thought process. He worries: "What if cruelty had grown into a common passion? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness, and had developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful?"(35). His fears partially come true after meeting the creatures, for they have grown weak from not having to work or endure hardship, and since they had all the comforts of the good life provided for them, they had lost the impetus to strive. But the Time Traveller sees this "ruinous splendor" as a kind of paradise, where "One triumph of a united

humanity over Nature had followed another”(48). This paradise, however, is not a cause of celebration but a reason for mourning. After learning of the Morlocks' existence, the Time Traveller speculates on what had come to pass:

I grieved at how brief the dream of human intellect had been. It had committed suicide. It had set itself steady fast toward comfort and ease, a balanced society with security and permanency as its watchword. It had attained its hope to come to this at last.... The rich had been assured of his wealth and comfort, the toiler assured of his life and work.(110-111)

Wells' depiction of the relationship between the Eloi and the Morlocks can be seen as a critique of the notion that “work” was a problem to be solved, rather than a necessary condition of humanity essential for the intellect to develop. The late nineteenth century was a time when many people thought that progress, especially technological progress, could solve many of humanity's apparently intractable problems, such as disease, hunger, violence, and exploitation. Wells, a devotee of science, seemingly endorses this view at the beginning of *The Time Machine*, as the Time Traveller, an inventor, creates a machine that travels in the fourth dimension. However, as the story continues, readers see that the Time Traveller discovers a future in which the only thing that has progressed is humanity's savagery and thirst for self-destruction.

The adventure story includes many archetypal elements. The Time Traveller's journey to the underworld, his fear of the great forest, and his relationship to Weena, mirror imagery prevalent in earlier literature, imagery strongly associated with the inner workings of the human psyche. The tale of

802,701 is political commentary of late Victorian England. It is a dystopia, a vision of a troubled future. It recommends that current society change its ways lest it end up like the Eloi, terrified of an underground race of Morlocks.

In the Eloi, Wells satirizes Victorian decadence. In the Morlocks, Wells provides a potentially Marxist critique of capitalism. Before Wells, other people had written fantasies of time travel. Wells has his Time Traveller speak at length on the fourth dimension and on the strange astronomy and evolutionary trends he observes as he travels through time.

The novel features a framing device wherein an unnamed narrator in the present day (mid-1890s) sets the stage for the main story, which the Time Traveller himself tells. The unnamed narrator provides perspective on the Time Traveller, encouraging readers to see the man as honest and believable when he might otherwise come across as mad. In so doing, the narrator lends weight to the Time Traveller's story.

Over the course of the story, what initially seems like a utopian age reveals itself as quite the opposite. In the final part of the novel, the Time Traveller tells of travelling still further forward in time until he reaches the end of Earth's existence, and the unnamed narrator relates what happens after the Time Traveller's return to his own era.

In future in which humans have evolved into different species, Wells also shows a future in which humans do not exist at all. Chapter Eleven finds the Time Traveller on a beach in the distant future in which the only signs of life seem to be giant crustaceans and algae that has washed ashore. Wells' descriptions of the changed sky with no moon, different constellations, thin

atmosphere and the dying sun are reminders that the human species is but a blip when considered in the scale of geologic time.

So I travelled, stopping ever and again, in great strides of a thousand years or more, drawn on by the mystery of the earth's fate, watching with a strange fascination the sun grows larger and duller in the westward sky, and the life of the old earth ebb away.(118)

The universe is much, much older than humans so, too, the Earth and both will endure long after humans are unrecognizable or gone. This, in tandem with Wells' treatment of Darwinism, serves as a reminder of the limited power of human beings to control their own fate and the fate of the world at large. The time machine itself is a feat of technology and innovation that seems to promise mastery of humans over natural processes and the end of The Time Machine shows this notion to be hubristic.

The structure of the narrative of The Time Machine is also reflective of the theme of inequality. The Time Traveller recounts his journey into the future to a room full of social elites (an editor, doctor, journalist, psychologist, etc.), both because they are his friends and also because they are the people who have power to effect change in British society, and the Time Traveller expects his account to be impactful. While the Time Traveller is a respected scientist, he seems not quite at home in these circles: the others view him as an eccentric and he's uncomfortable with servants (he "hates to have [them] waiting at dinner").

The Time Traveller occupies a complicated class position that, makes him uniquely suited to reflect on the class distinctions he encounters in the

future. Wells' vision, even the Time Traveller's movement hundreds of thousands of years in the future will not allow him to transcend his class. The Time Traveller is more at home with the Eloi than the Morlocks, just as he was socializing with elites in Victorian England.

A large part of what makes humans special is their intelligence, ambition, and creativity, but Wells rejects the notion that these are qualities inherent to humankind. He writes, "It is a law of nature we overlook, that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble"(111). The Eloi live in a world without the motivating forces of adversity and fear (except for the threat of the Morlocks, before which the Eloi are helpless), the Eloi have become less than human. The Morlocks (the descendants of the British poor) live in difficult conditions and are fearful of one another due to the practice of cannibalism. As such, the Morlocks are a much more capable (though less moral) species than the Eloi. This is a direct challenge to the kind of Utopian thinking that would consider a world without struggle to be the ultimate achievement of humankind. If struggle and fear are part of what makes us human, then living in a Utopia would, paradoxically, rob human beings of their defining characteristics. An ideal world for Wells, then, is one in which humans must work, strive, and take risks, but not to the point that they become depraved like the Morlocks. Wells presents kindness as a characteristic even more definitive of human beings than fear. Indeed, the endurance of kindness is, perhaps, the only redemptive aspect to an otherwise bleak book.

Wells writes in the epilogue (referring to the Time Traveller's Eloi friend Weena's kindness), that the narrator was comforted to know that in the

future “even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man”(130). This is a fitting ending for the book, as kindness is at the heart of the Time Traveller’s own mission. His trip into the future is not for the purposes of gaining power or wealth but rather for obtaining knowledge. Once the Time Traveller realizes the dark truth of the future, he returns to his own time in order to raise the alarm to the people who might have the power to effect meaningful change. This, Time machine is an act of kindness and empathy on behalf of all people, and it embodies Wells’ idea that kindness is the quality that redeems humanity from its depravities.

It’s worth noting, too, that Wells wrote *The Time Machine* at a moment when Freud’s ideas of the subconscious were becoming widespread, and part of the eeriness of the world of 802,701 is its evocation of the human psyche. Above ground, which can be seen as a parallel to the conscious mind, the Eloi are kind and fun-loving and they live in harmony with one another. Underground, which parallels the subconscious, the Morlocks are depraved and cannibalistic.

The structure of the world 802,701 (in which the Eloi and Morlocks are in conflict with one another but also interdependent) suggests that the kindness of the Eloi and the fear and depravity of the Morlocks are inseparable in the human psyche, which is another way of talking about the complexities of human natures.

There’s no denying that *The Time Machine* is an extraordinary work of imagination. More than 100 years after its initial publication in 1895, H.G. Wells’ tale of a nameless scientist who builds a time machine, travels to the year 802,701 AD and there encounters humanity’s descendants – the childlike

Eloi and the monstrous Morlocks continue to engage readers and inspire fellow science fiction authors. Still, *The Time Machine* is hardly light entertainment. In many ways a response to the popular utopian fiction of the period, Wells handily inverts a core belief of his day – namely, that scientific and technological progress would, inevitably, lead to a better tomorrow. Indeed, the novel’s decidedly pessimistic speculation about the ways humanity may evolve if it fails to face the most pressing social problems of the era – particularly, the exploitation of the working classes – offers a profound indictment of unchecked capitalism and the class divisions that roiled late 19th-century Victorian society.

Chapter Three

The Eloi and the Morlocks

Wells was able to explore many of the themes that obsessed him, including class inequality, evolution, and the relationship between science and society in his novels. His description of the Eloi and the Morlocks in *The Time Machine* dramatises the exploitative relationship between owners and workers in Victorian England. There's no denying that *The Time Machine* is an extraordinary work of imagination and more than 125 years after its publication in 1895, H.G. Wells' tale of a nameless scientist who has built a time machine, travels to the year 802,701 AD and his encounters with humanity's descendants, the childlike Eloi and the monstrous Morlocks continue to engage readers and inspire fellow science fiction authors.

Still, *The Time Machine* is hardly light entertainment. In many ways a response to the popular utopian fiction of the period, Wells handily inverts a core belief of his day – namely, that scientific and technological progress would, inevitably, lead to a better tomorrow. Indeed, the novel's decidedly pessimistic speculation about the ways humanity may evolve if it fails to face the most pressing social problems of the era – particularly, the exploitation of the working classes offers a profound indictment of unchecked capitalism and the class divisions that annoyed late 19th-century Victorian society.

The Time Machine is generally credited with the popularization of the concept of time travel by using a vehicle or device to travel purposely and selectively forward or backward through time. The term “time machine”, coined by Wells, is now almost universally used to refer to such a vehicle or

device. Utilizing a frame story set in then-present Victorian England, Wells' text focuses on a recount of the otherwise anonymous Time Traveller's journey into the far future. A work of future history and speculative evolution, *Time Machine* is interpreted in modern times as a commentary on the increasing inequality and class divisions of Wells' era, which he projects as giving rise to two separate human species: the fair, childlike Eloi, and the savage, simian Morlocks, distant descendants of the contemporary upper and lower classes respectively. It is believed that Wells' depiction of the Eloi as a race living in plenitude and abandon was inspired by the utopic romance novel *News from Nowhere* (1890), though Wells' universe in the novel is notably more savage and brutal.

The Eloi represent the elitism of the rich who bask in their wealth and do not work to contribute to civilization. While they are beautiful and graceful, they are unintelligent and lazy. The Hebrew word Elohim, meaning "God," may be the origin of the term Eloi, suggesting a fall from grace. Wells projects as giving rise to two separate human species: the fair, childlike Eloi, and the savage, simian Morlocks, distant descendants of the contemporary upper and lower classes respectively. It is believed that Wells' depiction of the Eloi as a race living in plenitude and abandon was inspired by the utopic romance novel *News from Nowhere* (1890). It is also thought that Wells' Eloi race shares many features with the works of other English socialists, most notably William Morris and his work *News from Nowhere* (1890), in which money is depicted as irrelevant and work is merely undertaken as a form of pleasure.

The narrator recounts the Traveller's lecture to his weekly dinner guests that time is simply a fourth dimension and demonstrates a tabletop model

machine for travelling through the fourth dimension. He reveals that he has built a machine capable of carrying a person through time, and returns at dinner the following week to recount a remarkable tale, becoming the new narrator.

In the new narrative, the Time Traveller tests his device. At first he thinks nothing has happened but soon finds out that he has gone five hours into the future. He continues forward and sees his house disappear and turns into a lush garden. The Time Traveller stops in A.D. 802,701, where he meets the Eloi, a society of small, elegant, childlike adults. They live in small communities within large and futuristic yet slowly deteriorating buildings, and adhere to a fruit-based diet. His efforts to communicate with them are hampered by their lack of curiosity or discipline. They appear happy and carefree but fear the dark, and particularly moonless nights. Observing them, he finds that they give no response to mysterious nocturnal disappearances, possibly because the thought of it alone frightens them into silence. After exploring the area around the Eloi's residences, the Time Traveller reaches the top of a hill overlooking London. He concludes that the entire planet has become a garden, with little trace of human society or engineering from the hundreds of thousands of years prior, and that communism has at last been achieved.

The Time Traveller's mood transformed to one of heedless elation. As the years passed, however, his fear began to grow. For a moment, the Time Traveller became certain he would never be able to stop, so he decided he must stop immediately. He yanked the stopping lever and was abruptly flung

off the machine. “I saw huge buildings rise up faint and fair – and pass like dreams”(32) .(The Time Traveller)

The Time Traveller found himself in a garden in the middle of a storm. He noticed a white stone statue of a sphinx on a bronze pedestal and began to worry anew about what sort of world he would discover: What if people had become savage and inhuman? Feeling a new stab of fear, the Time Traveller rushed to his fallen time machine and, as the rain had stopped, turned it upright once more. Suddenly, he saw a group of robed figures. One of them, a beautiful, delicate creature, roughly four feet tall, approached him. Others followed. They spoke to the Time Traveller in a lovely language that he didn't understand. The beings didn't seem to fear him at all.

Feeling more secure, the Time Traveller removed the control levers from his machine, rendering it inoperable. He attempted to explain where he came from. He pointed to the sun, and one of the creatures, noticing, made a noise like the sound of thunder. The Time Traveller realized to his dismay that the creatures thought he came from the storm. He wondered if, perhaps, the little people were fools. He had always expected future generations to be far advanced; this group seemed to suggest otherwise.

“Nature never appeals to intelligence until habit and instinct are useless. There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need of change”(111).The creatures covered the Time Traveller in flowers and led him to a lovely, though worn, building. Inside, he ate the strange fruit the creatures gave him and tried to learn their language. They found his questions amusing at first but soon grew tired of teaching him. After eating, the Time Traveller went back outside to explore the world of 802,701 AD.

The Time Traveller saw a number of ruins and noted that the only standing structures appeared to be large, castle-like buildings; there were no single-family homes. He thought of communism. Looking at the group of creatures following him, he noticed there seemed to be no difference between male and female, and no signs of age or disease. Everyone wore the same style of clothing. He considered how these things might make sense. Without hardship or danger, humanity no longer needed male strength or female gentleness; it no longer required intelligence or ingenuity or passion. Cooperation would rule, and toil would end. And, eventually, having achieved these heights, society would begin its slow decline – as these mindless, yet lovely, creatures showed. However – the Time Traveller explains to his listeners in the present – these initial theories would ultimately prove incorrect.

Back in the future, night began to fall and the Time Traveller walked back toward his time machine. As he drew nearer, he saw it wasn't where he had left it. He knew no one could have moved the machine in time – he still had the levers in his pocket – so the little people must have hidden it somewhere. As he ran around the grounds, he startled a white creature that ran away into the night. He returned to the hall where he had eaten earlier and, waking the creatures he found sleeping there, demanded to know the location of his machine. They merely looked at him, confused and afraid. At last, he returned to the White Sphinx statue and, after much weeping and cursing, fell asleep on the ground.

“Under the new conditions of perfect comfort and security, that restless energy, that with us is strength, would become weakness”(50). (The Time Traveller)

The next morning, the Time Traveller's rationality returned. Examining the grass closely, he saw drag marks and concluded that someone had placed the time machine inside the statue's bronze pedestal. When he tried to ask the creatures how to open the pedestal, they reacted with a mixture of surprise and disgust. Seeing no way to open the pedestal himself, the Time Traveller decided he must be patient. He resolved himself to get to know the creatures better and to explore the world more thoroughly.

The Eloi live a banal life of ease on the surface of the Earth while the Morlocks live underground, tending machinery and providing food, clothing, and inventory for the Eloi. The narration suggests that the separation of species may have been the result of a widening split between different social classes. With all their needs and desires perfectly fulfilled, the Eloi have slowly become dissolute and naive: they are described as smaller than modern humans, with shoulder-length curly hair, pointed chins, large eyes, small ears, small mouths with bright red thin lips, and sub-human intelligence. They do not perform much work, except to feed, play, and mate, and are characterized by apathy; and when Weena falls into a river, none of the other Eloi help her she is rescued instead by the Time Traveller. Periodically, the Morlocks capture individual Eloi for food; and because this typically happens on moonless nights, the Eloi are terrified of darkness.

They are the evolutionary descendants of the British elite, who exploited the British poor for so long that the poor evolved into a race of humanoids called the Morlocks. While the centuries of exploitation of the Morlocks complicates the picture of the Eloi as essentially good, they are a species characterized by kindness, and the Time Traveller becomes affectionate

towards them on his travels. The Eloi face no adversity in their lives except that they are likely being raised for food by the Morlocks, who come to the surface of the earth at night and eat vulnerable Eloi.

But gradually the truth dawned on me: that Man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals: that my graceful children of the Upper-world were not the sole descendants of our generation, but that this bleached, obscene, nocturnal Thing, which had flashed before me, was also heir to all the ages.(69)

Later in the dark, he is approached menacingly by the Morlocks, ape-like troglodytes who live in darkness underground and surface only at night. Exploring one of many “wells” that lead to the Morlocks' dwellings, he discovers the machinery and industry that makes the above-ground paradise of the Eloi possible. He alters his theory, speculating that the human race has evolved into two species: the leisured classes have become the ineffectual Eloi, and the downtrodden working classes have become the brutal light-fearing Morlocks.

Deducing that the Morlocks have taken his time machine, he explores the Morlock tunnels, learning that due to a lack of any other means of sustenance, they feed on the Eloi. The Time Traveller theorizes that intelligence is the result of and response to danger; with no real challenges facing the Eloi, they have lost the spirit, intelligence, and physical fitness of humanity at its peak.

Meanwhile, he saves an Eloi named Weena from drowning as none of the other Eloi take any notice of her plight, and they develop an innocently affectionate relationship over the course of several days. He takes Weena with

him on an expedition to a distant structure dubbed "The Palace of Green Porcelain", which turns out to be a derelict museum. Here, the Time Traveller finds a fresh supply of matches and fashions a crude weapon against Morlocks, whom he must fight to get back his machine. He plans to take Weena back to his own time. The next day, she presents him a garland of flowers, which she has made especially for him. He takes her on his expedition and decides to take her to his own time, the Victorian Era, but Weena faints and is lost in a fire when he battles the Morlocks to retrieve his time machine. He returns to his own time with two strange white flowers, which Weena had put into his pocket.

The Morlocks open the Sphinx and use the time machine as bait to capture the Traveller, not understanding that he will use it to escape. He reattaches the levers before he travels further ahead to roughly 30 million years from his own time. There he sees some of the last living things on a dying Earth: Menacing reddish crab-like creatures slowly wandering the blood-red beaches chasing enormous butterflies, in a world covered in simple lichenous vegetation. He continues to make jumps forward through time, seeing Earth's rotation gradually cease and the sun grow larger, redder, and dimmer, and the world falling silent and freezing as the last degenerate living things die out.

Overwhelmed, he goes back to the machine and returns to his own time, arriving at the laboratory just three hours after he originally left. He arrives late to his own dinner party, whereupon, after eating, the Time Traveller relates his adventures to his disbelieving visitors, producing as evidence two strange white flowers Weena had put in his pocket.

The original narrator then takes over and relates that he returned to the Time Traveller's house the next day, finding him preparing for another journey and promising to return in a short time. However, the narrator reveals that he has waited three years before writing and stating the Time Traveller has not returned from his journey. The Time Traveller makes several more stops. In a distant time he stops on a beach where he is attacked by giant crabs. The bloated red sun sits motionless in the sky. He then travels thirty million years into the future. The air is very thin, and the only sign of life is a black blob with tentacles. He sees a planet eclipse the sun. He then returns, exhausted, to the present time. The next day, he leaves again, but never returns.

As the Time Traveller walked about, he noticed not just the natural beauty of the place, but the many wells that appeared to dot the landscape. From within, he thought he heard machine-like sounds and noted the wells appeared to be sucking air down into the Earth. He concluded they must be a kind of ventilation system – but for what purpose? Other questions presented themselves: If the little creatures didn't work, where did their clothes and shoes come from?

Later that day, the Time Traveller saved one of the creatures from drowning in the river. Her name was Weena. After the rescue, Weena became devoted to the Time Traveller, following him everywhere. She was afraid of the dark like the others of her kind. That is why they all slept together, in one room, in the great buildings. One morning, the Time Traveller woke before sunrise. Looking out over the land, he saw ghostly figures moving around. On his fourth morning, the Time Traveller took refuge from the sun in one of the ruins. Inside, he found himself face to face with one of the pale figures. He

was able to note its gray-red eyes and long blonde hair as the ape-like creature fled. The Time Traveller tried to follow, but it disappeared down one of the strange wells.

We are always getting away from the present moment. Our mental existence, which are immaterial and have no dimensions, are passing along the time-dimension with a uniform velocity from the cradle to the grave. (13)

Pondering this new mystery, the Time Traveller deduced that society had divided itself into two species: one which lived above the ground and the other that lived below. He then theorized that the underground race was the final result of the widening gap between capital and labour, which had already made known in his own time. The underground creatures known as the Morlocks were the laborers, he reasoned, who the rich must have forced underground at some point in history. They would have had no choice but to keep working for the Overlanders, or else they risked starvation or suffocation. In short, the ease of Weena and her people called the Eloi was not the result of society's triumph over nature alone, but also the triumph of one class of society over another. But why had the Morlocks taken the time machine? And why, if the Eloi were the ruling class, were they so afraid of nightfall when the Morlocks emerged? The more he considered the situation, the more certain the Time Traveller became that recovering his time machine hinged on venturing into the world of the Morlocks. He feared taking this step. One day, as he was walking, he noticed a building which he dubbed the Palace of Green Porcelain. Though he wanted to visit it, he decided he must first go down into one of the wells. The Time Traveller kissed Weena good-bye and began to descend

despite her protests. He climbed down until he had thoroughly exhausted himself.

Finding a small ledge where he could pause, the Time Traveller rested. Suddenly, he felt clammy hands touching him. Lighting a match, the Time Traveller saw a number of Morlocks running away down a tunnel. He followed them to a massive chamber where he saw a table with a large piece of some kind of meat sitting on it. The Morlocks themselves lurked on the edges of the light that the Time Traveller's match cast. All at once, he realized he only had four matches remaining. And each time a fire died out, the Morlocks grabbed at him. He began to go back the way he had come. He had almost completed his escape when the last of his matches went out. The Morlocks attempted to seize him, but he managed to scramble up the shaft unharmed. In light of his excursion below, the Time Traveller revised his earlier opinion that the Eloi ruled the Morlocks. Maybe once they did, but now – though the Morlocks still made garments for the Eloi – the Eloi were clearly no longer in charge. Thinking again about the Palace of Green Porcelain, the Time Traveller wondered if it might be the safest place to spend the night. Carrying Weena on his shoulder, he began to walk toward it. At one point during the journey, Weena climbed down and walked beside him, picking flowers and putting them into his pockets. In the present time, the Time Traveller pauses in his story to his dinner guests, reaches into his pocket and produces two blooms – which he places on the table in front of his guests.

Back again in the future, the trip took far longer than planned and, as night fell, Weena and the Time Traveller found themselves on the edge of a forest. Afraid to venture inside without light, the Time Traveller let Weena

sleep while he kept watch. In the middle of the night, it suddenly came to him, with horror, that the meat the Morlocks were eating was probably Eloi. The next morning, he and Weena continued walking. Once inside the Palace of Green Porcelain, the Time Traveller realized it must have been a museum. Moving through the various exhibits, he found a hall filled with machinery. Suddenly, Weena drew close to him, and the Time Traveller sensed Morlocks at the far end of the dark hall. Turning to one of the machines, he broke off a large lever to use as a weapon. He and Weena then made their retreat. Moving through a crumbling library, the Time Traveller briefly mused on the time wasted in writing all those books. He found some camphor – a highly flammable substance – and a box of matches encased in glass. He smashed the glass and took the two items. As the daylight waned, the Time Traveller decided that, rather than stay at the museum, he ought to head back toward the time machine. Armed with his iron bar, he might have a chance at breaking into the pedestal.

The Time Traveller and Weena began walking, but as they approached the woods, they heard the Morlocks behind them. Using the camphor and some dry brush, the Time Traveller started a fire to protect their backs as he and Weena made their way through the forest. They walked quickly but soon found themselves surrounded by Morlocks. The Time Traveller put Weena down for a moment to retrieve a match from his pocket and start another fire. She fainted, and the Time Traveller carried her again to another spot. He realized that he had lost his sense of direction, so he decided to make camp. Sitting by the fire, the Time Traveller fell asleep. “Looking at these stars suddenly dwarfed my own troubles and all the gravities of terrestrial life”(88).

(The Time Traveller) He awoke to find the Morlocks grabbing at him. He attacked them with his steel bar and killed some. To his confusion, the rest ran away. The Time Traveller realized that his first fire had become a raging inferno. He searched for Weena but couldn't find her anywhere. He ran after the Morlocks, hoping they would lead him out of the forest. At last, he emerged onto a hillside. The Morlocks he found there were blinded by the heat and light, rendering them helpless. When morning came after a final, futile search for Weena, he continued his journey back to the statue.

When he arrived, he was shocked to see the pedestal was open. Inside, the Time Traveller saw his machine. Though he realized this was probably a Morlock trap, he nevertheless went inside. As he guessed they would, the pedestal panels closed behind him. He pulled out a match to ward off the monsters but realized he had lost the box and the matches wouldn't strike against anything else. The Morlocks attacked, but the Time Traveller managed to get inside his machine, attach the forward lever and push it forward.

The Time Traveller went even further into the future. Thousands of years flew past. The Time Traveller noticed, however, that the shift from night to day appeared to be happening more slowly. He saw the sun grow larger and redder. At last, the Earth seemed to stop turning altogether. The Time Traveller brought the time machine to a halt.

"There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of space, and a fourth – time"(10). (The Time Traveller)

In the twilight of the dying sun, the Time Traveller looked at the strange landscape surrounding the beach he had landed upon. The Earth was covered in lush greenery. The air was thin. In the distance, he saw something that

looked like a giant white butterfly. A clump of what he thought was red rock began to crawl toward him. It was a massive crab-like creature. While the Time Traveller stared, another crab creature approached from behind and brushed the back of his neck. He quickly pushed the lever forward and jumped a month further into the future. But now he saw dozens of the crab creatures on the beach. Horrified, the Time Traveller moved another hundred years ahead. Little had changed. He continued on, stopping every thousand years or so to see Earth's decay before finally stopping 30 million years in the future.

The air was bitterly cold and the sun took up a giant portion of the sky. There seemed to be nothing alive except for moss. Snow began to fall and another planet – Mercury, he guessed – began to eclipse the sun. The sky turned black; then, slowly, the eclipse waned. Nauseous and on the verge of collapse, the Time Traveller saw a round black creature splashing in the red ocean toward him. He climbed back onto his machine and started to head back in time.

After a while, the Time Traveller found he was able to breathe easily once again. He began to see the dim outline of houses and, as he slowed the machine, he recognized the landscape once more. Finally, he found himself back within the walls of his laboratory. He stopped the machine, checked the date and, hearing his guests at dinner, went in to join them. His tale complete, the Time Traveller acknowledges that he doesn't expect the guests to believe his story. They can, he states, take it as mere speculation if they wish. Indeed, he can hardly believe himself. Staring at the flowers on the table, the Time Traveller wonders aloud if it was all a dream – or madness. Leaping to his feet,

he runs back to his laboratory to see the machine. There it sat, covered in dirt and grass. The guests leave, discussing what they have heard.

I cannot expect you to believe it. Take it as a lie – or a prophecy. Say I dreamed it in the workshop. Consider I have been speculating upon the destinies of our race until I have hatched this fiction. Treat my assertion of its truth as a mere stroke of art to enhance its interest.(123) (The Time Traveller)

The narrator can hardly sleep that night and, the next day, rushes back to the Time Traveller's house. He finds the Time Traveller in his lab, preparing to leave on another time-travelling trip. The Time Traveller asks the narrator to wait, telling him he will be back in half an hour – and this time, he will bring back proof of his adventure.

The narrator notes that, as of the telling of this story, three years have elapsed since the Time Traveller left. He wonders if the Time Traveller has perished or if he's still wandering in time. In any case, thinking about humanity's future fate continues to depress the narrator. The only comfort he has remains in Weena's two faded flowers – proof that even when all else good and admirable has fallen away from society, tenderness will remain.

In 802,701 A.D the Time Traveller describes the race of small creatures as being on the intellectual level of five-year-olds. The creatures take him to a large building, where a number of them sit around and eat fruit. He learns they are vegetarian and live communally in one building, with the sexes mingling freely with each other. The Time Traveller becomes frustrated by the creatures' diminishing curiosity about his presence and his inability to communicate with them. Noting the creatures' indolence and the generally dilapidated look of the

buildings, the Time Traveller speculates that the creatures evolved from the human race, growing weak because they had managed to decrease their population and to erase all "hardship and vigor" from their existence. His speculation about the creatures echoes both Karl Marx and Darwin's theories of economics and evolution respectively. At the end of the chapter, the Time Traveller signals that his guesses about the creatures are wrong.

Chapter Four

Satire

Usually, literature reflects the features of contemporary society. One of the reasons is that the writers of the literature necessarily are influenced by the society they live in. In *The Time Machine*, H. G. Wells showed his own view on late-Victorian society. In that era, speed of changes in society was fast and many modern society problems started to arise according to development of technologies. H. G. Wells was also aware of these problems. He focused on the class division in *The Time Machine* and proposed future dystopia, rather than utopia. Wells showed how the problem of class division would be worse than people imagine in the future in *The Time Machine*.

In the early 19th century, the prospect of the future was usually related to utopia. Expectation of human reason and confidence in science, which were influenced by civil revolution and industrial revolution, made many people look forward to more advanced societies. However, as modern problems including the gulf between rich and poor became serious, criticism against harmful effects of industrialization started to arise. The emergence of literature about dystopia showed this criticism. Similarly, time traveller in the book looked the future society as utopia. He said that “the whole earth had become a garden.”(30). He also believed in “a perfect conquest of Nature”(32). However, as he discovered the real aspect of future society, he admitted that his first theory that the future is utopia was totally wrong. It is actually dystopia which is far different from what he expected. The time traveller

suggested that because of too perfect and secure environment, the human in upper world had dwindled “in size, strength and intelligence”(49)

The Time Machine, is much more than a science fiction novel about the future. Although at a glance *The Time Machine* may seem to be a fictional glance at the future, but once investigated it is understood that Wells incorporates a wealth of knowledge into his work. Wells uses satire and parody ingeniously to sculpt an image of the social division of England at the time. He also craftily represents present day England using the future resulting from the theory of Social Darwinism. *The Time Machine* is not only a look into the future, but also a look back into the past and the way things were in England around the 1900's. Wells' story is entirely based on his view of England in the 1900's. His view is very twisted because he was not of the upper class and therefore had a pessimistic view of England. Wells describes the Eloi as such: “...for I never met people more indolent or more easily fatigued.” Why else would he represent the upper class by the lazy “Eloi,” and the lower or working class represented by the "Morlocks" (vicious creatures that fed on the Eloi (37).

Wells casually portrays in a comical yet serious manner of how the upper class depends on the working class for their existence. Ridiculous it may be, but it describes the social class of England fairly accurately. By representing the upper and lower class the way he does is obviously satirizing them even stereotyping them to a certain degree. Without this paradoxical and satirical environment Wells never would have been able to get his view of the English social classes across.

Wells uses symbols to evoke ideas and emotions and to figuratively stitch together many of the story's themes. For example, the Palace of Green Porcelain, a museum containing artifacts from England of the 1890s, signifies the idea of home, civilization, and extinction—all at once—for the Time Traveller. Other major symbols are the White Sphinx, which evokes the spiritual degradation of the Eloi-Morlock society, and the time machine itself, symbolizing Victorian progress and the promise—and the danger—of technology.

Time Machines represent hope, but also danger. The time machine enables the Time Traveller to transcend one of the basic limitations of the universe. It has incredible power but takes him to a vicious land. The subways, railroads, and factory machinery of the 19th century Industrial Revolution represent progress, but they also destroy the environment and dehumanize workers. The Morlocks' ventilators allow them to exist, but to what purpose other than to prey on the Eloi? The machine is both the greatest and perhaps the worst outcome of the human capacity for inventiveness and progress.

The Time Machine is so concerned with the theme of time that "time" is in the title. The time in *The Time Machine* isn't last week or next year – that's time on a human scale. Time in *The Time Machine* is on a scale that's totally beyond anything human. This is geological or even cosmic time. When the Time Traveller jumps into the future, he doesn't watch the lifespan of a person, but the lifespan of a species – or even the lifespan of a star. Thinking about time in this way involves looking at the long view – even though that long view moves people out of the spotlight.

Though Traveller is not the narrator of *The Time Machine*, the Time Traveller is the book's protagonist. He is an eminent but eccentric British scientist, and his particular interest in time travel leads him to build a time machine that transports himself into the future. Much of the Time Traveller's character is revealed through his observations and storytelling—for instance, the fact that he values intelligence above all other human traits becomes clear as a result of his obsessive disappointment that the humans of the future are stupid and uncurious. The Time Traveller thinks like a scientist, always forming hypotheses about the world and adjusting them based on his observations, even if he doesn't like what these observations suggest about humanity. The other notable characteristic of the Time Traveller is that, while he is a member of the British elite (as evident by the company he keeps at dinner parties), he is not at home with them. The other elites view him as far too clever and, for that reason, suspect.

The narrator of *The Time Machine* is all but absent from the book. He is one of the Time Traveller's dinner companions, which suggests that he is also a member of the British elite, but his profession is not named and he does not figure into any of the Time Traveller's story about the future, which comprises the bulk of the book. The narrator is notable, though, for seeming less skeptical of the Time Traveller's story than the other dinner guests. However, the narrator does not seem to be able to fully absorb the lessons of the Time Traveller's story, even though he does believe that it happened. The narrator, unable to overcome his desire for future humans to have improved on the conditions of the present, prefers to live with the assumption that future humans will have better lives than he will. This makes him unable to fight to

change the Victorian social conditions that led to the Eloi and the Morlocks in the first place, which makes the narrator a rather ineffectual vehicle for the Time Traveller's story.

One of the three men present at both dinners. Medical man considers the Time Traveller's theories and stories, treats the subject seriously at first, but challenges him and remains extremely skeptical. At the demonstration, he maintains that the Time Traveller played a trick on them all. The fact that medical man shows up on more than one occasion at the house of the time traveller indicates that medical man is quite fascinated by the story and mane even considered it believable at some point. The medical man knows for certain their host is very smart, intelligent, and able to pull off a breakthrough of that caliber but is adamant as he also knows him to be a trickster.

The narrator, or Mr. Hillyer, is basic to the story, and if you say he is nearly as curious as a cat, you couldn't be wrong. Punctual and very attentive to details, the narrator is one of the time traveller's trusted guests and also one of the only two narrators deployed by Wells for the story, the time traveller himself being the other one.

Mr. Hillyer is very inquisitive and driven to investigate. Even though he doesn't completely swallow the whole-time travel fairy tale, a part of him still wanted to know more, perhaps maybe even taking a trip through time to see for himself. Hillyer is the closest to believing the time traveller's adventures and he shows this by the way he keeps coming back for more even after everyone else is gone.

The provincial mayor doesn't appear to be a very smart man, nor does he look like he has science as a forte. The provincial Mayor makes an

appearance at the first meeting but there is too much mumbo-jumbo stuff flying around that he couldn't bring himself to show up again.

The journalist seems like he likes to tell his own story more than listen to another person. The journalist shows up during the second meeting, tries to hijack the spotlight from the time traveller by chipping in his story but no one cares, so he goes home, never to attend again.

By making an attendance only at the second meeting, we take the popular editor gets a scoop, perhaps from one of the attendees at the first meeting, comes up to see if it's a good fit for his tabloid, but he is disinterested and never returns after his first experience.

This man comes off at the first meeting seeming very involved and excited in the matter, but as he fails to turn up subsequent meetings, we take it he finds it boring and too much of a farce to attend again. A very young man is present at the first meeting only. Young man participates in the discussion about time traveling and the fourth dimension. Man with a beard is present at the second meeting only is quiet and shy, and unknown to the narrator. It is no surprise he only makes it to the second meeting and never returns. He is among the guys drinking at the time traveller's house but by his inactivity, even the narrator himself denies his presence.

This man feels hooked by the time traveller's stories and theories as much as the medical man, making himself available as much as he needs to. The psychologist thinks the story is great and even wonders how priceless a possibility as such would become to a historian. All in all, he doubts the reality of it and shrugs it off.

Filby is one of the characters who play a very minimal but effective role in the book *The Time Machine*, appearing only at the first after-dinner meeting with the lads. Described as contentious and argumentative, the red-haired bloke finds the time traveller's claims as irrational and unbelievable.

A loving and affectionate character, Weena happens to be one of the Eloi who is saved by the time traveller from drowning by the river. She is introduced to us as a beautiful and elegant female by the time traveller, although we don't know how he's able to figure that one out since he also tells us that it's especially very hard distinguishing the creature's gender. In a precariously unsafe future, Weena instills the feeling of love and peace and of expression of affection, no wonder the time traveller becomes so fond of her and plans to take her along with him to the present day.

The unnamed narrator is just one of the dinner guests, so why does he get his own character analysis? Like the other guests, he's mostly left undescribed, and we don't even know what he does for a living. He says he has an appointment with a publisher so he might be a writer. He also goes to the Linnaean Society. Though, so he might be a scientist – we just can't know for sure.

One thing that sets the narrator apart from the other guests is that he sort of believes the Time Traveller's story. Everyone else makes jokes, thinking the Time Traveller is pranking them or is simply stressed out. But the narrator is at least willing to entertain the idea that time travel is possible. He's like the perfect science fiction reader – somebody who's ready to suspend his disbelief for a moment and consider something out of the ordinary. In this way, the narrator seems more like the Time Traveller than the other guests. This might

be why the narrator enjoys the Time Traveller's company so much; as he notes, he “was one of the Time Traveller's most constant guests” (23).

On the other hand, as the narrator notes in the Epilogue, while the Time Traveller is a pessimist who thinks human progress is an illusion, the narrator is more of an optimist, who thinks things have to get better. The narrator gets the final word in the novel, and it's a mixed but optimistic message: “even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man” (130). As we said, that's not a super-happy ending, but it's probably a happier one than the Time Traveller would have left us with.

During the 19th century Great Britain expanded their empire across India, Asia and parts of Africa. Britain used an imperialistic government in order to take over areas of the world to add political, social and economic wealth to their empire. The advancement of the British Empire was exponential with the coupling of the industrial revolution and imperialism that defined British economic, political and social structure across their expanding empire. The industrial revolution was the machine that would empower while imperialism dictated who would be controlled. Through the characterization of both imperialism and the industrial revolution, in his book “*The Time Machine*” , H.G. Wells uses symbolism to explore the destructive nature and shortcomings of both processes as they changed the world around him.

The Time machine contains two levers—one to move the machine forward in time, and one to send it backward. Without the levers, the machine cannot work. The Time Traveller always keeps these levers with him, attaching them to the machine only when he means to travel through time, so that the machine cannot be driven by anyone else into a different era and lost

to him. The levers represent the power of technology, a power that, unless shepherded carefully, can be misused, or lost altogether.

Matches are the only useful objects, outside of the time machine itself, brought on the adventure by the Traveller—who, in his enthusiasm to visit the future, overlooks things he might need for such a trip. He uses them to light his way in the darkness of the Morlock tunnel world and to deter the creatures when they threaten. “I had my crowbar in one hand, and the other hand played with the matches in my pocket” (112).

The Eloi are humanlike creatures who are small, unintelligent, uncurious, weak, and also, importantly, benevolent and happy. They are the evolutionary descendants of the British elite, who exploited the British poor for so long that the poor evolved into a race of humanoids called the Morlocks. While the centuries of exploitation of the Morlocks complicates the picture of the Eloi as essentially good, they are a species characterized by kindness, and the Time Traveller becomes affectionate towards them on his travels. The Eloi face no adversity in their lives except that they are likely being raised for food by the Morlocks, who come to the surface of the earth at night and eat vulnerable Eloi.

The British poor toiled in dark conditions for so long that they evolved into a subterranean race of humans who could no longer see in the daylight. While they once likely ate animals like rats that they found underground, this food supply ran out and the Morlocks became cannibalistic, preying on their evolutionary cousins, the Eloi. While the Eloi faced no adversity for centuries, thereby losing their strength and intelligence, the Morlocks (as a result of their harsh conditions) retained much greater capabilities. The Morlocks are seen by

the Time Traveller as an evil species, and their clammy, pale bodies and enormous eyes certainly contribute to their menacing aura, but it's important to note that the Morlocks prey on the Eloi out of necessity. They have no other food, and they have been exploited by the Eloi for centuries, which makes their moral position complex. Nonetheless, the Morlocks are the antagonists of *The Time Machine*, and part of the book's pessimism is its conclusion that the Morlocks are on their way to ruling the earth.

The afternoon of the day he saves Weena, she presents him with a "big garland" of flowers" (63). They seem to be an expression of love or affection whose meaning has not died even after thousands of years. Then, of course, there are the two white flowers that the Time Traveller brings back. This particular pair represents the tender feelings between another pair, himself and Weena. She picked them and put them in one of his pockets. Their color symbolizes purity and innocence, that of the Eloi, who, whatever their failings, can still care and love. The white flowers can symbolize Weena's devotion and innocence and contrast with the machinery of the time machine.

The Time Traveller values intelligence above all other human traits, and he is disappointed that future humans are not only unintelligent, but also weak, silly, and uncurious. For a while, his relationship to the Eloi is defined only by intellectual interest and not by real empathy, but it is through his friendship with Weena that he begins to feel true affection for and identification with these creatures. Put another way, it is in the kindness of the Eloi that the Time Traveller can locate their humanity. Weena loves putting flowers in the Time Traveller's pockets (she treats his pockets like "an eccentric kind of vase for floral decoration"), and this gesture represents the kind nature of the Eloi.

Weena's flowers are also the only piece of compelling evidence of his travels that the Time Traveller brings back to the present, and they represent hope for humanity in the face of such a bleak tale of the future of mankind. As the narrator notes, the flowers serve

And I have before me, for my comfort, two strange white flowers—shriveled now, and brown and flat and brittle—to witness that even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man. (130)

Sphinx really does dominate the story; and not just the Time Traveller's first impression either. It strikes the first really sinister note, suggesting the decay of the future world, and also a mysterious threat to the hero. Its wings are spread, not folded, to suggest a flying bird of prey; as we see from the development of that idea soon after the initial description: "I felt naked in a strange world. I felt as perhaps a bird may feel in the clear air, knowing the hawk wings above and will swoop" (36). And the swoop duly takes place, when the Morlocks drag the time machine into the pedestal of the sphinx. Thus the symbol is also an efficient cause in the story; which is an excellent way to use symbols, and not only in SF.⁶ We can focus the sphinx symbol a little more clearly if we recall the most famous sphinx of mythology, the one which confronted Oedipus. The answer to that sphinx's riddle was simply Man - the creature who goes on four legs in infancy, stands firm on two legs in manhood, and totters three-legged on a staff in old age. And precisely the rise and fall of Man is the subject, or a main subject, of *The Time Machine*. I submit therefore that this leprous, crumbling sphinx represents the "three-legged" stage, the decay of Man in the future world. Its whiteness is the whiteness not only of

leprosy but also of bone, its sightless eyes are those of a human skull. It stands for immediate decay and the menace of imminent death.

It is really astonishing to notice how often the color white appears in the text. The sphinx is hardly ever mentioned without being called "white," even though there are no other sphinxes about. And there are many other white things. Already in that first future scene we have the white sphinx, the silver birch tree, the white hailstones. The birch might suggest a rather colder climate than is presented for the year 802,701; and the hailstones are in a sense the first hostile move against the hero, and foreshadow the "white flakes" of snow in the end-of-the-world *Further Vision* (119). Then again there is the whiteness of the Eloi: "white limbs"(41), suggesting once more decadence. There are several instances of over-lush white flowers. But above all, there is the whiteness of the Morlocks.

Of course the Morlocks' pallor is explained scientifically as due to their underground habitat (70). But as in the case of the sphinx, their color is insisted upon again and again. For instance, here is the first view of them: "The moon was setting, and the dying moonlight and the first pallor of dawn were mingled in a ghastly half-light. The bushes were inky black, the ground a sombre grey, the sky colorless and cheerless. And up the hill I thought I could see ghosts. Three several times, as I scanned the slope, I saw white figures. Twice I fancied I saw a solitary white, ape-like creature...." 66).

Light, and dark its associations with good and evil are evident throughout. As the Time Traveller travels sun and moon and day and night shift, as does the Time Traveller's mood between joy and fear. The Morlocks live and thrive only in the dark. The coming of night fills both the Eloi and the

Time Traveller with fear. The desolate shore of the far future has a black sky inhabited first by dark-red monster crabs and, second, by a black-tentacled creature. By contrast, firelight is safety and life. The white of the two flowers he brings back represents the affection between himself and Weena, the only such feeling seen in the book. Only in the twisted far future world do the white butterfly and snowflakes disrupt this association. Fire appears as the ancient protector of humankind. It protects the Time Traveller from the Morlocks with the matches he uses when he visits their tunnel, the campfires he lights to keep them away, and the wildfire that eventually drives them off. However, it is also the likely cause of Weena's death. Often a symbol of purification, the fire cannot cleanse this land of the Morlocks; it can only keep them temporarily at bay.

The Palace of Green Porcelain raises the question of what sorts of human achievements truly matter. As the crumbling artifacts underscore, the things humanity focused their intellect upon in centuries past were useless in preventing society's decline (and in fact, may have precipitated it). Perhaps if greater attention were paid to solving social problems, human beings wouldn't have devolved into the foolish Eloi and monstrous Morlocks.

Flowers are important symbols in *The Time Machine*. They are the "mauve and purple" rhododendron blooms the Time Traveller notices when he first lands on the little lawn. They are bright spots in the hailstorm, symbolic of the good he will find. Of course, rhododendrons are a shrub of the present as well. They serve as a bridge between the two times, he inhabits. The Eloi connection with flowers is very strong. One bedecks him with "a chain of beautiful flowers"(40) when he first meets him.

Thus, Wells showed how the problem of class division would be worse than people imagine in the future in his novel *The Time Machine*

Chapter Five

Summation

Herbert George Wells was one of the prominent and forward-looking, even prophetic social critics who devoted his literary talents to the development of a progressive vision on a global scale. A futurist, he wrote a number of utopian works and foresaw the advent of aircraft, tanks, space travel, nuclear weapons, satellite television and something resembling the World Wide Web. His science fiction imagined time travel, alien invasion, invisibility, and biological engineering. Brian Aldiss referred to Wells as the “Shakespeare of science fiction”, while American writer Charles Fort referred to him as a “wild talent”.

The Time Machine is a science fiction novella by H. G. Wells, published in 1895. The work is generally credited with the popularization of the concept of time travel by using a vehicle or device to travel purposely and selectively forward or backward through time. The term “time machine”, coined by Wells, is now almost universally used to refer to such a vehicle or device.

Utilizing a frame story set in then-present Victorian England, Wells' text focuses on a recount of the otherwise anonymous Time Traveller's journey into the far future. A work of future history and speculative evolution, Time Machine is interpreted in modern times as a commentary on the increasing inequality and class divisions of Wells' era, which he projects as giving rise to two separate human species: the fair, childlike Eloi, and the savage, simian Morlocks, distant descendants of the contemporary upper and lower classes respectively. It is believed that Wells' depiction of the Eloi as a race living in

plentitude and abandon was inspired by the utopic romance novel *News from Nowhere* (1890), though Wells' universe in the novel is notably more savage and brutal.

The Time Machine is a cautionary tale of what may happen if unfettered capitalism is permitted to continue. By making a machine the thing that literally enables time travel, Wells was appealing to the increasing fascination Westerners of the late nineteenth century had for the new and the mechanical. Electricity, steamships, the radio and telephone, and numerous other technological inventions were changing the shape of what was thought possible and, Wells would say, blinding many to their very human responsibilities to use these inventions for the betterment of all rather than for the profit of a few.

In the novel, Wells discusses extensively the problems of equality and humanity. Within this context, the author's socialist criticism focuses on the fact that the current society fails to embrace the principles of humanity and equality due to overt exploitation of human labour. The novel is Wells' interpretation of future society in which he strives to achieve humankind's perfectibility by introducing scientific discoveries. At the same time, the author resorts to realistic descriptions to the possible extent and combines it with the fantastic world. Further, as it is usually represented in Science Fiction novels, Wells introduces a kind of warning to humans who neglect ethical rights and principle of social equality. At this point, the book can be considered an interpretation of Social Darwinism theory, according to which humans tend to devolve. Additionally, while debating on the human

equality, Wells associates Time Machine with a history machine to introduce symbols of social and economic degradation of the world's community.

From the capitalist perspective, Wells criticizes heavily the capitalist tendencies of his society. The author's dystopian outlook on human race and its future creates a common thread combining all the themes of the novel. Specifically, Wells notes, "Scientific people...know very well that Time is only a kind of Space"(12). Although the phrase bears purely scientific character, it also sheds light on the existing system of social and political order.

Wells describes the proletariat as animals and this class leads to human devolution. Such a reference also explains the way Wells introduces the concept of humanity. Unequal treatment of people is also expressed through the existence of social class stratification. In this respect, the main idea of the novel consists in the confrontation between these two social groups, as well as between different modes of life. At the same time, the contrast existed between these two societies is represented in relation to anti-ethical frameworks employed to depict them.

The Time Machine has two main threads. The first is the adventure tale of the Eloi and Morlocks in the year 802,701 AD. The second is the science fiction of the time machine. The adventure story includes many archetypal elements. The Time Traveller's journey to the underworld, his fear of the great forest, and his relationship to Weena, mirror, imagery prevalent in earlier literature which is strongly associated with the inner workings of the human psyche. The tale of 802,701 is a political commentary of late Victorian England. It is a dystopia, a vision of a troubled future. It recommends that

current society change its ways lest it end up like the Eloi, terrified of an underground race of Morlocks. In the Eloi, Wells satirizes Victorian decadence. In the Morlocks, Wells provides a potentially Marxist critique of capitalism. The rest of the novella deals with the science fiction of time travel.

Wells' depiction of the relationship between the Eloi and the Morlocks can be seen as a critique of the notion that “work” was a problem to be solved, rather than a necessary condition of humanity essential for the intellect to develop. The late nineteenth century was a time when many people thought that progress, especially technological progress, could solve many of humanity's apparently intractable problems, such as disease, hunger, violence, and exploitation. Wells, a devotee of science, seemingly endorses this view at the beginning of *The Time Machine*, as the Time Traveller, an inventor, creates a machine that travels in the fourth dimension. However, as the story continues, readers see that the Time Traveller discovers a future in which the only thing that has progressed is humanity's savagery and thirst for self-destruction.

The structure of the narrative of *The Time Machine* is also reflective of the theme of inequality. The Time Traveller recounts his journey into the future to a room full of social elites (an editor, doctor, journalist, psychologist, etc.), both because they are his friends and also because they are the people who have power to effect change in British society, and the Time Traveller expects his account to be impactful. While the Time Traveller is a respected scientist, he seems not quite at home in these circles: the others view him as an eccentric and he's uncomfortable with servants.

The Time Traveller occupies a complicated class position that, makes him uniquely suited to reflect on the class distinctions he encounters in the future. Wells' vision, even the Time Traveller's movement hundreds of thousands of years in the future will not allow him to transcend his class. The Time Traveller is more at home with the Eloi than the Morlocks, just as he was socializing with elites in Victorian England.

Time Traveller's description of the Eloi, as what he initially sees as the perfect communist society turns out to be little more than an updated and more perverted story of the haves and the have-nots from his own time. Humanity's mistake, Wells implies in the novel, is in believing that through science and technology they had conquered nature.

Once the Time Traveller realizes the dark truth of the future, he returns to his own time in order to raise the alarm to the people who might have the power to effect meaningful change. This, *Time machine* is an act of kindness and empathy on behalf of all people, and it embodies Wells' idea that kindness is the quality that redeems humanity from its depravities.

The structure of the world 802,701 (in which the Eloi and Morlocks are in conflict with one another but also interdependent) suggests that the kindness of the Eloi and the fear and depravity of the Morlocks are inseparable in the human psyche, which is another way of talking about the complexities of human natures.

Wells projects as giving rise to two separate human species: the fair, childlike Eloi, and the savage, simian Morlocks, distant descendants of the contemporary upper and lower classes respectively. It is believed that Wells' depiction of the Eloi as a race living in plenitude and abandon was inspired by

the utopic romance novel *News from Nowhere* (1890). It is also thought that Wells' Eloi race shares many features with the works of other English socialists, most notably William Morris and his work *News from Nowhere* (1890), in which money is depicted as irrelevant and work is merely undertaken as a form of pleasure.

They are the evolutionary descendants of the British elite, who exploited the British poor for so long that the poor evolved into a race of humanoids called the Morlocks. While the centuries of exploitation of the Morlocks complicates the picture of the Eloi as essentially good, they are a species characterized by kindness, and the Time Traveller becomes affectionate towards them on his travels. The Eloi face no adversity in their lives except that they are likely being raised for food by the Morlocks, who come to the surface of the earth at night and eat vulnerable Eloi.

Flowers are important symbols in *The Time Machine*. They are the “mauve and purple” rhododendron blooms the Time Traveller notices when he first lands on the little lawn. They are bright spots in the hailstorm, symbolic of the good he will find. Of course, rhododendrons are a shrub of the present as well. They serve as a bridge between the two times, he inhabits.

A mythical creature combining features of several real creatures—lion, human, eagle—the White Sphinx foreshadows the Eloi and Morlock who are also human–animal hybrids. In Greek mythology, the Sphinx was the ominous guardian of the city of Thebes. If a person guessed the riddle, he passed. If he didn't, he was killed. It is a warning to the Time Traveller. The White Sphinx will turn out to guard the time machine for the Morlocks.

Time Machine represent hope, but also danger. The time machine enables the Time Traveller to transcend one of the basic limitations of the universe. It has incredible power but takes him to a vicious land. Light, and dark its associations with good and evil are evident throughout. As the Time Traveller travels sun and moon and day and night shift, as does the Time Traveller's mood between joy and fear. The Morlocks live and thrive only in the dark. The coming of night fills both the Eloi and the Time Traveller with fear. The desolate shore of the far future has a black sky inhabited first by dark-red monster crabs and, second, by a black-tentacled creature.

The Time Machine is so concerned with the theme of time that "time" is in the title. The time in *The Time Machine* isn't last week or next year – that's time on a human scale. Time in *The Time Machine* is on a scale that's totally beyond anything human. This is geological or even cosmic time. When the Time Traveller jumps into the future, he doesn't watch the lifespan of a person, but the lifespan of a species – or even the lifespan of a star.

Matches are the only useful objects, outside of the time machine itself, brought on the adventure by the Traveller—who, in his enthusiasm to visit the future, overlooks things he might need for such a trip.

The Time Machine is a social doom prophecy. The future is presented as a place where the privileged have finally gotten a world where they can lead utterly carefree lives of leisure. Unfortunately, the centuries of soft living have turned the rich into weak and stupid creatures. Meanwhile, the working class has speciated into subterranean horrors that finally seek revenge on their former masters. This is to serve as an extrapolation of what Wells surely saw as a widening gulf between the rich and poor in Victorian England. Wells

exaggerated the difference between the Morlocks and Eloi to warn the well-to-do and the British government that the social injustices of the day would prove ruinous if not corrected. Also, Wells warns everybody that the attainment of our ideal world, one with no pressure or work, would probably be fatal to the human race.

The Time Machine seems to compare favorably with mainstream literature of its day. When compared with more modern novels, science fiction or otherwise, parts of it seem a bit quaint and stuffy. Still, Wells was a good writer and the novel has a sense of wonder; it's a fine adventure tale.

On the surface, the circumstances and science sound good, but they don't hold up well if you know much about science. I accept the idea of the time machine, since that particular fantasy is central to the story, but there are a few other details that bothered me.

First, the Time Traveller describes the land as being devoid of fungi. The primary decomposers in an ecosystem are fungi; without them, you can't have a gorgeous landscape. I guess Wells just didn't want stinkhorns on his world.

Elois are described as being disease-free. Perhaps science could get rid of parasites and viruses. But you can't kill off the bacteria; otherwise, the whole ecosystem goes down. No decomposition, no nitrogen fixation, no plants ... no Eloi. Since there must be bacteria, eventually you'll have disease, since bacteria mutate quickly and will occupy any ecological niche that they can get started in.

The behaviour of the Morlocks rang a little false. They're intelligent enough to run the machines and lay a trap. Chimpanzees and even crows use

primitive tools. If suppose Wells kept the Morlocks unarmed so that the hero could get away; a party of armed Morlocks could have easily drained him. He didn't completely believe the development of the Morlock society. I don't think a working class, no matter how subjugated, could be kept down for so long. It only takes one extremely able person to get a revolution going, and in the time frame the novel.

Wells was accurate in showing the evolutionary changes that could occur in several hundred thousand years' time. He doubts the extent of their mental deterioration that they would have had games and sports, and that would have almost guaranteed that at least some of the Eloi would not have been so small and weak. Humans love games; even in places where there is no literacy and no ambition, you have stickball and basketball and poker. The Eloi still had language, why not at least some balls to throw around?

Some of Wells' scientific reasoning was off, but the knowledge of the day was limited. The story is good and fast-paced, and the descriptions are engaging. The novel lacks the literary ammunition of other works of the same period, but it paved the way for a whole lot of really excellent science fiction stories and novels.(Synder1)

In some ways, H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895) is a 'timeless' text: it continues to enjoy huge popularity (as witnessed by big film adaptations in 1960 and 2002, as well as the fact that the novel itself has never been out of print and is available in a range of editions), it continues to exert a considerable influence on the literature and cinema produced since, and its very narrative structure – with much of the action of the novel taking place in a time that hasn't happened yet, the year 802,701 – in a sense absents it from

its own context. But an analysis of Wells' novella that sees it floating completely free of its 1890s context, much as the Time Traveller himself succeeds in leaving his late Victorian world behind, risks overlooking the extent to which *The Time Machine* is a novella deeply rooted in late nineteenth-century concerns. These concerns are neatly covered in Roger Luckhurst's introduction to the recent Oxford edition of the novella, *The Time Machine* (Oxford World's Classics).

Wells uses the concept of time travel, and the invention of the time machine, as a vehicle for exploring the issues of his time: class, industrialisation, and the implications of Darwinian evolution, degeneration (a big concern in the 1890s), imperialism, and many other things.

The Time Machine can be read as Wells's attempt to understand the meaning of our existence in light of the theory of evolution, which had led many Victorians to question their firm faith in God and therefore in a Christian understanding of humanity's purpose. If we're not on Earth because God created us for his purpose, then what are we doing here? Is our existence merely random? Are we mere animals, albeit thinking ones? Partly what Wells is trying to do is examine the role of man in the modern world. He does this, Oliver think, through several oblique references to the story of Oedipus, the mythical King of Thebes who inadvertently fulfilled a prophecy which stated he would kill his father and marry his mother. However, what is less well-known in the Oedipus story is how Oedipus came to be King of Thebes in the first place: namely, by solving the Riddle of the Sphinx and, through doing so, freeing the city of Thebes of its plague. The Riddle which the Sphinx asked people, but which nobody else had managed to solve until Oedipus came

along, was the following question: ‘What goes on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs in the evening?’ The answer is ‘Man’, because humans crawl on all fours as babies, walk upright on two legs during adulthood, and then use a walking-stick when they’re older.

The Time Machine has been adapted into two feature films of the same name, as well as two television versions and many comic book adaptations. It has also indirectly inspired many more works of fiction in many media productions.

Works Cited

- Baule, Amanda. "Caution over Evolution: The Time Machine as a Response to Social Darwinism." *UCONN*, 22 Nov. 2015.
hist3101dystopia.uconn.edu/2015/11/22/caution-over-evolution/.
- Butterfly, Baron. "The Time Machine." *Lupane State University*,
www.coursehero.com/file/135450832/The-Time-Machinedocx/.
- "HG Wells' The Time Machine: A Critique of Victorian England." 123
HELPME, www.123helpme.com/essay/HG-Wells-The-Time-Machine-A-Critique-199858.
- McNamara, Sylvie. "The Time Machine Plot Summary." *LitCharts* LLC, 1 Feb. 2017, www.litcharts.com/lit/the-time-machine/summary.
- "Modern Society in the Time Machine by H.G. Wells." *Bartleby research*,
www.bartleby.com/essay/Modern-Society-In-The-Time-Machine-By-FCBC3UKWJJU.
- "Relationship Between Eloi and Morlocks in the Time Machine." *StudyMode Research*, 13 May 2012, www.studymode.com/essays/Relationship-Between-Eloi-And-Morlocks-In-63843604.html.
- Snyder, A. Lucy. "Book Review: The Time Machine by H.G. Wells." 04 Nov. 2005, www.lucysnyder.com/index.php/book-review-the-time-machine-by-h-g-wells/.
- "The Time Machine Book Summary." *Stonory*, stonory.com/summary/the-time-machine-book-summary/amp/.
- "The Time Machine: Notes Towards an Analysis of Well's Novella."
Interesting Literature, interestingliterature.com/2018/06/the-time-machine-notes-towards-an-analysis-of-wells-novella.

“The Time Machine.” *Encyclopedia.com*. 25 Apr. 2022.

www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/time-machine.

Time machine symbols: Course Hero, www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Time-Machine/symbols/.

Wells, H.G. “A Short History of The World.” Cassell & Co,Ltd.1936.

Wells, H.G. *The Time Machine*. Fingerprints Classics, 2021

“What it’s About: Humanity’s Dark Fate.”, getabstract,

www.getabstract.com/en/summary/the-time-machine/32522.

A Feminist Reading of Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in shadow*

A project 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

by

M. RIONCY

(REG. NO. 20APEN21)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Tradition and Modernity	
Three	Stepping into Shadows	
Four	Narrative Technique	
Five	Summation	
	Works Cited	

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **A Feminist Reading of Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow*** 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 is a work done by M. RIONCY the year 2020-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.


Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI


Dr. S. Sudha Rani

Guide


Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


Examiner 27/05/2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Feminist Reading of Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmanian 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.

Thoothukudi


M.Rioncy

May 2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Feminist Reading of Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmanian 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.

Thoothukudi


M.Rioncy

May 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, and strength in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study.

I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, **Ms. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. S. Sudha Rani** Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance, encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank the faculty department of English for their valuable input in teaching and moulding us.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

The Day in Shadow exposes clearly the unpleasant and the embarrassing situations that exist in the life of women through the women characters. Shashi Deshpande's women suffer silently for the well-being of their personal and family life. The title itself states that the women characters in the novel spread the vine of love and bind themselves in the society to seek liberation from their mental worries.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Nayantara Sahgal her life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of her work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Tradition and Modernity** shows the superficial modernity of the Indian people who blindly imitate western style in their fashions and manners, little knowing that these things are taking them away from the traditions and customs of their own country.

The third chapter **Stepping into Shadows** describes when the traditional bound women accept their false conditioning into subordination and dependence without objections, the sensitive women realize their need of freedom and struggle against the norms suffering women.

The fourth chapter **Narrative Technique** explain the style and art of techniques in Nayantara Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow*.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and brings out the researcher's findings.

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

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Literature is the reflection of life. It mirrors the society in which it is generated. We classify literature according to language, origin, historical period, genre and subject matter. Literature is a form of human expression. But not everything expressed in words, when organized and written down is counted as literature. Those writings are primarily informative, technical, scholarly, journalistic, would be excluded from the rank of literature, by most, though not all, critics. The purest literary form is the lyric poem, and after it comes elegy, epic, dramatic narrative, and expository verse. Many novels certainly all the world's great novels are in literature, but there are thousand not so considered. Most great dramas are considered literature.

Initially literature was a form of entertainment for the people. Over time, it attained the purpose of reforms as well. The writers started highlighting the social issues in their writing. Thus it becomes a medium to draw the audience's attention to certain matters and urge them to think about the reform. From ancient civilizations to the modern era, indeed all the works of literature have given us insight into the issues and trends prevailing at that time.

Literature may be classified according to a variety of system, including language, national origin, historical period, genre and subject matter. Some literature are treated separately by language by nation, or by special subject. The art of literature is not reducible to the words on the page: they are there solely because of the craft of writing. As an art, literature might be described as the organization of words to give pleasure. Yet through words literature elevates and transforms experience beyond "mere" pleasure.

English literature, however, emerged with the beginning of the history of English people. It refers to all the literary works novels, short stories, poems, fiction, nonfiction and plays composed in English. The earliest works of English literature mirror the life lived by the people of that region at that specific period. For instance, all the changes undergone by

English society from the earliest to the modern time have left their imprints on English literature.

Indian literature refers to the literature produced on Indian subcontinent until 1947 and in the republic of India thereafter. The republic of India has twenty two officially recognized languages. The earliest works of India literature were orally transmitted. Sanskrit literature begins with oral literature of the Rig Veda. In the medieval period, literature in Kannada and Telugu appeared in the 9th and 11th centuries respectively. Nissim Ezekiel is called the father of post independence and modern poetry of India.

Indian writing in English has a relatively short but highly charged history. Indian English literature refers to the body of work by writers in India who write in the English language and whose native or native language. Could be one of the numerous language of India. It is only one and a half centuries old. The first book written by an Indian in English was Sake Dean Mahomet, titled travels of Dean Mahomet; Mahomet's travel narrative was published in 1793 in England. In its early stages, it was influenced by the western art form of the novel. Most of the early Indian writing in English was non fictional such as biographies and political essays.

Indian writing in English might as yet appear as a dilemma. English in Indian still reflects the stereotypical colonial hangover. But without resorting to such platitudes like English being an international language, and writing in English in India being one major way of getting noticed overseas. Indian writer is not a species apart but very much an integral part of the Indian literary scene.

Today Indian writing in English has come to occupy a respectable position in the global village. A new breed of writers is emerging who are multiethnic, multicultural and multiracial. The trend is new and infectious because they bring about a gust of freshness in fiction and in English literature. They form the new generation of the global

village born in one continent raised in another and living in another. They have a larger following and a very wide leadership around the world.

Indian English literature is also associated with the works of members of the Indian Diaspora especially people like Salman Rushdie, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Agha Shahid Ali and Rohinton Mistry who were born in India. The new generation of Indian author, who wrote almost exclusively in English like R.K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*. Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* followed 1938. Indo-Anglican is a specific term in the sole context of writing that should not be confused with the term Anglo-Indian. As a category, this production comes under the broader realm of postcolonial literature the production from previously colonized countries such as India.

The work of Indian women writers has been undervalued due to patriarchal assumptions about the superior worth of male experience. The factors contributing to this prejudice is the fact that most of these women writers have observed domestic space. The Indian women's perceptions of their aspirations and expectations are within the framework of Indian social and moral commitment. Proficiency in English is available only to writers of the intelligent, affluent and educated classes; the writer's works often belong to high social strata and cut off from the reality of Indian life.

The majority of novels written by Indian women writers depict the psychological sufferings of the frustrated homemakers. Indian writing in English is now becoming more popular. In the realm of fiction, it has heralded a new era and has earned many laurels both at home and abroad. Indian women writers have started questioning the prominent old patriarchal domination. They are no longer puppets in the hands of man. They have shown their worth in the field of literature both qualitatively and quantitatively and are showing it even today without any hurdle. Today, the works of Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Kiran Desai and Manju Kapur have left an indelible imprint on the readers of Indian fiction in English.

A major development in modern Indian fiction is the growth of a feminist or women centered approach, that seeks to project and interpret experience, from the point of a feminine consciousness and sensibility. Many Indian women novelist have explored female subjectivity in order to establish an identity. The origin of Indian writing in English by women can be traced back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This emergence is an important milestone for feminism in India. Access to English education was one of the main reason of modernization of the thinking of Indian women. The broad scope for higher education inspired women to pursue English education which had a visible impact on the status of women. Indian women came in contact with the western culture, ideas, philosophy, literature and movement that were appealing and thought provoking. They got an opportunity to express their Indian attitude in the newly acquired English language.

During almost six decades of post colonial history of Indian English fiction, a wide variety of novelist has emerged focusing attention on a multitude of social, economic, political, religious and spiritual issues faced by three coinciding periods of human experience. With the turn of the century the Indian English women novelists have surpassed their male counterparts outnumbering them quantitatively as well as by maintaining a high standard of literary writing, equally applauded in India and abroad, experimenting boldly not only with technique but also by incorporating tabooed subject matters in their novels and short stories.

Among Indian women novelists in English writers like R.P. Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Arundati Roy, Shobha De, Bharati Mukherjee, Jumpa Lahiri, Rama Mehta and Geeta Mehta have heralded a new consciousness, particularly in the pathetic plight of the Indian women .women novelist in most of their writings, they have tried to project women as the central figure and seem to succeed in presenting the predicament of women most effectively and also have tried their best to free the female mentality from the age long control of male dominations.

Nayantara Sahgal is one of the distinguished Indo-English writers who write in the stream of national consciousness. The first generation of important women writers began publishing their work in the 1950s. During this period, Nayantara Sahgal emerged as one of the most significant voices in the realm of Indian English fiction. The emotional world of women is explored and analyzed with admirable insight and sympathetic perception in Nayantara Sahgal's novels. In almost every novel, Nayantara has a central women character that gradually moves towards an awareness of her emotional needs. She has shown an admirable understanding of the problems and the predicaments of the women and exploited their skills in projecting convincingly the agonized mind of the persecuted women. Her portrayal of women characters in the novels invariably bears authenticity to their feminist approach, outlook, and perspective. Her keen observation of the life of Indian women and their interest in the study of their inner mind are evidenced by their vivid and panoramic portrayal of their plight.

Nayantara Sahgal is one of the eminent female Indian writers in English to receive wide recognition. She is a brilliant writer who was in a privileged position to develop in the post-independent India. She has set up her fictional endeavor in the creative vein of post-colonial consciousness with a strong and proper perspective in our times by her close analysis and enormous sensitivity that set right the national honor and self-respect. Her fictional world is a unique amalgamation of social, political, cultural, economic, and national consciousness that address itself to the international affairs, which cast light on human mentality by raiding on socio-political and national matters in the genuine interest of universal humanity. She is exclusively regarded as a political writer who seems to have "politics in her blood"(268).

Nayantara Pandit Sahgal was born in Allahabad on May 10, 1927 into one of India's most prominent political families. With her mother Vijayalakshmi Pandit as India's first ambassador to the U.N., her uncle Jawaharlal Nehru as India's first Prime Minister and her first cousin, Indira Gandhi as India's third Prime Minister as well as the first women Prime

Minister of India; it is not surprising that politics and history inspire and underlie much of her writing.

Nayantara Sahgal is the second of the three daughters of Ranjit Sitaram pandit and Vijayalakshmi Pandit. Her childhood was spent in Anand Bhawan at Allahabad with her parents, her maternal uncle, Jawaharlal Nehru and her cousin, Indira Gandhi. Her childhood and adolescence were spent amidst India's political reverberations, the crusade for emancipation from the British yoke and the influence of Gandhian ideas of freedom and non-violence. She has, as A.V. Krishna Rao states, "inherited and cherished a certain set of values and attitudes toward life which can be best described as a complex of a political liberalism, social sophistication, economic moderation and cultural catholicity interaction with the Gandhian Idealism"(4).

In her article "*This Time of Fulfilment*" she mentions the two turning point in her life- one was her marriage to Gautham, a businessman. The unhappy marriage ended in a divorce in 1967 which left her walk into the world fearlessly. Disharmony and dissolution of marriage becomes the basis for her writing. The second turning point was her own decision to live with a brilliant bureaucrat, E.N. Mangat Rai in his book review, *Relationship Extracts from a Correspondence*, he described in his own words, "not an affair but a revolution, a self-discovery that life had to be lived more fully in order to be meaningful"(14). Later in 1979, she married Mangat Rai, after many years of living together.

Sahgal was honored for her works with Awards. Her novel *Rich Like us* won the Sinclair fiction prize and the Sahitya Academy Award. Her earlier book *Plats for Departure* won the commonwealth writers Prize. She served as an advisor to Sahitya Academy's Board for English from 1972 to 1975. She was a member of Varghese committee for autonomy to radio & TV in 1977-78. In 1978, she was a member of the Indian delegation to U.N. General Assembly. She has also held the post of vice president of People's Union for Civil Liberties. She received the Sinclair prize for fiction in 1985. Sahitya Academy Award (Britain) in 1986

Sahgal was also a Fellow of the Woodrow Wilson International centre for scholars, Washington from 1981 to 1982. In 1990, she was elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1997, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate for Literature by the University of Leeds. In 2002, Mrs. Sahgal was awarded the Alumni Achievement Award from Wellesley College. Her last novel, *Lesser Breeds*, was published in 2003. The library of Congress currently holds twenty-four of her works. Sahgal continues to write and maintains contact with Woodstock from her home in Dehra Dun. In 2004, she spoke at the Woodstock's 75th annual commencement, where she inspired yet another generation of students to make a difference in the world.

Sahgal is not only a novelist of repute but is also a journalist by profession. She confesses that fiction is her “abiding love”, journalism her “conscience”. Talking to Rama Jha in 1987, Sahgal said that her two kinds of writing experiences – that of a novelist and that of a political journalist – though contrary to each other, are mutually sustained because, her central focus in both areas is the same – the concept of freedom in human beings, national and personal, increasingly feminist. She feels that women should try to understand and realize herself as a human being and not just as an attached to some male life. She introduces her theme of the quest for freedom in human beings, national and personal, increasingly feminist. She feels that women should try to understand and realize herself as a human being and not just as a one attached to some male life. She introduces her theme of the quest for freedom through them delineation of male protagonists though she severely attacks the male-dominated society.

Nayantara Sahgal is a prolific writer. She has to her credit nine novels, two biographies, political commentaries and a large number of articles, contributions to various newspapers and magazines. Her novels include – *A Time To be Happy* (1957), *This Time of Morning* (1965), *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969), *The Day in Shadow* (1971), *A Situation in New Delhi* (1977), *Rich Like Us* (1985), *Plans for Departure* (1987), *Mistaken Identity* (1988), *Lesser*

Breeds (2003). Her non-fiction mainly includes her two autobiographical books: *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954), *From Fear Set Free* (1962). Besides a history *Freedom Movement in India* (1970) and a political treatise *Indira Gandhi: Her Road to Power* (1978), besides numerous newspaper and magazine articles.

Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta on July 11, 1956. He studied at Dehradun, New Delhi, Alexandria. He experiments extensively with the form of his book. Each book of Ghosh is born out of a conviction. He received a Doctorate from Oxford University. He worked as professor in both India and the US. Ghosh has already bagged several prestigious awards for his works. Some of these awards are Prix Medicis Etranger for *The Circle of Reason*, Sahitya Akademi Award and Ananda Puraskar for *The Shadow Lines*, Arthur C. Clarke Award for *The Calcutta Chromosome*. Ghosh's notable non-fiction writings are *In an Antique Land* (1992), *Dancing in Cambodia and at Large in Burma* (1998), *Countdown* (1999), and *The Imam and the Indian* (2002, a collection of essays on themes such as fundamentalism, the history of the novel, Egyptian culture, and literature.

Ruskin Bond is a well known Indian writer in English. He has written more than hundred short stories, six novels, three collection of verse and over thirty books for children. Bond has written two autobiographies. The first, *Scenes from a Writer's Life*, covers the first twenty-one years of his life and the second book, *The Lamp is Lit*, narrates when Bond returned to India after a two year stay in England. Ruskin Bond received Sahitya Akademi Award for his book *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra* (1992), and was honoured with the title Padma Shri (1999), for his life contribution to Indian Literature in English. He has been writing for the last fifty years in different genres of literature.

Michael Chabon born May 24. He is an American novelist, screenwriter, columnist and short story writer. Chabon's work is characterized by complex language, and the frequent use of metaphor along with recurring themes such as nostalgia, divorce, abandonment, fatherhood, and most notably issues of Jewish identity. He often includes gay, bisexual, and

Jewish characters in his work. Chabon's first novel, *The Mysteries of Pittsburgh* (1988), was published when he was 25. He followed it with *Wonder Boys* (1995) and two short-story collections. In 2000, he published *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*, a novel that John Leonard would later call Chabon's magnum opus. It received the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2001

Nayantara Sahgal's first book *Prison and Chocolate Cake* (1954), an autobiography, was published when she was only twenty-seven-year old. The book describes the powerful associations and experiences of her childhood and provides invaluable insight into the shaping influences of her life. The political consciousness which dominates her literary creations, is real and inseparable from herself and her surroundings. In the preface to *Prison and Chocolate Cake*, Nayantara Sahgal writes: "We grew up at a time when India was the stage for a great political drama and we shall always remain a little dazzled by the performances(7). In the same book, she says: "Our growing up was India's growing up into political maturity – a different kind of political maturity from any the world has seen before, based on an ideology inspired by self-sacrifice, compassion and peace"(9).

Sahgal's first novel, *A Time to be Happy* has the reference to congress activities and the events of 1942, It portrays the search for identity of a westernized Indian youth Sanad, against the backdrop of India's struggle for liberation. It is also on a different level, submerged saga of Indian national movement with its inevitable and indelible impress on the minds of countless comfortable upper middle-class Indians. It covers a period of about 16 years from around 1932 to 1948. The central theme is the awakening of Sanad's conscience and his attempt at success in self-discovery and identity.

Sahgal attempts to project a nation's consciousness through the fragmentary consciousness of an individual. Thus, while dealing with the particular, the novel also is concerned with larger issues. The novel is set in the immediate pre and post independent period, and deals with themes which are taken up by Sahgal in her later novels also. It is the

story of Sanad, a nearly English Youngman brought to be a success, puzzled and uncertain about his future. Sahal's novel, *This Time of Morning* is a purely political novel which deals with what happens in the corridors of power, in the drawing rooms of politically very important people or in the lobbies in parliament. Some of the characters of the novel are so beautifully and symbolically portrayed that they are equated with the contemporary political personalities. Much of the action takes place in Delhi, and the particular context is the decline and fall of one of the pillars of the Government, Kalyan Sinha. *This Time of Morning* can certainly claim to be one of the best political novels written by an Indian in English.

Sahgal's *Storm in Chandigarh* deals with the problems of political tension and violence originating from its being Chandigarh, the common capital of the two states: the Punjab and Haryana. The novel depicts violence, chaos and the uneasy political situation of the late sixties in the partition of Punjab into two newly formed states: Punjabi speaks Punjab and Hindi speaking Haryana with Chandigarh as the common capital. The novel deals with the political upheaval in Punjab in the post independence period. Beside the political background, there is also a human background which has not received adequate treatment. The fictional situation of young hearts broken up by compulsions of marriage and call of few love suggests that marriage is not just sexual relationship; it means companionship on equal terms. The cause of disturbance in the relations between man and woman partly lies in man's inherent debility to indulge in adultery and partly in the unnatural position of the husband or the wife in the family.

The God of Small Things (1997), Arundhati Roy's debut novel, didn't just win the Booker Prize, but also became the biggest selling book by a non-expatriate Indian author. Roy, known for her strong political stances and commentary, is one of the most followed writers in contemporary India today. Her work also includes several collections of essays including *War Talk* (2003) and *Capitalism: A Ghost Story* (2014).

Women characters in the novel no more like to remain confined within the four walls of their houses. They prefer to go picnic to relieve the burden of boredom and monotony. The clash between the Gyan and Harpal is a clash of ideologies. It is a fight between the cult of violence versus the idea of non-violence. Gyan who shows little concern for emotions and human beings always indulged in a ruthless attitude. Harpal on the other hand is more concerned with human beings than with anything else. Each time, there is a confrontation between the two Chief Ministers.

CHAPTER TWO

TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Sahgal emphasizes the Spirit of Individuality through Simrit in the novel *The Day in Shadow*. She infuses into her heroine the spirit of self-hood either unconsciously or consciously and deliberately. Sahgal's concern for the women who are caught in the dilemma of liberty and individuality or stability and protection of marriage is understandable. It seems to be deeply concerned with the need of freedom for women, for women to become aware of themselves as individuals. Simrit and Pixie in the novel want to stand on their own feet and enjoy individuality, self-expression and self-dependence. It is Simrit's longing for freedom and individuality that urges her to take divorce from her husband. According to Sahgal freedom is not a gift, it is an achievement and every generation has to do its job well in order to continue and preserve the tradition of freedom.

Simrit is introduced as an independent woman who can make choices. She marries Som, solely attracted by his color, life and action disregarding opposition from her parents and the dislike of her friends. Very soon, she realizes her folly when she is forbidden in his house to have a say even in routine matters like choosing servants or a cook, selecting curtains or sofa covers. Disappointed at Som's attempts to restrict her individuality and the humiliating treatment meted out to her, Simrit resolves to dissolve her seventeen-year-old marriage. Even as a divorcee, she asserts her individuality. In the sight against the outworn traditions, she chooses to start a new life with Raj, a liberal thinker.

The main theme of *The Day in Shadow* is the continued exploitation of the woman by her husband. The continued tendency towards exploitation of woman by man provokes her to revolt against the social system and reconstitute it on her terms. Thus, it marks the emergence of the new type of woman who can present her own terms on which compatible and dignified family life will be possible. The novelist narrates the story of Som and Simrit who seem to get

on well during the first few years of their marriage. But Som's inability to understand her, except as an object of physical pleasure and enjoyment, compels her to seek human communication outside the marital bonds. Som treats her not as a person but as a possession.

Som is a business magnate, aspiring for greater comforts and riches but he is unmindful of his wife, Simrit as a person who has individuality and who aspires for her own identity. Unable to get recognition of her identity from Som, Simrit carves a new path for herself from her husband's domination. Simrit finds herself shut out of Som's world. He never consults her in any matter. Unable to withstand his ambitious nature, she longs to isolate herself from his world of commerce. All her attempts to change him go awry. Som becomes furious at her protest and asks her either to be a docile wife or to break off their marital relationship. She decides to live independently, but her husband Som wanted her to understand the value of comforts he provides and make her regret for her decision to break relationship.

Simrit plumps, though reluctantly, for the second alternative. She is prepared to forsake him and all the riches and comforts rather than lead the abject life of a sex-satisfying companion. To live with self-respect is her primary right and for that, she risks the unknown future with courage and confidence. She demonstrates that individual freedom is so precious that it should not be compromised or allowed to be suppressed. For her, emotional involvement is far more important than the sexual relationship and it is an individual that seeks fulfillment and expression, not as possession.

Simrit, a sensitive being in her own right, longs for communication and understanding which she is unable to find in Som's world of ambition and money. Som expects her to conform to his ideal of subdued womanhood and considers the inequality of their relations to be the right order of things. Simrit finds this denial of freedom a suffocating experience. Her life with Som lacks continuity and warmth. She feels isolated within her skin and even the physical relationship is not involving or kind enough. It is an act with beginning and an end

with nothing in-between or even afterwards. Simrit feels completely alienated from Som that the physical act can no longer transport her unresisting to a comfortable place.

Women are still regarded as servile creatures by people like Som. They are regarded as belonging to the sphere of sex and procreation. Men like Som expect them to live under their control. Simrit is an educated woman who yearns for a free communication of ideas with her husband but feels detached and ignored like piece of furniture used only for physical comfort whenever needed by Som. She wants freedom, love, warmth, affection and understanding but Som never bothers about her feeling. Som never understands that money can't give her what she wants. Simrit is fed up with this life and takes divorce from her husband. It is a very common factor that an Indian woman has to struggle a lot to walk out of her husband's life because they are bound to the traditional social set-up. So they need extra courage to break the traditional bondage marriage. It is with such indomitable courage and strength of conviction Simrit comes out of Som's life.

After discarding her former role as an intellectual and a prolific writer, Simrit thinks she has a different and responsible role to play as a divorcee; feeling uprooted and abandoned in the society. Her problems encompassing physical, emotional and economic spheres are many and varied. As a woman used to the luxuries of life, she suddenly has to find herself to have to go without telephone, even milk or ration card. She has taken "all the living wealth children and had left behind the crockery and furniture and linen and jewels and silver Som got all the things, the cars, the bank account" (58).

While Som lives in luxury, Simrit lives in penury. She is not even sure how long her flat would be affordable, its rent being too expensive for her. In spite of all these problems, the courage with which she tries to adjust herself to the aftermath of the divorce is admirable. Simrit possesses extraordinary will-power. As a single parent of her children, even in the most trying situations, she does not lose courage. She continues to be assertive and if the situation demands, she even becomes aggressive. Her husband, too, is aware of her strength: "Som

could have forgiven her if she had been a weaker being, unsure, dependent, and even deceiving. But beneath her docility she was none of these things unpardonable” (53).

What forces Simrit to rebel against the conventional security of marriage is her yearning for a free communication of ideas with her husband beyond the glandular sensations of sex. Simrit realizes that talk is the meaning link in her relationship with Som and tries in vain to engage him in any meaningful dialogue. She suffers marriage with Som as a solitary confinement of the human spirit instead of enjoying it as a communication and a union of two human mind and spirits. Having chosen her husband, Simrit finds she does not have the freedom to choose anything else, not even such trifling domestic matters as chair covers and curtains. Her tastes, her ideas, her values are quite different from her husband's but it is Som's wishes and his desires which prevail smothering her initiative and her interest in living, till in the end she feels she is just a log in the machine.

Simrit and Som's relationship is marked by lack of tenderness and warmth, communication and compatibility. Hurt and humiliated at his condescending attitude, she suffers in silence for seventeen long years mainly because of her upbringing in a patriarchal society where male superiority is taken for granted. Her anxiety and restlessness are evident right from the beginning. Her seeking divorce from Som is an indication of her protest against being victimized by him. It is Simrit's longing for freedom and individuality that urges her to take divorce from her husband. Simrit does not want to be known as her husband's wife but as her own self. When someone asked her about the profession of her husband, she thinks:

Wasn't it odd, when you were standing yourself, fully a person, not to be asked what you did? There was such an enormous separating gulf between herself and these women, most women-most people. May be the question would be different in the twenty-first century. Simrit herself had never accepted a world where men did things and women waited for them. (6)

Moolchand, Som's company lawyer, at a meeting to clarify the 'Consent Terms' to Simrit, finds it rather unbelievable for a woman to have absolute control over herself. "Moolchand might have reacted better if she had broken down and wept, pleaded her plight, not displayed this control and competence. She was something outside his experience, a woman who exercised her mind"(59). The most glorious instance of her self-confidence and crisis management is seen when she rejects with contempt Som's offer to receive the income that accrues of the shares on the condition of remaining unmarried.

Simrit finds her life disrupted and herself in the midst of a peculiar financial problem. The heavy tax payments are an attempt to enslave her in every way, and divorce instead of being a new beginning is a confrontation with the age old orthodox views regarding the status of woman. All her attempts to make others see the divorce settlement from her point of view fail because people do not see her as a person seeking freedom and fulfillment. As long as it provides for the future of their son, it seems to other to be a fair settlement. Simrit likens her position to that of a donkey whose burden attracts no notice and draws forth no pity for 'loads for donkey' (56).

For Simrit, divorce does not bring freedom but confrontation with all that is orthodox in this male-centered society. It is easy to get, easier than a car or a telephone or a license for an industry but it is painful and dislocating in its effect on Simrit. Though the law had changed, attitudes hadn't and Simrit feels uprooted and abandoned in a husband-centered world. It is difficult to begin anew for the past lives on in the present, in the memories of the shared years and the lives of the children. Simrit feels that "a part of her would always be married to Som" (220).

Simrit's divorce does not imply that marriage has failed as a social institution or that it has outlived its utility. On the other hand it clearly demonstrates the need for reciprocal relationship in marriage. Man-woman relationship whether within or outside marriage, needs to be liberated from conventional approaches to it in order to become a satisfying and

fulfilling one. Marriage is neither a system of slavery nor an escape route. It is not even a contract-for it is wrong to approach it in that spirit. It is partnership based on respect and consideration and requiring involvement from both. This relationship has been subjected has been subjected to an unusual strain in a number of ways. Partly the break-up of the joint family system itself is responsible for the increase in friction between husband and wife.

The divorce settlement is a continuation of their marriage, it pins her down to the role of a victim and attempts to crush her desire to be free in a positive way. The first step she has to take is to face the situation squarely and it is the courage of this stand which frees her from the bonds of the marriage as well as the divorce settlement. Out of this struggle to be free is born a new Simrit, a person who makes choices, takes decisions and becomes aware of herself as a person. First the mind, then the body open up to new responses and life affirms itself in a new sense of fulfillment.

After a long struggle Simrit also turns out to be a woman who can make choices, take decisions and makes up her mind to start life anew with Raj from whom she can get what she longs for and expects from her husband-love, warmth, affection and understanding. Her acceptance of Raj is based on his endearing qualities of tenderness, honesty and equality which she has vainly searched for in Som. Raj's 'rich warm concern' appeals to her. He helps her regain her emotional and intellectual equilibrium.

Raj and Simrit plan to get married, they have enough confidence in their own selves and the future to want to take that step. Marriage has a permanence and stability about it and does not become a superfluity even when divorce has become a social reality. What concern the novelist most is the need for a mature approach to marriage, the need to nurture it with love and care and candor. She wants communication not perfection, for men and woman have their own limitations. Though she is fully aware that men can be as unhappy as woman when the relationship is not satisfactory one, she stresses the point that ordinarily it is women who suffer more and are denied right to self-expression.

Raj is a mature person, takes personal interests in her and loves her. The fact that she is a middle-aged woman with several children does not deter him. He has great respect for her and intends no foolery, "No handholding games with her. No games of any sort. With her it had to be on a long, strong basis" (157). His interest mainly springs from his passion for crusading against oppression of any kind. Raj-Simrit relationship begins with the mind and not with the body. They seek fulfillment not as possessions but as individuals. Listening to Raj, Simrit feels that she is lifted out and soothed. She thinks: "After all attraction had to start somewhere and what better starting point than the mind?" (160).

Simrit is aware that in marrying Raj, there is every possibility that her physical as well as psychological needs are met without losing her dignity and sense of equality and that she can live a truer life without any pretence. Simrit's futile cry for equality in her relationship with Som materializes now in the relationship with Raj. Not legislation but understanding, love and respect can bring equality in a relationship and both of them have these qualities in abundance. Along with Raj, she builds up a world on the foundations of justice, equality and humanity. Thus Simrit emerges out as a new woman who can present her own terms on which harmonious and dignified family life is possible now and in future.

In the process of emancipation, it has become necessary for Simrit to get rid of her fears and inhibitions. She has to overcome social opinion and orthodoxy on one hand and personal hesitation and reluctance on the other. She continues to think, despite divorce, that her connection with Som is continued through her children and hence is besieged by feeling of guilt at her association with Raj. When Simrit meets Som to discuss the Consent Terms, Som's meanness comes before her in full proportion and perhaps this is the reason of her sudden feeling of being liberated from guilty feeling. She announces to Raj: "I'd got rid of my guilt. It was gone without a trace and in its place there was a strong, positive feeling" (208). Simrit considers the new possibility that life has held before her: "she felt free at last to choose what her life would be. She was filled with the sheer rightness of being alive and

healthy at this particular time. Part of it was physical well-being. The rest was balanced in a deeper calmer rejoining” (236).

Raj and Simrit bask in the sunshine of freedom in the day-break and exchange with each other “the good tidings of great joy” of life, rooted in faith. By accepting Raj, it should not be considered that Simrit continues to be a victim in the male-dominated society. Raj is warm and tender, a total contrast to Som. He treats her as an equal and she is perfectly at ease in Raj’s company. Their relationship is not one where Raj is domineering and dictating. There are several instances to show that there is perfect equality and, as a matter of fact, very often it is Simrit who takes decisions and imposes them on him. Though Simrit loves Raj, she is not prepared to marry him, at least her problems are solved. But Raj is particular that they should marry immediately so that he can share her problems and make her happy.

Simrit is a middle-aged divorcee without money with three children and a tax problem to the size of a python. Hence no motive can be attributed to Raj’s eagerness other than love for her and when she too loves him, he does not find any reason to prolong the relationship without the sacredness of marriage. Simrit is portrayed as a courageous woman who understands the wrong choice she made in her life by choosing Som. She realises her mistake, fights her battle as a lone crusader, shoulders the responsibility of bringing up her children and ventures into her passion of being a freelance writer. All these episodes in her life and the decisions she takes show how well she perceives the circumstances in her life and her emotions. It is her proper perception which helps her untangle the bundle of crisis. Hence, Simrit’s decision to lead life on her own terms is a justifiable action. It is also quite natural to take the companionship of Raj, who empathizes with her and appreciates her individually.

It primarily deals with the struggle of a young, beautiful and daring Indian woman trapped under the burden of a brutal divorce settlement and the agony and unhappiness. Simrit experiences in the hands of cruel and unjust male dominated society of India. The novel also exposes the life of the political leaders, business barons, journalists, and free thinkers in the

bee and flow of the daily living in New Delhi. Nayantara Sahgal had presented the social life of these people living in India in the early sixties when India was on her way to progress after the attainment of independence. The novelist shows that though Indians had got freedom yet it was only on the surface level as in their attitudes to love, morality, sex, marriage, education and religion, they were still the slaves of the west.

The theme of the tradition and modernity had been continued by Nayantara Sahgal's in *The Day in Shadow*. The main characters of the novel Som, Raj, Simrit, Sumer Singh, Brij and Ram Krishna behave like moderns but at the same time find it quite difficult to isolate themselves completely from the age old tradition of their own country. It had got its precious past. Though being the capital city of India, it had now become completely a modern city 'blossoming into new street lighting, fountains and parks, restaurants, shops and discotheques'(160) bearing no resemblance to the sad, dark, stricken Delhi of the refugee migration just after independence but it was still proud of its mosques, temples and other historical places. Undoubtedly its past was lost in antiquity and it had not remained the same virtuous place running a slow and smooth life. Now the life here was full of confusion, chaos and disorder and there was a vigor and vulgarity about Delhi today-as there was about any process of growth and change. *The day in shadow* opens with a gala get-together at intercontinental and very first sentences of the novel underlines the glow, the glitter of this modern society of the capital city of India,

The huge mirrors of the zodiac room at the intercontinental, festooned in carved gilt, reflected everyone of consequence in the ministry of petroleum, and a lot of other officials besides. And their wives. And some of their daughters-the supple, flat-stomached young, with their saris tied low showing their navels, their hair swinging long and loose, or piled high in glassy architecture. (1)

All this shows the superficial modernity of the Indian people who blindly imitate western style in their fashions and manners, little knowing that these things are taking them

away from the traditions and customs of their own country. Trimmed hair, slim body and naked stomachs are considered to be signs of modernity. Similarly, in order to be modern, these people arrange parties and spend money plentifully. They believe that a man living in Delhi has got to attend parties to know more and more people. Raj wants Simrit to go out of the house so often and meet more and more people though Simrit feels out of place in such parties. In the same way, the Indians also go for holidaying like the foreigners. In such a modern society vulgarity is also considered to be a sign of modernity. Som is kissing his wife in the presence of his friend Lalli. In the same way Simrit's friends don't like her ex-husband Som as they consider him to be a bore. According to these people "A man had to be flashy on a big scale to be thought well off, and majestically vulgar to be admired, and Som had not arrived in that category" (4).

Som found difficult in talking with Lalli in Punjabi when he first met him but later in the novel he learns German phrases while in the contact of his friend Vetter. He wanted to be look like a foreigner in his mannerisms also moreover, in Delhi the reputation of a civil servant has nothing to do with his merits but he must have good English diction and good manners. In *The Day in Shadow* there was not a single character that can say completely modern or traditional. Almost all the major characters were a mixture of both these elements. They were modern in some aspects but traditional, or can side to be orthodox, in many other things. For example, there was Som who tries to be modern in each and every manner and blindly imitates the western style of life. He speaks their language, learns their mannerisms and adopts their fashions. As Simrit recalls, "He had German phrases on the tip of his tongue and Vetter's mannerisms. He did most of his personal shopping in Europe. In a royal blue jacket, a French silk tie and hand stitched roman leather shoes he even looked foreigner." (9)

Som could never go away from the tradition of his own country. It was tradition in Som that urges him to believe that women had to live under the control of man. He hates women's individuality and their freedom and believes in male domination to such an extent that he

gives him least freedom to his ideal of subdued womanhood, and considers the inequality of the relationship to be the right order of things. Through notice that the tradition within Som for example, he was modern in other aspects, when coming to husband-wife relationship he was completely traditional. He gives no voice to Simrit even in the ordinary decisions of everyday life: "Even their son had a veto. Not even about servants, she had dismissed the cook twice for drunkenness and bad behavior and Som had kept him on."

Simrit was also a blend of both the tradition and modern elements. She wants individuality and freedom, feels suffocated and unhappy in the husband centre world and takes divorce from Som. Thus she rebels against the conventional security of marriage as she yearns for free communication of ideas with her husband beyond the glandular sensations of sex. In this respect she was an awakened woman of the modern age who shows the courage of mind after the divorce and it was tradition in her that makes her feel that by taking divorce she had offended something old and ordained, "A part of her would always be married to Som." (220)

Simrit could never go away from the old tradition and customs of her own country like modern women. The sacred institution of marriage had also come under the impact of modernism. In traditional Indian society, marriage was arranged by the parents and after marriage the husband and the wife had to live with each other under all circumstances. It was considered to be a contract or bondage made in the presence of do's which had to be obeyed. But in the modern society, people don't believe in arranged marriages in the novel "*The Day in Shadow*". Simrit gets married to Som, a businessman, against the will of her Brahmin parents. She remains unhappy with this marriage and ultimately takes divorce from her husband. After her divorce from Som, she plans to marry Raj. So marriage in the modern society was fixed by man himself and not by god as it was thought in the traditional Indian society. Simrit was an educated woman who yearns for a free communication of ideas with her husband but feels isolated and ignored like a piece of furniture used only for physical

comfort whenever needed by Som. She wants freedom, love, warmth, affection and understanding but Som never bothers about her feelings. Som never understands that money can't give her what she wants. Simrit was fed up with this life and takes divorce from her husband. Divorce had become quite easy in the modern days, the easiest one. Simrit says that it takes a year to get a Birla car, five to get a flat but: "You could get a divorce by mutual consent at the drop of a hat. The Hindu code bill had jumped two thousand years of tradition to confer that particular twentieth century blessing" (5).

In the matters of man-woman relationship and even in the laws established by the government, people had double standards. For example, no doubt divorce was made so easy and common by law in the modern society but it was not so easy a decision in such a society where women had stayed married no matter how unhappy and confining their marriage had been. In the terms of divorce settlement were harsh and involve a heavy responsibility for taxes in the care of Simrit though law had changed but not the attitudes of the people. Simrit feels uprooted and abandoned in the male dominated world as she finds that nobody tries to see divorce from her point of view, as a person seeking freedom and fulfillment. Both Moolchand and Shah saw nothing wrong with the divorce settlement though it is a complete injustice with Simrit. So even law does not do justice with a woman in this society. As the society was male-dominated where all the laws were made by the man himself. There was no doubt in modern man had changed a lot but he had still not given up that old traditional view of considering woman as an object possession.

Like in her earlier novels, in *The Day in shadow* also, Nayantara Sahgal seems to be deeply concerned with the need of freedom for woman. Saroj and now Simrit and Pixie in this novel want to stand on their own feet and enjoy individuality, self-expression and self-dependence. It was Simrit's longing for freedom and individuality that urges her to take divorce from her husband. Simrit does not want to be known as her husband's wife but as her own self. When someone asked her about the profession of her husband, she thinks:

Wasn't it odd, when you were standing there yourself, fully a person, not to be asked what you did? There was such an enormous separating gulf between herself and this woman, most woman-most people. Maybe the question would be different in the twenty-first century. Simrit herself had never accepted a world where men did things and women waited for them. (6)

Pixie in this novel also moves towards self awareness but she was quite different from Nayantara Sahgal's other women characters. She was a working girl who did not have security of an affluent background. When she decides to break her relationship with Sumer Singh she had to think about it against her need for a job and a roof over her head. But still she decides to break which shows her courage to seek self-realization. Similar us, after a lot of struggle, Simrit also turns out to be a woman who can make choices, takes decisions and makes up her mind to start life a new with raj from which she could got what she longs for and expects from her husband love, warmth, affection and understanding. Modern man was becoming more materialistic. He gave more importance to money and power than human feelings. For men like Som, money was the most important thing in life and this love for money becomes the root cause of his separation from his wife. Simrit feels, "Money had been part of the texture of her relationship with Som, an emotional, forceful ingredient of it, intimately tied to his self esteem. Money was, after all, a form of pride, even of violence" (60).

Man had become so much money-minded that there was no place left for human feelings and emotions in his heart. He weighs everything with money. Even husband-wife relation and father -son relation were weighed in terms of money. Som feels that money could give happiness to Simrit. To notice that when his children win prizes, Som award them with money other material things and not with love and affection. Som could go to all extents to got more money. As he earns more and more that he breaks relations with his friends Lilli and Vetter. Even Brij was fascinated by that the money world, and decides to ignore his mother's

side of the case as he thinks that it may upset his relations with his father, “it was too big a risk. He didn’t dare.” Simrit’s daughter also lives in the dream world of affluence projected by the rich advertisements in the magazine. But no one pays any attention to anything of value: emotions, involvement and attachment, and only the superficial acts of life engage their attention. In the traditional Indian society extra marital relations were considered immoral but such relations were becoming quite common in the modern society. In *The Day in Shadow*, Raj and Simrit were having an affair though Simrit was divorced as a mother of so many children. Earlier Raj was having a relationship with Shaila and even after her marriage with another man he longs to meet her. Similarly Summer Singh had physical relations with Pixie and so many other girls. Though the people were becoming modern in every possible manner.

In some cases the Indians do not want to shed their traditional attitudes. For example, in the modern times though people were educated, they were still unwilling to understand that there was no difference between a son and daughter. A male heir was considered very important in a family. People gave more importance to sons. That can be seen in Som and Simrit that though they were having so many daughters and only one son, Brij, Som shows no affection for his daughters and was considerate only to his son. Even after the divorce he cares only for Brij. In the traditional Indian society, religion strongly influenced in the minds of the people. People used to have strong faith in the theory of “Karma” and they accept their fate willingly. They used to have full faith in the supreme power of god. In the day in shadow, there were such characters like Sumer Singh’s father who believes that if there was any taint in his son, “Only providence or a miracle would put it right” (68). Similarly when Simrit was thinking about Brij’s moving towards his father, Raj tells: “Some power outside her controlled it all. Not god or any rational conception. Just fate” (114). Simrit willingly accepts the tax terms as she believes that it was in her fate. But science had influenced the minds of the people in the modern society and they have “their new ideas and awareness of the presence of reality as an undeniable fact” Simrit accepts everything as her fate. But ram Krishna and raj wish Simrit to take a stand against injustice and not to yield to a sense of

helplessness and victimization. Raj refuses to accept fate as an answer to human problems.

Ram Krishna tells Simrit:

Retribution catches up ...with people who do not face a problem. Religions are supposed to help one to face up. Religions are like public schools. Each produces a type, a uniform personality. The type ours produces doesn't face up it puts problems into cold storage...But I've found a way out of that...To fight wrong ...a man has to believe it is terribly important to fight it. (233-34)

Ramakrishna identifies religion with devotion to do well. Doing good to the people of god was the real devotion of god: people like myself and Simrit and so many others. That awareness of good, of god, of the universe, whatever one called, it was pervasive and supreme. It descended to the dust of the village. It was everywhere. It had to be made to yield results, to become a song on one's lips, a great fighting strength and it was not today. Thus Nayantara Sahgal's concept of religion, was secular religion as she gave importance to men as human beings.

CHAPTER THREE

STEPPING INTO SHADOWS

Women have been prevented from having justice from social, economic, political and constitutional spheres and largely ignored as the 'Weaker Sex'. The twentieth century has seen the new awareness about the women's marginalized status resulting in the birth of women's Liberation Movement. Literature, being the mirror of society does not reflect the pathetic condition of women but explores the woman's questions, extensively and vociferously. In India an unmarried or divorced or separated woman is exposed to dangers. She is often used as convenience, and is sexually harassed, physically exploited and morally demoralized.

Some feminists assert the importance of women to become aware of themselves as individuals, and shaping their destinies by assertiveness and self-confidence and they use the term 'Feminist Consciousness' in this context. Juliet Mitchell in her book, *Psycho Analysis and Feminism*, defines the term Feminist Consciousness as "the process of transforming the hidden individual fears of women into shared awareness of the meaning of them as social problems, the release of anger, anxiety, the struggle of proclaiming the painful and transforming it into the political" (61).

When the traditional bound women accept their false conditioning into subordination and dependence without objections, the sensitive women realize their need of freedom and struggle against the norms suffering women. Nayantara Sahgal in her article, "The Virtuous Woman" refuses the opposing the institution of marriage: "Leaving a marriage that had become an emotional wasteland" (1).

Feminism under many names wishes to prevent discrimination of the grounds of gender and is generally a movement for social change. Yet its origin and past have always been neglected in the history of literature of all the languages. The movement of feminism was in

its full swing in the 1960's. The chief aim of this movement was to secure equal rights and opportunities for women in the male-dominated society. This required awakening and struggle on the part of woman. The term 'feminism' originated from the French word 'feminisme' coined by the utopian socialist Charles Fourier and this term was first used in English in the 1890s in association with the movement for equal political and legal rights for women. The women's Liberation Movement is one of the results of this feminist movement. Feminism is a rapidly developing critical ideology of great promise. It has evolved into a philosophy encompassing diverse fields of human activity in society. The feminist theory, its varied articulations and its complex results in a literary context constitute a significant segment for critical endeavour.

Feminism is becoming a more and more accepted part of ordinary social political discussion, even if it is not seen in the same view by everyone. However, feminism now, as in the past of this diversity, is often symbolized in everyday conversations, as well as in lecture rooms, as a single entity and mostly concerned with equality. This limited portrayal is rarely challenged. Many forms of existing feminist analysis require substantial previous knowledge and are difficult that they make Einstein's theory of relativity appear similar to a piece of cake. Present day feminist thought has sometimes, in this context, been accused of retreating from badly comprehensible language into an incomprehensible jargon typically associated with 'ivory tower' academics. Feminism in India has been controversial. Some traditionalists argue that it alienates women from their culture, religion and family responsibilities. They view it as a diversion from the more important class struggle against western cultural and economic imperialism. Chandra Mohanthy (1988) supported the assumption that feminism as a western ideology supported only the third world women, and it is only the third wave feminism.

Nayantara Sahgal an Indian feminist was influenced by the western Third Wave Feminism and the term 'Third World Women'. Most of the literary works of Nayantara

Sahgal seek answer to the problems of woman in the male-dominated world of today. Sahgal has been in this regard immensely influenced by her mother. There was no unity among the feminist movements in India. But different schools of feminists on specific issues were taken up at different times in different parts of India. The main issues included 'Sati'-Window burning and female infanticide, Child marriage, Purdah-female seclusion and restrictions on female education. Though sati was practiced by the people in 1829, it has never been eradicated as suggested in Nayantara Sahgal's *Rich Like Us* (1985). Nayantara Sahgal also pictured fictional narratives of female infanticide, child marriage and purdah in *Mistaken Identity* (1988). There had been some reform groups in all parts of India from the eighteenth century onwards, including the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the National conference, all of which aimed to modernize Indian society in gender relations.

Indian feminist scholars and activists have to struggle to carve a separate identity for feminism in India. They define feminism in time and space in order to avoid them in critically following Western ideas. Indian women have negative survival through an array of oppressive patriarchal family structures: age, ordinal status, and relationship to men through family of origin, marriage and procreation as well as patriarchal attributes – dowry, caste, community, village, market and the state. It should however be noted that several communities in India, such as the Nairs of Kerala, certain Maratha clans, and Bengali families exhibit matriarchal tendencies, with the head of the family being the oldest woman rather than the oldest man. Sikh culture is also regarded as relatively gender-neutral.

In India remarriage is not very popular. Despite this fact, Simrit in *The Day in Shadow* remarries so that she can resume her life afresh with Raj. Sahgal, the iconoclast, shows that even after achieving freedom in all spheres, women are not truly free and happy as they realize they have to pay a heavy price for their independence. A free woman feels lonely and unprotected in the male sexist society, which is ready to crush her identity and individuality at every opportunity.

Simrit finds a friend, a brother and finally a life partner in Raj. He is ready to spend his time in spite of his busy schedule as a sitting M.P. He looks at her problem as his own, understands her problems and suggests ways to overcome them. It is after observing and understanding him for a long time that Simrit decides to become his life partner. This decision of hers is different from her earlier decision to marry Som. That was a marriage built on an infatuation, whereas, here, Simrit evolves as a more mature character because of her exposure to various problems. These problems actually help her to discover herself better. With this understanding and hope she steps into a new life with Raj.

Som is madly engrossed in amassing wealth. Simrit finds happiness in the love and affection of a happy life. As she is deprived of this basic need, she decides to seek divorce. Slowly, Raj enters the portals of her life because she gets emotional and mental support from him for resolving the crisis in her life. After marrying Raj, she was given the opportunity to allow the writer in her to flourish. Raj takes interest in her work and is besotted by her. Simrit hero-worshipped Raj and he in turn admired Simrit's integrity and grit.

Simrit looks like a liberated woman who has the courage to break a long relationship, which has become meaningless, with no sense of companionship or partnership between husband and wife. But she opts for divorce when already another male support is waiting for her outside marriage. She steps out of the sheltered world of Som, not to live a life of her own in her own way, but to step into the shadow of another man. She really does not have to struggle alone for survival, neither at the economic level nor at the emotional one, which leaves a woman ever more disintegrated and vulnerable.

At times Raj does not feel genuinely concerned about Simrit. He seems to respect her independence and her individuality: "She didn't need a man for identity or status" (139). In his conscious generosity he can go a step further. It was not a question of Simrit for himself - at least not until he had some sign from her. It was Simrit for her he wanted, Simrit to forsake her shadows, and begin to live. However, the patriarchal attitudes are so deeply ingrained in

him that they have become a natural part of his personality. He constantly maintains a stance of superiority towards Simrit.

Simrit for her own sake ironically does not even ask about marriage, a decision even Simrit feels was supposed to be at least mutual. Simrit is surprised at the abrupt announcement, but then accepts it simply. The need for marriage is actually more desperate to Raj than Simrit who had already tasted this institutionalized relationship for too long to be tempted into another such bond so soon. Once this sign of love has come from Simrit, Raj, like any other male chauvinist, starts taking her for granted. And Raj's indoctrination in the patriarchal set up with its unequal gender roles is so deep-rooted and so thorough that he finds nothing unnatural in this kind of command of a man over a woman.

Simrit fails to see Raj's prejudices, biases, and superficialities. She blindly adores him and feels exhilarated in his company: a smile from him radiated an atmosphere of suppressed jubilation that lapped around her in waves. Genuinely grateful to him, she feels "Raj had uncarved her" (11), never for a moment suspecting that Raj might be only carving her into a shape he himself likes. She gets easily subdued under his over-confident postures. She is taken aback at the abrupt announcement of marriage, yet surprisingly no protest comes forth from her. The indoctrination of unequal gender roles promoted right from the birth, sometimes subtly, sometimes not so subtly, is so deep-rooted in Simrit as well, that she too accepts the gender hierarchy assumptions as natural and even remains oblivious to any injustice inherent in them.

Despite the sudden one-sided announcement of marriage by Raj, Simrit continues in her euphoric admiration of Raj. Men like him were born to lead and educate. She feels in fact, just passes on from one man's world into another man's. The resolution just affirms the status-quo and the heroine's grateful acceptance of her lot makes an artificial power structure look like a natural one. Apart from the fact of divorce, Simrit herself remains a stereotype submitting to the idea of male superiority and male dominance. Though the novel has data

good enough to make a feminist novel, which should centrally concern itself with the issue of power, yet, in the absence of irony at any level, it remains a novel. By a woman, about a woman, where contrary to woman's cause the status-quo is uncritically accepted as some inevitable law.

Sahgal through Simrit reveals the predicament of a woman after divorce, by purposely choosing the intelligent, sensitive and cautious woman. Though a writer and a free-lance journalist, she is very shrewdly trapped in a brutal divorce settlement, to show that a woman can be easily used by a man for his convenience. Through Simrit's divorce, Sahgal's makes a strong plea for a change and revitalization of the Indian society.

In Indian society, woman often finds herself in trouble due to financial pressures - but man's condition improves substantially after divorce. He becomes richer with practically no burden and responsibility weighing upon him. Overburdened with the responsibility of children and home, without any independent income of her own in most cases, a woman has to depend on the little alimony which the court of law grants in her favour as part of the divorce settlement. The law also works in the interest of men as the judges and the lawmakers are men. The woman, who has to bring up children, usually gets no help from the father of the children. In the case of a working woman, usually alimony is not granted on the grounds that she is earning on her own. But a woman's job is one that pays less than a man's, because in the interest of the family she cannot pursue a career and often takes up a part-time job, or a less demanding ones, hence less payment. As a result even though they are working after divorce, women find their financial position not very sound.

Simrit does "two-thirds of the world's work, provide forty five percent of its food, ten percent of its income, and one percent of its property" (60). Simrit, thus, even in purely economic terms suffers greatly in the world of male supremacy. And sometimes the fear of economic hardship alone may hold Simrit back in unhappy marriages. Simrit in *The Day in Shadow* writes only occasional articles in newspapers; she has no regular income of her own.

Besides, she has to pay income tax on the shares, which her husband has kept in her name to save his own income tax. Simrit, with her son Brij and daughters, struggles hard to maintain a rented flat, which is too expensive for her. There are no basic amenities like regular supply of milk or a phone connection. However, she tries to overcome her problems with her characteristic toughness of undivided integrity.

Even on the emotional level, divorce does not bring easy happiness or freedom to Simrit. It turns out to be a traumatic experience, a shock and often disintegrates a poised and amiable Simrit's personality and disturbs her psyche. In fact, to free oneself from the past, and to soothe the wounds of a broken marriage, one needs moral strength and time that ultimately prove to be the healing factor. The social responses also add to the sense of trauma. A divorced Simrit is seen as a culprit or as a pitiable creature. As a result, the sense of deprivation, loneliness and insecurity increases.

Simrit feels tormented after divorce as though she were suppressed under the emotional debris of the shattered relationship. Sometimes she is filled with unreasoning-dread, as if an assassin waited there in the dark for her. When she comes out of the party, Raj asks her if she enjoyed it. Simrit remarks: "How can I enjoy something? I can't even begin to think straight till things are settled at the flat. She had moved in so recently, it was not yet come, I feel so disorganized" (14).

Divorce settlement terms deliberately aimed at leaving Som's funds intact for his son, at the cost of making Simrit a financial wreck, shocks her. Her friendship with Raj provides her the anchor, helps her come out of the shock and establish a life of her own. The mutual admiration between Simrit and Raj blooms into love and they decide to marry. Simrit, despite her passive acceptance of Sam's domination, retains individuality of her own. Freedom from marriage is not the end of her suffering. It is, in fact, the beginning of a battle, with the consent terms of divorce heavily weighing her down.

Simrit's hesitant journey towards identity, too, is partly the product of her sensitivity of hers which has made her a writer. Yet this sensitivity keeps her aloof from people. Her spiritual nourishment comes not from her fellow man but from untouched un-spoiled non-human things. This shrinking from everyday life makes her so non-assertive that she complies in Som's taking over her life.

Simrit discovers herself very late, but she does not sulk. The struggle for individual freedom begins the moment, Simrit realizes, and that she is not leading her life in tune with their wishes. She does not emancipate as weeping dolls, but fights bravely and establishes herself. Som is insensitive to Simrit's feelings. When he divorces her, he uses money to convey his displeasure.

It is her courage which frees Simrit from the bonds of marriage as well as the divorce settlement. Out of this struggle for existence, is born a new Simrit, a person who makes choices, takes decisions and becomes aware of herself as an individual. First the mind, then the body opens up to new responses and life affirms itself in a sense of fulfillment in her relationship with Raj. The relationship which she builds with Raj is thus an entirely different one - it is born out of a real need, not a habit and it begins with the mind, not the body.

Sahgal's women seek to establish a new order with changed standards where women can be their true selves, where there is no need for hypocrisy and where character is judged by the purity of heart and not chastity of body. When they fail to build up a relationship based on companionship, communication and equality, they come out of their conventions and walk with confidence over the past to build a new life with a man after their own heart.

Raj's entry into her life changes Simrit's course, turning it towards self-realization. His belief that living is an acquaintance with things in the raw and with human beings at all levels gradually penetrates into her and propels her towards taking action before it is too late. She leaves Som and moves elsewhere with her children, learning to cope with things on her

own. Her divorce, then, is her first step towards self-discovery, for she has managed to break out of the enclosure; her next is learning to cope with things on her own through reaching out to Raj and fulfilling her own sexuality.

Raj loves Simrit, not as he did as a youth only to be a disappointed, but as a mature middle-aged bachelor. He discovers in Simrit the kind of person who would soothe and sustain his restless spirit. His quest for tranquility and fulfillment thus culminates in his discovery of attachment to Simrit, the uprooted mother of several children, but a woman of culture. First the mind, then the body open up to new responses and life affirms itself in a new sense of fulfillment in her relationship with Raj which is on equal terms. Her decision to re-marry is a sign-out of continuing subjugation, into social and sexual emancipation that leads to autonomy and selfhood.

Remarriage is actually Raj's idea. Simrit herself is not interested. She knows she does not need marriage. Therefore Raj feels impelled to make that controversial one-sided announcement about their forthcoming marriage, without consulting her beforehand, so that he can forestall her objection and evasions. Simrit characteristically, makes no commitment, but his promise of enduring comradeship makes her believe that with him beside her, but not necessarily with him as husband she has at last achieved autonomy. Struggling to build a new life for herself as a writer and for her children, Simrit finds that the past continues to impinge on the present. She feels that a part of her would always be married to Som in the memories of shared years and the lives of children.

Simrit is a lady earning an income and can easily stand on her feet. Pixie in this novel also moves towards self-awareness but she is quite different from Sahgal's other women characters. She is a working girl who does not have the security of an affluent background. When she decides to break her relationship with Sumer Singh, she has to weigh it against her need for a job and a roof over her head. But still she decides to break, which shows her courage to seek self realization. Similarly, after a lot of struggle, Simrit also turns out to be a

woman who can make choices, take decisions and make up her mind to start life anew with Raj from whom she can get what she longs for and expects from her husband - love, warmth, affection and understanding.

Simrit is unhappy because she can find no solace in being involved either to Som, her husband, or her growing children. In the back drop of political corruption and social hypocrisy, Simrit stands out alone and separated. Her marriage to a business man against the will of her Brahmin parents has fallen on rocks. Som wants Simrit to act as a traditional wife and to be his ideal of subdued womanhood, which Simrit finds to be a suffocating experience..

It is not Som's possessive attitude, but rather his growing avarice, his craze for affluence and power that Simrit finds appalling. Her disgust reaches a climax when Som and Vetter finalize a new deal to manufacture armaments and this implies in her view, the erosion of Som's humanity. Simrit is shocked by the idea that worldly goods could be exchanged for Som's bomb. Simrit finds her life disrupted and herself in the midst of a peculiar financial problem. The heavy tax payments are an attempt to enslave her in every way, and divorce instead of being a new beginning is a confrontation with the age old orthodox views regarding the status of women. All her attempts to make other see her as a person seeking freedom and fulfilment have failed. The divorce settlement is a continuation of their marriage, it pins her down to the role of victim and attempts to crush her desire to be free in a positive way. The first step she has to take is to face the situation and it takes courage to make a choice, take decisions and become aware of herself as a person. Raj combines in himself the two essential qualities that Simrit has been so desperately striving to find, justice and gentleness.

In her fight against injustice, Simrit is bound to receive help and co-operation from right-thinking and enlightened individuals. The revolutionary forces in society enable her to achieve her liberation from the exploiting male and his society. Since Simrit had given her consent to the document, the only way to fight the injustice perpetrated against her, was to

create public opinion against it. As a freelance journalist, she could make it an issue in the papers and, meanwhile, regard herself as free from any binding obligation to honor the document's terms. Clearly, the change had to be brought about by democratic means. The feminist cause is thus upheld because it meant a fight against social wrong.

The novel makes a dig at the functioning of the courts in the country which directly or indirectly contribute to the suppression of justice to women. The worst thing that has happened to this woman is that without a proper understanding of the 'Consent Terms' in the divorce document, she has been obliged to put her signature on it and the document has been confirmed by the court. Ram Krishnan must come at last to teach her to fight against the injustice. In a cinematographic flashback, he recalls how he had stood for women's liberty in the past when he persuaded his deceased wife Vinita to reject the traditionally laid down pattern of life for a wife. He asked her to stop the twenty-four hours housekeeping and service to her husband demanded by society and transformed her from a housekeeper and a cook into a warm friend and companion.

Simrit's divorce does not imply that marriage has failed as a social institution or that it has outlived its utility. On the other hand, it clearly demonstrates the need for reciprocal relationship in marriage. Sahgal's viewpoint appears to be a desire to place, man-woman relationships whether within or outside marriage need to be liberated from the conventional approaches to it, in order to become a satisfying and fulfilling one. Marriage is neither a system of slavery nor an escape route. It is not even a contract, for it is wrong to approach it in that spirit. It is a partnership based on mutual respect and consideration and requiring involvement from both. The relationship has been subjected to an unusual strain in a number of ways. What concerns Sahgal most is the need for a mature approach to marriage, the need to nurture it with love and care. She wants communication, not perfection, for Som and Simrit have their own limitations, though she is fully aware that Som can be as unhappy as Simrit

when the relationship is not a satisfactory one. She stresses the point that ordinarily it is Simrit who suffers more and is denied the right to self-expression and emancipation.

The underlying message in *The Day in Shadow* is Sahgal's examination of interpersonal relationship. All men in the novel who form a part of the male dominated world have similar attitudes to men-women relationships. Both Som and Sumer Singh's harshness and Raj and Ram Krisnan's paternalistic rich warm concern is part of the same social conditioning. Most marriages fail because there is no interpersonal accommodation between the partners. Simrit and Som are not able to build a satisfying relationship. The final phase of their marriage is marked by their inability to communicate and then by the closing of their communication channels.

Simrit emits new vision and hope in life. Simrit is not against tradition; on the other hand, she sees Indian tradition as a promise for survival. Simrit tries to convince Som that money is no substitute for affection and interest. She is unhappy when Som rewards the children with money and not with love. But to Som and Vetter, it is Simrit who is abnormal. They are unable to fathom the cause for her unhappiness. "Didn't she realize she was the luckiest woman in the world?" Vetter asks her: "Why are you not happy?" (167). Simrit tries to analyze her own feelings and realizes that she wants a world where there is love, understanding and sublime feelings. She is shocked to notice violence and greed all around.

Simrit is not angry with the male gender. She has no quarrel with men or even with the apparent domination of men. She only rejects a certain kind of man, who embodies certain kind of values. Raj is a wonderful person so different from the other shallow and oppressive men in her life. The feminist should have iron soul, like that of men. Having understood the message, Simrit feels freed at last to undertake the struggle, no matter what amount of suffering it may involve. Simrit throws away the shackles of slavery thrust upon her by man, her husband, and while carrying on with her struggle, she has gladly retained the link with her children.

Simrit depends on some help to escape oppression and exploitation. Raj provides it to her. As a friend, he often helps her to come out of the miserable relationship. He gives her moral strength to smash the taboos and assert her identity to live a meaningful life. In India still the number of free women financially independent and willing to take a drastic decision is quite limited and often in novels of early 70's women look towards men for emancipation and help. Raj in *The Day in Shadow* is instrumental in giving new directions to Simrit, showing her the way to live life meaningfully. Apart from being down-to-earth, practical and understanding human beings, he has the extraordinary capacity to counsel patience.

In this male world where men pass orders and women carry them out, where men create situations and women live them, the only hope for a woman is another woman. Their experiences being identical, women alone can understand each other. The realization thus dawns on Sahgal that while divorce provides one kind of freedom, freedom from oppression and exploitation by the husband, it creates new forms of suffering and problems as well. Most of Sahgal's women remarry, not because they are anti-feminists, nor are they willing to return to oppression within marriage.

CHAPTER FOUR

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

A Narrative technique is any of several specific methods the creator of a narrative uses to convey what they want in other words, a strategy used in the making of a narrative to relay information to the audience and particularly to develop the narrative, usually in order to make it more complete, complex, or interesting. Literary techniques are distinguished from literary elements which exist inherently in works of writing.

Nayantara sahgal is most important figure in Indian writing in English. She is the writer who gives the political consciousness into her fiction. Many of her novels are famous for the feminist writing. The aspect of politics becomes the main concern of her writing because she is the part of political family. Nayantara Sahgal is the very famous name in the Indian writing in English for feminist writing. She has the political background which helps her to write accurately in the fiction. The political association with Gandhi and Nehru family makes her the best writer to use postmodern technique in the literature.

The narratives technique of her writing mostly bases on the political writing. The narratives of her are a blend of politics and history which appeals to the national consciousness. The authenticity in her writing brings the clear picture of India in front of reader's eye. The overall narratives go in favour of women's liberation. The role of politics and history in nurturing the human life is clearly available in her all fiction.

It tries to analyze Sahgal's feminist concern which underlies the social and political criticism of the state of affairs in post-independence in India. It also underlines briefly the novelist's constant preoccupation with exposing the state of affairs particularly in Delhi's which happened to be the hub of social and political activities. The novel is set in Delhi and is close to the seat of power and justice. This section gives a brief outline of the novel *The Day in Shadow* and short introduction of Nayantara Sahgal and her literary creations.

The Day in Shadow is a starkly understated revelation of what it is like to be a divorced woman in a nation in which women for use has been the rule too long. It is a love story but it is also a social history by a talented writer who shows where of she writes Mrs. Sahgal makes the inheritors of Gandhi and Nehru comes alive. Subtly, without sentimentalizing and with a special gift for telling sentences that must be read a second time, she traces two parallel course that come together at last, giving her protagonist the comrade she needs, giving him a partner in hope and faith. No magical victory is promised, for them or for their country. But, they no longer walk alone.

The novel is a fine example of the female literary tradition in Indian English literature. The Western wave of stream of consciousness technique affected the writings of the novelist and she also plunged deep into the inner world of her characters. The novel is basically concerned with the emotional effects of divorce on a woman-Simrit. It has the theme of survival of a sensitive individual in a ruthlessly materialistic society.

The crisis is already over when the story opens. Simrit and Som are divorced and she is trying to adjust to the aftermath of a divorce, Som lives in a male-centered world and doesn't view women as persons and find it easy enough to condone Lalli's murder of his wife. Moreover, he shows no affection for his daughters and loves only his son, Brij. Similarly, Simrit is also a blend of both the traditional and modern elements. She wants individuality and freedom, feels suffocated and unhappy in the husband-centered world and takes divorce from Som. Thus, she rebels against the conventional society of marriage as she yearns for a free communication of ideas with her husband beyond the grandular sensation of sex. In this sense, she is an awakened woman of the modern age who shows the courage of living alone in this world. But she does not get peace of mind after the divorce and it is tradition in her that makes her feel that by taking divorce, she has offended something old and ordained. Thus, she may become a modern Indian woman but she can never go away from the old traditions and customs of her own country.

Simrit suffered from marital incompatibility. She respects certain values of life more than material prosperity. Som never discusses business with her. Their intimacy never extends to areas of mind. She feels suffocated in the world of Som. It is the class of ideals that leads to their separation. She feels that talk is the missing link between her and Som, between her and his world. She has a famishing need for talk.

Simrit longs for self-expression and freedom to live as an individual within the bonds of marriage. She reflects her creator's love for individual freedom and her conviction that the bond of marriage is to be cemented with mutual trust, respect and consideration. She expects the physical intimacy between them to spread and envelop every act and gesture of their life with tenderness and love. What forces Simrit to rebel against the conventional security of marriage is her yearning for a free communication of ideas with her husband.

Simrit, despite her passive acceptance of Som's domination, retains an individuality of her own. She wanted to be a good wife but not at the cost of her non individuality. She is placed in a frightening situation-herself a cog in a machine with which it had become impossible to live. Lack of understanding and sympathy ultimately ends in a final catastrophe divorce. She gradually copes up with the emotional shock of the divorce. It was a brutal divorce settlement inflicted on her. The settlement of business shares worth six lakhs of rupees on her son Brij when he attains the age of twenty five and the legal transfer of those shares to her custody for the payment of taxes even though she gets no income from them threaten to undermine her economic independence so thoroughly that she feels very frustrated and depressed.

Struggling to build a new life for herself and her children, she encounters a brilliant rising member of the parliament. Her friendship with Raj provides her the anchor and helps her to come out of the shock and stupor and establish a life of her own. The kind of resistance she develops to face her predicament was a first move towards freedom.

It is her courage which frees Simrit from the bonds of marriage as well as the divorce settlement. Out of this struggle for existence, is born a new Simrit a person who makes choices, takes decisions and becomes aware of herself as an individual. First the mind then the body open up to new responses and life affirms itself in a sense of fulfillment in her relationship with Raj. The relationship which she builds with Raj is thus an entirely different one-it is born out of a real need, not a habit and it begins with the mind not the body. Simrit considers the new possibility that life has held before her. The personal world of Simrit and Raj, wedded with sympathy and understanding, seems to be a world which Nayantara Sahgal loves to depict as the only alternative to the mechanic world of power, politics and money.

Simrit's divorce does not imply that marriage has failed as a social institution; on the other hand, it clearly demonstrates the need for reciprocal relationships in marriage. For Simrit, freedom as in individual comes only when she is able to shed the feelings of guilt which her broken marriage has left her with. She learns to live life for what it is. One can sense when one reads the novel that Mrs. Sahgal believes in freedom at all levels and the doctrine of peaceful existence. Her concept of freedom is not morally political. It includes the full expression of one's personality and discovering of one's true identity. Her protagonists show faith in an individual capacity to communicate and reach others through debate and discussion. She has a profound conviction that all progress, whether social, political or economic is possible only in an atmosphere of freedom and where people can communicate on all fronts. Mrs. Sahgal projects immense possibilities of life for both personal as well as political crises. *The Day in Shadow* affirms faith in life and its immense potentialities through the character of Simrit. Speaking for her, the author states, "From the high spot an immense valley of choice spread but before her saze and she felt free at last to choose what her life would be. She was filled with sheer rustiness of being alive and healthy at this particular time" (236).

Many of the critics find that Sahgal is a political novelist with rare prophetic foresight and sensitivity. The political consciousness which dominates her literary creations is real and inseparable from her and surroundings. Her novels depict the contemporary Indian political scene of the past forty years, starting from India's independence in 1947. Moreover, she has continued the theme of tradition and modernity in a subtle manner.

Commenting on *The Day in Shadow*, Anita Mahajan says that the Indians have got freedom but it is only on the surface level. In their attitude to love, morality, sex, marriage, education and religion, they are still the slaves of the West. They think that they can become modern just by imitating the Western style of life. They love organizing parties, drinking wine and flirting with women other than their wives. They enjoy late night dinners and ballroom dances. In the same way, they also go for holidaying like the foreigners. In such a modern society, vulgarly is considered to be a sign of modernity. Deeply setting through the novel, she says,

The Day in Shadow shows the superficial modernity of the Indian people who blindly imitate Western style in their fashions and manners, little knowing that these things are taking them away from the traditions and customs of their own country. Trimmed hair, slim body and naked stomach are considered to be signs of modernity. Similarly, in order to be modern, these people arrange parties and spend money lavishly. They think that a man living in Delhi has got to attend parties to know more and more people. Raj wants Simrit to go out of the house so often and meet more and more people though Simrit feels out of place in such parties. (10)

A famous Indian critic, S.K. Tikoo, says that Sahgal's *The Day in Shadow* deals with the feminist theme. It shows how tradition has left women behind loss of personal freedom, whether it be due to the state or a person, it's unacceptable to both Sahgal and her characters. This is why we find her heroines defying and even breaking away from the bonds of marriage

to find a life of fulfillment elsewhere. The struggle of a woman trying to establish her identity apart from her husband and family is unacceptable to Hindu society. The inability of the law courts to translate legal theory into action is vividly brought about Sahgal in the novel. Tikoo writes,

The novel stresses the state of subjection of women to injustice of various kinds and the need for intensification of the woman's struggle for liberation. As Raj confesses that the woman angle makes about as much den't as an insect on a laser beam. He is himself determined to take up cudgels against the unjust treatment of Simrit Raman. It is not surprising then that the man who fights against the injustice meted out to her ultimately fascinates her and becomes the object of her love whom he intends to marry despite the fact that she is a mother of three children. (248)

The novel *The Day in Shadow* has an autobiographical undertone where author is an observer and omniscient throughout the novel. Postcolonial writings root their experiences to the colonial suppression, Gandhian ideology and free India struggling with its class, cast and religion disparities. Nayantara Sahgal represents her quest of self through the protagonist of the novel. The story begins with a point of conflict and flux with in Simrit, who is dealing with a brutal divorce settlement and an emotional turmoil simultaneously. The novel is a revelation of tumultuous odyssey of a divorced woman, a very much different scenario from the western culture and dogmas. The novel provides the audience with an illuminating inner journey of the protagonist.

The Day in Shadow, her fourth novel, marks a definite linear development in Nayantara's art from the form. Technique and language points of view the narrative device and the chain of events are contrived in such a way that they leave no room for the dramatic situation to reach the climatic point. Even Raj and Som are not brought face to face to project

the tension or conflict in dramatic terms. Raj enters Simrit's world only when Som has already made an exit.

The use of flashback technique, however, is appropriate. The stream of consciousness technique coupled with the functional use of "reverie" helps the author a great deal in emphasizing the events that appear interise and significant to her. She is a good story-teller. Readability is one of the qualities in *Nayantara Sahgal*. She gives an evidence of extremely well not only of the complex psychic tensions of an alienated husband and wife, but with the use of suggestive and original image she can also recreate imaginatively the world of senses. For example, Simrit, after divorce and before encountering Raj, identifies as a part of a frieze and a common bit of wood. Power used excessively "resembles roosting meat... enticing the appetite for miles around". Further there are vivid descriptions of the drowsy peace of a Delhi winter afternoon, the lovingly comfortable feel of a cup of hot tea nursed in one's hands when one has unexpectedly attained peace of mind, the crisp red and white succulence of a water melon; the host inclines his smooth brilliant head, etc. She has finely described the social and political life of New Delhi that forms the fiction milieu of *The Day in Shadow*.

Nayantara, however, succeeds in assigning to each one of her characters sufficient eloquence and clarity to conduct a highly edifying dialogue. The novelist seems to have taken adequate care to trim speech to character. Som, the villain of the piece, for instance, speaks a diction evocatively which suggests the brutal nature he is meant to personify. The total feel of Som's personality seems to be that of an assertive, old-style Englishman, a hard drinking, searing, bullying, ruthless, self-centred domineering business tycoon, a proper Heathcliff, so to say. Further, his dealings with his son, Brij, help us in establishing his identity and character. The novel demonstrates a firm grip over language and the novelist's knack for narrating episodes convincingly.

Sahgal brings into sharp focus the diversity of these human characters and enacts the variety of their motives and mottos in the drama of life in New Delhi, the microcosm and

nerve-centre of modern India. The crisis that Simrit refers to, is to begin with, a deeply personal, emotional and moral crisis involving herself. Raj and her children on the one hand and Som on the other. But it gradually becomes enlarged and identified as a national crisis with the future of the country itself at stake Sahgal weaves the web of circumstance in her novel out of the warp and woof of what appears to be an ordinary insignificant and even prosaic personal detail: the divorce of a seemingly proud, sensitive, smug and impractical woman. The successful integration of this personal crisis with the critical moment in India's foreign relations that might qualitatively alter the international relations in Asia is what distinguishes this novel as technically refined pieces of fiction. The astonishing ambivalence that Sahgal achieves in dramatizing the personal and political crisis and their inter relatedness lends an unprecedented metaphoric significance to it.

Against the glittering socio political backdrop in New Delhi, the Indian cultural parades inherent in its predominantly Hindu character is presented as another crucial aspect of the background. Sahgal builds up an atmosphere of cultural shallowness and hypocrisy into an almost visible form when Sumer Singh, enters the scene with absolutely prepossessing and ingratiating smiles and nods Ram Kishen the spiritual mentor of Raj and a good old friend of his father, is instrumental in bringing about the union of Simrit and Raj the separated Hindu Brahmin woman and the outlook on life in India is neither anti-Indian nor blindly pro-Indian hat pro-bono publico Firmly rooted in the Indian tradition, Ram Kishen has lived a life full of action, both physical and mental steeped in the Gandhian philosophy and programmes, he believes in and practices in the Gandhian philosophy and programmes, he believes in and practices non violence as a living value and practical virtue, worth leaving as a legacy to the posterity, it is the virtue of non-violence that is manifest in the practice of peaceful co-existence which alone ensures a natural continuity and permanence of our institutions. He feels the urgency of the present and accepts it

The expanded awareness of Simrit is the direct) consequence of freedom that Ram Kishen urges her to live for, pending the settlement of the problem of the consent of Terms of her divorce. Ram Kishen, a figure of Patu families in the novel, symbolizes the future possibilities of free India when he blesses the union of Raj and Simrit, the liberal Christian and the liberated Hindu woman respectively. The "expanded awareness of Simrit is the direct consequence of freedom that Ram Kishen urges her to live for, pending the settlement of the problem of the consent of Terms of her divorce. Ram Kishen, a figure of Patu families in the novel, symbolizes the future possibilities of free India when he blesses the union of Raj and Simrit, the liberal Christian and the liberated Hindu woman respectively.

The fictional fabric of Nayantara Sahgal is not a romanticized view of modern India's undeniably tumultuous political existence. Its artistic ambiguity has to be perceived in terms of the political ironies that prevail in New Delhi - a haven for political its 34/69 unscrupulous and profligate politician and ell seeking supporters jostling with the just and the gentle. The apparent, ambiguity in the policy of non-alignment and peaceful co existence as practised after the death of their author Jawahar Lal Nehru, Indias first Prime Minister becomes clear on the day of voting in favour of a particular super power rather than neutral country for exploring the sensitive areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sahgal's artistic alignment of points and counterpoints, forces and counterforce's while dramatizing the growth and maturation of the individual consciousness in the context of the national consciousness is sensitive and subtle. Her sense of history is evident in the perception of Raj whatever rigid choices have to be made elsewhere, ours is the ancient and seasoned solid of co-existence it has held its contradictions tenderly and peacefully.

Sahgal's artistic alignment counterpoints, forces and points and counterforce's while dramatizing the growth and maturation of the individual consciousness in the context of the national consciousness is sensitive and subtle. Her sense of history is evident in the perception

of Raj: whatever rigid choices have to be made elsewhere, ours is the ancient and seasoned solid of co-existence. It has held as contradictions tenderly and peacefully.

The novel stresses the state of subjection of women to injustice of various kinds and the need or intensification of the women's struggle for liberation. As Raj confesses. "The woman angle makes about as much dent as an insect on a laser beam" pg.146 .The novel takes a significant turn as it evidences a larger canvas than is apparent from its socio-political feminist aspect. It stresses the larger, humanitarian aspect and reminiscences the havoc caused by the partition. The feminist cause is upheld because it meant a light against a social wrong. The need for such a fight was justified not merely by Christianity people lauded about but even by Hinduism and it states,

That is the point to dig out of the Hindu approach, moved out of the universal into the present. The ingredients of the approach are already there, rather buried down under at the moment, like the best of diamonds. We have to dig them up, highlight them, make it known that this too is Hinduism It is this that will provide the Slamina, the sticking point, the boiling point we need to reject what we don't believe in, and give us the will to act. We had it under Gandhi. He took ahimsa non violence - Hindusim's oldest idea and sent a whole nation into battle with nothing but that (234).

The feminist had to know, like men, iron in the sour. Having understood the message Simrit feels freed at last to undertake the struggle no matter what amount of suffering it may involve. By the manner in which she throws away the shackles of slavery to man, her husband the novel seems to be an interesting and instructive illustration of an experiment in Indo-English writer's feminist fiction

In the novels Nayantara Sagh history and politics are inextricably interwoven. Geographically the scenes action in her novels is located in such towns and cities as Bombay,

New Delhi, Calcutta, sharanpur and Himapur. This may point to the fairly obvious fact that sahgal's knowledge and familiarity with the south Indian Culture is perhaps not yet so adequate as to induce her to locate the action of her novels in madras or Hyderabad or Bangalore or Trivandrum. This however, is not to be considered as a lacuna in her fiction.

Sahgal's novel keeps the reader absorbed and what is generally considered to be a drawback in the larger context, is the strength of her novels. The depiction of the society in which she is and activates herself is important in terms of contemporary life in India. The political and social issues, the qualities and strength of Hind culture, the necessity for a new, dynamic, pragmatic political philosophy and goals, above all the “startling modernity” of a situation where the Indian women on whom are inflicted “the Consent Term” as a result of her divorce with children depending on her and his huge tax problem all these topics seems to be summering in the novelists crucible of imagination. They cannot easily be banished but neither are they fused with the main current of the novel. They saw to be intruding into the fabric of the story with a disintegrating force that adversely affects the total unity.

Nayantara sahgal gives an evidence of writing extremely well not only of the complex psychic tensions of an alienated husband and wife, but with the use of the suggestive and original image she can also recreate imaginatively the world of senses.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Indian literature is arguably one of the oldest and richest literatures in the world. Indian English Literature has attained an independent status in the realm of world Literature. Wide ranges of themes are dealt with in Indian Writing in English. While this literature continues to reflect Indian culture, tradition, social values and even Indian history through the depiction of life in India and Indians living elsewhere, recent Indian English fiction has been trying to give expression to the Indian experience of the modern predicaments.

Nayantara Sahgal a prominent and one of the great Indian English women novelists. She began writing when she was very young and became a professional writer in the post-independence year. Her novels depict on the premise of multicolored female characters, marital tension and domestic traumas undertakes the quest for female identity. A brilliant, unsparing novel about divorce and its implications in Indian society. This is the story of Simrit, lost and bewildered as she struggles to cope with the emotional shock of a divorce plus a brutal divorce settlement inflicted on her. Ostracized, victimized and shackled by memories of the past, her only bridge to a new life is Raj, a brilliant, rising Member of Parliament. *The Day in Shadow* can be read at several levels. It is about Simrit, who emerges from the shadows to find happiness with Raj. It is the story of Raj, who passionately believes in freedom and refuses to accept fate as the answer to human problems.

The Day in Shadow is Nayantara Sahgal's fourth novel and one that can be considered almost autobiographical in nature. It is an honest depiction of the trials and tribulations of a divorced woman borne out of the author's bitter personal experiences. The novel also revolves around a male Protagonist Raj who believes ardently in the concept of freedom and refuses to take things passively. The other protagonist is the vibrant young capital of a newly born independent nation, Delhi which acquires a character of its own to change the destinies

of people. The Sunday Times in its review mentions about the author, “She is a moral writer- though not a moralist. She sees art as all great artists of the past have seen it, as an instrument for discerning and affirming the difference between the right and wrong, Very refreshing.” The analyses attempts to review the novel at various levels to decipher the autobiographical elements, decode the social history of Post-Independent India with a colonial past.

Sahgal’s novel deals with men and women, especially women struggling against oppression and injustice heaped upon them in the name of tradition and culture. Nayantara portrays the inalienable right of freedom for women in many of the character in her novels, such as Simrit in Sahgal’s fourth novel *The Day in Shadow*. Sahgal’s entire fictional corpus revolves around the twin themes one was political and the next was lack of communication between husband and wife within modern Indian women search for individual freedom and self-realization and self-identity relatively permanent self-assessments such as personality attributes, knowledge of one’s skills and abilities occupation and hobbies. All these qualities can see in Nayantara Sahgal’s *The Day in Shadow*. It presents the theme on freedom for women to become aware of themselves as individuals along with tradition and modernity. The protagonist emerges from the shadows to find happiness. It explores the women, how she came out from the patriarchal society. This novel intent to study the protagonist refuses to reconcile with Simrit the patriarchal and male governed society and tries to establish her own individual identity.

Simrit is a fictional replica of Sahgal. Sahgal's marriage to Gautham Sahgal can be compared to Simrit's marriage to Som. Like Gautham, Som were also badly affected by the partition of India and Pakistan. Both of them had to abandon their ancestral homes in Lahore and migrate to India. They lost faith in the principles of non-violence and Satyagraha because it did not practically do any good to them. The loss they suffer as an aftermath of partition makes them very practical in their approach to life.

Sahgal's beliefs in freedom and humanism were largely the results of the indelible impress of Nehru on her. She writes in one of her auto-biographical work, "My country was for me in extricable bound up with my uncle's ideal of it. His was the India with which I wanted to associate myself and in which I wanted to live". (179)

Raj appears to be superior to Simrit in intellect and therefore domineering in nature. But Simrit with independent spirit will never bow down before male authority. Perhaps Nayantara Sahgal wants to bring home the essential truth that no man woman relationship can exist on the principle of perfect equality. It is for a woman to have freedom and independence to lead an honorable and dignified life. There cannot be any doubt of Simrit possessing this in abundance. Nayantara Sahgal proves her credentials as an impressive feminist writer by portraying Simrit as one who gives up her intolerably compliant role to defend her independence and self-respect and readjusts herself in her new role with dignity and responsibility.

The novel *The Day in Shadow* gives the opportunity for the readers to get rid of the shadow of life and move to the light of life in the psychological way. Sahgal reveals the psychological, financial and other existential problems which a woman has to face as part of her punishment for leaving her husband. After divorce the woman often experiences a sense of inability to control her life while a man feels free from all social, moral and financial responsibilities. Through Simrit, Sahgal expounds various aspects of divorce and its implications for a lonely woman.

Sahgal confesses that in the novel *The Day in Shadow* she has tried to figure out something that has happened to her, the shattering experience of divorce. She wanted to show how even in a free country like India, where women are almost equal citizens (since it is a patriarchal tradition that still controls Indian society), a helpless woman is exploited without creating a ripple. Struggling to build a new life for herself and her children, she encounters a brilliant rising member of parliament. Her friendship with Raj provides her the anchor and

helps her to come out of the shock and establish a life of her own. Her struggle towards emancipation leads to the kind of resistance she is developing, in order to face her predicament. It was her first move towards freedom.

Sahgal projects immense possibilities of life for both personal as well as political crises. The novel is a fine example of the female literary tradition in Indian English literature. Simrit is aware of their sad predicament only when Raj enters her Lives. She openly confesses that for a healthy marriage, if a woman's devotion, submission and co-operation were needed, she would happily give these. When the emotional needs of a woman are met naturally, she is willing to offer herself for the familial needs. This message is very much autobiographical, because, the emotional perception of the author is reiterated by the characters in various situations.

In trying to create a character of her own image, Sahgal deliberately adds a neurotic streak to Simrit. In picturing the problem, she gives autobiographical touches, and some are deliberately imposed. But the author succeeds only partially in conveying this paradox. At her best she is very good, for sheer sensitivity, some passages in her novel stand out as among the best that Indo-English writing has ever produced. But she is unable to sustain her theme, and towards the end, the novel becomes something of a bore with too long philosophical discussion. The novel demonstrates through his view of things, the application of the feminist principles emerging in the west to the situation of Hindu women in particular.

Som is running a race to gain more than what he had lost. The same priorities to wealth break the author's marriage also, Gautham Sahgal provided her with all material comforts. He even built a house for her in Chandigarh but it remained a house and never become a home, as Sahgal moved to Mangat Rai's flat, Sahgal brings a vital difference into the novel as heroine breaks the marital bondage and starts a new life with a approval of the socially sanctioned institution of marriage. But Sahgal, in spite of her desire to legalize her relationship with

Mangat Rai, was not permitted to do so, but Sahgal vests Simrit with the liberty of deciding her destiny.

Raj comes to the rescue of Simrit, and in real life Mangat Rai comes to the aid of the author. The distress that the woman feels after divorce and alienation in Indians society springs directly from the existential predicament of the author. Nayantara Sahgal candidly analyses her marriage:

For the first time I came across the shocking assumption of inequality. A man's ego and ambition, I learned, must be served first. In case of conflict, the man's will and desire must prevail....I was uneasy and restless adjusting to the demands of a personality and an environment whose goal and texture were different from anything had known or been comfortable with. (15)

Simrit in *The Day in Shadow* is shaped from Sahgal's personal experience. Simrit's agony echoes the novelist's personal life. This was written soon after her divorce in 1967. Being a freelance journalist and writer the intellectual group lifts her spirit. Mrs. Sahgal felt overburdened with the enormity of her tax thrust upon her by the divorce settlement. Eventually, she overcame her problem of tax only through her own independent efforts. In her interview to Jasbin Jain she says: "My husband defrauded me also. Not only defrauded me but hung me with taxes. I had a huge struggle after my divorce to make money and I made it. I feel pleased that I managed to do it by my own efforts" (52).

Sahgal having experienced in her own life the bitterness of the exploitation of woman and denial of justice to her by man and society presents through the protagonist Simrit the existing problem of women in the male dominated society in a manner. Mrs. Sahgal, after having been abandoned by her husband, found a true companion in a Christian government official E.N. Mangat Rai. C.S. and got married to him. The Western wave of stream-of-consciousness technique affected the writings of the novelist and she also plunged deep into

the inner world of her characters. It has the theme of survival of a sensitive individual in a ruthlessly materialistic society.

Sahgal's novels present a symbolic cross-section of the Indian nationality. Raj, the Indian Christian intellectual and an influential member of parliament; Simrit, the free-lance journalist and Som's divorced wife; Ram Krishnan, the veteran journalist and a doyen among the editors of free India; Sumer Singh, a committed Minister of State in the Union Cabinet, responsible for the Ministry of Petroleum; Som, the newly rich business baron and Simrit's divorced husband; Shah, the flexible industrialist. Lalli and Vetter the business partners of Sam for sometime; Brij, the sixteen year old son of Som are the notable characters. Sahgal brings into sharp focus the diversity of these human characters and enacts the variety of their motives in the drama of life in New Delhi.

In almost every novel Sahgal has a central woman character that gradually moves towards on awareness of her emotional needs. She is concerned with a wide range of issues but in essence they all reveal her concerns for growth and development of the individual whether the individual be a man or a woman. She firmly believes that no human problems will be solved unless human beings regard one another as equals. This is also applicable to the relationship between man and woman. Women are also individuals and marriage is a partnership and not an institution. Categorically she feels that the day women are accepted and treated as equal partners in human relationship, a new age could begin.

The Day in Shadow of Nayantara Sahgal is unified, first by their background of recent Indian politics, then her division of the world into the aggressors and the non-aggressors and finally growing out of both of the need for women to become equal partners in the struggle to protect those values which allow human being to live together in mutual respect.

The narratives technique, of her writing mostly bases on the political writing. The narratives of her are a blend of politics and history which appeals to the national

consciousness. The authenticity in her writing brings the clear picture of India in front of reader's eye. The overall narrative goes in favour of women's liberation. The role of politics and history in nurturing the human life is clearly available in her all fiction.

It tries to analyze Sahgal's feminist concern which underlies the social and political criticism of the state of affairs in post-independence in India. It also underlines briefly the novelist's constant preoccupation with exposing the state of affairs particularly in Delhi's which happened to be the hub of social and political activities. The novel is set in Delhi and is close to the seat of power and justice. This section gives a brief outline of the novel *The Day in Shadow* and short introduction of Nayantara Sahgal and her literary creations.

Nayantara Sahgal successfully presents in her novel the dilemma of a modern woman. The protagonist of the novel rejects the existing traditions and social set-up. She becomes more conscious of her emotional needs and strives for self-fulfilment. She attempts to live a more liberal and unconventional way of life. However, she is trapped and oppressed because of her dependence on her husband. Sahgal has truly shown the hardships and sufferings involved in fighting against an established order. She tries to attain her individuality within the framework of society. Sahgal believes that women should try to understand and realize herself as a human being and not just as an appendage to some male life. Simrit in *The Day in Shadow* really emerges as a new woman who does not want to compromise with her uniqueness and identity.

WORK CITED

Bai, Meera. *Women's voices: The Novels of Indian Women Writers*. New Delhi, South Asia Books, 1996.

Jain, Jasbir. *The politics of Hinduism in the novels of Nayantara Sahgal*. Littcrit, Vol.2,no.1.1976, pp.45-47

---. "The Asthetics of Morality: Sexual Relations in the Novels of Nayantara Sahgal".

The Journal of Indian Writing in English, Vol 6, no.1, 1978.

Rao, Krishna. A.V, *Nayantara Sahgal: "A Study of Her fiction and nonfiction"*. Nathan, 1976.

Mahajan, Anita. *The Theme of Tradition and Modernity in The Day in Shadow*. New Delhi, Prestige Book, 1993, pp.9-19.

Sahgal Nayantara. *The Day in Shadow*. Delhi. Vikas. 1973.

---. *The Day in Shadow*. Delhi: Penguin,1991.

---. *This Time of Fulfilment: "Femina"*. 1976, pp. 7-20.

---. *Voice for Freedom*. Delhi: Hind pocket Books, 1977.

---. *Prison and Chocolate cake*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1963.

Voice of the Voiceless: Racism and Societal Injustice in Angie Thomas'

The Hate U Give

A project 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

Submitted by

S. RISHWANA THASLIN

(REG. NO. 20APEN22)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

May 2022

CONTENTS

DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Racial Discrimination	15
Three	Double Consciousness	29
Four	Techniques & Symbolism	42
Five	Summation	50
	Works Cited	55

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **Voice of the Voiceless: Racism and Societal Injustice in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*** 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, is a work done by S. Rishwana Thaslin during the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi


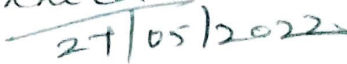
Head of the English Department

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI


Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Guide


Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


Examiner 
Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Assistant Prof. of English
Saraswathi College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 627 007

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Voice of the Voiceless: Racism and Societal Injustice in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*** 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.

Thoothukudi

May 2022

S. Rishwana Thaslin

S. RISHWANA THASLIN

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the **Lord Almighty** for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, wisdom and strength in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study.

I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English and Guide for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance, encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank **Dr. Vinitha the Librarian**, extended help in the use of the library for the reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

The project entitled **Voice of the Voiceless: Racism and Societal Injustice in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*** comprises of five chapters.

The first chapter **Introduction** discusses the origin of African American Literature in general. It also deals with the literary fame of Angie Thomas, her life, works, and achievements.

The second chapter **Racial Discrimination** depicts the sufferings of Black people in the White world.

The third chapter **Double Consciousness** explores how the Black people struggle to find their identity. It also depicts how dual identity plays a major role in their life.

The fourth chapter **Techniques and Symbolism** shows how techniques plays a major role in this novel.

The fifth chapter Summation sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is a reward of human experience and it is people's impression of life. Literature must be an analysis of experience and a synthesis of the findings into a unity. It can be presented into any number of forms, ranging from novel to poem, short story, dramatic play. It gives an opportunity for us to enrich our life. Literature is a term used to describe written or spoken material. Broadly speaking, 'literature' is used to describe anything from creative writing to more technical or scientific works. But the term is most commonly used to refer to works of creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction and nonfiction.

Literature refers to any single writing of intellectual values. Literature says something about issues, experiences or ideas that are of intense. It transforms the man who reads it towards the condition of man who wrote it, and brings to birth in us also the creative impulsive. It is an art with different aspects in different parts of the world. Literature introduces the reader to new worlds of experience. Literature teaches us about life and it helps us to comprehend our emotions and our values. The eleventh edition of *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* considers literature to be "the body of written works produced in a particular language, country, or age" (183).

African American literature is the body of literature produced in the United States by writers of African descent. African American literature can be defined as writings by people of African descent living in the United States. It begins with the work of the late 18th century writer, Phillis Wheatley. It has become an inevitable part of American literature and culture. It explores the issues of freedom and equality long

denied to Blacks in the United States, along with themes such as African American culture, racism, slavery, sense of home, segregation, religion and feminism.

African American literature has generally focused on the role of African Americans within the larger American society and what it means to be an American. In the book *Teaching African American Literature: Theory and Practice*, Graham Maryemma states: “All African- American study speaks to the deeper meaning of African- American presence in this nation. This presence has always been a test case of the nation’s claims to freedom, democracy, equality, the inclusiveness of all” (32).

African Americans are also referred as Black Americans who are an ethnic group of Americans with total or partial ancestry from any of the Black racial groups of Africa. Most African Americans are of West and central African descent and are descendants of enslaved Africans within the boundaries of the present United States. The history of African Americans starts in 16th century.

The early Europeans brought Africans with them to America and it was not long before the institution of slavery was established in United States. In past there have been events and issues such as slavery, racism, reconstruction development of the African American community participation and the Civil Rights Movement. The Civil Rights Movement from 1954 to 1968 was directed at abolishing racial discrimination against African Americans particularly in the Southern United States. The Black Power Movement and Civil Rights Movement expanded the aims to include economic and political self sufficiency and freedom from the white authority. Black activists became playwrights fuelling the Civil Rights Movement with the representations of black life on the stage. This paved the way for African American literature

African American literature is a composite of many different life stories and experiences that African Americans have had to endure throughout a life time. African

American literature has examined the problem of racial discrimination in all its philosophical, existential and epistemological aspects. It has travelled from mid eighteenth century with slave narratives to current times with all its socio-literary exuberance initiating a literary and cultural transformation in the fabric of American society.

The strong presence of African American literature has paved the way for the emergence of Native American, Asian American, and Chicano American streams of literatures. The African American writers sought to demonstrate the proposition 'all men are created equal' in the declaration of Independence which required the black Americans be extended the same human rights as those claimed by White Americans. In advance over the high point of slave narratives, African American literature was dominated by autobiographical spiritual narratives.

The genre known as 'slave narratives' in the nineteenth century were accounts by people who had generally escaped from slavery, about their journeys to freedom and the ways they claimed their lives. A sub genre of African American literature which began in the middle of the nineteenth century is the slave narratives. African American literature is dominated by autobiographical narratives and reached its peak by slave narratives. Slave narrative is a genre of literature that was written mostly between the mid- 1700s and late 1800s by African slaves in America.

The first slave narrative was written by Olaudah Equiano in 1789 titled *Interesting Narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa*. Slave Narrative is an account of the life or a major portion of the life of fugitive or former slaves. It comprise one of the most influential traditions in American literature, shaping the forms and themes of some of the most celebrated and controversial writing, both in

fiction and autobiography, in the history of United States. The vast majority of American slave narratives were authored by African Americans.

The African American female literature is an educational tool used in America by women of African descent. The African American female literature also became a platform for many African American women to speak out their own opinions that involves society and being a woman in society. Social issues discussed in their books include racism, classism and social equality which marked its trace for the Harlem Renaissance. The Harlem Renaissance marked a turning point for African American literature.

The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920 to 1940 brought new attention to African American literature. It was a great period of flowering in African American literature and the arts were influenced by the writers who came from North in the Great Migration and those who were immigrants from Jamaica and other Caribbean Islands. In twentieth century nonfiction works by authors such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Booker T. Washington debated how to confront racism in the United States. Today African American literature has become accepted as an integral part of American literature. Many critics say that African American literature is part of a Balkanization of American literature.

The first African American novel published in the United States was Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859). It expressed the difficulties of lives of northern free blacks. The emergence of African American Women writings brought in double jeopardy of racism in Black Women's movement. Gloria Hull examined the dilemma of Black women in *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*. This novel gives a framework to understand the impact of races, sex and class status on

the African American woman. This has made many black women to turn towards each other for better introspective and analytical understanding of Black Women's problems.

The famous African American women writers are Octavia Butler, James Baldwin, Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston, Maya Angelou, and Angie Thomas. They are poets, playwrights, novelists and scholars, and together they helped capture the voice of a nation. They have fearlessly explored racism, abuse, violence as well as love, beauty and music. While their names and styles have changed over the years, they have been the voices of their generations and helped inspire the generations that followed them.

Octavia Butler is an African American author, who is chiefly noted for her science fiction novels about future societies and superhuman powers. She began her writing career in 1970. Her first published novel, *Patternmaster* (1976) resulted in a volume of novels called *Patternist series*. Her famous novel *Kindred* (1979) is about a contemporary black woman is sent back in time to a pre-Civil War plantation, becomes a slave, and rescues her white, slave owning ancestor. Some of her other acclaimed books include *Parable of the Sower* (1993), *Parable of the Talents* (1998), *Lilith's Brood* and *Bloodchild and Other Stories* (1984). Octavia Butler is popularly called the 'Grand Dame of Science Fiction.' She is also the first science fiction writer to receive the MacArthur Fellowship award.

James Baldwin is considered as a key figure among the great thinkers of the 20th century. He spent most of his life living abroad to escape the racial prejudice in the United States. He is the quintessential American writer, best known for his reactions on his experience as an openly gay black man in white America. His novels, essays, and poetry make him a social critic who shared the pain and struggle of Black Americans.

Baldwin caught attention of fellow writer Richard Wright who helped him secure a grant in order to support himself as a writer.

Baldwin published numerous poems, short stories and plays in magazines. His works are *Notes of a Native Son*, *Giovanni's Room*, *The Fire Next Time*, *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings*. Baldwin paints a vivid recollection of his time growing up with a paranoid father who was dying of tuberculosis and his initial experience with Jim Crow style segregation. *Giovanni's Room* tells the story of David, an American living in Paris who falls in love with an Italian bartender named Giovanni. In an attempt to deny the true nature of his sexuality, the protagonist proposes an American girl and leaves Giovanni, who jilted, commits a murder and is executed. James Baldwin provided inspiration for later generations of artists to speak out about the gay experience in Black America like Staceyann Chin and Nick Burd.

The most notable writer in African American literature is Toni Morrison. Her first novel *The Bluest Eye*, was published in 1970. The critically acclaimed *Song of Solomon* (1977) brought her national attention and won the National Book Critics Circle Award. Her novels have earned her countless prestigious awards including the Pulitzer prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Morrison's works continued to influence the writers and artists, through her focus on the African American life and her commentary on race relations. In 1987, Morrison released her novel called *Beloved*, based on the true story of an African American enslaved woman. This novel was a Best seller for 25 weeks and won countless awards including the Pulitzer prize for fiction. In 1993, she became the first black woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. In 2000, she was named as the Living Legend by the Library of Congress.

Zora Neale Hurston is a Black American anthropologist, folklorist and author. She became the leading light of the Harlem Renaissance. Hurston's novels, short stories, and plays often depicted African American life in the South. Her work in anthropology examined black folklore. She is noted as the first Black American to collect and publish African American and Afro Caribbean folklore. Her works include *Mules and Men* (1935), *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), *Tell My Horse* (1938), *Moses, Man of the Mountain* (1939).

Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is considered as her best work in her literary career. In this novel, Hurston weaves race and racism into the society and culture in which the protagonist Janie lives, and she chooses to focus more on Janie's life experiences as a human being than as a black woman. She could write about the most ordinary things and make them infinitely gorgeous. Her characters appeared real and human. Her works have increased in popularity with the passing time. Hurston influenced many writers, forever cementing her place in history as one of the foremost female writers of the 20th century. Throughout her life, Hurston dedicated herself to promoting and studying black culture.

Maya Angelou is an African American autobiographer and a versatile writer. She is acclaimed as an American poet, author and activist. She is best known as a writer for her numerous books of poetry and her six poignant memoirs. Often referred to as a spokesman for African Americans and women through her many works, her gift of words connected all people who were "committed to raising the moral standards of living in the United States." Her most famous work *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was published in 1969 and became the first in seven autobiographies of Angelou's life. In this novel Maya Angelou narrates her childhood experience from the age of 1 to 17. It was nominated for various awards including Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award.

This novel made Angelou an international star, and continues to be regarded as her most popular autobiographical work.

Maya Angelou's works have earned her more than 30 honorary degrees as well as nominations for a National Book Award and Pulitzer Prize. In 2011, President Barack Obama awarded Angelou the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the country's highest civilian honor. It was a fitting recognition for Angelou's remarkable and inspiring career in the arts. Braxton ranked Maya Angelou as "America's most visible black women autobiographer." The writings of Maya Angelou reflect the struggles of racial discrimination, gender inequality, and survival for existence in the contemporary society.

The most remarkable writer in African American literature is Angie Thomas. She is the part of a new crop of African American authors. Her real name was Angela Thomas. She was born in 1988 in Jackson, Mississippi. She was raised by her mother, Julia Thomas and her grandmother. His father was a basketball coach, who was mostly absent turning up sporadically in her life. Her father died when Thomas was studying at the University. At an early age, she witnessed multiple instances of drug dealing and gun violence. She grew up near the home of assassinated civil rights activist, Medgar Evers. When she was six years old, she witnessed a first shootout.

Angie Thomas is a former teen rapper, and her music career was short lived. Even though she didn't pursue the rap career, most of her works are influenced by her favourite rappers. Her favourite rappers are Kendrick Lamar, Nicki Minaj, OutKast, Tupac, Nas and more. She was the subject of an article in *Right on!* magazine. She was the first black teenager to graduate from her creative writing course. Although her nationality is American, she deals with African American themes in her works and the

struggles undergone by African American people. Angie Thomas first wish was to write fantasy and middle grade novels. Her school teacher helped her to develop her writing skills.

When Angie Thomas was a college student, one of her professors told her that her writings could give voice to those people who had been silenced and whose stories had not been told. In an interview with *The Daily Telegraph*, she stated that she aims to show “truth and tear down stereotypes” in her writing. She also says that it is important for the white community to listen to the hardships of Black Lives Matter Movement. Her mother took her to library and that inspired her to take writing as a career. She is best known for the genre Young Adult Fiction. Angie Thomas usually writes about the contemporary issues in society and the issues that affect black people in America.

Thomas’ first novel *The Hate U Give* (2017) is an Young Adult novel and it is her debut novel, expanded from a short story which she wrote in college in reaction to the police shooting of Oscar Grant. Angie Thomas wrote this popular novel, while working as a bishop’s secretary at mega church in Mississippi. Thomas wrote this novel to bring light to the controversial issue of police brutality and the Black Lives Matter Movement. In this novel *The Hate U Give*, Thomas expresses how the black community is seen and treated in this world through the eyes of a sixteen year old girl, Starr Carter. The novel *The Hate U Give* was published on February 28, 2017 by Harper Collins.

The novel *The Hate U Give* is narrated by Starr Carter, a 16-year-old African American girl from a poor neighborhood who attends an elite private school in a predominantly white, affluent part of the city. Throughout the course of each day she tries to fit in, but she often feels invisible in both worlds. One day she and her friend

Khalil are driving home from a party when a white police officer pulls them over. The officer ends up shooting and killing the unarmed Khalil and Starr watches this incident. Starr must then decide if she will stay quiet or use her voice to combat the racism and the prejudice she encounters.

Angie Thomas incorporated slang and coarse language as well as characters such as drug dealers and gang members in this novel to make the story more realistic. This novel won many awards including the 2017 *Boston Globe-Horn Book Award* for fiction. In 2018, the book was named as Coretta Scott King Honor Book. The novel *The Hate U Give*, was adapted in to a film by 20th Century Fox in October 2018. This novel was also adapted into an audio book, and won several awards and praise for its narrator Bahni Turpin.

On the Come Up (2019) was Thomas' second Young Adult novel. In this novel, Thomas examined issues such as poverty, double standards, racism and resilience. This novel explores the life of a 16-year-old Brianna, who wants to be a rapper. After performing a freestyle rap battle, she gets the chance to record a song. Some of the lyrics in the song talk about guns, which she includes to mock the perception of Black people as hooligans. The song goes viral and the white people labels her as a thug and complains that she is indicating violence.

Brianna then gets chances to record more music, and for this she has to keep up the angry Black woman identity. She agrees to keep up this identity, because her family needs more money to run their life. Afterwards Brianna regrets for her choice. Her novel *On the Come Up* was published on February 5, 2019 by Blazer and Bray. The novel *On the Come Up* is about fighting for our dreams, and especially for the black

people's freedom. Angie Thomas received 2019 Boston Globe- Horn Book Award Poetry Honor Award for this novel.

Thomas' novel *Concrete Rose* (2021) is a prequel to the novel *The Hate U Give*, and was released on January 12, 2021 in US and UK. This novel tells the story of Starr's father Maverick Carter. In *Carter Rose*, Thomas deals with the themes of responsibility, loyalty and revenge. The novel revolves around Maverick Carter, a 17-year-old boy in high school. His father is a gang member who is serving time in prison. Maverick is a member of the gang called King Lords and completely in love with her girl friend Lisa. He is busy playing ball, buying gifts for his girlfriend, and helping his mom pay the bills by selling drugs.

Maverick indulges himself in drugs, just to support his mother, because his father is confined in prison. However, one-night stand results in a baby who is left in a door step. And that changes everything. Maverick becomes a full-time dad, before the first day of his senior year in the high school. The baby Seven becomes Maverick's world. He decides to take care of this baby. But he misses hanging out with his friends, and also the cash that came from selling drugs.

With the help of his cousin Dre, Maverick gets out of the gang and takes a part time job with the local grocer. When his cousin Dre gets shot in the head, Maverick starts slinging with drugs again. Then he finds out that his girl friend Lisa is pregnant. He doesn't know what to do with this two child as a teenager. Maverick's life is full of questions. And none of them have easy answers, *Concrete Rose* is written from a black male teenager's perspective, entirely in black English, allowing readers the experience of intimately knowing characters that are often dismissed by society. In this novel *Concrete Rose*, Thomas casts a loving eye on the lives and realities of Black people.

Angie Thomas wrote a young adult novel *Blackout*, and it is set to release in June 2021, which she co-authored with Dhonielle Clayton, Tiffany D. Jackson, Nic Stone, Ashley Wood folk and Nicola Yoon. This novel follows thirteen teenagers in six interlinked stories which celebrate Black love. After a summer heat wave causes city wide power outage in New York City, Black teens explore love, friendships and hidden truths over the course of a single day.

All the characters in this novel *Blackout* are very bold, thoughtful, respectful and kind Black teens. These characters are wonderfully respectful of each other's choices. Six critically acclaimed, best selling, and award-winning authors bring the glowing warmth and electricity of Black teen love in this novel. In addition to her fiction books, Thomas wrote a guide for writing short stories titled *Find Your Voice* (2020). This book offers tips and writing exercises on subjects such as coming up with ideas for stories and creating believable characters.

Among all these works, Angie Thomas is best known for her work *The Hate U Give*. The novel *The Hate U Give* is a Young Adult Fiction novel. Young Adult Fiction is written for the readers from the age of twelve to eighteen years old. These Young Adult fictions mostly get the attention of the adults. The themes related to young adult fiction are friendship, first love, relationships and identity. Young Adult novels are peculiarly well suited to consideration of ethical matters. She draws the reader in by writing with lingo and slang from the point of view of 16-year-old Starr.

Thomas' writing style really emphasizes the first person narrative with an autobiographical feeling. The use of the first person allows the reader a window into the tumultuous mind of a teenager seeking an identity for herself. The title of this novel is an allusion to her favourite rapper Tupac Shakur song. Angie Thomas also wrote a

prequel to this story called *Concrete Rose*. The novel's physical setting alternates between Starr's home neighborhood of Garden Heights and the wealthy area in and around the Williamson high school.

The narrator is Starr Carter, a sixteen year old African American girl living in Garden Heights and attending Williamson Prep school. This novel is written in the first person view point. This novel is about a teenage girl named Starr Carter, who grapples with racism, police brutality, and activism after witnessing her black friend Khalil murdered by the police. Starr Carter is the only witness to her friend Khalil's fatal shooting at the hands of a white police officer. Soon afterwards Khalil's death becomes a national headline. Some are calling him thug, drug dealer and gang banger. But Starr Carter only knows that her friend Khalil is a victim.

Starr Carter, tries to find justice for his friend. Facing pressure from all sides of the community, Starr must find her voice and decide to stand up for what's right. She vows to continue fighting for justice on behalf of Khalil and all other black people killed at the hands of White police. The major conflict in this novel is between Starr and herself as she struggles to speak up and fight for her friend Khalil. The novel became an immediate young adult best seller and was adapted into a movie shortly after its release.

Chapter Two entitled "Racial Discrimination" tells about how the African Americans are suffering racial discrimination in America. This novel *The Hate U Give* is about how the main character Starr Carter struggles to get justice over racism. It also examines the way how society treats the black people.

Chapter Two

Racial Discrimination

Racism is the different treatment of human beings on the basis of their skin colour. It is usually linked with the skin colour of a person which makes one distinguishes from a certain race or community. Racism is believed to have existed as long as human beings have been in the world. Racism involves prejudice, discrimination or hatred on someone because of their colour, ethnicity or national origin. Racism is the prejudiced belief of people, that a particular race is superior to others. The idea has resulted from years of neglect and oppression on some races for their attributes and skin color. Racism is a critical social barrier, which prevents our society from advancing. In the book *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*, Frances Henry and Carol Tator say:

Racism refers to a system in which one group of people exercises power over another on the basis of skin colour ; an implicit explicit set of beliefs, erroneous assumptions, and actions based on an ideology of the inherent superiority of one racial group over another, and evident in organizational or institutional structures and programs as well as in individual thought or behavior patterns. (352)

Racism is a type of discrimination which makes the recipient feel bad about where they were born and how they look. It is an unscientific method of judging people. According to Richard T, Scafer, “discrimination is practiced commonly on the grounds of age, disability, ethnicity, origin, political belief, race, religion, sex etc factors which are irrelevant to person’s competence or suitability” (96). Racial discrimination typically points out taxonomic differences between different groups of people, although anyone may be discriminated against or an ethnic or cultural bias independently of their somatic differences. Racism is so deep rooted in our culture that we think it to be the

norm. The need to eliminate racism has come to highlight after a series of violent activities against people for their race. We, as a society, need to let go of this narrow-minded thought that some people are inferior to others only because of what their skin color is. Racism can only be removed by spreading awareness about it. Racial subordination is a form of suppression.

Racism is the wrong belief that some people are better and superior to others due to their genetic trait corresponding to their skin color and race. It refers to the thought that physical appearance has a link with personality and intellect. The white people look down upon the coloured and create in them a feeling of inferiority and uselessness. Racial discrimination mentally affects the coloured. Racism occurs in several forms like symbolic, ideological, structural and interactional. Racism is a baseless and irrational method of judging people. In the book *The 'R' Word*, by Kurt Barling, W.E. Du Bois an African- American writer states that:

The 'racial' differences, as the alternative appearances of 'colour, and bone.' At its most simplistic level, racism implies or asserts an intrinsic connection between the way people look and what they can think and can do all the way from how well you dance, run, work, how 'civilised' you are, even how intelligent groups of people are as defined by these observable "racial" characteristics. (3)

Racism is more than just words, beliefs and actions. The word 'racism' became common in 1600s due to the enslavement of the Africans by the Americans and Europeans. The word racism is used to mean acts of discrimination based on racial prejudice. Racism separates people into 'us' and 'them' based on where we come from

or the colour of the skin. In the book *Racism: A Short History*, George M. Fredrickson an American author says that: “I regard racial justice as a distinctive evil, more heinous than the class inequality found in liberal capitalist societies” (XII). Racism is the worst thing that prevails in many developed countries and it influences wars, slavery, the formation of nations and legal codes. Racism is a belief that the genetic factors which constitute race are primary determinants of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority or inferiority of a particular race.

‘Racist’ and ‘Racism’ are the exasperating words in American society. In 1903, W.E.B. Dubois said that the matter of colour or race is important in the United States of America in 20th century. Dalton and Duster stated that the United States of America is conscious of colour. America is a country that still has a problem with racism. Some Americans believe that race is the primary indicator of human abilities and capacities. In the context of Racism in the United States, racism against Black Americans dates back to the colonial era, and it continues to be a constant issue in American society in the 21st century.

From the arrival of the first Africans in early colonial times until after the American Civil War, most African Americans were enslaved. Even free African Americans have faced restrictions on their political, social, and economic freedom. Therefore racism remains an inescapable part of the lives of black people. African Americans comprise 13.4 percent of U.S. population. African Americans are suffering from racial discrimination throughout their life. Nearly half (45%) of African Americans are experiencing racial discrimination in America. In this novel *The Hate U Give*, Thomas shows how a poor black girl, Starr Carter suffers from racial discrimination. Through this novel Thomas spreads awareness that African Americans are still facing racial discrimination in their day to day life.

The Hate U Give is an outstanding delineation of racism. This novel demonstrates a series of racist acts received by its black characters. Racism in this novel has emerged through the form of police brutality against black people. Racism emanates in mastery and provides the explication for demeaning, humiliating and doing savagery to people on the basis of colour. This novel portrays the racial and systematic injustices that African Americans face in America today.

Racism is the central point to the novel *The Hate U Give*. The main protagonist Starr's identity is heavily informed by her race. The tension that Starr feels between Garden Heights and Williamson Prep is due to differences in wealth and in race. Most of her classmates at her school are white, but most of her neighbors are black. Starr feels torn between making sure, that she's not seen as 'too black' at school and making sure she's not 'too white' at home. Starr is the only black girl in Williamson, "I'm one of the only black kids there" (15). She struggles between two worlds, the Black world of Garden Heights and the White world of Williamson. Starr feels ashamed to live at Garden Heights, because of their race. At Williamson Prep a fancy majority white school, she is looked as inferior because of her skin colour. So she says that, "Funny how it works with white kids though. It's dope to be black until it's hard to be black" (15).

During the spring break party at Garden Heights, Starr Carter hears the sound of gun shots and she runs to her friend Khalil Harris on her way. Then in the car Khalil complains that in Garden Heights they can't have a party without shooting. Then he explains rapper Tupac Shakur's "Thug Life" philosophy to Starr. So he says "Thug Life stood for 'The Hate U Give Little Infants Fucks Everybody'" (21). According to Khalil this means the way society treats black kids comes back around to hurt everyone.

In Black hip-hop culture, thug life refers to a determined and resilient attitude to succeed in life inspite of racism and injustice.

In this novel *The Hate U Give* the actual essence of racism has been displayed in the form of police brutality and injustice towards black people. When Khalil Harris is about to drop his friend Starr Carter at home after the spring break party, a white police startles them by flashing lights in the mirror. Then suddenly Starr remembers her father's advice that, "Get a good look at the cop's face. If you can remember his badge number, that's even better" (25). She then notes the cop's appearance and badge number. She states that, "I make out the numbers on the badge – one-fifteen. He's white, mid thirties to early forties, has a brown buzz cut and a thin scar over his top lip" (26).

The police officer's badge number is One- Fifteen. Starr continues to refer him by this number throughout this novel. When One- Fifteen asks them where they came from, Khalil tells that it is none of One-Fifteen's business. Then One-Fifteen forces Khalil Harris to get out of the car and searches for drugs. But he finds nothing. When Khalil opens the car door just to make sure that Starr is safe, One-Fifteen shoots Khalil for three times. She then expresses her feelings for Khalil by saying that:

Instinct says don't move, but everything else says check on khalil. I jump out the Impala and rush around to the other side. Khalil stares at the sky as if he hopes to see God. His mouth is open like he wants to scream. I scream loud enough for the both of us. (27)

This One-Fifteen treats Khalil and Starr Carter as an indifferent one because of their skin colour. Even though they are victims, he shoots Khalil. He treats them as dangerous

threats. The Racist Prejudice of the One-Fifteen turns the act of dropping a friend off to home after a party, makes it deadly. One-Fifteen shoots Khalil because he believes that Khalil being black makes him dangerous. Khalil's death becomes a catalyst for protests against racial injustice throughout the community. Therefore racism against black people put Starr in danger during Khalil's murder.

Even after knowing the real name of the police officer is Brin Cruise, Starr refers him only by his badge number. Starr reduces One-Fifteen as a symbol of racism in the system of law enforcement. This choice of word by Starr makes a larger point that Khalil doesn't die because of One-Fifteen, but because of the way law enforcement criminalizes black youth. The police institution also initially doesn't want to prosecute One-Fifteen. The police officers leave Khalil's body in the street and they starts to comfort One-Fifteen. One-Fifteen is a statistic, a part of a violent system, and his name and story do not change the fact that he wrongly killed Khalil. This shows how a black man is treated and wrongly killed by the white police officer.

Blacks are often treated as racist by police institution. Racist activities happen in many forms in society, such as institution. Essentially institutionalized racism is a system designed to oppress African Americans. Institutional Racism is a misunderstanding of White people that Black people perceive as a matter. The term 'Institutional racism' was first coined in 1967 by Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton. Institutional racism is also known as systematic racism, that is embedded in the laws and regulations of a society or an organization. Shooting is one of the examples of institutional racism in this novel *The Hate U Give*. In this novel, institutional racism is done by police institution towards Black people who become minority in US society. In this novel *The Hate U Give* the black people Starr and Khalil

gets bad treatment from the white police. While checking the license the white police officer does racist acts by beams his flash lights in Starr's and Khalil's face. His action shows anti black behaviour. The flash light makes them glare. What the officer does make Starr and Khalil as civil people become uncomfortable and disturbed by his action.

Institutional Racism was noticed on officer's manner in this checking license practice. First the officer snapped at Khalil and Starr before they ended their talk. Secondly he treats Khalil unreasonably in which he asks Khalil to raise his hand. Then the officer yanks Khalil by his arm and pins him against the back door. The white officer, One-Fifteen does racist action because he was not aware of the fact that the Black people as minority have the same rights as people as majority to treat properly in license checking by the officer. The officer or One-Fifteen as white person considers Khalil to be a guilty Black person. The officer dubs Khalil with the call of smart mouth, assuming that Khalil was just a liar teenager. This misunderstanding of White people is the main cause of institutional racism against Blacks.

The officer is sure that he will find something bad like drugs or sharp tool or gun from Khalil. Therefore he pats Khalil down two or more times to prove his guess, but he finds nothing and forbid Khalil and Starr to go, "One-Fifteen pats him down two more times. He turn up empty" (26). The white officer hates Khalil, without knowing what Khalil actually did, the police immediately shoots Khalil without thinking it deeply. Even before Khalil finish his talk, the police shoots him brutally. The officer does not give Khalil the chance to defend himself.

The officer performs actions that remain inhumane, unfair, and destroys the rules of essential principles. His act that points the gun to Starr spontaneously after shooting Khalil breaks the rule of essential principles as human being. The white police officer is unfair when he points the gun to Starr, because Starr does not even threaten him, instead the officer makes Starr frightened. The officer also destroys the rule of essential principle as human being. By pointing his gun to Starr, he threatened Starr without care about Starr who still shocked by the death of his friend, Khalil . Starr is powerless to resist the officer who has killed Khalil. Starr also cannot defend himself. The officer's action is very barbaric. This shows how institutional racism is portrayed by Angie Thomas in her novel *The Hate U Give*.

The racist activities can also be seen after the shooting incident of Khalil. The two police come there and check Khalil's car but they ignore Khalil's corpse, which they must care first. This institutional racism involves the cooperative failure of police institution to offer a proper service to Khalil because he is Black race. This institutional racism called cooperative failure because it involves several officers who do racist acts together. One of the officers closed Khalil's corpse a long time after he shows his care to One-Fifteen, the shooter. Another officer tells One-Fifteen that this shooting is not a serious problem and guarantees that this case will not cause One-Fifteen to go to jail. This shows the perspective of the White officers that they are superior to the Black people.

Thomas beautifully portrays institutional racism through the behaviour of two white police officers in the novel. The two police officers act as racist towards Starr's father who is Black. These White police officers do not believe in Starr's father's statement that, there are no problems between him and his white neighbour, Mr. Lewis.

These officers are in the same institution that Blacks are inferior. Mr. Lewis as a White person gets privilege while Starr's father who is black was accused without any evidence. Even though Lewis himself says to the white police that he and Starr's father only have usual talk, the white police does not believe this. Blacks are always treated as inferior to the White people.

The portrayal of 'racism' can also be seen through Starr Carter's relationship with a white boy Chris. Chris is a wealthy white student at Williamson and Starr is the poor black girl from Garden Heights. Starr tries to hide her Garden Heights world from Chris. Chris is a frequent source of comfort and happiness for Starr, but he too occasionally makes ignorant comments about her race. Even though they both love each other, her race acts as a barrier for their relationship. Her father Maverick doesn't like Starr dating a white boy. It is not that Maverick hates dating, but the reason behind his hatred towards Chris is his race. Her mother Lisa Carter and her brother Seven Carter, support her in dating with Chris but her father doesn't like Chris identity. So Starr states that:

She and Seven are okay with me dating Chris, although if it was up to Seven I'd become a nun, but whatever I can't get the guts to tell Daddy though. And it's not just because he doesn't want me dating yet. The bigger issue is that Chris is white. (45)

Starr worries that by dating a white boyfriend she is betraying her community. Here, one can see how 'race' plays a major role, even in relationship in her community.

Thomas writes the story of *The Hate U Give* based on the real situation of racism in America where African- American people or Black people are still experiencing injustice because of their race either from individual or institution. She

portrays the racism in America by giving realistic depiction based on the real phenomenon that happened in America. The individual racism in the story is done by Hailey's father when he indirectly humiliates the Black people by addressing their neighbourhood as "The Ghetto." When Starr invites Hailey and Maya to come to her house in Garden Heights, Hailey's father does not allow her to come because he does not want her daughter to spend the night in "The Ghetto." "Ghetto" is a word used to address a part of the city especially the slum area where the minority lives. This word was first used in Venice to describe part of the city where Jews were restricted and segregated.

Hailey's father indirectly humiliates Starr's family and also the other black people by addressing Garden Heights as "The Ghetto." He indirectly says that Starr and the other black people in this novel, are poor people who live in slum and he will not allow her daughter to spend her time in that kind of place. So Starr says that, "Hailey didn't come. Her dad didn't want her spending the night in "the ghetto." I overheard my parents say that. Maya came but ended up asking her parents to come get her that night" (39).

Thomas creates this situation where the black people are humiliated by the white people based on the real situation of the African- American people in their everyday life. They are often mocked at and looked down because of their race. Thomas says that Hailey's brand of racism is very harmful than her father. She makes racist comments about Starr by calling her as a 'Fried Chicken.' This shows that how white people pose such weird comments on black people. Thomas suggests that the only way to change this system, is to keep fighting and to keep challenging against racist attitudes.

Starr Carter's fight for racial injustice is seen during her interview with the detectives about Khalil's murder. She goes to the police station with her mother to give her statement to the detectives. She is very nervous when she sees so many officers with guns. Then the two detectives Gomez and Wilkes asks her how long she knew Khalil and asks for the story of the "incident." Starr says that Khalil offered her a ride after shots were fired at the spring break party. Then the white police officer stopped the car and he shot at Khalil. She defends Khalil by saying that : "One-Fifteen killed," I say."And he wasn't doing anything wrong" (105).

The detectives try several times to put words in Starr's mouth, but Starr stresses that Khalil did nothing wrong. Starr then understands that the detectives are trying to discredit her and Khalil. She realizes that the detectives only goal is to protect the white police officer who shot Khalil. When the detectives ask her whether Khalil sells drugs, she understands that they are trying to characterize Khalil as a thug and try to justify the cop's actions. This shows that being a black boy Khalil gets an unfair treatment. The mindset of the white people is that black and colored people are bad, evil, violent and criminal. At this point 'race' is dominant because the entire system starting from media to police, has turned against Khalil portraying him as a victimizer rather than a victimized.

Khalil starts up selling drugs once to pay back the debt of his family after his grandmother has been fired. Despite this, Khalil doesn't deserve this brutal death. The media has been eager to rouse sympathy for the police officer rather than standing up for the injustice faced by Khalil. Cobbina in her book *Hands Up, don't Shoot* says "Media representations of minorities (specifically African- Americans and Latinos) in urban inner-cities were frequently depicted as addicts and criminals, while the Whites

were portrayed by the media as victims” (167). This has been the great portrayal of racism that continuously affects the part of the lives of black community in America.

Thomas says that black people get discrimination in every circumstances of their life. The black people are always treated badly just because they are black. The white people consider themselves as superior because they have power and money. They think that black people is weak because they have no money and power in society. She says that black people is considered as the minorities, because they are very poor and have no power in the society. So Thomas says that, “Black people minorities, poor people. Everybody at the bottom in society”

The main idea of the novel *The Hate U Give* is that everyone is equal and no matter what race they belong to or what colours they have. In the novel *The Hate U Give* Thomas emphasizes the differences between the life of the black and white people, their environment, circumstances and how they are treated by the society. Thomas explains this racial discrimination through the character Maverick. Maverick, Starr’s father explains to Starr that how the black people are discriminated, as they does not get the same opportunities as the white people in getting a job. Companies in America do not want to give job to the black people. Most of the black people in this novel are middle and lower class people, because they cannot get a proper job to improve their economic condition.

Maverick explains to Starr about how drugs, racism, and lack of opportunity trap communities like Garden Heights in a cycle of poverty and crime. He says that people become drug dealers because they need money. He connects this to the lack of proper education in minority communities, drug industries and a justice system that

disproportionately punishes the black people. In order to show the difficulties of black people he says that, “Corporate America don’t bring jobs to our communities, and they damn sure ain’t quick to hire us” (168). According to Maverick, Thug Life means a system designed against African Americans. He claims that the only way to change this racial discrimination is to speak up.

Starr Carter is initially hesitant to speak out what she had witnessed, fearing revenge against her family and worrying that she is not meritorious enough to speak for Khalil. Because of her race she feels inferior to voice out her opinions. She then comes to realise that her voice as the most effectual instrument, she possess. Starr says the world called Khalil a thug, but she will remember him as a hazel-eyed boy with dimples. She has realized that the fight for justice is about more than Khalil. It is actually about her entire family and community. She then lists the names of real world black individuals killed at the hands of white police. So Starr states:

It would be easy to quit if it was just about me, Khalil, that night, and that cop. Its about way more than that though. It’s about Seven. Sekani.

Kenya. DeVante.

It’s also about Oscar.

Aiyana.

Trayvon.

Rekia.

Michael.

Eric.

Tamir. (437)

Starr says that what happened to Khalil is what many African Americans have been going through in their day to day life. These brutal attitude by the white police shows how black people are suffering from racial discrimination.

Thomas says that black people get discrimination, hate, oppressed, and unfair treatment because of they are black. Many people think that black people are bad, evil, violent, and criminal. Because of some people everyone think that all black people are bad. She says that, people have to change their mindset about black people and start to treat black and coloured people fairly same as the other people in the society.

Chapter Three entitled “Double Consciousness” tells about how Starr suffers from two different worlds. She feels that she is Black as well as American. This Double Consciousness does not allow her to have one unified identity. She has more than one social identity. So Starr, wants everyone to accept who she is.

Chapter Three

Double Consciousness

Double Consciousness is the internal conflict undergone by subordinated or colonized groups in an oppressive society. This term called “Double consciousness” was introduced by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay “Fate”. W.E.B. Du Bois first used the term in an article titled “Strivings of the Negro People” published in the August 1897 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*. It was later republished and edited under the title “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” in his book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. In this book he describes the African American experience of Double Consciousness, including his own. In the book *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois says that :

One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife this longing to attain self conscious manhood, to merge his double self in to a better and truer self. He wouldn't bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face. (1)

Du Bois argues that there is a constant tension between how black people identify themselves and how they are identified by a society in which people are dominant. Du Bois believed that African Americans lived in a society that was oppressive and devalued them as equals. At the same time, the African American culture encouraged

equality and dignity. This type of Double Consciousness forced the race to view themselves from the perspective of both cultures, making it difficult for them to unify their African American subculture with their overall American identity. The term Double Consciousness also referred to Du Bois's experiences of reconciling his African heritage with an upbringing in a European dominated society.

Double Consciousness describes the experience of living in racist society where one feels both Black and American. Double Consciousness describes the feeling that one has more than one social identity, which makes it difficult to develop a sense of self. Double Consciousness recounts the individual sensation of feeling as though your identity is divided into several parts, making it difficult or impossible to have one unified identity. Double Consciousness is a concept in social philosophy referring to a source of inward "twoness" experienced by African Americans because of their racialized oppression and disvaluation in a white dominated society.

Double Consciousness is specifically the psychological challenge, African Americans experienced of 'always looking at one's self through the eyes' of a racist white society and measuring oneself by the means of a nation that looked back in contempt. The concept of Double Consciousness is important because it elucidates the experiences of black people living in post slavery America. It also sets a framework for understanding the position of oppressed people in an oppressive world. It became used to explain the dynamics of gender, colonialism and xenophobia.

Recently the concept of Double Consciousness, has been expanded to other situations of social inequality, particularly women living in patriarchal societies as well as LGBTQ people living in homophobic and transphobic societies. In the book *How to Be an Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi says that "White people have their own dueling consciousness, between the segregationist and the assimilationist. The dueling White

consciousness fashioned two types of racist policies, reflecting the duel of racist ideas” (26). Double Consciousness is still a very relevant concept in our society. Many people of all cultures would like to believe that we live in a post racial society. However there are still many covert inequalities and biases that are based upon race, making it difficult for African Americans to overtly resolve current issues with double consciousness.

The novel *The Hate U Give* is shaped by W.E.B. Du Bois’ concept of ‘Double Consciousness. *The Hate U Give* is very much influenced by Angie Thomas’ own experiences. The author Angie Thomas, herself is suffered from this concept Double Consciousness. Angie Thomas is an ordinary African-American woman who spends most of her life in ghetto neighbourhood. She grew up in a neighbourhood called Georgetown. The area is notorious for bad things such as drug dealing, shooting, gang war, and other ‘ghetto’ stereotypes.

Starr rarely goes outside because of the gunshots. When she applies to Belhaven University, she falls into two worlds. She gets herself between her mostly black, poor neighbourhood, and her mostly white, upper class school. Thomas often changes who she is, wherever she is. At Belhavern, Thomas is one of the black students in her class. She tries to fit in with her friends and does everything to show that she is not a ‘ghetto’ girl. She is black but she is not a ghetto. She changes the way she talks, changes her taste in music, and changes her style of clothing.

Thomas does not use African-American Vernacular English, but she speaks with proper English at Belhaven University. Her favourite genre is hip hop and her favourite singer is Tupac but whenever she is among her friends in class, it changes to Jonas Brothers. She does not wear baggy clothes to school but substitute it with the casual but

formal polo shirt paired with jeans. She goes under all these transformations in hope that people welcome her and not see her as the girl from ghetto.

Thomas pours these criteria into her work too. In the novel *The Hate U Give* Thomas injects Starr Carter with Double Consciousness sensibility and sharpens her dilemma by making her dramatically straddle between two worlds: The African American Garden Heights neighbourhood where she lives and the white Williamson Prep where she goes to school. Starr is an African-American girl who lives in Garden Heights. Garden Heights is a poor black neighbourhood. There are gang activities, drug dealer, shooting and many other crimes involved in this area. Starr struggles to navigate the primary black world of Garden Heights and the primary world of Williamson Prep. From the time Starr steps into Big D's party at the beginning of the novel, she feels 'two versions' of herself. Starr has to swing between these two spheres, and she switches her speech, mannerisms and behaviours to fit whatever the circumstance she finds herself in. Starr constantly feels like, she has to hide her 'blackness' when entering her white school.

Starr is mistreated in her school because of her background. Being in a classy school of white people, Starr has encountered different kinds of unethical treatments and behaviours. Belonging to a black community while attending a high class school, she has been in a great dilemma and she feels torn in to two personalities. Starr tends to speak and act differently at school. So Starr says that :

Being two different people is so exhausting. I've taught myself to speak with two different voices and only say certain things around certain people. I've mastered it. As much as I say I don't have to choose which

Starr I am with Chris, maybe without realizing it, I have to an extent.

Part of me feels like I can't exist around people like him. (296)

In Garden Heights Starr discusses about the neighbourhood issues such as 'gangbanging' with her friends. In her White school she is very careful in her tone and in her language. She frequently switches her tone based on the place. She is caught between two worlds, Williamson Starr and Garden Heights Starr.

Starr lives in a ghetto neighbourhood with her family. Her father is an owner of a grocery store and her mother is a nurse in community clinic. She has an older step brother Seven and younger brother Sekani. Apart from her family, she does not really socialize in Garden Heights. Starr does not mingle with the kids in Garden Heights. She does not know lot of people in the neighbourhood. It is hard for her to make friends, except Kenya. Kenya is her friend and Seven's step sister. Starr's father and Kenya's mother are Seven's parents. Her only friend is Kenya. Starr states that :

Kenya is about the only person I hang out with in Garden Heights – it's hard to make friends when you go to school that's forty –five minutes away and you're a latchkey kid who's only seen at her family's store. It's easy to hang out with Kenya because of our connection to Seven. She's messy as hell sometimes, though. (9)

Starr never leaves Kenya's side. Even at Big D's party Starr sticks to Kenya. So Starr says that, "Kenya begged me to come to this party for weeks. I knew I'd be uncomfortable as hell, but every time I told Kenya no she said I act like I'm "too good for a Garden party." I got tired of hearing that shit and decided to prove her wrong" (14). The only reason Starr comes to the party is because of Kenya. Starr has only one friend in Garden Heights and that is Kenya. Her social life is dull in Garden Heights.

In Garden Heights, people know her as Big Mav's daughter and Starr. Starr literally knows nobody in Garden Heights, "I really don't know anybody. Their faces are familiar, but you don't get names and life stories when you're bagging folks' groceries (12). Starr does not care about what people in Garden Heights think about her. She even admits it to Kenya that, "Do I look like I care what people think?" (9). Starr has no problem with how people see her in Garden Heights. She does not go to school in Garden Heights and she does not meet them daily. According to Starr, it is hard to earn coolness in Garden Heights.

Starr behaves differently in Williamson when compared to Garden Heights. Starr goes to Williamson since middle school. Williamson Prep is a predominantly white private school that is situated outside of Garden Heights area. Starr attends this school along with her brothers. Their parents send them to study in Williamson, because they want their kids to get proper education that they cannot get in Garden Heights. Another reason is because the neighbourhood is not safe for them to roam around. It is their way to protect their kids from bad things that often happened in the neighbourhood, such as shooting and gang war.

In Williamson white school Starr is one of the black students in eleventh grade. Starr says that, "I'm cool by default because I'm one of the only black kids there" (15). People in Williamson see her as a breath of fresh air among many whites. They welcome her. Her social life in Williamson is not as dull as in Garden Heights. She can easily connect with the students in Williamson. She has two best friends in Williamson, Hailey Grant, a white and Maya Chang, a Chinese American. Her boyfriend Chris is a white man.

Starr in Garden Heights and Starr in Williamson are different personalities. One night Starr has invited Hailey, Maya, and Kenya to stay at her house. It is revealed from her thought:

Hailey didn't come. Her dad didn't want her spending the night in the "ghetto." I overheard my parents say that. Maya came but ended up asking her parents to come get her that night. There was a drive-by around the corner, and the gunshots scared her. That's when I realized Williamson is one world and Garden Heights is another, and I have to keep them separate. (39)

Starr's friends and their family find it harmful for them to come to her neighbourhood. Starr then comes to know that her world and her friends are different. She cannot bring Garden Heights to Williamson. She cannot be seen as ghetto in Williamson. She cares about how people see her. She wants to fit in among the white peers. She does not want to send people away because they are scared of her blackness, of her. Thus Williamson Starr is born. From her thought, it can be clear what she decides: "I just have to be normal Starr at normal Williamson and have a normal day. That means flipping the switch in my brain so I'm Williamson Starr (73).

When Starr gets down from her mother's car and enters Williamson's ground, she is no longer Starr Carter from Garden Heights but Williamson Starr. Then Williamson Starr describes how Starr is and how she adapts in Williamson. In Williamson school, Starr does not use her Garden Heights slang. Slang is one of the many stereotypes people have about living in ghetto neighbourhood. Starr does not use her slang at Williamson. When Starr meet her friends, they talk about how to eat Pop Tart. For this, Starr replies with the word that she does not usually use in Garden

Heights. She says 'Ewww' instead of 'Ill' to show her aversion after Luke says that he prefer to eat warm Pop Tart. According to Starr's thoughts,

Williamson Starr doesn't use slang – if a rapper would say it, she doesn't say it, even if her white friends do. Slang makes them cool. Slang makes her “hood.” Williamson Starr holds her tongue when people piss her off so nobody will think she's the “angry black girl.” Williamson Starr is approachable. No stank-eyes, side-eyes, none of that. Williamson Starr is nonconfrontational. Basically, Williamson Starr doesn't give anyone a reason to call her ghetto. (74)

Starr Carter is trapped in to two different worlds. This can be seen when Starr hides that, she comes from black neighbourhood to the people at Williamson.

Starr is very conscious about how people especially her friends see her background. When she talks with her friends, she listen to them but she never tell her story. She abstains herself to talk about Garden Heights. And she does not want people to talk about Garden Heights. When her friends Hailey and Maya ask that, Khalil whom the media mentioned is her friend or not. They ask her, “Does this have something to do with the police shooting that drug dealer in your neighbourhood” (114). Starr is afraid that her new image of Williamson Starr will crumple if people in Williamson know that she come from the same neighbourhood from Khalil.

Starr is scared to tell that she is the sole witness of police shooting that killed Khalil. She betrays Khalil by saying to her friends in Williamson that he is not her friend. Here we can see how Starr struggles to have one unified identity. She tries to hide her Garden Heights identity from her friends in Williamson. She feels inferior to show her identity. This shows how she suffered from Double Consciousness. She has

to switch her identity based on the place. She has to adapt herself based on the situation in which she lives.

Starr as Williamson Starr, has to follow what people say to her in Williamson. When her friends discuss about the colours of Jonas Brothers, Hailey says that she takes the role of Joe. But Starr wants to take Joe's role. So Starr says that:

Hailey whips her head around so fast, her eyes flashing Maya and I snicker. So there's a video deep in the depths of YouTube of the three of us lip-syncing to the Jonas Brothers and pretending to play guitars and drums in Hailey's bedroom. She decided she was Joe, I was Nick, and Maya was Kevin. I really wanted to be Joe – I secretly loved him the most, but Hailey said she should have him, so I let her. I let her have her way a lot. Still do. That's part of being Williamson Starr, I guess.

(78)

The above quote shows that how Starr is forced to follow the people of Williamson. As Williamson Starr she has to stay silent by without giving her opinions. She has to accept what the white people say to her.

Williamson Starr holds her tongue when people scolds her, so that nobody can think her as the angry black girl. She protects herself from getting into an argument and just keep it to herself when someone irritates her or makes her sad. She does not want to be seen as the angry black girl and someone that is different from the rest of them. She usually decides to go away from the place rather than to challenge or fight with the person. So when Starr, Hailey, Maya, and the rest of the girls of her grade play basketball, Hailey unintentionally says something to her that has double connotation as racial slur. Starr hears Hailey's words clearly. She hears how Hailey asks her to pretend

that the ball is fried chicken. Hailey says to Starr that, “Hustle! Pretend the ball is some fried chicken. Bet you’ll stay on it then” (113). Even though Starr hears Hailey’s words she does not scold her. Instead she hides herself in the locker room. As Williamson Starr she has to stay silent even when she is offended by racial comments.

Starr becomes Williamson Starr, when she is surrounded by white people or is in the situation where white people involved. She changes the way she talks, the way she dresses, the way she behaves. When she meets the two detectives, Mrs. Gomez and Mr. Wilkes Starr is very conscious about her impression in front of them. She does not want them to think her as a ghetto girl. Starr changes her behaviour when she talks with the detectives. She says:

I let go of my mom’s hand to shake the detectives hands. “Hello.” My voice is changing already. It always happens around “other” people, whether I’m at Williamson or not. I don’t talk like me or sound like me. I choose every word carefully and make sure I pronounce them well. I can never, ever let anyone think I’m ghetto. (97)

Through this quote, we can see that how Starr changes herself depending on the situation. She feels herself as a black girl, when she is in Garden Heights. In Williamson she thinks that she also belongs to the white community. So she changes herself, when she is in Williamson. She has more than one social identity.

The idea of Double Consciousness can also be seen when Starr is scheduled to show up in an interview on one of the national news programs as a witness for Khalil’s death. She goes with her whole family. Her family comes as her moral support. Before they depart her mother tells them about what they have to do later in the studio. Her mother asks her to behave like a white woman. Her mother asks her to use proper

English to the detectives by saying Yes ma'am. She also asks everyone to dress up, as if they are going to the church. This shows how her mother asks everyone to have more than one social identity. Her mother asks them to pretend depending on the situation. Starr further observes that they must speak, dress, and behave a certain way in a world that prioritizes white conceptions of respectability. So Starr, describes these worlds as not bad, just different.

In Garden Heights, Starr is reserved, and rarely socialize with people, except her family and her best friend Kenya. In Garden Heights people know her as Big Mav's daughter and they do not know her name. She is not cool enough for the peers in Garden Heights. In Garden Heights Starr refuses to approach people and she finds solitude by herself. Another thing as Garden Heights Starr, she can talk in her slang. She can also talk about Khalil in Garden Heights.

In contrast, Williamson Starr is someone cool. She is one of few African-American students in the entire white school. Thus, according to Williamson's residents, she is cool by default. She has a moderately good social life. In Williamson Starr has many friends and she also has a white boy friend, Chris. However, as Williamson Starr, she cannot act like 'ghetto' and she cannot talk about Garden Heights. She uses proper English on daily conversations and she is someone who is approachable in Williamson.

Garden Heights Starr is the opposite of Williamson Starr. To live in distinctive worlds is not a pleasant experience of Starr. Both of the worlds do not collide and Starr has to hide this, "I'm not even sure I belong at this party. That's not on some bougie shit, either. There are just some places where it's not enough to be me. Either version of me. Big D's spring break party is one of those places" (1). Starr feels that she is

neither Garden Heights Starr nor Williamson Starr. There is no place where she can be herself and do not have to put up a facade to fit in.

Starr compares her life with her favourite TV show, *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* which stars Will Smith and tells the story of a black teenager who is sent from his West Philadelphia neighbourhood to live with his wealthy aunt and uncle in their mansion in Bel Air after he gets in a fight. Starr herself points out the allegorical nature of the show in regards to her own life. Just as Will was sent to Bel Air because of trouble in his neighbourhood, Starr was sent to Williamson Prep after Natasha's death. The theme song of this show goes similarly with her life story. However, the character in this show does not need to change who they are in order to survive in society. Starr wants that to happen to her too. So Starr states that, "I just wish I could be myself at Williamson like Will was himself in Bel-Air" (39).

Starr has to change who she is according to people and situation around her. She switches to whatever characteristic suits her best for the circumstances. She has done it since middle school. It cannot be denied that Garden Heights and Williamson Starr are part of her. It has become how she handles herself in front of the public. When she is in Garden Heights, she turns to Garden Heights Starr and Williamson Starr appears when she is at school or in the presence of white people. Furthermore, Starr does not feel like she belongs to these two worlds. She wants to be accepted as who she is in Williamson and she wants to bring Williamson to Garden Heights. She wants to be accepted as who she is.

Chapter Four entitled 'Narrative Techniques and Symbolism' shows how symbols have been used to indicate the incidents that had happened in the novel *The Hate U Give*. The flawless narrative techniques make the readers to fall for the storyline.

Starr Carter is the narrator of the novel who has been constantly narrating the incidents that had happened in her life. Thomas had used the first person narrative technique to make the readers understand the novel in a better way.

Chapter Four

Techniques and Symbolism

The novel *The Hate U Give* is told in first person point of view from the perspective of Starr Carter, sixteen year old African American girl who witnesses her friend being shot and murdered by a police officer. The usage of first person allows the reader to know about the mind of a teenager who is searching for her own identity. Thomas' novel uses language from the modern protest movement Black Lives Matter, which arose in response to real life police violence. Angie Thomas attracts the readers in by writing with lingo and slang from the point of view of a sixteen year old African American girl. Thomas' writing style really highlights the first person narrative with an autobiographical feeling.

Starr speaks in the first person point of view offering commentary and insight into how events make her feel and providing background information. While her observations are subjective, Starr does not deliberately contort the truth and in fact tries to clarify as much as possible the way she feels and why. Starr tells the story in a colloquial manner as if talking to a friend. She reacts to events as they occur, leading to a wide range of emotions as she experiences them. *The Hate U Give* is a heartbreaking and fast moving novel. It faces the reality of living as an African-American poverty in crime ridden, low income neighbourhood while providing an intriguing, humorous plot. The novel is centered on the experiences of Black characters.

Additionally the setting is well portrayed and it helps to move the story line. The novel is told from Starr's point of view and is highly authentic and effective. The entire novel is written in present tense, which gives the impression that we learn about the unfolding events in the order that Starr experiences them. The tone of Starr's narrative

is pretty down to earth and much of the narrative almost seems like a casual conversation with the readers. Furthermore the characters are well developed and contribute to the plot successfully. Angie Thomas draws from her own experiences to make the characters in the novel true to life. The novel *The Hate U Give* is portrayed through Starr's eyes, and it gives the readers a great representation of scenes.

Angie Thomas uses many symbols to make the novel more interesting to the readers. She uses many symbols just to convey her ideas in a poetic way. The most important symbol in this novel is 'Garden Heights.' The name 'Garden Heights' carries symbolic weight because it emphasizes the fact that children, like plants, need care and attention to grow and are the products of the place in which they grow up. While the streets all have names like 'Carnation' and 'Magnolia' very little actual nature appears in Garden Heights outside of Maverick's garden.

The contrast between the pastoral name and the harshness and violence in the neighborhood emphasizes how unideal the conditions of Garden Heights are for children. Starr falling into Maverick's rosebush and emerging bloodied from the thorns during Natasha's murder symbolizes the hidden dangers that children in Garden Heights must face while growing up. Garden Heights may represent a garden, but it is a garden filled with thorny dangers and difficult circumstances in which children, like plants, struggle to survive and grow.

The symbol Maverick's roses represent Carter family. Maverick's work in his rose garden represents his values as a parent and his devotion to Starr, Seven, and Sekani. Maverick mentions that gardens need conversation to grow, and we see conversation as an important part of his parenting style, such as when he talks to Starr about the meaning of Thug Life. The roses start drying during the initial riots in Garden Heights, which coincides with the height of Starr's confusion and self-blame. As time

goes on and the family becomes entrenched in the complications of Garden Heights, the roses appear to be dying. At the end of the novel, Maverick brings the rosebush with him when the family finally moves to a new neighbourhood. When Starr asks if the roses will be alright if we place it in a new environment, Maverick replies that, “Yeah. A li'l damaged, but alive. I'm gon' try something different with them. Putting them in new soil can be like hitting a reset button” (428). The roses are bit damaged but Maverick assures Starr that the new soil will be a reset for them. Maverick says that his roses will survive the move to the suburbs, he also means that despite his fears, the values of black power he has given his children will survive the move as well. In this novel Starr too has been damaged like the roses, but her new surroundings and her new soil helps her to move forward in her life.

The constant work and love Maverick puts into his roses offer a vision for a black childhood in which children flourish because of the caring attention from the adults around them. Thomas may have chosen roses for Maverick's garden as a reference to Tupac's poem 'The Rose that Grew from Concrete' which is widely interpreted as celebrating the success of poor black children who grow up with very few resources. Thomas uses this poem just to encourage the children from her neighborhood to be roses. Because roses are notoriously difficult to grow, a rose growing in concrete is a miraculous occurrence. The symbol Maverick's roses thus represent how opportunity and the lack thereof affects people's lives and how those with rich soil are more likely to thrive.

Another notable symbol in the novel *The Hate U Give* is Tupac Shakur's concept of THUG LIFE-THE HATE U GIVE LITTLE INFANTS FUCKS EVERYBODY. It is an important symbol in the novel and the source of the book's title. The acronym explains the recurrent nature of poverty and crime that occurs due to

hatred based on a racist social system. Starr and Khalil discuss the acronym shortly before Khalil's death. Starr also discusses Tupac's concept of THUG LIFE with her father later and comes to the conclusion that she can't be silent about the shooting. Starr's broadcast interview is a vital moment in her transformation as she leads the protests against Khalil's death in the streets of Garden Heights.

Starr doesn't accept violent techniques, such as rioting and ransacking. Instead, as Ms. Ofrah points out, the most effective weapon Starr has in fighting injustice will be her voice. Starr uses the public platform she never wanted or expected to have to speak up not just for Khalil, but for African Americans everywhere. The acronym is symbolic of the struggles that black people in America face emphasizing the generalizability of Starr's story. This symbol runs throughout the entire novel, as characters such as DeVante and Khalil get caught up in a system that traps them.

Despite the racist, social system 'Black Jesus' highlights the symbol of the strength of African Americans in the face of oppression. Black Jesus is used as a symbol of black identity and faith. The Carters have a picture of Black Jesus in their home and when they pray together as a family they address Black Jesus. Maverick appropriates white dominated Christianity by making Jesus black and leads his family in a group prayer each morning. The family derives strength from their prayer every day without relying on a white power or ideal. 'Black Jesus' is also symbolic of the blended religion of Starr's family. Maverick does not approve of eating pork which is a Muslim practice. The Carters frequently turn to Black Jesus for guidance while feeling pride for the strength of black people everywhere. During prayer Maverick pleads to Black Jesus by saying that :

Black Jesus, watch over my babies today. Keep them safe, steer them

from wrong, and help them recognize snakes from friends. Give them the wisdom they need to be their own people. Help Seven with this situation at his momma's home. Thank you for Sekani's miraculous, sudden healing that just so happened to come after he found out they're having pizza at school today. Be with Lisa at the clinic as she helps your people. Help my baby girl get through her situation, Lord. Give her peace of mind, and help her speak her truth this afternoon. And lastly, strengthen Ms. Rosalie, Cameron, Tammy and Brenda as they go through this difficult time. In your precious name I pray, amen. (71)

'Black Jesus' is the symbol which gives power and strength to the African-Americans. They have strong belief in Black Jesus. It is the symbol of their identity.

Angie Thomas uses many different symbols in the novel to portray how two conflicting worlds are seen in the eyes of society. Starr, a coloured girl, watches as her world crumbles down after watching her best friend get shot, making her question the life she has been living. Because of this, Starr embarks on a journey to find her voice and the power to stand up for what she believed in. In *The Hate You Give* Angie Thomas tells a story of innocence being lost in a moment of tragedy which is depicted through many symbols to further display her novel's larger theme. Reality can be brutal and sometimes a mere mistake is enough to end our time on earth. This is exactly what happened to Khalil's case. Because a hairbrush is wrongly perceived for a gun, and the story of Khalil's life is ended too soon. Khalil's hairbrush represents both the blinding power and senselessness of racism. Khalil's hairbrush is symbolic of the distrust that police officers have for minorities.

Activist Ms. Ofrah tells Starr and her parents that One-Fifteen shot Khalil, because he mistook Khalil's hairbrush for a gun because the handle is thick and black.

So Ms. O'fray says that, "Officer Cruise claims he saw it in the car door, and he assumed Khalil was reaching for it. The handle was thick enough, black enough, for him to assume it was a gun" (215). During the protest, people shout that, a hairbrush is not a gun represents the irritation that the African-American community feels when it comes to the shooting of unarmed black people. An object meant for grooming contributes to Khalil's death further suggests that black individuals can do everything to cling to societal expectations of propriety and still be targeted simply because of the colour of their skin.

The hairbrush also invokes the 1999 death of Amadou Diallo. Police officers mistakenly believed that Diallo's wallet was a gun and fired 41 shots at him. Diallo's death led to an explosive controversy and national debate over racial profiling and police brutality. 'Hairbrush' is the important symbol which shows white people hatred towards coloured people. It shows how the white police officer mistakenly thinks the hairbrush as a gun and killed the unarmed black man.

The most remarkable symbol in this novel is 'One-Fifteen' One-fifteen, the badge number of the cop who murders Khalil, is a symbol of unfettered police brutality against African Americans. Even after learning his real name is Brian Cruise, Starr thinks of the police officer who shot Khalil as One-Fifteen. By referring to him only by the badge number, Starr reduces One-Fifteen to a symbol of racism in the system of law enforcement. This word choice makes a larger point that Khalil did not die because of One-Fifteen, but because of the way law enforcement criminalizes black youth. Starr's referring to the officer as "One-Fifteen," rather than by his real name, is important in two main ways. First, Starr says she knows to get the badge number of any cop she interacts with because she was given 'the talk' about police at an early age. Because African Americans are much more likely to be harassed by police because of

racial profiling, they are taught to always cooperate and never make any sudden movements in order to stay safe. In this sense, One-Fifteen becomes a symbol for the larger issue of institutional racism because white parents never have to give their white children this safety talk. Second, by not referring to One-Fifteen by his given name, Starr is refusing to humanize or sympathize with him. She puts the focus squarely where it should be: on his victim, Khalil Harris.

As One-Fifteen's colleagues protect him, comforting him in the aftermath of the shooting and trying to distort Starr's testimony during her first interview, it becomes clear that One-Fifteen's behavior is condoned, or at least considered normal. Although Uncle Carlos eventually condemns One-Fifteen, the police institution does not, and initially does not want to prosecute him. One-Fifteen as an individual may have committed this crime, but he could have been any police officer who perpetrates violence against black communities. One-Fifteen is a statistic, a part of a violent system, and his name and story do not change the fact that he wrongfully killed Khalil.

The other minor symbols in this novel are Chris' Rolls Royce car, Starr's favourite TV Show *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*. Chris' Rolls Royce is symbolic of his privilege, both financial and racial. Starr worries that the differences in her and Chris's backgrounds will prevent them from opening up completely to each other. She hides the parts of her life that she believes will make her appear "ghetto," including Natasha and Khalil's deaths. However, the symbol of white privilege as a barrier to their interracial relationship is inverted when Starr and Chris have an honest conversation about the need to accept each other inside of the very car that represents the differences between them.

Starr's favorite TV show is *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air*, which stars Will Smith and tells the story of a black teenager who is sent from his West Philadelphia

neighborhood to live with his wealthy aunt and uncle in their mansion in Bel Air after he gets in a fight. Starr herself points out the allegorical nature of the show in regards to her own life. Just as Will was sent to Bel Air because of trouble in his neighborhood, Starr was sent to Williamson Prep after Natasha's death. However, the analogy doesn't extend to how comfortable Will and Starr feel in their respective new environments. Will still retains his own personality, while Starr feels the need to hide hers.

Angie Thomas involved many different kinds of symbols into her novel to indicate how two completely different worlds: the underprivileged and wealthy, perceive each other. These two incompatible worlds could be greatly affected and joined together if they would just take the time to connect with each other in ways not many people have tried. The stereotypes and racism to which African Americans are subjected are revealed to be extremely common and harmful, even bringing about the death of innocent young African Americans.

Chapter Five

Summation

African American Literature has expanded and developed over a series of time periods in which the particular writings reflected some aspects of Black lives. The most admirable thing about African American Literature is the consistency throughout the

periods to convey a message of strength and encouragement of Blacks. The primary characteristic of African American literature is that it speaks to the African-American experience in the United States, a country with a history of slavery and segregation laws. African American literature constitutes a vital branch of the literature of the African diaspora, and African American literature has both influenced by the great African diasporic heritage in turn influenced African diasporic writings in many countries. African American literature exists within the larger realm of post-colonial literature. In her book *English Post Coloniality: Literatures from Around the World* Radhika Mohanram states that, "African American literature differs from most post-colonial literature in that it is written by members of a minority community who reside within a nation of vast wealth and economic power" (5).

The First chapter Introduction throws light on Angie Thomas works and achievements in African American Literature, which proves Angie Thomas as an important figure in African American Literature. As a visionary author and activist Thomas speaks about the complexity of the Black experience in America. First chapter deals with *Thomas'* life, her works and her contemporary authors. Her writing style really emphasizes the first person narrative with autobiographical feeling. Thomas creates a name for herself as an author, after publishing her famous work *The Hate U Give*. She is a former teen rapper whose greatest accomplishment was an article about her in Right-On Magazine with a picture included. She is an inaugural winner of the Walter Dean Meyers Grant 2015. Her debut novel *The Hate U Give* was a no 1. Newyork Times Best Seller. In an interview with Publishers Weekly, Thomas gives on her role as an activist:

I've always seen her writing as a form of activism. If nothing else, books gives us a glimpse into lives that we may not have known about before; they can promote empathy. There is the movement Black Lives Matter and the organization Black Lives Matter, and I respect what both are doing. I know [The Hate U Give] is an 'issue' book, but I didn't necessarily want it to be that way... I wanted to make something that is so political seem personal. While I wanted Khalil to represent these young men who lose their lives and are quickly labeled thugs, I wanted (the plot of the book) to be its own thing. I didn't want to disrespect anyone's family, anyone's memory. (11)

The second chapter 'Racial Discrimination' tells about how African-Americans are suffering from white people. Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give* is a polemical novel because of its strong condemnation of the racism that has targeted African-Americans. *The Hate U Give* revolves around racism against people coming from black background in the USA. Race has been always been associated with power dominance and enforcement of oppression which is still in the hands of Whites in America. *The Hate U Give* is a perfect showcase of the hatred that African Americans have received from the American society.

The theme of racism plays an important role in Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*. Though the murder of Khalil, an unarmed black, by a white cop, Thomas exemplifies the very robust impact of racism in America. Considering all the facts and occurrences of the events taking place in the plot, it can be concluded that racism exists in every layer of American society. Police brutality in terms of oppression made by governmental system has been the predominant factor in this specific novel by Angie

Thomas. It gives certain belief that if Khalil has not been a black, society would have responded in a completely different manner. The reaction and coverage of media might have portrayed the incident in a more sympathetic manners towards Khalil and his family.

The accusation might have been a little lighter while a sharp hatred can be set upon the police officer for killing an unarmed young man. Hence, casting a look upon all these, it can be started that American society is still now struggling with the fact of racism. The protagonist Starr serves as an empowering character through her journey by using her voice against the racial injustice in the US. Starr is the model for the current youth, to use their own voice to challenge systematic discrimination against racial minorities. The second chapter 'Racial Discrimination' shows how Khalil as a black man treated indifferently because of his skin colour.

The Third Chapter titled 'Double Consciousness' shows how the main character Starr Carter feels pulled between two worlds, Black Garden Heights and White Williamson Prep. Du Bois describes the concept of double consciousness as a 'two-ness' in which the individual identifies himself as both an American and a negro. This feeling of double consciousness hence leads to psycho-social anxiety where the individual is forced to come to terms with the two social worlds entwined in one dark body. The concept of 'two-ness' therefore means that the individual has two souls, think in two different manners and bear double warring ideals, all in one. The concept of double consciousness can further be described as having two manifestations. The first one is the power that the white stereotypes have on black people, including their thoughts and lives. Secondly, the racial discrimination that alienates the black negroes from the mainstream of the society and finally, the internal divergence between being both an American and African at the same time. This raises the individual's awareness

of how others perceive him hence changing one's identity to gain acceptance in the social interaction. This leads to the individual's self image being badly damaged due to the treatment accorded to him by the white people. The African-American hence perceives himself as an outcast in the social standing and struggles to gain acceptance hence shaping his future experience and culture.

In the novel *The Hate U Give*, Thomas imbues Starr with the sensibility and sharpens her dilemma by having her dramatically straddle two worlds; the African-American Garden Heights neighborhood where she lives and the white Williamson Prep where she goes to school. Starr constantly feels like she has to hide her 'blackness' when entering her school, primarily a white space. She has to dissociate herself from Garden Heights, her primarily black and more impoverished neighbourhood in order to be accepted by her white peers.

The Fourth chapter 'Narrative Techniques and Symbolism' shows how Angie Thomas gives importance to techniques and symbols in her novel. It makes her novel more dignified. Angie Thomas uses narrative techniques in her novel to make it more complete and meaningful. The narrator is Starr Carter, a 16-year-old African-American girl living in Garden Heights and attending Williamson Prep school. It's in the first-person viewpoint. Starr's witty, sarcastic, and upbeat social commentary gives the novel an optimistic tone in the face of tragedy. However, the novel also has undertones of anger at the oppressive systems that its characters must fight against each and every day. In this novel Angie Thomas uses many different symbols to convey her point of view to the readers in a more poetic way.

The Hate U Give as a title demonstrates the hatred that Starr and her associates have received from the American society due to their colour. The novel *The Hate U*

Give is about a sixteen year old Starr Carter moves between two worlds: the poor neighbourhood where she lives and the fancy suburban prep school she attends. The uneasy balance between these worlds is shattered when Starr witnesses the fatal shooting of her childhood best friend Khalil at the hands of police officer. Khalil was unarmed. Soon afterward, his death is a national headline.

Some are calling him a thug, maybe even a drug dealer and a gangbanger. Some cops and the local drug lord try to intimidate Starr and her family. What everyone wants to know is: what really went down that night. And the only person alive who can answer that is Starr. But what Starr does or does not say could upend her community. It could also endanger her life. Inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement, this is a powerful and gripping Young Adult novel and about one girl's struggle for justice.

The Hate U Give takes a frank and confronting look at race, racism, poverty, drugs and violence in contemporary America. The novel has lot of positive messages about standing up for what you believe in and who you are.

WORKS CITED

Barling, Kurt. *The 'R' Word*. Biteback, 2015.

Cobbina, Jennifer E. *Hands Up, don't Shoot*. NYU Press, 2019.

Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Avenel, N J. Gramercy Books, 1994.

Fredrickson, George M. *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton UP, 2002.

Graham, Maryemma, et al. *Teaching African American Literature: Theory and Practice*. Routledge, 2013.

Henry, Frances and Carol Tator. *The Colour of Democracy: Racism in Canadian Society*. 2006.

Kendi, Ibram X. *How to Be an Antiracist*. Penguin Random House, 2019.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Eleventh Edition, Merriam Webster, 2003.

Mohanram, Radhika and Gita Rajan. *English Post Coloniality: Literatures from Around the World*. Greenwood Press, 1996.

Scafer, Richard T. *Racial and Ethnic Relation Group*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000.

Chapter One

Introduction

Harriet Ann Jacobs, also called Harriet A. Jacobs, from Edenton, North Carolina, U.S Washington, D.C. was an American abolitionist and a slave narrator. She is one of the most famous African-American slaves during the time of the Civil War. Her autobiographical account, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is an eloquent and uncompromising narrative of her struggle for self-identity, self-preservation, and freedom for herself and for her children from slavery. It chronicles the remarkable odyssey of her dauntless spirit and faith which carried her from a life of servitude and degradation in North Carolina to liberty and reunion with her children in the North.

Jacobs contributed to the genre of slave narrative by using the techniques of sentimental novels "to address race and gender issues." She explores the struggles and sexual abuse that female slaves faced as well as their efforts to practice motherhood and protect their children when their children might be sold away. In the book, Jacobs addresses White Northern women who fail to comprehend the evils of slavery. She makes direct appeals to their humanity to expand their knowledge and influence their thoughts about slavery as an institution.

Jacobs composed *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* after her escape to New York, while living and working at Idlewild, the home of writer and publisher Nathaniel Parker Willis. Jacobs' suffering and her struggle to make a sense for her life and her children among all horrors enabled her to win the authorship to her novel as an autobiography by a female slave. It was written at a time when education for slaves was considered very dangerous against

slavery in the nineteenth century United States for it would enable the slaves to discover the truth and ask for their liberation.

Harriet Jacobs was the first slave woman to write her own experiences living under slavery, and is one of many hundreds of slave narratives that were written during the antebellum period. She was treated badly as she was abused, mistreated, assaulted, and beaten. She discovered all the black history of American slavery to show the true meaning of freedom for herself and her children through her decisions which resulted from her sufferings.

When we trace African American Literature it is a body of literature produced in the United States by the writers of African descent. African American literature has become an inevitable part of American literature and culture. It explores the issues of freedom and equality of blacks. The genre began during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with writers such as poet Phillis Wheatley and orator Frederick Douglass and continues today with writers such as Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou and Walter Mosley being ranked among the top writers in the United States. African American literature tends to focus on the themes of particular interest to black people, the role of African Americans within the larger American society and issues such as African American culture, racism, religion, slavery, freedom, and equality. African American writing has tended to incorporate oral forms, such as spirituals, sermons, gospel music, blues or rap.

The strong presence of African American literature has paved way for the emergence of Native American, Asian American, and Chicano American streams of literature. It is only with the significant representation of African American literature that the American society stands to be cleansed

from the problem of racial discrimination. African American literature has examined the problem of racial discrimination in all its philosophical, existential and epistemological aspects. It has travelled from mid eighteenth century with slave narratives to the current times with all its socio-literary exuberance initiating a literary and cultural transformation in the fabric of American society.

The African American writers sought to demonstrate the proposition “all men are created equal” in the declaration of Independence which required that black Americans be extended the same human rights as those claimed by white Americans. In advance over the high point of slave narratives, African American literature was dominated by autobiographical spiritual narratives. The genre known as slave narratives in the nineteenth century were accounts by people who had generally escaped from slavery, about their journeys to freedom and the ways they claimed their lives.

The African American female literature is an educational tool used in America by women of African descent. This use of education became very popular to African American women around the eighteenth century and is becoming even more popular in the twenty-first century. Their writings became a platform for many African American women to speak out their own opinions that involves society and being a woman in society. Social issues discussed in their books include racism, sexism, classism and social equality which marked its trace for the Harlem Renaissance.

The Harlem Renaissance marked a turning point for African American literature. The Harlem Renaissance of the 1920 to 1940 brought new attention to African American literature. It was a great period of flowering in African

American literature and the arts were influenced by the writers who came from North in the Great Migration and those who were immigrants from Jamaica and other Caribbean Islands. Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes are the two most influential writers to come out of the Harlem Renaissance, a number of other writers also became well known during this period. Before the American civil war, the literature primarily consisted of chronicles by people who had escaped from slavery; the genre of slave narratives included accounts of life under slavery and the path of justice and redemption to freedom. A sub - genre of African American literature which began in the middle of the nineteenth century is the slave narrative. African American literature is dominated by autobiographical narratives and reached its peak by slave narratives. Slave narratives depicted the personal experiences of slaves who had escaped from slavery and developed in the middle of the nineteenth century. Their common motifs included physical and psychological abuse of slavery by white owners and quest for freedom and education. Slave narratives gave the people who lived in the North a glimpse of the slave relationships with each other, the bond and love between family members and respect of the elders. To present the true reality of slavery, a number of former slaves such as Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass wrote slave narratives, soon became a mainstay of African American literature. Some six thousand former slaves from North America and the Caribbean wrote accounts of their lives, with about 150 of these were published as separate books or pamphlets.

Slavery in the United States of America and its colonial predecessors lasted for almost two hundred and fifty years, from the first enslaved Africans brought to the colony of Virginia in 1619 to the constitutional abolition of

slavery in 1865. Such a long period of slavery inevitably influenced literature written during that time. In fact, an entirely new genre arose during the era of slavery: the slave narrative. According to Donna M. Campbell of Washington State University, slave narratives are “the stories of enslaved people recount[ing] the personal experiences of antebellum African Americans who had escaped from slavery and found their way to safety in the North”).

Slave narratives became one of the most controversial, but also one of the most influential genres in American literature. The usual purpose of such stories was to show the reality of the life of the slave in America and to convince people that slavery had to end. Harriet Jacobs was the first enslaved African-American woman to author her own narrative. Before that writers such as Sojourner Truth had her story narrated through scribes because she was an illiterate.

The autobiographies of former slaves in America are the foundation of the African American literary tradition. It gives a glimpse into the very lives of the slaves themselves and also a way of getting us to understand the nature of slavery. There have been several debates around the authorship of slave and the motives of slave narratives.

In the case of authorship, former slaves were constantly doubted and questioned about the authenticity and veracity of their stories and writings. The role of abolitionists was very important in authenticating the authorship of the slave narratives. White abolitionists found it necessary to layout well-defined conventions and formulae for writers to follow for in most cases potential narrators did not possess literary skills;

the abolitionists took up the task of recording the oral narratives of the fugitives.

One of the defining characteristics of the slave narrative is the testimonial or letter of authenticity generally written by a white editor or abolitionist friend of the narrator. In order to be published, black authors had to be endorsed by whites who could testify to their credibility and the authenticity of their stories.

Another defining characteristic of the slave narrative is a phrase such as “Written by Herself” in the narrative’s title, and an opening statement such as “I was born. . . ,” followed by a place of birth, but no birth date. The body of the narrative generally includes vague references to the narrator’s parents, descriptions of a cruel master or overseer, descriptions of whippings and other brutal treatments, and accounts of slaves being sold on the auction block.

Other distinguishing characteristics of the slave narrative are its simple, forthright style; vivid characters; and striking dramatic incidents, particularly graphic violence and daring escapes, such as that by Henry “Box” Brown, who packed himself into a small crate and was shipped north to waiting abolitionists.

Slave narratives are patterned after the biblical story of the Jewish people’s escape from Israel and their subsequent journey to the Promised Land. Consequently, slave narratives often assume a religious framework and explore several common themes, such as the quest for freedom, the search for home, redemption and salvation, the search for deliverance from evil, and the crossing of boundaries. Because slaves were legally denied the right to read and write, often under penalty of disfigurement or death, American slave

narratives also focus on the quest for literacy, which was often linked with the quest for freedom. (Slaves who could read and write were more likely to escape, because they could forge their own passes and read about the successful escapes of other slaves.)

Like the Negro spirituals, slave narratives have had a profound impact on contemporary American literature. And like the spirituals — which often contain secret codes decipherable only by enslaved blacks — they were considered dangerous and subversive by slaveholders, who feared that they might incite slave revolts and riots.

Historians estimate that more than 250 organized slave revolts and conspiracies took place in what is now U.S. territory, and thousands more occurred in the Caribbean and in Central and South America. The leaders of slave revolts were often seen as murderers and lunatics by whites. Among blacks, however, they were usually viewed as heroes and martyrs, although some slaves saw them as dangerous to their own survival. The most infamous slave revolts were those led by Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Nat Turner. Although all three men were ultimately apprehended and executed, their courage and daring inspired other blacks to fight for their freedom and to cling to the hope that they, too, would someday be free.

In 1800, Gabriel Prosser, a slave living on a plantation in southern Virginia, vowed to escape the brutal treatment of his master, Thomas Prosser. He organized a plot in which approximately 1,100 slaves were to take Richmond. Prosser envisioned that his “army” would eventually be joined by as many as 50,000 more. As the time for the revolt drew near, two of the slaves warned authorities of the plot. As a result, Prosser and 35 other slaves

were executed, and the Prosser conspiracy gained national attention. Governor James Monroe described it as “unquestionably the most serious and formidable conspiracy we have ever known.”

Several years later in South Carolina, Denmark Vesey, a slave who had purchased his freedom in 1800 with money from a winning lottery ticket, led another uprising. Vesey, who was a native of St. Thomas in the West Indies, worked as a carpenter in Charleston, South Carolina. Over a period of seven months, he planned an uprising to “liberate” the city, encouraging slaves to seize weapons, commandeer ships, and sail for the West Indies. Vesey’s plot attracted more than 9,000 slaves and free blacks, but several slaves betrayed him, leading to the arrest of 131 blacks and four whites. In the end, at least 35 men, including Vesey, were executed.

By far the most notorious and successful slave rebellion was led by Nat Turner in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1831. Turner was born in Southampton County on October 2, 1800, the same year Prosser led his rebellion and Vesey was freed. Turner was raised by his mother and paternal grandmother after his father ran away, and he was 31 years old when he led his infamous rebellion, often called his *insurrection*.

Turner, who was the slave of Joseph Travis, was a preacher who saw visions and felt divinely inspired to lead his people to freedom. He plotted his revolt for six months, sharing his plan with only four others. On the day the revolt was to take place, he and his men gathered in the woods and then began their raid by attacking the Travis plantation and killing the entire family. By the following morning, Turner’s group, which had grown to 60, had travelled through the county, killing at least 57 whites. As the revolt progressed,

Turner's "army" continued to grow. They were finally stopped on their way to Jerusalem, the county seat, where they had hoped to gain additional support and replenish their ammunition. Thirteen slaves and three free blacks were hanged, but Turner was not captured until two months later, less than five miles from where the raid had begun.

Thomas R. Gray, a lawyer and plantation owner assigned as Turner's defence counsel, interviewed Turner during his trial and later published *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, a pamphlet containing the story of Turner's rebellion from his own point of view. (William Styron later wrote an awardwinning novel by the same title, which drew much controversy from blacks who claimed it presented a totally distorted view of Turner.) Gray made no attempt to defend Turner and called no witnesses to testify on his behalf. As a result, Turner was hanged on November 11, 1831. His corpse was skinned and his flesh was used for grease.

Turner's revolt led to harsh laws throughout the South, further restricting the limited freedom of blacks. It also spurred blacks and abolitionists into action and increased tensions between the North and South. Instead of engaging in organized revolt, many slaves ran away in order to escape the bondage of slavery.

In their book *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* historians John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger explore this form of rebellion. Franklin and Schweninger describe three categories of runaways: *absentees* (slaves who left the plantation for a few days or weeks); *outliers* (slaves who hid in the woods for months or even years); and *maroons* (slaves who established camps in remote swamps and bayous). The authors also discuss the role of "term

slaves” (slaves who were to be set free at some future date) and free blacks, who sometimes helped others escape. According to the authors, the “typical” runaway was a young male plantation hand between the ages of 13 and 29.

One of the primary methods of escape for runaways was the infamous Underground Railroad, a secret network of blacks and whites that illegally helped fugitive slaves reach safety in the North or Canada. The network, also referred to as the “Liberty Line,” used railroad terms to describe its operations. For example, guides were referred to as “conductors,” hiding places were “stations” and groups of slaves were “trains.” The “Liberty Line” generally ran from Virginia and Kentucky across Ohio or from Maryland across Pennsylvania to New York, New England, and Canada.

From 1830 to 1860, it is estimated that nearly 9,000 fugitives passed through Philadelphia and nearly 40,000 through Ohio. The most famous black conductor was Harriet Tubman, who was often compared to the biblical character of Moses because she made at least ten trips North over a period of ten years, leading more than 200 slaves to freedom.

In addition to running away, slaves also used more subversive tactics to escape slavery, such as self-mutilation and arson. And mothers sometimes killed themselves and their children to save them from slavery, as Jacobs alludes in her novel. Because slave narratives document the horrors of slavery as experienced by ex-slaves, they serve as a powerful tool for exposing the brutalities of the chattel slave system, which defined people as “property.” The narratives also served as a testament to the courage and dignity of black men and women who were perceived by their “masters” as subhuman creatures without souls.

Slave narratives first appeared in the United States around 1703, but most were published during the era of abolitionism, from 1831 to the end of the Civil War in 1865. One of the most prominent slave narratives published during this period was Frederick Douglass' *Narrative* (1845). Other narratives of this period include William Wells Brown's *Narrative of William W. Brown, Written by Himself*; *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavas Vasa, the African*; and *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave*.

After 1865, over 60 book-length narratives were published, including Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery*, and James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*. Under the federal government's Work Projects Administration, the largest single group of slave narratives was collected. The collection gathered in the South in the mid-1930s includes 2,194 oral histories of elderly ex-slaves.

Slave narratives can be broadly classified into three distinct forms: tales of religious redemption, tales to inspire the abolitionist struggle, and tales of progress. The tales written to inspire the abolitionist struggle are the most famous because they tend to have a strong autobiographical motif. Many of them are now recognized as the most important literary figures of all the nineteenth century writings by African Americans, with two of the best-known being Frederick Douglass's autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* which was published in 1854 and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs (1861).

The first African American novel published in the United States was Harriet

Wilson's *Our Nig* (1859). It expressed the difficulties of lives of northern free blacks. *Our Nig* was rediscovered and republished by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., in the early 1980's. He labelled the work fiction and argued that it may be the first novel published by an African American. Parallels between Wilson's narrative and her life have been discovered, leading some scholars to argue that the work should be considered autobiographical. Despite these disagreements, *Our Nig* is a literary work which speaks to the difficult life of free blacks in the North who were indentured servants.

When Harriet Jacobs wanted to tell her story, she lacked the skills to write the story herself. She had learned to read while young and enslaved, but, at the time of her escape to the North in 1842, she was not a proficient writer. The subject matter of her book - sexual abuse of slave women - was a taboo in the mid-19th century, and Harriet had struggled over whether or not to expose herself so publicly. But she realized the significance of her story and decided to go ahead, although she wrote under the pseudonym, Linda Brent, and assigned fictitious names to everyone mentioned in the book.

Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs wrote in a similar way, by sharing their compelling stories that consisted of many hardships and obstacles. The two authors depicted their life stories in their biographies. To some extent, Douglass actually wrote his first autobiography in order to communicate, among other things, how he became so eloquent that many people asked themselves if he could ever have been a slave. Harriet Jacobs, even though she did not have such a spectacular rise in the anti-slavery circles as Douglass, was in her own way remarkable for she wrote her autobiography

herself and claimed this achievement in the title of her text. Their narratives were able to attract attention and point out on the savagery of slavery. In adapting her life story to this genre, Jacobs drew on women writers who were contemporaries and even friends, including well-known writers Lydia Maria Child and Fanny Fern.

Harriet Jacobs is one of the most famous African-American slaves during the time of the Civil War. She is famous for several reasons. Most notably, she wrote her own autobiography documenting the experiences of her life as a slave in North Carolina during the antebellum period of the United States. Harriet was actively involved with the abolition movement before the launch of the Civil War. During the war she used her celebrity to raise money for black refugees. After the war she worked to improve the conditions of the recently-freed slaves.

Harriet Ann Jacobs was born at Edenton, North Carolina, in 1813 to Delilah, the daughter of Molly Horniblow (Aunt Martha), the slave of Margaret Horniblow, and to Daniel Jacobs, a carpenter, the slave of Dr. Andrew Knox. When she was six years old, Jacobs' mother died, and Jacobs was taken into the household of her mistress, Margaret Horniblow, who taught her to read, spell, and sew. When she was 12, Margaret Horniblow died and willed Harriet to her five-year-old niece, Mary Matilda Norcom (Miss Emily). As a result, Harriet and her brother, John S. Jacobs (William) moved into the household of Dr. James Norcom (Dr. Flint). Shortly after Jacobs' arrival to the Norcom house, her father dies. Feeling sad and alone, Jacobs' life is made even more unbearable by Norcom's determination to make her his concubine. Desperate to escape Norcom, Jacobs entered into a sexual

relationship with Samuel Tredwell Sawyer (Mr. Sands) at 15, with whom she had two children: Joseph and Louisa Matilda (Ben and Ellen).

Undaunted, Norcom continued to pursue Jacobs. When she repeatedly rejected his advances, he sends her to work on a plantation several miles from Edenton. Secure in the knowledge that her children are safe with her grandmother, Jacobs adjusts to plantation life, but when she learns that Norcom plans to send her children to the plantation, she runs away, hiding out at the homes of friends, both black and white. Thinking she has escaped, Norcom sells Jacobs' children and brother to a slave trader, unaware that he is acting on behalf of Sawyer, who allows them to return to Jacobs' grandmother's house. Determined to be near her children, Jacobs spends seven years hiding in her grandmother's attic, where she passes the time sewing and reading the Bible.

Between 1838 and 1842, three events occurred that convinced Jacobs to escape. Sawyer took Louisa Matilda to Washington, D.C., to live with him and his new wife, Lavinia Peyton, and then sends her to his cousins in Brooklyn, New York. Jacobs' brother John ran away from Sawyer, his master. Aunt Betty (Aunt Nancy) died, plunging her grandmother into nearinconsolable grief at the loss of her daughter. Following her escape, Jacobs spent several years as a fugitive slave, alternately living in Boston and New York and supporting her children by working as a seamstress.

In 1849, Jacobs moved to Rochester, New York, where she helped her brother run an antislavery reading room, office, and bookstore in the same building that also housed the offices of Frederick Douglass' newspaper, *The*

North Star. In Yellin's "Introduction" to her 1987 edition of *Incidents*, she notes that "the breadth of the references to literature and current events in *Incidents* suggests that during her eighteen months in Rochester [Jacobs] read her way through the abolitionists' library of books and papers" which included "the latest and best works on slavery and other moral questions." During this time, Jacobs also began working with a group of antislavery feminists, which led to her meeting with the abolitionist Amy Post. Post became one of her closest friends and encouraged her to publish her story, despite her understandable reluctance to reveal her painful private life to the public.

Jacobs escaped from slavery at 27 but started writing her book 10 years later, following numerous attempts to gain support for the publication of her manuscript. She had initially sought support from Harriet Beecher Stowe, who had gained renown with her publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. But instead of helping her, Stowe offered to include Jacobs' story in her book, *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Disappointed and determined to tell her own story, Jacobs began compiling her narrative in 1853, completing it in 1858.

After travelling to Boston to obtain letters to abolitionists abroad, she sailed to England to sell her book. She was unsuccessful, and she returned home and approached Boston publisher, Phillips and Sampson, who agreed to accept the manuscript, and then went bankrupt. Undaunted, Jacobs sent her manuscript to Thayer and Eldridge, another Boston publisher, who agreed to publish it on the condition that it included a preface from Lydia Maria Child. Jacobs' friend, William C. Nell, introduced Jacobs to Child, who agreed to write the preface and act as Jacobs' editor. Shortly after the contract is signed (with Child acting for Jacobs), Thayer and Eldridge also went bankrupt.

At this point, Jacobs decided to purchase the plates of her book and publish it herself. It was finally published in 1861 by a third Boston printer. In 1862, the English edition, *The Deeper Wrong*, was published in London. Jacobs explored such themes as the horrors of sexual abuses by her master, the bond with her grandmother, and her love for her children. It has generally been considered to be a precursor of the black feminist narrative. Following the publication of her book, which received little public acclaim until it was rediscovered more than 100 years later as part of the new renaissance of black women writers, Jacobs spent the remaining years of her life as an activist, supporting herself by working as a seamstress and later running a boarding house in Cambridge, Massachusetts. After her brother's death in 1875, Jacobs and her daughter moved to Washington, D.C., where Louisa Matilda, following her mother's example, helped organize meetings of the National Association of Colored Women. Jacobs died on March 7, 1897, in Washington, D.C. She is buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge.

Harriet Jacobs stands as a testament to women everywhere who struggles for freedom and survival, demand dignity and respect, and refuse to settle for less than equal representation and full participation in society. In addition to the extraordinary incidents of her life as a heroic woman who fought for and won freedom for herself and her two children, one of the most intriguing aspects of Jacobs' life revolves around her relationship with her editor, Child, who was frequently cited as the "real" author of Jacobs' book by critics who believed that Jacobs' style was too sophisticated for a former slave who lacked formal education. But Child insisted that she did very little editing, crediting Jacobs with authorship of the manuscript. As further evidence that

Jacobs wrote the narrative in her own words, Yellin cites numerous letters written by Jacobs, which exemplify an identical style. By encountering scepticism concerning the originality of her work, Jacobs who is credited to be the first black woman to write a book-length narrative suffered the same criticism as her predecessor Phillis Wheatley (1753-1784), the first black woman to publish a book of poetry.

The usual criticism levelled against African American literary criticism is that it tends to be programmatic and prescriptive. All the significant African American writers chose to employ an appropriate mode of representation to advance the cause of African American creative expression. Accustomed to heavily edited slave narratives that were mass-produced by the abolitionist movement, nineteenth-century readers shunned Jacobs' narrative because of its content as well as its form. Jacobs' use of dialogue in the text was particularly offensive to the nineteenth-century reader, who believed that dialogue fictionalized autobiography. Literary scholars also rejected the text, dismissing it as a highly fictionalized account of the slave woman's life, one that was modelled on popular romantic fictions of the time.

First published in 1861, *Incidents* was "discovered" in the 1970s and reprinted in 1973 and 1987. Since then, several editions of *Incidents* have been published. The most complete and comprehensive version of the narrative is the 1987 Harvard University Press edition, edited by Jacobs' biographer, Jean Fagan Yellin, a professor at New York's Pace University. (The second edition is scheduled for release in April 2000.) In addition to her efforts to establish the authenticity of Jacobs' narrative, Yellin also brought *Incidents* to the attention of readers, scholars, and critics who had long ignored or dismissed

the work because it failed to meet the standards of the male slave narrative, as defined by male critics such as Robert Step to and James Olney.

After being ignored by scholars for decades, the text was re-discovered by Professor Jean Fagan Yellin, who published her study of the narrative in 1981. Since that time, scholars such as William Andrews, Sidonie Smith, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and others have written extensively about the Jacobs' autobiography. A scholarly re-reading of the text has shed considerable light on the history of the narrative, its authenticity, and its unusual form. Modern scholars also reject the earlier assumption that dialogue fictionalizes autobiography. Jacobs' use of dialogue is considered to be a brilliant, if misunderstood, attempt to re-create the context in which the incidents of her life take place.

The renewed interest in the Jacobs text has resulted in a more liberal definition of autobiography, which now includes numerous texts by writers previously not entitled to the autobiographical "I" of the dominant culture. Subsequently, the definition of the universal human subject has been expanded to include those who were previously marginalized as other.

Armistead Lemon describes Jacobs's narrative as "the most widely-read female antebellum slave narrative 3). Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* can be taken as an illuminating example of the slave narrative genre, revealing the characteristics of this literature, such as the structure and pattern of the story, and the literary and rhetorical devices used. Jacobs's narrative conveys the most important aspects of the genre, enabling the reader to gain a clearer perspective on the lives of the enslaved. Slave narratives emphasized the horrific impact slavery had on enslaved people. In their article on slave

narratives, Allyson C. Criner and Steven E. Nash observe that “[slave] narrators [describe] slavery as a condition of extreme physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual deprivation.

Incidents is the most sophisticated, sustained narrative dissection of the conventions of true woman-hood by a black author before emancipation ... Jacobs used the material circumstances of her life to critique conventional standards of female behaviour and to question their relevance of applicability to the experience of black women. (47)

Chapter Two

Dehumanizing Effects of Slavery

Harriet Jacobs under the pseudonym, Linda Brent, narrates the hardships of slavery in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Not only does Jacobs expand upon the horrors of the toxic and violent relationship between slave and master but also upon the life of a female slave. Using her own harrowing experiences, she describes the dehumanizing effects of slavery as an institution, and how these emboldened her to escape from her southern slave master Dr. Flint, and to risk everything in seeking emancipation in the Northern States. It is with an unquenchable conviction that she highlights the poor conditions in which slaves are held, and the inherent evil nature of slavery itself, that requires total eradication from human society.

When Jacobs has determined to convince the world of the devastating and dehumanizing impact of slavery on women, she decides to document her horrific experiences as an enslaved African woman. Because she wanted to protect those individuals who might be hurt by her exposé, she assumed the pseudonym Linda Brent and, with the assistance of her editor, L. Maria Child, wrote what was to become one of the most powerful narratives of the slavery experience from a female perspective. In the book, Jacobs addresses White Northern women who fail to comprehend the evils of slavery she makes direct appeals to their humanity to expand their knowledge and influence their thoughts about slavery as an institution.

Jacobs showed that enslaved women had a different experience of motherhood but had strong feelings as mothers despite the constraints of their

position. Jacobs was clearly aware of the womanly virtues, as she referred to them as a means to appeal to female abolitionists to spur them into action to help protect enslaved Black women and their children. In the narrative, she explains life events that prevent Linda Brent from practicing these values, although she wants to. For example, as she cannot have a home of her own for her family, she cannot practice domestic virtues.

Jacobs's main focus in her *Incidents in the life of a Slave Girl* depicts everything her autobiographical protagonist, Linda, endures as a slave. Linda, the first-person narrator, starts the story with the phrase "I was born a slave" (8) frames all the subsequent events. It is a long journey with many obstacles, and only the strongest make it to the happy ending. In addition to the structure, as a slave narrative it has a specific story pattern, depicting the events related to loss of innocence, phases of servitude, pursuit of education, acts of sexual abuse, and escape attempts.

Major themes in *Incidents* include the economics of slavery; the quest for freedom; pain and suffering both physical and emotional; self-definition; self-assertion; community support and family loyalty, (generally lacking in slave narratives by men); and writing as a means of freedom, self-expression, and resistance. Also significant is the issue of literacy, which was often used as a metaphor for freedom, because slaves who learned to read and write were often the ones who ran away, as that of the letters Linda writes while hiding in her grandmother's garret which play an important part in her eventual escape. Other themes include the moral conflict between slavery and Christianity, Colour prejudice and racism, the bond of motherhood, family loyalty, and abandonment.

Incidents can be divided into five distinctive parts each focusing on significant events in Linda's life. Consequently, the structure deviates from that of the traditional slave narrative. Although some chapters focus strictly on Linda's story, others provide social, political, or historical commentary. The work also offers a new perspective on historical events such as the Nat Turner insurrection. It is unique in that it addresses specific audience, white women in the North and speaks for black women still held in bondage.

The story pattern shows divisions that provide more details, breaking down the stages of the narrative. In the initial stage of Jacobs's story, a few events occur that are essential for Linda's character development. When introducing the protagonist, Jacobs stresses the time when Linda begins to learn about the world around her. For example, she discovers she is a slave only at the age of six, after both her parents die. Linda's pursuit of education commences with her first mistress, who is very kind to her and teaches her how to read. Linda says, "My mistress had taught me the precepts of God's Word," (10) meaning that even her religious knowledge comes from her first owner. Linda's education in the initial stages is an essential foundation for the stage of crisis because, once taught to do the right thing, Linda is reluctant to commit immoral acts. Knowing her childhood circumstances and the little education she receives helps the reader better understand Linda's moral dilemma in the stage of crisis and transition.

After briefly talking of her earliest childhood, her parents and her brother, Jacobs begins her book with the history of her grandmother. At the end of the book, Jacobs relates the death of her grandmother in 1853, soon after Jacobs had obtained her legal freedom, using the very last sentence to

mention the “tender memories of my good old grandmother.” Molly Horniblow obtained her freedom in 1828, when Jacobs was about 15 years old, because friends of hers bought her with the money she had earned by working at night.

In Jacobs's autobiography there are two slaves who dare to resist their masters physically, although such an act of resistance normally is punished most cruelly: Her uncle Joseph (called “Benjamin” in the book) throws his master to the ground when he attempts to whip him, and then runs away to avoid the punishment of a public whipping. Her brother John (called “William”) is still a boy, when the son of his master tries to bind and whip him. John puts up a fight and wins. Although the “young master” is hurt, John gets away with it. Other slaves mentioned in the book, women as well as men resist by running away, although some have to pay dearly for that. Jacobs's uncle Joseph is caught, paraded in chains through Edenton and put in jail, where his health suffers so much that he has to be sold for a very low price. Jacobs also tells of another fugitive who is killed by the slave catchers.

While physical resistance is less of an option for enslaved women, they still have many ways of resisting. Molly Horniblow, Jacobs's beloved grandmother, should have been set free at the death of her owner in 1827. But Dr. Norcom, Jacobs's abusive master and the son-in-law and executor of the will of Molly Horniblow's owner, wants to cheat her out of her freedom, citing debts which have to be settled by selling the deceased's human property. Norcom tells the enslaved woman that he wants to sell her privately in order to save her the shame of being sold at public auction, but Molly Horniblow insists on suffering that very shame. The auction turns out according to Molly

Horniblow's plans: A friend of hers offers the ridiculously low price of \$50, and nobody among the sympathizing White people of Edenton is willing to offer more. Soon after, Jacobs's grandmother is set free.

Both Harriet Jacobs and her brother John frustrate the threats of their master by simply choosing what was meant as a threat: When Dr. Norcom throws John into the jail, which regularly serves as the place to guard slaves that are to be sold, John sends a slave trader to his master telling him he wants to be sold. When Norcom tells Harriet to choose between becoming his concubine and going to the plantation, she chooses the latter, knowing that plantation slaves are even worse off than town slaves.

Harriet Jacobs also knows to fight back with words: On various occasions, she doesn't follow the pattern of submissive behaviour that is expected of a slave, protesting when her master beats her and when he forbids her to marry the man she loves, and even telling him that his demand of a sexual relationship is against the law of God.

As Craig White suggests that a slave narrative genre has three stages in its structure: the initial, the transitional, and the climactic, in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* the first stage present the author's personal experience as a slave. The transitional stage involves a moment of crisis in the narrator's life, some kind of challenge that has a big impact on the person. The final stage is the climactic stage, which most often depicts a successful escape from the slave owner. Linda, the first-person narrator, starts the story with the phrase "I was born a slave". Such a beginning immediately gives the reader a

perspective that frames all the subsequent events. It is an essential initial idea that extends throughout the text.

The transitional or crisis stage in Jacobs's narrative is the moment when Linda makes the decision to become pregnant by Mr. Sands, a white man who likes her. Jacobs asks her "virtuous reader" not to judge her harshly because "the slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standards as others" (888). Linda knows that what she is doing is immoral, but this is the only strategy that enables her to protect herself from Dr. Flint's harassment and to save her future child from being sold.

Finally, the climactic stage of Harriet Jacobs's narration is Linda's achievement of real freedom. Even though she has escaped her owner, Linda remains a hunted fugitive until she "[is] sold at last," when her friends pay Dr. Flint's relatives to stop chasing her; this is the moment when Linda begins a truly free life (898).

The three stages of the slave narrative appear in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, showing periods of Jacobs's life as a slave, from birth until freedom. The story pattern shows divisions that provide more details, breaking down the stages of the narrative. In the initial stage of Jacobs's story, a few events occur that are essential for Linda's character development. When introducing the protagonist, Jacobs stresses the time when Linda begins to learn about the world around her. For example, she discovers she is a slave only at the age of six, after both her parents die. Linda's pursuit of education commences with her first mistress, who is very kind to her and teaches her how to read. Linda says, "My mistress had taught me the precepts of God's

Word,” meaning that even her religious knowledge comes from her first owner.

Linda’s education in the initial stages is an essential foundation for the stage of crisis because, once taught to do the right thing, Linda is reluctant to commit immoral acts. Knowing her childhood circumstances and the little education she receives, helps the reader better understand Linda’s moral dilemma in the stage of crisis and transition. Slave narratives are rich in rhetorical devices. Slave narrators often use concrete imagery to create memorable images in readers’ minds. For instance, if the goal of a slave narrative is to depict the miserable life of enslaved African Americans, imagery is essential in portraying the mistreatment of the enslaved, the poor conditions in which they had to live, and all the rigorous labour imposed on them.

Chapters 1 and 2 describe the narrator's childhood and the story of her grandmother until she got her freedom. The narrator's story is then continued in chapters 4 to 7, which tell of the longing for freedom she shares with her uncle *Benjamin* and her brother *William*, *Benjamin's* escape, the sexual harassment by *Dr. Flint*, the jealousy of his wife, and the lover who she is forbidden to marry. Chapters 10 and 11 tell of her affair with *Mr. Sands* and the birth of her first child.

Chapters 14 to 21 tell of the birth of her second child, her removal from the town to *Flint's* plantation, her flight and her concealment in her grandmother's garret. The nearly seven years she had to spend in that narrow place are described in chapters 22 to 28, the last chapters of which concentrate on the fate of family members during that time: the escape of her brother

William (chapter 26), the plans made for the children (27), and the cruel treatment and death of her aunt *Nancy* (28). Her dramatic escape to Philadelphia is the subject of chapters 29 and 30. Chapters 31 to 36 describe her short stay in Philadelphia, her reunion with the children, her new work as nanny for the *Bruce* family, and her flight to Boston when she is threatened with recapture by *Flint*.

Chapter 35 focusses on her experiences with northern racism. Her journey to England with *Mr. Bruce* and his baby *Mary* is the subject of chapter 37. Finally, chapters 38 to 41 deal with renewed threats of recapture, which are made much more serious by the Fugitive Slave Law, the “confession” of her affair with *Mr. Sands* to her daughter, her stay with Isaac and Amy Post in Rochester, the final attempt of her legal owner to capture her, the obtaining of her legal freedom, and the death of her grandmother.

The other chapters are dedicated to special subjects: Chapter 3 describes the hiring out and selling of slaves on New Year's Day, chapter 8 is called *What Slaves Are Taught to Think of the North*, chapter 9 gives various example of cruel treatment of slaves, chapter 12 describes the narrator's experience of the anti-Black violence in the wake of Nat Turner's Rebellion, and chapter 13 is called *The Church And Slavery*.

As for the women slaves are concerned they suffered severe emotional damage, because they were the victims of the owners. They treated them as objects, yelled at them, and humiliated them. This torture caused the slaves to feel as if they were an object, in which any person could take over them. They had the worse, whenever they were taken apart from their children. Jacob

states: Both men and women were given punishments but women were brutally assaulted and physically abused since they were less physically able to do things like men could. On the contrary, the women had it worse than men did.

Regarding sex, the female slaves, were the ones to suffer more; because not only were they forced to do hard work, but also were forced to have some type of sexually contact. This occurred mostly, with females age 15 years and older. Jacobs gives a supportive statement, “My master met at every turn, reminding me that I belonged to him, and swearing by heaven and earth that he would compel me to submit to him,” he develops how in most cases, they were sold or rented with men like 12 years of age difference.

As Linda laments the birth of her daughter Ellen, she says “Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Why was slavery far more terrible for women?” Because, as Jacobs' story so poignantly illustrates, in addition to the horrors and brutalities endured by enslaved men, women bore the added anguish of being wrenched from their children. To compound their pain and degradation, enslaved women were often used as “breeders,” forced to bear children to add to their master's “stock,” but denied the right to care for them. In fact, it was not unusual for the plantation master to satisfy his lust with his female slaves and force them to bear his offspring. As Linda points out, children from such unions were often sold to protect the honour and dignity of the slaveholder's wife, who would otherwise be forced to face the undeniable evidence of her husband's lust.

When Jacobs describes how Linda goes to Dr.Flint to announce that she wants to marry a free black man, her words to the master sound like words

of a mature woman who is ready to start a family and knows what she wants in life. This conversation happens in the fifth chapter of the narrative. However, in the tenth chapter, the reader learns that at this point Linda is “a poor slave girl, only fifteen years old” (887). This discrepancy creates dissonance in the mind of the reader who is probably white and middle class because Linda’s age and her behaviour are not congruent. The irony helps Jacobs convey that the demands of slavery forced girls to mature into womanhood too early.

Although Harriet Jacobs’s *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* falls under the umbrella of the slave narrative genre and conforms to most of its characteristics, Albert Tricomi, a professor of English at the State University of New York at Binghamton, argues that Jacobs’s narrative has several unique qualities. Tricomi says that Jacobs’s story “absorbs many features of the biographical and the fictional slave narrative” (620). For instance, despite being based on her real-life story, the book does not completely represent Jacobs’s biography. Harriet Jacobs changes the names of every character in her story in order to protect the real people she talks about in the book. The author’s substitution of names may make readers question whether all the events in the story are equivalent to what happened to Jacobs in reality. Yet, because the author follows most of the best traditions of the slave narrative genre and she herself is an ex-slave and a woman, her story is still trustworthy and reliable as a portrayal of slave life.

As for as the imagery is concerned Jacobs uses concrete imagery to create memorable images in readers’ minds. For instance, if the goal of a slave narrative is to depict the miserable life of enslaved African Americans, imagery is essential in portraying the mistreatment of the enslaved, the poor

conditions in which they had to live, and all the rigorous labour imposed on them.

Harriet Jacobs pays considerable attention to the small details. For example, when Linda is hiding from her master in a garret, she describes the place precisely: “The garret was only nine feet long and seven wide. The highest part was three feet high, and sloped down abruptly to the loose board floor” (892). This short description of a place where Linda spends seven years as Caitlin O'Neill, a scholar in African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin, comments is “crucial to [Linda's] activist's beginning and is the site of her self-actualization” (O'Neill 56). Mention of the exact dimensions of the tiny room, where the woman has to spend the greater part of a decade, enables readers to visualize the garret and imagine the intensity of Linda's desire to be free, given that she is willing to live in such darkness and constriction to avoid slavery's worst abuses.

Apart from imagery, slave narratives often use satire or irony as one of the main rhetorical devices for story development. In her research on the rhetoric of slave narratives, Lynn A. Casmier-Paz, a professor in the English Department at the University of Central Florida, claims that Jacobs's identification in her title as a “slave girl” contradicts the wise voice of the narrator as she reports the events in the story (107). Moreover, Casmier-Paz relates that most covers of early editions of the book depict an old woman, not a girl (107). Such contrast creates ironic contradiction that emphasizes how quickly enslaved girls had to grow up.

In describing the economics of slavery, historians point out that although male slaves were generally valued for their labour and physical

strength, females were valued for their offspring. When Jacobs wrote her narrative, she addressed the women of the North, hoping to make them aware that, unless they spoke out in protest, they were just as guilty as Southern slaveholders of supporting and perpetuating the system of slavery.

When Linda has numerous opportunities to escape, she chooses to give up her freedom and her own life to save her children. Harriet Jacobs shows how the institution of slavery dehumanizes an individual both physically and emotionally. Based on Jacob's statement: "Slavery is bad for men, but is far more terrible for women." It can be identified that even though men had their struggle, women had it worst.

Another characteristic of Jacobs's writing is her use of language. Language, especially use of dialects, is an important part of a slave narrative because the characteristic speech patterns of the enslaved show their identity. However, Jacobs, as Tricomi notes, "represents herself and her family as speakers of Standard English" (625). Usually, authors of slave narratives stress how their speech differs from their masters' because of a lack of education. With her use of proper English, Jacobs could intend to show that Linda is educated in order to make her narrator more credible to her readers, who were predominantly white people. However, the author does use dialects and classical representation of "the black dialect" (625).

In the eighteenth chapter, "Months of Peril," Jacobs includes a dialogue with Betty that is full of the traditional depiction of the slave language. Betty says, "Honey, now you is safe. Dem devils ain't coming to search dis house" (Jacobs's ch. 8, par. 1). Despite not using dialects in portraying Linda's speech

and that of her close relatives, Jacobs still follows the classic pattern of the slave narrative genre in which black dialect is a prominent part of the story.

Slave narratives are often divided into chapters or sections that have numbers or titles. Harriet Jacobs's narrative is typical in this respect. As Maria Holmgren Troy, suggests that "fragmentation reflects the fashion in which slave families are repeatedly broken up" (20). Linda does not realize for a long time that she is a slave as she is not separated from her family. In the beginning, she says, her parents "lived together in a comfortable home ... [and] I never dreamed I was a piece of merchandise" (879). Linda's relatively happy childhood allows her to avoid the emotional trauma of family separation. However, later in life Linda, like Jacobs, does experience separation, first from her lover and later from her children. Jacobs's use of chapters reminds the reader of the rapid and sometimes tragic changes that slave owners imposed on the enslaved. North Carolinian researchers Marcella Grendler, Andrew Leiter and Jill Sexton assert that "slave narratives were an important means of opening a dialogue between blacks and whites about slavery and freedom" (3).

The emergence of the slave narrative genre enabled the enslaved to express themselves, to show the reality they had lived in. Harriet Jacobs was one of the first female slave writers to tell her story to a large readership. Even though she did not always conform to all the expectations of the genre, her work is still one of the best examples of the slave narrative. Jacobs's use of irony, dialect, fragmentation and other literary devices commonly used in the genre of slave narrative help people even today understand the horrific human cost of slavery.

Chapter Three

Religion as a Justification of Slavery

In *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Jacob exposes some of the harsh realities of the Christian faith and practice in both the South and the North. She describes how Christian slave owners invoke and manipulate biblical texts on submission to authority to reinforce and perpetuate attitudes of subservience among slaves. In this way, Christianity becomes a tool of oppression in the context of the institution of slavery. She distinguishes the Christianity practiced by the slaves and the hypocritical one practiced by the slave masters. Slave masters, are presented as hypocrites whose practices were contrary to Christianity's fundamental principles of brotherly love, humility, compassion and respect towards other Christians. Although slave owners taught their Christian slaves to heed to and practice the teachings of Christ as delineated in the Bible, their treatments of slaves were not consistent with the main biblical teachings of love and humanity.

Like many other slave narratives, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* is infused with religious references and poses a scriptural challenge to slavery. The role of religion in slave communities and in African-American history is complex. There exists a range of white slaveholding Christianity on the religious self-understanding of recently arrived African slaves as well as on later generations of African Americans. Religion is integral to most early nineteenth century black literature and oratory and the role played by diverse religions in early black activism is rigorously debated by scholars. Harriet

Jacobs constructs her story within an explicitly religious framework and directly condemns slave holding Christianity by claiming the validity of a more genuine Christianity. Her own religious views show some interesting internal conflicts that illustrate how difficult it was for enslaved Christians to embrace such traditional protestant people as submission and self-denial.

Christianity, the Bible, prayer and religious meetings were important in the lives of slaves in America. Generally, slaves were introduced to the Christian faith by their masters and, sometimes white family members of the household. African-American religion played dual roles in the lives of black people in America: a place of hiding and security from white dominance, and secondly as the people's identity. This duality puts in light a new religious reality that largely influenced the religious practice in the slave community and significantly accounts for traces of paradox in the expression of Christianity in the era.

In her autobiography *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs describes the youth of her alter-ego, Linda Brent, as a slave in the American South. The narrative often meditates on the existence of slavery within a society that purports to fulfil Christian principles. Linda observes the hypocritical Christianity practiced by her owners and the white community, who use religion as a justification for slavery. At the same time, she describes the sincere religious convictions that allow slaves to preserve dignity and strength even in the midst of constant degradation. In doing so, Jacobs affirms her own Christian faith while arguing that religion can be used to excuse evil just as easily as to promote justice.

Linda observes that her owners and much of the white community around her use Christianity to increase their social status and consolidate power over their slaves. Early in the narrative, Linda recalls that her first mistress taught her the Christian commandments to “love thy neighbour as thyself” and to treat others as she wants to be treated. However, the mistress’s religious commitments don’t stop her from leaving Linda to the Flints in her will, plunging her into decades of turmoil. Linda concludes that “she did not recognize me as her neighbour”; the mistress’s piety has enabled her to feel righteous without alerting her to the injustice of owning slaves.

Linda notes ironically that Dr. Flint frequently goes to church and donates to the collection box, but the devout image he cultivates in this way has no bearing on his willingness to own slaves and his predatory behaviour, especially towards Linda. This hypocrisy is characteristic of many slaveowning men in the narrative. Another time, Linda and some friends begin to attend services organized for slaves by the local Methodist church. The pastor, Reverend Pike, reads from a Biblical text that urges servants to obey their masters, and during his sermon berates the assembled group to work harder and faster, because God sees their “laziness.” Here, the church establishment is actively mobilized to give legitimacy to the institution of slavery.

At the same time, Christianity is an enormous source of emotional strength for Linda and other members of the black community. In one particular disturbing incident, Linda describes a white woman mocking at the bedside of a slave who is dying while giving birth to her master’s illegitimate child; she says that there is no heaven for “the like of her and her bastard,” but

the woman responds calmly that “God knows all about it, and He will have mercy on me.” In this situation, religious faith allows the slave to respond to these appalling insults with calm resolve, and to meet her death with tranquillity.

As she grows up, Linda is guided by her grandmother’s strict religious teachings. It’s her emphasis on the importance of chastity that makes Linda so determined to stand up to Dr. Flint. One of the narrative’s most touching moments comes when Linda and her grandmother pray together before her escape; in this case, Christianity cements their bond and gives them courage before a decisive action.

Although Linda at first feels she’s violated the precepts of religion by having an illegitimate affair, she later says that “God alone knows how I have suffered; and He, I trust, will forgive me.” Here, her sincere faith helps her cope with the social stigma of unwed motherhood; for Linda, Christianity is not about gaining social status but maintaining her dignity and self-respect in the face of constant oppression.

Because she lives in an extremely religious society and is a devout Christian herself, Jacobs invokes Christianity throughout her narrative. For her, religion provides moral support and the promise of divine justice, which is particularly important given that society offers no such people like her. However, even as she extols the virtues of Christianity, she is highly critical of people who use Christianity neither for personal growth nor to help others, but for the self-serving end of justifying slavery.

Linda also observes how the white pastors from North hypocritically accepted the Southern Christianity's use of the Bible to justify the institution as well as the high-handed attitudes of slave masters. One episode that illustrates Linda's reproach is how a clergyman from the North who was invited by the slave owners of the South to preach to their slaves presented slaves positively after being taken around by slave owners to observe the living conditions of a few privileged slaves who are living in relative comfort. Surprised by the clergy-man's sudden change of attitude, Linda describes him as a "northern man with southern principles" (169). She finds this attitude, which most Yankees seemed to adopt on coming to the South, as hypocritical: They seem to satisfy their conscience with the doctrine that God created the Africans to be slaves. What libel upon the heavenly Father, who "made of one blood all nations of men!" (170) Several episodes in Jacobs' narrative touch on this inconsistency in the attitudes and practices of slave owners, white public officials and even pastors.

The first concern of Linda's observations is about what she saw as relaxed attitude of the Methodist church in appointing people to leadership positions in the church and the economic motives of some of these appointees. A case in point is the appointment of the town constable as the leader of a Methodist class meeting that she attended and the 'unchristian' that he exhibited towards the class members. For Linda, the constable appears to have accepted to perform Christian duties not out of commitment to the faith but for the amount, "fifty cents" (199). Linda comes to this conclusion because she observed that the

constable does not even show any sign of empathy, love or care to the congregation. She portrays him as an unsympathetic and insensitive person who took pleasure in the suffering of others as shown in the way he responded to a grieving woman slave whose children had been taken away from her. Linda narrates that after the woman told her heartbreaking story and expresses her desire for God to take her life, the constable “become crimson in the face with suppressed laughter, while he held up his handkerchief, that those who were weeping for the poor woman’s calamity might not see his merriment” (200). Thus, Linda describes him as a “white-faced, black-hearted brother” (199).

Another incident where Linda expresses her shock is when she found out that Mr. Flint’s, her high-handed and wicked master, had joined the congregation of the Episcopal Church. The fact that a man such as Dr. Flint joins the church makes Linda question whether Christianity had an impact on the character of people at all. She saw no positive change in the attitudes of Dr. Flint after he joined the church. When Dr. Flint asked her to join the church, Linda answered sarcastically that she already found enough sinners in the church and hopes she “could be allowed to live like a Christian” (204) outside it.

Harriet Jacobs repeatedly presents the irony of religion in the institution of American slavery in her work. She presents several of the contradictions and hypocrisy she encounters. Right from the beginning, Jacobs identifies a paradox in the teachings of her mistress. Jacobs praises her mistress for the things she taught her as a slave including blessing her memory for the happy times she spent with her; she further

expresses her surprise and how she lost hope by the decision that was made by her late mistress to send her to serve someone else instead of liberating her. Linda's mistress taught her the precepts of God's word in the words of the Bible "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself...Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them" to which Linda retorts "But I was her slave" (128). The text above is found in Matthew 7:12 and has come to be known as the 'Golden Rule' prescribing the way people, especially Christians ought to relate with one another in reciprocity, fairness and equality. To make someone a slave will mean that one can also in like manner be made a slave but this was not the way Linda's mistress related to the Biblical principle.

By Linda's response, Jacob's sees the apparent contradiction in the meaning her mistress sought to convey to her and what she thought was the objective meaning of the scripture. Also, one gets the impression that the word "neighbour" either had more than one meaning or one exclusive meaning ascribed by the slaveholders. The latter seems more plausible in this case as Jacobs notes; "I suppose she did not recognize me as her neighbour" (128). Jacobs is compelled by the actions of her mistress to conclude sarcastically that perhaps slaves are not considered neighbours and the reference in the bible regarding loving and doing good to one's neighbours refers to an exclusive group of people including her mistress' kind and does not apply to slaves.

The sheer relativism that characterized the use of scriptures especially by the slaveholders presented the Bible as a manual for legitimizing the institution of slavery, justifying their unjust actions

towards the slaves and moulding the slaves into conformity with their wishes. This is so because, of the two, the slaveholders were literate and custodians of education. Any formal means of learning was the exclusive preserve of the slaveholders.

Slaves considered it a rare privilege to be taught by their kind owners to read and write because it was unlawful for a slave to have education. Therefore the disproportionate use of the precepts of God by slaveholders may not only have aided them to get away with the unjust treatments they meted out to the slaves but also exerted an influence on the way the slaves viewed the Bible and Christianity in general because they were their Bible teachers.

A paradox is found in the passage where Jacobs points out how slaves are taught to believe concerning the North. First of all, some of these slaves have been made to believe and accept that they are inferior and will be punished at any attempt for “running away from a kind master” (168). This statement is a comment made by a slaveholder when they returned from the North and told the slaves in the South about life for the free slaves in the North. Jacobs, after the slaveholder’s comment on life in the North, states that “slaveholders pride themselves upon being honourable men; but if you were to hear the enormous lies they tell their slaves, you would have small respect for their veracity” (168). This is another example of how and why the lives of the slaveholders cannot be trusted especially when the writer presents the lack of truth in their words and actions in general. Slaveholders create the impression that being a slave in the South is a better life and option compared to being

free in the North and some of the slaves believed this impression and lived by it.

Jacobs goes ahead to describe how freedom can make a man free but yet because many of the slaves have been made to believe that there is no worth in exchanging slavery for freedom, there is difficulty in persuading the slaves to believe otherwise especially in order to protect their families. In short, slaveholders have made it clear in their actions towards the slaves that slavery is better and more valuable than life itself. Here lies the paradox: by implication, every slaveholder is free; that freedom is what entitles them to have chattel slaves because a slave could not own another slave. Therefore, to suppose as slaveholders in the south did, that slavery was better in the south than life and freedom in the north is not only an exploitative deception but also a contradiction of their own status as free men.

One wonders why the slaveholders did not swap places with their slaves if it was good an option to be a slave. This can be said to be a calculated attempt by the slaveholders to use such philosophical statements to administer hegemony over the slaves. It also follows from the above mentioned contradiction that the slaveholders sought to create a social context within which to mediate a reconstruction of the status of slaves that negotiates a new identity; one that sees a free man in a slave in the South as opposed to one devalues the freedom of a slave in the North. Thus the quest for self-identity sought by the slaves through their struggle for freedom and emancipation was diminished and an imposed

identity was placed, at least, on most of the slaves who believed and settled with the status quo.

In the event of the death of Linda's father, her grandmother tries to console and comfort her, as it is a difficult period for her. Her faith as a little girl is being tested by death, which has taken away her father, mother, mistress and friend. Her faith crumbles and she eventually rebels against God. Her grandmother, in an attempt to console her, makes this remarkable statement: "who knows the ways of God? Perhaps they have been taken from evil days to come" (130). In a later statement made by Linda's grandmother in relation to the status of her grandchildren as slaves, Linda admits that her grandmother literally fought to make them accept their status as slaves as the will of God and that God "had seen it fit to place them under such circumstances; and though it seemed hard, [they] ought to pray for contentment" (138). When placed side by side, the two statements reveal some contradictions. In the first statement, it is clear from her grandmother's rhetorical question "who knows the ways of God?" (138), that no finite human mind can know God's ways, including herself. In the second statement, however, grandmother seems to know the ways of God as it relates to the slave status of her grandchildren enough to vigorously entreat them to settle with it.

It is also significant to note that it is paradoxical to claim that a situation such as slavery, with its consequent denial of comforts and human dignity in the antebellum south, is the will of God while admonishing the slaves to pray to the same God who supposedly willed it for them to grant them appeasement. This inconsistency indicts the quest

of her grandmother for her own freedom and affirms rather than condemns the practice of slavery from the biblical point of view. The tendency to relativize Christian teachings both by slaves and slave masters severely undermined the authority of the Bible as an objective moral framework for life. The reasoning of Jacobs and her siblings in reaction to what their grandmother said leans forward to what can be termed an objective proposition of the Bible “it is much more the will of God for us to be situated as she was [in freedom]” (138).

Another incident from chapter 4 from a conversation between Benjamin and his grandmother when they went to visit him in jail, illustrates the degree of contradiction on the issue of forgiveness. After his attempted escape proved abortive, Benjamin is recaptured and imprisoned by his master and the entire experience is distasteful to the poor slave. When asked about the role of God in withdrawing a decision to commit suicide when he was captured, Benjamin’s admission that he forgot about God when hunted like an animal triggered his grandmother’s response was, “Don’t talk so, Benjamin, Put your trust in God. Be humble, my child, and your master will forgive you” (144). Benjamin disagreed with his grandmother’s persuasion that he should ask for forgiveness from his master. He said, “Forgive me for what, mother? For not letting him treat me like a dog? No! I will never humble myself to him. I have worked for him for nothing all my life, and I am repaid with stripes and imprisonment. Here I will stay till I die, or till he sells me” (144). As the dialogue shows, Benjamin and his grandmother agree that there is an offense for which

forgiveness must be sought. However, they disagreed on who ought to be apologizing and asking for forgiveness.

Benjamin, like other like-minded slaves, believes that the slave owners should be the ones to apologize and ask for forgiveness from their mistreated slaves. He therefore does not see the logic in asking for forgiveness from a man whose delight is to treat him as an animal. His resolution to not humble himself and ask for forgiveness from his master can be considered as a reflection of the paradox embedded in his grandmother's gentle persuasion. Again when Benjamin was asked if he ever thought of God, he answered, "No, I did not think of him. When a man is hunted like a wild beast he forgets there is a God, a heaven" (144). He points out that his only focus was how to get out of his struggle and get beyond the reach of his attackers whom he referred to as "bloodhounds" (144). In this situation, we see how the slave Benjamin expresses his views of God in times such as what he described to his grandmother.

One would expect that as they believed and trusted God, they would constantly depend on him more especially in times of trouble but this slave makes us aware that even a slave in his desperation to be free sometimes does not look up to God. On the one hand there is a profession of faith in God but on the other hand, especially as it was inevitable in Benjamin's case, to seek divine intervention, the expressed action or reaction betrays the confessed faith in God, revealing a paradox of a kind. Jacobs draws attention to yet another paradox in chapter 5 where she notes; "If a pastor has offspring by a woman not his wife, the church

dismisses him, if she is a white woman; but if she is colored, it does not hinder his continuing to be their good shepherd” (204). Within the context of Christianity at the time, this pronouncement was most likely a creed by which the affairs of the formal church community were conducted. The substance of this self-made religious ideal hangs on the belief that a pastor’s culpability for the offense of having a child from an adulterous relationship is based on the skin colour and status of the woman with whom the act was committed. In essence, the act is not an offence deserving dismissal if the woman involved is a black slave. This shows that the interpretation of certain parts of the bible was manipulated to satisfy selfish interests.

The language in the creed above also accentuates the discursive practices that reveal the power relations in the slave era society. This discursive practice shows the assertion of power and designates the social status of slaves and slave owners, thus bringing the marked social stratification of the era into focus. In incidents, Jacobs equally presents a character whose lifestyle is different from what she appears to be. Mention is made of Mrs. Flint who is a member of the church, part of its several services, and also partaker of the Lord’s Supper (132).

According to Linda, “she is not one who appears to be living in her Christian frame of mind and the reason is simply because she acts inhumanely and seems to passively watch the cruel treatment of her slaves” (132, 133). She also has an attitude that can be described as insensitive especially her attitude towards her servants when dinner was

not served at an exact time. This is an opposite reflection of the life that is expected of Christians.

Jacobs describes slaveholders in a way that presents them as very horrible and insensitive people. She explains how women are considered nothing unless they were able to produce for their masters and how these slave owners who show how mean they are, profess to be “Christians” (175). This is considered hypocrisy and one of the masters mentioned in this page boasted in the name and standing of a Christian yet could be heartless enough to shoot a woman right through the head. His authority demands that no one questions him, as the belief is that no slave is ever valued and that a master has the right to do what he pleases with his slave who is also considered his own property. The other reason a master would care less for his slave or place no value on him is simply because the master has hundreds of them and has nothing to lose.

Jacobs uses the master’s self-proclaimed Christianity as a point to clearly reveal what she believes as the true perception and reality of Christianity: “the young lady was very pious and there was some reality of Christianity...her religion was not a garb put on for Sunday and laid aside till Sunday returned again” (175). This, in Jacobs’s opinion, was an example of the hypocrisy that was evident in the lives of the whites in the community as they were concerned more with the external show of their Christianity instead of the inner character. In chapter 13 of Jacob’s work, she points out that religion was used as a tool to prevent murder as the masters came to a conclusion that the slaves needed enough of religious instructions to prevent them from murdering their masters.

There is the mention of three churches - Methodist, Baptist and Episcopal- in place which, in their own way, made arrangements to hold services for the black slaves although there was a bit of difficulty to decide a suitable place for them to worship. Jacobs gives an example of the Rev. Mr. Pike and how he always gave out the portions of scripture to which he wished the black slaves read and respond. For example, "Servants be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ" (198). A good look at his entire sermon shows how he addresses slaves as though what all they do is only to steal and disobey their masters. There was not a line that was addressed to masters. Scriptures and sermons of this kind created the impression to slaves, especially those who could not read and write, that their masters were justified in the way they treated their slaves and how right the notion that slaves were just properties and made to work and serve. This way of preaching and the use of the bible by slaveholders led some slaves to distinguish between their master's bible Christianity and the slaves own experiential Christianity.

Thus throughout her book, Harriet Jacobs, *In Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, revealed American slave owners everywhere were hypocrites, and calling themselves Christians was the greatest sin of all.

Chapter Four

African American Women

African American women have traditionally moved a myriad of obstacles in their quest to success. From the moment African women set foot on America's shores, they have contended with both racism and sexism. During these struggles to survive, they often scaled the walls to confront barriers caused by the other. An accurate picture of the status of African American women cannot be formed by simply focusing on racial hierarchies. There have always been the issues of power and gender within the African American community.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the black woman's place in history and society has been problematized by racism, sexism, and in many cases classism. Though some black women have managed to surface to the forefront of certain political movements, stereotypes of immorality and inferiority have kept most on the fringe. The black woman, who found it difficult to "fit in" society because of her unique experiences, encountered the same dilemma in her place in literature. Literature, called a mirror of society, often reflected societal restraints, leaving the black woman and her condition voiceless or only partially revealed. The existing genres of the nineteenth century that black women occupied were the domestic / seductive genre of white women and the slave narrative genre of black men.

The African American women's historical role has been to provide nurturing comfort to her children and family, to hold on even though the world around her may be coming apart. One in four African American women is uninsured. This lack of health insurance, along with other socio economic

factors, continues to contribute to the dire health issues African American women face. The level of educational attainment for African American women has risen very slowly and still sits at a significantly lower level than that of white women. African American women owned businesses continue to grow despite significant financial and social obstacles. African American women continue to have higher rates of unemployment than white women and continue to have lower amounts of weekly usual earnings and median wealth compared to their male counterparts and white women. According to Williams, African American women vote in greater proportions than do African American men-nearly two of every three Black voters in 1992 were women. Similarly, African American women are rare among the higher ranks of Black businesses

While African American women have a rich history of leadership in their communities, they are underrepresented in all levels of government. African American women writers' works are most often both subtle and vociferous, dissenting voices against the tradition which demands female subordination. In today's African American literary world, one can find two kinds of exclusive black women writers. African American women writers have been an inspiration to this world by bravely sharing their stories, struggles, and triumphs. The nineteenth century was a formative period in African-American literary and cultural history. Prior to the Civil War, the majority of black Americans living in the United States were held in bondage. Law and practice forbade teaching blacks from learning to read or write.

Even after the war, many of the impediments to learning and literary productivity remained. Nevertheless, black men and women of the nineteenth century learned to both read and write. Moreover, more African-Americans than we yet realize turned their observations, feelings, social viewpoints, and creative impulses into published works. In “Times”, the nineteenth-century printed record included poetry, short stories, histories, narratives, novels, autobiographies, social criticism, and theology, as well as economic and philosophical treatises. Unfortunately, much of this body of literature remained, until very recently, relatively inaccessible to twentieth-century scholars, teachers, creative artists, and others interested in black life.

Prior to the late 1960s, most Americans had never heard of these nineteenth-century authors, much less read their works. Most of the nineteenth-century titles reprinted during the 1960s and 1970s, however, were by and about black men. A few black women were included in the longer series, but works by lesser-known black women were generally overlooked. The last two decades have witnessed an explosion of interest in writing by and about black women. In response to this interest, the Schomburg Centre, in collaboration with Dr. Henry Louis Gates and Oxford University Press, published the thirty-volume Schomburg Library of Nineteenth Century Black Women Writers in 1988. The Schomburg Centre is pleased to make this historic resource available to the public. It was created to share poetry, short stories, histories, narratives, novels, biographies, and autobiographies authored by nineteenth-century Black women writers, and honoured women such as Effie Waller Smith, Jarena Lee, Josie D. (Henderson) Heard, and Susie King Taylor, Harriet Jacobs, Elizabeth Keckley, and Sarah Jane Woodson Early.

Williams' Dessa Rose employs remnants of both the nineteenth century domestic novel and the slave narrative, but as an author of the twentieth century in the black women writers' tradition, she goes far beyond those parameters. These genres often had to be modified, expanded, or altered in some way to capture her life, experiences, and thoughts in writing.

Black women writers of the nineteenth-century, because of the parameters of these two genres, had to pave their own way and make their own traditions for writers yet to come; but this did not occur without cost and compromise in telling their complete stories. They were aware of society's definition of a "lady" and therefore tried to conform to it in their writings. They often used the domestic genre of white women to tell their stories. This collection is now out of print, but there is a continuing need to make works by 19th-century black women writers available to scholars, students and the general public alike.

African American women's autobiographies display a quite different orientation toward self and others from the typical one demonstrated in autobiographies by black men. Jacobs writes a slave narrative in which the strongest characters are not the masters but the female slaves. She reveals her vulnerability and difficult struggle toward selfhood and girlhood. Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1856), describes the horrible and inhumane slave experience through the voice of a "fictitious" narrator, a girl named Linda.

The audience for Jacobs' autobiography was the white American readers of her time. Writing an autobiography from a black female's perspective was itself an act of rebellion, since slaves were forbidden to read

or write. Using a fictional narrator gave the author distance that she needed between herself and everyone, including even the most ardent white abolitionists, many of whom were not ready to believe that a female slave could have written such a memoir. Jacobs' narrative strategies are simple and straightforward, yet the use of Linda, with her reasonable, timely voice, allows Jacobs to reconstruct the horrors of her slave life and her life as a runaway in ways that her readers could access easily, and could believe. By couching her story in fiction, Jacobs could relate the facts of her life.

Jacobs in her autobiography reinvents the miserable slave period to arouse peoples' consciences and awareness to fight against slavery. As an autobiographer, Jacobs feels the need to document her sexual oppression, but she doesn't want the focus to be exclusively on her personal story. Slavery, the "Peculiar Institution" of the South, caused suffering among an innumerable number of human beings. To expose slavery as a "pit of abominations" not only helped to undermine it, but by educating African Americans Jacobs frustrated the very idea of African American inferiority upon which slavery had been built. *In Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, is thus not only an account of the experiences she endured as an enslaved African American woman, but also, in light of her public activities as an educator and abolitionist, a text intended to enlighten white Northern women on why and how American slavery should be abolished.

Exposing in shrewd detail the institution of American slavery ostensibly meant, for Jacobs, exposing, among others things, her sexual abuse "for the world to read. With the same daring approach that she used to teach her uncle Fred to read and write, she intended to educate the hearts and minds

of women in the North on the issue of African American enslavement and the notion of racial equality. Harriet Jacobs had no formal education and she recognized the limits of her informal education as a slave, a fugitive slave and later a free African American woman. Like Jacobs, many enslaved African Americans yearned to gain knowledge, but most slaveholders forbade it.

Instead, they attempted to reinforce a “sense of innate inferiority” among slaves so as to mould them into being obedient and submissive. Part of Jacobs’ educating enterprise included teaching white women of the North to challenge their value assumptions, especially when considering the experiences of enslaved African American women. Thus, we can see that African American women like Harriet Jacobs were at the centre of African American education in antebellum America.

African American women in the North contributed to educational initiatives in their communities and they also spoke out on political issues. Their direct involvement in the antislavery reform movement arguably expanded the meaning of abolition to include educational opportunity and the fight for racial equality. However, being an antislavery activist in the North did not necessarily imply agreement with the notion of racial equality. Indeed, many white antislavery activists who vehemently opposed the institution of slavery did not view African Americans as equals. For example, membership in female antislavery societies was often closed to African American women. To resolve entrenched racial assumptions regarding membership, some white female antislavery societies reluctantly incorporated African American women. Unfortunately, as historian Julie Roy Jeffrey notes, African American

women were too often, regarded as an addition and an afterthought, if not second-class members.

Yet, African American women who joined antislavery societies alongside white women demanded respect, forcing white women to face their own racism. For those white women who believed in the struggle against slavery as well as the fight for racial equality, a real sense of interracial cooperation they encountered various problems, ranging from financial hardships to a lack of resources, as they tried to establish and run independent schools. Despite the white hostility directed toward African American education, African American women like Sarah Mapps Douglass and white women like Prudence Crandall devoted themselves to teaching and, in urban areas where a large African American population existed quite a few independent schools progressed.

The African American community in Alexandria raised the money needed to complete the building by hosting a fair, which enlisted the help of free African American women. This particular move was a strategic one by Jacobs, not only for its intended value to teach self-reliance, but also to break the tension among free African Americans who “feared “ the “great influx of degraded contrabands would drag them all down to the same level in social estimation. White Northern women often overlooked these class tensions, but Jacobs, acutely aware of them because of her experiences in the South and the North, wanted to address them head-on in order to mobilize and unite the community. Harriet Jacobs also wanted African Americans to learn the value of self-sufficiency and autonomy, two characteristics Northern white women often ignored in their teaching.

One way to promote these values was on the practical level by privileging the autonomy of African American institutions. According to Jacobs, the freed people discussed the issue “sensibly” and then voted “parliamentary style,” to have African American teachers manage the school. Throughout *Incidents*, Jacobs embodied a unique abolitionist spirit from girlhood to womanhood, from slavery to freedom. Her life’s work was to make African American people visible. She chartered education as a viable objective and carved out a space for African Americans that did not deny their experience, their voice, or their humanity but instead envisioned them as citizens of the nation. Her approach to education evolved from the moment that her mistress taught her to read and write.

Harriet Jacobs was a pioneer, not only for her activism as an abolitionist, but also, because of her educational aims, an incredible force that helped to shape post-Civil War life in America. Her collective points of view deflect attention from her personal circumstances to the effects of slavery has on all women victimized on the Southern plantation. Slavery is much worse for women, according to Jacobs: “Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortification peculiarly their own” (79). This observation from Jacobs articulates the emotional burdens put upon the black women.

Ironically, for slave mothers, New Year’s Day approaches with enormous pain and sorrow, because, far from being a joyful holiday, it is a traditional day to trade slaves. The pain of being separated from their children is devastating to all slave mothers. Black women were denied the right to

choose their mates, and even to protect their children. The slave narrative's purpose is to expose injustice and inspire political action. Scenes of degradation can contribute to that end, but Jacobs also wants to present her as dignified a way as possible.

Focusing on the effects of slavery on others and women in particular helps Jacobs maintain a sense of privacy. Her narrative strategy-shifting from personal experience to the universal problems of female slaves-effectively broadens the scope of her reader's interest. By incorporating other voices into her text, Jacobs creates a concentric relational web with Linda in the centre.

Based on such a network, the reader can relate Linda's peril to her people, and ultimately perceive the cause of the tribulation-slavery as an institution. This notion of collective selfhood built through other voices facilitates Jacobs' narration and her political purpose. She locates the slave's miserable experiences in the larger context of woman's emancipation, encouraging "the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South" (145). Here, Jacobs draws an emotional connection through writing from a gender perspective. Regardless of race, colour, or ethnicity, women as a gender, have common concerns, such as children, family, friends, and sexual abuses.

Denouncing the slave master's heinous behaviour is not Jacobs' only objective; her attention to mother's agony over the suffering of her new-born baby builds solidarity with her female readers. The institution of slavery made it impossible for African-American women to control their virtue, as they were subject to the social and economic power of men. Jacobs showed that enslaved women had a different experience of motherhood but had strong feelings as

mothers despite the constraints of their position. Mothers in the South undergo forceful separation from their children, while mothers in the North enjoy happiness with their children. The sharp contrast led by this inhumane institution should intrigue the interest and sympathy from mothers in the North.

Jacobs was clearly aware of the womanly virtues, as she referred to them as a means to appeal to female abolitionists to spur them into action to help protect enslaved Black women and their children. In the narrative, she explains life events that prevent Linda Brent from practicing these values, although she wants to. For example, as she cannot have a home of her own for her family, she cannot practice domestic virtues. If a slave mother has a beautiful daughter, she bears an extra burden. This girl will soon become the victim of those licentious masters who will corrupt her with foul words: “If God has bestowed beauty upon her [slave girl], it will prove her greatest curse. That which commands admiration in the white woman only hastens the degradation of the female slave” (27).

Jacobs constructs a bond among all women, an elemental feminism, which can aspire to the complete and reciprocal communication of feeling because it believes in universal sentiment, native human responses that are not bound by circumstance. Given her audience, Jacobs is careful not to alienate the white female abolitionists by insulting or blaming their sisters in the South. In chapter II, Jacobs describes one female slave whose “nearly white” child is mocked and cursed by her mistress. While recognizing the mistress’s cruelty, Jacobs is prudent in her phrasing: “From others than the master, persecution

also comes in such cases” (12). Jacobs condemns the behaviour of female slave owners, but her appeal to a white female audience prevents her from castigating female slave masters as freely as she does male masters. There may be a touch of compromise here, or it may be that Jacobs sees women as being nearly as deeply bonded and disenfranchised as slaves.

In any case, as a woman, Jacobs asserts two kinds of solidarity absent in male narratives: motherhood and sisterhood. In order to protect her daughter from suffering sexual assaults and her boy from being humiliated, Jacobs conceals herself for seven years in her grandmother’s garret, which is only nine feet long and seven feet wide, with no access for either light or air. It is motherly love that supports Jacobs while she is in hiding. Linda is more than the proverbial “angel of the house”. Her femininity entails the moral and spiritual strength to fight against slavery.

Jacobs employs two strategies in building her specifically multi-racial sisterhood: she identifies common grounds between the two groups, and she is careful to express gratitude toward her white benefactors. In the first chapter, Jacobs refers to her mother’s mistress and her mother as “foster sisters” because they both are fed at the breast of Linda’s grandmother. Here, it is the slave economy that undermines sorrel intimacy. Linda’s childhood under this mistress is described as happy without “toilsome or disagreeable duties” (5).

Coming at the beginning of her narrative, this portrait lays the emotional groundwork for future solidarity and harmony among women of different colours. Jacobs is indebted to one white mistress who shields her from the hunting of Dr.Flint’s family. She heartily expresses her gratitude

toward this generous woman: “How my heart overflowed with gratitude! Words choked in my throat; but I could have kissed the feet of my benefactress. For that deed of Christian womanhood, may God forever bless her” (103). This demonstrates that women of different colours could be tied together without the racial, political, and economical barriers. The mistresses are also the victims of the patriarchal system, and unfortunately, they have to affirm their social positions at the price of denying the humanity of slaves.

In her autobiography, Jacobs includes a chapter about the death and funeral of her aunt Betty (called “Nancy” in the book), commenting that “Northern travellers ... might have described this tribute of respect to the humble dead as ... a touching proof of the attachment between slaveholders and their servants”, but adding that the slaves might have told that imaginative traveller “a different story”: The funeral had not been paid for by aunt Betty’s owner, but by her brother, Jacobs’s uncle Mark (called “Philipp” in the book), and Jacobs herself could neither say farewell to her dying aunt nor attend the funeral, because she would have been immediately returned to her “tormentor”. Jacobs also gives the reason for her aunt’s childlessness and early death: Dr. and Mrs. Norcom did not allow her enough rest, but required her services by day and night. Venetia K. Patton describes the relationship between Mrs. Norcom and Aunt Betty as a “parasitic one”, because Mary Horniblow, who would later become Mrs. Norcom, and aunt Betty had been “foster-sisters”, both being nursed by Jacobs’s grandmother who had to wean her own daughter Betty early in order to have enough milk for the child of her mistress by whom Betty would eventually be “slowly murdered”.

Jacobs presents her as struggling to build a home for herself and her children. “This endorsement of domestic values links *Incidents* to what has been called ‘woman’s fiction’”, in which a heroine overcomes hardships by finding the necessary resources inside herself. But unlike “woman’s fiction”, “*Incidents* is an attempt to move women to political action”, thus stepping out of the domestic sphere at that time commonly held to be the proper sphere for women and joining the public sphere.

Jacobs discusses “the painful personal subject” of her sexual history “in order to politicize it, to insist that the forbidden topic of sexual abuse of slave women be included in public discussions of the slavery question.” In telling of her daughter’s acceptance of her sexual history, she “shows black women overcoming the divisive sexual ideology of the white patriarchy”. Jacobs attempts to clarify that slavery is the vile fruit of patriarchy that causes the sufferings of both black and white women. Thus, black and white women should fight together against these two unjust institutions. The publication did not cause contempt as Jacobs had feared. On the contrary, Jacobs gained respect. Although she had used a pseudonym, in abolitionist circles she was regularly introduced with words like “Mrs. Jacobs, the author of *Linda*”, thereby conceding her the honorific “Mrs.” which normally was reserved for married women. The *London Daily News* wrote in 1862, that *Linda Brent* was a true “heroine”, giving an example “of endurance and persistency in the struggle for liberty” and “moral rectitude” The new interest in women and minority issues that came with the American civil rights movement also led to the rediscovery of *Incidents*.

Chapter Five

Summation

Harriet Ann Jacobs, also called Harriet A. Jacobs, is an Afro-American abolitionist and autobiographer has crafted her own experiences into an eloquent and uncompromising slave narrative called *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. She is one of the most famous African-American slaves during the time of the Civil War. Her *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* was an eloquent and uncompromising narrative of her struggle for self-identity, self-preservation, and freedom. It chronicles the remarkable odyssey of Harriet Jacobs whose dauntless spirit and faith carried her from a life of servitude and degradation in North Carolina to liberty and reunion with her children in the North.

Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* was first published in 1861 under the pseudonym Linda Brent. Jacobs' narrative depicts her life in slavery in the South and her escape to freedom in the North. Jacobs explored such themes as the horrors of sexual abuses by her master, the bond with her grandmother, and her love for her children. Brent's story begins with the shocking news that her first mistress had bequeathed her to Dr. Flint despite her expectation of being free. In Dr. Flint's house, Brent is physically abused and is repeatedly sexually harassed. In order to shun Dr. Flint's sexual advances, Brent begins an affair with Mr. Sands, a local white lawyer, and eventually, has two children with him. However, her children legally belong to Flint as his "property."

Hoping that Flint might sell her children to their father, Mr. Sands, Brent hides herself in a garret above her grandmother's house. She stays there for seven years and eventually escapes to the North. In the North, she finds a job at the Bruce family and reunites with her children. Finally, she gains her freedom after Mrs. Bruce "purchases" it for her. *Incidents* has generally been considered to be a precursor of the black feminist narrative. Brent's narrative has attracted much attention from such prominent feminist theorists as Hortense Spillers, Hazel Carby, and Valerie Smith. Generally, these theorists praise *Incidents* highly for its challenges to Victorian notions of true womanhood and rigid racial categories.

Incidents is the most sophisticated, sustained narrative dissection of the conventions of true woman-hood by a black author before emancipation ... Jacobs used the material circumstances of her life to critique conventional standards of female behavior and to question their relevance of applicability to the experience of black women. (47)

Though Jacobs was born into slavery, still was taught to read at an early age. She was orphaned as a child and formed a bond with her maternal grandmother, Molly Horniblow, who had been freed from slavery. While still in her teens Jacobs became involved with a neighbour, Samuel Tredwell Sawyer, a young white lawyer by whom she had two children. When she refused to become her owner's concubine, she was sent to work in a nearby plantation. In an attempt to force the sale of her children, Jacobs escaped and spent the next seven years in hiding. After escaping to the north in 1842, Jacobs worked as a nursemaid in New York City and eventually moved to Rochester, New York, to work in the antislavery reading room above

abolitionist lecture tour with her brother, Jacobs began her lifelong friendship with the Quaker Reformer Amy Post. Post among others encouraged her to write the story of her enslavement.

Jacobs contributed to the genre of slave narrative by using the techniques of sentimental novels to address race and gender issues. She explores the struggles and sexual abuse that female slaves faced in the plantations as well as their efforts to practice motherhood and protect their children when their children must be sold away.

The book opens with an introduction by Harriet, which states her reasons for writing an autobiography. Her story is painful, and she would rather have kept it private, but she feels that making it public may help the antislavery movement. A preface by Lydia Maria Child states that the events are true. Periodic sentences are a little invention from ancient Greek rhetoric. They are tightly crafted masterpieces keeping the readers in suspense until the last word. The readers have got to keep all these clauses in their head as they read through the sentence and finally put them all together at the end. She uses “I” and she does not provide any information that she couldn’t personally known.

The nineteenth-century view of marriage as a husband protecting and honouring his wife’s dignity and purity has no chance in slave communities. This text also portrays about family and community. The central theme of this book is very different from the majority of slave narratives which is the experience of slavery from the point of view of slave women. Jacobs argues throughout that slavery as experienced by women is much more harsh and terrible than slavery experienced by male slaves. Slavery is a dehumanizing,

depraved systems that seeks to reduce its participants to nameless, faceless brutes. Despite the prosperity of some slaves to fall a prey to rage, depression, or stupor, many were able to survive due to support of their family and others in the black community.

Harriet exposes some of the same realities about religion in both the north and the south. She explains that religion was a way for slave holders to keep their slaves in check - ministers delivered sermons about obeying their masters- and to assuage their pricked consciences. This text showcases the rich heritage of African history, tradition, and religion that fused with their American counterparts. Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Women were expected to be housewives, yet black female slaves had little choice in this matter. By desiring her own home, Brent defies the master narrative in the sense that she expects the same fruits out of life that her white counterparts enjoy. She proves her arguments through the presentation of her own life and the way that she has to cope with not only the burden common to all slaves but also the horrendous experience of being used sexually, and having absolutely no opportunity to resist such treatment.

The book makes it clear that there is no such thing as a good slave master because participating in the very act of slavery destroys one's morals and values almost without expectation. As Dr. Flint demonstrates, slave holders can be absolute monsters with no capacity to love or feel sympathy for the poor treatment and abuse they inflict on their slaves. Mr. Sands probably would have not followed through with his promise to free his own children if Brent had not badgered him about it.

In essence, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* makes it clear that slavery takes away one's morals, and, perhaps most importantly, one's capacity to love even the capacity to love your own child. Brent emphasizes that slaves also suffer moral decay as a result of the slaves system. Because slaves have no control over their day-to-day life as well as their destiny, they have no ownership over their sense of self or their actions. Thus it's not slave fault that they have been dehumanized by the slave system. Because of this dehumanization they have no reason to adhere to the moral standards of normal society.

Male slave narratives had focused heavily on the physical abuse suffered at hands of their masters Brent illuminates a different aspect of torture endured by female slaves. Because Brent worked indoors and was not subject to the beatings and hardship that occurred in the fields on a daily basis, it was important that she was able to convey the psychological torment that she was subject to by Dr. Flint. Another aspect of this psychological abuse was the simple fact that most often slaves, as mentioned above, did not have the power of choice over their destiny. Thus, when one feels like his or her life is being controlled by other forces and that's exactly how Brent felt while enslaved this can be extremely physiologically damaging to ones' sense of self. While slavery was terrible for both men and women, the latter suffered its own particular tragedies.

Women, and even young girls found that their body was not their own they were looked up as sexual objects that existed for their masters to enact their most depraved sexual fantasies upon. They were taunted and insulted, as in Harriet's case, or outright raped. Many were made to bear children of their

white masters, all the while being deprived of marriage to the men that they would choose for themselves. Furthermore, any child born to a slave woman would be also a slave, no matter the position of the father. Harriet notes that slave girls simply did not have the opinion of being virtuous since their virtue was under constant assault.

Slave mothers also felt the keen and wretched pain of seeing their children beaten or sold, or if they were girls, experience the same woes as they had. It is impossible to exaggerate how terrible slavery was for slaves. Many were beaten, raped, forced to work in terrible conditions for long hours, deprived of family ties, and had to deal with harsh weather and little or no food. Harriet's entire tale gives voice to the immorality and degeneracy of the system that would eventually spark a bloody war and prove untenable. However her book is also valuable in that it speaks of another problem with slavery. It is just as corrupting for white people. Indeed, the entire South and even the North were affected by the cancer of slavery.

Slave masters were licentious and vicious and their wives were jealous and cruel. Children of slave owners learned too early about violence and sex and as they aged they became indoctrinated into their parents system. Even white people like Mr. Sands and Mr. Throne, who did not practice outright violence, were callous and racist. Lies and hypocrisy were rampant. Christianity was diluted and perverted in the mouths of southern ministers and their congregants. Overall, slavery was corrupting to everyone in its reaches.

Jacob's story is so dramatic, so vividly illustrative of the unthinkable horrors and trials of slavery the sickening violence, the ware of potential, the unpredictability of lives lived according to a slave owner's caprices that it

almost reads as a text. She emphasizes that the life of a slave woman is incomparable to the life of a slave man, in the sense that a woman's sufferings are not only physical but also extremely mental and emotional. Whether or not a slave woman is beaten, starved to death, or made to work in unbearable circumstances on the fields, she suffers from and endures horrible mental and emotional. Whether or not a slave woman is beaten, starved to death or made to work in unbearable circumstances on the fields, she suffers from and endures mental horrible mental torments. Unlike slave men these women have to deal with sexual harrasement from white men, most often their slave owners, as well as the loss of their children in some cases. Men often dwell on their sufferings of bodily pain and physical endurance as slaves, where as women not only deal with that but also the mental and emotional aspect of it.

Men claim that their manhood and masculinity are stripped from them but women deal with their loss of dignity and morality. Females deal with the emotional agony as mothers who lose their children or have to watch them get beaten as well as being sexually victimized by white men who may or may not be the father of their children. For these women, their experiences seem unimaginable and are just as difficult as any physical punishment. The understanding of the life a slave woman is far beyond the knowledge of the common people. In the book, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, she brings up three arguments to support her views on anti-slavery: the moral conflict between slavery, and colour prejudice.

Many critics applaud contemporary slave narratives because they show individuals rising from the depths of despair to overcome seemingly impossible odds. However, some critics contend that the narratives perpetuate

the myth that people can overcome society's racism by sheer willpower and determination. Many critics believe that the narratives are deceptive because they offer a false sense of hope to blacks, while encouraging whites to think that if some blacks can break down barriers and cross over racial boundaries to achieve success, those who do not have only themselves to blame.

Thus throughout Jacobs' biography, she uses key themes such as power struggles and feminist views to portray slavery to persuade to the women in the north that slavery is indeed corrupt. The narrator of the novel Linda, the slave girl displays the African history, tradition and religion mainly slavery and its cruelty. She lived as a slave till her death. She never had freedom and happiness in her life. Many have misused Linda through the fake of slavery. If Linda's parents had not died, she would have lived happily throughout her life. Linda had as many struggles in her life as a slave likewise her children had in their life.

Apart from imagery, slave narratives often use satire or irony as one of the main rhetorical devices for story development. Another characteristic of Jacobs's writing that differs from other slave narratives is her use of language. Language, especially use of dialects, is an important part of a slave narrative because the characteristic speech pattern of the enslaved show their identity. However, Jacobs, as Tricomi notes, "represents herself and her family as speakers of Standard English" (625). Jacobs's use of chapters reminds the reader of the rapid and sometimes tragic changes that slave owners imposed on the enslaved). The emergence of the slave narrative genre enabled the enslaved to express themselves, to show the reality they had lived in. Harriet Jacobs was one of the first female slave writers to tell her story to a large readership. Even

though she did not always conform to all the expectations of the genre, her work is still one of the best examples of the slave narrative. Jacobs's use of irony, dialect, fragmentation and other literary devices commonly used in the genre of slave narrative help people even today understand the horrific human cost of slavery.

Works Cited

- Aly, Mona. "American Drama." *JSTOR*. 2 Sep, 2013, pp. 1-17.
- Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Harriet Jacobs." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 3 Mar. 2022, www.britannica.com/biography/Harriet-Jacobs.
- Course Hero. "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Study Guide." *Course Hero*. 28 Nov. 2016. www.coursehero.com/lit/Incidents-in-the-Life-of-a-Slave-Girl.
- Dodson, Howard. "19th Century African American Women Writers." *New York Public Library*, 6 Oct, 2009, www.libguides.nypl.org/African-american-women-writers-of-the-19th-Century
- Guerra, Maria. "Fact Sheet: The State of African American Women in the United States." *CAP*, 7 Nov, 2013, www.americanprogress.org/article/fact-sheet-the-state-of-african-american-women-in-the-united-states/
- History of American Woman. "Black Women Writers Through Civil War And Reconstruction." *History of American Woman*, <https://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2021/01/black-women-writers-of-the-19th-century-2.html>
- Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Thrift Edition, Dover Publications Inc, 28 Dec. 2001.
- Kabria, Baumgartner. "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Education and Abolition." *Ethnic Studies Review*, vol. 32, no. 2.
- Osborne-Bartucca, Kristen. "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl Themes." Editor Christine McKeever, *GradeSaver*, 30 January 2013, www.gradesaver.com/incidents-in-the-life-of-a-slave-girl/study-guide/
- Smith, Mitzi J.. *Insights from African American Interpretation*. Fortress Press, 1 May. 2017. Pp. 45-59.

Search for Self – Identity in Meena Alexander 's Nampally Road

A project 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

by

S. SELVA RAMYA

(REG. NO. 20APEN24)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Women In Post Colonial India	11
Three	The Orange Sellers' Protest	21
Four	Search For Self-Identity	29
Five	Summation	39
	Works Cited	46

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **SEARCH FOR SELF-IDENTITY IN MEENA ALEXANDER'S NAMPALLY ROAD** 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 is a work done by S. Selva Ramya during the year 2020-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department
Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

N. Sumathi
Dr. N. Sumathi

Guide

S. Vennila
27/05/2022
Examiner
Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Assistant Prof. of English
Sarah Thero College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 007

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled "Search for self-Identity in Meena Alexander's *Nampally Road*" 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.

S. Selva Ramya
S. Selva Ramya

Thoothukudi

May 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, and strength in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principle, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank our Institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. N. Sumathi**, Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project. I thank the faculty of the Department of English for their valuable input in teaching and moulding us.

I thank **Dr. Vinitha** the Librarian, St. Mary's College for her assistance is permitting me to use the library resources.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

The project entitled *Nampally Road* exposes the protagonist Mira's longing to establish her identity in the literature arena. The conflicts in the protagonist's life and search for her own identity through experience, are vividly presented through socio-political changes in the contemporary India.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Meena Alexander her life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of her work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Women in Post Colonial India** focuses on women's issues in India. In the decolonized nations, women's lives are still dominated by their patriarchs at home and in society at large.

The third chapter **The Orange Sellers' Protest** analyses the clash between the politicians and the middle class people.

The fourth chapter **Search for Self-Identity** has focused on the protagonist's search for identity.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and brings out the researcher's findings.

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

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Indian literature comprises literary works produced in the sub-continent of India. Indian literature is said to have great antiquity in oral forms of literature until Sixteenth century. Unlike other literatures in the world, Indian Literature is different as its core idea has always been an ideology based on society. These are found in the works like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and also in the early *books of Vedas*. Secondly, epics are the literacy master pieces wherein they have a strong belief in reincarnation.

Development of English has paved the way for Indian writers to express the thoughts about culture and tradition. A few Indian writers were moved by the genius Idea of presenting the imaginative literature of India to the western readers. Some legendary writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Mulk Raj Anand etc., have portrayed Indian literature. Indian culture and tradition in a realistic manner and they are the pioneers in Indian literature. Indian English literature pertains to the work by writers from India, who pen their thoughts in English language and whose native language could be one of the innumerable regional and indigenus languages of India.

Indian English literature has attained an independent status and is also guarded by prominent writers like Rajaram Mohan Roy, Sir Aurobindo, Gosh and R.K.Narayanan and many others. There were plenty of writings during Pre-Independence era by dramatists, essayists and novelists. Indian literature talks about Indian history, culture, tradition and social values. There are critics and commentators in English and America who appreciate Indian English novels. Indian literature flourished because of the contribution of the creative writing by Indian novelists in English. Indian novelists faced many hurdles of writing in foreign language and they

also introduced their own style of writing which was precise and clear. They also used vocabulary apt for the Indian readers.

An ardent love for novels in India began with the arrival of English. However, the early writers who began writing English novels were the writers whose mother tongues were English. But their novels in English exposed the realities of the society of Indian society to the international readers. The novelists of that period dealt with social issues which brought the awareness among the people. The growth of the Indian novels happened during the partition of India. The novels during that period were based on the themes of Partition. The first English writer of Indian English literature is Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. The other novelists during that period were R.K.Narayanan, Joginder Singh, Khushwant Singh etc.

Other notable authors like Anita Desai, Malathi Ramachandran, Amulya Malladi, Dr.Belinda Viegas, Neeraj Pandey contributed many works and they serve as backbones in the development of Indian English Literature. Writing by women has given a new dimension to the Indian Literature. In this twentieth century, women's writing has been considered a powerful medium of modernism and feminist statements. The last two decades have witnessed phenomenal success in feminist writings of Indian English Literature.

The novels reflected the contemporary development in the society. The problem of city life was the major theme of novelists. For example, *Thomas Hardy's Mayor of Caster bridge* brought the vast majority of urban readers closer to rural community. During the eighteenth century, women utilized their free time to read and write novels. They explored the world of women, their emotions, identities, experiences and problems. Novels for young generation were based on heroism. The hero of such a

novel usually was a daring, positive and powerful person, R.L.Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1833) idealized a new type of man.

Amulya Malladi, born in 1974 in Sagar, Madhya Pradesh. She pursued her bachelor's degree in Electronics Engineering from Osmania University, Hyderabad, India. Amulya did her Master degree in Journalism from the University of Memphis, United States. She is famous for her six works and also her works have been translated into several languages including Dutch, German, Spanish, Romanian, Danish, Serbian and Tamil. Some of her famous works are, *The House for Happy Mothers* (2016), *A Breath of Fresh Air* (2002), *The Mango Season* (2003). Besides writing, she works as a Marketing Executive for a Medical device Company. She has won several awards for her contribution towards drama web series. She wrote her first book when she was eleven. She has lived in all parts of India from the high Himalayas to the City in the Coramandel Coast, Chennai.

The novel *The Breath of Fresh Air* (2002) was written when she was in Utha, United States. In an interview she spoke about the influence behind writing this novel. When she was nine years old, she lived in Bhopal. During that time on 3 December 1984, there was a dreadful effect due to the leak of the Methyl Isocyanate, from Bhopal's *Union Carbide plant*, popularly known as the *Bhopal Gas Tragedy*, where a large number of people were killed. She had escaped from the dreadful attack the kilometers away from the plant. But she told that she remembered the victims telling her how they felt the gas which affected their lungs. The sufferings of the people of that region had made a great impact in Amulya's mind leading her to write a novel on their sufferings.

Malladi's writings are similar to those of Anita Desai. Her style is simple, easy and unfurnished. Amulya has not triggered much human emotions in her first novel it became an exception. This book makes its readers bawl like babies. Malladi has captured the emotional impacts of the tragedy with maturity and dignity. The novel speaks of complexities faced when life does not turn out the way we plan. Malladi portrays a beautiful insight into Indian culture and tradition.

Anita Desai was born on 24th June 1937. She is an Indian novelist, short story writer and also a children's writer and a good example of the bicultural heritage in the period of post- Colonial India. She was born in Mussoorie, India. she did her schooling in Queen Mary's higher secondary school in Delhi. *The cry of the peacock* was the first novel written by Anita Desai and *Clear Light of Day* is her autobiographical novel. Her novel *The Village by the sea* won the British Guardian Prize. She received Sahitya Academy award for her novel *Fire on the Mountain*. Though she has mastery even different language like Bengali, Hindi, German and English, she prefers to write in English.

Desai's published works comprise adult novels, two collections of short stories and two books for children. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature in London and the Academy of Arts and Letters in New York. In 1984 she won the Booker prize award for her novel *In custody*. She mainly focuses on women's lives in her novels. Desai's books are well known for the beauty of the plot and the characterization. Her description of rural India and its hardships are brilliant and perfect. She is one of the best story writers based on India circumstances. She is brilliant with words.

The major themes of Desai's novels are family and society, culture and environment, quest for identity, the contrasts and relationships in a family and

crumbling of traditions. Social biases and Eurocentric themes are also sometimes found in her novels. *The village by the sea* depicts the miserable poverty of the village people on one side and the impact of industrialization of villages on the other side. These are compared to the high and low tides as seen in the sea. The diction of her novels makes us feel the salty air of the sea, feel the cool breeze and also kindles our emotions. Change and survival are the two major themes which the author concentrates and portrays through her novels. The incidents in the novel are more realistic and believable rather than imaginative therefore it gives an optimistic feel to the readers.

Dr. Belinda Viegas who is known as the Renaissance woman of south Goa has written three novels namely *The Cry of the Kingfisher*, *Goa Maaza* and *The Golden Gate* and Other stories. Dr. Belinda Viegas is a novelist, link mountaineer and a psychiatrist. Being a psychiatrist, most of her writings are based on her personal experiences in her clinic.

Anita Nair was a prolific writer, best known for her novels such as *Mistress*, *Ladies Coupe* and *The Better Man*. She has contributed collection of poems to English Literature. Recently she stepped into crime genre with her Inspector Gowda series. Arundhati Roy was a political activist and is active in environmental and human rights issues. She has several essay collections to her credit. She published her debut novel *The God of Small Things* in 1997. Roy's novel became the biggest selling book by a non/expatriate Indian author and won the 1998 Man Booker Prize for Fiction. She was awarded the Lannan Cultural Freedom Award in 2002, the Sydney Peace Prize in 2004, and the Sahitya Akademi Award from the Indian Academy of Letter in 2006.

Kiran Desai was born on 3 September 1971, New Delhi, India. She was an Indian born American author whose second novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006),

became an international best seller and won the 2006 Booker Prize. She was the daughter of the renowned novelist Anita Desai. She graduated from Bennington College in 1993 and later received two MFA's from Hollins University, in Roanoke, Virginia and the other from Columbia University, in New York City. Kiran Desai left Columbia for several years to write her first novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* (1998). Desai became the youngest female writer to win the award. Thus many Indian writers have showcased their talents in the books by winning many prizes such as the Bestsellers, Booker prizes etc.

Meena Alexander, one of the finest poets of contemporary times. Meena was born in Allahabad, India, on 17 February 1951. She was raised in both India and the Sudan in North Africa. She received a bachelor's degree in French and English from Khartoum University in 1969 and a doctorate degree in English from Nottingham University in England. She earned a Ph.D in English in 1973 at the age of twenty two with a dissertation in Romantic Literature that she would later developed and publish as the Poetic Self.

She has received awards and fellowships from The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation. She was distinguished professor of English at Hunter College, City University of New York. She passed away on 21 November 2018. Her poetry remained steeped in her Indian roots as well as embracing her many homes, including the time she spent in Sudan and England. These six poems from her book *Atmospheric Embroidery*, published in 2015, show how Alexander's verses embodied both the deeply personal and widely political.

Meena Alexander emerged from a postcolonial country; thus, her work deals with personal as well as national concerns. One of these themes is the use of the English language. Though she has written in French, Hindi and Malayalam, Alexander's work is predominantly in English. As with so many other postcolonial authors, she struggles in *Fault Lines* with the use of English itself:

There is violence in the very language, American English, that we have to face, even as we work to make it ours, decolonize it so that it will express the truth of bodies beaten and banned. After all, for such as we are the territories are not free. (199)

Alexander struggles to develop her sense of identity in a culture still imprinted with the stamps of Britain. She demonstrates in this autobiography both her triumph of will and her artistic talent. She then moved to India and taught at several universities, including the University of Delhi and the University of Hyderabad. During the five years she lived in India, she published her first three books of poetry. *The Bird's Bright Ring* (1976) juxtaposes images of blood, salt and native flora and fauna with fragmented commentary on the socio-political effects of British ruled India. Her novel *I Root My Name* (1977) intimates the painful experiences of women while *A Mirrors Grace* appearing in *Without Place* (1978) recounts Cleopatra's struggle to resist slipping into the margins of patriarchal linguistics.

In 1979, she was the visiting fellow at the university of Paris-Sorbonne. The following year she moved to New York city and became an Assistant Professor at Fordham University. Later she was appointed as a distinguished professor in English in 1999, she continues to teach in the Ph.D program at the Graduate Centre and the MFA

program at the hunter college. She has also taught poetry in the University Division in the school of Arts at Columbia University.

Meena Alexander is known for her lyrical writing that deals with migration, its impact on the subjectivity of the writer and sometimes violent events that compel people to cross borders. Maxine Hong Kingston comments:

Meena Alexander sings of countries, Foreign and familiar places where the heart and spirit live and places for which one needs a passport and visas. Her voice guides us far away and back home. The reader sees her visions and remembers and is uplifted. (2)

Meena Alexander's collections of poetry include *House of Thousand Doors* (1988) which centers on memories and dreams. *The Storm* (1989) contemplates the feminist ideals of recreating and rewriting "Pure" female self/identity from fragmentary matrilineal memories. In *Night Scene: The Garden* (1992) mother, Grand Mother, aunts and sisters figure prominently in the narrator's memory, which symbolizes a kind of "mother tongue" that encourages the poet to create a "new" self. Hilda Marely praise for Night scene:

The extra ordinary poem play is remarkable for the unswerving strength of its movement which carries the extra ordinary poem play is with it a multitude of intense details. (It is) rare in sensory evocation and ruthless at times in its precision. (18)

The poetry of *River and Bridge* (1996) explores similar personal and feminist themes, focusing primarily on coping with cultural displacement but other poems address myriad forms of violence and protest, ranging from racial and sexual to economic and religious. Joy Harjo Praises that:

The river and bridge are ultimately the same. Just as New York city and Delhi merge in the body and imagination of a woman making poetry near the end of an age, Meena Alexander eloquently leads to the conclusion of this funny collection with, there is no grief like this the origin of landscape is mercy. These poems are the journey we take with her to know this utterly. (61)

Her other notable works are *Atmospheric Embroidery* (2018), *Birthplace with Buried stones* (2013), *Raw Silk* (2004), and *Illiterate Heart* (2002). Alexander's work has been influenced and mentored by that Indian poets Jayanta Mahapatra and Kamala Das, and the American poets Adrienne Rich and Galway Kinnell. Her poems frequently confront the difficult issues of exile and identity, while still maintaining a generous spirit.

Meena Alexander wrote the novels such as *Nampally Road* (1991) and *Manhattan Music* (1997). Her works of criticism include poetics of Dislocation. Her novel *Manhattan Music* (1997) is infused with the power of myth. She explores the crossing of borders from India to Manhattan, the Indian Diaspora, fanaticism, ethnic intolerance interracial affairs and marriage and what it means to be an American.

Alexander's Scholarly works include *The Poetic Self: Towards Phenomenology of Romanticism* (1979) and *Women in Romanticism: Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelly and Dorothy Wordsworth* (1989). She was deeply influenced by the British Romantic poets whom she studied in her youth, but she struggled to accommodate this aesthetic into the development of her own poetic voice. In many of her poems, she returns to the theme of the burdens imposed by colonial language and pedagogy in the representation of her experiences as a female postcolonial

poet. Meena Alexander's first poetry was published in India by the Calcutta Writers Workshop. In the US, her first book of poetry, *The Shock of Arrival: Reflections of Postcolonial Experience, Quickly changing River*.

Meena Alexander is an Indian writer whose poetry and fiction reflects her multicultural life experience among diverse ethnic and religious communities in four continents. Generally concerned with the roles of place, memory and language in identity formation, Meena Alexander's works examine the disparate elements of her heritage and her cultural displacement. Her search for psychic wholeness through language a prevalent theme of her poetry also articulates the concerns facing many postcolonial writers silenced by the dominant literary traditions of the imperial past. Meena Alexander is known for her lyrical writing that deals with migration, its impact on the subjectivity of the writer and sometimes violent events that compel people to cross borders. Though confronting such stark and difficult issues, her writing is sensual play maintains a generous spirit.

Meena Alexander treats her writing as a search for a homeland which is less physical than psychological, in particular her poetry, as a means of making sense of her multiple cultural, geographical and psychological position. Critics have also read Meena Alexander's impulse to question her identity for signs of emergent feminism, responding particularly to her experiences as a woman in both occidental and oriental contexts.

The next chapter deals with the "Women in Post Colonial India". This centers on various issues including feminism, cultural retention, politics and history.

CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN IN POST COLONIAL INDIA

Alexander, in *Nampally Road*, centers on various issues including feminism, cultural retention, politics, and history among others. One of the themes of her novels is obviously the portrayal of women's issues in India. By presenting women as mothers, political activists, and victims of a patriarchal society, she brings to attention the plight of women in a postcolonial nation. In the so-called decolonized nations, women's lives are still dominated by their patriarchs at home and in society at large. She describes Mira's attempts to escape an arranged marriage and her shunning of traditional values.

Alexander describes in minute detail the roads, crowds, shoppers and the everyday activities on the road. As Luis H. Francia puts it: "with its restless crowds, cinemas, shops, temples, mango sellers, cobblers, cafes and bars, *Nampally Road* becomes a metaphor for contemporary India." The novelist, Meena Alexander, is extremely critical when she sees institutions veering away from ideals. She sketches the deterioration in the personal and political areas of life as well.

The narrative draws on many women—Durgabai, Raniamma, Laura, Maiteyi, Rameeza Be—to build up a matrix of polyphonic narratives that reverberate through the text and lend efficacy to the (auto) biography of Mira. The marginalised female voices, resisting victimisation through their search for self-reconciliation in the interstices of memory and culture, empower a new discourse of the nation in the hybrid realm of culture. *Nampally Road*, it is argued, offers an image of national consciousness as achieved by undermining the hegemony of the past and the tyranny of the present. It tries to give voice to the subaltern by imaginatively and socially engaging them in the national, political, cultural and social narratives of their nation.

The character of Durgabai is “Obstetrics and gynecologist and pediatrician all rolled into one”. She represents Mother India, hard -working, honest, upright and kind, staying in a run-down building, charging practically nothing in her clinic with a tin roof in one of the poorest parts of the town. She is appropriately named “Little Mother”. All the women in the novel are inextricably linked with her.

Mira Kannadical, the protagonist is an English professor who returns to India after studying in England for four years and getting a Ph.D on Wordsworth from Nottingham University. She feels distraught and out of place in England and decides to start a new life in India. When Mira got a teaching job in Hyderabad, she gladly accepted it because she thought that going to India would give her a chance to establish a clearer identity for herself. Once she reached in Hyderabad, she felt that she was no more a girl in confusion but a woman of firm standing. When Mira started living in Hyderabad, she had minor problems about readjusting with the Indian society. Once Mira started eating with her left hand by mistake and this shocked many Andhrites who saw it.

During her free time, Mira continued her attempts to write poems. She was very much confused inside her mind in spite of all her western education. She wanted to become a poet so as to establish for herself a new identity. Otherwise her mother will dress her up in silks and gold and marry her off to some rich engineer or estate owner. Mira strongly felt that she may not be able to survive such a marriage. According to Mira, marriage was a personal matter and she will commit into a marriage only when she is fully prepared for the arrangement. Mira’s search for identity makes a sharp turn when she sees Rameeza Be for the first time inside the Gowliguda police station. Very soon someone carried away Rameeza to the house of Maitreyamma where she was given good rest and medical attention.

Mira comes in contact with Ramu, a college teacher. They both teach English in Sona Nivas, a local college. He is highly unorthodox and rejects superstitions including what he refers to as “Horoscope Rubbish”. Ramu and Mira visited Rameeza in that house and her pathetic condition extremely influenced Mira. ‘I wished’, Mira wondered, ‘I could give up my own useless life in some way that could help her’. Thus, Mira finally found her identity. She understood that she was nobody else other than an ordinary Indian. The suffering of Rameeza Be was the suffering of an entire nation and Mira’s mission in life was to seek a solution to give relief to millions of Rameezas in India. Mira became half an Indian by returning to India and deciding to settle down permanently here. She became a full Indian when she understood that her mission in life was to serve India, her motherland.

The main event in the novel is the birthday celebration of Limca Gowda, the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Meena Alexander’s observes:

Limca Gowda was an ambitions man and wished to turn himself into an absolute ruler. The notion of unquestioned power vested in a single man pleased him enormously. Sometimes at night he dreamed that he was the old Nizam of Hyderabad, returned in new flesh to claim his kingdom. His party which had been voted in four years ago, now rules with an iron hand. Dissent was strongly discouraged. (4)

Nampally Road, which is fairly quiet, turns into a noisy thorough fare because of the birthday celebrations of the Chief Minister. The tax money of the common people is spent like water:

Fully authorized by his own ruling party, Limca Gowda had decided to turn his dreams to good use. His office was now run from the old fort of Golconda, the seat of the rulers of ancient Hyderabad. It was rumoured

that for his birthday celebrations fast approaching now, he would take hold of history with an iron hand, mix and match as he desired, dress up as the last Qutubshahi, and mimic the mad gestures of the dead Nizam.

(38)

Rameeza is a young woman, accompanied by her husband to Sagar Talkies to see the celebrated Isak Katha. Rameeza is raped in police custody. On their way back home, they are encircled by a horde of drunken policemen. She is gang-raped and her husband has his brains beaten out. But no one can raise their voice for any matter, till Limca Gowda's sixtieth birthday celebrations are over. The raped woman has no voice. Her suffering does have a language. When Rameeza, the victim is interviewed by Mira, all that she can do is make little whispers and short cries. Ramu and Mira want to understand her pain. They tell her that those who raped her will be brought to justice and that people would rise up against violence.

Rape is the most heinous crime committed by man against woman. Among others, some police personnel and politicians have also been implicated now and then in rape cases. Sometimes, police officials and staff of civil services tend to claim most rape cases are not rape cases, but cases of consensual sex. For example, a senior official of the Mumbai Police, Mr. Y.P. Singh, once remarked that "Except for a few violent rape cases where brutal force is used, most other cases involve some degree of consensus sex" (The Hindu, October 17, 2004).

This argument does not seem to convince many people, perhaps because of stories of various types of police atrocity. People agitate against "police atrocities" almost daily and we read about such demonstrations in our newspapers on a regular basis. A recent incident, On 16 December 2012 where a female physiotherapy intern was beaten and gang raped in Delhi raises furious questions on women's safety in the

contemporary India. She died from her injuries thirteen days later while undergoing emergency treatment in Singapore for brain and gastrointestinal damage. Rape, as a form of personal violence, is not merely a physical assault and symbolic of the mistreatment of womankind, but a violation of the most sensitive part of a female psyche.

The Indian government's inability to protect women and children from rape and sexual violence undermines its commitment to uphold the rights of all Indians. During 2013 the authorities also failed to enforce laws that protect vulnerable Communities including dalits, religion, minorities and tribal groups. The Government's efforts to increase mass surveillance raised concerns over rights to privacy and free speech.

In *Nampally Road*, a woman is raped in police custody and two other women are raped and buried half alive in the shifting sands of the Arabian Sea. Despite strong recommendations by the Law Commission of India, several judgments in High Courts and Supreme Court as well as laws against rape, the police do not take any action, as they seem to be more worried about the birthday celebrations bash of the Chief Minister than about the tragic fate of a poor woman. Meena Alexander describes the happening thus:

A young woman had come in from the mountain village with her husband. It was late night. Walking back to the home of relatives, along the deserted road in Gowliguda, they fell prey to a horde of drunken policeman. Rameeza was gang raped. Her husband had his brains beaten out. His body was recovered from a well behind the police station swollen, the eyes puffed out, it was identified. (58)

A few days after Rameeza Begum's incident, a small crowd gathers and agitates in order to rescue her:

I could hear the rickshaw drivers cry out as we raced past them. I could hear the fish wives and the sellers of vegetables, all the way to open space where the police station stood. The scores of men and women thrust hard against the main doors of the police station. The cries of men and women using milk bottles and soda bottles and bottles filled with kerosene, bearing sticks and stones and bits of lumber in the clear afternoon heat, the police station started burning. (56)

But very soon, many are quickly arrested and carried off in the black vans by the reserve police. Rameeza is declared a "source of turbulence". Student leaders, workers and some intellectuals are also arrested. They were to be held in "preventive detention", it was said, "until the Chief Minister's birthday was over."

Dr. Durgabai is referred to as the Little Mother. Meena Alexander seems to imply that India needs the healing touch of doctors like Durgabai. The Little Mother, perhaps, is symbolic of Mother India. The symbolism is made evident when Durgabai suffers from illness as the city goes through commotions and atrocities carried out in the name of politics. Durgabai also evinces great interest in all the happenings and suffers mental trauma as she suffers variously in the sufferings of the oppressed.

Durgabai's attention is wholly dedicated to a long-awaited transformation of India. "A new India is being born", she claims significantly; she has a soft corner for women in trouble. Equipped with the influence of good educational background, both Ramu and Mira, ordinary citizens in the novel, are in a position to serve the nation. There is a barber shop on the right side of Little Mother's house and a bicycle shop on

the left. The apprentices, small boys, sleep on the pavement using rugs. Little Mother feels happy in treating their small ailments. She comments on them thus: “They were all picked off the street. He is good man the bicycle fellow. He treats them as well as he can. But they eat so poor diet such as a bit of rice, or roti and some dal if they are lucky. I have dreams of keeping a buffalo to provide them with milk” (19). Not only the mother, but even an illiterate cycle shop owner has something constructive to offer toward the building up of the nation’s economy.

Alexander underscores the point that every individual, who is rich or poor, makes up the nation, and who should assume the responsibility to shape India into one of the outstanding nations of the world. Little Mother feels upset and almost angry. She can sit and read the *Wye valley* poems, but she raises the question: “Why study Wordsworth in our new India?” Poetic sensibilities, fine arts, religion and culture become “luxuries” that well-fed plutocrats only can afford. The novel is a novel of protest and anger. Initially disagreement is registered through mild protests. The novel tries to prove that the anger of the meek and the humble could rise to the level of a mass rebellion, which will ultimately decimate the perpetrators of injustice.

The pomp and show accompanying the sixtieth birthday celebration of Limca Gowda, the Chief Minister’s utter neglect of masses, and the plight of the millions who are condemned to live a destitute life in slums, all these culminate in the eruption of lava in which Limca Gowda’s “Cardboard” city meets a fiery finale. What began as a mild protest in the form of orange sellers’ march wells up with anger and determination against manifest injustice in the heart of millions and explodes, leading to such a violent end. In every colonial nation, human relationships have arisen from the severest exploitation, founded on inequality and contempt and guaranteed by police authoritarianism.

All administrative and political machinery is geared to a regime of oppression for the benefit of a few. For the colonizer, the most important area of domination is the mental domain of the colonized. The native woman is doubly marginalized by virtue of her relative economic oppression and gender subordination. In all spheres of Indian society, women are dominated, dehumanized and de-womanized, discriminated against, exploited, harassed sexually, used, abused and viewed as inferior beings who must always subordinate themselves to the so-called male supremacy. Indian women still live under the shadow of patriarchal tradition that manifests itself in violence against women.

An old cobbler woman, who is in no way linked to the birth day celebrations of Gowda, is threatened by an Ever Ready man, and this can be quoted as an example. The poor old woman is concentrates sincerely in mending the broken chappal (sandals) of Mira. She is not only old and poor but suffers from leukoderma. The cobbler woman carefully works on the chappal without minding the slogans and the busy trucks carrying the cheering villagers, cheering for a promise of three free meals and a handful of rupees. But nothing seems to bother the woman who chooses a pavement to work for her livelihood. All on a sudden, the Ever Ready man comes and “stares at her, kicked some of her leather scraps into the gutter and then walked away, lathi in hand” (7). But the old woman is calm and composed and continues to do her work. Her non-violent attitude is amazing to Mira, the college teacher, whose passion rises at the flicker of anger. Mira, the a college teacher, seems to derive her strength for action from the subaltern voices.

The final chapter of the novel picturizes a woman from village, narrates the everyday atrocities in Hyderabad. She boldly raises her voice against the centre for the marginalized. This shows that the subaltern also can speak and it shall surely be heard.

The next speaker in the crowd is Maitreyi, a sweeper in the police station. She is the only eye witness of the rape. She describes how Rameeza is “dragged up the steps” and later “thrown into the cell”. The next speaker is also a woman. Who is introduced as Rosamma from the hill country. She says, “Overcome oppression, down with chains.” She pats on Mira’s shoulder and says, “You must not be afraid to use knives. How also should we reach the new world?” (32).

Mira now understands that the marginalized have to sustain their anger so that a day will come for them to reap justice, liberty and equality, with the help of the sickles they carry. Alexander questions the value of non-violence of Gandhi, because it almost fails to bring a change in the lives of the poor and the subdued as seen in the life of the cobbler woman. Unless women take up the “knife of justice”, there is little chance for freedom and justice. The subaltern must speak, speak a louder and louder one by one and then must go in for action, just like the woman from a village, a Maitreyi and a Rosamma.

Alexander suggests a path of recovery and healing through female solidarity and friendship. She does not stop merely with the recording of female bodily trauma. This vision possibly stems from the influence of various Indian women’s movements that she witnessed in her formative years. Alexander suggests that there is a possibility of the uplift of the poor and destitute if only a little bit of cooperation is found in every individual. Mira is an ordinary woman who is ready to embrace the subdued wherever she finds them. Her heart wells up whenever she sees women being subdued in the hands of the cruel patriarchy. Her anger is beautifully canalized into positive actions and she is very much sure that there shall definitely be a cure though it may be a slow process. The novel ends with a positive note thus: “Her (Rameeza’s) mouth was healing

slowly.” Mira wishes a “heavy rain must fall” on the fire which had been lit in water (21).

The next chapter deals the Orange Sellers, a team of middle class people’s protest against the political corruption executed under the chief minister.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ORANGE SELLERS' PROTEST

India, the seventh biggest country in the world with the second highest number of people living in the country, has developed so many socio-political problems for itself. More than 55% of the population comes under poverty. Education is another biggest and major problem of India. It is well-known that a large number of politicians, not only in India, but almost in all countries are corrupt. People are never shocked when politicians corrupt indulged. Honest politicians are a rare breed today.

Ministers like Lal Bahadur Shastri, Sardar Valla Bhai Patel. Jawaharlal Nehru, etc.. are rare who had very little bank balance at the time of the death. Politicians always interfere into police department. It paralyses the police arm and because of such acts of politicians, police officers become dishonest, inefficient and corrupt. According to Santhanam Committee's Recommendations, politicians are one of the important sources of corruption in our day to day life.

Corruption in India has reached in all - time high with rates being exactly double of the global prevalence - Globally, 27% people say they paid bribe when accessing public services and institutions in the last 12 months. In India however, the number of people who did the same was 54% over one in two citizens. Political parties are found to be the most corrupt in India with a corruption rate as high as 4.4 on a scale of 5 (1 being least corrupt rate and 5 being highest). The highest amount of bribe however was collected by the police - 62% followed by those who involved in registry and permit (61%), educational institutions (48%), land services (38%). India's judiciary has also been found guilty - 36% involved in bribes. Cynicism about a corruption free future is wide spread among the Indian public with 45% people saying that the common man

can make a difference on the other hand, around 34% people (1 in 3) say they will not report corruption while facing it.

In *Nampally Road*, Limca Gowda the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh was a totalitarian ruler and suppressed the opposition parties cruelly. He became the chief minister after winning the election by spreading false stories about the former chief minister Mr. NGR. Limca Gowda ruled the state with the help of a created secret police organization called the “Ever Ready men”. The members of Ever Ready men wore khaki uniform and each one of them was provided with a motorcycle. The policies of Limca Gowda were very harmful for the poor people of the state. He imposed a heavy tax on oranges and the poor orange sellers found it hard to survive. So they organized themselves under the banner of ‘Orange Sellers of Telugu Desham’ and staged a protest march against the chief minister. Mira and Ramu witnessed the march from the window of Bolaram’s New Mysore Café. About one hundred men and women marched forward with red flags shouting slogans against the cruel rule of the chief minister. Some of them carried a pile of oranges clutched in their arms. Within a few minutes, the Ever Ready men arrived on motorcycle and started attacking the procession. The policemen started beating the orange sellers with lathis, dragged and kicked them. Very soon the whole procession was scattered and dispersed. To quote:

A hundred men and women, no a hundred and fifty, two hundred, raised themselves from behind walls and ditches and poured in from the crossroads. They grouped behind a banner. Three men held it aloft. “Orange Sellers of Telugu Desham” it read. (7)

The life of the poor was extremely pathetic under the rule of Gowda. The villages were neglected and even basic health facilities were not provided to most of them. Dr. Durgabai remembers the case of the village boy who was attacked by a

leopard. The child did not receive any medical attention for several weeks. Finally the child's father had to carry him to Hyderabad by walking 50 miles into the city. The man had no money with him, just the clothes on his back and his dying son in his hands. Durgabai tried her best to save the child but she was not successful in her efforts as the child's brain was completely damaged. Injustice was widespread in Hyderabad. The poor did not get any justice from the authorities. There was no drinking water, no schools and not even good roads in the villages of Andhra Pradesh. The chief minister was only interested in strengthening his rule. He made preparations for conducting an elaborate celebration of his own birthday so as to increase his popularity. Limca Gowda wanted to achieve the popularity of NGR who was his rival and the former chief minister.

The protest of the orange sellers irritated the C.M of the state. Suddenly the Chief Minister's special branch "Ever Ready Men" with a torch in their waist band armed with lathes on their motorcycles crashed the unarmed men and women of the orange protest. Mira defines:

The Ever Ready Men leaped off their machines and started beating the orange sellers, dragging them to the pavements, kicking them. The Orange Sellers were scrabbling free, their banner torn and bloodied, running as hard as they could until the street resembled a ditch of water in which living creatures were immersed, struggling for their lives, their arms and legs damaged by the blows falling from the iron-tipped lathis.

(7)

Black money is the biggest problem of India, today as it has made the country very weak from somewhere inside of it. In India, the people do not pay tax and they receive bribe even for small work. Little mother feels for poor India being grabbed by

the rich and greedy. India holds one third of total poor people in the world, according to the World Bank Around 32% of people are below the international poverty line and around 68% of the people earn only 2USD per day. This data states that the common people face a lot of problems in their day to day life. In *Nampally Road* Little Mother is a kind hearted woman feels sorry for the poor and the needy. He feels sorry for the abandoned. Little Mother does her best to them. Durgabai reports:

They eat so poorly. A bit of rice or roti and some dal if they're lucky. I have dreams of keeping a buffalo to provide them with milk. I have dreams of keeping a buffalo to provide them with milk. By the bathroom, in that plot of grass just under the Ribaldos' window? (19)

Development in India has become a standstill progress because of poverty and illiteracy. In the novel, a tribal man comes to the clinic of Dr. Durgabai with a child of ten or eleven years old, part of whose skull is torn and the whitish brain matter is visible. The boy is attacked by a leopard. His father being illiterate, does not know the seriousness of the problem and thereby loses his son. Durgabai, a Gyni - Obstetric, is a type of woman, who cares for the poor and the needy.

Durgabai feels horror troubled by rich people's meaningless 'show' and the elaborate life style of modern doctors which can be supported only with the help of black money. Her attention is wholly dedicated to a long/awaited transformation of India. Durgabai observes:

A new India is being born," she whispered to me between patients, scrubbing her hands with red carbolic soap. With women, it was women's business, aches in the ovaries or breasts, bleeding or the stoppage of blood, care for the tiny embryos as they grew in their

mother's wombs. For women in trouble, raped or saddled with an unwanted pregnancy, all it took in the early stages was a quick D and C as it was called, dilation and curettage." Then you have to build up the woman's spirit so "the shame doesn't last". She explained to me, the fate of some of our young girls. (16)

The student leaders, workers and some intellectuals are also arrested. They were to be held a "protective detention" it was said, until the Chief Minister's birthday was over. The people of the city feel sorry and are angry with Minister Limca Gowda, on hearing the news of education. He sent some of his men to control the public. "The policemen jumped to attention. It was obviously a politician, one of Limca's followers (37).

Limca Gowda, the Chief Minister was an extremely corrupt politician. In the name of his own son-in-law, he started a company manufacturing soda water. The company produced lime-coloured soda water under the trade name 'Limca Soda'. The water used for making this cool drink was neither filtered nor purified. Once hundreds of Hyderabadis who consumed this soda during a wedding celebration were hospitalized because of abdominal pain and violent vomiting. But the chief minister only tried to support his company by getting photographed publicly with a bottle of 'Limca Soda' in his hand. He went on drinking it bottle after bottle and soda water started dribbling down his chin. Because of the chief minister's public display, the soda became a fashionable thing in Hyderabad and the people continued to drink it even when the price were raised considerably. Not only this, even after hearing Rameeza Be's incident, Limca Gowda and the Ever Ready men were busy in organizing Limca's sixtieth birthday celebration. Violence in the area was temporarily under control. They

cannot afford any trouble before Limca's sixtieth birthday celebrations. After the gang rape Rameeza Be's condition was very much pathetic. In Meena Alexander's words:

Her sari was stiff with blood. She lay curled up on the mud floor of the cell just behind the wooden desk. Her face was held up by the mud. In spite of the mosquitoes buzzing over her, both eyes were open. She was breathing in jagged, irregular breaths. I gripped the cell bars and started and started at her. The hair from her head was plastered in a light mat on her cheeks, held together with blood. (57)

The chief minister of Hyderabad was a great favourite of the Indian Prime Minister and she frequently called him to Delhi for political consultations. Whenever the chief minister travelled to Delhi, elaborate and expensive arrangements were made to beautify the city and the airport with decorations and archways, All this money was siphoned away from the fund meant for the development of the poor Andhriles. Wherever Gowda travelled, a large number of secret police and Ever Ready men escorted him in a big motorcade. Ramu taught Mira how to press against the college walls so as to escape from the mud being thrown at her good clothes by the speeding convoy.

The poor people of Andhra Pradesh became desperate but they could do nothing against the Chief Minister publicly as all opposition was cruelly suppressed using the police forces. So they organized secret and underground organization to work against Limca Gowda. Ramu and Mira were active workers of these secret organizations.

The people were angry towards the chief minister's irresponsible nature, the gang rape of Rameeza Be by the policeman, and his rich birthday celebrations. The

furious mob gathered against the Chief Minister, roared in anger and dug out the past cruelties of the CM and his men.

Indian women still live under the shadow of patriarchal tradition that manifests itself in violence against women. In *Nampally Road*, Meena Alexander beautifully narrates a small pathetic incident wherein an old cobbler woman, who is in no way linked to the birthday celebration of Gowda, is threatened by an Ever Ready Man. The poor old woman is concentrating sincerely in mending the broken chappal of Mira. She is not only old and poor but suffers from Leukoderma. The author sketches the cruelty, of the rich to the poor. Mira Kannadical remarks:

He stared at her, kicked some of her leather scrapes into the gutter, and then walked away, lathi in hand. The old woman was composed as she watched me, her hand still holding the needle. Her body was so calm on that thin strip of pavement. Just a flicker of anger, and the Ever Ready man could have kicked her into the gutter and hauled me off with him.

(102)

The old woman is calm and composed and continues to do her work. Her non-violent attitude is amazing to Mira, the college teacher, whose passion rises at the flicker of anger. Mira seems to derive her strength for action from the subaltern voices. She boldly raises her voice against the centre for the marginalized. This shows that the subaltern also can speak and it shall surely be heard.

The next speaker in the crowd is Maitreyiamma, a sweeper in the police station. She is the only eye witness of the rape. She describes how Rameeza is dragged up the steps” and later “thrown into the cell” on hearing the voice of the subdued Mira comments:

Listening to her voice my ears grew swollen, like, wheat filled with water, a float on a swamp. I felt my body stuck in its place. I could barely lift my hand to push back the strands of hair that were crowding into my eyes. (88)

The people of Hyderabad takes revenge for the rape of Rameeza and the murder of her husband by destroying the chief minister's ambitious birthday celebrations. This leads to rebellion. When Mira finally reaches home, Durgabai is found with some bandage in her hands. She mentions to Mira that about Ramu's enquiry. These words gave great relief to Mira because it showed that Ramu was still alive in spite of organizing all the dangerous anti-government activities in the underground. Another delight waits for Mira at the gate of Durgabai's house. It was Rameeza Be who had recovered from her serious illness. Mira rushed to her and touched her hand. At that moment, she felt that was some hope left for the poor people of Hyderabad.

The next speaker where is also a woman. She is introduced as Rosamma from the hill country. She says, "Overcome oppression, down with chains" (15). Mira understands that the marginalized have to sustain their anger so that a day will come for them to reap justice, liberty and equality, with the help of the sickles they carry.

Meena Alexander questions the value of non - violence of Gandhi, because it almost fails to bring a change in the lives of the poor and the subdued as seen in the life of the cobbler woman. Unless women take up the "knife of Justice" there is little chance for freedom and justice. The subaltern must speak, speak on louder one by one and then must go in for action, just like the woman from a village, a Maitreyi and Rosamma.

The next chapter attempts to highlight the protagonist's search for identity in her native land.

CHAPTER FOUR

SEARCH FOR SELF-IDENTITY

From the late nineteenth century and into the first half of the twentieth century women were making claims for their power and importance as writers and also for the lives of women as significant subject matter. Prominent women writers are Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, Bharti Mukherjee, Kamala Markandaya, Kiran Desai, Anita Desai and Meena Alexander. Their novels focus on psychological sufferings of women. The themes are often about the depiction of the repressed and oppressed lives of women of the lower classes.

Meena Alexander is an Indian writer whose poetry and fiction reflects her multicultural life experience among diverse ethnic and religious communities for continents. Her works are concerned with the roles of place, memory and language in identity formation. Alexander's works examine the desperate elements of her heritage and her cultural displacement, concentrating particularly on her status as an educated woman of the South Asian diaspora living and writing in the west. Alexander searches for her own identity and self-creation amidst a world that strives to define, identify, and label people. These definitions of race and nationality prove difficult to defy.

Meena Alexander searches for psychic wholeness through language a prevalent theme of her poetry. She also articulates the concerns facing many postcolonial writers silenced by the dominant literary traditions of the imperial past. She states about her writing in *The Shock of Arrival: Reflection on Postcolonial Experience* "The Act of writing... it seems to makes up a shelter, allows space to what would otherwise be hidden, crossed out, mutilated". Sometimes writing can work towards a reparation, making a sheltering space for the mind. Yet it feeds off ruptures, tears in what might

otherwise seems a seamless, oppressive fabric. Alexander is known for lyrical writing that deals with migration, and its impact, the subjectivity of the writer and violent events that compel people to cross borders. Though confronting such stark and difficult issues, her writing is sensual, and maintains a generous spirit.

The novel *Nampally Road* vividly portrays contemporary India and a woman's struggle to piece together her past. At the heart of this novel, is the gang rape of Rameeza Be by the police. The towns people rise up and burn the police station. This novel reissued in 2013 by *Orient Blackswan* has a powerful resonance with the recent tragic events in Delhi. When it was first published in 1991 the novel was a Voice Literary Supplement Editor's Choice. Alexander focuses on issues of cultural richness, psychological complexity, feminism and social politics. *Nampally Road* is a narrative of minority struggle that focuses on the juxtaposition of past relationship and cultural and historical inheritance.

Mira the protagonist was born in India a few years after the independence and she did not agree to her mother's decision for an arranged marriage for her. She went to England as an undergraduate student and spent several years there. Life in England was a torture to Mira because she couldn't adjust with the fast lifestyle of the European people. She attended some dancing parties of the students but they disgusted her because of the loud music and the harsh lights. She even tried to go out every evening with a different boyfriend according to the western custom. Europeans considered it a permanent commitment or attachment to have the same boyfriend for a longer period.

Mira wanted to write a few poems so as to find out a separate identity for herself. She wanted to establish who she was. She thought that by writing a few poems or even a few prose pieces, she could start to give a meaning to her life. Meena

Alexander makes it very clear that Mira had a complex inter-cultural personality because she was an Indian girl who got a colonial education. When Mira got a teaching job in Hyderabad, she gladly accepted it because she thought that going to India would give her a chance to establish a clearer identity for herself. Mira comments:

When I had finally begun to write my thesis back in England, I had argued implicitly against the experiments that I conducted on myself. I had been forcing myself to go out each night with a different fellow so I would never get attached, to leap up and down or twist and jive at the student mixers with those harsh strobe lights and deafening music that was all the rage, to drink more than I felt comfortable doing, and to smoke until my throat hurt. (31)

When Mira reached Hyderabad, she felt that she was no more a girl of confusion but a woman of firm standing. Her mind had grown stronger and she could live her life fully only in her own country. Mira decided to make William Wordsworth her role model in life. Wordsworth was one of the English poets whom Mira read very closely as a part of her M.A. final year studies. He had written several poems on nature especially about beautiful places where he wanted to return again and again. He was a great poet who haunted the memory of Mira. She loved Wordsworth because he understood suffering and desire that could not let itself free. Mira wanted to become a poet by achieving the clarity of Wordsworth. Mira comments:

One of the poets I read very closely on those cold winter nights back then was Wordsworth. Now I taught his poems at Sona Nivas. They were part of the set exam for the M.A. finals. When Durgabai, who had read the daffodils poem but not much else, asked me who the poet was,

I explained that he had written several poems about returning to places that he loved; that he was ridden by guilt after abandoning his French mistress and baby; that he was a great poet still, haunted by memory.

(31)

When Mira started her life in Hyderabad, she had minor problems about readjusting with the Indian society. Once Mira started eating with her left hand by mistake this shocked many Andhrities who saw it. She started teaching English literature at the Sona Nivas College, Hyderabad. The professor allotted her the lectures on Wordsworth and Mira became a favourite among the students of Sona Nivas. During her free time, Mira continued her attempts to write poems. She had a good collection of little notebooks hidden under her bed. Ramu made fun of the creative attempts of Mira and commented that no one had the right to impose ideas on the readers. Mira explained that writing poems was a mission in her life. She was 25 years old and she hardly knew what she was writing. Mira observes: “The job offer in Hyderabad could give me a way out. I returned to India determined to start afresh, make up a self that had some continuity with what I was. It was my fond hope that by writing a few poems, or a few prose pieces, I could start to stitch it all together” (30).

Mira was very much confused inside her mind in spite of all her western education. She wanted to become a poet so as to establish a new identity for herself. Otherwise her mother will dress her up in silks and gold and marry her off to some rich engineer or estate owner. Mira strongly felt that she may not be able to survive such a marriage. According to Mira, marriage was a personal matter and she will commit into a marriage only when she is fully prepared for the arrangement.

Mira's search for identity makes a sharp turn when she sees Rameeza Be for the first time inside the Gowliguda police station. Rameeza's sari was stiff with blood. She lay curled up on the mud floor of the prison room just behind the wooden desk. Her face was held up by the mud. Mosquitoes were buzzing over her and still both her eyes were open. She was breathing in a jagged, irregular manner. Mira gripped the cell bars and looked at her for a long time. She bent forward and put her hands inside the prison bars and touched the damp forehead of Rameeza. The hair from her head was plastered in a light mat on her cheeks and it was held together with blood. Very soon someone carried away Rameeza to the house of Maitreyamma where she was given good rest and medical attention. It was a long and painstaking process but Rameeza finally emerged healthy because of the strong herbal medicines of Maitreyamma.

Ramu and Mira visited Rameeza in that house and her pathetic condition extremely influenced Mira. 'I wished', Mira wondered, 'I could give up my own useless life in some way that could help her'. Thus, Mira finally found her identity. She understood that she was nobody else other than an ordinary Indian. The suffering of Rameeza was the suffering of an entire nation and Mira's mission in life was to seek a solution to give relief to millions of Rameezas in India. Mira comments:

Ramu and I crouched on the floor by the rope bed, listening to Rameeza. I did not say very much. I just wanted to look at her, feel those eyes again. I wanted to understand her pain. Perhaps it would help us all move forward. Ramu, though, was talking to her, slowly, gently, speaking political words with the party and about how those who had raped her would be brought to justice. (80)

Nampally Road not only focuses on the consciousness of the rape victim but puts forward the idea as demonstrated by Gayatri Spivak regarding subalterns. It demonstrates the analysis of the subaltern in the representation of Rameeza's experience. The novel brings forward the difficulty, the impossibility of articulating traumatic experience for the rape victim and the difficulty of a writer in representing this in any factual or fictional narrative.

In the *Nampally Road*, the incident of Rameeza Be rape under the police custody was reported in the papers and led to the burning of a police station in Hyderabad. Yet this event itself is transformed into a poetic symbol. There are dreams and portents linking Rameeza Be with Durgabai and the protagonist, Mira, who is a foreign-returned woman trying to find herself. The other main character is Ramu her lover, an activist who is in the thick of the civil liberty struggle, but who remains strangely opposed to Mira's writing, and a Roman Catholic servant who wants to emigrate to Canada. Such is the exotic cast of the novel. Alexander creates a feminist space where characters are given a voice.

The *Nampally Road* vividly portrays contemporary India and one woman's struggle to peace. The companionship between women are nurturing and sustaining. The violence is portrayed through the story of Rameeza Be who is a woman of little stature. The physical violence done to this innocent woman leads to psychological violence and fear in the mind of the inhabitants. The protagonist exemplifies Meena Alexander's own alter-ego, finds it very difficult to maintain a balance between her life of writing and grim realities that surround her. The catastrophic events of Rameeza's life force Mira to ponder over the glorified concept of nationalism and her own identity as a writer. Mira begins to feel that her drafts are void of clarity and completion even when there are stack of notebooks under her bed. *Nampally Road* tackles a number of

serious and complex themes without reaching any neat conclusions. Although Mira's attachment to Little Mother and her sympathy for the brutalized Rameeza seem to be set her on the road to full-fledged feminism. Ramu is still portrayed appealingly, even when he is at his most arrogant.

Meena Alexander depicts the grim reality of senseless political violence, where the authorization rule and reign of the corrupt chief minister Limca Gowda a political climate that curbs freedom of expression. This is where the novel offers a perfect blend of the fact and fiction, portraying an Indian that teams with terror, Violence. Confusion and turmoil, add to Mira's sense of disquiet about the choices she has made in her own life and those of the country and people in power. Thus by emphasizing, on a deep national consciousness in her text and by constantly foregrounding the deep discontentment of the protagonist with the contemporary nation, the author interrogates the power structure.

The protagonist Mira, exemplifying Meena Alexander's own alter -ego, finds it very difficult to maintain a balance between her life of writing and the grim realities that surround her. The catastrophic events of Rameeza's life force Mira to ponder over the glorified concept of nationalism and her own identity as a writer. Mira begins to feel that drafts are void of clarity completion even when there is a stack of notebooks under her bed. Her world of writing seems to appear trivial in an environment of conflict and strife. She questions her teaching of romantic poetry in India. Mira's life in England was one of dislocation and this made her realizes that the self is always broken.

In the *Nampally Road*, Mira questions herself about Mahatma Gandhi's grand vision what would he have made of us, our lives fractured into bits and pieces of a New India. Her widowed Physician friend proves to be a true mentor of Mira in her

endeavour to assimilate her past and her present in the context of contemporary India.

Mira expresses her feeling thus,

I closed my eyes to listen better. I loved voice. It was the world together. It made a past. Listening to her, I lost the bitter sense I often have being evicted, of being thrust out of place in which lives had meaning and stories accreted and grew. The present was flat and sharp and broken into pieces. There was tear gas in the present and a woman's terrible cry hovering over a burnt out police station. (58)

Thus the recurrent theme of dislocation of self and need to find an identity for oneself culminates in Mira (and Meena) trying to redefine the landscape of the contemporary practices. The inner turmoil that Mira undergoes drives her to forsake her intellectual realm of Romantic poets and join her love Ramu's world of political activism in order to express a sense of solitary with Rameeza Be. She realizes that the life that made sense was all around me in little mother and Ramu and young students, the orange sellers and the violent and wretched ourselves included. It was all already there. Basu interprets the novel as in a *Nampally Road* which began with very bleak representation of political repression, the ending is one that envisions the possibility of transformation.

Yet Mira, along with Durgabai makes arrangements for the rehabilitation of Rameeza Be. Mira's kannadical's, joining the middle class people to protest against injustices reflect the author's innermost doubts and confused emotions regarding identity and meaning and her own attempts to deal with dislocation of space, time, memory and real world. Alexander talks about *Nampally road* in an interview between Zainab Ali and Dharini Rasiah and explains her aim as follows:

What I try do to is to give voice to these very human experience for longing for love and loss-all the stuff that makes us what we are but within this complicated, unstable world, shifting within diasporic and migrant spaces, where identities are contested where they cannot be taken what I try do to is give voice to these very human for granted. Because that is the world I know. (2000:88)

Through this statement, Meena Alexander reveals her own angst caused by dislocation and her persistent endeavour to define the “self”. Again in an interview with *Ruth Maxey* Meena asks the question as to why she defends her decision to teach Wordsworth’s works in India. Mira appreciates Wordsworth and proposes that “I have to admit to painted love that is not easy to speak of an attachment so deep that sometime I have felt it would be easier to deny it” (30). Wordsworth discourse reaches the heart directly and touches her interior and emotional part of the childhood.

In another conversation with *Ruth Maxey in MELUS*, Meena discusses her reference to the image of fire in her novel. Meena Alexander used the great Buddhist sage Nagarjuna’s epigram saying if the fire is it in water, who can English It? It has been aptly used by Meena Alexander as Nagarjuna says, “if the fear comes from the protector, who can protect is from fear?” (37). This fear which is supposed to be the savior. If the protector create fear in the hearts of million then there can be no way to abandon that fear. The image of fire on water is the power image for Meena Alexander and when she tries to find its genealogy, she is reminded of the incident when the Portuguese colonized Kerala in the 16th century in order to suppress any kind of revolt of the princess, and set fire to an Indianship.

The reviews and criticism of Meena Alexander's work is mostly positive as has not only been received favourably in India but also in the United States. Reviewing *Nampally Road* Interpal Grewal comments that Meena Alexander's range of women is impressive. The novel complex representation of India in the Indira Gandhi era, combined with issue of inclusion and empowerment through affiliations on the basis and class in both India and the U.S., effectively dismantles simplistic colonial of the monolithic third world woman as victim. Shilpa Deve, comparing the significations of Meena Alexander's fiction to that of Muktherjee concluded that *Nampally Road* represents more than a narrative of minority victimization and offers a reasonable strategy to incorporate the identity with the past by questioning the relationship between history and cultural inheritance.

Critics also have read Meena Alexander's impulse to question her identity for signs of emergent feminism, responding particularly to her experience as a woman in both an occidental and oriental context. Meena Alexander treats her writing as a search for a homeland, which is less physical than psychological, in particular her poetry, as a means of making sense of her multiple cultural, geographical and psychological positional ties.

The final chapter "Summation" sums up, all the four chapters and presents an overall view of the points and arguments that are discussed in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Indian literature comprises literary works produced in the sub-continent of India. It is said to have great antiquity in oral forms of literature until the Sixteenth century. Unlike other literatures in the world, Indian Literature is different as its core idea has always been an ideology based on society. These are found in the great Indian works like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and also in the early *books of Vedas*. Secondly, epics are the literary master pieces wherein they have a strong belief in reincarnation.

Indian English literature has attained an independent status and is also guarded by prominent writers like Rajaram Mohan Roy, Sir Aurobindo, Gosh and R.K.Narayanan and many others. There were plenty of writings during Pre-Independence era by dramatists, essayists and novelists. Indian literature talks about Indian history, culture, tradition and social values. There are critics and commentators in English and America who appreciate Indian English novels. Indian literature flourished because of the contribution of the creative writing by Indian novelists in English. Indian novelists faced many hurdles of writing in foreign language and they also introduced their own style of writing which was precise and clear. They also used vocabulary apt for the Indian readers.

Meena Alexanders novel *Nampally Road* is based on some selected incidents, which happen in Hyderabad and in particular, on a road called Nampally road. The narrator is Mira, a college teacher. Mira is accompanied by a male college teacher, Ramu. They both teach English in Sona Nivas, a local college. Ramu is a complete desi that he gives up all opportunities of going abroad. Ramu comments: “He turned down the Rhodes of scholarship that offers might have killed for, accepted a modest grand

from Jawaharlal Nehru University and swore on the memory of his dead mother never to leave the boundaries of free India” (3). He is highly unorthodox and calls the superstitious belief “Horoscope rubbish”.

Meena Alexander, is one of the finest novelists of contemporary times. Born in Allahabad, India, on 17 February 1951, she was raised in both India and the Sudan in North Africa. She received a bachelor’s degree in French and English from Khartoum University in 1969 and a doctorate degree in English from Nottingham University in England. She earned a Ph.D in English in 1973 at the age of twenty two with a dissertation in Romantic Literature that she would later develop and publish as the *Poetic Self*.

Meena Alexander has received awards and fellowships from The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and The Rockefeller Foundation. She was a distinguished professor of English at Hunter College, City University of New York. She passed away on 21 November 2018. The six poems from her book *Atmospheric Embroidery*, published in 2015, show how Alexander’s verses embodied both the deeply personal and widely political issues.

The second chapter “Women in Post Colonial India” dealt with the centers on various issues including feminism, cultural retention, politics, and history among others. One of the themes of her novels is obviously the portrayal of women’s issues in India. By presenting women as mothers, political activists, and victims of a patriarchal society, she brings to attention the plight of women in a postcolonial nation. In the so-called decolonized nations, women’s lives are still dominated by their patriarchs at home and in society at large. She describes Mira’s attempts to escape an arranged marriage and her shunning of traditional values.

The narrative draws on many women—Durgabai, Raniamma, Laura, Maiteyi, Rameeza Be – to build up a matrix of polyphonic narratives that reverberate through the text and lend efficacy to the (auto) biography of Mira. The marginalised female voices, resisting victimisation through their search for self-reconciliation in the interstices of memory and culture, empower a new discourse of the nation in the hybrid realm of culture. *Nampally Road*, it is argued, offers an image of national consciousness as achieved by undermining the hegemony of the past and the tyranny of the present. It tries to give voice to the subaltern by imaginatively and socially engaging them in the national, political, cultural and social narratives of their nation.

Mira Kannadical, the protagonist is an English professor who returns to India after studying in England for four years and getting a Ph.D on Wordsworth from Nottingham University. She feels distraught and out of place in England and decides to start a new life in India. When Mira got a teaching job in Hyderabad, she gladly accepted it because she thought that going to India would give her a chance to establish a clearer identity for herself. Once she reached in Hyderabad, she felt that she was no more a girl in confusion but a woman of firm standing. When Mira started living in Hyderabad, she had minor problems about readjusting with the Indian society. Once Mira started eating with her left hand by mistake and this shocked many Andhrites who saw it.

In the third chapter “The Orange Seller’s Protest” the researcher has highlighted the political exploitation discussed the Limca Gowda the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh was a totalitarian ruler and suppressed the opposition parties cruelly. He became the chief minister after winning the election by spreading false stories about the former chief minister Mr. NGR. Limca Gowda ruled the state with the help of a

created secret police organization called the “Ever Ready men”. The members of Ever Ready men wore khaki uniform and each one of them was provided with a motorcycle.

The policies of Limca Gowda were very harmful for the poor people of the state. He imposed a heavy tax on oranges and the poor orange sellers found it hard to survive. So they organized themselves under the banner of ‘Orange Sellers of Telugu Desham’ and staged a protest march against the chief minister. Mira and Ramu witnessed the march from the window of Bolaram’s New Mysore Café. About one hundred men and women marched forward with red flags shouting slogans against the cruel rule of the chief minister. Some of them carried a pile of oranges clutched in their arms. Within a few minutes, the Ever Ready men arrived on motorcycle and started attacking the procession. The policemen started beating the orange sellers with lathis, dragged and kicked them. Very soon the whole procession was scattered and dispersed.

The fourth chapter “Search for Self-Identity” in Meena Alexander’s *Nampally Road* has picturized portrays contemporary India and one woman’s struggle to piece together her past. At the heart of this novel, is the gang rape of Rameeza Be by the police. The towns people rise up and burn the police station. This novel reissued in 2013 by *Orient Blackswan* has a powerful resonance with the recent tragic events in Delhi. When it was first published in 1991 the novel was a Voice Literary Supplement Editor’s Choice. Alexander focuses on issues of cultural richness, psychological complexity, feminism and social politics. *Nampally Road* is a narrative of minority struggle that focuses on the juxtaposition of past relationship and cultural and historical inheritance.

Mira was born in India a few years after the independence and she did not agree to her mother’s decision for an arranged marriage for her. She went to England as an undergraduate student and spent several years there. Life in England was a torture to

Mira because she could not adjust with the fast lifestyle of the European people. She attended some dancing parties of the students but they disgusted her because of the loud music and the harsh lights. She even tried to go out every evening with a different boyfriend according to the western custom. Europeans considered it a permanent commitment or attachment to have the same boyfriend for a longer period.

Mira wanted to write a few poems so as to find out a separate identity for herself. She wanted to establish what she was. She thought that by writing a few poems or even a few prose pieces, she could start to give a meaning to her life. Meena Alexander makes it very clear that Mira had a complex inter-cultural personality because she was an Indian girl who got a colonial education. When Mira got a teaching job in Hyderabad, she gladly accepted it because she thought that going to India would give her a chance to establish a clearer identity for herself. Mira started living in Hyderabad, she had minor problems about readjusting with the Indian society.

When Mira started eating with her left hand by mistake this shocked many Andhrites who saw it. She started teaching English literature at the Sona Nivas College, Hyderabad. The professor allotted her the lectures on Wordsworth and Mira became a favourite among the students of Sona Nivas. During her free time, Mira continued her attempts to write poems. She had a good collection of little notebooks hidden under her bed. Ramu made fun of the creative attempts of Mira and commented that no one had the right to impose ideas on the readers. Mira explained that writing poems was a mission in her life. She was 25 years old and she hardly knew what she was writing. Mira says that “The job offer in Hyderabad could give me a way out. I returned to India determined to start afresh, make up a self that had some continuity with what I was. It was my fond hope that by writing a few poems, or a few prose pieces, I could start to stitch it all together” (30).

Mira's search for identity makes a sharp turn when she sees Rameeza Be for the first time inside the Gowliguda police station. Rameeza's sari was stiff with blood. She lay curled up on the mud floor of the prison room just behind the wooden desk. Her face was held up by the mud. Mosquitoes were buzzing over her and still both her eyes were open. She was breathing in a jagged, irregular manner. Mira gripped the cell bars and looked at her for a long time. She bent forward and put her hands inside through the prison bars and touched the damp forehead of Rameeza. The hair from her head was plastered in a light mat on her cheeks and it was held together with blood. Very soon someone carried away Rameeza to the house of Maitreyamma where she was given good rest and medical attention.

The final chapter "Summation" sums up, all the four chapters and presents an overall view of the points and arguments that are discussed in the previous chapters which are taken for study.

The researcher's findings are as follows: In *Nampally Road* initial disagreement is registered through mild protests. *Nampally Road* tries to prove the angle of the meek and the humble could rise to the level of mass rebellion, which will ultimately decimate the perpetrators of injustice. In *Nampally Road*, Meena Alexander also suggests a part of recovery and healing through female solidarity and friendship. Meena Alexander does not stop merely with the recording of female trauma. This vision possibly seems from the influence of various Indian women's movement that she has witnessed in her formative years.

The researcher hopes that this project may pave way for the future researchers to pursue their research on Identity Crisis, Cultural Inadaptability, Immigrant Sensibility and Rape as an Element of Power Dominance.

WORKS CITED

- Alexander, Meena. *Fault Lines*. The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 1993.
- Alexander, Meena. *Nampally Road*. Orient Longman Ltd., 1992.
- Alexander, Meena. *Nampally Road*. San Francisco: Mercury House, 1991. Print.
- Ali, Zainab & Dharini Rasiah. (2000) Interview with Meena Alexander. In King-Kok Cheung (ed.) *Words Matter: Conversations with Asian American Writers*, 69-91: Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Francia, Luis. H. Review of *Nampally Road*. *Village voice* (March 26,1991): 74.
- Harjo, Joy. “*River and Bridge*”. *Poetry, Works and Collaboration*. 1995.
- Morley, Hilda. “*The Garden*”. *Poetry, Works and Collaborations, Night Scene*, 1992.
- Nanda, Aparajita. “Of a ‘Voice’ and ‘Bodies’: A Postcolonial Critique of Meena Alexander’s *Nampally Road*. In *Bodies and Voices: the Force Field of Representation and Discourse in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies*”. Ed. Merete Falck Borch, Eva Rask, And Bruce Clunies Ross. Rodopi Press, 2008.
- Perry, John Oliver. Review of Meena Alexander’s *Nampally Road*. *World Literature Today* 65, no. 2 (1991): 364.
- The Hindu, English Daily News Paper, October 17, 2004.

Family Dysfunctions in the novel *The Corrections* by Jonathan Franzen

A project 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

by

SHARMILA.A

(REG. NO. 20APEN25)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Pathologies in Old Age	15
Three	Personification of Power	26
Four	Ethics of Complexity	40
Five	Summation	55
	Works Cited	61

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **FAMILY DYSFUNCTIONS IN THE NOVEL *THE CORRECTIONS* BY JONATHAN FRANZEN** 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 is a work done by Sharmila. A during the year 2020-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Lucia Rose

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Principal

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

T. Mary Manonmani
Dr.T.Mary Manonmani

Guide

S. Vennila
27/05/2022
Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Family Dysfunctions in the novel *The Corrections* by Jonathan Franzen** 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.

Thoothukudi



Sharmila.A

May 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, and strength to finish the research.

I express my gratitude to Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research-oriented study. I thank our Institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. I also acknowledge the research oriented ambience I received here.

I thank, Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, Dr. T. Mary Manonmani, Associate Professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance, encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

This project entitled **Family Dysfunctions in Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections*** addresses conflicts and issues within a family that arise from the presence of a progressive debilitating disease of an older.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the characteristics of American Literature and the literary fame of Jonathan Franzens's works, awards and achievements. It showcases the essentials of his work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Pathologies in Old Age** revolves around an elderly couple and their three adult children tracing their lives from the mid 20th century.

The third chapter **Personification of Power** shows the hegemonic concept of masculinity as a dominant collective that has been expanding with Western culture

The fourth chapter **Ethics of Complexity** displays the complexity of the ordinary people to revive faith in ethical humanistic, empathic responsibility through the characters.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and there by validates the study.

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

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

When considered in relation to other political entities in the world, the United States stands out in the sheer uniqueness of her history and socio-political growth. First “discovered” by European adventures and explorers in the fifteenth century, the U.S. represented the crown jewel in a New World which encompassed North and South America and the Caribbean islands. The country soon became the preferred destination for oppressed religious sects and victimised ethnic groups and nationalities. America ultimately became the land of opportunity where dreams could be fulfilled and aspirations met. Her literature is essentially a delineation of the ways in which America stands both a symbol and a concrete realisation of such a possibility.

Any study of themes and techniques in American literature depends crucially on how American literature is itself defined. This is vital because it can be categorised in a variety of ways through the utilisation of different criteria. Using historical periods, American literature may 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; literature produced between 1945 and the present .

American literature can also be categorised 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 two concepts like Puritan Christianity, transcendentalism, realism, naturalism and humanitarianism, as well as the more recent ideas of race, gender and political issues.

Specifically, ethnic criteria represent another way in which U.S. 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. Utilising such criteria, American literature can be classified into Native American Jewish, Hispanic, African American and Asian American literatures.

The fact that American literature can be classified according to differing and sometimes contradictory criteria makes the task of canon-formation necessary to the selection of major American authors difficult. Questions of appropriateness, however defined, immediately become apparent. For example, some of the best-known works of American revolutionary literature fail to acknowledge the injustice of slavery. Also, much of the literature produced by ethnic minorities is often considered a relatively unimportant tributary to the so-called mainstream, and as a result, is often assessed according to the critical expectations of the mainstream rather than on its own terms.

Native Americans, the first inhabitants of the continent, did not develop anything that can be called “literature”- their stories and poems were spread orally which means the American literary history begins with the age of colonialism. The character of early American literature is strongly influenced by several factors like, the era of colonising the continent. Since not only the English explored and claimed the territories, the beginnings of American literature are more or less connected also with French, Spanish or Dutch literature as well. The first writers brought mainly English ideas and ways of writings, which means early Americans literature is based on the literature of England. As years passed and literary theory developed, the writers who adopted the English style like Franklin, Longfellow, James and Pound are now sometimes called pale faces Their poetry is sometimes called as “cooked poetry”. On the other hand, there were authors who explored new topics and helped shape America’s own literary tradition. They are called redskins (Whitman, Emerson, the Beat Generation). Their poetry is referred to as “raw poetry”. Religion played an important part in the writers’ lives. Many writings of the period were the sermons and the theological books. The fact that the Pilgrims landed in the Massachusetts Bay in 1620 had an immense influence on the culture of the newly developing colonial system.

As dissatisfaction with the colonial system and the relation with the Britain grew, the literature gradually changed its shape. The writers become more politically, anti – British and revolutionary oriented, rationalism and enlightenment prevailed. Essays, speeches and pamphlets became more important. The Puritans religious poetry fell out of favour as man was not considered naturally sinful any longer.

The period of romanticism represented a revolt against classicism and its values such as reason and form. The American variant of romanticism was different from the European one to a certain degree. There was a great interest in Indians and their culture. The writings were less political and religious. The topics were mostly the American, and the writer's stressed imagination, nature and individualism. Transcendentalism is the movement of authors concentrated in Boston. They rejected the common spirituality and materialism. They were inspired by nature, spent time alone and relied on themselves. They also stressed the role of intuition and God was omnipresent for them.

Just as in Europe, the period of romanticism was followed by the period of realism. Writers left behind the styles and topics adopted by the previous generation and rather concentrated on describing life as it was its negatives typical for the period. It was an era of industrialisation and migration; determinism was a major paradigm of the age. Regionalism also appeared (Local Colour School – a group of authors who described the customs and specifics of particular regions). Novel was the main genre. The 1890s saw the rise of naturalism, an extreme form of realism coined by Emile Zola. Writers portrayed people in extreme situations and described their real behaviour – their books are full of dirty environments, poor neighbourhoods, prostitutes, drunks' crime and illiteracy. They formed the group called the Muckrakers.

Taking these factors into consideration, therefore, it can be said that the following works constitute some of the major texts of American Literature. They are: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, *Leaves of Grass* by Walt Whitman, *A Farewell to Arms*

by Ernest Hemingway, *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison.

Some modern writers of the 20th century are John Updike, Toni Morrison, Ken Follett Leo Tolstoy and Jonathan Franzen. John Hoyer Updike was an American writer, poet, literary critic and novelist. He was born on 18th March 1932 in Reading, Pennsylvania. He wrote the columns *Talk of the Town*, poetry and short stories for the magazine. Some of these stories became the groundwork for his later poetry books such as *The Carpentered Hen* (1958) and *The Same Door* (1959). His 1968 novel, *Couples* created a great hype by portraying the relationship of young married couples and the complications in their lives. His outstanding career as a poet was distinguished with successful volumes of poems such as *Telephone Poles and Other Poems* (1963), *Midpoint* (1969) and *Tossing and Turning* (1977) which is considered to be one of his best works. Updike also went through a deep spiritual crisis which he overcame by reading the works of the theologians Karl Barth and Søren Kierkegaard. His *Rabbit is Rich* won him the Pulitzer Prize in 1982. John Updike became the youngest person to get elected to the ‘National Institute of Arts and Letters’. George H. W Bush presented him with the ‘National medal of Art’ in 1989 and the ‘National Medal for the Humanities’ by G.W Bush in 2003. This great writer of English literature died on 27th January 2009 in Beverly Farms, Massachusetts.

The Noble Prize-winning Toni Morrison is an American author born on 18, February 1970, she was an editor and professor who is best known for writing novels with epic themes, detailed characters and brilliant dialogue. A lot

of her works revolve around black women defining their roles and striving to survive in a male dominated society. Morrison's work is also often heavily influenced by her inheritance of the African American culture. In addition to winning the Nobel Prize in 1993, Morrison was also awarded the Pulitzer Prize for her novel *Beloved* in 1987. Morrison first began writing at Howard when she joined a group of writers who met frequently to discuss each other's works. Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* was published in 1970. It was included in a selection of Orpharion's Book Club 2000. Her 1973 book, *Sula* gained a nomination for the National Book Award in 1975. Another well admired work by Morrison is *Song of Solomon* (1977) which was a main selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. The book also won the National Book Critics Circle Award. Morrison's most significant novel, *Beloved* was published in 1987. Although the book attained immense critical acclaim, it failed to win the National Book Award and the National Book Critics Circle Award, to which the writing community protested. However, Morrison was soon awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction as well as the American Book Award.

Ken Follett was born in Cardiff, Wales on June 5, 1949. He began publishing his fictional works but did not gain much acknowledgement in the beginning. Follett was first recognized as an exceptional writer in 1978 after the publication of his novel, *Eye of the Needle* which brought him both wealth and international fame. The book also won Follett an Edgar Award for best novel in 1979. A number of Ken Follett's books reached the number one spot on The New York Times bestsellers list while many have been adapted to screen. Some more famous titles by Ken Follett include *The Shakeout* (1975), *The Bear Raid* (1976), *The Mystery Hideout* (1976), *The Third Twin* (1996), and *Fall of Giants*

(2010). His next novel, *Winter of the World* is expected to be released in 2012. Ken Follett has also been a prominent name in British politics since he began taking interest in the activities of the British Labour Party in late 1970s. His political activities led to his second marriage in 1984 with Barbara Boxer who was a Labour official. In addition to being a popular Blairite, Follett has been involved in fundraising activities for the party. In 2010 he was the largest donor to Ed Balls' campaign to become leader of the Labour Party.

Alice MA senior Tallulah-Kate Walker is an American novelist, short story writer, poet, and social activist. In 1982, she became the first African-American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for fiction which she was awarded for her novel *The Color Purple*. Over the span of her career, Walker has published seventeen novels and short story collections, twelve non-fiction works, and collections of essays and poetry. Walker has written several other novels, including *The Temple Of My Familiar* (1989) and *Possessing The Secret of Joy* (1992) (which featured several characters and descendants of characters from *The Color Purple*). She has published a number of collections of short stories, poetry, and other writings. Her work is focused on the struggles of black people, particularly women, and their lives in a racist, sexist and violent society. In 2013, Alice Walker published two new books, one of them entitled *The Cushion in the Road: Meditation and Wandering as the Whole World Awakens to Being in Harm's Way*. The other was a book of poems entitled *The World Will Follow Joy Turning Madness into Flowers (New Poems)*.

Nicholas Charles Sparks is an American novelist, screenwriter, and philanthropist. He has published twenty-two novels and two non-fiction books,

some of which have been *New York Times* bestsellers, with over 115 million copies sold worldwide in more than 50 languages. Eleven of his novels have been adapted to film, including *The Choice*, *The Longest Ride*, *The Best of Me*, *Safe Haven*, *The Lucky One*, *Message in a Bottle*, *A Walk to Remember*, *Nights in Rodanthe*, *Dear John*, *The Last Song*, and *The Notebook*.

Sparks penned his first, never published, novel, *The Passing*. He wrote another in 1989, also unpublished, *The Royal Murders*. After college, Sparks both sought work with publishers and applied to law school, but was rejected in both attempts. He spent the next three years in various occupations, including real estate appraisal, waiting tables, selling dental products by phone, and starting his own manufacturing business. In 1990, Sparks co-wrote a book with Billy Mills entitled *Wokini A Lakota Journey to Happiness and Self-Understanding*, a nonfiction book about the influence of Lakota spiritual beliefs and practices. The book was published by Feather Publishing, Random House, and Hay House, and sold some 50,000 copies in its first year after release. In 1994, while working in pharmaceutical sales, Sparks began a novel in his spare time, *The Notebook*. In 1995, he was discovered by literary agent Theresa Park, who picked *The Notebook* out of her agency's slush pile, fell in love with it, and offered to represent him. In October 1995, Park secured a \$1 million advance for *The Notebook* from Time Warner Book Group. Published in October 1996, the novel made The New York Times best-seller list in its first week of release and eventually spent fifty-six weeks there.

Philip Milton Roth was an American novelist and short story writer. Roth's fiction often set in his birthplace of Newark, New Jersey is known for its

intensely autobiographical character, for philosophically and formally blurring the distinction between reality and fiction, for its "sensual, ingenious style" and for its provocative explorations of American Identity. He first gained attention with the 1959 novella *Goodbye, Columbus* the collection so titled received the U.S. National Book Award for Fiction.

He became one of the most awarded American writers of his generation. His books twice received the National Book Award and the National Books Critics Circle award, and three times the PEN/ Faulkner Award. He received a Pulitzer Prize for his 1997 novel *American Pastoral* which featured one of his best-known characters, Nathan Zuckerman *the Human Stain* (2000), another Zuckerman novel, was awarded the United Kingdom's WH Smith Literary Award for the best book of the year. In 2001, in Prague, Roth received the inaugural Franz Kafka Prize.

Eight of Roth's novels and short stories have been adapted as films *Goodbye; Columbus Portn7 The Human Stain; The Dying Animal*, adapted as *Elegy; The Humbling; Indignation*; and *American Pastoral*. In addition, *The Ghost Writer* was adapted for television in 1984.^[76] by the filmmaker Alex Ross Perry made *Listen Up Philip*, which was influenced by Roth's work. HBO dramatized Roth's *The Plot Against America* in 2020 as a six-part series starting Zoe Kazan, Winona Ryder, John Turturro, and Morgan Spencer.

The social realistic novelist Jonathan Franzen was born on August 17, 1959 in Western Springs, Illinois. He was the novelist and essayist whose sprawling, multi-layered novels about contemporary America elicited critical claim. His experiences with the outer world made him to think realistically and

it enabled him to speak German fluently. He started his literary career as a novelist and received number of awards and honours including National Book award and Pulitzer Prize. Jonathan Franzen wrote for The New Yorker magazine. His 1996 Harper's essay "Perchance to dream" bemoaned the state of contemporary literature. In recent years, Franzen recognized for his opinions on everything from social networking services such as twitter and the proliferation of e-books.

Franzen had done something much harder than writing a fine novel. He had validated a certain type of aesthetic vision, one that entirely excluded from the pantheon just a generation ago. One of the major things that made Franzen to become a novelist was his love for books. During his days in school, he did not find many friends. Rather he started to spend time in reading books, for hours. It was a fact that, his school days were not happy days. He started reading books from his young age that helped him realize the general state of the country, because Realism was the field, which influenced him.

Jonathan Franzen had a revolutionary thought that made him to question every conventional norm of study. Though he forced to study some works, he declared openly that particular work or author is not capable to be celebrated as a good one because he knows how to analyse a literary work. Jonathan Franzen had staked his entire claim on plotting, character development, psychological insight and structural control of the narrative. All these things parlayed into a position of prominence in American fiction. By all his mastery over English language, Franzen published his novel *The Twenty-Seventh City* in 1988. This enabled him to know the role of being an author. In the novel, he avoided the

use of personal elements. Being a novelist new to the field, he felt difficulties in distinguishing situation and story from character. However, later he got skill on it.

Jonathan Franzen's next novel focuses on the "Dysfunctional family". The novel named as *Strong Motion* was published in 1992. The system of the novel Franzen quoted as the systems of science and religion-two violently opposing systems of making sense in the world. The novel was drawn from the author's experience working in seismology. Set in Boston, it discussed the Harvard seismologist who discovered a link between unexplained earthquakes and the disposal of chemical waste.

The novel *The Freedom* was published in 2010. This novel discusses about many ways of family dynamics that can turn into a sardonic variant on those survival reality shows. At first, his extract he gained respectable space. While publishing the book Franzen was the first American author to appear on the cover of Time magazine since 2000, with the headline "Great American Novelist". This novel written after the death of his close friend and fellow novelist David Foster Wallace had a serious impact on him. "The New York Times" on November 17, 2014, reported that the novel *Purity* will be published in the upcoming September. The president of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, described *Purity* as the "Multi-Generational American Epic that spans decades and continents". The thought of the novel sketches from contemporary America to South America to East Germany before the collapse of Berlin wall. Other than novels, he had written short stories and non-fictional works, which all based on the prevailing culture in America. During 1990s, Franzen thought that role of

writing social novels are the issues and ideas, in favour of focusing on the internal lives, characters and their emotions as a useless act. It was because the advent of media culture seemed to affect the reading of novels.

As a novelist, he respected everyone. However, he did not like people comparing himself with other writers because each writer gifted with their own creative and narrative power. Therefore, comparison was also the one hated by Franzen. He had received awards like James Tait Black Memorial Prize, Salon Book Award, Galaxy National Book Awards as international author of the year, Carlos Fuentes Medal, Welt-Literaturpreis, and Budapest Grand Prize. In addition to awards, he had gained certain honours and recognition including Granta's Best Of Young American Novelists, New York Times Best Books of the year, National Book Critics Circle Award, Pulitzer Prize, PEN Award, International Dublin Literary Award, Distinguished visitor at American Academy Berlin, Los Angeles Times Book Prize and elected to the American academy of arts and science.

Being an active writer, Jonathan Franzen had given a commentary on the use of cell phones, sentimentality and decline of public space. It was entitled as *I just called to say I Love you*. The recent non-fictional works of Franzen *A critic at large: A Rooting interest* appeared in The New Yorker in Feb 2012. In May 23, 2016 *The end of the end of the World: an uncle's legacy and a journey to Antarctica* in The New Yorker". Jonathan Franzen even appeared in radio and television shows, notably in "Oprah Winfrey Show" on December 6, 2010 to discuss about his novel *Freedom*. The significant idea that Franzen had followed in all his novels was the humorous tone. According to him, no novel could be

written without humorous narrative. Complexity, ambiguity and contradictions play a vital role in his works. In general, the works of Franzen tried to create an infinite depth among the serious readers. His narration is vivid, unscrupulous and to the point, evolves its importance in each sentence. It seemed to be serious but it had the comic notions.

Jonathan Franzen's themes and plot circles around the contemporary realistic world that goes on complicated culture. Major focus was on the vices of the world that must correct. The guideline given by Franzen to write a fictional work is that one needs a problem and a tale. His characters magically presented with perfect inverse the way it performs, which makes sense. Consciously, the novelist had selected it from real world. His narrative style was enormously readable and very convincing. Almost all his novels set out in and out of America, because for him country is becoming an Anti-intellectual one. Therefore, the writer has to provide some useful thoughts to them. He had skewered the particularity of modern life and love like no one else. All his works were both a page-turner and a work of art.

Jonathan Franzen's characters moved relentlessly through their paces but the books never sounded rushed. Franzen managed to add new layers to his novels even in the final stretch, yet still proved capable of pulling everything together for one of the most memorable fictions. A portrait of world poised on the brink of combustion, and a nation losing its super powers, shot through the viewfinder of one long, difficult marriage was the major line of Franzen's novels. His writings illuminated, through the steady radiance of its author's profound moral intelligence, the world we thought we knew.

The single biggest theme in literary fiction these days in return of storytelling- and that comes a loud and clear in works of many writers of Franzen's generation. He had raised the ante the highest, and taken the hardest blows from those who wax nostalgic for the days. To a certain degree, he had become the poster boy for the changing of the guard that has been playing out in the literary fiction over the last decade. Franzen's major focus is on all sorts of entertainment leaves the possibility to become an intellectual entertainment.

The Corrections his third novel published in the year 2001, which had won "National Book award" for fiction. He worked for eight years in narrating the play, which focused on a family of five whose members endure unsuccessful marriages, strained familial relationships and failed careers. The novel expose all about the American culture and relationships. He even adds that the world of 1990s was good, but in the case of 21st century, it was not the same. In the novel, he envisioned the future world. The character Chip moved on from one job to another, without minding about the future. Franzen let each of his family members, and many of their friends, strut on the stage in a major role. It was partially autobiographical work.

CHAPTER TWO

PATHOLOGIES OF OLD AGE

The American Midwest is a region of the United States. People in these states tend to value practicality, friendliness and conservative political values. Midwestern culture is generally seen to be distrustful of people who are different and it can be judgemental when a person does not follow societal norms. Stewart O' Nan, in his novel *Songs For The Missing* has said that "The sins of the Midwest: flatness, emptiness, a necessary acceptance of the familiar. Where is the romance in being buried alive? in growing old?"

Stretching from the Midwest at mid-century to the Wall Street and Eastern Europe of today, Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* brings an old-fashioned world of civic virtue and sexual inhibitions into violent collision with the era of home surveillance, hands-off parenting, do-it-yourself mental health care, and globalized greed. Richly realistic, darkly hilarious, deeply humane, it confirms Jonathan Franzen as one of our most brilliant interpreters of American society and the American soul.

Franzen's *The Corrections* captures the mood and concerns of Americans who had never experienced terrorism. Postmodern literature is characterized by a mood of unease, patriotism, and distrust on civilian soil. The problems that the characters Gary Lambert, Chip Lambert and Denise Lambert face in *The Corrections* are indecision, antidepressants, and discontentment in their jobs. These problems are very different than the fears of war, terrorism, and

government security that Americans faced. *The Corrections* depicts ordinary American life before it changed the landscape forever.

The Corrections relies on episodic plot to provide background knowledge about each character. Each section of the book largely focuses on one character. The circumstances and choices that these characters face shape the person they are in the novel's present time. The present time line for *The Corrections* only spans a few months starting with Enid Lambert and Alfred Lambert's flight to New York and ending with the Christmas gathering.

Enid Lambert and Alfred Lambert are an old married couple living in St. Jude Missouri. Alfred is a retired train engineer and Enid is a housewife. They are stuck in a rut of boredom and frustration. Alfred's mental health is failing, and Enid is stressed by the mental load of taking care of him in their old age. Alfred's mobility has slowed considerably, and he takes a long time to complete simple projects around the house. Enid recalls that several years ago, Alfred painted the patio furniture. It had taken him about two hours to complete the love seat. This time around he has been working for a month and "all he'd painted of the love seat was the legs." Alfred has frequent spills and stumbles around the house. He tries to blame Enid for his stumbling and forgetfulness and makes excuses for why he cannot complete the small tasks around the house. The real cause is Alfred's declining mental and physical health. Enid decides they need a change of pace, and they prepare to go on a cruise.

Enid Lambert and Alfred Lambert meet their son Chip Lambert in New York City before departing for their cruise. Enid and Alfred believe that Chip writes for the *Wall Street Journal* when Chip actually works for a small art

publication called the *Warren Street Journal*. Chip used to be a college professor but lost his job because he had an affair with a student named Melissa Paquette. He blames the affair on Melissa and remembers the way she seduced him. He claims that he was "powerless" to act professionally.

Chip is struggling financially and has written a screenplay that he hopes his girlfriend Julia Vrais will pass on to her boss. Chip takes his parents to his apartment to meet Julia, but she appears to be leaving Chip. She has read his screenplay and is offended by the sexual references. She sees the screenplay as a failure and finds it "a tiny bit insulting" that Chip wrote a sexually charged screenplay about another woman's body. She is frustrated with Chip's failing career and disappointing work, and she ignores his please to stay.

Denise Lambert arrives to have lunch with her parents as Chip impulsively decides to chase after Julia. Chip's past is revealed in a series of flashbacks. He had an affair with a student while a professor at a university. The student Melissa Paquette also got Chip addicted to a drug called Mexican A. Chip was soon fired from his teaching position and started a relationship with Julia who is married to the deputy prime minister of Lithuania Gitanas Misevicius. Chip often borrows money from Denise but spends it unwisely and is quickly broke again. When his parents arrive for their visit, Chip has four dollars in his wallet, less than ten dollars in his checking account, no credit to speak of on any of his major credit cards, and no prospect of further proofreading work until Monday afternoon.

Denise visits with her parents in Chip's apartment as Chip leaves to chase after Julia. She notices that Alfred's Parkinson's symptoms have gotten worse.

Another flashback reveals that Enid and Alfred are disappointed in Denise's life choices. Enid wished Denise would accept traditional values and settle down and marry. Enid correctly suspects that Denise once had an affair with a married man. Chip returns to the apartment to find that his family has already left to send Enid and Alfred off on their cruise. Gitanas Misevicius hires Chip to do some questionable work for the Lithuanian government. Misevicius is vague about the nature of Chip's work and emphasizes the importance of fitting in with the Lithuanian people. He shows Chip some cigarette burns on his hand and hints at connections with corrupt government officials. Chip later leaves for Lithuania to begin his work for Misevicius.

The focus shifts to Gary Lambert who is the oldest of the Lambert children. Gary is an investment banker in Philadelphia. He and his wife Caroline Lambert are at a contentious point in their marriage. Enid Lambert calls and asks Gary and the family to come home to St. Jude for one last Christmas with their father before he dies or becomes too ill to enjoy the holidays. Enid also tells Gary about an offer Alfred Lambert received from a biotech company Axon Corporation. The company wants to buy a patent Alfred owns. Gary directs them to ask for much more than the company offered. He ends the call and researches the company on the Internet.

The story flashes back to Gary's last visit to St. Jude a few months ago. His visit does not go well. His parents' house has not been well maintained, and Alfred's health is much worse than Gary thought. Gary also realizes how much he dislikes St. Jude and the Midwest. In the present he gets into a heated argument with his wife Caroline Lambert. She makes it clear that she does not

want to go to St. Jude. Caroline had a very unpleasant Christmas holiday in St. Jude many years ago, and Gary promised his wife that he would never again ask her to go to St. Jude for Christmas. Caroline belittles Gary's parents and is especially harsh about Enid's values and choices. She tells Gary that he is free to go but that she and their three children will be staying behind in Philadelphia. Gary demands that the whole family goes with him. He believes that Enid will be "more willing to leave St. Jude and move east if she'd had her 'one last Christmas.'" The argument is so severe that both Caroline and Gary hint that divorce may be in their future. Gary is filled with rage and shouts, that they're going to split up over a trip to St. Jude!

A few weeks after Gary and Caroline's fight, the Axon Corporation is offering the public stock options. The Axon Corporation is the same company that offered to purchase a patent Alfred holds. Gary is interested in buying stock options in the burgeoning company. Gary and Denise discuss a promising new drug made by Axon called Corecktall. They wonder with excitement if the drug could help ease Alfred's Parkinson's symptoms. They also talk about the possibility of Alfred and Enid living with Denise as they grow older, but they do not come to any decisions. The flashback ends, and Gary decides that he will go to St. Jude for Christmas. He will not insist that Caroline and the children come with him.

Then the novel shifts to Enid Lambert and Alfred Lambert as they set sail on their cruise. A sequence of flashbacks describes Enid and Alfred's early marriage. Enid desperately wants children and dreams of being the perfect mother and housewife. After her marriage to Alfred, she quickly realizes that

she will not get the attention and satisfaction she craves from her husband. She relies on her memories of the early years when he'd been mad for her and had looked into her eyes. She feels some contentment however when she gets pregnant with her third child Denise Lambert.

Alfred is a repressed and conservative railway engineer. A flashback to a business trip reveals that Alfred is uncomfortable with sexuality. He feels a sense of satisfaction when he represses sexual thoughts, and he imagines he'd denied the succubuses his satisfaction when he stifles any arousal he feels during the trip. Alfred is a stern man and is often too severe with Gary Lambert and Chip Lambert. The flashbacks show various scenes from the life of the growing family. Alfred is stern with the children when they rebel against his authority. When Chip refuses to eat the dinner Enid has prepared, Alfred tells him he cannot leave the table until he has had one bite of everything. Chip falls asleep at the table, and when Alfred takes him to bed, he sees that Chip indeed took a bite of every food. Alfred unfairly blames Enid for not taking Chip up to bed and tells her to never let it happen again.

In the present Enid awakes on the cruise ship to find Alfred lying naked in bed which is uncharacteristic of his usual conservative behaviour. Alfred's mental health is rapidly declining. Enid finds the ship's doctor Dr. Hibbard and tries to explain her concerns about Alfred. Dr. Hibbard does not understand that she is flustered because of her sleepless nights helping Alfred calm down from his hallucinations. He calls Enid by the wrong name several times during their short conversation and does not understand what she is trying to tell him about Alfred. Dr. Hibbard believes she is the one who needs to calm down, and he

prescribes her a drug called Aslan. He never sees Alfred, and Enid decides to take the medication so she can stop worrying about Alfred for a few moments and get some peace. Alfred has a second night of hallucinations while Enid sleeps soundly from the medication. Alfred hallucinates his own feces trying to attack him. He imagines a sociopathic turd, a loose stool, a motormouth that taunts him. Alfred tries to wake Enid for help, but she does not respond to his pleas. The feces continue to taunt Alfred who drifts into another hallucination of his time as a railway worker and imagines a huge pipe burst causing damage to the railway line. He unsuccessfully tries to change his adult diaper during the hallucination but makes a mess of the bathroom. The next day Enid attends a financial presentation on the ship called *Surviving the Corrections*. As she watches the presentation, she looks out a window and sees Alfred fall off the side of the ship into the water. He is airlifted by helicopter to the mainland.

The story shifts away from Enid Lambert and Alfred Lambert to their daughter Denise Lambert. A flashback describes Denise's friendship with the married couple Robin Passafaro and Brian Callahan. Brian has sold a computer program he developed for millions of dollars. He uses his money to open a high-end restaurant called *The Generator* in New York City and plans to hire Denise as his head chef. The narration shifts to Denise's summer after high school. She gets an entry-level job at the railway company where her father works. Denise begins an affair with one of her father's married co-workers. She enjoys the attention she gets from him but realizes she does not care for him. She attends college in Philadelphia and has affairs with two other married men. Her third affair with Emile Berger results in marriage and subsequent divorce. Denise also has relationships with women, but they end in dissatisfaction.

In the present Denise accepts the job with Brian Callahan, and they go on a culinary tour of Europe to search for ideas for the restaurant's debut menu. Denise turns down Brian's sexual advances in Paris, and the two return to Philadelphia. Denise partly regrets not sleeping with Brian but also feels that for once in my life I am doing the right thing. Denise spends more time with Robin Passafaro and grows sexually attracted to her. Robin confesses that she is unsatisfied with her marriage to Brian. Denise and Robin begin an affair. When Brian discovers the affair, he fires Denise.

Denise and Chip Lambert catch up with each other through emails. Chip reveals that Alfred fell off the cruise ship and badly injured himself. He describes his work in Lithuania. Chip helps to run a website that lures American investors into fake business opportunities. The investors are told they can earn large returns by supporting Lithuania's transition from a communist country to a free market economy. Chip promises he will be at the family Christmas celebration in St. Jude.

Enid Lambert and Alfred Lambert have returned from their failed cruise. Enid is embarrassed by Alfred's fall and frustrated that her attempts to help him have failed. She hopes that she can get him into a trial for the drug Corecktail. The drug is made by the Axon Corporation which is the same company that Gary Lambert invested in and that offered to purchase Alfred's patent. Axon also manufactures the drug Aslan. The cruise ship doctor Dr. Hibbard prescribed Enid this drug, and Chip Lambert is addicted to the drug although he knows it by its street name Mexican A.

Gary arrives in St. Jude a week before Christmas. He is dismayed by the state of the house and his father's deterioration. He tries to talk about Alfred's health, but both parents dodge his questions and brush off his concerns. Gary tries to convince Alfred that he should enter an assisted living home much to Alfred's annoyance. Denise Lambert arrives in St. Jude shortly after Gary, but Chip Lambert is delayed in Lithuania. Denise and Gary are both shocked by the state of affairs in their parents' home. They find cans and containers of urine that Alfred has hidden around the house. Denise feels deep guilt that she did not realize how bad the situation had become for her parents. She and Gary both help Alfred change his adult diapers and navigate simple tasks around the house at different times during their stay. Denise learns that Alfred knew all about her affair with his co-worker and resigned from the railway company to protect her reputation.

A flashback reveals that Chip was detained by the Lithuanian police and accused of smuggling currency. He is able to make it to Poland and secures a flight home in time for the Christmas dinner. The Christmas gathering is not what Enid had hoped for. Everyone argues and quarrels, and no one has a fun time. Chip arrives at the family home just as Gary is getting ready to go back to Philadelphia. Gary explodes in anger at his parents and siblings. He is infuriated that no one is taking Alfred's decline seriously enough or willing to admit that Alfred is in very poor health and in the last stages of life. Gary leaves in a state of anger.

Chip begins to realize the situation his parents are in and understands why Gary was so upset. Gary witnesses one of Alfred's hallucinations. Alfred's

hallucinations are becoming more frequent, and he experiences them during the daytime as well as at night. Alfred hallucinates that the in-home physical therapist who comes to see him is an intruder. He has a hard time recognizing Chip. Chip tries to calm Alfred and diffuse the situation with the physical therapist. A few days later, Alfred and Chip go to a nursing home. The doctor asks Alfred a few questions to screen him for dementia. Alfred knows that he is failing the screening but does not know how to change his answers. He wets himself during the screening. Chip walks with the doctor to discuss Alfred's condition, and Alfred is left in the waiting room. He becomes agitated and yells for Chip to come back. Alfred asks Chip for assistance in committing suicide to avoid further deterioration. Chip tearfully refuses, and Alfred realizes he will never convince Chip otherwise.

The family Christmas did not go as planned. It was filled with difficult and awkward conversations between family members. It was nevertheless a successful reunion of siblings and parents. Although tensions were high and there was yelling, the honesty from each family member enabled them to move forward with a plan to help Enid Lambert and Alfred Lambert in their final years together. Franzen uses this scenario to comment on how difficult conversations and honest communication with family members can lead to feeling unburdened by repressed feelings. Each person makes small changes to themselves and the ways they interact with people. Some of these changes seem very small, but they have a profound impact. Franzen thus suggests that even small changes can cause great happiness within people and their loved ones.

In the last stages of Alfred's life, Enid finally gets her moment of honest communication that the other family members were able to have with one another during Christmas. Enid unleashes years of suppressed feelings that she hid from Alfred and the family because she wanted to keep the peace in the house. Enid takes pleasure in correcting Alfred every time he makes a mistake because of his dementia. Enid's marriage to Alfred meant she sacrificed her own dreams and desires to make the family happy. Alfred's declining health and deteriorating mental state mean Enid is finally able to reverse roles with Alfred and become the head of the household. She takes satisfaction in bossing him around and criticizing his mistakes. Alfred's dementia is good for everyone except Alfred because the family is unburdened by his harsh and repressive personality.

The pace of the novel *The Corrections* is frenetic, simply because it has to be: it is an encyclopaedic work, meticulously detailed about the areas of American life it brings under its gaze. These are so multifarious, their significances so varied yet so irrefutable, that the novel creates something of the multi-coloured polyphony of history itself, and its scope and exuberance make it an oddly affirmative and even joyful novel that is simultaneously an ambitious critique of modern time.

CHAPTER THREE

PERSONIFICATION OF POWER

Considering that death has been a central topic throughout the twentieth century, it is only towards the end of the century that the need for aging narratives started to increase, not least due to the rise of life expectancy. This advancement-initiated changes in the perception, social organization, and public portrayal of old age, which also meant that stories foregrounding old age gradually found access into mainstream culture. Compared to the recent growth of aging narratives in popular media, literature may not have experienced a similar awakening, but it has certainly noticed an expansion of texts that, above all, illuminate the difficulties of aging. Moving into the twenty-first century, aging narratives have become even more frequent, due to biomedical as well as social and cultural research about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, which has resulted in a growth of non-fiction literary work.

This chapter intends to touch the illness in old age, it concentrates primarily on representations of aging masculinities and explores, in Jonathan Franzen's fiction *novel The Corrections*, how hegemonic masculinities textually emerge as pathologies in old age. In masculinity studies, it can be observed that the general discourse surrounding hegemonic or "toxic" types of masculinities has been expanding within Western cultural contexts with scholars like Michael S. Kimmel, Bob Pease, and E. Anthony Rotundo at the forefront. However, the necessity to relate (toxic) masculinities to the challenges of aging and old age somehow remains at the margins of scholarly scrutiny—even if some of the

most widely read U.S. authors have contributed to creating a large body of work that favours male aging.

Writers as acclaimed as Philip Roth, John Updike, Saul Bellow, Paul Auster, and others have with growing maturity become interested in writing fictional portrayals of aging characters, preferably from a masculine viewpoint. Their stories thus take up aged perspectives to address old age issues and symptoms such as the lack of social interactions, depression, suicide, and, of course, various bio-medical and pathological challenges that occur more commonly in advanced age. Jonathan Franzen, even if excluded from David Leverenz's list of maturing authors, has with *The Corrections* produced a popular novel that was influential in bringing about new ways of considering gender roles in prescriptive patriarchal environments.

Taking aging studies observations about old age and pathology as a starting point for discussion of *The Corrections*, the central character, Alfred Lambert, needs to be re-read allegorically as the bodily representation of heteronormative (or traditional) family values that refuse to be reconciled with modern developments. These include, of course, the undoing of previously dominant gender roles. Alfred cannot merely be analysed as a sufferer from old age, that is, another male post-retirement depiction of the aging male victim. Instead, he should also be considered a symbolical old age figure whose decline makes visible the pathology of systematic gender inequality and the self-destructive nature of American hegemonic masculinities.

Despite the growing interest in establishing more affirmative perceptions of aging as, for instance, in popular literature, the fearful notions that

foreshadow old age as disease-ridden and death-prompting can hardly be diminished. Pathology and old age intertwine and are displayed most urgently on a bio-medical level, which recognizes the decrease in bodily functions and the rising risks of irreparable conditions. Nonetheless, aging is always lived out in social and cultural contexts, which pave the way for assumptions and behaviours that are developed in relation to aging individuals.

Jonathan Franzen's *the Corrections* invites a large and diverse number of possible readings, most of which, to this day, have acknowledged Alfred as a waning authority within Franzen's fictional world. Considering recent changes and developments in gender discourse and how the twenty-first century has opened up new ways of imagining aging male characters, the actions and depictions of Franzen's male protagonist gain meaning and momentum. The heated Oprah-Franzen disputes about low- and high-quality literature have perhaps slightly taken away from considering the patriarch's role in greater detail. And while Alfred Lambert has mostly been analysed in light of his connection to the other family members (his two sons, Chip and Gary, his daughter, Denise, and his wife, Enid), Alfred, as an aging subject who not only negatively affects everyone around him but finally fashions his own downfall, has remained largely untouched.

There are numerous textual indicators that foreshadow Alfred's approaching death; these are apparent in each individual storyline and create a long thread through the entire novel, until the very end, where Alfred's death is offered somewhat as a resolution to all conflicts, or the ultimate "correction" next to many corrections that are implied on numerous occasions. Ralph J. Poole

is among the scholars who suggest that Alfred's demise is perhaps the most significant correction that may have been overlooked by characters and readers alike. He asserts that "there is a logical and final correction that no family member has thought of: the deteriorating physical state and ensuing slow but steady passing away of father Alfred" (Poole 280). Poole further explains that this notion becomes especially visible at the end of the novel where mother and wife, Enid Lambert, is particularly emphasized.

The concise first chapter, "St. Jude," which provides the main arguments for this analysis, lays bare the base for all developments that follow on the next several hundred pages and predicts the tragic ending of the Lambert drama. On the very first page, the stage is set for this Midwestern spectacle. Using an aerial view, the spectating eye zooms into a seemingly secluded and deserted suburban landscape to find that the remaining residents have not yet been hit, minding their own business, unaware of the approaching catastrophe—which is foreshadowed in a tension-building scene description

The madness of an autumn prairie cold front coming through. You could feel it: something terrible was going to happen. The sun low in the sky, a minor light, a cooling star. Gust after gust of disorder. Trees restless, temperatures falling, the whole northern religion of things coming to an end. No children in the yards here . . . Storm windows shuddered in the empty bathrooms. And the drone and hiccup of a clothes dryer, the nasal contention of a leaf blower, the ripening of local apples in a paper bag, the smell of the gasoline

with which Alfred Lambert had cleaned the paintbrush from his morning painting of the wicker love seat. (3).

The terminology applied in the opening paragraph is strongly suggestive of what have been recognized as negative metaphors of old age within Aging Studies. Whether relating to the process or state of aging (autumn, falling, ripening), to possible pathological bodily decline and consequences, mental or physical, fatal or seemingly insignificant, (smell, madness, low, restless, hiccup), or alluding to eerie notions of imminent doom (cold front, going to happen, storm, end, shuttered windows, no children), it is self-evident that decline or failure, but equally, old age and death take a central position in this narrative. More importantly, presented by an observing third-person narrator who appears to caution the reader directly at an early occasion as well as the characters who, nonetheless, remain unsuspecting (“You could feel it: something terrible was going to happen”), Alfred Lambert is introduced without physically entering the narrative stage. Instead, only the remains of his morning activity are displayed (another eerie moment) and the question of how the “wicker love seat” may relate to the previous dense imagery of decay for which the narrative does not offer an immediate explanation.

Following this first outline of setting and central character, the novel soon reveals that suburban St. Jude is slowly moving towards collapse due to the preponderantly greying population that inhabits these, in Franzen’s terms, “gerontocratic suburbs of St. Jude” (3). This characterization reveals that Alfred is caught in a post-retirement state, where “three in the afternoon was a time of danger” because there would be “no local news until five o’clock” and where

these “[t]wo empty hours were a sinus in which infections bred” (3). Pointing at the dangers of old age that are embedded in the temporalities of retirement, which clearly reverberate de Beauvoir’s assumptions about male retired identities and Foucault’s notions of unproductive bodies, Alfred is, on the very first page, established as a doomed man. Thus, he is introduced as a man who continues his daily battles against bodily losses, running out of time but still determined to wield power over his heteronormative household, including his wife, Enid. Accordingly, the narrative lays bare: “He struggled to his feet and stood by the Ping-Pong table, listening in vain for Enid” (3). And with regard to this first scene where the house is suggested as a central story setting, Jesús Blanco Hidalgo claims that, in fact, here “the container stands for the contained” (137) and points out how this first mysterious and frightening depiction of the material home reflects “the fragmentation of the Lambert family” (137). He moves on to unravel the symbolisms of madness in those first pages and aligns his findings with Alfred’s mental illness by drawing connections to King Lear. While this allusion appears essential at first reading, “the layers of the symbolism in the setting go deeper” (137), the possibility stands that, while the house serves as an extension of this Midwestern American family, it can be simultaneously extended onto a larger all-encompassing patriarchal system. The house, in this case, becomes a synecdoche and stands for the stability of a social order that equally appears to be in decline.

Following this train of thought, the introductory passage is indeed exemplary of the overall narrative outcome in that it foregrounds two possible readings of Alfred’s position as an aging white middle-class American man. Franzen shrouds his protagonist in ambiguity and writes an elusive character

that is susceptible to both disdain and sympathy. In many instances, it is not clearly distinguishable whether (or not) Alfred is the victim who is affected by the dreary conditions of his aging body in an aging environment, “awakening” once again in a hopeless physique that is stuck in a hopeless surrounding, one with “no children” as suggested in the first paragraph, thus one with “no future.”¹ In any case, the terminology alludes to the impairment of muscles, physical strength, possible conditions such as arthritis (or as we later learn Parkinson’s disease) as well as hearing impairment. Again, the narrative brings notions of pathology to the foreground and creates Alfred as a disease-infected character.

On the other hand, the multi-layered opening simultaneously suggests Alfred himself to be the absolute source of danger, the terrifying giant that “awaken[s] in the great blue chair in which he’d been sleeping since lunch” (3)—in other instances Alfred’s blue chair is interchangeable with a royal throne with the time to scheme and “breed” malicious plans of oppression and destruction, “listening in vain for Enid” (Franzen 3); this also raises the question: is Enid perhaps aware of the danger and already in hiding? Thus, the readers could just as well conclude that Alfred is not the infected but instead that he is the infection. However, in this narrative Parkinson’s disease successfully steps in as the wrongdoer, a built-in distraction from Alfred’s life-long wrongdoings. Alfred’s assumptions about the supremacy of his own (masculine) body fades into the background so that his failure is painted as the bio-medical result of uncontrollable forces, seemingly overshadowing the many small failures which are indeed visible in the storylines of his family members that have contributed to his downfall as man, father, and husband.

Alfred is not read as an “infectious virus” but instead suggest that some of the prominent post war American masculinities. His character embodies—head of the household, breadwinner, physically and mentally powerful, ruling his family like a kingdom by spreading the occasional fear to suppress riots—are not only consequential for the characters surrounding him but ultimately bear negative consequences for himself. Aging—especially aging in the body—challenges masculine privilege which underneath the surface and beyond expression for Alfred, becomes his prime experience in the novel. In line with this observation, old age cannot merely be considered as a virus, remaining within the scope of negative metaphors of aging, that causes illnesses and impairment, but instead the narrative acknowledges that bio-medical processes of aging equally destroy lived hegemonic masculinities in revealing the limits of the masculine ideal that can no longer be upheld by an inflicted body. This heteronormative dominant masculinity displayed with Alfred as the unchangeable representative is the most effective virus in *The Corrections*. Its infectious spread becomes just as obvious in the individual stories of the other main characters his wife and children whose lives, choices, perceptions of self, expectations of others and/or themselves are infected by their husband’s and father’s patriarchal rule and upbringing. And they inherit and then incorporate some of his traits and attitudes willingly or subconsciously into their own way of life and sense of self—possibly passing on elements to future generations.

As the story advances, resistance in the other characters grows stronger, parallel to the decrease in Alfred’s authoritative power. His three children, each with a different level of intensity, experience first-hand the restraining effects of their father’s patriarchal rule in a hardened capitalist society and attempt to

make a number of corrections as suggested. This, however, is also a notion that is voiced by Colin Hutchinson, who argues that “Alfred and Enid’s three children, Gary, Denise, and Chip, have all resolved to live their lives in a spirit of correction, intending to right the perceived wrongs of their upbringing at the hands of an authoritarian father and subservient mother. Depression, insecurity about gender roles, the struggle to make a living and be financially independent, the inability to conform to heteronormative scripts, all these problems seem to be rooted in their upbringing and the relationships with their parents. Considering that everybody (intrinsically or extrinsically motivated) starts to develop away from Alfred’s values and time and again fails to break out, it is no surprise that most readings of the novel remain melancholic and sobering. Alfred’s impact reverberates into the future and can be considered ongoing, even after the narrative closes. Hegemonic systems, after all, can only prevail with a certain amount of consent, here deeply ingrained in the nature of all other protagonists.

The most promising development, implying almost complete success of liberation, is Enid Lambert’s seemingly strategic break from Alfred and his regime. With her, the narrative offers a suppressed wife who little by little transforms into a “guerrilla” (6) in her own home—an attempt to emancipate herself from her dominant husband. Their struggles are primarily set in the family house, where little fights over domestic responsibilities stand in for a much larger and general discontent on both sides, each separately trying to gain control over the other. Enid, in one instance, manages to intercept a letter by Axon, the corporation that offers Alfred a five-thousand-dollar patent licensing

fee (83), which she believes he can bargain more profitably and thus schemes to ultimately hide the letter from her husband:

Six days a week several pounds of mail came through the slot in the front door, and since nothing incidental was allowed to pile up downstairs— since the fiction of living in this house was that no one lived there—Enid faced substantial tactical challenge. She didn't think of herself as a guerrilla, but a guerrilla was what she was. (6)

The space where items and documents of both husband and wife are scattered on the Ping-Pong table, fighting to occupy table-space by adding and replacing or rearranging items. “The Ping-Pong table was the one field on which the civil war raged openly” (8), it says, a table of which Alfred can “appropriate . . . the eastern end . . . for his banking and correspondence” (8). The war allusions are undeniable. The table is also symbolical for what Franzen refers to as “the alarm bell of anxiety,” which “was an alarm bell that no one but Alfred and Enid could hear directly” . In a seemingly endless sentence, with numerous subordinate clauses, commas, and semicolons, it is described as “a sound that continues for so long that you have the leisure to learn its component sounds (as with any word you stare at until it resolves itself into a string of dead letters) . . . ringing for so many days that it simply blended into the background” (4). This “alarm bell” then seamlessly fits with the “civil war” analogy, implying that the ongoing almost habitual practice of their battles keeps raging on even undisturbed by serious interruptions and objections from outside.

The pertinence of this uncanny note that is described in such vivid detail and aligns Alfred's anxiety with an approaching new world order which stems from his ability to narrate the nature of America that no longer itself in a material reality he can recognise. Returning to relationship between the aging couple, we see that Enid, even if forced to adjust to the occasional strategical rearrangement, "sure that her own head would clear if only she didn't have to wonder, every five minutes, what Alfred was up to" (5), seems determined to emerge victorious. Her most successful coup is displayed in the stealthy and gradual takeover of the home space, which is best illustrated in the banishment of Alfred's blue chair. Though the chair can be recognized as alluding to (the loss of) hegemonic powers, it bears a more complex meaning when notions of aging are taken into account.

While hegemonic powers are further dismantled in the singular relocation of the chair from the main room to the basement, which simultaneously becomes the relocation of Alfred as head of the house who is, too, relocated from the main room to the basement, where he tries to re-establish his reign, it is also relevant to point at notions of comfort that are immanent in the materiality of the chair. The chair was thoroughly comfortable and intensely ugly. The novel describes the chair as follows:

The chair was overstuffed, vaguely gubernatorial. It was made of leather, but it smelled like the inside of a Lexus. Like something modern and medical and impermeable that you could wipe the smell of death off easily, with a damp cloth, before the next person sat down to die in it. (9)

This sketch of Alfred's chair, a bodily representation of an American hegemon, ultimately uncovers the intricate complexities and heterogeneities of toxic masculinities. While regal powers are also legitimized through legal and celebrated succession, here the focus is not on the success of tenure but rather on the replaceability of the successor ("next person"). And replaceability also conjures the notion of assembly line production, which continues to manufacture the same type of authority, indistinguishable and 'easily wipeable.' And though the ingredients appear to be just right to generate the next male American ruler (gubernatorial, leather, Lexus, modern, medical, impermeable), seated in a chair that in a most American sense also alludes to the rise of television culture, the foregrounded vocabulary is undermined by this dominating presence of perishability, of death. After his retirement and before Parkinson's begins tightening its grip on him, he awarded himself this reassuring object. And considering that the blue chair is Alfred's retirement gift for himself, the subtextual reference to the maintenance of aging masculinity increases in significance. It becomes evident that Alfred's blue chair is less important as an object of emotional attachment than as an object that helps him retain his sense of being-in-the-world.

After Alfred is diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, he is again relocated, this time into a care facility—which is his final destination. Attempting to take his life several times out of despair, he succeeds in the end and the novel closes with the family returning from Alfred's funeral, which suggests closure on the character-level. The care facility, another notably "gerontocratic" space in the novel along with the suburban home and the cruise ship, finally manifests as the space in which Alfred's doom is most graspable. And the many suicide attempts

further communicate the character's despair as a seemingly useless old man who remains a burden to those who outlive him. This moment in the novel mirrors both the grim reality of suicide deaths in advanced age as revealed by recent statistics as well as the favoured outcome in fiction novels of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century that address male aging. De Beauvoir draws on one of America's "most masculine" novelists and notes: "Hemingway said that the worst death for anyone was the loss of what formed the centre of his life and made him what he really was" (262). This notion of loss certainly matches our protagonist's situation.

The Corrections similarly suggests that in spite of being the provider and homeowner, the work-space, from which he was forced to retire, was the only space in which Alfred was able to build meaning for himself. And though his endeavours are certainly present in the struggle to keep his masculine space Enid-free (the Ping-Pong table is situated in the basement), Alfred only turns "mad" in light of his mental illness new in retirement or even fully taking over the basement. Accordingly, the first chapter reveals: "Enid couldn't get him interested in life. When she encouraged him to take up his metallurgy again, he looked at her as if she'd lost her mind" (5).

Even before he is struck by bio-medical consequences of old age and removed from his patriarchal home, Alfred fails to rethink his identity as an aging man. And thus, Franzen's narrator concludes that the fact seemed to be that life without Alfred in the house was better for everyone but Alfred" (651). While, as mentioned earlier, this final chapter reveals Alfred's doom and gives birth to the possibility of liberation for the other characters, it is significant to

note that only in regard to Enid a sense of liberation is overtly described—which also serves as the closing element of the overall story: “And . . . when he was dead, when she’d pressed her lips to his forehead and walked out with Denise and Gary into the warm spring night, [Enid] felt that nothing could kill her now, nothing. She was seventy-five and she was going to make some changes in her life” (653). Most scholars, nonetheless, remain sceptical of Franzen’s implied “corrections” and agree that instead of alluding, his title is meant to deceive. They share the position that no actual corrections not even for Enid takes place, for the novel is understood as not radical enough to predict change for the new century.

CHAPTER FOUR

ETHICS OF COMPLEXITY

Jonathan Franzen's particular version of realism in *The Corrections* in terms of a number of seminal concerns including the discourse of ethics, cognition, and social minds. As a post-postmodern writer, Franzen criticizes his contemporary authors for their disappointing and depressive attitudes which have caused the novelist and his audience to be separated and disengaged. He wants to regain the readers' trust and confidence through involving them in his novels. To achieve this, he selects realism as the main mode and genre of his writing; however, realism in the twenty and twenty-first centuries, in an era when it is extremely difficult to tell reality from illusion requires him to present an updated version which he himself calls tragic realism. As the rubric indicates, this new mode is neither completely in line with the style of Franzen's realist predecessors' – in that it lacks the overtly optimistic view of many realistic works – nor does the modifying adjective 'tragic' makes Franzen's style completely identical with traditional naturalism. If naturalism in its traditional version usually implies environmental, class, and hereditary determinism undermining the notion of cognition and emphasizing the importance of coercion, in Franzen's *the Corrections* these issues have been subtly embedded in different narrative layers entailing a kind of complicated system of cognitive involvement presented in relationships (ethical, humanistic, and even empathic). These relations often involve accepting or tolerating human flaws and even downfall presented in the initial activities of almost all characters in the novel as the juxtaposition of tragic and realism suggests.

Despite his postmodern tendencies in presenting depressive and tragic issues, Franzen has also faith in the possibility of certain kinds of 'corrections and hence changes presented in his characters' and their relationships' gradual transformation. It may be for the same reason that it is possible to simultaneously locate postmodern features like timelessness and place lessness in the form of contemporaneity, captivity, and immersion and also a tendency to depict society and the characters in their quotidian forms in *The Corrections*. These are best embodied in instabilities and tensions present in a (post-) postmodern society, in the geographically specified setting of the story St. Jude in the Midwest, and dysfunctional social units (from family to the world). Franzen's deliberate withdrawal of information through his use of omniscient narrator gives another example of his return to and modification of a traditional narration/narrative tool in realistic and naturalistic fiction together with his application of tangible motifs through presenting different social, psychological, and even political schemata, which in turn activate default assumptions and expectations in the course of the novel both put on display the perplexity of characters/readers facing these and remind them of the complexity of everyday life and ordinary people. To achieve this, Franzen initially instils confidence into his characters and readers and makes them partial, prejudiced, judgmental and even hostile towards their other fellow creatures; however, the induced self-assurance is later on substituted with doubt. Owing to its neorealistic mode of presentation, Franzen's *the Corrections* is heavily referential and situated. However, as a degree of independence is embodied in the characters' moments of decision-makings, homecomings and career alterations, the novel can simultaneously approve and challenge traditional naturalism's concept of determinism. It is here that a more humanistic and complicated picture of individuals rather than one dimensionally positive or negative individuals is presented. Franzen shows individuals in different sorts of relationship with intermetal units like

family, friends, colleagues, and society all presented in *The Corrections* ranging from complete assimilation, to tenuous inclusion, to oppositional exclusion, and so on. The representation of these relationships, in turn, provides *The Corrections* with a more complicated aspect of human life.

Franzen in his essays and interviews takes issue with the depressive style and artificially detached mode of writing of postmodernist authors in which, according to him, offer the reader nothing but depression and emptiness. Despite its tragic and naturalistic mode, *The Corrections* appears to be more humanistic in that it portrays the quotidian life of the members of a Midwestern family who are desperately struggling between being a member of the community – i.e., St. Jude and family – and freeing themselves from its intellectual, moral, and even ethical fetters. This, in *The Corrections*, embodied in the form of hesitations, indeterminacies, obsessions, dissatisfaction, and in the motif of quest, departures and homecomings causes cognitive vertigo. This leads characters/readers to both confusion and (re)cognition. The use of a contemporary family, round characters, and detailed and well-located geographical locations identical with Franzen's own birthplace makes the reader trust the text and start a carefree reading; however, as the passage proceeds, he finds his assumptions increasingly challenged and his confidence shattered. These 'corrections' are more evident when the passage gradually entails a more dynamic and active involvement which is at odds with the initial shallow reading. Franzen's choice of neorealism and places of strong social, political, ethical and even psychological implications foregrounds special stereotypes or at least expectations. However, in the course of the novel it becomes more evident that this is a strategy for delving into the subframes of what is taken for granted to unearth the forgotten and distrusted humanity lost in the age of superficiality and images.

The ample contextual description provided by *The Corrections* neorealistic mode is both a reflection of the contemporary American society and its members depicted in their private as well as social lives which in turn helps push the reader away from indifference toward a state of involvement. This also makes it possible for depicting characters as having a more mature appreciation of each other after their initial judgmental and obsessed attitudes. Careful reading of *The Corrections*, then, uncovers a subtle oxymoron consciousness gained here is the consciousness resulted from humanistic retrospection and ethics in a deterministic context of cosmic irony of the Midwest i.e. the characters and the Midwest are set in both a syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationship implying that the individual is not only an object located in a context but also a subject with a varying degree of independence best exemplified in characters' simultaneous lack of control and will to power, and in their at-times-complete exhaustion and also determination)

Although the name 'Midwest' can imply balance and equilibrium, as soon as a character leaves the place, he/she is plighted with doubts about its traditions and values best embodied in Enid and Alfred. Going beyond the borders through quests is not to highlight romantic/heroic deeds but to highlight the attempt made by each character to gain a partial mental/financial independence. The Lamberts, containing two Midwestern generations, are torn between modernity and tradition. Alfred, an engineer with a manual occupation and his children with a different mentality show the discrepancy between an agrarian background and the expansion of cities: a movement from the natural towards the artificial. These differences, as the main source of the characters' internal and external tensions, are later on tolerated as a source of complexity and knowledge. To Franzen, the Midwest, is also where the inhabitants can moderate between the extreme and can see both sides of the argument. Being a Midwesterner, thus, can simultaneously contribute

to citizens pride and guilt complex, especially when they want to leave the place or want to be different. This can tell why the word guilt – recurring in all Franzen’s works – triggers both social and personal dimensions and causes a sense of imposition as well as responsibility capable of strengthening characters’ relationships and acceptance of each other’s ethics. The writer sketches the life of individuals in a familiar and multifarious environment showing the multifariousness of life itself which can both paralyze and rekindle one’s critical thinking. This is how characters cannot easily decide to stay or to depart, to love or to hate, and to stay alone or to live with others. Franzen, consequently, presents how interrelated the individual and his surroundings are. He knows mental functioning cannot be understood merely by analysing what goes on within the skull but can only be fully comprehended once it has been seen in its social and physical context. The numerous mentions of existentialist thinkers and allusions to Hamlet and tragic heroes on the one hand, plus the detailed description of the social milieu of his fiction, on the other, clearly indicate that Franzen’s “perspective on the mind” is both “internalist” and “externalist” (39). This leads to the replacement of traditional heroes with ordinary people highlighting the ethics of ordinariness. This is why Chip in *Corrections*

purged the Marxists from his bookshelves [...] Jürgen Habermas’s Reason and the Rationalization of Society, which he’d found too difficult to read, let alone annotate, was in mint condition [...] But Jürgen Habermas didn’t have Julia’s long, cool, pear-tree limbs, Theodor Adorno didn’t have Julia’s grapy smell of lecherous pliability, Fred Jameson didn’t have Julia’s artful tongue [...] [he] sold his feminists, his formalists, his structuralists, his poststructuralists, his Freudians, and his queers . . . he piled his Foucault and Greenblatt and hooks and Povey into shopping bags and sold them all. (92)

It is in this return to life, corporality, and everyday reality that reason and rationalization of an ordinary man can replace jaw-breaking ideas which are “too difficult” and too detached to be understood because emphatic relationship results from understanding which itself is attainable through removing the mask of sophistication and intellectualism. Alfred Lambert’s children’s return to the Midwest and their attempt to refurbish the ramshackle house can be the celebration of the ethics of coexistence and tolerance. Not totally refuting the naturalistic conception of environmental determinism, Franzen prefers situated consciousness with an equivocal implication. The notion of place or situatedness can trigger both familiarity and alienation. Familiarity can help people function better and be more focused and oriented. Awareness of this cognitive fact in *The Corrections* is delicate and gradual. Franzen’s characters and other individuals become painfully aware that, to put it into Palmer, the critic who said terminology, consciousness never gravitates toward itself but is always found in intense relationship with another consciousness. Franzen presents characters entangled in a network of relationships embodied in the form of family, geographical located Ness, and communal dependencies. Displaying the negative side of situatedness, he depicts his characters – engaged in half-hearted- or pseudo-quests – as alienated from their habitat. Leaving one’s habitat means being cut off from a large part of what has long been taken for granted. Leaving the Midwest, characters attempt to replace habits with attitudes – a term with a higher cognitive load – no matter how successful or unsuccessful they are. Therefore, at the same time that Franzen depicts a caricature of a family, of a group of individuals being in a state of departure, belonging and aloofness, and judgment, he also shows characters struggling through the normalized and standardized truths and socio-existential ones to have a more ethical form of existence. Here is where the personal and the communal do not seem to reconcile at first.

In *The Corrections*, Franzen succeeds in creating characters in a multi-layered set of relationships so that success or failure in one affects the other of a different scope i.e., social, familial, or personal. Franzen skilfully pictures these parallels in the social and private lives of his characters. His microcosm of family presented in the detailed context of the Midwest's values, norms, and impositions triggers contradictory states of feeling and cognition causing characters' indeterminacies, sense of guilt and responsibility, and even their seeking refuge in a different place other than the Midwest. This makes the absolute dichotomy between society and the individual long practiced by postmodernism, naturalism, and even realism seem oversimplistic since there is always a degree of consciousness and dialectic for the family members concretized in different decision-making moments, performing deliberate antisocial and anti-patriarchal activities like Denise's and Chip's sexual perversion and Alfred's abstention from eating and his subsequent suicide, and even in their regrets. Thus, the subject-object dyad of society-person relationship is questioned. Hence, the novel which initially seems to be "obscure enough and simple enough to be mistaken for" an easily accessible novel is one with an ethical mission (36).

In *The Corrections*, the ethics of otherness can thus be achieved in the moments of surprise and transformation. Franzen makes use of the "epistemic imbalance" (208) through characters' misunderstandings, disappointments, and misjudgements found in their presuppositions they have made about the other. These disruptions are evident in the solitary confessions characters make to themselves. Denise modifies the image she has constructed about Alfred in her mind when she knows how he has kept her secret for so many years or when Alfred talking to his 'Turd' learns about his vanity. All these moments, despite questioning characters' habits and cognitive passivism, add to a great deal to their humanity and understandability.

To achieve his version of realism, Franzen juxtaposes the notion of contemporaneity in the form of a paralyzing hereness and uselessness of syntagmatic departures characters experience in their careers Gary is a banker, Denise is an international chef, and Chip is a playwright and university professor in the American metropolitan cities and trips usually to a European country with the paradigmatic. Along with their immersion in the here and now and their struggle to survive, the Lamberts can never get themselves rid of their memories. One of the best examples here is the letters carved by Don Armour beneath Alfred's chair which he cannot separate himself from: "The chair was a monument and a symbol and could not be parted from Alfred" (10). In *The Corrections*, the past is not merely something which has happened and finished but what affects the present. At issue are traumas which are agonizing but can invoke empathy too. Putting different parts of the puzzle together, the characters become aware of the causes of their family members' behaviour. Thus, they come to a new level of ethics. Unlike postmodern contemporaneity, in Franzen's recourse to neorealism in *The Corrections* the substantiality of the self is summoned in relation with time and place, in memories and future plans reminiscent of characters' humanness. Besides, as Burn claims, despite depicting a dark and tragic realism, mainly through his choice. Franzen withstands the notion of contemporaneity and timelessness induced by the late-capitalistic context embodied in vicious circles which characters are trapped in (62).

As Americans and Midwesterners, the Lamberts are also obsessed with the myth/curse of Americanness. In *The Corrections*, generations search for perfection and "omnicompetence" embodied in different ways in Denise's attempt to become a perfect chef, in Alfred's puritanical attitudes, and in Chip's rewritings of his play – to fulfil the imposed requirements of the myth. The resulting angst makes them leave the Midwest. Although there are many authors, like Henry James, who seminally incorporate patterns

of departures and returns in their fiction, in Franzen, arguably, these departures are not only to create some space between characters and the system but also to give them an opportunity to rearrange the forgotten stretches of time to arrive at a deeper understanding of other characters and their real motives. In this sense, Franzen does not merely want to confront one place with another in a symbolic way but to explore the cognitive alterations of individuals in these spatial and temporal arrivals and departures.

Like characters presented in naturalistic genres, Franzen's characters are also affected by place and time, in particular by their past. There are numerous moments when a trivial event triggers a traumatic experience in the past. Enid's Christmas invitation leaves her children with their dark memories and makes them anxious about homecoming. However, this does not mean that deterministic forces do not let them think or make decisions, for (re)cognition itself is always related to spatiotemporal dimensions. Characters leave their birthplace, even though not permanently, and once they are away from their families and the Midwest, their past, in the form of memories, looms larger and, cognitively speaking, helps them make revisions. Thus, all those abstractions and hatred, or even love, in this process of retrospective questioning make sense and become humanized. The bygones, then, are not nostalgic but omnipresent replacing liquidity with substantiality. This pushes characters towards their home, society, and relatives which they do not know whether to flee from or return to. Through these spatiotemporal links, Franzen replaces the abstract with the concrete and shows that there is no single centre of consciousness or irrevocably deterministic power. For him, identity is not something fixed, monolithic, or predetermined, formed in a vacuum but a continually dynamic entity in flux implying that "the self rewrites itself" (114) in real exposures with ordinariness and ordinary people. Franzen chooses neorealism at the end of the twentieth century because it facilitates the author's movement from individualism towards community

analogously shown in the characters' homecoming though this happens at Christmas and in winter when death and birth meet.

Despite the existentialist motifs of the novel, embodied in the individuals' strivings and sufferings and Alfred Lambert's frequently quoting existential philosophers like Schopenhauer, Franzen situates individuals in society; the Lambert family becomes a microcosm reflecting what is happening outside. The 'corrections' Franzen depicts are more constructive than destructively rebellious and this may account for the reason why unlike what we expect from novels, characters here move from radicalism towards conservatism or more mature reactions. The time when "any meaningful distinction between private and public sectors had disappeared" (441). This survival is not through characters' rudimentary transformation but through their hesitant returns to values, slightly modified attitudes, and uncertainties. The uncertainties and tensions prevalent in the novel and different levels of communications make the individual hesitate about arriving at a verdict about others. To achieve these 'corrective' and punitive measures, characters are not stable but are depicted as disoriented creatures zigzagging between sympathy and antipathy. This could in part come from neorealism which provides Franzen with a chance to pay due attention to all characters and their development in time. What Franzen presents is a Bildungsroman of "micro-collectives" (30) rather than one about a single invincible hero or person, and accordingly, he subtly shows how all the major characters continually position and reposition themselves and their attitudes towards the people other than themselves.

Franzen's neorealism by no means negates the concept of suffocating situation of neocapitalism reflected by many postmodern writers; however, it seems that through his preference to show the complexity of human relationships and lives, Franzen can talk of

individuals' grandeur in a social context. In doing so, Franzen makes *The Corrections* a venue for illustrating ethics based on complex interrelationships. His fiction limits characters of a dysfunctional family who realize that it is time for them to stop condemning others for victimizing them, to stop seeing the issues in black and white, to appreciate virtues in the development of interrelationships and to feel responsible for their mistakes. Franzen's notion of tragic realism, emphasizing the painful process of ethical maturity, negates the simplistic notions of superficial optimism as well as determinism. The movement itself results from proper mutual understanding rather than adherence to an idealistic version of the other made in the mind of each character.

Recognition and acceptance of characters' humanity cause more disturbance and confusions as they trigger different emotional states leading to responsibility and pang of conscience in other characters. It is in one of these dramatic moments that Denise suddenly becomes aware of her father's grandeur and her own ignorance. When she discovers that her father, knowing about her affair with the company's employee working under him, decided to sacrifice his position and promotion, she learns that things are much more complicated than her ironic prediction of how the table is set at home or her mother letting her into the house using the same repetitious words.

As mentioned, in *The Corrections*, characters' zigzag from radicalism to conservatism which is different from the typical movement of the typical protagonists from a state of compliance to that of disobedience. The characters' uncertainties regarding disobedience or reunion like the Lamberts' reunion in St Jude for Christmas on Enid's request and the children's ethical dilemma of ignoring or fulfilling her final wish not only have deepened their humanity but also indicate that the relationship between individuals and different social units is considerably more complex than it may

appear. In *The Corrections*, Franzen cruelly lets individuals be beguiled and suffer while they are torn between self and family/society. While this is mainly attributable to Franzen's ironic depiction of society, his humanistic undertones, and Darwinism in the form of rivalry evident even in the relationship of siblings, it also reflects his work's complexity as well as the complexity of the real human relationships often disregarded in realistic, naturalistic, and even postmodern novels. *The Corrections* as a novel of relationships shows the major characters' needs to redefine their relationship with other people as well as the system they are working for or harassed by. Although, at the end of the novel, nothing is resolved but Alfred's crisis with his suicide, characters achieve a considerably better understanding of each other. If in the earlier parts of the novel, everything is empty and characters are aloof and lonely ("THE MADNESS of an autumn prairie cold front coming through [...] No children in the yards here [...] Storm windows shuddered in the empty bedrooms" (3)), the last pages, despite Alfred's painful but still heroic death, show a different and warmer picture: "when she'd pressed her lips to his forehead and walked out with Denise and Gary into the warm spring night, she felt that nothing could kill her hope now, nothing" (566). *The Corrections*, thus, is the transcendence of the ordinary of Alfred and his ordinary family, one different from idealistic transcendentalism, "to establish intriguing dialectics between a discourse of dehumanization and a nostalgia for more traditional forms of identity" (335). Franzen, thus, accomplishes his moral mission as an author; in the face of rampant universalism, he calls for a new kind of realism and naturalism based on located Ness, multileveled relationships, and prejudice to revive hopes in the possibility of the other's ethics despite his confirming the fact that environment and nature can have deterministic and demoralizing effects on people.

Franzen's introduction of "family ecosystem" (176), and a complex mosaic of micro and macro levels in his works can contribute illuminating insights into such matters as myriad layers of interaction of interwind and nitramine. Franzen presents a family's generation gap, obsessions, failures, discrepancies, and changing values in their ramshackle house in St. Jude analogous to American society. The deeply detailed story of each member's life shows how they, suffering long periods of distress, hatred, misunderstanding, and impotence, reluctantly come back home to refurbish it. The notion of change and dynamism used, questioned by naturalistic determinism – is best embodied in characters' undergoing painful pseudo-transformations and internal conflicts. Franzen, as he points out in several essays, intends to seek philosophical and liberating discomfort produced in the long-forgotten "private spaces," not in the "therapeutic optimism" resulting from disappointing and ineffectual postmodern non-human and symbolic spheres (78). Franzen's version of tragic realism has contradictorily brought together naturalistic and behaviouristic implications and ethics. The result is a double and contradictory expression of change. On the one hand, characters are stuck in the timelessness induced through society, best presented in their repetitious actions and circular movements, while, on the other, they at least show slight changes of mood and attitude in terms of humanistic and ethical values which in turn present a glimpse of hope in the form of a weak but rekindling internal dynamism. Franzen tends to reconcile individuals with situatedness, prejudice vs indifference, belonging and "finitude of human existence," a "being-in-the-world," to redeem himself, his audiences, and his characters from liquidation induced through liquid identity and non-belonging. *The Corrections* is replete with moments of "deciding, wanting, and regretting" which, in Palmer's account of the sociality of the human mind, exemplify "the mental events and states that provide the causal network behind the physical events" (222) reminiscent of

the existence and being of the individual (readers and characters). This is how Franzen provokes the individuals into entering the process of “regressive questioning” (228) in search for the main cause of their plights rather than the mere suffering they are obsessed with. This seems to be what characters generally reach at the end of the novel although the answer provided by Franzen in the form of the characters’ final melodramatic re-join seems to be superficial, this stupid hopefulness may be the only solution. Although characters are ordinary people living as typical Midwesterners, Franzen’s allusion to classical tragedies like *Hamlet* and his numerous mentions of existentialist thinkers like Schopenhauer imply that in the face of all the external controlling forces debilitating human being and his pride, he is in search of reality with all its complexities not depression per se. In the deeper layers of the narrative, it is possible to locate a special kind of hope and fear best attainable in Franzen’s simultaneous use of neorealism along with its emphasis on time and place, and also in his detailed presentation of characters tortured in a state of mixed feelings ranging from hatred to love, from threat to security, and from departure to arrival.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

The unique American characteristics and the breadth of its production caused it to be considered as a separate path and tradition. American literature undergoes several phases in the process of establishing its substantial position in the society. The phases are; the beginnings to 1810, 1810-1865, 1865-1910, 1910-1945, and 1945 to the present. During the first phase, between 1739 and 1742, a Great Awakening had occurred due to the dwarfs of nearly the whole of the American colonies' religious revivals, in numbers and also in intensity. It was called as a "great and general wakening" at that time, and for more than two centuries, the "Great Awakening" has been acknowledging as a special moment in American religious history. Lesser revivals persisted throughout the decade but when the Awakening was carried into Virginal around 1750s and as late as 1763, the students of the initiators of the Great Awakening such as Samuel Buell, whose ordination sermon had been preached by Jonathan Edwards, were enjoying new refreshing on Long Island. It could be said that America experienced continuing revivals which witnessed a "Second Great Awakening" in the churches of New England and the massive camp-meetings of the trans-Allegheny West. Perry Miller claimed that "the revival, at least as understood through the mind of Edwards, marked America's leap into modernity.

As to conclude the American Literature as a whole, there was a significant difference between the pre- and post-Civil War periods, specifically within the duration of 1910-1945. That was when the arts took more of the job while the publicly recognized authority lost its legitimacy. Among the noteworthy aspects

was that of the Western civilization was more dominated by the search of profits and the American writers had been a seamless target of this goal. The most momentous phase, the final phase depicts the major movements in recent American fiction. This brings us to the exemplary of prominent novel *The Corrections* by a famous writer Jonathan Franzen.

The Corrections is a 2001 novel by American author Jonathan Franzen. It revolves around the troubles of an elderly Midwestern couple and their three adult children, tracing their lives from the mid-20th century to "one last Christmas" together near the turn of the millennium. *The Corrections* was published to wide acclaim from literary critics for its characterization and prose. While the novel's release preceded the September 11 terrorist attacks by ten days, many have interpreted *The Corrections* as having prescient insight into the major concerns and general mood of post-9/11 American life, and it has been listed in multiple publications as one of the greatest novels of the 21st century.

The central theme of *The Corrections* refers most literally to the decline of the technology-driven economic boom of the late nineties. The novel addresses the conflicts and issues within a family that arise from the presence of a progressive debilitating disease of an elder. As Alfred's dementia and parkinsonism unfold mercilessly, they affect Enid and all three children, eliciting different and, over time, changing reactions. Medical help and hype – the latter in the form of the investigatory method “Corecktail” – do not provide a solution. At the end, Alfred refuses to eat and dies, the ultimate “correction” of the problem.

By re-opening *The Corrections* case and placing Alfred Lambert centre stage, the readers hope to have made clear that the larger system that is in place in Franzen's novel cannot be fully grasped without considering gender in general—and here, the gender and aging must be thought together. While scholarly work agrees that seemingly no significant “correction” takes place in the narrative, for the possibility that the Lambert children reiterate their father's behaviour in later life is unmistakably implied, Alfred Lambert's fate suggests otherwise.

Re-reading *The Corrections* in light of current gender studies debates, in and outside of academia, there should be no doubt that masculinity and power intersect as is here made visible within the fictional universe of the Lambert family. Nonetheless, the power of patriarchy, or institutionalized male power is deeply ingrained in both the personal, and represented by all other players subordinate to the hegemon, and the geopolitical and cannot be understood separately.

Franzen distinguishes two models for novels: Status model and Contract model. The first group includes canons and great works of art while the second group represents a compact number of novels and entails a balancing of self-expression and communication within a group. While for the first group, difficulty is important; in the case of the latter value is the ability to induce serious thought. Here, as a careful reading of *The Corrections* suggests, pleasure painfully arises from experience. The novel shows how abstractions and negative prejudice move towards concrete and situated consciousness, achieved in the characters' human-scaled quests and experiences like being sacked,

falling in love, suffering, and even betrayals. Even the names of characters in Franzen's fiction indicate this situatedness and located Ness or the relationship between person and place, between interwind and intramind. It is mainly due to his choice of neorealism that Franzen can pay due homage to multidimensionality and depth of ordinary but simultaneously complicated issues and make his characters as well as the reader appreciate the ethics of otherness in tangible quotidian issues.

Living in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Franzen is well-aware of the problems besetting literature and society. He is conscious of these needs and asserts. He believes in sharing suffering with other fellow-creatures, in replacing misanthropy with philanthropy through replacing judgmental prejudice with ethics and (re)cognition. His characters' guilt complex, their interrelationships, their sense of being torn between their own passions and others' preferences are all examples of oscillations between these two poles. For Franzen, understanding and communication are as important as self-expression and should be kept alive in society. "All of a sudden he understood why nobody, including himself, had ever liked his screenplay: he'd written a thriller where he should have written farce," the readers read about Chip in *The Corrections* (534). This is Franzen expressing why comedy and tragedy like life itself coexist. Drawing on his naturalist and realist predecessors, Franzen writes a conventional novel highlighting the importance of characterization, of traditional plots family crises, coming of-age stories, and so on and of resolution rather than indeterminacy. Admittedly, there are numerous Foucauldian elements in his works; however, there is also a gleam of slender hope obtained through ethics, emotion and, above all, (re)cognition. This may

explain why in *The Corrections* initial depictions and descriptions encouraging aloofness and judgment gradually transform into empathy enhancing the sense of identification and affection. Here is where both readers and characters are to discard the initial negative prejudice and try to acquire more mature-but-still-contextual attitudes, as for Franzen nothing happens in a vacuum. To Franzen, the existence of an individual is defined in his connections, decisions, and sufferings since basically it is impossible to separate intermind and intramind, and since (re)cognition entails relationship, contradiction, opposition, and dilemma. This can explain why after depicting the lonely life of each character and the aftermath of this loneliness, Franzen brings them together at Christmas the moment of rebirth. As long as characters have not decided to replace their old habits, to temporarily move away from the Midwest, to change their career, and to finally come back home, they cannot be ethical creatures as (re)cognition is interwoven with involvement and disengagement, empathy and vicarious pleasure, suffering or satisfaction. Franzen knows that in (post-)postmodernism the mass media translates political and social movements into simple images that can be consumed by the public in a safe and reaffirming way. He witnesses how post humanistic virtual spheres and individuals with virtual identities. mark a condition in which the novel is depleted of humanistic values, subjectivity, communication, constructive speculation, and meaning. In a world of pessimism, World Wide Web, and non-belonging, Franzen, along with a group of theorists and authors, have decided to cling to the hope that the waning ego and faith of the postmodern novel can be revived through a new version of realism and spiritualism. To stand against both the traditional forms of idealism and the alienating technological environment, he prefers to look banal or

melodramatic or naïve or sappy and to ask the reader really to feel something than to leave the individual with blank irony and ontological uncertainties. Novel in this regard can be a venue to enjoy the dialectic of authority and marginality, aesthetics and influence as well as a return to ethics and philanthropy. When, in *Strong Motion*, Franzen satirically points out that Americans are wanted and required irresponsible, he calls for social responsibility and action in the face of passive resistance and intellectually-masked inaction. Problems of society, he avers, are too deep and complicated to be dealt with superficially and optimistically; he disparages therapeutic optimism of symptom novels. The problem with our novel is that it is thought of as “a medicine” (73), Franzen contends in *How to Be Alone*. Social novels, he continues, should deal with “manners,” with “mystery” (71), and responsibility. It should be a venue where conflicts, dilemmas, and challenges of ordinary people are genuinely presented and thought about – where ethics is rekindled.

Alfred’s failure to maintain his role as hegemon offers new possibilities for the other characters in reconfiguring their own scripts, best portrayed by Enid Lambert, for whom it does not appear to be too late, even in advanced age. For Alfred, however, the ending is most tragic because he is unable to break with old ideals and cannot free himself from the rigid concepts of American manhood that he carries into retirement and old age, gradually being folded into bio-medical consequences of aging while himself functioning as a metaphor for gendered pathological behaviour. Thus, he remains trapped in the socialized expectation to fulfil the role of the hegemonic holder of power but cannot achieve to maintain this type of hegemonic masculinity due to bodily changes.

Ultimately, Alfred falls prey to his own perception of self and the expectations he is bound to fulfil, which, of course, also informs the larger system he as man, father, husband, and provider is embedded in.

Franzen had inspired through all his characters. Later days, he made us to love them too. His stories achieved both the extremes. He had certain virtuosity of authorial control over his works. Plenty of political agenda, reflected in his works allowed to go unexamined, unchallenged or trample on the nuanced human elements that reside at the core of the book.

.

WORKS CITED

- Amani, O., et. al. "Sam Shepard and the Familial Maze: Possible Worlds Theory in Buried Child." *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*. Vol. 17, no. 2, 2017, pp. 69-83.
- Aminzade, L. M.. "The Omniscient Narrator from George Eliot to Jonathan Franzen." *Studies in the Novel*. Vol. 46(2), 2014, pp. 236-253.
- Annesley, James. "Market Corrections: Jonathan Franzen and the Novel of Globalization.", *Journal of Modern Literature*. Vol. 29, no. 2, 2006, pp. 111-28.
- Armengol, Josep M.. "Aging as Emasculation? Rethinking Aging Masculinities in Contemporary U.S. Fiction.", *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*. Vol. 59, no. 3, 2018, pp. 355-67.
- Bauman, Z.. *Liquid Modernity*. Polity Press. 2000.
- Berardi, F.. *Precarious Rhapsody, Semiocapitalism and the Pathologies of the Postalpha Generation*. Minor Compositions, 2009.
- Burn, S.. *Jonathan Franzen at the End of Postmodernism*. Continuum. 27 Oct, 2011.
- Clemens, Samuel Langhorne. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Macmillan Inc, 1962.
- Connell, Raewyn. "The Social Organization of Masculinity." *Exploring Masculinities: Identity, Inequality, Continuity and Change*. Edited by C.J. Pascoe and Tristan Bridges, Oxford UP, 2016, pp. 136-44.
- Course Hero. "The Corrections Study Guide." *Course Hero*. 14 Dec. 2020, www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Corrections.
- Dannenberg, H. P.. *Coincidence and Counter factuality: Plotting Time and Space in Narrative Fiction*. University of Nebraska Press, 2008.
- Franzen, Jonathan. *The Corrections*. Straus and Giroux. 2001.

---. *Farther Away: Essays*. Picador, 23 Apr. 2013.

---. *Freedom: A Novel*. Picador. 27 Sep. 2011.

---. "Mr. Difficult". *The New Yorker*. 30 Oct. 2002.

---. *How to Be Alone*. Picador. pp. 238-269, 2012.

Foster, Norman. *American Poetry and Prose*. Vol. 2, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1962.

Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun: A Drama in Three Acts*. Random House, 1959.

Hart, James D.. *The Oxford Companion to American Literature*. Oxford University Press, Inc. 1948

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. Dent and Co., 1957.

Joseph Carroll; Correcting for The Corrections: A Darwinian Critique of a Foucauldian Novel. *Style*, 1 March 2013, Vol. 47, no. 1, pp. 87–118. doi.org/10.5325/style.47.1.0087

Palmer, A. (2004). *Fictional Minds*. Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press.

— —. *Social Minds in the Novel*. The Ohio University, 2010.

Phelan, J.. "Cognitive Narratology, Rhetorical Narratology, and Interpretive Disagreement: A Response to Alan Palmer's Analysis of Enduring Love." *Style*. Vol. 43, no. 3, 2009, pp.309-321.

Williams L. Andrews, et. al. Editors. *The Oxford Companion to African American Literature*. Oxford University Press, 1997.

The Crumbling down of Gender Stereotypes in *Anne of Green Gables* and *Matilda*:

A Comparative Analysis

A Project 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

Submitted by

SMEHA JOHN MACHADO

(REG. NO. 20APEN27)



PG AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Family stereotypes and its impacts	13
Three	Education: A Powerful Tool	23
Four	A Progressive thought on ‘Women supporting Women’	33
Five	Summation	44
	Works cited	51

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled **The Crumbling down of Gender Stereotypes in *Anne of Green Gables* and *Matilda*: A Comparative Analysis** is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfilment 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 Smeha John Machado during the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Indit Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Head of English Department

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

M. Mangalaeswari
M. Mangalaeswari

Assistant Professor of English

Guide

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


S. Venila
27/05/2022
External Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **The Crumbling down of Gender Stereotypes in *Anne of Green Gables* and *Matilda*: A Comparative Analysis** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for the Degree of Master of Arts in English, is my genuine effort and that, it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar.

Thoothukudi

May 2022



SMEHA JOHN MACHADO

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am extremely grateful to the **Lord Almighty** for His guidance and grace in completing this project successfully during the year 2021-2022.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank my institution for the values I received and the knowledge I acquired in the course of study.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am deeply grateful to **Ms. M. Mangalaeswari**, for her untiring help, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank all the faculty of the department of English for providing a good learning experience and academic ambience.

I thank our librarian and the staff for their extended help in the use of the library for reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided.

I am indebted to my parents for the great comforts I enjoy and the good education they have provided me. I also thank them for their trust, moral support and benevolence.

PREFACE

The project entitled **The Crumbling down of Gender Stereotypes in *Anne of Green Gables* and *Matilda*: A Comparative Analysis** comprises of five chapters.

The first chapter, **Introduction** deals with the aspects of Comparative literature and its application in the novels of L.M. Montgomery and Roald Dahl.

The second chapter **Family stereotypes and its impacts** discusses the stereotypes in a family structure which have enslaved women throughout ages and how the characters in the novels break these gendered views

The third chapter **Education: A Powerful Tool** elaborates the purpose of education in a woman's life and how it becomes a powerful tool in the hands of stereotype breaking women.

The fourth chapter **A Progressive thought on 'Women supporting Women'** suggests the benefits and development attained through a progressive thought amidst women and how the women in the novels have succeeded in breaking the stereotyped views on the entire womenkind.

The final chapter, **Summation** consolidates the ideas discussed in the preceding chapters.

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

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The wider divergence of literatures of the world could be transcended by drawing together the elements ostensibly various but essentially common. Comparative literature is a complex and common discipline which involves the literary technique of comparison. The study necessarily involves the comparison of one literature with another. It is not for enhancing the superiority or inferiority of any individual literature but for enhancing the total understanding of literature in mutual terms.

In *Introduction to the Study of Comparative Literature*, N. Subramaniam defines it as “A study in terms of comparisons and contrasts of similarities and dissimilarities of literatures and cultures and countries more than one in order to contribute to the mutual appreciation of literary experiences of various people” (*Comparative literature*, vi). A comparatist adopts various approaches in his/her investigation. Comparative study not only involves analogical elements but also elements and features that are contrastive. Comparison is a common instinct and very true of human experience. The term ‘comparative’ is not at all a new concept though the term may have been coined recently. All the major Greek critics like Aristotle, Longinus and others made a revealing comparative study of the devices used by classical poets. Comparative study starts as a mode of study and develops into a concept. As a mode this studies literature not in isolation but in comparison and as a concept it could be a comparison of two or more similar or dissimilar forms or trends within the span of literature. Comparison gives a vivid view underlining the elements of unity in diversity. This study has several aspects where there is a study of international themes, motifs, cultural and literary relations. It can also relate to the literary

evolution and overall study of its history in general in the context of the milieu. According to Rene Wellek Comparative studies could be “a study of all literature from an international perspective with a consciousness of unity of all literary creation and experience- independent of ethnic and political boundaries” (Yusuf 4). Comparative studies primarily focuses on the universal view of literature. It elucidates human experience and the analogical elements in the narratives of different nationalities and the medium taken into consideration is imaginative language. Aristotle defined art as the imitation of nature, his basis was not Greek art and Greek poetry but art and poetry in general that is he spoke of universality. The term ‘Comparative literature’ was coined during the nineteenth century by the famous Victorian poet and literary critic Matthew Arnold. He used it to refer to comparing literary works across cultures and languages. Critics have noted that the medium of this study is composed of universal verbal patterns, which are independent of structural peculiarities. In his inaugural lecture at Oxford in 1857, Arnold acknowledged that, “Everywhere there is connection, everywhere there is illustration. No single event, no single literature is adequately comprehended except in relation to other events, to other literature” (*Comparative Literature*, v).

Furthermore World literature is closely associated with Comparative literature but the former deals with the recognition throughout the world and the latter deals with the relationship of only two countries or two authors of different nationality. In this research too, two authors of different nationality and their works are compared. Comparative study is not bound to the same extent by criteria of quality or intensity. A whole lot of such studies have been carried out even on lesser known authors where the art is magnified despite the artist’s status or recognition among the readers. Carl Jung has formulated the Collective Unconscious which embraces the experience of

total humanity, that is, of different people in different ages. And this can be brought in the comparative analysis of the texts as certain authors' themes, motifs, subject and the message delivered to the readers seem similar even if they have never seen or read about each other or their texts. This is the case in this analysis where the theme and the ending of the novels converge though their time and space differs.

In *The Preface to Shakespeare* Dr. Johnson expresses "...nothing can be styled excellent till it has been compared with other works of the same kind" (2). Thus the comparatist will notice similarities, differences and development of both the literatures taken into consideration. This comparative analysis is present among curious readers who enjoy reading and analyze literary works of other nations and their literary connections. And it can more easily commit itself to the broad understanding of literary studies entailed by contemporary critical thinking. Sometimes the study involves 'placing' of texts which leads to the enlightenment of scripts and an in depth discovery of new meanings. The two novels taken into analysis show harmony among certain characters and their resistance towards the society's gender stereotypes. The first novel in this comparison is *Anne of Green Gables* written by Lucy Maud Montgomery and published in the year 1908.

L.M. Montgomery (1874-1942) was born in Prince Edward Island, the place where her world began and the place which served as the setting for her most beloved character Anne Shirley. *Anne of Green Gables* became an instant best-seller and the heroine became the mythic icon of Canadian culture. Montgomery produced more than 500 short stories and 21 novels, two poetry collections and numerous journals and essay anthologies. *Anne of Green Gables* alone has been translated into more than 36 languages as well as Braille and follows dozens of adaptations into various medium. She was the first Canadian woman to be made a member of the British

Royal Society of Arts and declared a Person of National Historic Significance in Canada. Montgomery's childhood is very much similar to her heroine, the world's beloved character Anne. Her childhood was predominantly a lonely and isolated one since her mother died when Montgomery was only two and her uncaring father left her under the guidance of her maternal grandparents. But her new home was not worth of having such a curious and vivid creature like Montgomery in its custody. Anne was the replica of Montgomery, as the author herself, in her childhood, escaped into imagination when the world would seem dreary and make her feel unwanted. The missing of her mother and her care made Montgomery create bold, conspicuous, and intrepid female characters in all her novels. Her heroines were brave enough to break the gender stereotypes in that time of society where women rarely had higher education or hardly spoke against the societal decree. She explores the problems of women in her time, during the early twentieth century. She was not particularly a feminist and her texts enunciate the emancipation of both men and women from the hawk-eyed societal norms. Her novels explored the drudgery of gender stereotypes imposed upon the free spirited souls and finally the characters come to love the same souls whom they have criticized and sometimes forced to accept their success in life. Montgomery's characters in one way or the other reflected her own self, the author dubbed her dull named surroundings with interesting names and so did Anne. These women made themselves and their surroundings happy even when there was a bleak hope for such joyous conditions. Maud Montgomery married Presbyterian minister Ewen Macdonald. She maintained a great balance between her writing and her domestic responsibilities. As she was deprived of her mother's care at a very young age, she didn't want her children to experience the same so she was well engaged in her maternal duties and remained unswerved in her career.

Montgomery completed her first novel, *Anne of Green Gables*, in 1905. It was inspired by children's books as *Little Women* and *Alice in Wonderland*. Her novel was rejected by every publisher so she gave up and kept it in a hat box. In 1907, she tried it for a last time and secured a publishing deal with L.C. Page in Boston. Released in 1908, the book sold more than 19,000 copies in its first five months. It was reprinted 10 times in its first year. The novel constellated widespread acclaim and championed by the Canadian poet Bliss Carman and the American author Mark Twain in a letter to Francis Wilson called Anne Shirley "the dearest, most moving and delightful child since the immortal Alice" (1). By the end of the First World War, Lucy Maud Montgomery was a household name throughout American as well as other English-speaking worlds. Her themes revolved around orphans, children abandoned by parents and left in the care of unloving relations or independent spinsters. Starting from her first novel *Anne of Green Gables* to late novels such as *Magic for Marigold*, *Jane of Lantern Hills*, *The Blue Castle*, etc; all focus primarily on the education of girls and the breaking of gender stereotypes.

The author herself lived an exemplary life before the ambitious young aspiring female writers and she became a celebrity even during her lifespan. That was way too much for the women of her time as literature was still dominated by great men. Montgomery ensured a solid income from her writings, which enabled her to maintain a comfortable life for her family. It is considered to be a remarkable achievement for a female writer in the early 20th century. Her creations embarked a thriving industry consisting of television series, stage productions, and Anne- related commodities such as souvenirs and dolls. *Anne of Green Gables* has been adapted more than two dozen times and has earned the Guinness World Record for "longest running annual musical theatre production." The most desired notion of authors is that they should be

remembered and appreciated for their works and creations even after their death. But Montgomery stands an exception to it, not only during her lifetime but more than two hundred years after her death her creations have rocked the world and still continues to. Setting up heritage sites and landmarks for fictitious characters and places is a rare sight to behold and that too for a female writer in a patriarchal society. Though Montgomery wished to preserve a clear separation between her fiction and her life, her avid readers inextricably entwined themselves with Montgomery's heroines and places and that resulted in various heritage and tourist sites associated with the author's work. Thousands of tourists visit Prince Edward Island each year to see the so called sacred sites related to the writing of *Anne of Green Gables* and its imaginative landscape and the Canadian government has turned her places to National Historic Sites. Her works continue to be the focus of critical and scholarly attention to the international cultural impact of her work. A 2014 reader poll conducted by CBC books declared Anne Shirley as Canada's most iconic fictional character. Even though her contemporaries considered her great and positioned her among the famous male writers, Montgomery had artistic anxiety that her works were less modern and less literary than the writings of her contemporaries. She worried that her poetry was not taken as seriously as her novels which were only her pot-boilers. In 1978, second wave feminists such as Margaret Atwood began to champion Montgomery's literature as more than mere children's fiction or genre writing. They have to be re read and taken into analysis like in the thesis which is to be followed. Anne Shirley was seen as the heroic female ahead of her time, representing a movement before there was a name for it and to be heroic as well as a female in early 20th century Canada was a hard path to move on.

Moira Walley-Beckett, executive producer of 2017 adaptation, *Anne with an E*, told the CBC that, “Anne’s issues are contemporary issues: feminism, prejudice, bullying and a desire to belong” (1). Montgomery and her characters achieved great fame in her lifetime that was unprecedented in Canadian fiction. The fame only continued to grow following her death. In 1927, Montgomery received a fan letter from British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin and she also met with the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) in Toronto which shows that not only women were interested in her work but even men loved her works, which was a great achievement for a woman during the early 1920s. After the World Wars the novel *Anne of Green Gables* hugely resonated with the orphaned population in all countries. In 1923, Montgomery became the first Canadian woman to be the member of the British Royal Society of Arts. In 1924, she was named one of the “Twelve Greatest Women in Canada” by the Toronto Star. In 1935, she was named to both the Order of the British Empire and the Literary and Artistic Institute of France. In 1943, she was named a Person of National Historic Significance by the Canadian government. Montgomery has been a revolutionary and a trend-setter for all the young aspiring women who wish to set their foot in the vast sea of literature. Montgomery has gained more fame and critics consider it a great achievement for a woman in the early 1900s as she has crushed the prevalent gender stereotypes of her time. Canada post issued stamps in honour of Montgomery and *Anne of Green Gables* in 1975 and 2008. In 2016 she was included in the list of 12 candidates to become the first Canadian woman to be featured on Canadian currency. The contemporaries of L.M. Montgomery had different clubs and were great authors like C.S Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Agatha Christie, T.S Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and D.H. Lawrence who formed the super elite space of the literary period. Though Montgomery’s *Anne of Green Gables* outsold

Chesterton, Hemmingway, Lawrence, Forster, Pound, Eliot, Woolf, Fitzgerald, she was largely left alone. Yet her creations prevailed in the great enmesh of writers and she stands uniquely awarded amidst her fans and readers. The next author taken into consideration in this thesis is Roald Dahl.

Roald Dahl (1916-1990) was a British author known for his ingenious children's books. His villains were often malevolent adults who imperiled precocious and noble child protagonists. He became the fantastic story-teller of his time for young readers. *Matilda* was one among his most successful books and had many adaptations. This has been the favourite book for both young and old. His action packed tales feature memorable and often magical characters. During Second World War he was a fighter pilot in the British Royal Air Force and that made him write about his war experiences. After he became a father he started creating splendid characters which not only impressed his children but every kid on this planet. He wrote some of the most beloved children's books of the 20th century and like Montgomery's heroine Anne, Dahl's *Matilda* created a lasting impact in the minds of their readers. These characters were no more fictitious instead they dwelt and lived as the most influential heroines amidst the avid readers. Unlike Montgomery who created Anne in her very first novel, Dahl introduced *Matilda* at the end of his career and it turned out to be a masterpiece. Critics argue that facts like the rise of the Soviet Union, the popularity of television, and Dahl's own life experiences may have affected the classic children's book *Matilda*. Dahl feared the phasing out of books during his time as both young and old were indulged in watching vain TV shows and preached about fake modernism, which perhaps influenced Dahl to create the world's most beloved character *Matilda*—a voracious and an intelligent reader with an insensitive environment but somehow finds her solace in Miss Honey. In spite of Dahl's commercial success very little

scholarly work on him has been produced and *Matilda* is one such work which can be read with the application of many theories though it is classified under children's literature. Critics say that the view of society revealed in Dahl's books, his implied criticism of adults and his contempt for social institution has received mixed reactions.

Despite the change in his critical fortunes, Dahl's popularity with children and adults alike is enduring and in a recent poll he beat JK Rowling to the accolade of Britain's favourite author. Jeremy Treglown's *Roald Dahl: A Biography* shows Dahl as a war hero, a philanthropist, a devoted family man. Dahl once said, "If my books can help children become readers, then I feel I have accomplished something" (*BrainyQuote*1). Each of Dahl's books illustrates the capacity of young people to accomplish great things and to exhibit an independent spirit. Dahl's childhood is reflected in his stories, and he often ridicules or undermines the societal norms or stereotypes in his works like *The BFG*, *Matilda*, *Charlie and the Chocolate factory*, even the heads of the armed forces were not an exception to his ridicule. He tends to see the family as a possible source of happiness and comfort which *Matilda* misses but later bound to get a new one. Literary critic Linda Taylor notes that Dahl's main characters are known for their wit, solitariness, independence, tenacity, intelligence, resourcefulness and so do the heroines of L.M. Montgomery. This encourages young people to overcome low self-esteem and looking upto peers for their identity. *Matilda* and *Anne* never play the victim instead they go against the gender stereotypes and create their own identity. His contemporaries criticize Dahl for his unrealistic portrayal of life but librarians claim that Dahl's books circulate so much that they are worn in no time, the titles are always checked out and usually on reserve.

His works usually appeal to both boys and girls, young and old similar to Montgomery's. Like Shakespeare, Dahl created great many onomatopoeic words and readers still remember his saying in *The Witches*, "it doesn't matter who you are or what you look like as long as somebody loves you" (Dahl 173). This has remained the mantra for all his readers who are made to follow beauty stereotypes or indulged in body shaming. He was a rebel when coming to the topics such as gender stereotypes or authoritative norms that compelled to change one's identity. Through *Matilda*'s telekinesis Dahl expresses his views that everyone has their own super powers of great ideas, imagination and bravery with which they can change the world to a better place and he invented a similar character twenty years before *Matilda* under the title *Magic Fingers* thereby educating the readers that suppression should be dealt in a proper manner and false stereotypes to be broken. Speaking of his contemporaries, First lady Eleanor Roosevelt, his fan, records that he was invited for dinner at the White House. Walt Disney was so taken with *The Gremlins* and planned for a motion picture. C.S. Lewis, Ernest Hemmingway, Pablo Picasso were some of his contemporaries. Just like Montgomery, Roald Dahl too remained largely alone in a world full of such artists and literary clubs yet their commercial success was undeniably great and their legacy has endured even after a century.

Lucy Maud Montgomery and Roald Dahl were not direct influencers of each other but their works *Anne of Green Gables* and *Matilda* have a lot of similarities with few contrasts when taken for a comparative analysis. In this thesis the gender stereotypes of society is often cited with reference to various theories and how some of the characters in the novels emerge as catalysts for the working of the gendered society and some being the exception like Anne, Miss Stacey, Matilda and Miss Honey strive for equality for all individuals especially women around them, breaking the

stereotypes which others in their position wouldn't have dared to do so. *Anne of Green Gables* authored during the early twentieth century caused the whole world to love the red-haired heroine. Montgomery infused her thoughts on gender stereotypes from the beginning of the novel. Even she chose Anne as her novel's protagonist by painting her against the beauty stereotypes of that era. Mrs. Rachel Lynde says, "Well, they didn't pick you up for your looks, that's sure and certain ... She's terrible skinny and homely, Marilla. Come here, child, and let me have a look at you. Lawful heart, did anyone ever see such freckles? And hair as red as carrots!" (64).

With this description of her protagonist Montgomery throws light on Anne's further deployments of situations where she stands for herself as well her people against the gender stereotypes. As a young girl, growing up in a judgemental society she arms herself against the expectations thrown on her. Finally she makes everyone fall for her even her enemies loved her uniqueness. Even as an eleven year old child she expresses that beauty doesn't restrict itself to the blonde hairs and the blue eyes. Though the society's commentary leads her to change her looks but later she regrets and accepts her own God given beauty, Montgomery advocates the young as well as the old through Anne that, one's beauty may not last long but charisma does. This novel enlightened many young readers especially women making them realize that beauty may fade and go unremembered but good deeds and an optimistic view of the world will never go unnoticed. Thereby breaking the stereotype which the society constructs on individuals. Unlike Montgomery, during the latter part of the twentieth century the author of the novel *Matilda* doesn't give importance in describing the features of his protagonist instead he goes in for her wits and amazing power. He elucidates how certain young women do not wish to appear beautiful like Mrs.

Wormwood but automatically their wits and charisma make them both beautiful within and without allowing the entire world fall for their awesomeness.

In *Feminism as Critique: Essays on the Politics of Gender in Late- Capitalist societies* there is clear explanation of role- stereotyping:

There is an observable recent trend in feminist theory which attempts to step beyond the limitations and antimonies of an explanation of gender inequality based on the analysis of the social mechanisms of role- stereotyping. It was understood as the basically external acculturation of women and men during their early childhood into a system of beliefs which then were assumed to orient their social behaviour throughout their whole lifespan. (96)

Benhabib and Cornell describe how individuals are educated to follow the roles stereotyped in the society and during the course of time this caused frustrations and depressions among the undermined and literature is one such powerful tool which expresses the social condition. Authors like Montgomery and Dahl made good use of literature to emphasize the breaking of these stereotypes using their powerful, witty, charismatic characters. They captured the minds of the readers through Anne and Matilda and other such characters, empowering both young and old and advocating that family, education and support is very essential for all individuals. Women can break the stereotypes and prove that true education makes women wise and not arrogant, compassionate and not contradictory. The supportive men in their lives too break the gender stereotypes imposed upon them. In this thesis the concept of masculine activity and feminine passivity is critically observed and a comparative analysis is laid on the female characters activity and their roles in reversing the stereotypes of the societ

CHAPTER TWO

FAMILY STEREOTYPES AND ITS IMPACTS

Family is considered to be the most valuable and the dearest of all as it centers on love. But in this fast paced world love is not at all spared and to raise a family with love emitting relationships is very rare. This type of family will remain the unconquerable power as only few succeed in building such families. Undeniably, family is born out of unconditional love a person can truly and voluntarily give. All folklores, fairy tales, plays and poems feature different types of families have taught the readers about various experiences and hierarchies within the family structure. The family provides a major context for adjustment and the comparative analysis is in the universal theme of family where all literary pieces begin and end their wonderful area of exploration. It becomes the social unit created by blood, marriage or adoption and in this thesis the novels taken into consideration has the themes of adoption and there lies the breaking of gender stereotypes by the women in these novels. Theoretical literature on the family has emerged in a wide range of academic disciplines.

Social scientists consider the common values and beliefs that people hold part of the social structure, while some others restrict the term to the patterns of relations among individuals, groups concerning conduct. The sociological framework attempted to explore the relationship of the members to each other. This leads to the issues surrounding the sense of affection displayed toward the children in the parent-child relationship and that would be analysed with regards to the Wormwood's family. This family structure follows a stereotype where different roles are performed by different members and this changed with time. Adoption and bonding with unknown people and thereby creating a new family can be noted in *Green Gables*

stead where Anne finds love and affection from Marilla and Matthew and Matilda who finds solace in Miss Honey. But the most interesting thing is the similarity in the ending of the novels. These selected novels can be subjected to sociological analysis through the incorporation of the Marxist Literary Criticism. Sociological analysis focuses on the relationship between literature and society. The social function of literature is the domain of a sociological critic. They examine literature in the cultural, economic and political context. Montgomery places the shy Matthew, who has been stereotyped since his childhood, in front of a vivid creature Anne. Matthew was the first person to have been introduced to Anne. The orphanage mistakenly sends a girl to the Cuthberts when they wanted a boy to adopt. Matthew gets to the station and finds out the mistake but didn't want to leave Anne alone. Here the author builds a father-daughter relationship and the shy stereotyped Matthew finds this little girl different from all the girls or women he has seen in his entire life. Montgomery explains to her readers how Anne was not the typical Avonlea's well bred girl. And the spark of a familial bond is instantly created between Matthew and Anne because so far the company of women was bad but that of little girls were worse for him,

He detested the way they had of sidling past him timidly... as if they expected him to gobble them up at a mouthful if they ventured to say a word. But this freckled witch was very different, and although he found it rather difficult for his slower intelligence to keep up with her brisk mental processes he thought that he "kind of liked her chatter." (15)

By her heroine's chatter, Montgomery reveals her own childhood which lacked a perfect family love since her mother's death. Anne is pained to see the orphaned trees in her asylum and that depicts her state too. She has always wished for a beautiful home and Green Gables seemed to be the perfect place. In her words it is the

‘bloomiest place’ and after hearing Anne’s pathetic tale Marilla’s reluctance changes to a tender note. She was the one who said “... a girl would be of no use to us” (26). But she ends up loving Anne more than anyone else would do. Montgomery proves how a family need not have a particular structure or stereotype, instead loving, caring, supporting souls can create an awesome bond which can make a hearth and home this can be seen in the case of Matilda when she is adopted by her caring teacher Miss Honey. Matthew who considered the company of women to be boring and out of context for a man, especially during the early twentieth century, where masculinity was stereotyped to be the sole bread winners and therefore they wanted only a genius company. Women’s society is considered to have trivial discussions so not only women but also men were the sufferers of this stereotype because these societal norms prevented them from having equal discussions with the opposite sex but the author makes Matthew and all such men realize that there are women who go break the gender stereotypes. He finds Anne to be a real interesting little thing, Anne thawed him out of his shyness and finally makes him one among her “kindred souls” and creates a family, bound in love.

Marilla takes up the job of raising Anne who was wild in her imaginations and her non conformity towards the societal stereotypes disturbs Marilla at first but later she falls for Anne’s view of the world, positivity, happiness. Anne creates a family and makes herself comfortable amidst the queer Cuthberts Matthew and Marilla, the siblings known for their monotonous life. Anne’s words “nobody wanted me...it seems to be my fate” (39), cuts deep into Marilla and she wanted to give Anne a home and education. Entire Avonlea was shocked to know that the spinster has adopted a girl and wants to educate her. Anne was accepted into the life of the Cuthberts and this vivid creature made the entire Green Gables lively. Despite the anxious advice of

Mrs. Lynde, warning Marilla about adopting orphans, the siblings break the stereotype. They adopt a girl and are generous enough to educate Anne. Their neighbours thought them to have gone crazy since all followed the stereotype which explains about educating a boy can be of some use whereas spending money on a girl's education would be vain and useless. But at the end of the novel Anne proves that not all women go by the rules and stereotypes. Some asseverate their standing in the society by being the rule breakers. Montgomery always mentions how her heroine's spirit is always different from the others, Anne is different from other children both in beauty and behavioural stereotypes "... borne aloft on the wings of imagination. Who would want such a child about the place?" (33)

Nobody wanted her and the homeless orphan Anne finds solace under the shelter of the Cuthberts. Here Matthew and Marilla can be appreciated for their brave step to adopt Anne who would not conform to the false social norms, they transform Anne into a bold, beautiful girl who in the future graduates with honours and helps Marilla who had given her a wonderful family and love. Mrs. Lynde was someone who takes pride in speaking her mind out, no adult would dare to cross her views. But Anne breaks the stereotype when she teaches Mrs. Lynde that even orphans have feelings and it should be respected. While reprimanding the girl, Marilla realizes how Anne has taken the shape of her own secret thoughts which she has suppressed to live in this society. The so-called virtuous woman conforming to the stereotype, is expected to repress her anxiety and opinion and if she dares to express her views she will be considered a rebel, unworthy to be a woman in the society. But Anne was that "outspoken morsel of neglected humanity" (83) neglected because not all women dare to break the stereotype and this attracted Marilla because unlike her, Anne was dreadfully determined and lived her life to the fullest without giving a thought to the

imposed norms. This can be seen when she creates her own wreathed hat to church which the other little girls wouldn't dare to. At first Marilla insists that Anne should behave like other little girls but later realizes that this one was something different and born to bring a change in stereotypes followed throughout the ages in Avonlea.

The familial bond between Matilda and her parents are quite different when compared to Anne who is an orphan. Matilda has parents but their existence is similar to pushing Matilda into a state of an orphan. Her father Mr. Wormwood is a car-dealer, a magnate, the sole bread winner of their family which automatically leads the character to exercise control over the whole family, especially over Matilda and her mother. Similar to Marilla, Mrs. Wormwood is also afraid to break the stereotypes of the society but Matilda wouldn't tolerate this dominance. Anne and Matilda pose as the new generational women who wish to place their standards high and break the gender stereotypes. While analysing the love and care of the family, Matilda experiences none, like Anne before she came to Green Gables. The condition of Matilda in her family is mentioned by Dahl in the first few pages of the book, the parents looked upon:

...Matilda in particular as nothing more than a scab. A scab is something you have to put up with until the time comes when you pick it off and flick it away. Mr and Mrs Wormwood looked forward enormously to the time when they could pick their little daughter off and flick her away, preferably into the next county or even further than that. (4)

Matilda's condition was similar to the protagonist of Montgomery who was an unloved child before she came to Green Gables where her heart, mind and body grew under the tender guidance of Marilla and Matthew. The unloved Matilda finds a

family and a home in Miss Honey like Anne found amidst the Cuthberts. Dahl explains how extraordinary women are down trodden in this stereotyped society, their knowledge is scorned. They are expected to follow the gender stereotypes imposed on them. Both Montgomery and Dahl produced influential characters who deny the stereotypical views thereby making a better future for the forthcoming younger generation. Matilda's mother Mrs. Wormwood was the victim of the modernity and fake feminism. The author explains how many women yearned to acquire the stereotypical beauty. They were even ready to lose their health in order to attain this stereotype. The gendered notion explicitly demanded certain qualities from women to be performed whether they like it or not.

Dahl expresses how Mrs. Wormwood plays Bingo in the afternoons leaving little Matilda to take care of herself, Mrs. Wormwood dyes her hair blonde to convince her husband and tries to be a fake modernist, advocated by the shows broadcasted in the "telly". She fails to notice her daughter's phenomenal behaviour. The position of a true mother is taken by Miss Honey who isn't her blood relation instead they are bound by love. She cares for Matilda, she visits her home and finds out her student's pathetic condition under Wormwood's negligent roof. Anne too experiences this negligence under Mrs. Thomas and Mrs. Hammond's roof. Like Montgomery, Dahl enumerates the need for a family which need not be from blood relations. Anne and Matilda were phenomenal people and their suffering under an unloving, negligent house seems inappropriate. So the readers are comforted at the end when both the girls acquire a beautiful home breaking the stereotype of patriarchal dominance as the home of both the protagonists seem to be led by the womenfolk. This doesn't mean that educated women are arrogant because they deny a male companion or a life partner. The characters like Anne and Marilla; Matilda and Miss Honey just

exemplify that women can run a home without a father figure which has dominated the family structure ever since its formation, getting a partner or not, it is an individual women's choice. But the stereotype of the necessity of a father figure to lead the house or be the bread winners is broken here, since the women create their own loving family at the end of the novels. This dominant father figure is analysed by Marxist criticism which talks about women's domestic labour which has use value but no exchange value. Capitalism is congruent with patriarchy where men are paid more so that women are compelled to engage in housework.

In this structure, women are comparable to the proletariat in a capitalist system. Women are viewed as 'dependents', the role of a nurturer is forced into them. Sexism is compounded with capitalism to oppress women. The relationship between Marxism and Feminism is emphasized by Catherine MacKinnon, in the essay *Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory*:

Marxism and feminism are theories of power and its distribution: inequality. They provide accounts of how social arrangements of patterned disparity can be internally rational yet unjust. But their specificity is not incidental. In Marxism to be deprived of one's work, in feminism of one's sexuality, defines each one's conception of lack of power per se... (516-17)

Classical Marxist feminism sought to understand gender inequality according to class disparity. In *The Origin of Family, Private Property, and the State*, Friedrich Engels delineated the decline of the matrilineal and matriarchal society and the rise of patriarchy, with the shift in economic production and private property possession. Women were considered to be the property which has to be owned. Some women who thought to have achieved modernity like Mrs. Wormwood who likes to play

Bingo, changes her looks to please her husband and the society, become the owned properties. Like Dahl, in her novel Montgomery too portrays the two types of women; the ones who subvert the gendered stereotypes and the ones who become the properties subject to stereotypes. Mrs. Wormwood and Ruby Gillis are anxious in displaying their stereotyped beauty which the patriarchy demands but the authors prove that charismatic, educated women like Anne, Matilda, Miss Honey are beautiful both within and out. They break the gender stereotypes of the capitalistic society and insist that their not properties but people with dignity.

Dahl explains through the family of Matilda that the increase in production outside the house, sexual division of labour intensified, leading to the 'overthrow of the mother right' which Engels argues was 'the world-historic defeat of the female sex' (qtd. in Lerner 21). Women became 'slaves' to male sexual desire and economic dominance. Mr. Wormwood represented the bourgeoisie and his wife represented the proletariat. He slanders her and she just puts up with him for his money because she needs a luxurious life and that shows how dependent she is. "...she thought how stupid he looked. Hardly the kind of man a wife dreams about, she told herself" (29). Here the ideas of love and commitment were subordinate to the power structure of patriarchy. Thus the Wormwoods pose as an example of how a family must not be run. Here the children are the sufferers. This isn't a family at all if the love is not mutual and reciprocal, mutual understanding between the members alone can form a family. Matilda got a perfect familial bond with Miss Honey at the end of the novel similar to Anne who bonds with Marilla. Engels insisted on economic freedom for women to subvert this patriarchal power-play. He condemned this bourgeois concept of marriage or the 'marriage of convenience' they are sold into slavery once and for all. Juliet Mitchell's essay *Women: The Longest Revolution* (1966) revises the

traditional Marxist feminist framework by showing the importance of psychoanalysis along with class analysis in explaining women's oppression. She points out the intersection of patriarchy and capitalism in the exploitation of women:

Men enter into the class dominated structure of history while women (as women, whatever their work in actual production) remain defined by the kinship pattern of organization. Differences of class, historical epoch, specific social situation alter the expression of femininity; but in relation to the law of the father, women's position across the board is a comparable one. (409)

Diana Barry and all other girls put up with Gilbert's teasing but it was Anne who broke the stereotype and made him realize that women cannot be objectified. Mrs. Wormwood represents the women of her era who put up with their arrogant capitalistic husbands because they were economically dependent on men. But Matilda like Anne wouldn't tolerate the dirty money earned by her father and rejects his ideologies. Gender ideologies instilled the belief that women's oppression is natural. Men also become the victims of gender stereotypes as Marx in his Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* states, "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness" (2). They are not born arrogant instead they are taught to behave like a man from their childhood because arrogance is appreciated in a man. Miss Honey suffered a lot under her cruel guardian Trunchbull, she decides to come out of her mansion and lives a meagre but free life. She is helped by Matilda at the end of the novel. Matilda's wise act drives out the cruel Trunchbull and Miss Honey receives her inheritance. Miss Honey being an orphan herself, knew the pain of losing familial bonds. She was like Matilda, extraordinarily intelligent and talented but devoid of a loving family. So she could easily connect with Matilda's feelings and offers to adopt

her at the end of the novel. The Wormwoods were escaping to Spain since the police found out Mr. Wormwood's dirty business. The big black Mercedes was of no importance to Matilda unlike her mother, Matilda didn't care for these luxuries, she wished for a true family, true love which was given by Miss Honey. She adopts Matilda "I would love to have Matilda, I would look after her with loving care...and I would pay for everything. She wouldn't cost you a penny" (232). The parents were very happy to flick off this scab for them it'll be one less to look after.

Similar to Miss Honey and Matilda, Montgomery's characters Anne and Marilla break the stereotype to prove that women can run the house without the father figure who is portrayed as the sole bread winner. After the death of Matthew, Marilla determines not to wait for the sympathy of Avonlea people, she decides to sell Green Gables and educate Anne, but she fears the loneliness after Anne's gone to college. Anne gives importance to her home Green Gables and her beloved Marilla who has raised her as an orphan, going against the stereotype which forced her not to adopt a girl. Anne decides to work as a teacher in Avonlea, educate herself with the college syllabus, and take care of Marilla. "You surely don't think I could leave you alone in your trouble, Marilla, after all you've done for me" (302). The two women form a family going against the stereotype that women cannot survive alone.

Dahl and Montgomery break the stereotype of their era and boldly allow their lead characters to sustain themselves. Anne decides to stay with Marilla and so does Matilda with Miss Honey. Finding a male partner or not is an individual women's choice, pride and arrogance cannot be attributed to them. Here the authors exhibit that women can be bread winners and become phenomenal examples to others.

CHAPTER THREE

EDUCATION: A POWERFUL TOOL

Education is important to all individuals and recently women's education is being given greater importance because improving a girl's educational levels resulted in the growth of health and economic condition of the entire community. Statistics provide the information that learned women increase the standard of living for their children, as women invest more of their income in their families than men do. Education also improves women's communication with partners and employers and rates of civic participation. The gender stereotypes are broken when a female gets educated. The organisation of UNESCO believes that education of women brings about sustainable development. The gendered educational stereotype of men as breadwinners was broken when women rose to that position through education. Previously the concept of women education was condemned because that would disrupt their feminine duties but some empowered women proved it wrong, they managed it by dividing the domestic tasks with their partners. As Julia Kristeva advocates there should be both the 'spirit of adventure' as well as 'spirit of nest', educated working women created a beautiful family with the help of their progressive partners.

Gender stereotypes of the society demanded women to be virtuous, chaste and obedient. All other traditional and cultural demands were also based solely on the female sex. Man too suffers under these stereotypes because he is frightened to take the gendered roles ascribed to a woman, fearing the society would count him unmanly. Educational courses and careers also seem to have taken gendered roles as some jobs are counted safe for women and some need daring efforts so it is said to

belong to men. Many activists and famous literary figures like Mary Wollstonecraft argued that virtue belongs to both sexes and so does education. Earlier education was seen as a way of making women better wives and mothers, not as a way of transforming their lives. But L.M. Montgomery and Roald Dahl explain the importance of women's education as they capture the young adults' mind through their famous characters Anne and Matilda. Certain other characters in the novels play an important role in educating the protagonists. The teachers in both the novels explain the importance of education of women to empower them. Anne is grateful to Marilla and Matthew because they decide to send her to school. Family and Education has been her dream and she made good use of it. She's a vivid creature, very different from the stereotypical description of the girls in Avonlea. She is rich in imagination and very eager to learn new things. Marilla concludes Anne's personality, "... no house will ever be dull that she's in" (104).

Anne and Matilda set an example that education is important to all especially for girls, they have to overthrow the stereotypes that keep them from learning, reading and becoming the empowered women. In *On Education* Rousseau exclaims that "childhood has its own ways of seeing, thinking and feeling: nothing is more foolish than to try and substitute our own ways" (52). The teachers in both the novels, Miss Stacy and Miss Jennifer Honey, are very impressive as they do not force their thoughts on their pupil instead prepare them to face life, making them better citizens, inculcating self control, politeness and rational thinking. Miss Stacy is a stereotype breaker, the Avonlea children receive a new style of learning from her. She takes them outside the classrooms for practical sessions. Every Friday afternoons they have recitation competition and field trips because it is easier to learn about nature in fields

than in classrooms. She is educated and smart and criticized by the elders of Avonlea but Anne remarks,

Miss Stacy takes them all to the woods for a field day and they study ferns and flowers and birds. And they have physical culture exercises every morning and evenings. Mrs. Lynde says she never heard of such goings-on and it all comes of having a lady teacher. But I think it must be splendid and I believe I shall find that Miss Stacy is a kindred spirit. (189)

Miss Stacy breaks the stereotypes of the Avonlea society and she is criticized for her style of teaching and they imply that it is just because of her gender, if they would have got a male teacher like Mr. Philips for the Avonlea fry that would have satisfied the gender stereotyped people of Avonlea. But Montgomery introduces Miss Stacy just to prove her point that women are no less than men in acquiring and delivering knowledge. Montgomery describes Stacy as a “bright, sympathetic young woman with the happy gift of winning and holding the affections of her pupils and bringing out the best that was in them mentally and morally. Anne expanded like a flower under this wholesome influence...” (190).

Miss Stacy is contrasted with Marilla, Stacy encourages imagination with certain limitations in little girls, she also takes the rural Avonlea students to compete with the urban ones, but Marilla comments that “Reading stories is bad enough but writing them is worse” (210). Marilla has been raised in the gender stereotypical thoughts that says creativity and writing are neurotic, abnormal and intolerable in a woman. But Anne’s story club breaks all the stereotypes, she encourages girls to write, education made her think beyond the patriarchal constrictions. While comparing the qualities of Miss Stacy and Miss Honey one can find many similarities. Roald Dahl like

Montgomery brings in a female teacher to justify his thoughts on women's education and empowerment. Matilda finds a new mother-figure and a comforter in Miss Honey. Like Anne, Matilda flourishes under the guidance of her teacher. Both the girls love their teachers who are the source of their encouragement. Roald Dahl describes Miss Honey,

...she possessed that rare gift for being adored by every small child under her care. She seemed to understand the bewilderment and fear that so often overwhelm young children who for the first time in their lives are herded into a classroom and told to obey orders. Some curious warmth that was almost tangible shone out of Miss Honey's face when she spoke to a confused and homesick newcomer to the class. (61)

Miss Honey seems to be the only sweetheart in the entire school of the terrible Crunchem Hall Primary School. Dahl hints at the nature of his characters and places through its names. The school can be read as 'crunch them all' which means the management and the headmistress were altogether terrifying. They were not suitable to educate little children. Matilda's parents did not mind educating her so they left her in this school. Dahl brings in Mrs. Phelps and Miss Honey who remain the only souls to guide Matilda into the vast field of education. They understand the capacity of Matilda. They do not misjudge the little girl's extraordinary talent. Unlike her parents they do not laugh at her vast knowledge. Miss Honey understands that Matilda has innate ability and the only thing she needs, is to be guided, nurtured and loved like Stacy understands Anne. Miss Honey takes the responsibility of giving private tuition to Matilda. But she is angry at her parents' negligence, she becomes the first woman to reprimand the arrogant Mr. Wormwood, "Mr. Wormwood if you think some rotten TV programme is more important than your daughter's future, then you ought not to

be a parent! Why don't you switch the darn thing off and listen to me!" (88) Educated women like Miss Honey are very different from fake modernist like Mrs. Wormwood. Educated women rise up against injustice. Patricia Mann recognizes the fundamental transformations in the late 20th century western societies that have occurred as a result of the enfranchisement of women and their unmooring from patriarchal relations. Patriarchal culture excluded women from doing philosophy. So the philosophical thoughts of the protagonists were undermined. Anne and Matilda were thought to be too young to speak against injustice. Anne spoke against the society which targeted her looks and commented on her red hair and freckles. She taught a great lesson to the most handsome Gilbert and made him admire her. Matilda too teaches a lesson to her father who tears her book and snubs her whenever there is a discussion between the male members of her family. When Anne and Matilda get bullied they do not cry like other stereotyped girls. They know their worth and their educated minds lead them to subvert not submit to the wrong stereotyped rules.

Montgomery explains that not all women are timid and fragile but there are women like Anne who break the rules of being the so-called girl the society has destined, "Anne did not cry or hang her head. Anger was still too hot in her heart..." (112). Similarly, Roald Dahl explicitly proves that Matilda is not among those women who can be subdued. She acts against the gender stereotype which advocates women can be bullied without them protesting against it. Her father tears her book and asks her to watch television like her mother. Dahl explains how girls were taught to follow the same suppressive gender stereotype their mothers had been following. Mr. Wormwood couldn't accept the fact that his daughter the weaker sex was much more talented than his son. Matilda is very much similar to Anne as she doesn't cry:

Most children in Matilda's place would have burst into floods of tears. She didn't do this. She sat there very white and thoughtful. She seemed to know that neither crying nor sulking ever got anyone anywhere. The only sensible thing to do when you are attacked is to counter-attack. (35)

Gender stereotypes are considered to be mistaken social fictions. Ambition, aggression, high intelligence in women can quickly bring accusations on them for not being a feminine character. When Mrs. Lynde says Anne has got enough education for a woman and, "I don't believe in girls going to college with the men and cramming their heads full of Latin and Greek and all that nonsense" (304). Anne replies that she will work as well as learn those subjects which are allotted only for men. Similarly, Matilda's father and Diana Barry's mother believe that girls going to college will only earn them a bad name. Matilda's 'brain power' is ignored by her father as he teaches his son the tactics of his business. Here even the boy suffers under gender stereotypes Dahl shows how the boy seems disinterested in his father's business profits. He might be interested in some other career but he is forced to learn his father's commerce. But the interested daughter is being kept away from high finances just because she's a girl. Her mother explains to Matilda, "I'm afraid men are not always quite as clever as they think they are. You will learn that when you get a bit older, my girl" (59).

But education makes Matilda rebel against her father's illegal business when she says, "It's dirty money I hate it" (19) similar to Miss Honey who survived outside her cruel aunt's house. Because education and reading books enlightened them to behave honestly which will one day lift them to great heights. And a truly educated woman never boasts about her excellence and skill. Her actions speak more than her words. Montgomery and Dahl portray these kinds of empowered women like Anne, Mrs.

Allan, Miss Stacy, Matilda, Miss Honey and Mrs. Phelps to educate their young readers that gender stereotypes are constructed to dishearten the tender accomplishing mind so it can be broken like the above mentioned characters. Both the authors inculcate the thirst for reading among their young audience. Dahl wants to represent his social milieu and the introduction of the television which devastated the reading, writing and learning abilities in children compared to the era of Montgomery where there was no technology and an ample amount of creativity hovered about the youngsters. Dahl introduces a voracious reader like Matilda and gives her wonderful power thereby grabbing the little ones who spend most of their time in front of the idiot box, into his narration. Anne and Matilda prove that education never fails to uplift the down trodden.

There is a gendered view that men are ambitious while women are more erotic. The saucy flirtatiousness of a pleasure-loving young woman is a stereotype expected among teen girls. Ruby Gillis and some other girls in *Anne of Green Gables* and Mrs. Wormwood in *Matilda* fall a prey to this stereotype. They care more about their looks because they were taught that women gained a good comfortable life only by their face not their brains. Mrs. Wormwood foolishly accuses Miss Honey for choosing education:

... A girl should think about making herself look attractive so she can get a good husband later on. Looks is more important than books, Miss Hunkey...

I said you chose books and I chose looks... And who's finished up the better off? Me, of course. I'm sitting pretty in a nice house with a successful businessman and you're left slaving away teaching a lot of nasty little children the ABC. (91-92)

Mrs. Wormwood represents the whole lot of the females in the society who have been trapped in the casket of the so-called gender stereotype. Similar to this, Ruby Gillis is very conscious about her looks and she is curious enough to get a 'string of beaus' and have them all crazy about her. So this gender stereotype of beauty has created a great impact on the female sex. From their childhood they were trained as a marriage material. Studies have shown that such ideals of beauty often lead to depression, reduced self-esteem, eating disorders. But Montgomery and Dahl succeed in fostering brave and beautiful women in their novels. The authors insist that true education breaks these stereotypes. Anne is very keen in achieving her goal without giving heed to the distracting fashions and beauty standards given by the society. Like Ruby Gillis, she does not wish to deceive men. She is focused on her education and if Providence permits she would have a right life partner who is progressive and supportive. Her education and eloquence make her more attractive and charming like Matilda and Miss Honey.

Anne scores high in every exam and becomes the only female student to compete with the boys in the entire city. She proves that beauty comes with education and knowledge makes her more attractive and gains her dignity wherever she goes. She breaks the stereotype of beauty by showing that she does not have blonde hair, blue eyes or flawless skin. But her education and knowledge ranked her to the seats of dignity which were only occupied by the lads of her town. This confidence in breaking the stereotype partly comes from Marilla's upbringing she always taught Anne that "Handsome is as Handsome does" (76). Similar to Anne, Miss Honey too strives to change the gender stereotype which has imprisoned women for centuries. Dahl wanted to focus on the education of the girls rather than submitting to the superficial adornments that represent femininity as style and beauty only. Women

have more than beauty to be admired in them. Miss Honey becomes a heroine in the sight of the growing Matilda. Due to her education, she earns an honest living and doesn't wish to be some cranky businessman's wife. She is happy to share her knowledge with others unlike Mrs. Wormwood who neglects education and spends lavishly playing Bingo but the end of such women turns out terribly bad. Like Montgomery, Dahl conveys his thoughts on the importance of education throughout the novel. At the end Mrs. Wormwood suffers along with her husband just because of the dirty money they were earning. Big Black Mercedes was of no use to Matilda unlike her mother she didn't care for these luxuries. She is more like Miss Honey sensible, honest, wise and independent. Like Marilla, Miss Honey's upbringing would be perfect for the vivid Matilda. Both the authors enforce that education brings confidence as well bravery in women to speak up against the false accusers. This can be seen when Matilda deals with the terrible Trunchbull and Anne deals with her bullies and Miss Honey reprimands the arrogant businessman saying "...Do not despise clever people, Mr. Wormwood" (94).

L.M. Montgomery and Roald Dahl explain that the purpose of education is fulfilled when a woman becomes independent and empathetic and especially a critic when it comes to the discussion of both the social and literary events. Virginia Woolf argues that in order to be creatively and critically successful, a woman must be able to own her own space and financial stability. This can be seen in Montgomery's characters Anne, Marilla, Miss Stacy and Mrs. Allan and Dahl's characters Matilda, Miss Honey and Mrs. Phelps. Mrs. Rachel Lynde, despite of her stereotyped notions, is described as a red-hot political critic. "Mrs. Lynde says Canada is going to the dogs the way things are being run at Ottawa, and that it's an awful warning to the electors.

She says if women were allowed to vote we would soon see a blessed change (139-140).

It was the time when women were not allowed to take part in legal discussions but Montgomery prophesied through her character that voting system for women will develop the country. Ten years after, in 1918 women were granted the federal vote and in 1919 they gained the right to run as Members of Parliament. Roald Dahl elucidates the efficiency of women being a critic. Matilda is a self-taught critic, she explains to Miss Honey about the authors she has read. She gives her thoughts on their writings. She criticizes C.S Lewis and Tolkien for their less funny narration. But she is very fond of Charles Dickens. Miss Honey is astonished at this five year old critic and delivers all her possible knowledge to Matilda. Thus Montgomery and Dahl strongly support the education of girls for the betterment of the nation. Educated women in their novels break the stereotypes that suppress them and they emerge as role models for their future generation.

CHAPTER FOUR

A PROGRESSIVE THOUGHT ON ‘WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN’

There are two dominant cultural ideas about the role women play in helping other women: the Righteous woman and the Queen Bee. The Righteous Woman is an ideal belief that women have a distinct moral obligation to have one another's backs. Since all women experience sexism, they should be more attuned to the gendered barriers that other women face. This heightened awareness should lead women to foster alliances and actively support one another. If women do not help each other, this is an even worse form of betrayal than those committed by men.

The Queen Bee belief argues that in reality women just can't get along. As Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant point out in their essay in *The New York Times* on the myth of the catty woman, this belief rests on the erroneous idea that there is something inherent to the female sex that causes women to undermine each other. The idea of a Queen Bee syndrome dates to research first done in the 1970s. The ultimate queen bee is the successful woman who instead of using her power to help other women advance, undermines them. Despite studies showing that men engage in indirect aggression like gossiping and social exclusion at similar or higher rates than women, it is still widely believed that women are meaner to one another.

Studies show that the Queen Bee behaviours are not reflective of some Mean Girl gene lurking in women's DNA. Rather, to the degree they exist, queen bee dynamics are triggered by gender discrimination. These behaviours emerge when two dynamics come together: gender bias and a lack of gender solidarity. When woman for whom

being a woman is not a central aspect of their identity experience gender bias, queen bee behaviour emerges. To get around these kinds of gendered barriers, these women try to set themselves apart from other women. They do this by pursuing an individual strategy of advancement that centers on distancing themselves from other women. One way they do this is through displaying Queen Bee behaviours such as describing themselves in more typically masculine terms and denigrating other women. These behaviours are triggered in male dominated environments in which women are devalued.

Women too can be misogynists. But there are plenty of studies and evidences which show that women do indeed support one another. A woman alone, has power, but collectively they have impact. Alexandra Elle, the poet and author taps into the intentional living philosophy. According to her,

Celebrating another woman's triumphs or success will never take away your shine or glory. If anything, it'll add to it and create more light... It's human to feel competitive sometimes; it's normal to feel jealous, but we have to reel in those negative emotions and not let them dictate our relationships with one another. (Strebe, par.4)

The poet is now a proud mother and author. She explains the importance of support which, especially, must be towards a fellow woman. She tells that there are many women in her life who support her in all dimensions. Her friends have become her chosen family and she needs them to stay on track. It's important to have these types of soulful connections. This makes her feel anchored and truly supported. Elle asks her readers to put aside any perception or judgment of women that stereotypes have taught the womenfolk throughout ages. Gender stereotypes showcase how women are

meaner and hypercompetitive to fellow women. With the push for gender equality, supporters and well-wishers seem to be a positive entity. But there has been article after article that suggests “women seem to cut women down” rather than support or encourage them. But Elle encourages all to foster the quality of being generous and open minded. She adds to the fact how stereotypes have taught women as well as men the false notions throughout ages and it is time to break these gender stereotypes that proclaim women do not support women.

Sometimes I feel that society likes to trick us into thinking that we [women] cannot, or have no interest in, getting along, working together, and standing in support of one another... I have seen with my own eyes the opposite. Now more than ever it feels like we are joining hands and celebrating not only our differences but similarities. (Strebe, par.7)

The media hype and cultural perceptions might showcase that women do not want to revel in another woman’s success, but Elle sees things differently and she wanted to usher in her new message, “I wanted to remind people that we can still glow and be great in the light of someone else’s success and triumphs” (Strebe, par.9). She explains how women can cultivate such qualities of support and encouragement. One must silence the noise of negative self-doubt. She tells that questioning one’s personal glory creates more room for envy. So it is better to discover a way to celebrate one’s own light, life, and purpose, which consequently allows one to rejoice in the success of the neighbor and thereby provide a genuine support, and basking in the success of another woman will benefit the listener since it will motivate the other to act like the former and achieve success. These kinds of women have friendships that are full of celebrating one another. It not only affirms them but creates a relationship that is rooted in trust, love and comradery.

Elle's journal entries are always so inspiring and purposeful. She bids all to get started with the motto "support, not shame" thus emphasizing the need to support all human beings especially women must support women to bring about a drastic change in the societal gender stereotypes. The road to gender equality starts with women supporting women. From an oppressive history, inequality in the workplace to periods, pregnancies, childbirth and all the in-betweens, no one knows what it's like to be a woman except for another woman. To have a listening ear or shoulder to cry on from someone who has been in a female's shoes in some form or fashion, is incredibly therapeutic and comforting. So support in all forms seems essential to women.

Women, being both rational and intuitive, are able to single-handedly execute so many tasks on a daily basis. It's empowering to know what can be achieved if women support each other and work together in numbers as a community. Some innately look for kindred spirits who are likeminded and support one another's plans and ambitions. The good vibes are often reciprocated by these supporting women. For every successful woman there is at least one other strong woman behind her giving her words of encouragement as well as sound, objective advice. Montgomery and Dahl create stereotype-breaking women characters, who support each other's successes as well as failures.

Admittedly, it feels so much easier to criticize and tear each other down, but if women uplift, encourage and make the effort to cultivate more supportive relationships with each other, the atmosphere will feel more harmonious as well inspiring. There's strength in numbers and empowering other women is self-empowerment in itself.

Critically assessing the above explained concepts in the context of *Anne of Green Gables* and *Matilda*, the readers would understand how the authors have thrown their full creative strength in the creation of their stereotype-breaking characters. The first exposure to the supportive women in the novel starts with Marilla who breaks the Avonlea stereotype and adopts a girl, supports Anne, gives her good education and manners, stands for the orphaned Anne when the whole world seemed to stand against this adoption. Marilla finds a purpose in her life after she adopts and supports the orphan girl. She says, “it’s only three weeks since she came, and it seems as if she’d been here always. I can’t imagine the place without her... I’m glad I consented to keep the child and that I’m getting fond of her...” (89). Providence had handed Anne over to Matilda and ultimately Anne supports the old fragile Marilla at the end of the novel, these two women are the major ones concentrated by Montgomery and they stand a proof to ‘women supporting women’.

Societal stereotypes have taught that women are more judgmental and feel threatened by attractive women so complimenting seems very rare in this species. But Montgomery explains how the little queer orphan Anne breaks this stereotype and compliments Diana whenever there is an opportunity and Diana is sweet enough to ensure Anne that she was good at everything and she has got the loveliest colour. Montgomery hints at her advice to young girls through her character Diana when she says to Anne, “...you are the smartest girl in school. That’s better than being good-looking”(109). A woman compliments a fellow woman and that supports her and brightens up her day. Next Anne supports Mrs. Barry by nursing Minnie May back to life that strengthens the bond between the two women. Then comes the support from Josephine Barry, a wealthy spinster, she supports Anne whenever she is out of Avonlea. She acknowledges Anne and explains that Anne “...amuses me, and at my

time of life an amusing person is a rarity” (159). Anne is a supportive company to both young and old. Also Anne doesn’t encourage making uncharitable remarks on other women. Mrs. Allan was the next supportive woman to come into Anne’s life. “With Mrs. Allan, Anne fell promptly and whole-heartedly in love. She had discovered another kindred spirit” (170). This woman made religion very interesting and cheerful to young children. She was very different from the previous Sunday school teacher. She was against the stereotypical way in which other woman teach about God to little children.

Mrs. Allan diverts the little Anne’s troubled mind when she spoils the special cake made for her. She doesn’t judge Anne instead supports the little girl she becomes one among the most inspiring role model for the growing Anne. She always had that ‘heart to heart talk’ with Mrs. Allan. The next support comes from Miss Stacy and Anne blooms under her guidance. They create The Society for the suppression of Gossip thereby claiming that they do not belong to the class of the stereotypical women. Gendered views have always cornered womenfolk for gossiping but men too have a great part in gossiping. When a man does that it is said to be healthy criticism but when a woman does that, it means gossiping. Miss Stacy wanted to bring social awareness and help the young fry to develop into good citizens. Her support is a very important aspect in Anne’s upbringing.

When Anne refused to play Elaine’s part just because she was not upto the beauty standards mentioned by the poet, her friends supported her and encouraged Anne to do it. They thought that Anne’s talent will cover up all the stereotypical standards. Her friends accept that Anne is beautiful both within and without. Sensible ones are always appreciated than the beautiful ones. Montgomery appreciates and supports Anne for “her fresh enthusiasms, her transparent emotions, her little winning ways,

and the sweetness of her eyes and lips” (236). Not only boys, girls too can be brave, bold, lightening up the lives of the people. Not all girls are boringly good but some break the stereotype which other female dare not to do so. They break the gender stereotypes that force them to behave in a way which may not interest them. By breaking it, they become the phenomenal women whom everyone admires. Phenomenal women always support their fellow mates. Marilla supports Anne and leaves the decision making into Anne’s hands.

It was the time when women were not allowed to act on their own, but Montgomery crushes the gender stereotype by telling that women are capable of making good decisions and they can have control over their life. When Anne exclaimed how she loved to be a teacher but that would be expensive, Marilla comes to her rescue and supports her saying,

I guess you needn’t worry about that part of it. When Matthew and I took you to bring up we resolved we would do the best we could for you and give you a good education. I believe in a girl being fitted to earn her own living whether she ever has or not. You’ll always have a home at Green Gables as long as Matthew and I are here, but nobody knows what is going to happen in this uncertain world, and it’s just as well to be prepared. So you can join the Queen’s class if you like, Anne. (242)

Diana Barry did not get the support which Anne gets. Thus Montgomery contrasts the ambitious life of Anne and the distraught Diana who was not supported to pursue her higher education. Mrs. Barry didn’t appreciate young girls learning things which were allotted for the menfolk. An enthusiastic girl with headstrong passion will flourish under the support and guidance of her fellow womenfolk. So support of a fellow mate

is very necessary in every individual's life. There is another circumstance in which all Avonlea girls cheer up Anne because she feels homesick at the town. This shows that they belong to the Righteous woman group. They prove that women are born cheerers. They support, love and comfort their fellow women. Anne loved her girl friends' company because it was never boring and she was herself when she was around them. While coming to the men in Anne's life, Matthew and Gilbert, they support all her endeavors.

Matthew breaks the gendered stereotype he comes out of his shy shell and buys jewellery and dress for Anne. Earlier he always considered it to be a woman's duty to buy things for a girl. But he takes the role of a father and supports Anne Shirley. To adopt a girl, raise and educate her was a big deal back in the 1900s but Matthew supported the orphaned Anne. Gilbert appreciates Anne's knowledge and never criticizes her based on her gender instead accepts her ideas and thoughts and conveys his ambitions too. He supports her by giving up his teaching post in Avonlea and takes up the tedious work at White Sands. Thus a woman's success is also based on the support she receives from her masculine friendship.

Analysing Dahl's *Matilda* based on the introductory theories given in the beginning of this chapter the readers can easily contrast between the Righteous women group or the sisterhood and the Queen Bee syndrome. Miss Trunchbull, the terrible headmistress of Crunchem Hall School is a proper example of this syndrome. She despises young girls and her punishments are cruel. She doesn't like to be contradicted and always likes to keep her fellow beings under her control. The word support itself cannot be professed before her. She has hardened herself, she thinks that false masculinity can bring everyone under her control. She wanted to be the queen bee and thinks no one can be her equivalent. But supportive women prove her wrong

at the end of the novel. The next analysis is that the support from Matilda's parents is a strange demand so the support arises from the mother-like teacher Miss Honey and like Montgomery's Anne and Marilla; Matilda and Miss Honey are the empowering women mentioned by Dahl who support each other and also their fellow beings. The first support to young Matilda comes from Mrs. Phelps when the woman helps little Matilda pick up books and introduces her to many wonderful authors. She never told about Matilda's visit to the library to her parents because that would put an end to her self-education. The company of the books was a great comfort to her and Mrs. Phelps as well as Miss Honey supported this little lectiophile. Mrs. Wormwood, the mother of Matilda remains indifferent to her daughter's power of knowledge. She does not belong to the sisterhood or the righteous woman theory. Matilda wanted a change in her parents she wanted them to be like Miss Honey. Jennifer Honey was a broad-minded supportive woman and cared her students like a mother. Matilda did not get the support she wanted from her parents. "The parents, instead of applauding her, called her a noisy chatterbox and told her sharply that little girls should be seen and not heard" (5).

But the disparity between Mrs. Wormwood and Miss Honey lies in the support which they deliver to their fellow women. While her mother says that education is useless for women, Miss Honey acknowledges Matilda's talent and teaches her that women need to be brave and more analytical because wise and educated women have always threatened the stereotypes of this society. Through her own life she teaches Matilda to stand against bullying. Miss Honey had the charm to make her students fall in love with her teaching. She takes the courage to walk upto Matilda's strange parents and describes about her student's extraordinary knowledge. When she is insulted by the Wormwoods, she is not discouraged instead makes another plan to

improve Matilda's talent. Help will arise out of another place if it doesn't come from one's own bloods, so the help came as Miss Honey to Matilda. This shows that a supportive woman turns down the stereotype and finds the inner talent of another fellow female. Miss Honey stands true to her profession and her students. A woman who obtains the essence of true education will never show off instead 'they achieve and help others achieve.' When Matilda explains to Honey about her telekinetic power, she does not discourage the girl for having her vivid imagination run wild instead speaks kindly and understands the girl's situation. It is beautiful to find someone who does not think that one is crazy when one explains the most impossible thing happening to them. Dahl explains that this support and understanding is necessary in everyone's life.

Miss Honey guides Matilda to use her powers in a good, balanced way. Miss Honey explains that Matilda is a phenomenon thereby indicating that every strong supportive woman turns out to be phenomenal. Matilda catches hold of this advice that supportive women are always phenomenal and devises a plan to help her teacher from the clutches of her terrible aunt. Thus the support of Miss Honey is reciprocated when Matilda helps Miss Honey get back her father's inheritance which was usurped by her aunt. Matilda drives out the arrogant aunt Trunchbull away. This sisterhood is elucidated and appreciated by Dahl through his narration. The teacher helped Matilda get love, support and affection which she yearned for and Matilda in turn supports her teacher by understanding her state of helplessness. When Matilda taught a lesson to the arrogant Trunchbull "...Miss Honey ran forward and gave the tiny child a great big hug and a kiss" (220).

Marilla helps Anne by adopting her and gives the orphan a dignified place in the society and Anne in turn helps Marilla by staying by her side when Matthew dies, she

saves Green Gables from being sold and both women form a new home at Green Gables. Marilla's support has been reciprocated at the end of the novel. Similar to Montgomery's characterization, Dahl explains how Miss Honey helps Matilda who is not loved by her parents and metaphorically becomes an orphan. She loves and supports the child and teaches her to cultivate her talents and advocates her to make use of her power in good way. Miss Honey's support is reciprocated at the end of the novel when Matilda understands the problem Miss Honey is going through and gets justice for her. Finally, as Dahl titles his last chapter 'A New Home' both the women establish a peaceful home for themselves. Miss Honey, like Marilla to Anne, becomes the mother-figure to the abandoned Matilda whose parents were generous enough to flick her off to Miss Honey. The authors have succeeded in making their female characters break the gender stereotype which has been telling for ages, that, women do not support women, instead the women in the novels support and appreciate other women's beauty and progress. This is proved by the above critical comparative analysis based on the concept of support in these novels.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Comparison is a common instinct and very true of human experience. Comparison of both the novels in this thesis gives a vivid view underlining the elements of unity in the themes such as family, education and support. Comparative studies primarily focuses on the universal view of literature. *Anne of Green Gables* and *Matilda* are comparatively analysed with reference to the universal view. The experiences of the characters created by Montgomery and Dahl and the analogical elements in the narratives of different nationalities of the authors are compared and contrasted. The themes and the message delivered to the readers converge though their time and space differs. Comparative analysis leads to the enlightenment of scripts and an in depth discovery of new meanings. According to T.S. Eliot Comparison and analysis are the chief tools of the critic. Comparative analysis of the authors Montgomery and Dahl as well as their characters gave way for a broader scope over the unexplored path in the literary field. The two novels taken into consideration show harmony among certain characters and their resistance towards the society's gender stereotypes. Montgomery shows a mirror image of her own childhood through Anne, her protagonist. The author has brought life to the unknown Prince Edward Island the place where she was born and the place where she gave birth to her fictional character, Anne Shirley. This stereotype breaking girl made Montgomery achieve the status of National Historic Significance in Canada. This is very much the case with Dahl, his novel's protagonist Matilda too was against the gendered stereotypes. Both Montgomery and Dahl have portrayed bold, intrepid, conspicuous female characters in the above mentioned novels.

These women were brave enough to break the gender stereotypes forced on them and the four chapters give a detailed analysis of these novels. Not only women but men too suffer under these gendered views. Matthew's conversation with the women folk tells about his notions about the opposite sex. But Anne breaks this stereotype and thaws Matthew's frozen thoughts on women as a whole. Mr. Wormwood is raised in the stereotyped society which has inscribed in the minds of men that fragility is a thing to be ashamed of in a man and independence is a thing to be ashamed in a woman. So Mr. Wormwood grows into an arrogant man having gendered views that men are the sole bread winners and women are their dependents. But Matilda breaks this stereotype when she detested his dirty money and finally finds a beautiful home. She nestles with Miss Honey who teaches her to be honest, humble and independent. Boys like Michael and Gilbert are pushed to follow their unaimed ambitions and tormented by the questions of a masculine stereotype in the way the society imagines. Mr. Wormwood expects his son to take over his business after him without asking for the consent of the little boy Michael. Gilbert is stereotyped before Anne's advent into Avonlea. Montgomery gives Gilbert a humorous yet terrific encounter with Anne. That makes him realize that not all girls are stereotyped but there are certain phenomenal ones who dare to stand against the gender stereotypes.

The thesis paves way for the critical analysis of the themes submerged in the novel and brings them into limelight. Every man possesses a natural character, a kind of essential inner self which is pulled between competing models of masculinity he encounters in the society. Gender stereotypes have instilled a fear in them that they may be unmanned in the presence of women if they treat them as their equals. So they do not give up their pride and ego, like Mr. Wormwood who disliked the intelligent discussions being discussed by women. While the major focus is on the women, in the

novels, rising up against the gender stereotypes, Montgomery and Dahl give a silent yet an important depiction of the men around them. In Mr. Wormwood's brazenly commercial world there is no place for an intelligent girl like Matilda. The readers could understand how the modern codes of masculinity are based upon an illusion, if Michael is willing or not he has to take up his father's business. But one could contrast Mr. Wormwood with Gilbert. Mr. Wormwood does not allow Matilda to have discussions in a family while the male members are having the serious talk. He does not admit the fact that his daughter is more quick-witted than his son. But Gilbert easily discusses with Anne about his ambitions and future and she reciprocates her own ambitions. He even gives up his position as Avonlea's teacher for Anne so that she can further her ambitions.

Therefore fixing a core of manly attributes have always had to be placed and justified within a wider field of cultural differences. The regulative ideals of masculinity are fluid as it depends on the man to choose his identity against the stereotypes and it is same in the case of a woman. The next analysis is on the family stereotypes and how the women from both the novels break the stereotype. Dahl foreshadows the fact that women were excluded from any rational or critical public debate. Home and family are private domains where one could speak up but they were silenced by their men.

To manage a great family is a capacity to execute great employment so women are capable of earning and supporting their family. Women break the stereotypes when they project their presence of mind in managing things like Anne when she saved Minnie May and Matilda when she devised a great plan to save Miss Honey. Marxist theory has been incorporated into the thesis to give a more detailed analysis. Family as an economic unit needs equality between the male and female members. The

expansion of global trade made women independent as an entrepreneur and consumer citizen who should self-regulate and self-care. So in both the novels the women form a great bond at the end. Marilla and Anne; Miss Honey and Matilda describe that women need not depend on men to survive instead they build beautiful homes. Thus the chapter ends with the analysis of both the novels which had an informational ending. The authors tell that marriage is a personal choice but the thing they wanted to emphasize was that women can build beautiful nests for themselves. They end up building their own empires along with their beloveds. It does not mean marrying and getting a partner will result in danger. Instead these women take time to steady them up and analyse a perfect companion who will encourage them giving them equal opportunity in running a family.

The thesis is taken into the next step which is essential for a woman's empowerment that is education. For centuries education has been a dream for women of middle and lower classes. Even aristocrat women were taught at home the things necessary to run a household. They were objectified even in the process of their education. Dahl brings out the voice of the society with its severe stereotypes through the character Mrs. Wormwood. She shocks Miss Honey through her ignorance. She laughs at Miss Honey for having chosen education as her priority.

She compares and contrasts her life with Miss Honey. She deliberately describes the difference between the women who choose looks and the women who chose books. She pities Miss Honey for her poor state and refuses to assist Matilda to pursue higher education. But Miss Honey is very strong in her decision to encourage Matilda. Since education has remained the professional ambition for women and became the phantom of libidinal pursuit, an idea of fulfillment. This fulfillment can bring a

moralized aim of independence and allow them to break the gendered views forced on the women.

Women are seen as dependent wives, feeble parasites who must be looked after so Anne and Matilda take education as their weapon against this gender stereotype. Mary Wollstonecraft argues that women and their stereotypes are made up fictions. Freud's gendered concepts of instincts and desire seemed not to work in Anne, Marilla, Miss Honey and Matilda. They were very much focused on their career and personal accomplishments. Wollstonecraft in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* explains how Bourgeois women are held prisoners by the gendered norms and are groping in the dark. Ruby Gillis and Mrs. Wormwood are the examples for the above statement. The analysis winds up explaining the importance of education and how the phenomenal women in the novels break the stereotypes which campaign against the progress of wise women. Anne proves that women can be as ambitious as men. She competes with other boys in the college and becomes the only girl to top the scholarship list. The girls of her age seemed to be more interested in making themselves more attractive and keeping a string of beaux. But she like Miss Honey chose books rather than looks. But Montgomery and Dahl explain that charismatic women get more admirers than the ones who despise education.

There is a general gender stereotype which has been passed throughout ages that women are greatest enemies of their own kind. The theories involved in explaining the concepts of support especially from a woman says refraining or prohibiting women from doing something does not solely come from mankind but women play a major role in subordinating their own kind. Mrs. Lynde says that Anne has had enough education for a woman. But Anne shocks her by envisioning her goals before a woman who was taught to follow the stereotypes.

Miss Trunchbull, the headmistress of Crunchem Hall School is the perfect 'Queen Bee' who likes only her dominance to hover around her students and staff. She picks up a surrogate male self that is incomplete and unsatisfying. Unlike Miss Honey who captivates every child with her sweet supportive nature, Miss Trunchbull tries to crush the single extraordinary talent in her school who is Matilda. Mrs. Wormwood too follows the stereotype of women against women concept she does not support her daughter. She gives her easily to Miss Honey and flicks her away like a scab. Miss Honey adopts Matilda like Marilla adopts Anne. To reciprocate their love and support both the girls support their benefactors and become a family at the end of the novel. Anne takes up a job to support the feeble Marilla as well as follows her own planned ambitions. Matilda takes up the responsibility of driving away the cruel aunt of Miss Honey and helps to get back her inheritance which was usurped by her aunt.

Thus gender is the constructed identity and its effects are mainly cast upon women. In critics have come to claim that gender is not God's creation but of patriarchy. In *Patriarchal Attitudes* Fiddes says, "Woman presented with an image in a mirror has danced to that image, in a hypnotic trance. And because she thought the image was herself, it became just that" (13). In this thesis the stereotypes of the society has been discussed and the characters breaking those gender stereotypes have been subjected to comparative analysis.

In *The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex*, Gayle Rubin says how gender stereotype represses the personality which can be shared by both men and women,

Men and women are, of course, different. But they are not as different as day and night... In fact, from the standpoint of nature, men and women are closer

to each other... the idea that men and women are more different from one another must come from somewhere other than nature...Far from being an expression of natural differences, exclusive gender identity is the suppression of natural similarities. It requires repression: in men, of whatever is the local version of feminine traits; in women, of the local definition of masculine traits. The division of the sexes has the effect of repressing some of the personality characteristics of virtually everyone, men and women. (179-80)

Thus the gender performances are stereotyped for example, a woman is excluded from family decisions and debates, high ambitions and education is unnecessary for her since she is only going to look after the children and household chores, and the first impediment for every woman arises from another woman either in her family, her workplace or from the society as a whole. The above mentioned stereotypes are broken by Montgomery and Dahl's phenomenal female characters. They are graceful, charming, loving, supportive and intelligent. Maya Angelou describes in her poem *Phenomenal Woman* how others wonder what is the secret of these phenomenal women. Though they are not the stereotypical beauties all fall for their charm. When they walk into a room they become the center of attraction. That is because they are the stereotype breakers.

They love like a family, help themselves as well as others in education and support their fellow beings. Anne, Matilda, Marilla, Miss Honey and many such characters in the novels are phenomenal women who stand against all gender stereotypes. The research intends to compare and analyse Montgomery and Dahl's powerful women and their attitude towards gender stereotypes. Future researchers can bring out a linguistic or cultural approach based on these novels.

WORKS CITED

- Angelou, Maya. "Phenomenal Women." *Still I Rise*, Random House, 1978.
- Benhabib, Seyla, and Drucilla Cornwell. *Feminism as critique: Essays on the Politics of Gender in Late- Capitalist Societies*. Polity Press, 1987, p. 96.
- Bloom, Alan, trans. *On Education*. By Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Basic Books, 1979.
- Dahl, Roald. *Matilda*. Penguin Random House, 2016.
- . *The Witches*. HTML5 Flipbook, 18 May 2022, www.fliphtml5.com
- Eliot, T.S. "Functions of Criticism." *Criterion*, Faber and Faber, 1923.
- Engels, Friedrich. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1902.
- Fidges, Eva. *Patriarchal Attitudes*. Fawcett publications, Inc., 1970.
- Johnson, Samuel. *Preface to Shakespeare*. 10th ed., Project Gutenberg, 2004.
- Kalidas, A., and J. Samuel Kirubahar. Preface. *Comparative Literature: Bapsi Sidhwa and Bharati Mukherjee*. Author Press, 2012.
- LeFebvre, Benjamin. "Anne of Green Gables Ad with Celebrity Endorsements." *L.M Montgomery Online*, Word Press, 8 April 2015, www.lmmoline.org
- Lerner, Gerda. *The Creation of Patriarchy*. Oxford UP, 1986, p. 21.
- Mackinon, Catherine A. *Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: An Agenda for Theory*. Chicago UP, 1970, pp. 516-17.
- Marx, Karl. Preface. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. Progress Publishers, 1977.
- McIntosh, Andrew, and Cecily Devereux. *Lucy Maud Montgomery*. The Canadian Encyclopedia, 1 Feb. 2022.
- Mitchell, Juliet. *Women: The Longest Revolution*. New England Free Press, 1966.

Montgomery, Lucy Maud. *Anne of Green Gables*. Bantam Books, 1998.

“Roald Dahl Quotes.” *Brainy Media Inc*, 13 May 2022. www.brainyquote.com

Rubin, Gayle. “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex.” *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, New York Monthly Review Press, 1975.

Sandberg, Sheryl, and Adam Grant. “The Myth of the Catty Woman.” *The New York Times*, 23 June 2016.

Strebe, Sacha. “An Author Explains Why Women Supporting Women is the Way Forward.” *Byrdie*, 18 Feb. 2021. www.byrdie.com

Tikkanen, Amy, editor. “A Vindication of the Rights of Women.” By Mary Wollstonecraft, *Britanica, Inc.*, 2022.

Yusuf, S. *A Handbook of Comparative Literature*. Manimekala Publishing House, 2016.

The Fragmented Selves: A Feministic Reading of Jaishree Misra's *Afterwards*

A Project 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

by

SUBA NANTHINI. M

(REG. NO. 20APEN29)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

APRIL 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Portrayal of New Woman	12
Three	Narrative Techniques	28
Four	Cultural Identity	38
Five	Summation	50
	Works cited	59

CERTIFICATE


This is to certify that the project entitled “**The Fragmented Selves: A Feministic Reading of Jaishree Misra’s *Afterwards***” is submitted 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 Suba Nanthini. M during the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.



Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi


Dr. F. Mary Priya

Head of the Department
Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

Guide


Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


Examiner 27/05/2022

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled “**The Fragmented Selves: A Feministic Reading of Reading Jaishree Misra’s Afterwards**” 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.

Thoothukudi

M. Suba Nanthini

Suba Nanthini . M

May 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the Lord Almighty for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind and strength in order to finish this project.

I am indebted to Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for the values and knowledge I have acquired during the course of study.

I thank Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi, Head of the Department of English, for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement to do this project successfully.

I am deeply grateful to my guide, Dr. F. Mary Priya, Assistant Professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study, I sincerely thank her for her constant academic guidance towards the completion of this project.

I thank the staff members of our department for their extended support and librarian for her extended help in the use of the Library for reference work and its sources.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents and friends, for their support towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

Jaishree Misra's *Afterwards* expresses the story of a loss. It begins with a death, as a narrative and ends with a journey that seeks absolution from the past. This novel begins where the flow of a river pours itself into an ocean and makes everyone to believe it's all over. But it is not the end, its beginning of the story which is the journey that takes place afterwards.

The first chapter **Introduction** projects the short history of Indian English Literature, its origin and development. It also presents Jaishree Misra and her novels.

The second chapter **Portrayal of New Woman** deals with how woman are portrayed in the novel. It analyses feministic attitude and difference between traditional woman and modern woman of the 21st century.

The third chapter **Narrative Techniques** deals mainly with hybridity and multiculturalism.

The fourth chapter **Cultural Identity** analyses how Rudra, the main protagonist identifies her real self.

The final chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and brings out the researcher's findings.

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

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Literature takes record of the community's very being- its hopes, fears, aspirations, visions, and the confusions in a medium that captures that the very contours of its soul. Indian English Literature is veritably a mirror to the Indian Psyche. Indian English Poetry with its unique blend of thought and form has carried out a distinctive work for itself.

Indian English Literature is at least a century and a half old, and the earliest known novels in English have been written in India in 1835, and the earliest instance of poetry taking us back to eighteen twenties. Indian English Literature is being a part of the large family of Indian Literature in general as such.

English language came to India during the period of British rule. Having learned a colonial language, there were a few Indian writers, who started writing in English. Indian English literature specifically refers to works written in English by Indian writers. Indian English literature has developed over a period of time and writing in English did not start in a day. It took years and hard work of several distinguished people to bring the current status. It is nearly 150 years old.

The first book in Indian English literature is Sake Dean Mahomet's *Travels of Dean Mahomet*. It was published in the year 1793 in England. Among the major genres of literature, novel is the best genre in Indian English literature. The first Indian novel in English is Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife*. The novel is published in 1864. Raja Rao Mohan Ray, R.K.Narayan, Rabindranath Tagore and Mulk Raj Anand are recognized for their contributions of Indian English literature.

In the twentieth century, the famous writers are Anita Desai, Salman Rushdie, Khushwant Singh, Vikram Seth, Amitav Ghosh, Arundhati Roy and Chetan Bhagat. The heritage of Indian English literature has well flourished. The majority of women writers have contributed to the novel. Indira Gandhi declares that:

Woman must be a bridge and synthesizer. She should
 Allow herself to be swept off her feet by Superficial
 trends nor yet be chained to the familiar she must
 ensure the continuity which strengthens roots
 and simultaneously engineer change and growth
 to keep society dynamic, abreast of knowledge,
 sensitive to fast moving events. The solution lies
 neither in fighting for equal position nor denying it,
 neither in retreat into the home nor escape from it. (24)

Novel writing has become a popular form of literature. People were interested in reading novels and it has become a passion. It gives a scope of change and development in the society. Indian novels serve as an instrument to generate thought and bring a transformation and reformation in society.

The term novel originally meant a fresh story in prose as distinguished from a story in verse. Literature is an imaginative recreation of life and as such it is both the real life and the imaginative life at the same time. Likewise, fiction is mainly created from the imagination and the fact. Some novels are based on the true story or situation.

The word 'fiction' is derived from Latin word 'fichus' it means, the act of making, fashioning or molding. Fiction contains certain symbolic and thematic features known as literary merits. In other words, fiction narrates a story which aims at something bigger than merely a story. Fiction may be based on stories of actual historical events; characters presented in a fiction may have resemblance to real life events and characters.

The narrative techniques and uses of perfect language add beauty to the novel. Indian women novelists have given a new dimension to Indian English literature. Women writers not only contributed to novel but also to all genres in Indian literature. In the middle of 19th century, more women started to write in English language. In course of time, English literature has many changes in writing style. In early writings, women write about female experience and domestic life.

The women in Indian fiction reveal pathetic condition of women in India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy is a famous social activist and reformer of India. Roy is notable for his efforts to abolish Sati and Child marriage. The works of Tagore tell the plight of Indian women.

The middle-nineties are the best period in portraying women as the protagonist at the centre of the novel. The plot focuses on female bereavement, marital discord, suppression, marginalization, alienation and identity crisis. The early novels of Kamala Markandaya, Maheswata Devi and Sarojini Naidu show the suffering and the problems of women in Indian society. Those novels mirror the status of women in the male dominated society.

In the twenty first century, Indian English literature is dominated by women writers. The recent modern Indian women novelists in English are Anita Desai, Shashi

Deshpande, Shobaa De, Arundati Roy, Anita Nair, Chitra Banerjee Devakaruni, Manju Kapur and Jaishree Misra. They set a permanent place in Indian English fiction. In their writing, they have portrayed the male domination and female controlled by male. Women writers try to write woman as a woman. Their writing reflects a long conflict between male and female.

The critically lauded twentieth century writer of India, Anita Desai, was born in Mussorie, India. Her novels are normally based on the experiences and inner lives of Indian men and women who are known for their compassion, eloquence, and lucid prose. Having come to age when India achieved Independence in 1947, Desai weaves politics and gender issues into her works. Desai published her first short story when she was only twenty years old. Her first novel was *Cry, The Peacock* (1963) and her other novels are *Voices in the City* (1965), *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* (1971). Desai has received many awards including the “Royal Society of Literature Winifred Holtby Prize in (1978), the Guardian Award for Children’s Fiction in 1982, Indian National Academy of Letters Award, and three nominations for the Booker Prize. She has taught at Cambridge, Oxford, Smith Mount Holyke, and MIT. She is also the member of the Royal Society of literature and the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Her most notable work is *The Village by the Sea* written in 1982. The novel focuses on a small family in India who live in a village near the sea and describes the difficult situation of the society.

Arundhati Roy, an Indian novelist and political activist says that “I have never been particularly ambitious. I am not a carrerist, I am not trying to get anywhere in a career. It is more important to engage with the society, to live it, to have different experiences”. She is best known for her first novel *The God of Small Things* (1997) which

won the Man Booker Prize for fiction. She was also awarded with Sidney Peace Prize in 2004. Her career began with scripting for television and movies. She wrote screenplays for *In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones* (1989), a movie which talked about her experiences as an architecture student and she appeared as a performer. Her first essay was in response to Indian's testing of nuclear weapons in Pokhran, Rajasthan. The essay titled "The End of Imagination", is a critique against the Indian Government's nuclear policies. It was published in her collection *The Cost Of Living* in 2002.

Shashi Deshpande is an award winning Indian novelist. She published her first collection, of short stories in 1978, and her first novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* in 1980. Her works also includes children's books. Shashi Deshpande's novels present a social world of many complex relationships. She is an eminent novelist who has emerged as a writer possessing deep insight to the female psyche. She has won various awards such as Thirumathi Rangammal Prize and prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990 for her novels. She also won the PadmaShri Award in 2009 for her valuable contribution as a writer. She also wrote the screenplay for the Hindi film "Drishti." Her short stories were collected in five volumes. These are: "The Legacy and Other Stories"(1978), "It Was Dark and Other Stories"(1986), "The Miracle and Other Stories"(1986) and "The Intrusion and Other Stories"(1993). Through her novels, she raises various issues related to women and her position in human society.

Among the seasoned Indian Writers of the 21st century is Chetan Bhagat. The success of the comedy-drama novels based on young urban middle life class dates back to as early as 2008. Among his bestselling works are *Kai Po Che*, *Five Point Someone*, *Two States*, *One Indian Girl* and *Half Girlfriend* which all ranked high success. Chetan

Bhagat is a motivational speaker as well as a columnist for career development. He was included in *Time Magazine's* list of World's 100 most influential people in 2010. His notable works are *Five Point Someone* (2004), *One Night at the Call Centre* (2005), *The 3 Mistakes of My Life* (2008).

The woman in India is definitely worshipped making use of probably the choicest terms of address. Though the female of independent India is not prepared to enter another era of oblivious hero worship. The spirit of revolt arisen out of physical lifestyle, wayward methods and mismatched matrimony of the husband have forced the female to accept and register the dissent of her. Jaishree Misra is actually the writer of this particular decade. In his novel, Misra brings out the themes of love and loss, social life, bereavement and reconciliation, tradition and modern etc.....

In this chapter Misra brings about the bereavement and reconciliation. Her subsequent work "*Afterwards*" too had the themes of love and loss, had highlighted. But their works are different and enjoyable in their own right. The themes run across "*Ancient Promises*", "Accidents like love and Marriage" and "*Afterwards*" are love, heartbreak and marriage life.

Jaishree Misra is one of the famous women writers of the present age. She is a growing women writer in Indian English literature. She is mainly concerned with the conflict between tradition and modernity and between the conventional and the new women. Her novels mainly focus on marital life and woman's role at home.

Jaishree Misra was born in 1961 in Kerala. She belongs to a Malayali family. She was brought up in Delhi. Her father is an Indian Air Force officer and her mother is a school teacher. She completed her Post Graduation in Kerala. She also studied Diploma

in Special education at Institute of Education in London. In 1990, she moved to England and worked as a Radio Journalist at the BBC as well as a film classifier at the British Board of Film Classification in London, England. She resigned her job at the end of 2009 after a seven year stint when she went to live in New Delhi. Then, she helped to start up a residential home for mentally challenged adults. She built the studio on Veli beach in Trivandrum. Kerala is being developed into a writer's residency. She currently lives with her family in the United Kingdom.

Indian women writers habitually wrote about domestic life. They are concerned with women and talk about the limited space of women in the society. Jaishree Misra started writing as a career in 2000. Jaishree Misra in *THE HINDU*,

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 memoir because I was bored. It became my first book, *Ancient Promises*. Then events over took me.

Jaishree Misra is the great-niece of the late Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai. He is a famous Malayali writer and a Janapith Award winner. He wrote thirty novels and six hundred short stories.

Jaishree Misra's marriage life was a failure. When she was a teenager she loved a man, but she was directed into an arranged marriage. This marriage was a disaster and she gives birth to a mentally challenged child. For her intellectually challenged child, she studied special education. She met her first love after ten years of her marriage and her heart was broke. Her first lover's name is Ashutosh. He lost her because he moved to

United Kingdom for higher studies. It was when she came in contact with her teenage lover, who had never married. Eventually, she filed for divorce and after the bitter battle gained custody of her daughter Rohini she remarried.

Misra was encouraged by her friends to tell her story. She wrote in close resemblance to her personal life. Abandoning her London house, Jaishree Misra is returning to Delhi with Rohini and Ashoutosh, with whom she is now happily married. Misra believes in 'Malayam Karma' which means that joy and sorrow follow each other in a cycle.

Misra has authored eight novels and a book of poetry, which she calls snippets rather than poems. Her novels deals with the psyche of women when they are their subjugated in the institution of marriage, are not given space and are confined by the rules of patriarchy. Her works include *Ancient Promises* (2000), *Accidents Like Love and Marriage* (2001), *Afterwards* (2004), *Secret and Lies* (2009), *The Little Book Of Romance* (2009), *Secret and Sins* (2010), *A Scandalous Secret* (2011), *Of Mother and Other* (2013), *Love Story For My Sister* (2015), and Rani .Misra's ninth book *A House for Mr. Misra* it is a first non-fiction work.

Misra's first novel *Ancient Promises* earned her worldwide readers. It was published and sold worldwide by Penguin UK and became a major bestseller in India. The protagonist of the novel *Ancient Promises* is Janaki. She is a reflection of Misra. Janaki is a Malayali Nair born in Kerala but raised and educated in far- away Delhi. This novel about her unsuccessful arranged marriage followed by a divorce ten year later. When Janaki meets Arjun, her first love her old passion awakes up. They still feel deeply attached to each other. Janaki also known as Janu files for divorce and Suresh agrees to

handover Riya. At the end, Janu, Riya and Arjun happily lived in England. It is a semi-autobiographical novel. This story has a close resemblance to Misra's life.

The second novel *Accidents Like Love and Marriage* is a story spun around the everyday concerns and incompatible relationships of the three families namely the Sachdevs, the Menons and the Singhs. This novel speaks of an unhappy marriage and marriages which turn out to be that of business transactions.

The Third novel *Afterwards* is a story of a loss. It begins with a death, is a narrative of privation and ends in a journey that seeks absolution from the past. It is about a lover returning with the ashes of his beloved to the land where his romance began.

Misra's fourth novel is *Rani*, which is a historical novel based on the real life of Rani Laskmibai. When she was thirteen years old, she was the king of Jhansi. In her early age she took charge of the landscape around her shift and charging under the control of the powerful East India Company. She leads her army and her army and dies in the battle of freedom.

The fifth novel, *Secrets and Lies*, celebrates female friendship. The story revolves around four friends, Anita, Bubbles, Sameera, Zeba and Lily. The novel ends with the meeting of the girls and the changes in their psyche when put to various types of pressures. The story deals with love and friendship and explores every aspect of unsuccessful marriages.

Her sixth, novel *Secrets and Sins* is a novel about three women Riva, her sister Kaaya and Susan Riva's friend. The triangle of husband, wife and past lover focuses on the emotional bonding of marriages.

Her seventh novel *A Scandalous Secret* deals with the story of Meha and Sharat. The story revolves around a happily married couple, who lives change after a dark secret from the past. The story highlights the problem of rejection and injustice to woman. It probes deep into their motherhood psychology.

Jaishree Misra's recent novel is *A Love Story For My Sister*. The story of Margaret's kidnapping is linked with current time. Tara parallels with both Margaret's and Nirbhaya, a victim of gang rape and the narrator is Pia, Tara's sister.

Misra's topical collection of poems *The Little Book of Romance* is mainly about the joys and disappointments of love. And her good collection of stories is *Of Mother and Other*.

Her third novel *Afterwards* is about the hope of life and belief then that there is happy life in every afterwards. The main theme of novel is love and loss. Maya is the protagonist of the novel. She has a suspicious husband, Govind. Rahul Tiwari comes to India for a short break from London. Maya wants to escape from sadist husband because she leads a loveless marriage life with suspicious husband. She has only one daughter named Anjali. Who is a one year old, Rahul Tiwari an NRI, is a neighbour to Maya. They become good friends and she asked help to Rahul to escape from the oppressive marriage life. They flee from India with Maya's daughter Anjali. It is a new beginning to Maya and life was normal but unfortunately, she dies in a car accident after three years of happy life in London. The novel is written with a postmodern attitude and search for identity. The novel shows the bereavement of a woman.

The main protagonist in this book is an NRI Rahul Sharma who is settled in the UK and comes down to Kerala to learn tabla. The book is divided into two parts. The first

part deals with Rahul's visit to India wherein he falls in love with Maya, his neighbor, who is a married woman. The author states that Maya has a bad marriage without giving any clear insight regarding the problems she faces with her husband. Maya has a small daughter called Anjali and both of them leave with Rahul to London. Her family is shocked by Maya's behaviour and chooses to break all ties with her and consider her as dead. The first part of the book ends, with this incident.

Then the second part of the book deals with the relationship of Maya and Rahul. The book takes a time leap of 3 years and we are told that Maya has died in a road accident. The story then focuses on the relationship between Rahul and Anjali and how they cope with the Maya's death. The novel exposes the battle between the loved and the lost.

The project has five chapters. This first chapter focuses on a short history of Indian English Literature and its origin and development. It presents a brief introduction to Jaishree Misra and her novels. The second chapter deals with Jaishree Misra's portrayal of new woman in *Afterwards*. It analyses feministic attitude and difference between traditional woman and new woman of the 21st century. The third chapter deals with the hybridity and multiculturalism. The fourth chapter deals with cultural identity as a main theme. The heroine of the novel Maya and Rahul Tiwari searches for their own identity. The last chapter is the summation, other chapters.

The second chapter brings out how woman have portrayed in the novel *Afterwards*. It brings out the feministic attitude and difference between traditional woman and new woman of the 21st century.

CHAPTER TWO

PORTRAYAL OF NEW WOMAN

The term “New Woman” was coined by Irish writer Sarah Grand in 1894. She was the first person to use the term in an article “The New Aspect of the Woman Question” published in the *North American Review* in March 1894. Later, the term was popularised by Henry James, a British- American writer. He used the term ‘new women’ to indicate the rising number of feminists, educated women, economically independent women in Europe and United states. Independent women have double works and survive in two different circumstances. This type of women face the problems in the exterior world and in the domestic life at the same time. The word ‘new women’ was introduced at the end of nineteenth century to describe women who were publishing against the limits which society imposed on women. Now a day these women are called a ‘Liberated women or feminists’. The new woman is different from the traditionally stereotypical woman. The main purpose of life for new woman is self fulfilment, not depending on any others financially.

There are some characteristics features for new women. A new woman, who has broken all customs or norms of Indian society, which are fixed only for women, tries to overcome the suppression. She has created her own place in the society. These types of women called are New Women or revolutionary woman. In short, they reject old conventions and find their own identity. The present century writers have sketched their own style or concept of new women. The remarkable concept of new women can be found in Shobha De’s snapshots, to live the way they live. She has modified the concept of new women. In her novel women characters have economic

freedom and sex with another man other than her husband without any guilt. These women live their life in their own way.

The new woman has become more vulnerable and her problems have increased. No longer can she retreat to the seclusion of her kitchen and at the same time the male domination has tried to overpower her. But she has fought on to seek an identity, an identity that she had lost in thousands of years of slavery. Women writers pen to inspire as well as to ignite the fury that has lain within.

In a male dominated world, the bitter experiences, the miserable humiliations, the helpless cries of women go unnoticed. The shame and the suffering they have been exposed to for years have made their situation even worse than beasts. Indian women especially have faced this miserable traumatic situation for long. The coming of the British brought new ideas, new thinking and new attitude along with them. From then onwards the societal pattern changed, the woman came forward, emerged as a new woman to seek a new identity.

There are many thrilling stories in our classical literature, which instill great moral strength in women and portray various types of new women. The ancient women were brought up in traditional set up and women had been made a traditional scapegoat in this male dominated world. Those days women were compared to dice and drinks as in Mahabharata in which Panchali also known as Draupadi is the best example. It is very painful to know that Draupadi meets shame and ill treated at the hands of Kauravas but her five own husbands are silent at the time. Draupadi's life is destroyed by Pandavas and Kauravas. From then on till now women are the toys in the hands of men. The misbehaviour of Kauravas and the long silence of Pandavas make her take a vow

and it's called Panchali's pledge. Draupadi is a great example for women's position in ancient time.

Now a day's woman plays various roles in the society. Their task is different from ancient and previous century women. The role of women in the civilized society is increasing and they have multiple faces. They are working as employees, home makers, social activists, fighting for their own rights. They work equal to men but they do not have equality in the rotten society. The twentieth century writers are seeding the plant of new women. However the present century has a lot of proof for changes in the affairs of woman.

The feminist movement began in the first half of 20th century and in the next half of the century writings have feminism as a main theme. The authors of late twenty century write with feministic attitude. It is the root cause for the concept of New Women in Indian English Literature.

We find that contemporary novelists have taken up the feminist issues as a main theme of their novels. Woman in their novels has been depicted as emerging from her stereotyped roles. She is being shown as searching for identity of her own striving to create space for herself. She is rejecting patriarchal domination. She is marching ahead searching for fulfilment as an individual asserting herself. The novels of contemporary Indian fiction writers are woman-centric and they show the new woman in their writings. For instance Anita Nair, Chetan Bhagat and some other writers portray woman characters as harbinger of social changes and they also write about the equality in their employment. *One Night @ the call centre*(2005) is the best example for the equality between men and women in employment.

In the recent Indian English fiction we find that the heroines are quite sure of themselves, of their rights and their place in the society. They are aware of their existence and are no longer submissive and are living in silence. There is a marked difference in their attitude as compared to that of the heroines of earlier fiction.

Women are regarded subordinate to men because it is believed that she was made out of man. It's common saying about woman's birth on the earth. The famous writer Simon de Beauvoir quoted St. Thomas words in her work *The Second Sex* in this introduction to women as another.

In *Afterwards*, Jaishree Misra has described the central character as a new woman. She has the quality and the characteristic features of new woman. This chapter deeply analyses Maya as New Woman and with all her excellence in the twenty-first century.

Jaishree Misra's portrayal of woman in *Afterwards* has changed along with the change of time. This chapter deals with the domestic life of Maya and her experience as a new woman. It partly analyses on feministic attitude.

The female protagonist of the novel is Maya. She reveals her painful condition to Rahul Tiwari. The first part of the novel is about Maya's sufferings. From the words of Maya readers can clearly understand the sadist husband Govind's character. Jaishree Misra has portrayed Govind as a suspicious and cruel husband. He doesn't trust his wife Maya. His suspicious nature is revealed from Maya's emotional words, "She said, He's just... just suspicious...." (54). Through the conversation between Rahul and Maya readers can understand the sufferings of marital life.

You've got to tell me. Is he...Govind...really nasty to you? Is that it? 'I had put one hand on her back and tried to look at her face. She shook her bent head and mumbled something I couldn't hear. 'what's that?' I asked. She looked up, her eyes wet and red and said more clearly, 'He doesn't beat me or anything...' [...] 'what's he suspicious of?' 'Me,' she said, 'all the time.' 'Is that why he didn't let you go to college?' she nodded. 'or the shops or to make friends, anywhere...except to see my parents. And even then he prefers that they come here. (54-55)

A comfortable or a rich life does not give happiness and peaceful mind. Likewise in this novel Govind gives rich life to Maya but she does not feel happy and she does not have any kind of satisfaction in her life though she has all luxurious things. Since she does not have peaceful mind she is mentally depressed in her marital life. Maya is longing for the love of her spouse love and lack of love is the reason for all her struggle. The neighbours of Maya think that she is a fortunate woman but in reality it is just the opposite. Maya says that "what they want to see is that I live in a nice house, have a nice car, a husband who gives me everything. They don't want to see the other side of that." I nodded and she continued, 'Do you know people think I'm so lucky. They think I have everything a woman can want" (55). From these lines, we can understand Maya's marital life is the richest and the most luxurious one but not a happy one.

Maya's conjugal life is compared to the image of cage by Rahul Tiwari and Govind's doubtful nature is commented by him. Rahul says: "So he puts you safely away into a cage... 'You must admit it's a nice cage, though. Three bedrooms, three attached

bathrooms, stainless steel sink in a fully tiled kitchen...‘ Her sing-song tone was half mocking and half sorrowful again (56-57).

As a male in the male dominated society Rahul gives reason for Govind’s doubtful attitude. He tries to justify Govind’s act and console Maya. “Because he has the sort of business that takes him away on so many tours, he gets suspicious thinking of all the things I might get up to in his absence”(56).

In William Shakespeare’s tragic drama *Othello*, Othello’s suspicious nature is the causes for his disaster. Likewise here Govind’s suspicious nature is the reason for his calamity. Because of this nature he lost his wife and daughter. If a person does not have trust on others that relationship will break. Similarly in this novel Govind’s distrust and doubtful nature is the root cause for their separation.

Dr. Satendra Kumar writes about equality between men and women. In an article “Women Empowerment: Past Trend and Future Direction”, he says male and female are the two sides of a coin. He gives an example from the great epic. equality to women is an important one.

The incident has been taken from the Ramayana, Rama, Sita and Hanuman are sitting in the garden and enjoying the nature. It gives pleasure to them and it’s a feast to their eyes.

‘Seeing a creeper Raman said to Hanuman, look, how beautiful the creeper is enchanting the beauty of garden especially the tree over which it is creeping Sita responses. The beauty depends on the tree which is providing haven to the creeper. Hence whether the creeper is beautiful or the tree is beautiful it is as difficult to unlock as whether the creeper is

beautiful or the tree is beautiful it is as difficult to unlock as whether man is superior to woman or woman to superior to man. But of them have their own importance which cannot be over viewed they are two sides of the one coin. (171)

It shows men and women add beauty to each other. When the creeper and the tree join it is pleasant for our eyes likewise man and woman join together to add beauty to their life.

In traditional Indian society, parents do not give importance to their daughter's education. Conventional people stop their child's education at the primary level. Because they think when a girl is educated it is a waste of money and time, they feel girl child as a burden. There are numerous violence against girl child. Maya's parent represents traditional parents. But they are little different from age old parents. They give higher education to Maya at the same time accepts Govind's marriage proposal and they stop Maya's education. As a topical normal parent's way of thinking Maya's parents also want their daughter to marry a rich man. Govind is attracted by Maya at the first sight in a shop.

It was while she was here that Govind had spotted her in the town one day.... Later, he had made enquiries, without her knowledge, and a few days after this her family had been approached by a broker with a wedding proposal. He was very well off, my father had been very impressed that he had set up this business on his own and had done so well for himself...(43)

Maya is complete to discontinue her Under Graduation degree and is compelled to marry Govind. It is a mirror of the real situation in India, how women's education is stopped in the rotten society.

To educate a woman is to educate a nation

Do not deprive the woman of education

.....

A woman that has much education

Will teach her childhood motivation

She'll train them support the nation

They'll always have the best of intention

Knowledge is essential in every institution. (Educated Woman 1-13)

This poem is written by Saudatu Kabir, its entitled "Educated Woman". The poet brilliantly writes importance of women's education. In the civilized 21st century also people stopped women's education. It commonly happens in rural villages in India and it shows the woeful condition of women. Maya's education is dropped because of early marriage. "She had studied English literature at college before she had dropped out in her second year to get married to Govind Warriar" (43). Lack of education is the one of the reasons for failure in martial life. If she heas been educated her knowledge wouls have given solution to her problems and troubles. Education of woman is important in order to develop socio-economic condition of the families. Education makes woman stronger, independent, wealthier and free to choose their own future. If women are educated, it will help them to take right decision, be aware of their own rights and to protect themselves from the abuses and discord. In India most of the girls are not educated because of

financial problem, early marriage and pregnancy. It happens so because of the age old conventions. Maya requests Rahul to arrange job for her, "Please help me." She whispered. 'What can I do, Maya? How can I help?' 'Please help me to get a job in Delhi or somewhere. Any job, please!'"(57). If Maya is educated she need not plead Rahul for a job and ask help from him to escape from the hell.

After marriage a woman is known by her husband's name and before that she is mentioned by her father's name. There is no identity for woman by her name. It is unfair to identify women by the men folk in the advanced life. In *Afterwards*, Maya is known by her husband's name Warriar even when she is separated from him. In London, Maya meets with an accident when the information is passed to Rahul they mention Maya as Mrs. Warriar and Maya Warriar. It represents male chauvinist modern society.

There's been an accident, sir. We believed one of the persons involved might be your partner. Maya Warriar? She's in a serious condition at the A&E department at Kings in South London....do you know where that is. Sir? Did they always use the words 'in a serious condition' when they meant 'dead'? (87)

According to Simon de Beauvoir, in truth woman has not been socially emancipated through man's need sexual desires and the desires for off spring which makes the male dependent on the females for satisfaction. They do not respect their wives and women and are mentally and physically tortured by their husbands. In *Afterwards*, Maya is also physically and psychologically tortured by her husband Govind. Govind's suspicious nature kills Maya at psychic level and his violent behaviour wounds her physically. When Govind sees Maya speaking to Rahul, he behaves too violently.

She fell into my arms, sobbing, her words coming tumbling out, between raging sobs, ‘He...saw...he saw you ...coming out of the gate...he was furious...’

I held her by the shoulders. ‘What did he do, where is he...’she could barely speak now for her sobbing. ‘He ...he waited for Karthu to leave and ... then...he hit me, Rahul...’

‘What! The bast—why didn’t you call ... where is he...’ ‘I don’t know...he hit me...pulled my hair ...shouting things... Anjali was screaming....’(64)

Domestic violence is clearly portrayed in *Afterwards*. From the dialogues of Maya readers can understand her feeling and how she suffers in the hands of devilish husband. Her husband Govind is over possessive, he loves his wife but he does not give any freedom to her. He does not allow her to talk with neighbors‘ and to meet any other man. Only Maya’s parents allow meets Maya and they are the only guest to his house. Govind tells to Maya that her beauty is the reason for all troubles so he wants to destroy her face. “He threatened me...” she said, her voice breaking up again. [...] ‘My face ...’ she sobbed. I put my hands on her face, cupping her cheeks. ‘What about your face?’ ‘He said he would ... that that was what was causing all the problems....” (64)

In *Afterwards*, Maya is the protagonist half traditional and half modern. In the beginning of the novel, Maya is portrayed as a traditional woman, who bears all the sufferings. She represents typical domestic wife. Later on she elopes with Rahul to England. After that readers find Maya as a new woman. She decides to escape from Govind. She and her one year old daughter Anjali flee with Rahul to Delhi after

sometimes they all go to England. Maya does not have any feeling of love for Rahul. She respects him and cares for him as a friend but Rahul has the feeling of love and he thinks that she is her partner. He gives a happy and comfortable life to Maya and Anjali in England.

And so it came to pass that Maya left Kerala with Anjali and with me. It wasn't quite elopement, but that was certainly how it was seen by everyone else. Trivandrum would have reeled from the shock of it for days after that. But we were not to know what was being said. It wasn't hard to guess, though, and I certainly didn't want to make things worse for Maya by speculating about it. (65-66)

One should stick on to one's life following tradition while at the same time should adapt oneself to the positive aspects of modernity. Likewise, Maya lives her life. The readers finds Maya as a traditional woman in domestic life living with Govind in Kerala and her life time with Rahul in England transforms Maya as a new woman.

In other aspects Maya is a fugitive and fragile. She tries to escape from the problem and her only problem is her suspicious husband. In this view Maya is a fugitive. She is also a fragile character with weak mind. She does not try to solve the problem. If she is bold enough and strong, she may change her husband and live happily with him. There is no necessity for her to go to England and meet accident.

The second part of the novel begins with the description of Maya and Rahul's relationship for two years and nine months. The relationship between Maya and Rahul is revealed by himself. "Married or together? We hadn't really been married, of course, but

that was something we didn't talk about very much because there was nothing we could have done about it" (74).

In England, Maya does social services voluntarily and helps women. She is not allowed to work in England because of two reasons. Rahul and Maya are not a couple as she does not have proper divorce from Govind. Maya starts changing from traditional domestic woman to new modern woman and social activist in London. Foster care is a problem in the family. As a mother, she feels the difficulties of managing the situation and consoles the poor mother. Maya did not know Rahul and Anjali also face the same problem. Foster care is becoming biggest problem to Rahul after the death of Maya. Rahul is a guardian; he is so affectionate towards Anjali. The relationship between Rahul and Anjali is portrayed as a good father and daughter. In England, Maya's behaviour and attitude changes a lot. She is not a stereotypical house wife in India and not an old traditional Maya, who is afraid of her on husband and lives within four walls. She is an active social worker. It shows that her way of thinking changes towards modernity.

In scriptures and myths "woman is depicted either as a goddess or a sub-human creature, never as a complete human being" (262). The same idea is repeated by famous literary feminist critic Susan Gubar and Sandra Gilbert. The critical essay entitled *The Mad Woman in the Attic* talks about the pathetic situation of women writers.

Specially as we will try to show here, a woman writer must examine,
Assimilate and transcend the extreme images of "angel" and "monster"
which Male author have generated for her declared Virginia Woolf, we

Must The “angel” in the house”.. all women writers must kill the angels necessary opposite and double, the ‘monster’ in the house, whose Medusa-face also kills Female creativity.(812 TMA)

Susan and Sandra opine women writers before going to start their works they should kill the mythic images of “angel” and “monster”. *Likewise* the ordinary woman also must to kill both faces and she must create her own image as woman. Here, in *Afterwards* Maya’s character is also similar: She is not a goddess or witch. She creates her own image which should not be compared to any other person. She is remarkable for her individuality and takes steps in her own path. This makes Maya an unforgettable character. A woman could not be independent and was meant to spend her life under the authority of man: father, husband and in case of widowhood dependent on brother and son. The popular saying “Women derive their status from their husbands and power from their sons” (quoted in 264 PIEL) has the full meaning in life. Maya is different from the formal types of women. She is not dependent on her husband and her father. She chooses her own way. This makes Maya as a new woman. This is Misra’s portrayal of new woman in *Afterwards*.

Maya suffers due to domestic violence. But as a new woman, she tries to relive from the tension and turmoil. As a traditional woman, she follows ancient customs; she acts according to Govind’s wish. There is no way to choose Maya’s own wishes and desires. As a modern woman, she wants to crush the sufferings like a waste paper. The protagonist tries to overcome her adversity.

Maya breaks marital customs and elopes with Rahul. From this we can observe Maya as different woman. Maya’s thoughts are something different from an ordinary

woman. She thinks how to escape from the place with her daughter Rahul. Asks her how he can help her. Her answer is very impressive and it reflects independent woman thoughts. From Maya's replies audience observe Maya's future plan.

What can I do, Maya? How can I help? 'Please help me to get a job in Delhi or somewhere. Any job, please! 'But you haven't even got a degree, Maya, I reminded her gently "any you have little Anjali could work in nursery or something. Keep Anjali with me. I could study part-time. I used to be a good student. (57)

Maya wants to continue her education. She is surviving in an unsuccessful marriage life even during that time she thinks that she must rejoin her bachelor degree. Her desire to study in part time shows her new way of thinking. In spite of this entire struggle Maya wants to continue her education. In this point reader also finds Maya as a new woman. Though we all have good education we cannot get job in the competitive world. Maya needs to shape herself by doing her degree. If she has these two things she can lead a happy life with her daughter Anjali.

Rahul wants to help Maya and sympathises with her. He is a modern western man that is why he helps Maya and flees with Maya and her small girl child. As a typical Indian man, he never thinks to help Maya. His modern attitude instincts him to give shelter to Maya.

Jaishree Misra's protagonist Maya uses the short cut of elopement as her individual freedom. She could escape and relieve her from the depressive domestic atmosphere by becoming economically independent and following western way of living. It is contradictory to traditional Indian women's, belief and custom. Here Maya witnesses

domestic suppression and how women are victimised to male chauvinist community. A person who follows old conventions customs and rituals do not accept Maya as a new woman and they say Maya as an immoral woman.

Now adays, rural villagers and a person who follow old tradition and belief surely blames Maya and that type of mob opines Maya as a disgraceful woman. She no longer bears the suffering that is given by her husband. She has strong mental power to confront reality as it is. She is able to liberate herself from their traumatised psyche and emerge as an individual being. Maya gains self esteem, empowerment and realizes herself.

Maya wishes to bring up Anjali with full freedom and lives a prosperous life. We can also find single parent concept, here. Maya thinks that she can get a job and after that become economically independent, and can bring up Anjali by herself. In the modern world, there are numerous single mothers bringing up their children, like this Maya also tries to bringing her child.

Shashi Deshpande in an interview says: “having a life outside the family is very important for women’. From outside world women come to know about themselves by refining their relationship accepting at the same time social constraints and emerge as fully developed individuals doing justice in their domestic as well as professional fields.

After Maya’s eloped with Rahul she did not leave her child alone. She takes her child with her and she spends her life doing social works. In Indian society since the husbands ill treated their wives to remain with them because of the customs and tradition of the society. This leads to an unhappy stressful and unsatisfied life. Maya the main character of the novel shatteres all the rigid customs and traditions of the society and she wished to live a pleasant and torture free life. So she steps out from her marriage life and

she begins a new life for her sake and her daughter's sake. Maya's thinking makes her new woman. She has broken the domestic wife images and goes beyond to be a typical woman in which the new woman is born. Woman alone can live a happy life.

Through Maya's character Misra gives woman's creative activities that they should entail corresponding changes in the audience and the critical sense so that the new woman and her portrayal in literature will find to an acceptable place. It would make changes in the society and enrich women's power.

The third chapter narrative techniques in Jaishree Misra's *Afterwards* deals with the hybridity and multiculturalism.

CHAPTER THREE

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

A writer could be studied by focusing on the artistic devices used in the work. The authors are well noted for some techniques and devices used in their work of art. Victor Shlovsky's remarkable essay "Art as Technique" is published in 1917. It deeply deals with techniques of a work of art. In this essay he states:

And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects *unfamiliar*, to make form difficult, to increase the difficulty, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.* (qtd in ELCT)

E.M. Forster in his work *Aspects of the Novel* analysed the techniques in simple terms. A plot is a narrative of events, the emphasis falling on causality. The plot refers to the order of presentation in the narration of the story. Techniques add beauty to the art, it is essential for a work of art. Without narrative techniques a work of art becomes a failure. The story or plot is like a body and narrative technique is a soul, without soul body does not live.

Narrative techniques offer deeper sense for the person who reads and helps the reader to use mind's eyes to imaginative circumstance. Narrative techniques may include metaphors, simile, personification, image, hyperbole, alliteration, back story, flash back,

foretelling and narrative perspective. Symbolic language is a common element in narrative writing. A Symbol is a thing that signified something else. Symbols in fiction often give more than one meanings.

Metaphor and similes are expressions that are used to compare two things in efforts to help the reader have a better understanding of what the author is attempting to convey. The difference between a simile and a metaphor is that a simile uses the words 'like' , 'as', or 'than', in the comparison while the metaphor does not use these words. Imagery creates visuals for the reader that appeals to our senses and usually involves figurative language. Personification is seen when an inanimate object is given human or animal like living qualities. Hyperbole is an exaggeration to make a point. Aliteration is seen when the writer uses the same constant letter together in the beginning of words in a sentence.

In short, narration how author conveys the message to the reader. Narrative includes three perspective: first person perspective, second person perspective and third person perspective. There are some other techniques used in novel like back story, cliff hanger, twist, biographies and autobiographies. Black story is a flash back or old story that supports the current story. Cliff hanger is used when the author cuts short the story halfway and the user is left to his imagination about this ending. This technique is called cliff hanger. Anything that has a turning point in the novel is called twist. A biography refers to a person's life history or events and autobiographies refer to the history of man's life written by him.

Narrative techniques are the methods that writers use to give certain artistic and emotional effects to a story. Although the term gets used loosely in everyday speech to

talk about narrative, a ‘story’ is just a sequence of event in time. Not until a writer chooses to present that story in language does it become a narrative. Many key narration techniques focus on categories like plot, character, point of view and style.

There are many narrative techniques which the writers use in their writings. The present chapter deals with techniques which Jaishree Misra has used in her writings. Her experiments with irony and flash back in a unique manner makes her a leader to the new generation of fiction writers. The problems of domestic life, quest for identity, and women’s sufferings are preoccupied in her thoughts.

Misra has a unique narrative style. Her style is different from other contemporary women writers. The writings of women are most basically about women and they focus on women and their sufferings or experience. Their writings are so realistic and sensitive. Similarly Misra’s *Afterwards* has all these aspects. The protagonist of the novel is Maya; the story of the novel is about Maya’s and her experience in marital life. The narrator of the novel is Rahul Tiwari, it is narrated in first person singular. Rahul tells the life story of Maya. It is a little bit different from other novels because a man tells a woman’s life and portrays her as a good woman and justifies her action. This makes Misra unique from other writers.

In *Afterwards* is a first person narration narrated by Rahul, tells the story of his life as well as Maya’s. Misra writes *Afterwards* in first person perspective so that reader’s can better understand the feeling of the fictional characters. This type of narrative strongly reflects the person’s emotion and their psyche.

Before I could stop myself, I was shouting, ‘Mum’s gone, Anjali. There’s no Mum any more, okay? GONE! DEAD! SO STOP ASKING ME FOR

HER. I CAN'T BRING HER BACK! SO PLESAE JUST STOP ASKING! I honestly can't bear it any more!' I stopped abruptly, with my face in my hands, rocking backwards and forwards with the agony of it all. (185)

From Rahul's first person narration we can clearly understand his emotion.

Misra examines the sphere of Maya and the subjugation of women in the society. She presents the culture from the point of view of the orient and the occident. Maya's quest for the identity in *Afterwards* is an aspect of postmodernism and postcolonialism. It reflects the male dominated society, showing the lives of women in conjugal life, sufferings of women in the institution of marriage and patriarchal norms. Misra as a women writer redefined the female individuality, changing herself as a feminist. Only women writers can understand the psyche of women better than men writers. That's why most of the women writers become a feminist. Jaishree Misra is also a feminist. Literature changes along with society then the portrayal of character also changes and women's affair, their role are also transformed from the previous era.

Misra's woman character Maya has attempted and succeeded in redressing the injustice to women. She creates new social order and psychological codes for the well-being of women. Maya's character teaches woman how to use the newly gained freedom, how to recognise herself and transcendent, how to free her conscience from locking it in the patriarchal framework and how to create her own values. This novel has been successful in drawing healthy man-woman relationships, seriously concerned with changing perceptions. This novel represents how women are ill treated, suppressed in the patriarchal society. The women writers have taken the task of studying gender identity. In

the contemporary literary, world women writers portray the changing notions of women's psyche. *Afterwards* is the perfect example for this type of writings.

Misra cleverly tells that what exactly happens when exactly when a married woman flees with someone in the patriarchal Indian society. She also shows the parents react in such situations. In *Afterwards*, Maya's family and the society consider her escape from domestic life with Rahul a severe blow to the dignity of their upper caste family status. Her parents conduct death rites after her elopement. Maya's parents are shocked when Maya breaks her marital relationship. They refuse to answer her calls and conduct her death rites when she was alive in Rahul and Anjali. From Rahul's narratives readers find Maya's parents complete rejection of Maya.

Translated for me by a shocked and white-faced Maya as she read her father's letter: 'Go and live your life in the way you have to. You do not exist for us any more. We will forget you ever existed, just as you will have to forget about us. The Maya, who was once a child this family is now dead'. That was what they said. Dead. (242,243)

The novel becomes more interesting towards its last part. Rahul thinks of conducting a pilgrimage to Maya's native place to immerse her ashes. He also has a plan to see her parents who have refused to accept her for three years, doing death ceremony three years before her actual death. On his journey to Kerala, he meets Maya's mother and the weak old woman there who lives alone in a temple situated in a remote area. Maya's mother has become tired and lonely after Maya's elopement and her husband's death. Her hatred toward Maya has changed and she shares her intense grief and remorse with Rahul. The next morning they immerse Maya's ashes in the river and do her last rites.

Maya's death makes her mother's love towards Maya and Rahul. From Rahul's narrative readers observe Maya's mother's confession that conducting death rites was her father's decision. The author tries to convey that all hatred and anguish ends with death. She emphasises this message through Rahul's words in this novel. *Afterwards* is a pessimistic novel, Jaishree Misra has expressed her pessimistic attitude in this novel. Maya's death makes the novel a pessimistic one.

Misra uses many Malayalam words such as “ ‘Ningal vallaery nallu manushyanaanu’...(53)”. It has added beauty to the novel. From this readers find Misra's fondness towards her mother tongue. It also reflects her rejection of universalism. English is a universal language. In spite of this Misra gives importance to her local native language. It is one of the characteristics of a postcolonial writer. Rahul is not familiar with Malayalam because he is brought up outside Kerala. He faces some difficulties to conversing with other Malayalee people. Even though he knows universal language English he struggles to communicate and understand his own language. He expresses his own hatred towards Hindi and Malayalam language.

I grew up reading English books in Delhi, and have to struggle to read even a newspaper in Hindi, pity, isn't it?' ...

‘And films too. I grew up in Bangalore and only ever wanted to see English films when I was young. I hated Hindi and Malayalam films then and only went when my mother forced me to go with her.’ (30)

He also has some misconception about Kerala. “English seemed to be a major problem here. I had heard about Kerala's high literacy rate and had imagined that everyone would be wandering around spouting high-quality English. people were

pleasant enough, wherever I went, but seemed to shy away in a great hurry after helping me out in hesitant English” (33). One of the grandparents of Rahul is a foreigner so by birth he is a hybrid man. “One of my grandparents was English, so something’s obviously filtered through. But, really, I’m here a sort of eternal foreigner,... (30)”. Doing the household works and helping woman in kitchen are the merits of western culture. Rahul follows this and helps Maya. Men’s doing household work is a kind of liberation to women from the domestic work and it also does justice for women.

Because there is a rule in Indian society that is only women must do the domestic works. It is not fair but in western society men and women equally do the household works. “ In England, Maya, it’s when they have a girlfriend or a wife that men become expert at this kind of thing. Cooking, Cleaning, Clearing up after their women”(44).

At present feminists raise their voice about this issue. In India modern women expect a liberated life but the conventional people follow some of the cruelties. Men in the male chauvinistic society never accept this change. Maya is shocked at Rahul in the kitchen as she is not familiarised to see men in the kitchen, because doing or sharing the domestic duties by men is traditionally considered a dishonour to the family. Rahul is representation of changing modern Indian youth of upper class.

He is an emigrant and exposed to different cultures. He gets support from his Indian parents for his decisions. He seems to accept women as equal partners and as free individuals. It shows his sympathy for women’s condition. He is ready to share the domestic works as against the conventional images of masculinity. The failure of Govind is rooted in his androcentric attitude. He does not give an equal share in parenting. Anjali is more attached to the mother. Usually girl child is more attached towards father but here

Govind is not attached with his daughter. Anjali is Govind's daughter, in spite of this Rahul loves Anjali and gives more love as his own daughter.

Maya's personality is revealed only through Rahul's words and her mind is hardly revealed to the readers from her own point of view. Despite of this, Maya is the central character and the powerful presence throughout the novel. The novel is fully about her life before and after her death. The main concern of the novel is about the life of Maya and the gender issues. Maya is the victim of domestic violence, arranged marriage and fake morality. She is forced to marry a wealthy business person. When a good alliance from a rich approaches her parents, they put an end to her studies. Likewise Maya's education is put an end by her parents.

Misra uses the imagery to show the terrified married life. She uses the image of 'cage' to express Maya's marriage life. By using images, Misra clearly and easily reveals Maya's domestic life to the readers. The narrator Rahul stresses Maya's domestic sufferings and repeatedly uses the image of cage. In the opening of the novel Rahul uses the symbol of cage, "When I had found her. Restless and caged, iridescently beautiful, terrified suddenly at her own freedom" (4). The conversation between Maya and Rahul about Maya's married life cage symbol is mainly used.

Same reason for which he married me, too....[...]

'Good-looking girl, good family, convent education...

but once he got me, he

didn't know what on earth to do with me!'

'So he puts you safely away into a little cage...'

'You must admit it's a *nice* cage, though.' (56)

Jaishree Misra is skilled in the art of storytelling and she succeeds in giving a portrayal of the sufferings confronted by women in the male dominated social framework. *Afterwards* ends with audience view, it is an open ending. Misra ends her novel abruptly and allows the plot to continue even after the end. The reason for this deliberate act on the part of Jaishree Misra may be that the novelist might perhaps want her readers to give vent to their own responses. The reader can ponder on the possible ends of the novel as per his or her own perception.

Jaishree Misra presents solution to the various problems She seems to be interested in teaching moral values to her readers through her novel. She simply gives the facts barely and clearly. She prefers to moralise her readers on the right way of living. Misra's woman character Maya achieves freedom in the real sense. Misra being a realist cannot deviate herself from reality.

Misra uses the stream of consciousness through Rahul the narrator. And there is a shift from present to past and past to present. Her novel *Afterwards* lacks the unities of time, place and action. But it follows chronological order Maya's life narrated in the chronological order by Rahul. From Maya's ancestry to Anjali being handed over to her biological father, Misra uses simple language and it is not bombastic. It helps readers to understand easily at one reading.

Maya in *Afterwards* represents a new woman who rebels against the patriarchal society by breaking the age old traditions and beliefs where as Maya's 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 in the male dominated society. Her protagonist Maya represents the

large group of women who revolt not for equality but for the right to be acknowledged at home and in the social sphere. Misra questions those who suppress and ignore the female articulation by giving voice to her protagonist and making her voice heard out loud to the world around her.

The Fourth chapter deals with cultural identity as a main theme. The heroine of the novel Maya and Rahul Tiwari searches for their own identity.

CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURAL IDENTITY

Cultural identity is an essential infrastructure for development because without culture, there can be no socio-economic, scientific and spiritual development in a nation. A powerful tidal wave is surging across the world creating a new transition from tradition to modernity. Claude Levi-Straus rightly observes:

Civilization has ceased to be that delicate flower which was preserved and painstakingly cultivated in one or two sheltered areas of a soil rich in wild species. I am caught within a circle from which there is no escape: the less human societies were able to communicate with each other and therefore to corrupt each other through contact, the less their respective emissaries were able to perceive the wealth and significance of their diversity (*Tristes Tropiques* 64).

Cultural identity is one of the important aspects of postcolonial criticism. Cultural identity is an essential basic for development because without culture there is no spiritual, social or economical development in a nation. Throughout the world there is a new transformation from tradition to modernity. There is a clash between the traditional society and modern society. In India, Indians have undergone a cultural crisis in which the established of culture and existing traditions are challenged by new modes of thinking. The discord of cultural identity is created by the tradition bond of the society. Jaishree Misra's writings try to use Indian Identity in the midst of modernity and they emphasise the hybridity of past and present.

Cultural identity is the identity that is given to where we belong to. It deals with our generation, religion, social class, ethnicity and locality of social group. Each culture has its own distinct characteristics. Culture identity gives self conception and self perception of one's identity. Alienation of culture leads to mental dilemmas, suppression and failure in life. No one can lead a life without a culture and a real identity. A person who does not know about their own past history and culture is like a tree without roots. So the people must have the knowledge of their past history and of their culture. This knowledge will help them lead a meaningful and peaceful life. Cultural identity represents a person's personality, emotion, nature and customs. It helps to measure one's behaviour, character and attitude. It helps them to encounter the barriers of alienated culture. This makes people to move all over the world beyond the national barriers. This cultural ideology is reflected in Jaishree Misra's *Afterwards*.

Cultural identity is an important factor for surviving in the world. It helps with the growth and improvement of human. Without culture there is no development in the nation. In India, there is always a conflict between the tradition and the modernity. The traditional people question modern people and the modern people mock the old convention and rituals. The clash between old tradition and modernity begins before independence because during this time western culture enters into India. Some group of people were attracted by the other culture. There begins the battle of two cultures.

In *Afterwards* Misra discusses the Indian and the western culture and talks about differences, benefits, merits and demerits of two cultures. Jaishree Misra's novel focuses on both cultures in generalized nature. She is not favoured by one culture, and this novel analysis both the advantages and disadvantages of various cultures.

In *Afterwards*, Misra writes about both traditional Indian life and modern western life through the main characters of the novel Maya and Rahul. Rahul Tiwari is a non-residential Indian; he comes to Kerala for a short break from his job and learns Mrindangam. The central character Maya hates her martial life with Govind. She waits for an opportunity to escape from her unsatisfied martial life. She tries to escape from loveless marriage and with the help of Rahul she does that.

The novel talks about the various relationships and their break up in the second decades of the 21st century. Human relationships are complex. Similarly, the novel *Afterwards* deals with the relationships of woman and her circumstances. When readers read the novel they are little confused and find it difficult to understand the relationship of Rahul and Maya. Rahul Tiwari leads an isolated life in England. He arrives at India for a short break from London. He finds himself as a friend, partner, and co-person to Maya and finally he becomes a saviour to Maya.

The novel centres on the three main characters; they are Maya, Rahul Tiwari and Govind Warriar. Maya is a young beautiful and cheerful married woman. She is the heroine of the novel. She is noted as notorious for fleeing with Rahul. Here Indian readers question her loyalty as well as her nature of love and relationship. By eloping with Rahul she lost her identity of traditional Indian woman. She does not care for identity nor is she worried about protecting the Indian culture and tradition. Her only intention is to move away from her loveless husband.

Maya openly tells her situation to Rahul that Govind is not cruel but his only problem is his suspicious nature. Similarly many women undergo suppression and tortures by their own husbands because in Indian society there is a common saying,

whatever happens, they never leave their husbands. Although they do not complain about their husbands to others people. Basically, Indians give more importance to the culture. They never even think of breaking the customs and traditions. They do not want to lose their identity as a wife and Indian woman. Yet Maya is an exceptional character in the novel. She loses her cultural identity by eloping with her neighbor guy Rahul. She creates herself as a pitiful and helpless woman in front of Rahul and the audience. Maya's words makes Rahul and reader also sympathise for her and creates a bad opinion on Govind.

Maya is bold enough to throw off her identity. She is willing to lose her identity as a wife and Indian cultured woman. Maya's strong decision to leave her house in order to go with Rahul is quite shocking and surprising. Her strong mind pushes Rahul to take wrong decision that is elopement. From this we can understand Maya and Rahul have lost their identity.

Rahul Tiwari, yet other central character, can be seen as a selfish and individualistic character in the novel. Maya neighbor starts a relationship with Maya with casual conversation and by exchanging foods. Their relationship is developed by Maya voluntarily. She shares everything with Rahul and he knows the relationship between Maya and Govind. His parents lives in Delhi and his brother works in San Francisco. He does not have any feeling for his separation from the family and he is comfortable with loneliness.

Yes, of course, family. My parents and my brother Anil.

Although none of them are near me—my folks are in Delhi and my brother's in San Francisco. Although that's not a problem really,

with telephones and the internet and all that.'

'No girl? Wife?'

'Wife? Good God, no!' She looks amused at my Emphatic response.

'I've had girlfriends , of course, but all those seem to have ended disastrously,

For some reason. Never my fault.(41)

Through the telephone and internet, Rahul shows love and affection to his parents through scientifically advanced devices. From this, readers can understand Rahul's lack of affection with his parents. Misra does not say any detail about his relations but it is clear that he is far away from everyone he knows. From this conversation, the audience can observe Rahul's selfishness.

My sort of existence can feel like a very selfish

One sometimes. I just do what I want to do, go where I want to go... big, important things, like family ties and statehood and even nationhood seem to have passed me by completely.'

'How lovely to be so free!' she said softly. 'People like me just get so bogged down, thinking all the time about what other people want, what other people think(40-41)

Rahul feels guilty for fleeing with Maya. He is attracted by Maya but he knows he does not have love affair with other man's wife. He is confused and perplexed and has a strange relationship with Maya.

I smiled at her guiltily, but she continued

To gaze at me solemnly, sucking on her bottle. That was the other

Thing, goddammit, you couldn't just to falling in love with some
 Poor kid's mother, could you? Some things ought to be sacrosanct.
 Other people's lives, other men's wives, the trust of little children,
 Most of all. (50)

Rahul loves Maya. His consciousness wake's him up and from that moment he tells himself that she is another man's wife. He has never faced any problem with the 'sacrosanct' rules. But now the rules seem to have made him as its victim. He tries hard to stop himself from what is going on. But Maya and Anjali just draw him towards them. He does not accept what he is doing. "Or else how could I explain that another man's wife was sitting here, next to me, And change the course of her world along with ours (50)". Rahul is the most important factor who encourages Maya to throw away Indian identity and rebel against tradition. Maya totally abolishes her identity of Govind's wife and leaves her husband.

Govind as a father protects his daughter's identity. After the death of Maya Govind's presence plays an important role. He comes to England to get back his daughter Anjali. The people doing social service, who are taking care of Anjali call Govind and ask him to reach England to get up his daughter and to fulfil her needs when he meets Rahul, he behaves very gently and he is also reminded of what Rahul and Maya have done to him. Govind basically is very traditional and follows all old beliefs of Indian society. Such a husband is an unbearable to Maya. When Riya and women from social service offer their hands to welcome him, he avoids. From the words Rahul readers know what type of person Govind is,

Sandy shook Govind's hand and mine I could tell he was uncomfortable

With this and remembered that in India women did not usually shake hands. Unless they moved in very westernized circles and met a lot of foreigners.....

Maya told me that Govind was old-fashioned full of conservative beliefs.(201).

When the social service volunteers ask Govind what plan he has about Anjali's future his reply is very impressive. "Everyone turned to look at Govind..... Then, taking a deep breath , he said, all in a rush, 'I think she should go back with me to India. That is her home; she should never have been taken away from there at all'(202). Govind wants to bring up Anjali as a traditional Indian girl. He fears that Anjali would choose a life like her mother. So, he is clear on that he must bring up her with him in India. So that baby will realize the values and traditions of India. Govind, as Anjali's biological father behaves like a typical Indian father and he guides his child.

Govind emphasizes on the cultural identity of her daughter Anjali. Maya gets an urgent discord with the cultural identity created by the tradition-bound society. Her betrayal of her husband Govind and elopement with Rahul is an action of selfishness. From this behaviour she loses her identity as a wife and Indian woman. Therefore she lost her life within three years.

Postcolonial theoretician Homi K Bhabha developed the term 'hybridity'. It means mixture of two or more cultures. He is in favour of emigrants and accepting the blend of cultures. This celebration of cultural blending considerably blurs the boundaries laid down by tradition. His work *The location of culture* is about cultural studies and Eurocentric activity of the colonised countries .

If the jargon of our times—postmodernity, postfeminism, postcolonialism—has any meaning at all, it does not lie in the popular use of the ‘post’ to indicate sequentiality—after feminism, or polarity-anti-modernism. These terms that insistently gesture to the beyond, only embody a restless and revisionary energy as they transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric sight of experience and empowerment(TCL 1).

These lines taken from Homi K Bhabha’s *The location of culture*, this is his view about culture. He says ‘Hybridity’ is the appearance of new cultural forms of multiculturalism. On seeing colonialism as something locked in the past Bhabha shows how its histories and cultures constantly intrude on the present, demanding that we transform our understanding of cross-cultural relations. Bhabha’s view of multiculturalism is expressed by the quotes lines of Renee Green in the *Introduction to The Location of culture*.

Multiculturalism doesn’t reflect the complexity of the situation as I face Daily It requires a person to step outside of him to actually see what he is Doing. I don’t want to condemn well-meaning people and say ‘It’s a black Thing you wouldn’t understand’. To me that’s essentialising blackness.(TCL 4).

In *Afterwards*, Rahul Tiwari is a Hybrid person. He is brought up in Indian culture and he is settled in English where he follows the western culture. His personality

and attitude reflects him both as an Indian and as a western man that's why Rahul is considered a multi cultured man. Multiculturalism is unavoidable in current society.

Everyone is reared in one culture and lives in other culture; there is a necessity move to other place for economic purpose like Rahul. His action of fleeing with Maya represents his western mind and at the same time he feels guilty to take Maya with him. It shows him Indian way of thinking from the bottom of his heart, he thinks like an Indian man. That's why he feels strange and guilty. The reader can find the view of multi-cultured man. From the words of Rahul, "I was familiar enough with life in small-town India to know better than to impose my semi-western, city-bred values on everything I saw around me. And I truly sorry if my casual encounters with my pretty neighbor had landed her in trouble of any sort"(19).

In Orientalism, Edward Said argues that the representation of the East and West a kind of binary and that of unequal relationship between the Orient and the Occident. Orientalism simply means the western misconception of the orient. It also means 'Otherisation', orientalism is the western fantasy about the East. It has been created over the other which called cultural imperialism. There is inferiority in the mind of colonized people. They have craze on western fashion and luxurious things. This mentality is commonly seen in Indian people they think that western culture is something superior. In *Afterwards* Maya's character is a little bit like that. She asks so many questions to Rahul about the life of western.

Tell me, don't you miss the luxuries of the West when you live here like this? [...]

‘Well, some things I do. Such as good newspapers, being able to drink milk straight from the carton, a mosquito-free atmosphere ... big important things like that! But I’m fairly easy-going generally__ I don’t need very much.(40)

From this stanza we can easily understand Maya’s fashion with western countries and Rahul’s pride to be a western or NRI. From Rahul’s character, the audience understands the binary opposite behaviour of him that is selfishness representing the western style and otherness representing the culture of India. Rahul himself declares his selfishness and the other hand he helps Maya and others. It shows his board mind and his oriental behaviour. His contrary character is reflected in this conversation:

But then I’ve always been the opposite_ sort of scared to think about being Far away from the people I love. You’ll think of that as sillyIsuppose?’
 ‘No, on the contrary! I’m quite envious of people who have such a strong Sense of who they are and where they want to be.
 And who they want to be with!’(40)

According to Derrida, western philosophy supported this hierarchy in order to preserve this concept of presence. This traditional hierarchy of binary oppositions has infected all system of thought including literature, criticism of art, in fact, the whole culture. Binary opposition in a work is an advanced finding in criticism of a work. Here in *Afterwards*, binary oppositions such as traditional and cultural man, selfishness and otherness. For example Maya follows old customs and rituals at the same time leaving her husband for the simple reason of her own happy life. Her separation represents her as a modern woman. On the contrary, she is very pious and she always has pictures of God

in her bag. It shows her strong faith in God. “Above my head was a calendar with the picture of a goddess on it. She was sitting on a lion and looked extraordinarily serene for it. Next to me was a tiny bookshelf. The Bhagavadgita, Vivekananda’s writings, Sathya Sai Baba’s teachings, a small photograph album in old red leather”(267-268). Maya’s “little sandalwood Ganesha was also in the bag” (269). Rahul came back to Kerala for to doing funeral rituals to Maya and immerse Maya’s ashes. It reflects Rahul as a traditional Indian man. On the other side Rahul was very shocked about arrange system in India. Living a western man it’s quite shocking to him. On hearing Maya’s story Rahul raises many questions in his mind. He is wonder how an arrange marriage system successful in India at present and asking questions about discontinue of woman’s education in the civilized society.

‘Didn’t you have any concerns about marrying a stranger?’ I asked , aware of how like a westerner I sounded. She shrugged. ‘I had no one else in mind. It seemed silly to object when there was nothing to object to.’ ‘Your education? Didn’t you want to complete that?’ ‘I had thought I’d be able to as I’d still be In Trivandrum. But Govind was not too keen.’

I was careful not to sound like a horrified westerner again as I knew how often a Good marriage could take over the importance of everything else. (44)

As a post colonial writer, Misra gives importance of Indian culture. She beautifully portrays Kerala culture and the scenario of Kerala nature. Loneliness, alienation and migration are also the main aspects of postcolonial writings. Maya’s

loneliness in life is obviously due to the lack of support from her parents. All events finally leads to Maya's death, her father's death and mother's loneliness. Although Maya and her mother have a concern for each other, they cannot support each other. Maya's mother confesses to Rahul. Maya's mother's reply reveals women's helplessness and her voicelessness in the patriarchal society. Maya comes under the control of her husband and father. Her mother tries her best to solve this issue but her voice is not heard by her husband.

Yes, it was unnecessary. I__I was upset with her father but I could not do anything ...everything was going wrong ... his mother's health...' [...] 'How sad that we don't get second chances at being parents...we made so many mistakes...her ...marriage...' [...] He was a good boy ...he used to call me A Amma too.(260)

Jaishree Misra is a postcolonial writer; her novel afterwards is a good example for postcolonial novel. It has many aspects of postcolonialism such as multiculturalism, orientalism, hybridity and cultural imperialism. From this we can prove Jaishree Misra as a postcolonial writer and she has the quality of postcolonial critic according to Peter Barry. The multicultural and hybrid world is welcomed on the horizon of the 21st century and there is no place for any kind of divisions or borders.

The fifth chapter "Summation" sums up all the four chapters and present an overall view of the points and arguments that are discussed in the previous chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Among the Indian novelists Jaishree Misra has attained a special status with her intrinsic analysis of women's lives in her novels. In her writing career spanning more than twenty years, Jaishree Misra has written nine novels and one collection of short stories. In her third novel *Afterwards*, as mentioned in the cover page: "There is always, if not exactly a 'happily ever after', at least an 'afterwards' to every story..." (22)

When Rahul Tiwari arrives in Kerala for a short break from London, he has no premonition of a life-changing movement. But one glance over the fence at his lovely but reticent neighbour Maya is enough to launch him on a path of no return. He finds himself playing friend, partner, and co-conspirator and finally the entirely unexpected role of saviour as Maya, suffocating under the weight of a loveless marriage and a suspicious husband, turns to him for help. Together, they flee India with Maya's one-year-old daughter Anjali and life seems to hold all the promise of a new beginning, until destiny strikes... With characteristic ease and insight, Jaishree Misra writes in her new novel of the transforming power of love and of the joy and heartbreak of giving yourself to another, for better or for worse.

Misra an Indian novelist has joined the growing number of women writers from India, on whom the image of the suffering woman eventually breaking the traditional boundaries has had a significant impact. The author's main focus is on the struggles of women. She projects herself as the representative and perfect spokesperson of the women folk of the present time. The women in her novels seem to be a personification of modern

women who can be able to face the burden of inhibition they have carried from generation to generation.

The novel is about the Maya as a New Woman in *Afterwards*. Sheela Reedy's interview with Jaishree Misra:

Ready: Is there any difference in the women they portray compared to literary fiction?

Misra: Women in Indian fiction so far had to be downtrodden to be interesting.

But now they lead fairly glamorous lives. (Interview 7 Sep, 2009)

Her reply in that interview exactly matches Maya in *Afterwards*. Misra creates Maya's character like that. She writes about domestic violence, dropouts from women's education, conflicts between tradition and modernity and the need for the equality of women in the society through the character of Maya. By pointing out, Simone De Beauvoir, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar words it can be proved that Maya is a New Woman.

The Second chapter deals with the Jaishree Mira's portrayal of new woman in the society. In *Afterwards*, Misra has described the central character as a new woman. She has the quality and the characteristic features of a new woman. This chapter analyses Maya as New Woman and with all her excellence as a new woman in the twenty-first century.

Nowadays, woman plays various roles in the society. Their task is different from ancient and previous century women. The role of women in the civilized society is increasing and they have multiple faces. They are working as employees, home makers,

social activists, fighting for their own rights. They work equal to men but they do not have equality in the rotten society. The twentieth century writers are seeding the plant of new women. However, the present century has a lot of proof for changes in the affairs of woman.

Women are an integral part of the society. The society can never develop without the active participation of women. The place of women in the society is different from culture to culture. One fact common to all societies is that women have never been considered the equal to men. All through history man has been represented as the symbol thought and woman as emotion. If man is more intellectual, woman is more practical. Yet the psyche of the entire human race has been coloured by patriarchal tradition. Gloria Steinem once said : “The Patriarchy requires the violence or the subliminal threat of violence in order to maintain itself....The most dangerous situation for an woman is not an unknown man in the street, or even the enemy in the war time, but a husband or lover in the isolation of their home.”(226) Maya is found in a depressed condition. Domestic violence is very well portrayed in the novel *Afterwards*.

Domestic violence is portrayed very well in the novel “Afterwards”, where Maya makes it explicit in some of her dialogues how much she is afraid with her husband and their arguments. Her husband is overly possessive and loves her so much but doesn’t give her freedom to talk or to meet with other men. She is not allowed to be social. There is a scene in the first part of the novel that there is argument and quarrel between Maya and her husband. This scene is a very clear example and shows that how women face domestic violence in normal everyday life.

Literature changes along with society, likewise, portrayal of woman's character also changes. Maya's character in *Afterwards* is an instance for that. The novel stresses the raising voice for equality and financial independence. From Maya's character, women readers can get hope in life, fighting for their happiness and rights. Everyone has only one life and so they must lead a happy and fair life.

Jaishree Misra's woman character Maya overcomes the traditional taboos. She is able to establish the power of her individual female self. Women succeed in establishing an identity and a mark of their own individual self. In short narration is how author conveys her message to the reader.

The third chapter dealt with the narrative techniques that Jaishree Misra used in the novel *Afterwards*. The narrative includes three perspectives: first person perspective, second person perspective and third person perspective. There are some other techniques used in novel like back story, cliff hanger, twist, biographies and autobiographies. A black story is a flash back or old story that supports the current story. Narrative techniques add beauty to the novel. If a novel writes without proper narrative techniques it is a social text and it will not be successful. Techniques are like declarations which makes the novel more attractive. Jaishree Misra writes *Afterwards* in a first person narration. Rahul Tiwari is a narrator of the novel. *Afterwards* is something different from other novels because a man narrates the story of a woman in his point of view and supports her. Rahul also speaks of the abuses of the male chauvinistic society.

Misra uses the stream of conscious through Rahul the narrator. And there is a shift from present to past and past to present. Her novel *Afterwards* lacks the unities of time, place and action, but it follows chronological order. Maya's life narrated in the

chronological order by Rahul. From Maya's ancestry to Anjali being handed over to her biological father, Misra uses simple language and it's not bombastic. It helps readers to understand easily.

Jaishree Misra has a unique narrative style. Her style is quite different from other contemporary women writers. The writings of women are mostly about women and they focus on women and their sufferings or experience. Their writings are so realistic and sensitive. Similarly Jaishree Misra's *Afterwards* has all these aspects. The protagonist of the novel is Maya; the story of the novel is about Maya's life and her experience in marital life. The narrator of the novel is Rahul Tiwari, it is narrated in first person singular. Rahul tells the life story of Maya. It is a little bit different from other novels because a man tells a woman's life and portrays her as a good woman and justifies her action. This made Misra unique from other writers.

Afterwards is a first person narration narrated by Rahul. He tells his life as well as the life story of Maya. Misra writes *Afterwards* in first person perspective from this reader can better understand the feeling of the fictional characters. This type of narrative strongly reflects the person's emotion and their psyche.

The novel becomes more interesting towards its last part Rahul thinks of conducting a pilgrimage to Maya's native place to immerse her ashes. He also has a plan to see her parents who have refused to accept her for three years, doing death ceremony three years before her actual death. On his journey to Kerala, he meets Maya's mother and the weak old woman there who lives alone in a temple situated in a remote area. Maya's mother has become tired and lonely after Maya's elopement and her husband's death. Her hatred toward Maya has changed and she shares her intense grief and remorse with

Rahul. The next morning they immerse Maya's ashes in the river and do her last rites. Maya's death makes her mother's love towards Maya and Rahul. From Rahul's narrative readers observe Maya's mother's confession that conducting death rites was her father's decision. The author tries to convey that all hatred and anguish ends with death. She stresses this message through Rahul's words in this novel.

The Fourth chapter has been discussed with the theme that is used in the novel *Afterwards*. Many aspects of Postcolonialism can be found in *Afterwards* and Jaishree Misra can be regarded as a postcolonial writer. The main elements of postcolonialism like hybridity, multiculturalism and cultural identity are found in *Afterwards*. According to Peter Barry's points Jaishree Misra can be proved as a Postcolonial critic. *Afterwards* examines the other cultures, quest for identity, cultural differences and binary opposition in the Indian society.

Cultural identity is an essential infrastructure for development because without culture, there can be no socio, economic, scientific and spiritual development in a nation. Cultural identity is one of the important aspects of postcolonial criticism. Cultural identity is an essential basic for development because without culture there is no spiritual, social, economical development in a nation. Throughout the world, there is a new transformation from tradition to modernity. There is a clash between the traditional society and modern society. It deals with our generation, religion, social class, ethnicity and locality of social group.

The novel centres on the three main characters; they are Maya, Rahul Tiwari and Govind Warriar. Maya is a young beautiful and cheerful married woman. She is the heroine of the novel. She is noted as notorious for fleeing with Rahul. Indian readers

question her loyalty her nature of love and relationship. By eloping with Rahul, she lost her identity of traditional Indian woman. She does not care for identity nor is she worried about protecting the Indian culture and tradition. Her only intention is to move away from the loveless husband.

Thus, the novel mainly focuses on women's sufferings and on the male domination. In *Afterwards* Maya, her daughter and Maya's mother are voiceless in the male dominated society. They face many problems from their own relatives but they do not have voice to express their emotions and sufferings. It shows pitiful condition of women character in the rotten society. Maya's parents are the main cause for her struggle. It shows the ignorance of an Indian typical parent.

Maya's parents stopped her education and arranged her marriage with Govind Warrior when she is just nineteen years old. This mistake greatly affects Maya. When she gets married, she is doing her second year in under graduation and she is not prepared for their marriage. She does not have enough knowledge about the married life. At the time, Maya's parents push her into a marital life. Maya's parents can be caused for all her sufferings. Maya's mother confuses her mistakes to Rahul. But now everything has gone and now Maya is no more.

Jaishree Misra writes about women's conditions and their voicelessness in the society. In *Afterwards*, Misra gives second chance to Maya. This practice is not accepted in Indian society. Maya lived happily and independently in England for three years. Then Maya meets a major accident and she dies. It shows Maya's pessimistic attitude. She has given a happy to Maya for three years and after that she takes away that life. There are many solutions for Maya's problem in readers's point of view. In human life happiness

and worries equally come but man has to move on to survive in the world. He has to accept all the miseries. Misra says man must accept both and there is no end after the society. There is a happiness in every 'afterwards'.

We can see women are dislocated and displaced in the society and various attempts have been made by them to escape from the undesirable experiences they mostly encounter in the domestic atmosphere. This novel is the outcome of such a type of woman's character. We can say that most of them have experienced various level of self determination but they are also affected by the past memories and are isolated from the community. Men think women are sexual object and they sacrifice for their family but they are women of substance as well as essence.

The novel portrays a married woman's life and while some women dominate over their husbands in the domestic sphere or they are able to achieve self-determination. Most of the others are entrapped, exploited, and others are oppressed.

Maya rebels against patriarchal society by breaking the traditional values and norms. Jaishree Misra expresses the conflicts that arise when women try to struggle for independence and self-determination in order to achieve equality and resolve tension between the men and the women. Therefore Maya is a significant Indian new woman who breaks the traditional customs and rebels against the patriarchal society.

Nowadays, women have become the embodiments of revolt not for equality but for the right to be acknowledged as individuals with belief in education, financial independence and self-fulfillment in the society. They should have opportunities to

achieve independence in socio and economic existence both in the personal and private domains if equality is to be achieved in the society.

Jaishree Misra is a modern Indo-English writer, widely acclaimed not only in India but also in the world, focusing on the contemporary issues and has added a new dimension to the contemporary Indian English Fiction.

The researcher hopes that this project pave this way for the future scholars to pursue their research on Domestic Violence, Class Difference, Feminism and Women Psyche.

WORKS CITED

Agrawal, Krishna Avtar. *Post-Colonial Indian English Literature*. Book Enclave. 2007.

Beauvoir, Simone De. "Woman as Other". *The Second Sex*, Vintage, 1997, pp. 1-38.

Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 1980.

Khan, A.A, ed. *Changing Faces of New Women Indian Writing in English*. Adhyayan Publishers & Distributors, 2012.

Khan, A.A and Talat Qumar, eds. *Emergence of New woman Indian writing in English*. Adhyayan Publishers & Distributors, 2012.

Misra, Jaishree. *Afterwards*. Penguin books. 2004.

Nagarajan, M .S. *English Literary Criticism and Theory An Introductory History*. Orient Blackswan Private Limited, 2012.

Sharm, Rama. *Recent Indian English Lierature*. Manglam Publications, 2012.

www.jaishreemisra.com.

**A Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* as a
Re-imagination of Valmiki's *Ramayana***

A Project 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

Submitted by

TANCY. S

(REG. NO. 20APEN30)



PG AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

CERTIFICATE

DECLARATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
One	Introduction	1
Two	Womanhood	14
Three	Re-imagination of the Epic	29
Four	Art of Narration	45
Five	Summation	58
	Works cited	68

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled *A Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's The Forest of Enchantments as a Re-imagination of Valmiki's Ramayana* is submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, in partial fulfilment 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 S. Tancy during the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department
Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

S. Sudha Rani
Dr. S. Sudha Rani

Guide

Lucia Rose
Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.

S. Venkila
27/05/2022
External Examiner

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* as a Re-imagination of Valmiki's *Ramayana*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University for 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 title.

Thoothukudi

May 2022



TANCY S

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following persons who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the **Lord Almighty** for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind, and strength in order to finish this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank our Institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project. I thank the faculty of the department of English for their valuable input in teaching and moulding us.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. S. Sudha Rani**, Assistant professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I thank **Dr. Vinitha** the Librarian, St. Mary's College who extended help in the use of the library for the reference work.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, financial support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

PREFACE

The Forest Enchantments by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is based on India's most cherished lovelorn epic Ramayana. This novel depicts Ram's banishment of fourteen years and Sita's life thereafter from her perspective. It also presents Sita's deep-seated desires-her love for nature.

The project entitled **A Study of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* as a Re-imagination of Valmiki's Ramayana** comprises of five chapters.

The first chapter, **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, her life, works, awards and achievements. It deals with the origin of Indian literature and the myth of Valmiki's *Ramayana* in the feminine perspective.

The second chapter **Womanhood** discusses about the main character Sita. This chapter dealt with the womanhood of Kaikeyi and other important characters in the novel, *The Forest of Enchantments*. It focuses on the women who are traumatized by various tragedies in their life.

The third chapter **Re-reading of the Epic** deals with how the original *Ramayana* is re-told in the perspective of Sita, *Sitayan*.

The fourth chapter analyses the **Art of Narration** of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments*.

The final chapter, **Summation** consolidates the ideas discussed in the preceding chapters.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Literature in its broadcast sense, is any single body of written works. It is regarded as an art form or any single writing deemed to have an artistic or intellectual value. It is a reflection of life. Its origin lies in the joy of creation. It begins in the creative chance of human language and in the human beings to use their language creatively. Literature is an art form of language, and words are its tools. Literature of any age is shaped and coloured by all the elements which entered into the civilization of that age. Suresh Kohli says,

Literature advocated universal brotherhood. Literature creates and recreates myths. Literature is a reflection of life. Literature is a manifestation of human emotions. Literature helps created loyalties against prejudices, it advocates compassion against hatred, it widens horizons and separates from the narrow class or social distinctions. Literature has always been used by writers as a weapon to fight against the established social norms, traditions, hypocrisy, outmoded customs, as also the political system (3-4).

Myth is a folklore genre consisting of narratives that play an important role in a society, such as basic tales or origin myths. The main characters in myths are usually non-humans, such as gods, demigods, and also include humans, animals, or combination in their classification of myth. The study of myth began in ancient history. Indian monk Swami Vivekananda's says: "The Indian mythology has a theory of cycles, that all progression is in the form of waves" (14).

Indian writing in English has relatively short but highly charged history. Indian English literature has acquired great importance in the world literature. The genre novel was imported from the west. Indian literature is the immortal piece of expression of unified experience of Indian English writers who have contributed much in the field of fiction. Indian English literature is related to the works of members of the Indian Diaspora. Many of the writers neither live in India nor are Indian citizens.

Indian writing in English deals with the ample range of themes. It reflects Indian culture, tradition, social values and even Indian history through the portrayal of life in India and Indians living. The progression in modern Indian English writings is the production of a feminist or woman-focused path that seeks to project and elucidate experience from the point of a feminine consciousness.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Rajmohan's Wife*, was published in 1864. Writers like Bharati Mukherjee, Amit Chaudhuri, Jeet Thayil, Aravind Adiga, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Jhumpa Lahiri, Salman Rushdie, Nirad C. Choudhuri, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, Arundhati Roy, Rohinton Mistry, V.S. Naipaul, Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor and Upamanyu Chatterjee are diaspora writers.

R.K. Narayan is the first great Indian English writer. His novels share the essence of Indian culture in all its true colours. Like Thomas Hardy's *Wessex*, he created Malgudi, the fictional place with typical Indian settings in its magnificent form. The novel *The Guide* is considered as his masterpiece. His works are *The English Teacher*, *Mr. Sampath*, *The Man Eater of Malgudi*, and *Swami and Friends*.

Anita Desai was born on 24th June 1937 in Mussoorie. She had written ten novels and many short stories. She started writing prose at the age of seven. Her

stories were published in children's magazines. Her first story *Circus Cat Alley Cot* was published in 1957. The short story is about Anna, a circus performer who becomes a nanny for an English family. It tells about a circus woman who tames and performs with tigers and lions. In her first novel, *Cry the Peacock* (1963), she portrays the psychic tumult of a young and sensitive married girl Maya who is haunted by a childhood prophecy of a fatal disaster.

Arundhati Roy came to be prominent by the publication of her first novel, *The God of Small Things*. The novel brings out a great wave in the world English fiction both in India and abroad. The *God of Small Things* won the Booker Prize for English Fiction. Arundhati Roy's non-fiction works also shares her anti-establishment views, as well as unorthodox concept about liberty and equal rights irrespective of sex, colour, and social status.

Kiran Desai is an outstanding woman author of modern India. She is a writer who has experimented her work with different forms of narrative techniques in fiction. Her talent in the use of irony and humormake her novels worth reading. She won the Booker Prize for her second novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* in 2006. *The Inheritance of Loss* deals with a number of themes from notable rustic life to pangs of insurgency.

Chetan Bhagat is a famous author of a number of record breaking best sellers. His novels are considered as the best sellers which no one Indian writer can claim till now. The most spellbinding reality on his writings is that they depict truth than fiction. *Revolution 2020* is the most creditable novel as it constitutes the sorrowful state of Indian society which is struggling because of favouritism and deception.

There are a time of women writers, whose writings stand for the cause of women's struggles. The term feminism was first used by the French dramatist

Alexander Dumas, the younger in 1872 in a pamphlet 'L' 'Homme-Femme' to designate the emerging sign for women rights. The term feminism in India suggests a lot of development arrangements to characterize, enlargement, equal political, economic and social rights and equal generosity for Indian women. Feminism traditionally marks the conviction that people must have equal rights and openings. Indian Women Writers have often uplifted their voice against social and social imbalance that bind women's liberty and carry out isolation of women. Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie captured the essence of feminism. In her novel *We Should All Be Feminists* she says,

The person more qualified to lead is not the physically stronger person. It is the more intelligent, the more knowledgeable, the more creative, more innovative. And there are no hormones for those attributes. A man is as likely as a woman to be intelligent, innovative, creative. We have evolved. But our ideas of gender have not evolved very much (4).

Feminism is not the credence that women are superior to men but that women and men are equal. In the world, where men are usually considered superior even today, owing to old-fashioned beliefs, feminism is mandatory to bring the world to stability. T. K. Nagarajan says, "The roles of women in literature are often quite wide in spectrum. Women were often portrayed as secondary characters to the greater men who carried the story line along, while the female simply offered a supporting role in the midst of the action" (166).

Tarabai Shinde born in Buldhana, Maharashtra, wrote many books and she was the first author known for her feminist writing. Her work *stri* is for the contrast between men and women. It was regarded as one of the country's modern feminist writings. The list of top women writers in India they are, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai,

Jumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Nikita Lalwani, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Other notable books of feminist writing from India include Sobti's *Mitro Marjani* (1966), Pritam's *Pinjar* (1950), Das's autobiography *My Life* (1973), Mahasweta Devi's *Breast Stories* (translated from Bengali by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1977), and Kamala Kamala's *Nectar in a Sieve* (1955).

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni was born in Kolkata, India. She is an Indo-American author and poet. Her works are mostly set in India and the United States, and often centre on the occurrence of South Asian immigrants. She writes for children as well as adults, and has print novels in multifold genres, consisting of realistic fiction, historical fiction, magical realism, myth and fantasy.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an award-winning and bestselling author, poet, activist and teacher of writing. Her work is published in over 50 magazines, including the *Atlantic Monthly* and *The New Yorker*, and her writing comprises over 50 anthologies, consisting of *Best American Short Stories*. Divakaruni is known for her cautious consideration of the immigrant experience, especially that of South Asian women. Her collections of poetry include *Black Candle: Poems about Women from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh* (1991) and *Leaving Yuba City* (1997), which won the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Prize and the Gerbode Foundation Award.

Divakaruni's story collections include *Arranged Marriage* (1994), which won the American Book Award, the Bay Area Book Reviewers Award, and the PEN Josephine Miles Award for fiction, and Bay Area Book Reviewers Award and *The Unknown Errors of Our Lives* (2001). Her major novels include *The Mistress of Spices*, *Sister of My Heart*, *Queen of Dreams*, *One Amazing Thing*, *Palace of Illusions*, *Oleander Girl* and *Before We Visit the Goddess*.

The first book of the series, *The Conch Bearer* was proposed for the 2003 Bluebonnet Award. The second book of the series, *The Mirror of Fire and Dreaming* came out in 2005 and the third and final book of the series, *Shadowland* was published in 2009. Two of her books, *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of My Heart*, have been made into film by filmmakers Gurinder Chadha and Paul Berges (an English film) and Suhasini Mani Ratnam as a Tamil TV serial individually. A short story, *The Word Love*, from her collection *Arranged Marriage*, was made into a bilingual short film in Bengali and English, entitled *Ammar Ma*. All the films have won awards.

Divakaruni's first collection of stories, *Arranged Marriage* was published to a great analytic acclaim. It was adopted as a text in many college classes, the collection centers on immigrants from India captured between two worlds. The characters are both liberated and cut off by cultural changes as they scuffle to construct an identification of their own. In the *Arranged Marriage*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni describes all the aspects of marriage. The book consists of eleven stories. The stories are divided into themes of starting over again, surviving on hardship, alteration of a strong woman, domestic brutality. Not only women but also their family members have to handle the realism, relationship, and the connection between the cultures when the women have an arranged marriage. Divakaruni's novel *The Palace of Illusions*, was a national best-seller for over a year in India and it is a re-telling of the Indian epic *The Mahabharata* from Draupadi's perspective.

The Mistress of Spices (1997), is set in contemporary Oakland, California. It is a tale of joy, sorrow, and one special woman's supernatural powers. A classic work of magical realism, this bestselling novel tells the story of Tilo, a young woman born in a faraway place, who is trained in the ancient art of spices and appointed as a mistress

charged with special powers. Once fully initiated in a rite of fire, the immortal Tilo in the rough and rigid body of an old woman travels through time to Oakland, California, where she opens a shop from which she administers spices as healing to the local Indian group. Although it is her duty to endure passionately disconnected, Tilo breaks the rules of the spices and is drawn into the lives of the customers in her shop, helping them through their twist of trouble: vicious husbands, racism, generational conflicts and drug abuse. When an unforeseen romance florescence with a handsome stranger, Tilo is forced to choose between the supernatural life of an immortal and the transformation of modern life. Spellbinding and mesmerizing *The Mistress of Spices* is a tale of joy and sorrow and one special woman's magical powers.

The Palace of Illusions is a 2008 novel is a performance of the Hindu epic *Mahabharata* as told from Draupadi's viewpoint that of a woman living in a patriarchal world. It takes back to a time that is half-history, half-myth, and completely magical and narrated by Panchaali, the wife of the five Pandava brothers. It discovers Panchaali's life from fiery birth and lonely childhood, where her beloved brother is her only true companion through her tangled friendship with the enigmatic Krishna to marriage, motherhood and Panchaali's secret attraction to the mysterious man who is her husbands' most dangerous foe. It is deeply a human novel about a woman born into a man's world, a world of warriors, gods and the ever cunning hands of destiny.

The Forest of Enchantments was published in 2019. *The Ramayana*, one of the world's greatest epics, is also a tragic love story. In this dazzling retelling, she places Sita at the centre of the novel this is Sita's version. It is also a very human story of some of the other women in the epic, frequently misunderstood and demoted to the

margins of Kaikeyi, Surpanakha and Mandodari. The novel has mighty remarks on duty, betrayal, adultery and honour. It is about a women's struggle to retain freedom in a world that benefits men, as Chitra transforms an ancient story into a gripping, contemporary battle of determination. *The Forest of Enchantments* is based on India's most adored lovelorn epic *Ramayana*. This novel portrays Ram's fourteen years of exile and Sita's life thereafter from her view. It gives Sita's deep-rooted wish and her love for Nature. She was indeed the daughter of Nature who could feel their grief as well as pleasures. The forced banishment had its ups and downs which even Ram and Sita could not escape.

The novel deals with Sita's life in the forest life. It also engages with the other characters in the circumstances. But the chief attentiveness lies in the fact on how Sita, staying within the society, highlights the ambiguity of society and how women in their life are subjected to racial discrimination in their own house, their society, and most importantly how men try to control their lives. Sita's voice further speaks about the art of destabilizing the public and the private life which is very prominent for the entire human race to follow. How Sita understands and analyses the different face of love also provide a lesson for life to the entire human race.

The book is one of the best versions of the *Ramayana*. This retelling depicts not only elements of honor, love and duty, but it also brings out the ingrained sexism that has prevailed in Indian culture since the times of the great epics. The *Ramayana* is a story told about the marriage of Ram and Sita, their banishment to the forest for fourteen years, Surpanakha's infatuation with Ram, the battle that followed and the final victory of good over evil. She is referred to be the immortal one. Abandoned at birth and found and raised by King Janak's palace in Mithila, Sita the Princess of

Mithila is blessed with powers to heal. Thus, she is cherished as the Goddess, though she considers herself a scanty mortal like the others.

The story told in her own voice charts the course of her life, her love at first sight with Ram, their subsequent marriage, her life in her new home in Ayodhya, her feelings and desire for motherhood, her pain in captivity, and finally the sorrow that arises out of Ram's suspicion on her character. While the Ramayana resonates even today, she makes it more relevant than ever, in the underlying questions in this novel: How should women be treated by their loved ones? What are their rights in a relationship? When does a woman need to stand up and say, 'Enough!'

Janak was the king of Mithila. One day while plowing, the king picked up a baby girl from a plow line. He had a great joy and the king thinks that the girl was a gift from God. He named her Sita. When Sita was ready for the marriage the king arranged for her marriage. In the palace of Mithila there was a heavy bow which was gifted by Lord Shiva as a gift. The king challenges that whoever could lift and break the bow would be able to marry his daughter, Sita. Sita says, "My first lesson on nature of love: that in a moment it could fulfil the cravings of a lifetime, like a light that someone might shine into a cavern that has been dark for a million years" (6).

The wise King Dasharath rules over the kingdom of Ayodhya, on the banks of the river Sarayu. Though the king had three wives, he did not have any children. The chief priest Vasishta advised Dasharath to perform a yajna to get blessings from the gods. He did so and the gods were pleased. The god told Dasharath to share the beverage with his three queens: Kausalya, Kaikeyi, and Sumitra. The three queens gave birth to sons. Kausalya gave birth to Ram, Kaikeyi gave birth to Bharath, and Sumitra had twins Lakshman and Shatrughan.

The birth of Ram was the appearance of Vishnu. When Sita saw Ram, she immediately falls in love with him and says, “Ram was young. He was indeed darker than Lakshman and slimmer. But his body was strong and wiry. A hefty bow was slung over his shoulder. His eyes were large and very dark, and shaped like lotus petals” (17). The four princes were excellent in weaponry and science. Vishwamitra imparted special weapons training to Ram and Lakshman. Dasharath sent both Ram and Lakshman with Vishwamitra and Ram was able to kill the ugly and dreadful demon Tarhaka.

Vishwamitra then took the young princes to the neighbouring kingdom of Mithila which was ruled by King Janak. In Mithila, Ram succeeded in stringing a great bow given by Lord Shiva. This won him Janak’s daughter Sita in marriage. Ram married Sita and they both lived happily for many years. Dasharath decided that it was the time for Ram to exchange the garland and also to become the King of Ayodhya.

After Twelve years the old king Dasharath expressed his desire that Ram rule the kingdom of Ayodhya. Everybody was delighted because Ram was a kind Prince. On the evening of the coronation ceremony Kaikeyi’s jealousy was aroused by the conspiracy of Manthara a cunning maidservant. Kaikeyi wants her son Bharath to become the king of Ayodhya. She decided to ask Dasharath for the two blessings and king Dasharath had promised to give two wishes to Kaikeyi. Sita says,

‘There are the two boons. One, that my son Bharat he made king of Koshala instead of you. That is his right. Because you might not know this – and your father has conveniently forgotten it – but when we were married, Dasharath promised my father that my son would sit on the

throne of Ayodha. And here's the second boon: that you be banished to be the forest for fourteen years.' (104)

Kaikeyi asked Dasharath to make Bharath the King and send Ram far away to the forest for fourteen years of exile. King Dasharath was heartbroken but he was bound to keep his promise. Ram left for the forest without any hesitation, accompanied by Sita and Lakshman because of his father's words. Ram, Sita and Lakshman lived in the forest.

After the departure of Ram, king Dasharath passed away due to the grief of his son. A she-demon called Surpanakha saw Ram and wanted to marry him. Surpanakha failed to seduce Ram and Lakshman is in the guise of a beautiful lady. But Ram refused to marry her and then she went to Lakshman and asked him to marry her. Angry at his refusal, she attacked Sita. On seeing this, Lakshman rushed to help Sita. Surpanakha went to his brother, Ravan the King of Lanka and asked him to punish them for insulting her. As soon as Lakshman left, Ravan came in the disguise of the sage. He was offended when Sita told him that she could not cross the border line to give him a food. On seeing him angry, Sita forgot Lakshman warning and crossed the border line. After she crossed the line, Ravan took her and flew away to Lanka. Ram and Lakshman set out in search of Sita.

One demon Kabandh advised them to meet Sugreev. Sugreev agreed to help only if he killed Bali, who was Sugreev's brother. Ram defeated Bali and Sugreev became the monkey King. Keeping his promise, Sugreev asked his chief, Hanuman, and his entire army to help him. Ram sent Hanuman in search of Sita. Hanuman found Sita in one of the gardens of Ravan's palace. He gave her Ram's ring and told her that Ram would come and rescue her soon.

Ravan's soldiers caught Hanuman and took him to Ravan. Hanuman then asked Ravan to set Sita free but Ravan refused. He caught Hanuman and set his tail on fire. Ram, Lakshman, and Sugreev then rounded up a huge army. A bridge was built to Lanka and the army marched across. The battle began. Thousands of great warriors of both the armies were killed. Indrajit, Ravan's son, injured Lakshman with a magical arrow. Finally, Ram and Sita were united. Ram met Sita and he asked to prove her purity. Sita undergoes a trial by fire to prove her chastity. Even she had been living in the demon house for a long time. Sita entered the fire and proved her purity. Ram takes her back and they returned to rule Ayodhya for many wonderful years. The fourteen years of exile was over and they returned to Ayodhya, where Bharat returns the crown to Ram.

After returning to Ayodhya Ram celebrated his victory. He became the king of Ayodhya and lived happily with Sita. In the meantime various rumours also spread over Ayodhya. Ram sent Sita into exile because of all these rumours. And they have twin sons Lav and Kush. The child bearing Sita took refuge in the ashram of sage Valmiki. Their sons were born in that Ashram. Lav and Kush did not know about their ancestry.

Valmiki taught Ramayana songs to Lav and Kush. When Lav and Kush entered into the yajna with Valmiki, they sang the melancholic song of Ramayana. Ram was sad when he heard the song of Sita's banishment. Then Valmiki brought Sita in front of Ram. Ram asked Sita to re-examine him in front of everyone. At once the insulted Sita called out to Mother Earth and she vanishes into the earth to escape him. The soil was cracked and the Goddess got up and went to the underworld with Sita. Then Ram realized that Lav and Kush were his children.

The book is an engrossing read-all through trying to bridge the disconnect between the truth of Sita and the way Indian popular culture thinks of her. The project mainly deals with Sita's character and her step-mother Kaikeyi's own betrayal for her loving boy Ram. It also deals with the banishment of Ram, Sita and Ram's loving brother Lakshman and how they managed to survive throughout fourteen years of exile. The next chapter deals with the womanhood of Sita, Kaikeyi and other important women characters in the novel *The Forest of Enchantments*.

CHAPTER TWO

WOMANHOOD

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* is about the retelling of the ancient prestigious epic of *Ramayan* from Sita's perspective. As an Indian diasporic writer Divakaruni has nostalgia about Indian culture and tradition. The word culture comprises of behaviours and institutions, for attempts at retelling an ancient epic through the female's perspective. This novel focuses on the self-discovery of Sita who is a celebrated female character of ancient India. Divakaruni has changed her way of thinking from traditional portrayal of simple and selfless women into modern female characters who are searching for their identity in the patriarchal world.

Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* is about retelling of *Ramayan* from Sita's perspective. She clearly portrays the character of Sita as a contemporary woman. Sita is a protagonist of *Ramayan*. The Indian popular culture showed Sita as a meek, docile, soft, tender, long suffering, self-sacrifice, who is bearing misfortune but Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* placed Sita into a different light. She deploys the narratorial voice which has retold the story of Sita in different way as to one closer to the modern times.

The novel focuses on the self-identity of Sita. The self-discovery or self – identity is inevitable as breathing in contemporary Indian fiction. The modern writers have changed the way from the depiction of traditional portrayal of women but they are searching their identity. Divakaruni gives an unusual interpretations and new exposition about the Indian women's identity. This novel attempts to analyse the self-identity of Sita from Sita's perspective. *The Forest of Enchantments* gives an insight

into what happened through the eyes of the strong protagonist Sita who is a daughter of the earth, later adopted by king Janak. Sita is the wife of Ram and princess of Ayodhya. In this novel Divakaruni introduces Sita, who lost everything except her babies.

Women in Indian fiction were depicted as ideal creatures with various virtues in the novels of the 1960s, with no concept of revolt, whereas women in later novels are depicted as revolting. Women are educated and aware of their rights and privileges, and they are demanding that they be given their proper place in society. The representation of a woman in Indian fiction in English is not new, but the approaches taken by the novelists are quite distinct.

Sita is a paragon of humanism, of fidelity, of grace, of sagacity, of valour, and fortitude. In this novel, Sita is the woman from mythology who fights her own battles of hardship. In her single life span, she is abandoned by her parents right after her birth, is exiled with her husband, is abducted by Ravan, and later on undergoes an ordeal of fire to prove her fidelity. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni revisits the Indian epic in her attempt to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable. Marie Josephine Aruna believes:

The discourse of mythology is male-centered...mythological stories have represented feats of masculine prowess. Women, on the other hand, remained as docile puppets with their roles being confined in as much as playing victims, gorgons, or mute observers, with no representation of feminine prowess or female heroism or even female nature as such. (230)

Her pertinent efforts to satisfy male egotism make her firmer to rescue her self-esteem by relinquishing the mortal world.

India is a land of culture and strong beliefs in superstition, preserving and praising the culture is a prestige of all countries. Indian Literature is full of depiction of the myths and legends, myths are one of the segments which serve to determine the Indianness in Indian Literature. As a woman novelist she has added a new dimension to Indian English novel. Her novel reflects the changing role of Indian women from the traditional mythicised one to the new one of emancipation, modernity and the resultant changes in the social set up.

There are three important things when Divakaruni researched and meditated on her findings of the novel, *The Forest of Enchantments*. First – Sita may be the incarnation of the Goddess Lakshmi, but she had taken on a mortal human body with human failings. *The Ramayan* is filled with human emotions. Ram loves Sita so much at a crucial moment. “He becomes hostage to his desire to be the perfect king, which leads him into an action that will break his heart as well as his beloved’s” (ix). Second – Sita’s choices and reactions would stem from her courage. Sita has courage of endurance. Sita demonstrates her courage in her life time that refuses to compromise, no matter how much is at stake. Third – the story of Sita and Ram is one of the greatest and most tragic love stories not just because of their Indian Culture but is universal in its theme in the world.

Divakaruni’s major theme centered on her desire to investigate the identity of South Asian women, so she has created a new strong woman in her novels. As an Indian woman she was highly influenced by Indian mythology particularly Indian epic *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat*. A study of fascinating world of myth gives

knowledge to the roots of the society and it makes people aware of their religion, social customs, and rituals way of life.

The Forest of Enchantments was published after Divakaruni's famous novel *The Palace of Illusion*, in which *Mahabharat* told in the voice of Panchaali. She was the kind of writer whose imagination may lie in her topic which she can throw her body and soul. She read the Valmiki *Ramayan* and the *Adbhuta Ramayan* and the *Kamba Ramayan* and her favorite Bengali *Krittibasi Ramayan* form the fifteenth century. In that work pieces she discovered folk songs about Sita and there were many portraits of her, each different in a significant way. It gave me the courage to write *The Forest of Enchantments* of her own version. This chapter deals with the womanhood of Sita and other major women characters.

The novel became a meditation on the nature of love. She clearly portrays the character of Sita as a contemporary woman. It also tells about the goddess Sita who is in the form of human body and how she got into the palace of Mithila and her marriage life in Ayodhya. After that her husband and herself were banished fourteen years of exile. It tells about how she managed to behave in a proper way during her marriage struggles in her mother-in-laws house. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni wrote her story except in the colour of menstruation and childbirth, the colour of marriage mark that changes women's lives, the colour of the flowers of the Ashoka tree under which Sita had spent her years of captivity in the palace of the demon king Ravan.

Banerjee's *Ramayan* is told through Sita's voice. Sita is a young prince of Ayodhya. When the king Janak was ploughing, he found a baby lay in his path, she did not cry and she kicked the clothes and enters the word. Some believers believed that god has gifted the king a girl child. Sita says about her martial arts lessons: "she

was, in some ways, the real ruler of Mithila, sharp of intellect, clear of vision, balancing kindness with justice” (9). Sita is entirely different from her sister Urmila. Sita says, “I was very fond of my sister, though she was quite different from me, always wanting to play with dolls and dress up in Mother’s jewellery, and entertain the daughters of our ministers or visiting dignitaries.” (9). Urmila always wanted to play with toys and was fond of jewellery but Sita is a keen observer of her father’s ruling, her mother who is a counsellor to her father.

Sita learned how to deal with the troublesome circumstance, from watching the decision of her father. Sita enjoyed the journey with nature, she wanted to feel the plants when she touched the plants, she can feel the healing properties of that plant even she can hear the sounds of plants. Sita has knowledge of different subjects. She is well-versed in martial arts, understands nature and has mystic powers to cure headaches and colds. Sita says, her strange gift with plants was a mystery to her:

I was earth-born. Maybe for the same reason, when I touched a plant, I know its healing properties. I could tell which grasses cured headaches and colds, which seeds fended off infections, which herbs to give women when their monthly blood flowed too long, and which potions healed the shaking sickness or gladdened a long-depressed heart. (7)

After visiting Ram and Lakshman, Sita and Urmila had fallen in love with them. So they go to the Temple of Parvati in order to pray with Holy Mother. Urmila thought that Lakshman was a fine-looking man. Sita thought that Ram was the right mate for her. Even though she was portrayed as a goddess she has a desire to choose a pair for her. Sita prayed with intensity than she ever before that.

“Endure” is the classic advice Sita gets from her mother as she sets off on her journey from the sophisticated Mithila court to Ayodhya, fraught with intrigues, palace plots and fusty protocols. Her mother Sunaina instructs her daughter to be careful about king Dasharath and his three queens, Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi.

Kausalya, the eldest wife of King Dasharath. She was chief consort of him but she is not his favourite even though she is Ram’s mother. That was her deep sorrow to her. “she’ll try hard to make you her ally, to support her in her battles against the other queens. Listen patiently to her complaints about the other wives, but keep what she says to yourself. And as far as possible, be polite and respectful to them all and don’t take sides.” (48) Sumitra, the exquisite. She is the youngest of the three. Dasharath was infatuated with her beauty.

Initially King Dasharath has no sons, after the holiest rituals all his queens became pregnant. Kaushalya gave birth to Ram, Kaikeyi to Bharat and Sumitra had the twins, Lakshman and Shatrughna. And then Sunaina explains about Dasharath’s second wife Kaikeyi. She is the most favourite queen of king Dasharath. She often drive Dasharath’s chariot when he was at war. She is a healer too. Because twice she saved the king Dasharath. Sita’s mother instruct not to trust anyone in your new home especially Kaikeyi. Kaikeyi became his favorite wife, his counselor and comfort. She was the most powerful person in the palace.

Sita’s mother says about Kaikeyi that, “Be careful with her. I’ve heard that she’s as changeable as clouds in a windy sky. If she takes a dislike to you, your life could become difficult” (50). After Sita reached Ayodhya, she saw her mothers-in-law. Kaushalya was quite a bit older than the other two women. She has a wrinkled

face and dark circles under her eyes. But her smile was genuine. Meanwhile Sumitra is more possessive of Lakshman and more determined to control Urmila, Sita's sister.

One day Kaikeyi invites Sita to visit in the afternoon. And Sita enters into Kaikeyi's chambers, it was more elegant and opulent than those of the other queens. It was filled with unique and expensive art objects. Sita found that she was practicing sword-fighting with another woman. Sita says, "Sweat beaded Kaikeyi's face like pearl drops. Slim and strong and nimble, she moved like a much younger woman. "Something about her stance reminded me of the symbol on her steal, which she'd clearly chosen with care: the leaping tiger" (78).

Kaikeyi wanted to know how well a Mithilian princess fights, so she asks Sita to fight with her. When Kaikeyi was fighting with Sita, she switched the sword from her right hand to her left. She was ambidextrous. Kaikeyi has a sharp sense of humour, sharing funny stories about her follies when she was a new bride. She is a difficult person, hard to understand. Manthara, her nursemaid who came along with her when she got married. Both of them are very close to one another. Manthara the hunchback, she is the resident spy. She is very devoted to Kaikeyi. Manthara creeps around the palace, watching and listening and digging up secrets and reporting back to her mistress, Kaikeyi.

King Dasharath wants Ram to rule over the kingdom of Ayodhya. So he decides to celebrate Coronation. The king loved the ceremony. So he wanted all to be present at the festive event, to bless his son, Ram. Sita's life after marriage is not a happy one. In Ayodhya Kaikeyi who is the dearest wife of king Dhasaradh, she reminded her king to fulfill the boon who has promised before. Manthara entered

Sita's chamber to invite her to Kaikeyi's chamber. Kaikeyi wanted to give a wedding gift, and she was asking him to get the gift from her.

Kaikeyi's room strangely appeared dim inspite of gleaming floors and walls. Dasharath sat on a golden throne. And explains the boon which was given earlier to Kaikeyi. She got boons from her husband that is Ram should go to the forest where he has to live as hermit for fourteen years and Bharat will be a king of Ayodhya. Even though Ram was her favorite one she gave first priority to her son, Bharath. Sita had a dream about Kaikeyi and says,

This is what Kaikeyi failed to see: it's not enough to merely love someone. Even if we love them with our entire being, even if we're willing to commit the most heinous sin for their well-being. We must understand and respect the values that drive them. We must want what they want, not what we want for them. (126)

At once Sita begs Ram to fight against his kingdom. "protest. If nothing else, remind your father of his kingly duty to the people of Ayodhya." (105) Ram and Sita made their way to Kaushalya's quarters. Ram wants Koshal to have peace, so that he won't do anything against her mother, Kaikeyi-Ma. Ram explains his thought to his wife Sita:

And that's what I'm doing. Apart from honouring my father's promise, which is my duty as his son, I want Koshal to have peace. If I protested, strife would erupt all over the kingdom. Kaikeyi is powerful – she has her own faction here, her won guards, Riots and occur, maybe even civil war. Maybe worse, if she calls upon her brother to come and join her with his powerful Kekaya army. I can't be the curse of so much death and destruction. (106)

Being a new bride, this makes her life complicated, Ram agreed to go to the forest he insisted Sita to stay with her mother in law because he felt it is too dangerous for women to live in forest but unexpectedly Sita raised her voice, “I wanted to say, not all women are weak and helpless like you think. For all you know, I might be of help to you.” (111)

Sita was bold enough to face any obstacles. This decision taken by Sita without consulting anyone in the palace, the words of a young woman stunned everyone in the palace. So she was ready to go along with Ram and Lakshman. At once Ram insists Sita to stay along with his mother, Kaushalya but she refused to do that. Sita wants to go with her husband to comfort him. Then they were ready to exile for the long fourteen years of banishment. Before Sita leaves Ayodhya she wants to visit her sister, Urmila. Sita held her sister tightly at that time Urmila said that Lakshman refused to take her with him. Urmila says, “Her voice was calm and emotionless, and this frightened me more than if she’d been weeping. He said he had his hands full taking care of Ram, who was his first duty.” (116)

Then Sita accompanies Ram and Lakshman to the forest. By projecting this fact Divakaruni breaks the stereotype and shows the performance of Sita. Her love for Ram was won. Then they leave the city of Ayodhya and entered into the forest. When they were in the Chitrakoot Mountain, Bharat came and inform that their father Dasharath was dead now he wants to beg Ram to return and take over the kingdom. Kaikeyi-Ma denounced her publicly in the court and imprisoned her in her quarters. Bharat joined his brother Ram palms and says, “please come back, eldest brother. The kingdom is in turmoil. People are rioting. Many are leaving Koshal. Your return would help Kaushalya-Ma, too. She’s so depressed that we’re afraid for her life.” (122) But as per the principles of the family of Raghu, Ram refuses to go with Bharat.

One day they reached a small hermitage which was already known for Ram. In that ashram one beautiful lady named Ahalya was created by Brahma, who then gave her in marriage to Gautam, the ascetic. “Her movements were as graceful as a dance, and her eyes affectionate,” (133). Ahalya devoted to taking care of Gautam. As the king of god Indra believed that such a beautiful woman should belong to him. She was a virtuous wife and rebuffed Indra. Indra make use of the time, when Gautam went deep into the forest to perform a special yagna. At that time Indra is in the guise of Gautam and took Ahalya to bed.

After returning from the forest Gautam sensed that something had happened wrong and with his magical power he knew that what had happened in the ashrams. Then Gautam got furious with Indra and Ahalya and cursed both of them. “For betraying her sacred marital vows for the sake of bodily pleasure, she would be turned into stone. Ahalya declared her innocence, pointing out that she was as much a victim of Indra’s trickery as Gautam. But it was too late. The curse was in full force. Already her body was petrifying.” (130) In that scene Banerjee beautifully shows that how female may be the victim of men’s mistake. Even though Indra is making mistake but Ahalya was the victim to her own husband Gautam.

After leaving the small hermitage and then they were reached the place called Panchabati. For a decade in the forest life, Sita’s emotion about the childbearing with Ram is portrayed beautifully. She argues with Ram about her longing to have babies. But Ram refused. Ram says that it would not be the right time to bear a child in the dangerous forest. Sita says,

‘We have so many skills. I could teach them self-defence and cooking and gardening and healing and songs and stories and letters and even

regal comportment. Lakshman could teach them hunting and tracking and wrestling. You could teach them all about royal duties and higher morals and the use of special astras, and – '. (140)

Finally Ram refuses and says sorry to her beloved Sita and he says that “please be patient for little while longer, Sita – the way you’ve been all this time. We only have two more years in the forest. It’ll be over soon. (141)

Sita sees a girl while bathing in the river, she is slim and brown as bark and hiding behind the tree. She didn’t wear any clothes. The girl asks Sita, what are you doing here? Then she says about Ram’s vows and how they ended up in the forest. The girl instructs Sita to leave that forest because the forest belongs to the girl’s brothers, Khar and Dushan. Then the girl meets Sita’s husband and brother-in-law to tell the whole story of her brother and her kingdom. The girl told her name that was Surpanakha. Then the girl calls her name as Kaamarupini. Kaamarupini like Ram and she asked him to marry her. “I really like you. So I’m asking you to be my mate.” (146) Kaamarupini says,

‘I guarantee you, ‘kaamarupini continued, ‘I will make you happy. I know all kinds of magic. I can fly halfway around the world with you, take you to beaches filled with silver-white sands where no man has ever set foot, or to mountains so high that from their peaks you can see the entire world. We can frolic in lakes filled with heavenly lotuses. Or if you prefer, I can build you a palace filled with every comfort you can imagine. And should you ever get tires of my looks, I can change them and become slim and tall, or soft and curvy, or golden – haired

like the pale women of the north. In fact, I can fulfill every fantasy of yours.’ (147).

Here, in the form of rakshasas Surpanakha having a desire of the human to make her as a mate for her life. She offers everything in her desire for Ram. But Ram refused her proposal. Then Surpanakha went on with Lakshman’s proposal, Lakshman also refused, at once Surpanakha angry with Sita and she ready to fight with Sita. Then Ram instructs his brother to handle the ugly immortal creature. Lakshman picked up his bow and his bow chopped off the girl’s nose and ears. She screamed and vanishes, from a distance her final words heard, “‘you’ll be sorry. Ah, you’ll be sorry. All of you. My brothers shall know of this – and then you’ll be sorry you were ever born.’” (150)

Sita was a child to be humoured in this novel, because she was childish in need of the deer. Sita says, “My need for the deer grew like an ache an addiction.” (156) Even though she does not have a good feeling about the deer, she was a child to be distracted by the beauty of the deer. And she insists her husband to bring the deer to her. Then Ram went in search of the deer. And in sometimes Lakshman also go in search of his beloved brother Ram. Before Lakshman left Sita, he took his bow and draws a big circle around the hut. The line began to glow like a fire. Before leaving Sita he instructs not to step outside this rekha on any situation.

Once Lakshman disappeared, Sita prays to god for her husband to come back quickly. Then Sita was abducted by Ravan a demon king of Lanka. She was dropped under Ashoka tree, he instructs many demonesses to guard the area and prevent Sita from escaping. Ravan want Sita to be his chief queen and she refuses to become his chief queen because she love Ram with her wholeheartedly. Even in the very

comfortable life she refuses to become the queen of Lanka. She will be faithful to her marriage vows no matter what ever may happen. Then Ravan offers, “I’ll give you a year to change your mind. At the end of that time, either you’ll become my queen, or I’ll turn you over to Surpanakha, who will love the opportunity of designing for you whatever kind of death she thinks you deserve.” (180)

Sita refuses to yield to his advances and maintains her chastity. There are so many women who spoke kindly and some spoke to her rudely. Sita knew that her Ram will come to rescue her, she maintains her faith and confidence in the palace. Under the Ashoka tree Sita is exercising about face Ravan, she acknowledges,

“Allow him to pursue you and at the last moment, step sideways and bring up a knee in a sudden movement to the opponent’s groin; when he doubles over, press your thumbs into his eyes to blind him. Or step back as though retreating, and when the opponent lunges at you hit his wind pipe with your hand, held straight as a knife, At the right angle, the impact will break his neck.” (188)

Divakaruni shows Sita as quite courageous who can survive any difficult circumstance, she can easily move forward in spite of obstacles who never gives up, the courage that speaks in her journey no matter what the cost Indian women do. After many adventures, the story leads up to the battle between Ram and Ravan. Finally, Sita is rescued. Ram summons his wife but instead of being blissful at seeing Sita, he feels guilty and shame because his wife had lived in the palace of another man, her purity has been called into question.

Sita broken up by his words undertakes an ordeal by fire to prove her chastity to Ram and his people. Sita calls upon Agni (the god of fire) to testify her loyalty and

purity. She said, “Build me a fire. There’s nothing left for me on this earth now that my husband, Who I love more than my own self” (245). Agni god recognizing Sita’s chastity refuses to consume her. Sita suffered numerous horrors for no other reason than that she is Ram’s wife but Divakaruni’s Sita strikes hard to make her voice in which time to stand up and say enough. She has presented Sita’s agnipariksha episode is a moment of feminist brilliance.

As a part of demolishing the stereotypes, Divakaruni added many new dimensions in the novel which added new features in Sita’s character. When the battle between Ram and Ravan is over, finally fourteen years after Dashrath’s declaration, Ram sat on the throne with his wife Sita. The gossips starting over there in Ayodhya spoil the reputation of Ram. So he gave order to his brother Lakshman to drop Sita in the forest, near sage Valmiki’s hermitage without informing Sita.

Ayodhya again banished Sita into the forest, Sita knows the injustice, and so she raised her voice once again. Sita ordered Lakshman, “You go back and tell him this, Lakshman. He sentenced me to banishment because people were whispering that I might have betrayed him. But he’s the real betrayer, who’s going to sentenced him” (317). Sita walked into the forest, she observed the absence of boundaries and felt for her babies who are the most innocent creatures in the world. Later Sita realises the fact that she will be a single person to raise her children. During the difficult journey she is emotionally strong and positive her mental strength should be praised. She reflects,

‘I’m going to live for you. I’m going to guard you with my last breath.
I’m going to love you enough for mother and father both, so you feel
no lack. I’m going to teach you everything you need to know to be

princes. But more than that, I'll teach you what you need to know be good human beings, so that you'll never do to a woman what your father has done to me. (317)

Sita and her sons Lav and Kush live in the shadows of the forest. Sita never rested always smiled with her son's lives which were not easy for her but she handled her difficult situation with hope. This shows that Sita is a female counterpart of supreme beings. She is an embodiment of courage, spirit, wisdom, compassion, and endurance and Sita will resonate in today's time.

Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* shows Sita as a strong, resilient, positive, symbol of love and courage. This courage that has been reflected for centuries in the lives of women. Divakaruni's protagonist not only search for their identity but they create self identity. This novel chooses as its medium one of the most extraordinary woman character of Indian mythology. Sita creates everlasting impression in the minds of the readers showing the path for all women.

The next chapter deals with the re-imagination of the epic. It gives the comparisons between how the epic *Ramayana* is about and how Chitra Banaerjee deals the novel in the sense of Sitayan's view point. This chapter subjects the epic *Ramayana* in Sita's perspective.

CHAPTER THREE

RE-IMAGINATION OF THE EPIC

The epic, traditionally ascribed to the Maharishi Valmiki, narrates the life of Rama, a legendary prince of Ayodhya city in the kingdom of Kosala and was written at Amritsar in Punjab. The epic follows his fourteen-year exile to the forest urged by his father King Dasharatha, on the request of Rama's stepmother Kaikeyi, his travels across forests in the Indian subcontinent with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana, the kidnapping of Sita by Ravana – the king of Lanka, that resulted in war; and Rama's eventual return to Ayodhya to be crowned king amidst jubilation and celebration.

The *Ramayana* is one of the largest ancient epics in world literature. It consists of nearly 24,000 verses and it is divided into seven *kandas*: *Bala Kanda*, *Ayodhya Kanda*, *Aranya Kanda*, *Krishkindha Kanda*, *Sundara Kanda*, *Yuddha Kanda* and *Uttara Kanda*. The *Ramayana* belongs to the genre of *Itihasa*, narratives of past events which include the Mahabharata, the *Puranas*, and the *Ramayana*. It depicts the duties of relationships, portraying ideal characters like the ideal father, the ideal servant, the ideal brother, the ideal husband, and the ideal king. Like the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* presents the teachings of ancient Hindu sages in the narrative allegory, interspersing philosophical and ethical elements.

Rama, the hero of *Ramayana*, is a popular deity worshiped by Hindus, the route of his wanderings being trodden by devout pilgrims. The poem is not a mere literary monument, it is a part of Hinduism, and is held in such reverence that the mere reading or hearing of it, or certain passages of it, is believed by the Hindus to free them from sin and grant every desire to the reader or hearer. According to Hindu

tradition, Rama is an incarnation of the god Vishnu, who is part of the Hindu Trinity. The main purpose of this incarnation is to demonstrate the righteous path for the life on earth.

In Rama's youth, Rama is seen breaking the bow of Siva at Sita's *Swayamvara* in Mithila, as portrayed by artist Raja Ravi Varma. Brahma, creator of the universe, could not revoke a boon he gave the demon king Ravana, as a reward for his severe penances, that he should not be slain by gods, demons, or spirits. Having been then rewarded, Ravana began with the help of his evil supporters, the *Rakshasas*, to lay waste the earth and to do violence to the good, especially the Brahmin priests, disturbing their sacrifices. All the gods, watching this devastation, went to Brahma to find a way to deliver themselves and the earth of this evil.

Brahma went to Vishnu and conveyed the anguish of the gods and requested that Vishnu incarnate on earth as a human to destroy Ravana, as Ravana had not asked for protection against humans or beasts in his wishes to Brahma. Meanwhile the good king Dasharatha of Ayodhya, who had ruled over his kingdom of Kosala for a long time, was beginning to become anxious about his successor, for he had no sons to take over the kingdom after him. Taking advice from his ministers and priests Dasharatha organised a *Putrakameshti Yagna*, a sacrifice for progeny.

Vishnu decided to be born as the eldest to Dasharatha and caused a divine being to emerge from the sacrificial fire. The divine being gave Dashratha a golden vessel filled with nectar and asked him to give it to his queens. Dasharatha divided it amongst his three queens, Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi. In due course they became pregnant and gave birth to four sons: Queen Kausalya gives birth to the eldest

son, Rama. Bharata is born to Queen Kaikeyi, and twins Lakshmana and Shatrughna are born to Queen Sumitra.

The boys grew up learning the scriptures and the art of bowman ship from the sage Vasishta. One day, the sage Vishwamitra visited the kingdom and asked King Dasaratha to send Rama to protect him from demons who had been disturbing his sacrifices. Although very reluctant, Dasharatha agreed to send Rama and Lakshmana with Vishwamitra. As the brothers fulfilled their duties, Vishwamitra was pleased with them and bestowed upon them various celestial weapons. In *Ramayana*, Viswamithra says,

You cannot count on the physical proximity proximity of someone you love, all the time. A seed that sprouts at the foot of its parent tree remains stunted until it is transplanted. Rama will be in my care, and he will be quite well. But ultimately, he will leave me too. Every human being, when the time comes, has to depart and seek his fulfilment in his own way. (49)

Towards the end of their stay with Vishwamitra, Rama chanced to pass near the kingdom of Mithila and heard that its king, Janaka, had offered his peerless daughter Sita in marriage to the man who could bend the mighty bow of god Siva, which had been kept at Janaka's court. Rama at once determined to accomplish the feat, which had been tried in vain by so many suitors. When he presented himself at court Janaka was at once won by his youth and beauty. Five thousand men drew in the mighty bow, resting upon an eight-wheeled chariot. Rama, without any apparent effort he bent it until it broke and Janaka gladly gave him his beautiful daughter. After the splendid wedding ceremonies were over the happy couples travelled back to Ayodhya.

Rama's exile King Dasaratha, began to feel weary of reigning and decided to make Rama, the king of Ayodhya. His happy people received the announcement of his intention with delight and the whole city was in the midst of the most splendid preparations for the ceremony. Dasaratha went to discuss the celebrations with his favourite wife Kaikeyi. Jealousy of Kaikeyi was aroused by her evil maid Manthara, because the son of Kausalya was going to crown not her son Bharata, at that time absent from the city, were to be made king. She fled to an ante-chamber where Dasaratha found her in tears.

To Dasharatha concerned queries, Kaikeyi recalled that the old king had granted her two boons. Dasharatha agreed and Kaikeyi revealed her demands. She required him, first, to appoint her son Bharata as co-regent and, second, to exile Rama for fourteen years to the terrible forest of Dandaka. Dasharatha was heart-broken but he had to abide by his promise. Rama, the obedient son, immediately agreed to relinquish his claim to the throne and started to leave for his exile. His faithful wife Sita and his loving brother Lakshmana also decided to go along with Rama. Rama once left the forest, king Dasharatha died overcome by grief.

Sita and Lakshmana left behind Ayodhya and its people crossed the river Ganges and went into the forest. They found an idyllic place called Chitrakuta to establish their hermitage. Flowers of every kind, delicious fruits, and on every side the most pleasing prospects, together with perfect love, is stated to have made their hermitage a paradise on earth. In the forest, Rama befriended the old vulture-king, Jatayu.

Bharata returned to Ayodhya and he devoted to Rama, became furious with Kaikeyi for her role in exiling Rama and for the death of his father. When he found Rama and pleaded with him to return and assume the throne but Rama politely

refused, saying that he was duty-bound to see that his father's promise was fulfilled. Reluctantly Bharata agreed to return to the kingdom, requesting that Rama give to him his sandals. Back in Ayodhya, Bharata placed Rama's sandals on the throne of Ayodhya, and ruled as Rama's proxy from a village called Nandigrama near Ayodhya, awaiting his return. He also vowed to end his own life if Rama failed to return after fourteen years.

One day, the rakshasi Surpanakha, a sister of the demon king Ravana, chanced upon Rama's hermitage and saw the handsome Rama and became enamoured. Taking the form of a beautiful young girl. She tried to seduce Rama. Rama, was ever faithful to his wife Sita, did not respond and asked her to approach Lakshmana. An infuriated Surpanakha blamed Sita for the men scorning her charged at her in her original demonic form. However, Lakshmana saved Sita by severing Surpanakha's nose and ears. Surpanakha flew back to Ravana complaining about the young exiles.

Ravana, after hearing of the beautiful Sita from Surpanakha, resolved to kill Rama in revenge and take Sita for himself. He enlisted the aid of the demon Maricha. Maricha turned himself into a golden deer that Sita wanted for herself. She asked Rama to get it for her, but after Rama left to find it. Maricha began screaming to trick Lakshmana. He convinced Rama was in danger, resolved to go out and find his brother. Before leaving Sita alone in the hut, Lakshmana drew a circle in the dirt saying that Sita would be safe as long as she stayed in the circle.

Ravana approached the hermitage in the guise of an old man and asked Sita to give him some food. Initially hesitant to step out of Lakshmana's circle, Sita finally stepped out to give the old man some food. At this moment Ravana grabbed Sita and fled in his airborne vehicle, Pushpaka Vimana. Jatayu, seeing them fly attempted to save Sita, but Ravana engaged Jatayu in combat and chopped off the vulture's wings.

On returning to the hermitage, Rama and Lakshmana found the hut empty and they anxiously began a search. Through Jatayu, whom they found lying mortally wounded, Rama and Lakshmana learnt of Sita's fate.

Vanara kingdom Continuing their search, they encountered the vanara king of Kishkindha, Sugriva, and Hanuman, one of his generals, among whom Sita had dropped from the chariot her scarf and some ornaments. Sugriva had been deposed from his kingdom by his brother, Vali, who had also taken his wife Roma from him. Rama agreed to defeat Vali if Sugriva would assist in the search for Sita. The agreement made Sugriva challenged Vali to a duel. While the duel was progressing, Rama shot from his bow and killed Vali. Sugriva regained his kingdom and his wife.

Sugriva and Rama sent the vanara soldiers in various directions in search of Sita. Sampati, who was the brother of the slain Jatayu. Sampati was earthbound and deformed - his wings were burnt when he flew too close to the Sun. His brother had saved him from falling to his death. While Jatayu was the physically stronger of the two, Sampati possessed a compensating gift of vision. Sampati's vision was incredibly powerful, spanning several hundred yojanas and enabling him to see farther than anyone else. On hearing of Ravana's killing his brother, he readily agreed to help the vanaras. He was soon able to spot Sita in the southern direction. He could see her imprisoned in a garden of Ashoka trees on the island of Lanka, beyond the southern ocean.

Hanuman in Lanka Sugriva dispatched his army to the south with his nephew Angada at the head. Hanuman went with Angada as his general. When they reached Deep South, they found a great ocean stretching between them and land of Lanka. They could find no means by which to cross the ocean. Commanding his soldiers to remain where they were, Hanuman expanded his body to enormous proportions,

leaped the vast expanse of water and alighted upon a mountain Trikuta from which he could look down upon Lanka. Perceiving the city to be closely guarded he assumed the form of a cat and crept through the barriers and examined the city.

Hanuman found Ravana in his apartments, surrounded by beautiful women, but Sita was not among them. Continuing his search, he at last discovered her, Sita's beauty dimmed by grief, seated under a tree in a beautiful Asoka grove, guarded by hideous rakshasas with the faces of buffaloes, dogs, and swine. Assuming the form of a tiny monkey, Hanuman crept down the tree, and giving her the ring of Rama, took one from her.

Hanuman offered to carry Sita away with him, but she declared that Rama must himself come to rescue her. And as proof of finding her Sita gave Hanuman a priceless jewel to take back to Rama. While they were talking together, Ravana appeared and announced that if Sita did not yield herself to him in two months he would have her guards for his morning repast. In his rage, Hanuman destroyed a mango grove and was captured by the rakshasa guards and brought before Ravana. Hanuman proclaimed that he was a messenger of Rama and demanded that Ravana restore Sita to Rama or fall victim to Rama's wrath. Furious at hearing Hanuman's words, Ravana ordered Hanuman's death.

Vibhishana, Ravana's righteous brother intervened and counselled Ravana to follow the scriptures, reminding that it was improper to execute a messenger, and instead told him to exact the appropriate punishment for Hanuman's crime. Ravana accepted and ordered his rakshasas to set fire to Hanuman's tail. As soon as this was done Hanuman made himself very small slipped from his bonds and jumping upon the roofs, spread a conflagration through the city of Lanka. He leaped back to the

mainland, conveyed the news of Sita's captivity to Rama and Sugriva, and was soon engaged in active preparations for the campaign.

Rama preparing to lay siege to Lanka from the collection of the Smithsonian Institute Rama decided that as long as the ocean was not bridged, it was impossible for anyone but Hanuman to cross it. Rama meditated for three days without food or water, but in vain. In his anger at being so ignored, Rama turned his weapons against the ocean, until from the terrified waves arose Varuna, the god of the ocean, who promised him that if Nila and Nala from his army built a bridge, the waves should support the materials as firmly as though it were built on land. Terror reigned in Lanka at the news of the approach of Rama. Vibishana, Ravana's brother deserted to Rama because of the demon's rage when he advised him to make peace with Rama. Fiercely fought battles ensued in which even the gods took part Vishnu and Indra taking sides with Rama, and the evil spirits fighting with Ravana.

After the war had been fought for some time, with varying results, and a great number of troops on both sides were killed, it was decided to determine the victory by single combat between Ravana and Rama. At each shot Rama's mighty bow cut off a head of Ravana, which at once grew back, and the hero was in despair until Vibhishana told him to aim at Ravana's belly-button. Rama took careful aim. As Ravana fell by this weapon, flowers rained from heaven upon the happy victory. In his prose piece, *"The Ramayana: A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic"*, R. K. Narayan says,

Rama watched him fall headlong from his chariot face down onto the earth, and that was the end of the great campaign. Now one noticed Ravana's face aglow with a new quality. Rama's arrows had burnt off the layers of dross, the anger, conceit, cruelty, lust, and egotism which

had encrusted his real self, and now his personality came through in its pristine form – of one who was devout and capable of tremendous attainments. His constant meditation on Rama, although as an adversary, now seemed to bear fruit, as his face shone with serenity and peace. (254-255)

Sita was led forth, beaming with happiness at finding herself re-united to her husband, but her happiness was destined to be of short duration. Rama received her with coldness and with downcast eyes, saying that she could no longer be his wife after having dwelt in the house of Ravana. Sita assured him of her innocence but on his continuing to revile her, she ordered her funeral pyre to be built. Since, she would rather die by fire than live despised by Rama. The sympathy of all the bystanders was with Sita, but Rama saw her enter the flames without a tremor. Soon Agni, the god of fire, appeared, bearing the uninjured Sita in his arms. Her innocence thus publicly proved by the trial by fire, she was welcomed by Rama whose treatment she tenderly forgave.

The conquest won and Ravana defeated finally Sita restored. Rama returned in triumph to Ayodhya and assumed the governance to the great delight of Bharata and the people of Ayodhya. Sita banished Ayodhya was prosperous, the people were happy, and for a time all went well. It was not long, however, before whispers concerning Sita's long stay in Lanka spread through the city, and Rama came to hear the whisperings that a famine in the country was due to the guilt of Sita, who had suffered the caresses of Ravana while in captivity. Under the pressure from the citizens of Ayodhya, Rama banished her to the forest in which they had spent together the happy years of their exile.

Without a murmur the unhappy Sita dragged herself to the forest and torn with grief of body and spirit, found the hermitage of Valmiki where she gave birth to twin sons, Lava and Kush. She reared them with the assistance of the hermit, who was their teacher and under whose care they grew to manhood, handsome and strong. It chanced that about the time the youths were twenty years old, Rama began to think the gods were angered with him because he had killed Ravana, who was the son of a Brahman. Rama became determined to propitiate them by means of Ashvamedha, the great sacrifice in which he caused a horse to be turned loose in the forest.

At the end of the year when his men went to retake it, they found it caught by two strong and beautiful youths who resisted all efforts to capture them. When his men could not retake the horse, Rama went to the forest in person only to learn that the youths were his twin sons, Lava and Kush. Struck with remorse, Rama recalled the sufferings of his wife Sita, and on learning that she was at the hermitage of Valmiki requested her to come with him.

Sita had time to recover from the love of her youth and the prospect of life with Rama. She appealed to the earth, if she had never loved any man but Rama. If her truth and purity were known to the earth, let it open its bosom and take her to it. While the people stood trembling with horror, the earth opened, a gorgeous throne appeared and the goddess of earth seated upon it, took Sita beside her and conveyed her to the realms of eternal happiness leaving the repentant people to wear out the remaining years in penitence.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* is one of the latest adaptations of the Hindu epic Ramayana by Valmiki. This novel attempts to assess Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's unique interpretation of *Ramayan* through Sita's outlook. Her latest novel *The Forest of Enchantments* is a re-telling of *Ramayan*

through the perspective of Sita. It is Sita's version of *Ramayan* or *Sitayan* that is mostly concerned with the plight of the women who were mostly marginalized in other interpretations of *Ramayan*.

Throughout many centuries *Ramayan* has been told, retold, written, and re-written countless times in different languages by different authors, recognised or unrecognised. As A.K. Ramanujan has observed, "The number of *Ramayanas* and the range of their influence in South and Southeast Asia over the past twenty-five hundred years or more are astonishing" (133). Divakaruni's Sita is a brave, perceptive but innocent girl whose story is an account of her journey from innocence to knowledge, knowledge about human nature.

This novel is written in first person narrative technique as Sita narrates her own story. This imposes an obvious problem while re-telling an ancient epic. From the very beginning, Sita is portrayed as an ambitious girl who wants to rule the kingdom of Mithila and is outraged at the suggestion that no woman can be ruler of Mithila because of the "old belief the citizens of Mithila hold: no woman is strong enough-or wise enough-to guide them" (14). Sita is the daughter of earth and the archetypal mother who listens to the women characters on the margins and shines a loving light on this mythic world.

Divakaruni draws upon Sita's identification and bond with earth nature to endow her with a consistent and compelling vision. Sita's gardening skills, knowledge of herbs, healing touch and enchantment with the forest-all set the tone of Divakaruni's narrative: "My strange gift with plants was a mystery to me. Perhaps it was because, like them, I was earth-born. Maybe for the same reason, when I touched a plant, I knew its healing properties." (7)

The novel has been structured into thirty-five chapters with a prologue and an epilogue. The situation in which Sita is writing her story is rather troubling as Ram, ignorant of the existence of Sita and her two children invites Valmiki to Ayodhya who has planned to bring Lav and Kush with them so that Ram recognizes and accepts them as his sons and heirs. But Sita's fate remains undecided. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's version of *Ramayan* is portrays reprehensible characters like Surpanakha, Kaikeyi, Manthara, Ahalya in sympathetic light and allows defense for these characters while recalling the long-forgotten sacrifices of women like Urmila, Mandodari, Sarama. Tara who suffered endlessly to fulfill the so called "divine wish"

As the story evolves, the character of Sita also undergoes transformation and becomes more controlled and dignified. Her immediate foil is her sister Urmila who is a simple cheerful girl desirous of a happy married life. Urmila is a character who is most ignored in almost all versions of *Ramayan*. In Valmiki *Ramayan*, Urmila is described to proffer a unique sacrifice for the sake of her husband called Urmila Nidra. In her version of *Ramayan*, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni makes the plight of Urmila more poignant by contrasting her intense longing for a happily married life and desire to closer to Lakshman with her unfortunate fate. In this novel Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments*, Sita too feels guilty for abandoning her sister.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's re-imagination of Kaikeyi, the second wife of Dasharath is quite ingenious though she tries to remain faithful to the original story. In Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Sita was the daughter of Aswapati, master of horses and she herself was well trained in horse-riding and drove Dasharath's chariot in the wars. As her mother was banished by her father, she was brought up by Manthara who was one of her closest person she trusted and loved so dearly. In the southern text of the Valmiki's *Ramayana*, as Devout Pattanayik has over served Sumantra, "Dasharath's

charioteer and counselor speak of Kaikeyi's father abandoning her mother. Details of the story are part of folklore of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh." (113) but in this novel, Divakaruni omits these details. Kaikeyi's mother is described to be dead while giving birth to her and she is given to Manthara, her nurse-maid to be brought up. Thus a great sense of intimacy is understood between them. "Where Kaikeyi is concerned, Manthara's as fierce as a lioness with a newborn cub." (85)

In Valmiki's *Ramayan* and most of its re-tellings, Manthara is one of the vilest characters who instill her venom in Kaikeyi. While retaining the evilness of Manthara, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni calls attention to the love and possessiveness of Manthara towards Kaikeyi and the unsatisfied mother in Manthara. As Ralph Griffith says in his *Ramayana*, Kaikeyi is portrayed as so wicked that Ram thinks she will delight in Sita's abduction:

This day will dark Kaikeyi find
Fresh triumph for her evil mind,
When I, who with my Sita came
Return alone, without my dame. (302)

Her portrayal of Kaikeyi is that of brave combatant woman, master of sword fighting who challenges Sita in a duel. Sita hears many scary stories regarding her even before she reaches Ayodhya. She is a considerate woman who is sensitive enough not to hire any beautiful maid that may upset Manthara.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's delineation of Surpanakha also diverges from the other adaptations of *Ramayan*. In the Valmiki *Ramayan*, she is foul, ugly and demonic. In *Kamban Ramayan*, she is lovelorn and beautiful. In Divakaruni's re-imagination of *Ramayan*, Surpanakha is the innocent forlorn woman with an intense craving for love after the death of her husband. She is one in the long list of women

who were maligned and vilified but in her case it is mainly due to her deviance of the norms of maidenly behaviour and over assertion of sexual desire.

Sita feels sympathy for the girl who is hungry for love and is humiliated by two apparently just and serious men just because she openly proclaims her desire for a man. Another woman in this Indian epic condemned for so called ‘grave sin’ is Ahalya who has been portrayed in a very negative light in Valmiki’s *Ramayan*. The main objection against this character is that she identified the disguised God but could not resist sexual desire leading to a highly immoral act as it has been committed in full consciousness. Even after perpetrating the crime, instead of being repentant, she thinks only of how secret the deed:

Lord Indra of the Thousand Eyes,
But touched by love’s unholy fire,
She yielded to the God’s desire.
‘Now, Lord of God! She whispered, ‘flee,
From Gautam save thyself and me.’ (60)

In Valmiki’s *Ramayan*, Indra flees after making love to Ahalya but Gautam catches a glimpse of disguised Indra and understands everything. He curses both Indra and Ahalya. Before Ahalya can say something, she is turned to stone. In R.K. Narayan’s adaptation to *Ramayan* which is inspired by Tamil version of Kamban, Gautam “surprised the couple in bed...Indra assumed the form of a cat (the most facile animal form for sneaking in or out) and tried to slip away.” (67) After he curses Ahalya, she repents and seeks forgiveness. The compassionate Gautam then mentions Ram who can only redeem her.

Divakaruni’s depiction of Ahalya is altogether different. She not only sympathizes with her, but also implies how both her husband and Valmiki, the poet

representing the character have misunderstood her action and intent. She becomes the common woman figure who is never given any opportunity to speak. Even before she could explain the situation, her punishment is decided. When Sita meets her in the exile, she is told by Gautam that Ahalya has taken up vow of silence to gain spiritual merit but only Sita understands that it is her act of protest against her husband who has failed to understand her love and loyalty. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni not only provided defence for the characters who has been misunderstood, misrepresented and misjudged, her version of *Ramayan* or *Sitayan* acknowledges those women who sacrifices have never been taken into account.

In Sanghadasa's Jaina version of *Ramayan* and also in *Adbhuta Ramayana*, Sita is born as daughter of Ravan. Her relationship with her husband is also unusual. Ravan loves and respects her beyond doubt but he is infatuated and sexually engaged with other women subjecting her to humiliation. Mandodari's position is more conflicting. Mandodari is eager to reunite with her long-lost daughter again she knows that Sita, according to prophecy, will be the reason for the destruction of Ravan and his kingdom. In Divakaruni's *Sitayan* Mandodari's calm but majestic presence always haunts the readers since her first appearance. She has portrayed the character with such care and attention that her helplessness does not diminish her dignity rather adds to the reverence the readers feel for her.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* stands apart from all other version of *Ramayan* as it gives careful attention to those events and characters, especially female characters that are largely ignored in other adaptations. Though not an active feminist, she is very much concerned with lived reality of woman's life, her predicaments, her sufferings. Her feminism is strongly coloured by social and cultural

context. *The palace of Illusions* was born out of the urge to place the women in the forefront action. In Author's note on *The Palace of Illusions*, she writes,

But always, listening to the stories of the Mahabharat as a young Girl...I was left unsatisfied by the portrayals of the women. It wasn't as though the epic didn't have powerful, complex women characters that affected the action in major ways...But in some way, they remained shadowy figures, their thoughts and motives, their emotions portrayed only when they affected the lives of the male heroes, their roles ultimately subservient to those of their fathers or husbands, brothers or sons. (xiv)

The final scene of Epilogue with Sita's final act of self-respect is perhaps Divakaruni's greatest achievement. Though Divakaruni is retelling an old epic, she has portrayed Sita and other characters she speaks for. In her own unique way where Sita is not the devoted unquestioning wife who follows her husband blindly. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni used elements from most versions of *Ramayan* and produced an original *Sitayan* that gives a completely new understanding of the age-old epic. She has provided another side of the story and leaves it upon the readers to decide. *The Forest of Enchantments* is a powerful experiment that unsettles readers out of their complacency and provides a new way to interpret and old narrative. The next chapter deals with the art of narration in Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's novel, *The Forest of Enchantments*.

CHAPTER FOUR

ART OF NARRATION

Narrative is a sharing with of some created and true events or linked group of events, described by a narrator. Narratives should be identified from explanations of situation, condition, or features, and also from theatrical performance of events even in case a theatrical work may also include narrative speeches. A narrative will stay on a set of actions recounted in a procedure of discourse or narration, in which the events are arranged and preferred in a specific order as a storyline. Narrative is the representation of happenings, consisting of account and narrative discourse, story is an event or series of occurrences, and narrative discourse is those occasions as represented.

The category of narratives contains both the shortest information of occurrences and the longest biographical or historical works plus travelogues, diaries in addition to brief stories, ballads, books, epics, and other imaginary forms. In the analysis of fiction, it is normal to divide the short testimonies and books into third person narratives and first person narratives. Narrative techniques are methods and literary devices a writer uses to craft the elements of a story. They involve different narrative elements, including plot, perspective, style, character, theme and genre.

Divakaruni has been widely praised for her art of storytelling. She has widely earned the reputation of a silver-tongued story teller. She is hailed as a gifted storyteller by Abraham Varghese while the People magazine acclaimed her as a skilled cartographer of the heart. Junto Diaz acclaimed her as a brilliant storyteller. She has battled with contemporary things and a variety of theme—marginalization, relationship, motherhood, conflicts, mothering, category, individuation, woman as

mother, better half, sister and last but not least yet considerable woman as a individual not merely as another sex or gender object. She is cynical about traditions and custom, yet she realizes in their traditions the keys for the longings and needs of women in current time.

The Forest of Enchantments re-examines the narrative of the Ramayana through Sita's eyes. It sheds fresh light on a major Hindu epic, and attempts to question a woman's place in society and reflects on the idea of female autonomy in a patriarchal community. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has used various techniques in writing such as alternative narrative, first and third person narrative, stream of consciousness, letter and diary writing, myth and magic realism particularly to express disordered and tragic condition of Indian immigrants while establishing themselves to the new civilization. She is modernist copy writer since her writing highlights the idea of the trivial woman with an endocentric setup. Divakaruni is a celebrated feminist author who gives voice to women in mythology whose narrative has most often been written and controlled by men. By shifting the focus from men's stories to women's narratives, she increases empathy and understanding of lived women's struggles.

Divakaruni's writing revolves around the themes of women, immigration, and the South Asian experience in the United States, history, myth, magical realism, and cultural diversity. She highlights Diaspora women protagonists, living in two cultures, their delineation, isolation, exile, mental trauma, dispersion, dislocation at the level of diasporic consciousness particularly. In her works, insights take desire over the compulsion of approach. She recognizes the paradoxes in confirmed area and also will pay an ideological, ethnical, philosophical, artistic difficulty. In this sense, the

writer hypothesizes the hallmark of modernism, ego, liberty, love, intimacy as challenging through her modern emotional responses.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is a gifted postcolonial writer with great insight into human psychology. Most of her works reflect her connection with Indian roots, culture and traditions which are portrayed in her books in an effective and a convincing manner. Her narrative techniques make her a distinguished story-teller. Readers all over the world have acknowledged her abilities as a powerful writer who enthralls the audience with varied themes, creativity and vivid imagery. She uses a combination of back story, analeptic reference or flash back, prolepsis or flash forward to set the plots. Various narrative techniques like, the first-Person narration, magical realism, multi-perspectives, analogy, second-person narration, stream of consciousness and third-person narration are used deftly by Divakaruni.

Divakaruni's marvelous realism is to bridge the gap between present and earlier situation and its prolific entreaty for Indian immigrants who are suffering from miscellaneous types of tensions. She has been widely praised for her art of narration. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is considered to be one of the greatest story tellers in the cotemporary Indo-American English novelists. She had used various narrative techniques in her writing, which are the unique blend to set her apart from other novelists. The novel, *The Forest of Enchantments* focuses on the use of myth in her own style. She has used different settings in her novels. No novels of Divakaruni are complete without the use of myths. Her protagonists are women. Through women characters she depicts the deep-rooted culture of Indian tradition. Chitra Banerjee usually portrays women character types as a protagonist. Her history focuses on the life span of a female specially an immigrant.

A very impressive technique used by Divakaruni is blending the element of ‘myth’ in her stories. Divakaruni uses dreams as an effective means of narrative. She has administered magical realism along with the crudity of pragmatism and heartrending naturalism and purposefully woven the magical world through her imaginative narration and lucidity of incorporating an alternated reality full of charm and captivating allurements. Her creative forte represents a daring contradiction between the sensory and the illusory ways and worlds of experience engaging her literary personages supported by a harmonious coexistence of “magical fantasy” by making the wondrous and the factual spectacular. Through the character of Sita, the emblem of ceaseless suffering, Divakaruni has tried to offer a tribute to this legendary soul, where she not only protests against her unlawful desertion, but also points to the troublesome sufferings of other benign victims like Kaushalya, Sumitra, Urmila, Sarama, Mandodari and Ahalya.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, with her incessant style and lucid story-telling expertise, has resorted to mythical and magical analogies in many of her fictional tales. On the one hand, she has delineated the fabulous journey of the female folk from innocence to experience amidst odious ramifications of ignominy and hackneyed passivity, while on the other; she has specified the unbound continuity of life substantiating instability, vulnerability and uncertainty with an optimum aspiration for bliss and ecstasy. She herself has traversed the two antithetical polarities of India and America, and as a by-product of this Diasporic demarcation, she has endeavored to dip her pen into the miseries of Diasporic inefficacy with a subtle enumeration of myth and magic and an exceptional delicacy of surreal narratives.

The earliest female incarnation in Hindu mythology is the invincible spirit of ‘Shakti’, the positive energy which can obliterate or diminish any negative vibe with

intense sagacity and recuperate the natural poise. Nandini Bhadra, in her essay “Emerging Relationships in Diasporic Locations: An Examination of Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s Fictions”, has spoken about this positive energy recurring in the form of goddess Durga, Kali or Shakti:

In Hindu mythology, the goddess Durga is represented as the abode of ‘shakti’, a Sanskrit word which means inner strength and power and Kali symbolises the dark aspect of feminine power. The goddess is benevolent and malevolent at different times, depending on the need for protection, sustenance and destruction of evil. Indian Hindu women have been brought up not only to worship these icons, but also to internalize part of this ‘Shakti’. Perhaps Divakaruni seems to suggest that that the Indian woman in the diaspora is fortunate to have come from an ancient culture and can use her own resources, her inner shakti to make a place for herself in the new country she inhabits. (295)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni attempts to take her readers into the brain of the protagonist who put some light on her condition and all loose strings are tied by the end. The titles *The Forest of Enchantments* are relevant to the changing circumstances in the life of the Sita. The first person narration also permits the author to investigate deep into the head of the protagonist, exposing her frustrations and dread. First-person narration is a style where a tale is narrated by one character at the same time, talking for and about them. First-person narrative may be plural, singular or several as well to be a reliable, authoritative or illusory voice. Divakaruni is a skilled article writer who uses sensual vocabulary to make the book exciting, besides she actually is also dramatic and lyrical imaginative writer.

Myths are mostly glorious stories of the ancient past that solicit embalmed euphoria from mundane despondency. They depict a genre of unmitigated despair, inerrant sordidness and realistic descriptions of the everyday affair with non-realistic figurative use. Myth is an ancient story or set of stories, especially explaining the early history of a group of people or about natural events and facts.

Chitra Divakaruni applies the archetypal images of Sita to portray her unsung sufferings, the way she was deprived, neglected and disgraced by her husband and beloved subjects by rewriting her stories to develop scopes for holistic development and felicitate equal justice for her recompense. Chitra Banerjee to recreate this idealistic myth into contemporary critical purview. It took almost eleven years to produce this novel altogether different from migratory oscillations, could almost envision the mythical Ayodhya along with its kings and queens, bringing out those otherwise obligated stories with unfathomed criticality. Her work is more often called *Sitayana*, the journey of Sita from her supernatural birth to the ultimate denunciation into the mother earth. Therefore, it is a tale of feministic resistance where none of the major incidents was altered.

Unlike the mythical narrative, she has represented a very humanitarian image of Sita, a woman devoted to her husband as well as her followers, a passionate admirer of nature, a considerate mother, and also a banished wife who questions the injustices thrown upon her fate. Divakaruni has admitted that she was never satisfied with the destinies these mythical females had been born with. She confesses that: “I discovered folk songs about Sita, or those addressed to her. I realized that there were many portraits of her, each different in a significant way. It gave me the courage to write my own version.” (viii)

Divakaruni has followed three important patterns to transpire her imagination into word-pictures; first being that as Ram was the incarnation of Vishnu, Sita was also the incarnation of Lakshmi, but unlike Ram she had to suffer more as a human being, and if she worship Ram as the ideal husband who did not marry twice for his immense love to Sita, then how could he banish her without any fault of her own? Secondly, though Sita is considered to be an emblem of meekness, she endures all suffering for her extreme love and devotion for her own people.

At the end she demonstrates the courage of not compromising to the male patriarchs, which have been a common act of desperation of the Indian females. And thirdly, she knew that the love story of Ram and Sita is one of the most tragic stories of unfulfilment, unrequited passion and desire, so elevating Sita by undermining the status of Ram would have been too simplistic a conclusion for that colossal epic. Therefore, she depicted the compulsions and responsibilities of Ram, and obviously, in doing so, she has explored the exciting and surprising layers of Sita's character with genuine solemnity.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni follows more or less the original story line. There is no deviation, but she has generously and liberally used her creativity and imagination to create scenes, to build scenarios, adding some of her incredible touch and treatment to the already known characters and plot which did wonders to the story line. Divakaruni has modernized the character of Sita through her writing style. She has done a remarkable job in giving a human touch to the story. The transition from the comfort zone of birth house to the uncomforted zone of husband's house after marriage has been realistically narrated by the author.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has a wonderful writing style. The way she keeps improvising and renovating her narrative style is commendable. She keeps churning out books written in the same voice and style. She keeps innovating her style by using various writing techniques. All her books appear to be fresh and unique. While writing *The Forest of Enchantments*, she must have been in her most reflective and perceptive mood. Through Sita, she had observed various shades and forms of love. Love could kill as Dasharath died instantly after his separation from Ram. Love could make you a destroyer as Lakshman was ready to kill anyone for Ram. Love makes to do things which one may not believe in as Sita's mother Sunanina doesn't believe in superstition but was not ready to take chances when it comes to her children.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has also breathed life into other female characters like Urmila, Kaikeyi, Ahalya, Mandodari, Surpanakha, Sunaina and Kaushalya. Among the entire story she beautifully told the story of Ahalya and Guatam. The author has taken her story forward after Ram liberated her from the curse. Ahalya was shown giving the silent treatment to sage Gautam for the mistrust and suffering she went through in spite of her innocence. But there seems to be no apparent results. Sita raised questions about the kind of injustice meted out to Ahalya.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has told the story of other female characters but does not lend them voice to raise when Sita was asked to again go through purity test. Lav and Kush conveniently stood by their father's side. The author does not give that thundering and powerful voice to Sita which she gave to Draupadi in *The Palace of Illusion*. Sita's voice was not loud and aggressive. Sita had soft and quiet strength with which she says "NO MORE".

Sita and Urmila have always intrigued the reader. They were vulnerable yet strong; emotionally intelligent and full of compassion. With their quiet strength and endurance, both stood taller than the men of the epic. In *The Forest of Enchantments* Chitra's Sita will remain in everyone's heart forever. Everyone just loved Sita as a healer, blowing the breath of life in every living being. One who reads the book will definitely love Chitra's Sita, who was a devoted wife, but defied the male chauvinism with her logic and reasoning.

Ramayan is a tale, the epic nuances of Ram's generousness or his idealism, his unending effort of rescuing Sita, the fraternal bond between brothers and the devotedness of Sita as the emblem of virtue and loyalty. Those unnoticed or neglected females and their continuous struggle to maintain their individuality. *Sitayan* is no doubt a masterpiece of Divakaruni because instead of presenting a female-oriented discourse, she has described both the parties with their own versions of dilemma and obligations. She has not even tried to offer an altered destination to Sita's perilous journey; nor does she paint a negative image of Ram as a dominating or tyrant husband; she paints her canvas of *Sitayan* with those references which were already there in the original epic, but somehow deemed under the halo of patriarchal glory.

Mythological discourses are generally seen to be male-centred, where the majestic heroes rescue their queens or princesses after long battles and bloodshed. But, females are rarely seen fighting in battles to rescue their lost glories. Divakaruni, both in *The Palace of Illusions* and *The Forest of Enchantments*, has tried to re-mould, re-tell and prefabricated those mythical narratives to distraught the set pattern of hierarchy as well as to figure out the muted protests against marginalization, otherisation and the insignificant subject-position of this peripheral sex.

In Divakaruni's retelling of the epic, minor women characters come to life, claiming their own lures, redesigning and rephrasing them. The author delves deep into their selves and lays their beauty out. If this representation of women characters is satisfying, the men are treated with equal thoughtfulness. Over the years, the readers have been trained to gradually dislike Ram, to question his ethics, blame him for everything that goes wrong with our protagonist, Sita. Conversely, there has also been an awakening of fondness for Ravan, his wisdom and respect for Sita.

The author works gently to cleanse and remove such prejudices and biases. No one is entirely right or entirely wrong, for all human with quirks and fallacies, just like Ram and Sita and their clan. No one is to be blindly revered or reviled. Everyone live as per their ideals, and they are only as correct or misguided as eyes train to see. No wonder, then, the readers can only absorb the novel in the way that their own experiences and worldview have shaped them. Men and women, puritans and naysayers, seekers and the enlightened – there are traces of all perspectives, an attempt to examine the story from multiple angles, explanations and observations that are both compelling and riveting.

Divakaruni's style – her fine web of fine words that mould to her will. She is the original feminist. With the lightest touch, her sentences morph into ideas, concepts and discoveries. Her language is as delicate as silk, pleasing to the senses, but also enduring in its strength. Apart from the stylistic flair, one of her major strengths is her unraveling of multiple dimensions of characters. Sita comes across as a fierce conservationist, dutiful but bold daughter, protective sister, loving yet willful wife, perfect helpmate, sensual lover, courageous fighter, skilled healer, learned counselor, strong mother, kind yet firm daughter-in-law, nurturer and

adventurer. She revels in her own being, is mindful of pleasure and grief, of empathy and understanding, and is brimming with dignity for herself and for everyone else.

Divakaruni's rendition rightly raises pertinent questions on racism, sexism, inequality, castes, and also on post-traumatic stress disorder, animal rights and so on. While the myths and dreams, symbols and forebodings are right up the author's forte, there is at times a sense of excess. Several incidents and thoughts, though well-formed and admirable, are not always precise or even necessary. The first meeting between Ram and Sita, or Sita's entrapment in Ravan's gardens takes up entire pages sounding repetitive and superfluous. This languorous style, though relaxing, has the danger of slipping into the lethargic.

Even then, Divakaruni maintains an air of mystery in the story, peppering it with tiny shocks here and there. The abduction of Sita, is very well-devised and chilling; so is Ravan's death. The sustained and controlled fervor of her storytelling keeps even the most skeptical among the readers hooked. *The Forest of Enchantments* is a work of grace and kindness, of pluralities and possibilities. It is an experiment that makes us grateful to be living in this era of multiple truths and interpretations. This is the *Sitayan*, it may imbibe Sita's strength to the readers, who will learn how a woman is to be treated, and how exactly not.

Even as this Sita gracefully embraces womanhood in its entirety, allowing her beauty to manifest through her inner strength, Divakaruni never undermines the underlying melancholy that engulfs Sita all along her tumultuous odyssey. As human as her portrayal is, Divakaruni is careful to make plenty of room for mysticism, adding color to her canvas. So Sita often has visions of her future, not essentially in

the way it would happen, but glimpses that guide her to where she might be headed, and often, it leads her down some dark paths.

The most prominent evidence is in the fact that while the story is told through the perspective of a female, it actually caters to male narratives, with a few exceptions. The description of Sita's journey seems to centre around Ram, with other stages such as before her marriage or other interactions in her life existing on the fringes. The bid to cross the fissure dichotomizing gender falls short of achieving a middle ground, precisely because it takes on stereotypically female outlooks and feeds into a hierarchy of attributes that is biased towards what males traditionally value. It highlights and prizes male norms in a subtle way through Sita's personality while covertly discouraging threats to the ideal. There is an unsettling emphasis throughout the book that Sita must endure the adversities in her life, she must be prepared to make sacrifices and accept the follies and mistakes of others. Even Banerjee's reconfiguration of the *agnipariksha* is less of a defiant escape from humiliation and more of an emphasis of the *pativrata* ideal of a married woman.

While Sita does refuse to go through a second *agnipariksha*, she vindicates her chastity before she departs. Her protest has more to do with justifying her actions when she was innocent and less to do with being put in the position of defending her actions when was abducted and held against her will. In forgiving Ram for putting her through the ordeal, she not only validates oppression in the name of love, but also emerges as the faithful wife who forgives the unforgivable.

The main complaint with Divakaruni is that she failed to do justice to Sita's perspective. In the end, *The Forest of Enchantments* remained a tale about dharma, virtue and karma and not a channel for Sita's voice and an expression for the

oppression of the women in the *Ramayan*. The protagonist always seemed to live life for someone else rather than herself- first her father, then her husband and lastly for her sons and this devalued her autonomy in living her life simply for herself. Throughout the book, the female characters were defined via their use to the males – their value is estimated through their instrumentality to the men in the narrative. The next chapter sums up the entire thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMATION

Indian writing in English has relatively short but highly charged history. Indian English literature has acquired great importance in the world literature. The genre novel was imported from the west. Indian literature is the immortal piece of expression of unified experience of Indian English writers who have contributed much in the field of fiction. Indian English literature is related to the works of members of the Indian Diaspora. Many of the writers neither live in India nor are Indian citizens.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's works are mostly set in India and the United States, and often centre on the occurrence of South Asian immigrants. She writes for children as well as for adults, and has print novels in multifold genres, consisting of realistic fiction, historical fiction, magical realism, myth and fantasy. *The Forest of Enchantments* was published in 2019. The *Ramayana*, one of the world's greatest epics, is also a tragic love story. In this dazzling retelling, she places Sita at the centre of the novel this is Sita's version. It is also a very human story of some of the other women in the epic, frequently misunderstood and demoted to the margins of Kaikeyi, Surpanakha and Mandodari. The novel has mighty remarks on duty, betrayal, adultery and honour. It is about a women struggle to retain freedom in a world that benefits men, as Chitra transforms an ancient story into a gripping, contemporary battle of determination.

The Forest of Enchantments is based on India's most adored lovelorn epic Ramayana. This novel portrays Ram's fourteen years of exile and Sita's life thereafter from her view. It gives Sita's deep-rooted wish and her love for Nature. She was

indeed the daughter of Nature who could feel their grief as well as pleasures. The forced banishment had its ups and downs which even Ram and Sita could not escape.

The novel deals with Sita's life in the forest life. It also engages with the other characters in the circumstances. But the chief attentiveness lies in the fact on how Sita, staying within the society, highlights the ambiguity of society and how women in their life are subjected to racial discrimination in their own house, their society, and most importantly how men try to control their lives. Sita's voice further speaks about the art of destabilizing the public and the private life which is very prominent for the entire human race to follow. How Sita understands and analyses the different face of love also provide a lesson for life to the entire human race.

The second chapter deals with the womanhood of Sita and other main characters in the novel. Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* is about retelling of *Ramayan* from Sita's perspective. She clearly portrays the character of Sita as a contemporary woman. Sita is the protagonist of *Ramayan*. The Indian popular culture showed Sita as a meek, docile, soft, tender, long suffering, self-sacrifice, who is bearing misfortune but Divakaruni's *The Forest of Enchantments* placed Sita into a different light. She deploys the narratorial voice which has retold the story of Sita in different way as to one closer to the modern times.

As an Indian diasporic writer Divakaruni has nostalgia about Indian culture and tradition. The word culture comprises of behaviours and institutions, for attempts at retelling an ancient epic through the female's perspective. This novel focuses on the self discovery of Sita who is a celebrated female character of ancient India. Divakaruni has changed her way of thinking from traditional portrayal of simple and selfless women into modern female characters who are searching for their identity in the patriarchal world.

Sita is a paragon of humanism, of fidelity, of grace, of sagacity, of valour, and fortitude. In this novel, Sita is the woman from mythology who fights her own battles of hardship. In her single life span, she is abandoned by her parents right after her birth, is exiled with her husband, abducted by Ravan, and later on undergoes an ordeal of fire to prove her fidelity. Her pertinent efforts to satisfy male egotism make her firmer to rescue her self-esteem by relinquishing the mortal world.

The novel became a meditation on the nature of love. She clearly portrays the character of Sita as a contemporary woman. And it also tells about the goddess Sita who is in the form of human body and how she got into the palace of Mithila and her marriage life in Ayodhya. After that her husband and herself were banished 14 years of exile. It tells about how she managed to behave in a proper way during her marriage struggles in her mother-in-law's house.

India is a land of culture and strong beliefs in superstition, preserving and praising the culture is a prestige of all countries. Indian Literature is full of depiction of the myths and legends, myths are one of the segments which serve to determine the Indianness in Indian Literature. As a woman novelist she has added a new dimension to Indian English novel. Her novel reflects the changing role of Indian women from the traditional mythicised one to the new one of emancipation, modernity and the resultant changes in the social set up. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni wrote her story except in the colour of menstruation and childbirth, the colour of marriage marks the changes in women's lives, this can be compared to the colour of the flowers of the Ashoka tree under which Sita had spent her years of captivity in the palace of the demon king Ravan.

The third chapter deals with how *Ramayana* is portrayed in the perspective of Rama and how Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni portrayed *Ramayana* in the perspective of Sita, Sitayan. It consists of nearly twenty four thousand verses and it is divided into seven *kandas*: *Bala Kanda*, *Ayodhya Kanda*, *Aranya Kanda*, *Krishkindha Kanda*, *Sundara Kanda*, *Yuddha Kanda* and *Uttara Kanda*. *The Ramayana* belongs to the genre of Itihasa, narratives of past events which include the Mahabharata, the Puranas, and *the Ramayana*. It depicts the duties of relationships, portraying ideal characters like the ideal father, the ideal servant, the ideal brother, the ideal husband, and the ideal king. Like the *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* presents the teachings of ancient Hindu sages in the narrative allegory, interspersing philosophical and ethical elements.

The epic, traditionally ascribed to the Maharishi Valmiki, narrates the life of Rama, a legendary prince of Ayodhya city in the kingdom of Kosala and was written at Amritsar in Punjab. The epic follows his fourteen-year exile to the forest urged by his father King Dasharatha, on the request of Rama's stepmother Kaikeyi, his travels across forests in the Indian subcontinent with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana, the kidnapping of Sita by Ravana – the king of Lanka, that resulted in war; and Rama's eventual return to Ayodhya to be crowned king amidst jubilation and celebration.

Rama, the hero of *Ramayana*, is a popular deity worshiped by Hindus, the route of his wanderings being trodden by devout pilgrims. The poem is not a mere literary monument, it is a part of Hinduism, and is held in such reverence that the mere reading or hearing of it, or certain passages of it, is believed by the Hindus to free them from sin and grant every desire to the reader or hearer. According to Hindu tradition, Rama is an incarnation of the god Vishnu, who is part of the Hindu Trinity.

The main purpose of this incarnation is to demonstrate the righteous path for the life on earth.

In Rama's youth, Rama is seen breaking the bow of Siva at Sita's *Swayamvara* in Mithila, as portrayed by artist Raja Ravi Varma. Brahma, creator of the universe, could not revoke a boon he gave the demon king Ravana, as a reward for his severe penances, that he should not be slain by gods, demons, or spirits. Having been then rewarded, Ravana began with the help of his evil supporters, the rakshasas, to lay waste the earth and to do violence to the good, especially the Brahmin priests, disturbing their sacrifices.

The fourth chapter sums up art of narration in novel *The Forest of Enchantments*. This novel is written in first person narrative technique as Sita narrates her own story. This imposes an obvious problem while re-telling an ancient epic. From the very beginning, Sita is portrayed as an ambitious girl who wants to rule the kingdom of Mithila and is outraged at the suggestion that no woman can be ruler of Mithila because of the “old belief the citizens of Mithila hold: no woman is strong enough-or wise enough-to guide them” (14). Sita is the daughter of earth and the archetypal mother who listens to the women characters on the margins and shines a loving light on this mythic world.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, with her incessant style and lucid story-telling expertise, has resorted to mythical and magical analogies in many of her fictional tales. On the one hand, she has delineated the fabulous journey of the female folk from innocence to experience amidst odious ramifications of ignominy and hackneyed passivity, while on the other; she has specified the unbound continuity of life substantiating instability, vulnerability and uncertainty with an optimum aspiration for bliss and ecstasy. She herself has traversed the two antithetical polarities of India and

America, and as a by-product of this Diasporic demarcation, she has endeavored to dip her pen into the miseries of Diasporic inefficacy with a subtle enumeration of myth and magic and an exceptional delicacy of surreal narratives.

The Forest of Enchantments re-examines the narrative of the *Ramayana* through Sita's eyes. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni has used various techniques in writing such as alternative narrative, first and third person narrative, stream of consciousness, letter and diary writing, myth and magic realism particularly to express disordered and tragic condition of Indian immigrants while establishing themselves to the new civilization. She is modernist copy writer since her writing highlights the idea of the trivial woman with an endocentric setup. Divakaruni gives voice to women in mythology whose narrative has most often been written and controlled by men. By shifting the focus from men's stories to women's narratives, she increases empathy and understanding of women struggles through the ages.

The Forest of Enchantments focuses on the use of myth in her own style. She has used different settings in her novels. No novel of Divakaruni is complete without the use of myths. Her protagonists are women. Through women characters she depicts the deep – rooted culture of Indian tradition. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni usually portrays women characters protagonists. Her history focuses on the life span of a female specially an immigrant. A very impressive technique used by Divakaruni is blending the element of 'myth' in her stories. Divakaruni uses dreams as an effective means of narrative. She has administered magical realism along with the crudity of pragmatism and heartrending naturalism and purposefully woven the magical world through her imaginative narration and lucidity of incorporating an alternated reality full of charm and captivating allurements.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni's latest book, *The Forest of Enchantments* and it re-examines the narrative of the Ramayana through Sita's eyes. It sheds fresh light on a major Hindu epic, and attempts to question a woman's place in society and reflects on the idea of female autonomy in a patriarchal community. The book, *The Forest of Enchantments* outlining the contours of several shadowy female figures in the myth through Sita's interactions with them- Kaikei, Ahalya, Surpanakha and Mandodari are all reconstructed in this manner. This in itself is an extremely attractive proposal as these women, their contributions and sacrifices are usually dismissed as trivial facts in the unfolding of the myth.

Sita questions the boundary line between what is acceptable and unacceptable in a male-oriented world, which imposes a certain standard on the conduct of women and judges their actions from that bounded rationality. *The Forest of Enchantments* uses Sita's experiences to unravel the gendered double standard and when it is necessary for women to protest rather than accept their fate. Unlike some authors, Divakaruni does not fictionalise any elements of the legend, so there are no unexpected twists and turns and the narrative is the foreseeable one most of us grew up with. Sticking to the original script has the advantage of refocusing the lens on the patriarchal interpretations in the *Ramayana* where the patriarchal acts are unchangeable-if this story had rewritten the epic, while giving one temporary gratification, it would leave curiously dissatisfied because the realm of reality is in the actual narrative.

One of the first patriarchal interpretations it rejects is the idea of Ram as a stoic, self assured, man with no need for encouragement. Divakaruni's Ram breaches the boundaries of stereotypical male and female attributes and confesses his

vulnerability to Sita, sharing his fears with her. In a deeply interesting move, the narrative reworks Sita's banishment to Valmiki's ashram as a product of Ram's own insecurities and childhood experiences, giving a different tint to the whole novel by making the literary legend fallible. Sita questions the stark dichotomy between good and bad by conceding that each individual has their own understanding of *dharma* or just conduct. All that differs is perspective. In doing so, she creates a cross-cutting bond amongst the female characters in the myth, who instead of being pitted against each other, become creatures dictated by their circumstances and own ideals of morality.

Banerjee's *Ramayan* is deeply accessible in a way the original text is not – it humanises the individuals were brought up revering as Gods. Her examination of household dynamics and everyday hassles make the story distinctly relatable because it becomes evident that the intricacies of mortal interactions confuse even the divine. A retelling has immense potential to give power to those who are otherwise deprived of it and recast a narrative in a different light, reshaping the very context in which actions were interpreted, changing their meaning and basis. Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni hits the nail on the head with some aspects of her writing, but *The Forest of Enchantments* is a far cry from the feminist reshaping.

The most prominent evidence is in the fact that while the story is told through the perspective of a female, it actually caters to male narratives, with a few exceptions. The description of Sita's journey seems to centre on Ram, with other stages such as before her marriage or other interactions in her life existing on the fringes. The bid to cross the fissure dichotomising gender falls short of achieving a middle ground, precisely because it takes on stereotypically female outlooks and feeds

into a hierarchy of attributes that is biased towards what males traditionally value. It highlights and prizes male norms in a subtle way through Sita's personality while covertly discouraging threats to the ideal.

Divakaruni Banerjee's Sita protests largely internally and sometimes feebly externally. The protagonist almost seems to start down a path to abandon it again in favor of the well travelled socially respected route. There is an unsettling emphasis throughout the book that Sita must endure the adversities in her life, she must be prepared to make sacrifices and accept the follies and mistakes of others. Even Banerjee's reconfiguration of the *agnipariksha* is less of a defiant escape from humiliation and more of an emphasis of the *pativrata* ideal of a married woman.

Sita does refuse to go through a second *agnipariksha*, she vindicates her chastity before she departs. Her protest has more to do with justifying her actions when she was innocent and less to do with being put in the position of defending her actions when was abducted and held against her will. In forgiving Ram for putting her through the ordeal, she not only validates oppression in the name of love, but also emerges as the faithful wife who forgives the unforgivable. The main complaint with Divakaruni is that she failed to do justice to Sita's perspective. In the end, *The Forest of Enchantments* remained a tale about dharma, virtue and karma and not a channel for Sita's voice and an expression for the oppression of the women in the *Ramayan*. The protagonist always seemed to live life for someone else rather than herself- first her father, then her husband and lastly for her sons and this devalued her autonomy in living her life simply for herself. Throughout the book, the female characters were defined via their use to the males – their value is gauged through their instrumentality to the men in the narrative.

Rather than a feminist recasting, it feeds into societal norms of victim-blaming and appreciates qualities from a male standpoint. While the author does try in several places to give Sita an independent voice, the book as a whole comes off as a shallow attempt at understanding the difficulties and dilemmas a woman faces. It leaves a powerless caricature where a complex woman was promised and reflects traditional narratives that extract impossible standards of conduct from females. Even though the female characters suffer in the novel *The Forest of Enchantments* they get success in their life. Sita's fortitude, patience and tolerance it is evident that a woman should saddle the family ties but not at the cost of her self-respect and dignity. She should try to maintain her independent individuality.

WORK CITED

- Adichie Ngozi, Chimananda. *We Should All Be Feminists*. Vintage Original, HarperCollins, 2014, pp 4.
- Aruna, Marie Joesphine. *Patriarchal Myths in Postmodern Feminist Fiction: Select Study*, Pondicherry University, March 2010, pp. 230
- Bhadra, Nandini. *Locating Asian American Women Writers in the Diaspora*. Prestige Books International, 2013.
- Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *The Forest of Enchantments*. Hapercollins, 2019.
- Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *The Palace of Illusion*, DoupleDay, 2008.
- Griffith, Ralph T. H. *Ramayana of Valmiki*. WentworthPress, 2016.
- Kohli, Suresh, Editor. *Aspects of Indian Literature – changing pattern*. Vikas publishing House Pvt. Ltd. pp. 3-4.
- Nagarajan, T. K. *The Image of Women in Indian Literature*. Rajesh Kumar Yadav for Navyug, 2012, pp. 166.
- Narayan, R. K. *The Ramayana: A Shortened Modern Prose Version of the Indian Epic*. Penguin Books, 2006.
- Narmadha, S. “The Forest of Enchantments: Revisiting the Epic from Sita’s Perspective”. vol. 8, 6 June 2020, [www.doi.org/10.24113/ijellh.v8i6.10634](https://doi.org/10.24113/ijellh.v8i6.10634).
- Vivekananda, Swami. “Jnana Yoga: The Yoga of Knowledge”, 2015, pp. 14.

Nature, Women and Refugees: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*

A project 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

by

THERES RAHINA . J

(REG. NO. 20APEN31)



PG & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (Autonomous)

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

THOOTHUKUDI

MAY 2022

CONTENTS

DECLARATION

CERTIFICATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

PREFACE

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE NO.
One	Introduction	1
Two	Refugees and Settlers	14
Three	Nature and Man	23
Four	Struggles of Women	33
Five	Summation	44
	Works Cited	53

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled “**Nature, Women and Refugees: A Study of Amitav Ghosh’s *The Hungry Tide***” 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.

Thoothukudi

May 2022

Theres Rahina . J

Theres Rahina . J

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project entitled "**Nature, Women and Refugees: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide***" is submitted 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 J. Theres Rahina during the year 2021-2022 and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.


Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI


Dr. F. Mary Priya

Guide


Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose
Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001.


Examiner 27/05/2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am extremely grateful to the **Lord Almighty** for his guidance and grace in completing this project successfully during the year 2021-2022.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging a research oriented study. I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study.

I thank **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English, for her motivational support, moral guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am deeply grateful to **Dr. F . Mary Priya**, Assistant professor of English for her untiring help, academic guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank other staff members of the department for their constant support and the librarian for the extended help in the use of the library for reference work and the resources of the library.

I am indebted to my parents for the great comforts I enjoy and the good education they have provided me. I also thank them for their moral support and benevolence.

PREFACE

Amitav Ghosh is an Indian novelist. In his novel *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh intertwines two different cultures through Kanai Dutt, Fokir and Piyali Roy. Fokir represents the indigenous culture of Sundarbans and Kanai Dutt symbolises the foreign culture. The present study **Nature, Women and Refugees: A Study of Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*** has been organised into five chapters.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Amitav Ghosh his life, works, awards and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of his work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Refugees and Settlers** focuses on the violence against refugees and settlers in tide country.

The third chapter **Nature and Man** revolves around the relationship between the marine biologist and nature.

The fourth chapter **Struggles of Women** describes the women who are in search for their own identity.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and brings out the researcher's findings.

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

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a term used to describe written and spoken materials. Literature most commonly refers to the work of creative imagination, including poem, drama, fiction, non-fiction, in some instances journalism and song. Literature can be classified in many ways. One key distinction for prose literature is between fiction and non-fiction. Other than of prose, works of literature can be classified as drama or poetry both of which have their own sub-categories. Definitions of literature varied over times. In Western Europe prior to the eighteenth century, literature as a term indicated all books and writing. A more restricted sense of the term 'Literature' emerged during the Romantic period, in which it began to demarcate 'imaginative' literature. Contemporary writer's debate over what constitutes literature can be seen as returning to the older, more inclusive notion of what constitutes literature.

A literary genre is a category of literary compositions. Genres may be determined by literary technique, tone, content or even length. The distinctions between genres and categories are flexible and loosely defined, often with some groups. The most general genres in literature are epic, tragedy, comedy and creative non-fiction. They can all be in the form of prose or poetry. A genre such as satire, allegory or pastoral might appear in any of the above, not only as a subgenre, but as mixture of genres. Finally, they are defined by the general cultural movement of the historical period in which they are composed. A novel is an elongated work of narrative fiction, it is written in prose form. The novel derives early 18th century from the Italian word 'Novella', which was used for stories in the antique period. The fore-father of the novel was Elizabethan prose fiction and French heroic romance novel. The modern era usually makes use of a literary prose style. The novel came in to popular attention

towards the end of 1700s, due to the flourishing middle class with more leisure time to read and to buy books.

Indian English literature refers to that body of works by writers from India. The seed of Indian writing in English was sown during the period of the British rule in India. Indian writers poets, novelists, essayists and dramatists have been making notable and major contributions to the world literature. Indian English literature has gained an independent status in the realm of world literature. Indian English literature refers to the literature produced on the Indian subcontinent until 1947 and in the republic of India thereafter. In 1973, Sake Dean Mahomed wrote perhaps the first book by an Indian in English called the travels of Dean Mahomed. Most early Indian writing in English was non-fictional work, such as biographies and political essays. English language may be foreign in its origin but it has gained massive popularity over the years and is also the most favoured language of communication amongst people of various regions in India. Indian English literature contains the finest remarks of life and conduct.

The Sanskrit epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* appeared towards the end of second millennium BCE, as did the Tamil Sangam literature, the palicanon and Telugu appeared in the 6th and 11th centuries commonly. Later, literature in Marathi, Assamese, Odia, Bengali and Maithili appeared thereafter literature in various accent on Hindi, Persian and Urdu began to appear as well.

The arrival of Indian literature in English can be traced to the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century when English education was authorized in the cities of Madras, Bombay and Kolkata in the former British India. Raja Ram Mohan Roy from Bengal was the pioneer of Indian writing in English. He claimed that English should be the medium of education in India. Rabindranath Tagore

was also one of the eminent literary dignitaries during that age, who is well known for his work *Gitanjali*.

The current Indian literature is due to the effort of many creative writers, some of them are Sarojini Naidu, Nayantra Sehgal, Rama Mehta. Anita Desai is a celebrated figure in the Indian Literary world. Her famous works are, *Clear Light Of Day* in 1980, *In Custody* in 1984 which is taken in to an award winning film in 1993 and the *Village By The Sea* in 1982 for which she won the Guardian Children fiction prize. Desai published her first novel , *Cry The Peacock*, in 1963. In 1958 she collaborated with P. Lal to find the publishing firm Writers Workshop.

She considers *Clear Light Of Day* in 1980 her most autobiographical work as it set during her coming of age and also in the same neighbourhood in which she grew up. In 1999 Booker Prize finalist novel *Fasting*, this novel increased her popularity. Her novel *The Zigzag Way*, set in 20th century Mexico, appeared in 2004 and her latest collection of short stories, *The Artist Of Disappearance*, was published in 2011.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, an award winning and bestselling author, poet, activist. Her work was published in 50 magazines, including the Atlantic Monthly and The New Yorker and her writing has been included in over 50 anthologies. Her books have been translated into 29 languages including Dutch, Hebrew, Bengali, Russian, and Japanese. Divakaruni has judged several prestigious awards, such as The National Book Award and The Faulkner Award.

Two of her books *The Mistress of Spices* and *Sister of My Heart*, had been made into movies by film makers Gurinder Chandra, Berges and Suharini Mani Ratnam respectively. A short story, *The Word Love* from her collection *Arranged Marriage*, was made into a Bilingual short film in Bengali and English, titled *Ammar Ma*. All the films

have won awards. Several of her novels are currently under option at Hollywood and Bollywood.

Arundhati Roy is well known for her political stances and commentary. Her debut novel is *The God of Small Things* in 1997. Her work also includes essays like *War Talk* in 2003 and *Capitalism: A Ghost story* in 2014. Khushwant Singh was an eminent Indian writer, journalist, lawyer and politician. One of the integral works of the 20th century Indian Literature is *Train to Pakistan* in 1956. His other well-known and renowned books are *I shall not hear the nightingale* in 1959, *Truth, Love and a little Malice* in 2002, *Delhi: A Novel* in 1990 and *The Company of Women* in 1999. The women in India had made evident contribution to literature, and their contribution is well acknowledged in all literary circles.

Aravind Adiga's debut novel *The White Tiger* in 2008 won the *Man Booker Prize*. It is one of the most defining segments in 21st century Indian literature. His other works are included in the era of short stories *Between the Assassination* in 2008. Novel, *Last Man in Tower* in 2011 and *Selections Day* in 2016. His works are marked by a linguistic insular density that sees him weave complex narratives and multiple narrators into his tales, which combine a vivid portrayal of the rich patch works of Indian literature.

Kamala Markandaya was born in 1924. He is best remembered for her novel *Nectar in the Sieve*, which was published in early 50s. It is a touching count of the life of an Indian peasant woman, Rukmani and her struggle for survival in abiding her love for her husband. They also reflect the changing times and society.

Among many contemporary Indian English novelist Amitav Ghosh has acquired a unique place in literature. He is one of the distinctive and influential writers

of the post- colonial period. He is a prolific writer and he has written eight novels, three non-fiction works and several scholarly articles. Most of his novels have won national and international literary awards. His works have gained critical acclaim across the world. He had excellent the global literary standards set by the post-colonial and post-modern writers like Salman Rushdie, VikramSeth, SashiTharoor, Arundhati Roy and so on.

In the contemporary Indian Literary scenario Ghosh is one of the writers who reflect the truth of Indian reality. He bears numerous responsibilities in the world of literature. He is an anthropologist, sociologist, novelist, essayist, travel writer, teacher and slips in to global responsibility for establishing peace as an ambassador. He is one of the prominent and popular Indian novelists in English in the contemporary text.

Amitav Ghosh was born in Calcutta on 11 July 1956 and was educated at the all boys boarding school The Doon School in Dehradun. He grew up in India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. His contemporaries at Doon included author Vikram Seth and historian Ram Guha. While at school, he regularly contributed fiction and poetry The Doon School Weekly and founded the magazine History Times along with Guha. After Doon, he received his degrees from St Stephen's College, Delhi University, and Delhi School of Economics.

He then won the Inlaks Foundation scholarship to complete a D. Phil. in social anthropology at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, under the supervision of British Social Anthropologist Peter Lienhardt. The thesis, undertaken in the Faculty of Anthropology and Geography, was entitled "Kinship in relation to economic and social organization in an Egyptian village community" and was submitted in 1982.

In 2009, he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. In 2015, Ghosh was named a Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellow. He won the 54th Jnanpith award in 2018, India's highest literary honour. Ghosh's ambitious novels use complex narrative strategies to probe the nature of national and personal identity, particularly of the people of India and Southeast Asia. He has also written non-fiction works discussing topics such as colonialism and climate change. He worked at the Indian Express newspaper in New Delhi and several academic institutions.

Ghosh holds two Lifetime Achievement awards and four honorary doctorates. In 2007, he was awarded the Padma Shri, one of India's highest honours, by the President of India. In 2010 he was a joint winner, along with Margaret Atwood of a Dan David prize, and 2011 he was awarded the Grand Prix of the Blue Metropolis festival in Montreal. He was the first English-language writer to receive the award. In 2019 Foreign Policy magazine named him one of the most important global thinkers of the preceding decade. Ghosh lives in New York with his wife, Deborah Baker, author of the Laura Riding biography *In Extremis: The Life of Laura Riding* (1993) and a senior editor at Little, Brown and Company. They have two children named Lila and Nayan

Ghosh is best known for his English language historical fiction. Ghosh's first novel is *The Circle of Reason*, published in 1986. He was awarded France's Prix Medicis Award for this novel in 1990. It is a picaresque novel which concerns the adventures of Alu, a weaver from a small village in Gulf and to African Sahara then back to India. This novel has a diasporic theme of sense of displacement, self-identity, migration, alienation, quest for home and rootlessness. *The Glass Palace*, in 2000, is a tale of three generations of a family. It is a historical novel. This novel won the international e-book award at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2001. It is a story about

Rajkumar, who lands in Burma in rags but later becomes one of the richest timber traders in Burma. This novel also has many Diasporic themes such as self-identity, alienation, migration and quest for home. *The Shadow Lines* by Ghosh explores the political and economic growth of India through the lives of two families Bengali and English. This novel captures perspective of time and events that bring people together and hold them apart. The novel has an unnamed narrator relating the story of his experience and his uncle Tridib's experiences. Tridib is considered to be the protagonist of the novel. This novel is a useful resource to study the both the challenges of diaspora as well as the strategies of negotiation. *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and *Sea of Poppies* (2008) were some of his other works. The first volume of *The Ibis trilogy* is set in the 1830s, just before the Opium War, which encapsulates the colonial history of the East.

Diaspora is a psychological journey, a dilemma between homeland and new settlement nations. The migrant, journey from place to place becomes a stranger in other land and this alienation makes an effect on identity psychological peace and existential status. Amitav Ghosh, a novelist with an extraordinary sense of history and place, is indisputably one of the most important novelists in present time. Diasporic writing occupies a place of great significance between countries and cultures. Diasporic writing mostly become a response to the lost homes which leads to issues such as dislocation, nostalgia, discrimination, survival, cultural change and identity.

Amitav Ghosh shows a keen interest in projecting the diasporic life. Many of his narratives focus on the histories of exoduses and the individuals diasporic experiences. The blend of history and anthropology in Ghosh's novels helps him to bring out the present of the past in many aspects, including diaspora. He views the wars,

politics, economy and other worldly affairs from the perspective of the common people who suffer under all these major events and changes.

The Indian diasporic writers from all over the world started focusing on their homeland, the issue of migration and its effects, in their writings. For the Indian diasporic writers, it is India or the memories of India that become the materials to most of their literary expressions. Some of the important writers who concern their homeland and the diasporic subjects in their writings are V.S. Naipaul, Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Jhumpa Lahiri, Bharati Mukherjee, Arundhati Roy, Rohinton Mistry, Kiran Desai and Anita Desai.

The diasporic literature act as a bridge between two different cultures as it commonly deals with the memories of home and the experience of the emigrants in a host country with their native culture. Thus this literature became an extended form of home return; many of the diasporic writers looking back at their homeland, its culture and its other aspects through their writings. Among them Ghosh is one of the important diasporic writers who captures all the consciousness of diasporic community in his writings. His approach towards the movement of migration in all his novels was unique. He never directed his characters towards the loss on the foreign country instead he observed their experimental lives and gave a positive touch. His novels are always in search of the root cause of migration that never comes to view. He opened the past and re-examined every socio-political activity in order to expose its actual effect on the common people and their migration.

Ghosh is one of the postmodernists. Ghosh is immensely affected by the cultural and political milieu of post independent nation. Ghosh weaves the magical realistic plot along with postmodern background. Irony plays an important role in the

postmodern fiction. Ghosh is very careful in using the vernacular transcriptions and English. Ghosh improves a rich and conscious tradition in Indian English fiction, a tradition which includes Shashi Deshpande and R.K. Narayan. In Ghosh novels, *The Glass Palace*, *River of Smoke* and *Sea of Poppies*, postmodern traits and the treatment of diaspora are obviously present.

Ghosh's novels deal with the themes of political struggles and histories that caused the diaspora, memories of homeland, transculturation, idea of oneness and faceless human plights. He was very conscious on blurring the borders that divide India from its sub-continent. He expressed his vision of oneness or idea of the utopian world in most of his novels. There was a precise depiction of the reality of each and every stage in the lives of migrants in Ghosh's novels. Shubha Tiwari in his critical study about Amitav Ghosh states that, "Colonisation, recolonization, neo colonisation and decolonisation are recurring thoughts in Ghosh's work. Ghosh compulsively turns to this perspective"(3). As an Indian diaspora living in America, he was able to capture the outer and inner experiences of the people joining the exodus of migration and undergoing ineffable hardships. Both his fictional as well as non-fictional writings tend to project the restless moving across the continents, oceans and countries. Along with his universal ambition in his writings he never failed to offer a space to register the spirit of his homeland.

Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* adds a unique history of the Sundarbans in Indian history. The novel runs in two parallel stories, as in most of his earlier novels, of Kanai's and Piyali's visit to the Sundarbans that of the Morichjhapi incident as read by Kanai in the journal by Nirmal. History of Sundarbans is absorbed – its attraction of people of different castes and religion under Sir Hamilton to the present where Nilima's Babadon trust is fast expanding in Lusibari. Ghosh has portrayed a history of the tide country

that always changes with the flow of the tide. Nothing is permanent in the tide country except the water. The tide leaves no trace of earlier history of as it erases everything and begins a new one. Many ships and boats are sunk and houses destroyed with no trace of them. Even the natural islands and rivers are continually shaped and reshaped. Still, this muddy tide country attracts all sorts of people farmers, refugees, researchers, social workers, political readers and wildlife conservative donors.

To quote Sarika P. Arudhkar: “But in the name of tiger preservation, human lives are threatened; the tigers routinely maul and often kill islanders. Though there are the obvious modern devices that might be used to protect the islanders, the state allows the deaths to continue”(118). Ghosh has created such characters as are aware of the futility of the dividing shadow lines among individuals, be they of any religion, caste and creed, nation and social status.,

The tide country, with its strangely hybrid myth of Bon Bibi, is able to sustain its inhabitants in a struggle for existence. Ghosh seems to project a sort of society where caste and religion, colour and language are no barriers. Ghosh doesn't leave politics out of his novel. Through the Morichjhapi incident, he has brought a critical political play and criticized the politics of the communist government of West Bengal with all its propaganda for the people. He also bring East with West .Piya and Kanai represent the west and the cosmopolitan. Both are drawn, though in different manners, to the tide country and are shaken by their experience of the East in the Indian tide country of sundarbans. They could not help but admire such characters as kusum, Fokir and Moyna . Even though Fokir dies in saving Piya, his essence continues to give strength and a

new way of life to Piya. In the end, we see that Piya and Kanai come back to the tide country. They cannot escape the pull of the East.

Ghosh has tried to focus on the individuals' obsessions and peculiarities in this novel, the hungry tides are raging not only on the shores, but also on the psyche of individuals and their relationships. For Nilima, the trust was everything; she could not bear any harm to it. Her attachment to her enterprise can be seen in her words when she was having an argument with Nirmal. "And if you ask me what I will do to protect it, let me tell you, I will fight for it like a mother fights to protect her children. The hospital future, its welfare they mean everything to me, and I will not endanger them"(214).

On the other hand, Nirmal was a person who had nothing to do with the practical side of life. He always remained lost in his ideal dreams and poetry. He was a poet at heart who routinely invoked Rilke and at time of retirement realized that he never lived up to his revolutionary ideas in comparison to that of his wife. His papers left for Kanai contains an account of events at the end of his life. Ghosh's flashback technique depicts his dilemma in a very realistic manner which resembles the modern man's conflict.

The Hungry Tide shows the ever continuing struggle of the tide people against the tides and cyclones to create a stronghold in it. The tide also ever continues to erase everything in its way. The novel is Ghosh's portrayal of the ebb and flow of history of the tide country in all its odds. Ghosh has experimented various innovative techniques in his novels. Episodic narration, story within story, fantasy, myth, magic realism, cinematic technique or the flashback technique and the new vibrant usage of the English language, all combine to give the novels an unusual novelty. His characters are varied

and many of them have been portrayed as if they have descended from the pages of history. Displaying varied themes, his fictional canvas is filled with a multitude of people from many parts of the world who speak different languages and follow different cultures and religions. This transformation of theme and technique has transported the hitherto insular Indian English novel to the boarder frontiers of the new literatures of the world. Ghosh's works played a role in taking the Indian English novel to the highest echelons of world literature.

To conclude, in a country riddled with communal tensions and vested political interests, one needs to make a determined effort to combat the dehumanizing forces of such circumstances. Ghosh in his novels give the relevance for the contemporary times by interrogating history. He suggests that we have not learnt much from history and that we are still as base as our ancestors, seeing how history repeats itself. His novels not only show the consciousness for creating a new and more human order but also it shows the necessity of supporting human relationships. They also stress on mutual concern and care. His novels, indeed, explores out a ray of hope through their positive vision. Ghosh seems to be one of the few novelists offering an alternative to the post-colonial trend of narrating a nation.

Ghosh stories travel through time and space, creating a narrative that has an irregular flow. Time-travel is crucial to the story and created a complex of sub-themes and plots. Alok Pattanayak in his book *A Survey of Commonwealth Fiction* says that, "The characteristic of Ghosh is continued in *Hungry Tide* is the meticulous research that allows a combination of fiction and fact to the extent that they stand undifferentiated "(275). Touching upon various topics, Ghosh takes the reader through a whirlwind of events and emotions.

The next chapter entitled Settlers And Refugees describes about the violence of refugees and settlers in The Hungry Tide, it actually uncovers and re-tells the long hidden Morichjhapi story and gives violence to the subaltern.

CHAPTER TWO

REFUGEES AND SETTLERS

The Partition of Bengal caused a huge influx of refugees from East Pakistan, subsequently Bangladesh, into West Bengal. This exodus continued through the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s as Bengali Hindus entered West Bengal in the hope of settling down there. They were, however, sent to various areas outside West Bengal with the assurance that they would eventually be relocated. In 1978 these refugees slowly moved back from those relocation camps to Morichjhapi, one of the northern-most forested islands of the Sundarbans from where they had been brutally evicted for violating the Forest Acts. Officially, the government's major concern was to preserve the ecology of the Sundarbans. The massacre in Morichjhapi resulted in the violent deaths of hundreds of refugees and was seen by the Sundarbans islanders as a betrayal.

The refugees as well as islanders from adjoining villages initially built some huts along the cultivated area of the island. They belonged to the lowest social strata in the caste hierarchy and were very poor. Most of them survived by fishing with primitive equipment and sold the catch in the nearby villages. Despite all this the government persisted in its effort to drive the settlers out of Morichjhapi. Thirty police launches encircled the island depriving them of food and water. Furthermore, they were tear-gassed and their huts, fisheries, tube-wells and boats were destroyed. Those who tried to cross the river risked to be shot dead. To fetch water, the islanders then had to venture deep into the forested part of the Sundarbans islands. Several hundred men, women and children were believed to have died during that time and their bodies thrown into the river. Many of the islanders who had been rounded up along with the refugees subsequently fled from the trucks taking them back to Dandakaranya in central India.

The fame of the Sundarbans grew phenomenally with the success of Project Tiger that was launched a few years before the events of Morichjhapi in 1973, and since 1985, it has been included in the UNESCO's list of world heritage sites.

The usual portrayal of the Sundarbans is that of an exotic mangrove forest full of Royal Bengal tigers. From the beginning of Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* and the case of the subaltern the Sundarbans islanders took sides with the refugees, because they shared the same common place of origin, namely East Bengal. Moreover, they could identify with the terrible hardships the settlers had gone through. The historical incident described above is recreated in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*. For the old Communist, Nirmal, whose diary contains the story of the massacre, like many others at the time, this ruthless eviction of refugees was a betrayal of major socialist convictions. As the last significant expression of the trauma of the Partition of Bengal, the story of Morichjhapi occupies a central place in the novel. In an interview with The Frontline Ghosh said,

For me, Morichjhapi was inescapable. I'm concerned with the dilemma of how to balance human needs with nature. In India, the state seems to be so rigid, throwing people out, working under the assumption that they are wicked people with some perverse criminal instinct. But they are so terribly poor, braving the forest for nothing more than some honey. These are some of the poorest people in the world(11).

In an essay, Brinda Bose writes that Ghosh's fiction takes upon itself the responsibility of re-assessing its troubled antecedents, using history as a tool by which we can begin to make sense of or at least come to terms with our troubling present. Ghosh himself speaks of his fascination with history, highlighting the point that one of

the very important things in a text is that it becomes a place where those cultural interactions are performed in the most difficult possible ways. Another characteristic feature of his novels is the presence of a journey. A major contribution of postcolonial theory has been the emphasis on space and identity. Reality, in the postcolonial novel, is mediated by various ideological and political factors and often involves the subaltern in its discourse. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak* says that the subaltern needs to be given a space and that subaltern voices are characterized by heterogeneity.

Postcolonial theory claims that there are often counter narratives and stories, incorporated in dominant narratives, in order to be rediscovered and re-told. In this respect, Ghosh says that it is the responsibility of the postcolonial writer to tell these untold stories, the forgotten voices of history. In the essay *The Ghosts of Mrs. Gandhi* he says that violence today affects him so very much that it forms a dominant subject of his writing. Violence has always played a very important role in human affairs. For example, Hannah Arendt distinguishes violence from force and power arguing that power, as opposed to violence, is a creative force. Furthermore, Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* defines violence as an “all-inclusive and national [action]”(74). Fanon also points out: “For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity”(34).

This chapter is about Ghosh’s writings of the violence against refugees and settlers in *The Hungry Tide* it actually uncovers and re-tells the long hidden Morichjhapi story and gives voice to the subaltern. Postcolonial studies have to deal with the interplay between human beings and the environment, including issues concerning habitat, migration, state, society and conflict. Ghosh does encompass all these aspects

in his works and thus draws attention to the importance of the human subject. *The Hungry Tide*, in particular, is preoccupied with issues of migration and diaspora. In this respect, the very landscape seems to be in tuned with uprootedness and migration. For instance, the river traversing the Sundarbans creates a movement but in turn its boundaries are very fluid. Ghosh's work often reveals a concern with the idea of borders and the arbitrariness of such kind of borders. *In An Antique Land*, for example, he describes passages from India to Egypt. *The Circle of Reason* tells about voyages between the Indian subcontinent, the Middle East and North Africa. In *The Glass Palace*, is set against the background of several historical events, such as Britain's invasion of Burma, the Japanese victory over Russia and the start of Europe's decline, the first World War, the national independence movements of the 1920s and 30s, and the dramatic changes wrought by World War II and the plot centres on journeys between Burma, India and Malaya then ends in modern Myanmar. Unlike his earlier work where the narrative traverses states, countries and even continents in *The Hungry Tide*, the writer focuses on one region the Sundarbans. Thousands of low lying islands, some of them inhabited, are at the mercy of the destruction of the weather and the constant ebb and flow of the tides.

The story begins at Canning, the last railway station on the way to the Sundarbans, with an encounter between two characters. Piya Piyali Roy, an American scientist of Indian origin who is researching Irrawady river dolphins which are said to inhabit these tidal waters. She meets Kanai Dutt, equally well educated and cosmopolitan, a translator and businessman from New Delhi, another outsider in the story. He comes to the island of Lusibari to visit his aunt Nilima, who has discovered a bundle of papers that her late husband, Nirmal, addressed to him. The couple had to leave Calcutta and come to the Sundarbans because Nirmal's revolutionary ideas had

become too dangerous. Nilima founded a cooperative, the Badabon Trust, which brought help, medicine and a hospital to Lusibari, while Nirmal spent his career as a headmaster of the local school. Other characters in the novel are Fokir, Kusum, Horen and Moyna all subalterns with Kusum later becomes the victims of the massacre. The novel weaves together several, constantly intertwined plots: the plight of the displaced people that is revealed in the Morichjhapi incident, the struggle for land, the constant fight for survival in a dangerous ecosystem, and all those interactions that strengthen human relationships and emotions.

The following Morichjhapi incident, Ghosh talks about partition and refugees, Kanai's uncle's notebook reveals details about the shocking story of the Morichjhapi incident, when tens of thousands of displaced refugees try to settle on one of the uninhabited islands in the Sundarbans but are violently evicted by the government in the name of conservation. The plight of the refugees is a result of the Partition of India, and therefore of British colonialism. Both Nirmal and Kusum find themselves drawn into the struggle of the refugees. It turned out that the place to which the refugees were resettled in central India was extremely different from that they had known. Resituated in an area and among people whose language and culture was different, there was resentment among the refugees. For some years they manage to cope with all that and then, in 1978, they came to the Sundarbans in the hope of settling down there, in Morichjhapi. "They called it resettlement," said Nilima, "but people say it was more like a concentration camp, or a prison. They were surrounded by security forces and forbidden to leave. Those who tried to get away were hunted down" (118). This is an important comment, coming from Nilima who is very cautious of getting involved with the refugees and their problems. Before his death, Nirmal's behaviour had become, as his wife Nilima put it, "erratic" (26). Things actually became different at the time of

the Morichjhapi incident. When Kanai asked about that incident, Nilima makes the following, very matter of fact comment as,

Some of its people were descended from the first settlers, who had arrived in the 1920s. Others had come in successive waves, some after the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 and some after the Bangladesh war of 1971. Many had even come more recently, when other nearby islands were forcibly depopulated in order to make room for wildlife conservation projects.(59)

Nirmal began keeping his diary on 15 May 1979. Nilima says, Nirmal, as a young man who was fired by the idea of revolution finds it a pain in Morichjhapi : “Men like that, even when they turn their backs on their party and their comrades, can never let go of the idea ...[of revolution]” (119). The settlers, Nilima says, were not revolutionaries, all they wanted was “a little land to settle on” and for that “they were willing to pit themselves against the government. They were prepared to resist until the end” (119). In his journal, Nirmal finds a strong utopian strand in this attempt by the dispossessed, to collectively work to settle and make themselves at home:” there had been many additions, many improvements. Saltpans had been created, tubewells had been planned, water had been dammed for the rearing of fish It was an astonishing spectacle as though an entire civilisation had sprouted suddenly in the mud” (190-191). Kusum comes to Lusibari with the hope to get medical help for the settlers. In turn, this makes Nilima wary, since coming to their assistance would mean going against the government. Kusum is killed in the massacre at Morichjhapi. Nirmal, a poet at heart who constantly invokes Rilke, approaches retirement with the feeling that his life was poorly spent because he never lived up to his revolutionary ideals. Nilima, in contrast, represents the practical side of their marriage, as she builds a cooperative trust which brings hope to many lives. She, however, is unwilling to do anything that might upset the government

as she needs their favour. Nirmal's diary, which he leaves for Kanai, contains vivid accounts of the Morichjhapi incident. He writes about the settlers:

Many of their own people had gone off to join the movement drawn by the prospect of free land. But even as they marvelled at the refugees' boldness, there were those who predicted trouble: the island belonged to the Forest Department and the government would not allow the squatters to remain. (160)

Kusum provides a different perspective. She says that Morichjhapi was not really a forest even before the settlers came and that parts of it were being used by the government for plantations, etc. "What's been said about the danger to the environment is just a sham, in order to evict these people who have nowhere else to go" (214). What we get to see here is the fact that the argument concerning the preservation of the fragile ecology and environment of the Sundarbans was misused to get rid of the settlers.

Nilima does not want to get involved in this at all since that would be inviting trouble for the Badabon trust and the hospital. Away from her family and friends, she had to undergo a lot of travails to settle in the new place, away from family and friends. Once having settled, she looks for freedom: "The hospital's future, its welfare they mean everything to me, and I will not endanger them" (214). The entire Morichjhapi incident troubles Nirmal to a great extent. The very practical Nilima says about him: "My husband is not a practical man; his experience of the world is very limited. He does not understand that when a party comes to power, it must govern; it is subject to certain compulsions" (276-77). This is what Kanai, the cosmopolitan outsider, says about Kusum and her involvement in Morichjhapi: "she was killed in some kind of confrontation with the police. [...] She joined a group of refugees who'd occupied an island nearby. The land belonged to the government, so there was a stand-off and many

people died” (218). Kanai’s understanding of the stand-of and its relevance is very much like Nilima’s.

The government banned migration to and from Morichjhapi under the provisions of the Forest Preservation Act. Section 144 of the Indian Penal Code was imposed, which meant that it was a criminal offence for five or more people to gather in one place. Morichjhapi was the biggest island in the tide country. The police arrived on speedboats bellowing on loudspeakers asking the settlers to leave. The settlers were gesturing to them asking them to proceed. Soon they began to shout in unison. “Amra kara? Bastuhara. Who are we? We are the dispossessed and Morichjhapi charbona we’ll not leave Morichjhapi, do what you may” (254). The Bengali word *bastuhara* comes from the word *bastu* meaning home *bastuhara* signals the loss of home and homeland and carries with it the pain and suffering associated with the Partition. The siege of Morichjhapi went on for many days. Soon the water was full of struggling men, women and children. What Kusum says brilliantly sums up the entire situation;

The worst part was not the hunger or the thirst. It was to sit here, helpless, and listen to the policemen making their announcements, hearing them say that our lives, our existence, was worth less than dirt or dust. “This island has to be saved for its trees, it has to be saved for its animals, it is a part of a reserve forest, it belongs to a project to save tigers, which is paid for by people from all around the world.” (261)

The diary that Nirmal leaves for Kanai is about history, poetry, geology and as Kanai says, it was mainly about Morichjhapi. “He wrote all of it in the course of one day and the better part of a night. He must have finished writing just hours before the assault

started” (386). The diary lays out before Kanai an event in history which he would never have otherwise known.

The Hungry Tide privileges the subaltern, Fokir, Kusum and Moyna over the cosmopolitan, Piya, Kanai, Nilima and Nirmal. The novel is the story of refugees, and criticises environmentalism where human beings are given no importance. *The Hungry Tide*, therefore, prioritises the subaltern voice. Ghosh’s novel responds to the conflict over the access to habitat the resources and the enforcement by economic forces. The Morichjhapi incident clearly shows that ecology and environment is prioritised over human beings. In the novel it is Kusum who voices these practical concerns. There is no solution for the people who have always been part of that very environment. *The Hungry Tide* voices about habitat, territory, ecology and conservation.

CHAPTER THREE

ECO - CRITICAL VIEW

Ecocriticism deals with artistic feedback which claims to explore the correlation between writing and earth. It covers the investigation of writing, human studies, social science, brain research and so on and endeavours to consider the state of mind of humankind in environment. Notable class include eco poetics, nature writing and ecological artistic feedback. Ecocriticism isn't just the utilization of environment and biological standards yet in addition the investigation of writing and hypothetical way to deal with the associations of the environment, culture and its intricacies. It is additionally an investigation of dialect through which writing is communicated. Writing famous for copying the contemporary issues couldn't have stayed untouched from this idea. This uprising danger to humankind from persistent abuse of our environment has grabbed the consideration of the journalists in later past. The textualization of previously mentioned ecological issues in scholarly works has offered ascend to another division of artistic hypothesis, to be specific ecocriticism. Greg Garrard says,

Environmental problems require analysis in cultural as well as scientific terms, because they are outcome of an interaction between ecological knowledge and it's cultural inflection this will involve-disciplinary scholarship that draws on literary and cultural theory, philosophy, sociology, psychology and environmental, history as well as ecology.(14)

Ecocriticism agrees with different branches of the ecological humanities, morals, history, religious examinations, human studies, humanistic geology in holding that natural marvels must be grasped, and that the present thriving exhibit of natural concerns must be tended to subjectivity and additionally quantitative. At any rate as

basic to their remediation as logical leaps forward and fortified administrations of strategy execution is the driving force of innovative creative ability, vision, will, and conviction. Without anyone else, innovative portrayals of ecological mischief are probably not going to free social orders from ways of life that depend on profoundly changing environments.

In the contemporary world, nature has been the centre in many noteworthy art works. Due to various developmental factors, there has been a lot of destruction in environmental landscape. The change in the social and economic situations of the world has totally changed the portrayals of man's disposition towards nature in scholarly articulations. Ecocriticism is a quickly extending zone of research covers extensive variety of writings and speculations which examine the relationship of man and nature. Ecological investigations in artistic messages through nature symbolism, sexual orientation develop, women's liberation, man-lady relationship, tourism, culture and so forth have more extensive implications than what is depicted through their exacting articulations. In Indian works in English, there are numerous abstract books that mirror the topic of ecocriticism in them. There are numerous ways that creators have investigated natural issues. In a few books it is integral to the book, while in others, it is optional to the story and of different topics. There are a plethora of Indian works which revolve around the environment thanks to the abundance of flora and fauna in the country. Despite direct correlation there is nature intertwined with the setting. The glorification of nature and description by writers gives gleam to the art work.

Ecocentricism strives to establish an integrity between man and his society that to also evolve's to integrate a better society. Ecocentricism as a discipline attempts to register the fact that man is the reflection of ecology and he is the mere representation of ecology. The remedial aspects to redirect man from the existing unawareness is the

prime objective of ecocentricism. There is a demand which bases an ecocentric view is to break the inhumane and to raise a humane transition among the society. Ecocentricism promises effective solution through various integrated societal aspect.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* is one of the novels which has been written in the current era. In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh problematises the strains between and inside human groups, their particular relations with the regular world, and the additional desultory reality of nature that progressions and is all the while changed by humankind. The novel revolves around the relationship between the marine biologist (Piyali Roy) and nature. Water is the creator of the relationships and the also destroyer. The bond is created when Piyali Roy almost drowns when she's aboard in a boat. Fokir rescues her from the water. It ends up becoming a beautiful relationship/friendship. It ends with his life being taken away when he tried to protect her. This ends the sad tale. Water here is the Alpha and the Omega in the relationship.

The story entirely revolves around Sundarbans, which is one of the suburbs of India. Ghosh portrays the entire novel as the ecological witness in the region of west Bengal after 2004, which is completely surrounded by the mangrove forest. The characters employed in the novel intersect at various grounds and provide a striving purpose in illustrating the ecological factors in novel. The narration has vividly explained the indispensable role of each aspect of nature such as crocodile, tiger, and various other animals in the entire story. Here characters and elements of nature have a wholesome part to justify environmental happenings and the course of change. The characters strive to ceaselessly explain and act as a bridge between the present and the past.

The beginning of the story is set on a train journey, where one of the protagonists, Kanai Dutt, a city based Translator, encounters another protagonist Piya, and he understands by her appearance to be a foreigner despite her Indian tone. The travellers are designated towards a same destination have a purpose to be accomplished, which is the central element of the plot. Kanai is translator from Delhi and he travels to Sundarbans to visit his aunt and get acquainted with the letter, which his dead uncle had left behind. Piya's purpose is revealed through the conversation, as she is returns to her native land from Seattle to find out a rare species of Dolphin, as she works as a Marine Biologist. They depart at Lucibari after Kanai invites Piyal to his place as a nice gesture. He is accompanied by his aunt Nilima, and surprised to see the changeover of the entire place as he visits Lucbari after a long time. The water flow in the river has noticeably changed and also seems to be muddy.

Persuasively, Nilima made Kanai read the entire document, which was in the form of a hand written dairy. She insisted him to read the entire letter for the sake of Kusum, who is dead and an old friend of Kanai in Lusibari. The letter consists of the record of the main events that took place in the year 1979. Later on, Nilima narrates the entire happenings of Morichjhanpi massacre, where Kusum was killed. Nilima introduces Kanai to Fokir's family, and Fokir, son of Kusum, who is a local illiterate fisherman. Kanai comes to an understanding of how unsure the tide is in Sundarbans after he interacts with Fokir's wife Moyna. Meeting held in the hospital gave him a perspective, and thorough out the meeting Moyna was keen about sending their son Tutul to school. Moyna has deep objection towards her son to ride along her husband and she has plans for his son to attend school in the near future. Entire conversation doubtlessly enthralled Kanai, as he was clueless about the massacre and Fokir's family's plight. The narration gradually takes back to the memory of Kanai, when he

met Kusum in the year 1970, and she was under Nilima's care as Kusam's family has broken apart. Kanai also reminisces the performance they watched together and the last time he saw Kusum.

Parallely, Piya has come to her native land to excavate a rare Dolphin species. Forest department of Sundarbans grants permission for her research and she seeks aid from the local fisherman. A forest guard offers to help her along with a boat pilot, Mejda. They set off for their destination into the woods and they reach a particular spot as Mejda proposes that they could spot the dolphin. Piya could realise after a while that these people are not helping and they are just condescending. The reckless attitude of the men intimidated her as she almost drowns into the water. She calls off the entire works as the men are not reliable to help her in anyways. However, in a meantime, Piya encounters Fokir before and they begin their pursuit in the search of the dolphin to a place called Garjontola, where they encounter few Irrawaddy Dolphins around the area. Piya is overwhelmed as the day is not a failure and she could mark certain amount of progression in her work. Moreover, the genuineness of Fokir along with his son is an added factor in seamlessly pursue her work. However, the risk is like an inevitable factor as Piya almost lost her hand to crocodiles, which are also present in the water.

Piya then decides to seek help from Kanai, who has already invited her to Lucibari. Nilima also offers to help Piya by allotting the guesthouse for Piya's stay during her time of research. Meanwhile, the narration takes the readers through the letter and details the meeting of Nirmal, Kusum and Nilima. Refugees of Morichjhapi were in a great distress due to various causes and also explained in the letter. Later, Piya along with Fakir and Kanai set off to Bhotbhoti to continue her study and Kanai decides to be as a translator between Fakir and Piya. Nilima shows her disapproval when Kanai prepares to leave along with Piya, as tiger kills people every week in the

place they are about to visit. This is a strong evidence that government priorities tiger over common people and they are the actual victims. Further, they move towards the Garjontola pool in order to begin the research. Kanai beings to translate as Piya starts to talk about how she developed interest towards study of dolphins.

They encounter endless struggles throughout the stay in the pool. Kanai along with Horen decides to leave the place as Piya is able to communicate with Fokir better than the previous time. Kanai learns about a cyclone in the Garjontola pool later, but he was unable to return to the place and rescue them. Unfortunately, Fohir is hit by something large and he dies in the boat. Piya returns to Lucibari and narrates the whole incident to everyone. Piya also decides the name the project as Fokir.

The disposition of the characters in the novel has various factors that impedes their communication and nature acts as a driving force in order to unite them. Kanai's prime duty seems to act as a bridge between Piyali and Fokir, but there is a gradual progress in their relationship, where Piyali was able to comprehend the information communicated by Fokir. This stems up to the understanding of unity that nature has taught the characters in the novel. The portrayal of the character Fokir has also deepened the ecocentric narration of Ghosh. Fokir, the local fisherman, though kills animals for living also plays indispensable role in conserving them. Ghosh strives to give ecological solution to the central issue of the novel by effectively connecting past and present. The dramatic depletion of the nature is insisted as there is instinctive call of attention portrayed through the character Kanai. Postcolonial emphasis also deliberately insists that ecological balance as Ghosh vividly describes the past and the need for the present change in the environment. Nalimia being the strongest postcolonial character proves to reinforce that human beings are part of nature and she resources to insist on saving animals and explains the danger of it. The strongest

message of ecocentricism is conveyed through connecting indigenous people with their nature in which community based ecology is explained. Reconciling with nature is also strongly projected alongside of the entire story.

The grinding amongst arrive and the ocean in the Sundarbans makes a steady rubbing between the plant and creature life. Man's consistent infringement of the environments of the Sundarbans just legitimize the pressures between the different components of nature.

The Hungry Tide is set in the Sundarbans, an island in the Bay of Bengal which isn't recently delightful yet additionally intriguing. For pilgrims, the Sundarbans offers to a great degree eccentric and unreliable life. Terry Tomsy in his article when talking about the novel says that, "By dramatizing the encounter between bourgeois characters and the traumatic history of people inhabiting the Sundarbans region of Bengal, Ghosh suggests that an unreconstructed cosmopolitanism is incapable of addressing social injustices"(53). *The Hungry Tide* is a deliberate attempt to provoke readers to think in fresh ways about the role and meaning of place in fictional and nonfictional narratives—both in narratological and ideological terms. In short, Ghosh's depiction of the Sundarbans exposes the limits of conceiving character and setting as distinct categories.

Distress and ousting are consistent dangers and assaults by tigers which are generally normal. Tidal surges demolish the dependability of life on the island with no notice. Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* always talks about the contention amongst man and nature with regards to the Sundarbans in India and Bangladesh. The novel mirrors the contentions between the occupants and the oceanic and untamed life of the Sundarbans.

On all levels of the story, in fact, the forces of the global interact powerfully with the local, be that in ecological, economic, or cultural terms. And, in the end, an engaged globalism and an engaged localism emerge as constitutive, and are posited together opposite the force of destructive national and regional politics.

There have been various instances in the novel which cite the relevance and dependence upon nature for livelihood. The entire scene is set in the Sundarbans which is an area which dwells in costal biodiversity. “Ecology found its voice by studying the properties of species, their distribution across space, and their adaptive discourse in time”(69) says William Howarth in the *Ecocriticism Reader*. This stays in tandem with the life lived by the characters in the story. Piyali Roy by profession is a Marine Biologist who lives a life by studying the intricacies in the life of the renowned Irrawaddy Dolphins. Ghosh has shown this character as a person of strength and grit to withstand the problems faced by the government and so on. She is an Ecofeminist. Where she earns the name of being a feminist by her ideals and her very close connection and desire to study this particular breed is depicted in the novel. As Karen J Warren states in her work, she claims that Women and the environment have a closer walk together. As they have close connection with nature, they have their pursuits too in accordance to their walk with nature. Piyali Roy as a cetologist helps in the understanding marine animals and others. In the end the connection established between her and the environment is evident in the text.

There are no borders here to divide fresh water from salt, river from sea. The tides reach as far as three hundred kilometers inland and every day thousands of acres of forest disappear underwater only to re-emerge hours later. The currents are so powerful as to reshape the islands almost daily some days the water tears away entire

promontories and peninsulas; at other times it throws up new shelves and sandbanks where there were none before.

India is a country which is rich in biodiversity. The country is rich in Flora and Fauna and hence it is seen in the works of writers. This collage of ideas and thoughts sync well with the literature. In accordance to that, literature has come to grow alongside with such scenic and aesthetic descriptions in the works of Indian Authors, Ghosh *The Hungry Tide* is one such novel which has immense amounts of such literature in correlation to that. The protagonist itself studies nature and the tale tapers on that very note. Piyali Roy tries to do research and can be seen as an eco feminist based on her work. Nature is seen as a provider in her household too, despite not being the traditional provider, it does provide in a different way. The novel is filled with ecocritical elements and stands as literary elements which add flavour and beauty to the novel by broadcasting the relationship between man and nature. This is highlighted in the novel and the plans and ideas that help nature and man's coexist one.

The harmonious balance between man and nature is meticulously explained through the novel. The fact of coexistence between man and nature is inscribed through this novel. It also paved way for man to understand that there is no life possible without establishing relationship between man and nature. Mother earth has infinitely generated various problem, which is an inductive reminder to safe guard the earth. Literature acts as a tool and a medium to link nature and man and also strives for effective commencement of actions to mankind. Ghosh has remarkably included the elements of caution through every character deployed in the novel. Ecology has proved to be a striving force throughout the novel which alters the way of life people lived in the past and also featured in the present. There is fear instilled in Moyna, who is depicted to be the one of the bravest characters with will power, fears nature to safe guard her son's

life. This is the strongest reinforcement from nature against all odds to win man. The thematic concerns of the novel also revolve around an issue of global dimension. The novel forges a prominent concern about the survival of an ecologically balanced labyrinth like the Sundarbans. At the same time, the novel documents the pitiable plight of the impoverished and homeless refugees in their fertile surroundings to ensure their survival.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRUGGLES OF WOMEN IN *THE HUNGRY TIDE*

Amitav Ghosh's fifth novel *The Hungry Tide* has as its background the immense archipelago of islands that lies between the sea and southern plains of Bengal, collectively known as Sundarbans. Along with its eco-critical analysis of the threatened mangrove ecosystem in the face of globalization and market economy, another striking feature of this novel is its dynamic portrayal of women who are in search for their own identity. To find a firm ground to stand on, they are prepared to exceed the so called gender roles. The theme of woman empowerment also appeared in Ghosh's earlier fictions like *The shadow Lines* where Thamma is a revolutionary character with nationalist zeal. Evidently, the struggle of an educated, disciplined rebellious woman in the context of partition of India and consequent communal strife would be different from the struggle of those women inhabiting the impoverished land, always endangered by the sudden attacks of predators as well as natural disaster. Though there are characters who cannot be claimed to belong to the tide country but later settled there like Nilima or who are complete outsider like Piya, alien to its culture or even language but later finding her root in the mud of the tide country, the novelist never fails to convey to the readers in a nuanced way how all of them are vulnerable in every step in this male-oriented society.

As a matter of fact, it is the very awareness of their vulnerable position that drives them to seek an identity with an urge to defy the well established gender roles. Each woman is looking for a place for themselves, a recognition socially, economically, politically. Even myths and mythologies that Ghosh has chosen for his novel to reflect the cultural ethos of Sundarban abound in radical female characters who are sometimes presented as warrior or sometimes as symbolic rebels breaking out

of domestic shell. Significantly, the role and action of the male characters of the novel are to a great extent at the mercy of those of their female counterparts. Professor Mary Klages defines gender as “a set of signifiers attached to sexually dimorphic bodies and these signifiers work to divide social practices and relations into binary opposition of male/female and masculine/feminine” (92). Thus if any person wears high heels, there can be no doubt that the person belongs to the “female category” as the high heel is the signifier of feminine traits, traditionally, a woman is expected to perform household duties, bring up children as John Stuart Mill also states in his *Subjection of Woman*.

The male will be the bread earner and the task of women rest upon the assurance of careful use of husband's earning for the general comfort of the family. It is these stereotypes that Ghosh's women characters seem to challenge. It may appear quite natural for today's world where the women are giving a tough competition to men in every sphere but taken into considerations the time period of the novel, predicament of the women in the contemporary world and also the hostile land that forms the setting, their strive acquires an added significance. Their routes may be different but the destination remains the same- self-realization and self-fulfillment. The actions and ambitions of the women directly or indirectly challenge the established patriarchal set up. In this paper I would examine each woman character individually to explore their radical beliefs and vowed endeavour to break the stereotype.

Piyali Roy, the American citizen of Indian origin is the one of the major characters of the novel. She does not belong to the tide country but a visitor to the place. Being a cetologist by profession, she has come to the Sundarbans for a research work. Cetology involves the study of marine mammals and her specialized area is sea water river dolphin that is found in great waterways like Ganges,

Mekong, Irrawaddy. It is indeed very astonishing that a young woman who cannot speak nor even understand the language of the place can dare to visit the alien land without any companion or even a translator. She is exposed to dangers from several ways: she is aware of the fact as well. Yet her courage and her determination renders her unyielding who would not stop at any condition until she reaches her destination.

Her deviation from norms is marked at the very beginning of the novel that starts in a crowded Indian railway station where her “neatly composed androgyny of her appearance seemed out of place, almost exotic” (3). Piya does not at all resemble the so called enchanting heroine of romantic fictions, rather she is identified by “the unaccustomed delineation of her stance.” What is more striking is her worldview- at a so early an age , she has embraced solitude. She does not need any companionship or assistance of others, but prefers to be alone. “It’s easier to slip through the net if you’re on your own.” (12). Possibly her tainted childhood when she witnessed the bitter altercation between her parents along with her failure in relationship that ended with disastrous result led her to live a secluded life. Whatever be the case, her defiance of gender roles imposed upon the “second sex” by patriarchal society is evident in her every movement. Though the readers can never fail to trace her vulnerable position whether in her encounter with notorious Mejda or her chance meeting with lecherous city beau Kanai, she is in a sense unpliant. There are certain implications that Kanai’s intention is not so noble “but if life had taught him any lesson, it was that opportunity often rose unexpectedly, Piya appeared to be a case in point If Piya decided to avail herself of her invitation, then there was no reason not to savour whatever pleasure might be an offer ”(16). This is the eternal tragedy of women who are considered more a flesh to satisfy the hunger of men than human beings

with desire and aspirations. Kanai's description of Piya as "tasty young morsel" preferred by Tiger well testifies to the claim. Nilima sadly says to Kanai, "You're all the same, you men. Who can blame the tigers when predators like you pass for human beings?" (243). The forest guard and Mejda also had taken her granted and were convinced that a young foreign girl like her can never be able to manage without their help, as Piya senses, The man had evidently assumed she had no choice but to follow his orders, that she would put up with whatever demands he chose to make. From the start she had sensed a threat from the guard and his friend: "she knew that to return to the launch in these circumstances would be an acknowledgement of helplessness"(56). Her instinct told her that she would be safer in the shelter of a complete stranger and rustic fisherman. "But her experience with the guard had bruised her confidence and she felt as though she were recovering from an assault" (64). that is why the assuring gesture of Fokir "had the paradoxical effect of making her aware of her own vulnerability." Fokir, however is an agent of patriarchy, rather a talisman for Piya who is saved from death at the cost of his life. Though Piya did not have "the good fortune to fall in love with the right man in the right place" (313). perhaps it was the presence of Fokir that assured Piya of the existence of true human feelings that cannot be defined by sexual terms.

She is not the "tasty young morsel" to be taken advantage of, but a woman who deserves respect, modesty, courtesy. If the nasty forest guard or Mejda represents the oppressive patriarchy who debase women, Fokir affirms Piya that uncorrupted human hearts still exists.

Nilima, like Piya is also an outsider to the tide country. However her milieu is different from that of Piya, but she is an inborn rebel. While she was in college, she fell in love with one of the teachers Nirmal who was full of idealism and

communist dream. Of course her family that was one of the richest and reputed families of the city would not accept their relationship. In the India 1950s, obviously it was not easy for any woman to stand against the whole society, but Nilima was not the one to give up. Going against family, society, norms, she marries Nirmal and the ceremony is solemnized by reading of Blake, Mayakovsky and Jibanananda Das, a unique wedding contemporary society was not accustomed to. But this does not put an end to her struggle, in fact it was only the beginning. Due to some political tension, her husband had to leave Kolkata and settle in one of the islands of the tide country- Lusibari. Nilima accompanies him and also manages a job of school teacher for Nirmal using influence of her family.

With western education, urban ways of life, it was not easy for her to adjust to the new ways of life. She gradually understands that she has to make a firm ground for herself to stand upon in order to get rid of the existential crisis. This urge along with the sense of obligation to the unfortunate impoverished population of the tide country heading catastrophe worked together to the foundation of Badabon Trust with strikingly modern infrastructure like hospital, school, guest house. Kanai remarks, "In their family, Nilima was legendary for her persistence- her doggedness and tenacity had built the Badabon Trust into what it was, an organization widely cited as a model for NGO's working in rural India" (19). Her struggle is her own, she does not get any support from her communist husband who lives in his own illusory world of idealism. From the very beginning, patriarchy society tried to choke her voice, but she is inflexible. Again she is childless, thus has failed to fulfil the „essential duty“ of a woman i.e. to give birth and bring up children. She has no child of her own, instead has the hundred daughters she looks after in women's union.

It is horrifying to know that the women of the land are always ready to face their impending widowhood. When their men went fishing “it was the custom for their wives to change into the garments of widowhood” (80). All the symbols of marriage, the vermilion-sindur, the bangles or coloured saris are kept aside until the husbands came back. Their predicament at once reminds the reader of Synge’s *Riders To The Sea* where also the women basically had nothing to do but to wait for the news of the demise of their dear ones. In most cases they are not lucky enough to find the corpse for proper burial.

For the women in Aran Islands as well as in the tide country, the life is nothing but a ceaseless procession of death. The men meet an instant death whereas the women are left to die slowly day by day throughout the remaining life. It is however surprising that a radical communist like Nirmal refuses to acknowledge that these women with the same plight and life of abuse and exploitation forms a class- a *sreni*. “But Nirmal would not hear of it. Workers were a class, he said, but to speak of the workers” widows as a class was to introduce a false and unsustainable division.” (81) Nilima questions, “But if they were not a class, what were they?” They are, in a sense, nonexistent. Neither society nor government takes their struggle into consideration. But their struggle for existence hopelessly goes on forever through generation after generation. Nilima does her best to improve their condition but she often feels sorry for there remains muchills she was powerless to remedy. Nilima is not a daydreamer like her husband. She is realist, rational and pragmatic enough to perceive the world in its true light. She is well aware of the weaknesses and limitations that her gender imposes upon her but she also knows the way to overcome such impediments.

She came to Lusibari leaving her own land family, friends but she earns a recognition for herself and her achievements contribute to alleviating the predicament of the whole folk of tide country women as well as men. Nilima tells her husband with tear-filled eyes, “All these years, you’ve sat back and judged me. But now it’s there in front of you, in front of your eyes-this hospital. And if you ask me what I will do to protect it, let me tell you, I will fight for it like a mother fights to protect her children” (214). Nilima, unlike her husband has a lot of experiences of the world; these experiences provide her with the knowledge that patriarchy and its representatives are ever ready to clutch the woman in any off guard movement. Her entire life is devoted to serve the cause of women and by extension the entire humanity of the tide country.

Unlike Piya and Nilima, Kusum belongs to tide country but so much different from its usual representative. She is a storm, a Jhar as Nirmal describes. Her distinction from others are marked in her very introduction- “She had a clipped front tooth and her hair was cut short, making her something of an oddity among the girls of the island” (90). But the differentiation is not only ohn appearance, temperamentally to Kusum stands radically apart. Kanai calls up “ What I remember is her is even at that age she was very spirited” (131). As a teenage girl who knows nothing of the outside world, she travels to an unknown city to find her mother who fell victim to a woman-trafficking racket. She too, is not free from such dangers for Dilip who sold her mother off to a brothel is also in search of Kusum because, as Horen says, such young girls are highly in demand in prostitution business. Yet Kusum disregards Horen’s plea who is even ready to leave his wife and children for sake of Kusum and travels to Bihar alone in search of her mother. Horen later tells Kanai, “I thought I was protecting Kusum, but she was, in her own way, much stronger than me:

she did not need my protection or anyone's else" (363). Kusum is a strong willed woman who can make her own way and she succeeds in her mission though with help of a man whom she later marries. After death of her husband she returns to the tide country with a group of refugees from Bangladesh or East Pakistan and a new phase of struggle begins.

At the background of rebellion of the dispossessed people of Morichjhapi, a love triabgle is formed between Kusum, Nirmal and Horen. In Nirmal's word, "I felt myself torn between my wife and the woman who had become the muse I'd never had, between quiet persistence of everyday change and heady excitement of revolution between prose and poetry" (216). Kusum is that revolutionary spirit whose spark enlightens the path of those around her. Kusum chooses an illiterate rustic fisherman like Horen over Nirmal and offers her body and soul to him. She does not allow others to dominate her, rather she dominates them. Her whole life is characterised by rebellion and she dies a martyr in Morichjhapi massacre of 1979 fighting for and with her people. At every step she defies the societal norms and conventions. She would not submit to the pressure of either Government or society that could not provide her with basic needs of a worthy life. Neither patriarchy nor oppressive society can enchain her, she follows her own rule, makes her own decisions and creates her own routes among thousand jeopardy and menace.

Of all women characters of *The Hungry Tide*, it is Kusum who mostly embodies the essential spirit of revolution. Moyna, another significant woman character of the novel belongs to the tide country and she is wife of Fokir, the major male character. But this is not her only identity. She is a distinguished nurse of the hospital under Badabon Trust, one who has got promotion from barefoot nurse to full time trained nurse of the hospital by hard work and proficiency. Kanai, at her very first sight

could perceive that, “she was not to be shy of pitting her will against the world.” (130). She was determined from her childhood to avail herself of the education. Since there was no school in her own village, she had to walk kilometres away to another village.

Nilima tells Kanai, “Moyna was both ambitious and bright Through her own efforts, with no encouragement from her family, she had managed to give herself an education” (129). Patriarchy in form of her own conservative family had made every possible attempt to thwart her plans as by insisting her to marry an illiterate young man who made her living by catching crabs. But this could not stop her from fulfilling her ambition.

Despite the reluctance of her husband Fokir, she made him to move to Lusibarias she joined nursing training there. Through his conversation with Moyna, Kanai could clearly understand that “the dream of becoming a nurse was no ordinary yearning; it was product of desire as richly and completely imagined as a novel or a poem.” (135) Moyna shares the stormy attribute of her mother-in-law Kusum though their situations are different. But she can be as unyielding as Kusum firm in her self promise to achieve goal. Kanai’s praise of Moyna, “she’s ambitious, she’s tough, she’s going to go a long way” (196) is certainly not a hyperbole. Moyna is intelligent enough to sense Kanai’s lecherous intentions and does not bite the bait- Kanai babu, “you’re just making fool of me, aren’t you? You want me to say yes and then you’ll laugh in my face. You’ll tell everybody what I said. I may be a village girl, Kanai babu, but I’m not so foolish to answer a question like that. I can see that you play this game with every woman who crosses your path” (258). In spite of being a girl from impoverished country side, she can discern the true colour of city beaux like Kanai. Considering her background, upbringing, it seems amazing that she

inholds prudence to figure out how to survive in today's world and as Kanai says, "and it isn't just that she wants to get by-she wants to do well, she wants to make a success of her life" (219).

Piya, Nilima, Kusum, Moyna, all are victims of patriarchy. But they are not mere helpless victims. Even though the system tries hard to choke their voices, they cannot be fettered. Though their backgrounds, circumstances, milieus may be different, they seem to have a common goal. Defying traditionalism, they struggle hard to achieve equality. Though it cannot be denied that they have their own personal aims to fulfil, even then their individual attempts do suggest their identical dream of female utopia. Piya can leave her comfort zone, her family, friends, country to set off for a secluded journey that may be a part of her quest for self-realization; an urban, educated independent woman like Nilima can embrace the salty mud of tide country and devote her whole life for the welfare of people living there, an impoverished, apparently helpless country girl like Kusum can fight against government for securing the right of her own and her people; a simple village girl like Moyna can fight against her family to realize her dream. All of them are engaged in a personal mission, yet there is something common between them- all of them are in search of a purpose for their existence, looking for a worthy life. Perhaps they all dream of "a place where no one would exploit anyone and people would live together without petty social distinctions and differences....where men and women could be farmers in the morning, poets in the afternoon and carpenters in the evening." (53) Thus women of *The Hungry Tide* stands apart from traditional portrayal. They may be vulnerable but they do not lack the courage to fight back. They are revolutionary women who struggle hard to pave the way for a brighter future for generations

to come. This extraordinary delineation of the fighter women is one of Ghosh's unique achievements.

Chapter Five

Summation

Ghosh's 'The Hungry Tide' adds a unique history of the Sundarbans in Indian history. The novel runs in two parallel stories, as in most of his earlier novels, of Kanai's and Piyali's visit to the sundarbans that of the Morichjhapi incident as read by Kanai in the journal by Nirmal. History of Sundarbans is absorbed – its attraction of people of different castes and religion under Sir Hamilton to the present where Nilima's Babadon trust is fast expanding in Lusibari. Ghosh has portrayed a history of the tide country that always changes with the flow of the tide. Nothing is permanent in the tide country except the water. The tide leaves no trace of earlier history of as it erases everything and begins a new one. Many ships and boats are sunk and houses destroyed with no trace of them. Even the natural islands and rivers are continually shaped and reshaped. Still, this muddy tide country attracts all sorts of people farmers, refugees, researchers, social workers, political readers and wildlife conservative donors.

The tide country, with its strangely hybrid myth of Bon Bibi, is able to sustain its inhabitants in a struggle for existence. Amitav Ghosh seems to project a sort of society where caste and religion, colour and language are no barriers. Ghosh doesn't leave politics out of his novel. Through the Morichjhapi incident, he has brought a critical political play and criticized the politics of the communist government of West Bengal with all its propaganda for the people. He also bring East with West .Piya and Kanai represent the west and the cosmopolitan. Both are drawn, though in different manners, to the tide country and are shaken by their experience of the East in the Indian tide country of sundarbans. They could not help but admire such characters as kusum, Fokir and Moyna . Even though Fokir dies in saving Piya, his essence continues to give

strength and a new way of life to Piya. In the end, we see that Piya and Kanai come back to the tide country. They cannot escape the pull of the East.

The Hungry Tide shows the ever continuing struggle of the tide people against the tides and cyclones to create a stronghold in it. The tide also ever continues to erase everything in its way. The novel is Ghosh's portrayal of the ebb and flow of history of the tide country in all its odds. Ghosh has experimented various innovative techniques in his novels. Episodic narration, story within story, fantasy, myth, magic realism, cinematic technique or the flashback technique and the new vibrant usage of the English language, all combine to give the novels an unusual novelty. His characters are varied and many of them have been portrayed as if they have descended from the pages of history. Displaying varied themes, his fictional canvas is filled with a multitude of people from many parts of the world who speak different languages and follow different cultures and religions. This transformation of theme and technique has transported the hitherto insular Indian English novel to the boarder frontiers of the new literatures of the world. Amitav Ghosh's works played a role in taking the Indian English novel to the highest echelons of world literature.

In a country riddled with communal tensions and vested political interests, one needs to make a determined effort to combat the dehumanizing forces of such circumstances. Ghosh in his novels give the relevance for the contemporary times by interrogating history. He suggests that that we have not learnt much from history and that we are still as base as our ancestors were, seeing how history repeats itself. His novels not only show the consciousness for creating a new and more human order but also it shows the necessity of supporting human relationships. They also stress on mutual concern and care. His novels, indeed, explores out a ray of hope through their

positive vision. Ghosh seems to be one of the few novelists offering an alternative to the post-colonial trend of narrating a nation.

Ghosh's fiction reveals a keen interest in history. Ghosh himself speaks of his fascination with history, highlighting the point that one of the very important things in a text is that it becomes a place where those cultural interactions are performed in the most difficult possible ways. Another characteristic feature of his novels is the presence of a journey. A major contribution of postcolonial theory has been the emphasis on space and identity. Reality, in the postcolonial novel, is mediated by various ideological and political factors and often involves the subaltern in its discourse. Ghosh's writings of the violence against refugees and settlers in *The Hungry Tide*, actually uncovers and re-tells the long hidden Morichjhapi story and thus gives a voice to the subaltern. Postcolonial studies have to deal with the interplay between human beings and the environment, including issues concerning habitat, migration, state, society and conflict.

Ghosh does encompass all these aspects in his works and thus draws attention to the importance of the human subject. *The Hungry Tide*, in particular, is preoccupied with issues of migration and diaspora. In this respect, the very landscape seems to be in tune with uprootedness and migration, as, for instance, the river traversing the Sundarbans creates a movement but in turn its boundaries are very fluid. Amitav Ghosh's work often reveals a concern with the idea of borders and the arbitrariness of such kind of borders. *The Hungry Tide* privileges the subaltern, Fokir, Kusum and Moyna over the cosmopolitan, Piya, Kanai, Nilima and Nirmal.

The novel is the story of refugees, and criticizes environmentalism where human beings are given no importance. *The Hungry Tide*, therefore, prioritises the subaltern voice. Ghosh's novel responds to the conflict over the access to habitat and

resources and the enforcement by economic forces. The government banned migration to and from Morichjhapi under the provisions of the Forest Preservation Act. Section 144 of the Indian Penal Code was imposed, which meant that it was a criminal offence for five or more people to gather in one place. Morichjhapi was the biggest island in the tide country. The massacre in Morichjhapi resulted in the violent deaths of hundreds of refugees and was seen by the Sundarbans islanders as a betrayal. The Morichjhapi incident clearly shows that ecology and environment is prioritised over human beings. In the novel it is Kusum who voices these practical concerns. There is no solution for the people who have always been part of that very environment. The *Hungry Tide* voices about habitat, territory, ecology and conservation.

The refugees as well as islanders from adjoining villages initially built some huts along the cultivated area of the island. They belonged to the lowest social strata in the caste hierarchy and were very poor. Most of them survived by fishing with primitive equipment and sold the catch in the nearby villages. Despite all this the government persisted in its effort to drive the settlers out of Morichjhapi. Thirty police launches encircled the island depriving them of food and water. Furthermore, they were tear-gassed and their huts, fisheries, tube-wells and boats were destroyed. Those who tried to cross the river risked to be shot dead. To fetch water, the islanders then had to venture deep into the forested part of the Sundarbans islands. Several hundred men, women and children were believed to have died during that time and their bodies thrown into the river. Many of the islanders who had been rounded up along with the refugees subsequently fled from the trucks taking them back to Dandakaranya in central India.

Ecocriticism agrees with different branches of the ecological humanities, morals, history, religious examinations, human studies, humanistic geology in holding that natural marvels must be grasped, and that the present thriving exhibit of natural

concerns must be tended to subjectively and additionally quantitative. At any rate as basic to their remediation as logical leaps forward and fortified administrations of strategy execution is the driving force of innovative creative ability, vision, will, and conviction. Without anyone else, innovative portrayals of ecological mischief are probably not going to free social orders from ways of life that de-pend on profoundly changing environments. Yet, pondering works of creative ability may incite increased worry about the outcomes of such decisions and conceivable other options to them.

In the contemporary world, nature has been the centre in many noteworthy art works. Due to various developmental factors, there has been a lot of destruction in environmental landscape. The change in the social and economic situations of the world has totally changed the portrayals of man's disposition towards nature in scholarly articulations. Ecocriticism is a quickly extending zone of research covers extensive variety of writings and speculations which examine the relationship of man and nature. Ecological investigations in artistic messages through nature symbolism, sexual orientation develop, women's liberation, man-lady relationship, tourism, culture and so forth have more extensive implications than what is depicted through their exacting articulations. In Indian works in English too there are numerous abstract books that mirror the topic of ecocriticism in them. There are numerous ways that creators have investigated natural issues. In a few books it is integral to the book, while in others, it is optional to the story and different topics. There are a plethora of Indian works which revolve around the environment thanks to the abundance of flora and fauna in the country. Despite direct correlation there is nature intertwined with the setting. The glorification of nature and description by writers gives gleam to the art work.

Ecocentricism strives to establish an integrity between man and his society and to also to evolve to integrate a better society. Ecocentricism as a discipline attempts to

register the fact that man is the reflection of ecology and he is the mere representation of ecology. The remedial aspects to redirect man from the existing unawareness is the prime objective of Ecocentricism. There is a demand which bases an ecocentric view is to break the inhumane and to raise a humane transition among the society. Ecocentricism promises effective solution through various integrated societal aspect.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* is one of the novels which has been written in the current era. In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh problematizes the strains between and inside human groups, their particular relations with the regular world, and the additional desultory reality of nature that progressions and is all the while changed by humankind.

The novel revolves around the relationship between the marine biologist (Piyali Roy) and nature. Water is the creator of the relationships and the destroyer too. The bond is created when Piyali Roy almost drowns when she's aboard in a boat. Fokir rescues her from the water. It ends up becoming a beautiful relationship/friendship. It ends with his life being taken away when he tried to protect her. This ends the sad tale. Water here is the Alpha and the Omega in the relationship. Which talks about the role water plays in the lives of people.

The story entirely revolves around Sundarbans, which is one of the suburbs of India. Ghosh portrays the entire novel as the ecological witness in the region of west Bengal after 2004, which is completely surrounded by the mangrove forest. The characters employed in the novel intersect at various grounds and provide a striving purpose in illustrating the Ecological factors in novel. The narration has vividly explained the indispensable role of each aspect of nature such as crocodile, tiger, and various other animals in the entire story. The Characters and elements of nature have a wholesome part to justify environmental happenings and the course of change. The

characters strive to ceaselessly explain and act as a bridge between the present and the past.

The harmonious balance between man and nature is meticulously explained through the novel. The fact of coexistence between man and nature is inscribed through this novel. It also paved way for man to understand that there is no life possible without establishing relationship between man and nature. Mother earth has infinitely generated various problem, which is an inductive reminder to safe guard the earth. The Novel is filled with Ecocritical elements and stands as literary elements which add flavour and beauty to the novel by broadcasting the relationship between man and nature. This is highlighted in the novel and the plans and ideas that help nature and man coexist can be seen in the novel.

The Hungry Tide along with its eco-critical analysis of the threatened mangrove ecosystem in the face of globalization and market economy, another striking feature of this novel is its dynamic portrayal of women who are in search for their own identity. To find a firm ground to stand on, they are prepared to exceed the so called gender roles. Though there are characters who cannot be claimed to belong to the tide country but later settled there like Nilima or who are complete outsider like Piya, alien to its culture or even language but later finding her root in the mud of the tide country, the novelist never fails to convey to the readers in a nuanced way how all of them are vulnerable in every step in this male-oriented society.

Piyali Roy, the American citizen of Indian origin is the one of the major characters of the the novel. She does not belong to the tide country but a visitor to the place. Being a cetologist by profession, she has come to the Sundarbans for a research work. Cetology involves the study of marine mammals and her specialized

area is sea water river dolphin that is found in great waterways like Ganges, Mekong, Irrawaddy. It is indeed very astonishing that a young woman who cannot speak nor even understand the language of the place can dare to visit the alien land without any companion or even a translator. She is exposed to dangers from several ways: she is aware of the fact as well. Yet her courage and her determination renders her unyielding who would not stop at any condition until she reaches her destination.

Her deviation from norms is marked at the very beginning of the novel that starts in a crowded Indian railway station where her “neatly composed androgyny of her appearance seemed out of place, almost exotic” (3). Piya does not at all resemble the so called enchanting heroine of romantic fictions, rather she is identified by “the unaccustomed delineation of her stance.” What is more striking is her worldview- at a so early an age , she has embraced solitude. She does not need any companionship or assistance of others, but prefers to be alone. “It’s easier to slip through the net if you’re on your own.” (12). Possibly her tainted childhood when she witnessed the bitter altercation between her parents along with her failure in relationship that ended with disastrous result led her to live a secluded life. Whatever be the case, her defiance of gender roles imposed upon the “second sex” by patriarchal society is evident in her every movement.

Of all women characters of *The Hungry Tide*, it is Kusum who mostly embodies the essential spirit of revolution. Moyna, another significant woman character of the novel belongs to the tide country and she is wife of Fokir, the major male character. But this is not her only identity. She is a distinguished nurse of the hospital under Badabon Trust, one who has got promotion from barefoot nurse to full time trained nurse of the hospital by hard work and proficiency. Kanai, at her very first sight

could perceive that, “she was not to be shy of pitting her will against the world.” (130). She was determined from her childhood to avail herself of the education. Since there was no school in her own village, she had to walk kilometres away to another village.

Piya, Nilima, Kusum, Moyna, all are victims of patriarchy. But they are not mere helpless victims. Even though the system tries hard to choke their voices, they cannot be fettered. Though their backgrounds, circumstances, milieus may be different, they seem to have a common goal. Defying traditionalism, they struggle hard to achieve equality. Though it cannot be denied that they have their own personal aims to fulfil, even then their individual attempts do suggest their identical dream of female utopia. Piya can leave her comfort zone, her family, friends, country to set off for a secluded journey that may be a part of her quest for self-realization; an urban, educated independent woman like Nilima can embrace the salty mud of tide country and devote her whole life for the welfare of people living there, an impoverished, apparently helpless country girl like Kusum can fight against government for securing the right of her own and her people; a simple village girl like Moyna can fight against her family to realize her dream. All of them are engaged in a personal mission, yet there is something common between them- all of them are in search of a purpose for their existence, looking for a worthy life. Perhaps they all dream of “a place where no one would exploit anyone and people would live together without petty social distinctions and differences....where men and women could be farmers in the morning, poets in the afternoon and carpenters in the evening.” (53) Thus women of *The Hungry Tide* stands apart from traditional portrayal. They may be vulnerable but they do not lack the courage to fight back. They are revolutionary women who struggle hard to pave the way for a brighter future for generations

to come. This extraordinary delineation of the fighter women is one of Ghosh's unique achievements.

Works Cited

- Tiwari, Shubha. *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Study*. Atlantic publishers and distributors P Ltd, 2008, pp. 3.
- Ghosh, Amitav. *The Hungry Tide*. Penguin Books, 2008.
- Arudhkar, Sarika Pradiprao, *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical study in The Hungry Tide*, New Delhi creative books , 2007, pp. 118.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969 .
- Klages, Mary. *Literary Theory: A Guide to The Perplexed*. New Delhi, Bloomsbury, 2005, pp. 95.
- Garrard, Grey. *Ecocriticism*. New York, Routledge, 2004, pp. 14.
- Howarth, William. "Some principles of ecocriticism". *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in literary ecology*, 1996, pp. 69.
- Tomsky, Terri. "Amitav Ghosh's Anxious Witnessing and the Ethics of Action in *The Hungry Tide*." *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, vol. 44, no. 1, Mar. 2009, pp. 53.
- Ghosh, Amitav. "A praise book of the tides." *Frontline*, 10 Sep 2004, frontline.thehindu.com/other/article30224360.ece. pp. 11.
- Patlanayak, Alok. *A Survey Of Common Wealth fiction*. Pearl Books Publishers, 2012, pp. 275.

Racism in sports: A Study of the Textual and the Film Versions of Michael Lewis' *The Blind Side*

A project 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

by

YEGOVA FIBI. S

(REG. NO. 20APEN32)



PG and Research Department of English

St. Mary's College (Autonomous)

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

Thoothukudi

May 2022

Contents

Certificate

Declaration

Acknowledgement

Preface

Chapter	Title	Page
One	Introduction	1
Two	Evolution of a Game	18
Three	Issues of identity and Racism	28
Four	Blind Side in <i>The Blind Side</i>	41
Five	Summation	52
	Works Cited	58

Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Racism in Sports: A Study of the Textual and the Film Versions of Michael Lewis' *The Blind Side*** 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 is a work done by Yegova Fibi. S during the year 2021-2022, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma or similar title.

B. Serena Margaret

Dr. B. Serena Margaret

Associate Professor of English

Guide

A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Dr. A. Judith Sheela Damayanthi

Head of the Department of English

Dr. A. JUDIT SHEELA DAMAYANTHI
HEAD & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS)
THOOTHUKUDI

S. Vennila

Examiner

Dr. S. VENNILA, Ph.D.,
Assistant Prof of English
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi - 628 001

Lucia Rose

Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose

Principal
St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Thoothukudi-628 001.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Racism in Sports: A Study of the Textual and the Film Versions of Michael Lewis' *The Blind Side*** 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.


Yegova Fibi S

Thoothukudi

May 2022

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge and thank all who have supported me not only during the course of this project but throughout my Master's Degree.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to the **Lord Almighty** for the wisdom, He bestowed upon me, the peace of mind and strength in order to complete this research.

I express my gratitude to **Dr. Sr. A. S. J. Lucia Rose**, Principal, St. Mary's college (Autonomous), Thoothukudi and the institution for encouraging us to take up a research-oriented study.

I thank our institution for the values and the knowledge that I have acquired in the course of study. The research-oriented ambience inspired me to pursue the intellectual exercise of writing the project.

I thank, **Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi**, Head of the Department of English for her motivational support, guidance and encouragement in the successful completion of this project.

I am grateful to my guide, **Dr. B. Serena Margaret**, Associate professor of English for imparting her knowledge and expertise in this study. I sincerely thank her for her support, academic guidance, encouragement in the successful completion of the project.

I thank all the staffs in our department who supports and encourage me to finish my project.

I thank **Dr.K.Vinitha**, the Librarian, St.Mary's College who extended help in the use of the library for the reference work and for the abundant resources the library provided.

My thanks and appreciations are due to my parents for their love, support and the moral encouragement of my friends towards the completion of my project.

Preface

This project entitled **Racism in sports: A study of the textual and the film versions of Michael Lewis' *The Blind Side*** dramatizes the struggles undergone by the protagonist. It presented the conditions of football players in the society.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on American Literature. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter deals with **Evolution of a Game** covers the outline of the story showing the position of the power of Michael's efforts to overcome his racial problem and discrimination is raised in society by giving its constant presence in human relations. It shows its primary over all other aspects of life.

The third chapter deals with **Issues of identity and Racism**, that shows how the causes and the types of racial discrimination that are faced by Michael Oher, as a black people.

The fourth chapter deals with **Blind side in, 'The Blind Side'** about how Michael has completed the process of social mobility with his efforts and luck. Due to the Tuohy's supports, love, all facilities given to him, and his skill and efforts in football, he becomes a successful football player and a member of NFL team in 2009. Despite all his traumatic past made him living a poor life before, he tries to get up and fight for the better future and he gets it.

The fifth chapter deals with **Summation** it sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key term of the title.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

Literature is interpreted as reflecting norms and values, as revealing the ethos of culture, the process of class culture, the process of class struggle, and certain types of social “facts”. Literature is the reflection and reproduction of the life of the people. It has existed ever since the invention of the art of writing, which enabled men to keep an account of the things, they wished to remember. The literature of the past helps understand the lives of the people of the past. English literature tells us about the life of the people who speak of the English Language. It is the record of the thoughts and the feelings and the acts of the English-speaking race. To extend that the literature has been thought of as an art then the kinds of features identified have been closely associated with prominent features of arts in general. It is notable how these prominent features have been historically variable and even come to characterise periods of history: classical, romantic, modern and so on. To write it is certainly not impose a form of expression, and it is on the matter of the lived experience.

The arrival of the novel and prose fiction, reflection on the literary arts was confined to poetry, conceived in the broad sense which, as well as the epic and short lyric, included drama, notably the great tragedies of Sophocles and Shakespeare. Literature is contrasted with history and philosophy. The narrator’s conception of literature as an art is associated with imaginative or creative writing, the subject matter of “Literary Studies” or “Literary Criticism”.

American Literature need become more and more like the British Literature. American history is bounded by emergence of the United States as a world power

and the trauma of the stock market and the depression. It is divided by the First World War. The literature of the period kept pace with the history and the range of the literature is comparably great. Writers looked outside America more readily and inside America more critically than before. The certainties and the uncertainties, the changes and reaffirmations of the period were all reflected in the literature which pushed enquiry and experiments to its limits, from the ironic novel of the matters to the grotesque, from the autobiography to the newspaper article. Gentility caution, provincialism and the middle class values were replaced by styles and themes which paralleled the questioning and reforming about American social philosophy.

Unlike the Declaration of the Independence, the unity of the English race was unbroken; and until the eighteenth century the stream of the English Literature had bud a single channel. Since people in the United States began to have the writers of their own, the record of the feelings of their thoughts, and of their deeds may fairly be called American Literature. By the end of the 19th century, English Literature has four divisions, British, American, Canadian and Australian. Of these British Literature is still the most important, having the most important of the greatest authors. But the American Literature is second to it, and is growing sturdily and steadily.

Through the technique of realism, naturalism, symbolism, and expressionism, the writers of the period mirror out-its regions, its villages, its cities and its ethnicity. This is also an age of excellence, an era of psychological literature, of the individual consciousness – an era which strikingly affirms the value of the imagination. The Sprit of American Literature is the matter of the distilled airs and essences, of evolved visions and values, of national moors and the

moorings. It's the name of the energy that lights up the energy and it also lights up the inner American landscape. The earliest American literature was an interesting mixture of travel accounts and religious writings, produced mainly by immigrants of England. Some of the earliest forms of American Literature were pamphlets and writings expressing the benefits to both a European and colonist audience. The colonial period was dominated by Puritan beliefs and thus literature of this period is usually historical, religious, or didactic. The most common genres were tracts, polemics, journals, narrative sermons and some poetry.

By the end of the 19th century the nation had taken the place among the powers of the world. Hence its fortune was interrelated to those of other nations that inevitably became involved in two world wars, the conflicts, and the problems of the 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 moulded the literature of the country.

Michael Monroe Lewis was born on October 15, 1960 in New Orleans, Louisiana. and remains deeply interested and involved in the city. He lived in Berkely California with his wife, Tabitha Soren and their children; Quinn, Dixie and Walker. His education includes attending Princeton University, where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in art history, and later earning a Master's Degree in Economics from London School of Economics. In 2009 he published *Home Game, An Accidental Guide to Fatherhood* about his attempts to raise them. In the magazine *Houston Chronicle*, John Freeman said that:

Lewis is a terrific reporter and gifted prose stylist. He absorbs the vibration of the world he immerses himself in without getting carried away. So the progresses, he never loses track of Michael Oher.

Lewis is a bestselling author and contributes to various periodicals, including *Vanity Fair*, *Bloomberg*, and *The New York Times*. Lewis seems to inject a sense of humour in stories that otherwise have somewhat serious topics. His books have topped the best sellers list. He is truly one of the most successful writers in the United States. Michael Lewis has natural confidence. That may not come as a surprise for someone who has amazed so many *New York* best sellers, and who has had three of them made into motion pictures, but that confidence was displayed well even before he was an established author.

He was an undergraduate at Princeton, his thesis advisor suggested that he not pursue a career in writing. Though he needed that advice immediately after graduating, instead spend time as a gopher for an art dealer, as an apprentice to a cabinet maker, and as a tour guide. After a degree he found his way into the world of finance. Throughout this period, he wrote. He was encouraged by the response letters received from the family and friends. Even in the period prior to e-mail, the letters were shared and enjoyed by many beyond the intended recipients. Michael Lewis has published many *New York Times* best selling books on various subjects. His most recent works are *The Premonition*, *The Fifth Risk*, *The Undoing Project*, *Flash Boys* and *The Big Short*.

The Blind Side published in 2006, tells us the story of Michael Oher, a poor, illiterate African-American kid living on the streets of Memphis whose life is transformed after he is adopted by the Evangelical Christians. Before he wrote

Money Ball, this is book ostensibly about baseball, but also the way markets value people. Both of his books about sports became movies, nominated for Academy Awards, as did his book about the 2008 financial crisis, *The Big Short*.

Jay Hancock states about the novel *The Blind Side* as, 'It's not a joke book. It's not a sociology book. It's a storybook about modern society, ancient virtues, and the power of love, money and talent to do a little good' (24). His other works include *Boomerang*, *The New Thing*, about Silicon Valley during the internet boom, *Coach* about the transformative powers of his own high school baseball coach. *Lasers*, about the 1996 Presidential campaign, and *Liar's Poker* about a Wall Street story in part of his own experience working as a bond salesman for Salomon Brothers. Lewis is often referred to as a business writer, and this is sort of true, in that his narratives usually focus on some kind of market, be it for bonds or baseball players. But he's a business writer only in the same way that Malcolm Gladwell is a business writer

The success of *Moneyball* and *The Blind Side* means Hollywood is smiling on him: HBO is developing his plot for a fictionalised series about immigrant baseball players, which was inspired by an article he wrote for *Vanity Fair*, ABC has opted for his fatherhood book *Home Game*, and Warner Bros., which has been holding onto the rights for *Liar's Poker* for years, has finally hired a director and commissioned Lewis to write the script. He is also planning on writing a movie based on his book about Billy Fitzgerald, his high-school baseball coach. And there's a stack of new ideas, including a sequel to *Moneyball*, in manila folders in his office, waiting to become magazine articles and books and movies and, eventually, other people's Las Vegas speaking engagements. Michael Lewis

published an excerpt of his book in *The New York Times*, entitled *The Ballad of Big Mike*.

The Blind Side film was adapted from Michael Lewis novel, *The Blind Side: The Evolution of the Game*. It was released in the United States in November 2009 and was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Picture in 2010. It visualised the story of a poor African American boy, Michael Oher, who was taken care of by a white family, Tuohy's family, which changed his destiny and eventually grew into a National Football League (NFL) player. After the film was released, it received extensive attention and discussion. The movie's box office exceeded \$309 million.

The last text discussed is the film *The Blind Side* adapted and directed by John Lee Hancock. Moreover, several scholarly articles, which deal explicitly with *The Blind Side*, or with related topics, form an academic foundation for the discussion. Other empirical data includes film reviews by both professional reviewers and amateurs who post online reviews, and several interviews conducted by online film sites and advertising sites, as well as more established newspapers with online versions, like *The New York Times* and *The Los Angeles Times*. The reason for choosing this particular empirical data is primarily concerned with *The Blind Side*'s adaptation history.

The fact that several different versions of the work exist, makes it especially interesting to study. Additionally, all versions have been published within the last decade, which ensures that they have been created in the contemporary adaptation industry and with memes that are still current in our cultural context. It also means that some academic work has been done specifically on *The Blind Side*, but not

much. Precisely for this reason, Lewis chose to use non-academic data as well, to illuminate aspects of the adaptations that had not been dealt with in academic circles yet.

Racism in the United States has been a major issue ever since the colonial era and the era of slavery. Although, formal racial discrimination was largely banned in the mid-20th century, and came to be perceived as socially unacceptable and morally repugnant, racial politics remain a major phenomenon. Historical racism continues to be reflected in socio-economic life. The problem of racism has emerged almost as old as human civilization and the progress is not improving over time. The conflict between human being caused a different view about the problems in social community and physical differences. Often we hear about incidents of riot and fight between races which are also experienced by the American society.

The problem of racialism in America is experienced by African Americans. For about two centuries, trades of international slave have brought million of Africans to America. They were placed in plantations of cotton and tobacco, some of them were treated as contract labourers by the whites. They performed a contract to work some years for paying cost trip to America. The law status of the African slaves was not clear. African slaves couldn't get their freedom although they had done the service for a long period. After witnessing increased the number of black labourers and also their important role in the economy of the plantation in the South, the plantation owner (whites) felt important to make law regarding the position of black labourers. In addition, racism which had been viewed primarily as a problem in the Southern states, burst onto the national consciousness following the Great Migration. Thousands of slaves freed themselves by running away.

In the South, slavery became more firmly entrenched and expanded rapidly into the Old Southwest after the development of the cotton gin. In the North, there is still no system of slavery with the blacks as second class citizens. Discrimination against the colour was one of the causes of civil war between the States and North-South state. Although the system of slavery, had been abolished after the defeat of the countries of the South. Until the mid-20th century, the problem of racism still existed. The impact of racial discrimination is distinguishing between the rights of the black and the white people. Also, racial stratification continues to occur in employment, housing, education, lending, and government. These disparities have an impact on every aspect of life and relationship of black and white in American society.

The problem of racialism and relationship of the black and the white people in America can be seen through this novel, the scientific books, journals, newspapers or even films. Many films represent black and white relationship. Mostly, black people are described as minority and discriminated. One film that focuses on black and white relationship is *The Blind Side*.

The two main characters, Leigh Anne and Michael Oher come from different social background. Leigh Anne Tuohy is a white female of upper class, while Michael Oher is a black whose mother is divorced and drug addict. The storyline features Michael Oher an offensive lineman who plays for the Baltimore Ravens of the NFL. The film follows Michael Oher from his impoverished upbringing, through his years at Wingate Christian School his adoption by Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy, and on to his position as one of the most highly coveted prospects in college football team. Both of them create a harmonious relationship.

Through whites are often depicted as a people who consider that they are better than blacks.

The Tuohy family is described well and care about Michael Oher. The film *The Blind Side* represents the relationship of blacks and whites contrasting with the background on the history of racism. Therefore, the writer is interested in the analysis of the black and white characters (Leigh Anne Tuohy and Michael Oher) and to discover how the film describes their relationship. The acts of racism towards him can be handled by having achievements in sport. Eventually, the society can accept his presence into their group even though he comes from the minority group. Wellek and Warren present three classifications of problems in the sociology of literature. They are the sociology of the writer, the social content of the work itself, and the influence of literature on society (1977: 96).

The Blind Side novel has several things in common with the historical fiction film. The notion of historical fiction sounds like an oxymoron, because it appears counter-intuitive. Lewis's book was originally aimed at football fans who were interested in some game strategy and a personal story about it; the Tuohy's book was designed to help carry on a discussion with people who had seen the movie about our lives and were inspired to find their own way to give. The images of white people in "*The Blind Side*" are mostly positive, which conveys the idea of Western white society that white people are the incarnations of kindness and justice, heroes and saviours, and can help people in the world escape from suffering, including the black teenager from the bottom of society who has no birth certificate, no identity certificate, and lack of file records.

In the Western perspective, Africans are marginalized and the other, while Western whites are civilized and saviours. The film also promotes Western-centrism in a subtle way, influencing non-Western people, allowing them to form the self-identity and worship for Western myths and American dreams. The difference of physical characteristics are very apparent in American, especially on the southern America which very strong with the issue of racism is very strongly felt. In the era of slavery, black people often become slaves in white's communities. This problem happened for centuries. The racism toward Michael Oher can be reduced by sport. Since he lives in the Tuohy's house, by joining a football team in his school, Michael Oher easily makes friends. A football team has the same purpose that is winning the competition. In achieving the goal, each member has to have a strong communication and trust one to another in the team.

The relationship of black and white people did not run smoothly. Black and white people always distrust each other. White people do have prejudice over black people. They think black people are related to criminal hideous; because black people live in slum area, have no proper education, and are drunkards. Conversely, black people are positioned lower than the white people. The conflict happened between black and white people caused different views about the problem in community. Often, we hear about riots and fights between races, this also is experienced by black people in America. The images of white people in *The Blind Side* are mostly positive which conveys the idea of Western white society that white people are the incarnations of kindness and justice, heroes and saviours, and can help people in the world escape from suffering, including the black teenager from the bottom of society who has no birth certificate, no identity certificate, and lack of file records

The Blind Side is a novel adapted from the experience of National Football League player Michael Oher. While the readers understand the success story of this black athlete through the novel, they are also subtly instilled with Western-centrism, and thus form the identity and worship to the Western world. Said pointed out in "Orientalism" that the East is the Orientalized East, the East oppressed by the West with the help of discourse authority, and Orientalism is a manifestation of the cultural hegemony dominated by the West. In today's world, the competition of comprehensive national power is not only reflected in the political, economic, and military aspects. Cultural competition also plays an important role. The United States uses movies and other cultural products to export Western centralism and cultural hegemony in order to seek global cultural hegemony, and even world hegemony. Therefore, when we accept films and other foreign cultural products, we must take a critical attitude, take the essence and discard the dross.

Post-colonialism is the use of post-colonial criticism to study the traces of the colonial era left by post-colonial countries in cultural values and other areas of society after they have completed their political independence. The representative scholar of post colonialism is Edward W. Said, who proposed post colonialism on the basis of Gramsci's hegemony and Foucault's theory of discourse and power. "Hegemony" refers to the invisible colonization of non-Western groups by the West through cultural and ideological control, thereby realizing "discourse power". Said criticized the illusion of colonists who regarded themselves as truth and heroes in Orientalism.

Edward W. Said pointed out in "Orientalism" that dividing the boundary between East and West is entirely imaginary, and once this imaginary East becomes a fixed

concept, then there will be a corresponding series of behavioural patterns and conceptual patterns. These imaginative-based behaviour patterns and conceptual patterns unify the diverse and varied cultural patterns into a fixed pattern.

"The Other" is an important concept in post-colonial theory. In postcolonial theories, Westerners are often referred to as "the self", while the non-Western world is often called "the other." In cultural colonization, the West often represents the "self", the "superior" culture, and the narrator; while the East often represents the "other", the "weak" culture, and the object of narrating. In Edward W. Said's *Orientalism*, "the other" is used to refer to the cultural projection of a certain idea, which constructs the identity of the cultural subject through a certain power relationship and discourse power (Said.1999).

This problematic relationship with the truth is evident in both the book and the film, and it is particularly evident in the narrative techniques. They both tell the story of Michael Oher's journey from homeless black son of a crack-addicted mother to being adopted by wealthy, white parents, and a career in the National Football League, but it is striking that they both tell the story through the perspective of others. Rarely do we hear or see the perspective of Oher himself.

Fundamentally, they tell the story of how other people experienced Oher's journey. His own voice is noticeably absent, but the real person behind the story broke the silence after the film's success. Oher (with Don Yeager) published his own account in 2011, two years after the film and five years after Lewis' book was published. His account differs in many respects from the book and the film, but it is not necessarily a better representation of the truth. He was after all a young boy who experienced years of traumatic events through his young eyes and his

perspective is only one of many. It could be argued that all accounts are both true and untrue depending on the perspective of the narrator. That is one of the reasons why film adaptations based on non-fiction accounts do not benefit from being compared to the source text(s), but should instead be analysed as what they are films.

Michael Oher ended up contributing to the book, but it is still not narrated from his perspective. He is a character in the book, just like everyone else. The book is, however, not exclusively about Oher, but features two storylines where one is about the evolution of the left tackle position in American football, and Oher's story serves as a face to illustrate this position and works as the other storyline. What is interesting in this context is that the way Oher is portrayed in the source text probably influenced the depiction of him as a passive player in his own life in the film a great deal. However, the source text also conveys an image of Oher as someone who is determined to succeed, which is not included in the film, like in these lines: "Michael noted his outcome and concluded that his life was always going to work out. He refused to believe that there was ever the faintest possibility that he was going to be anything other than a huge success" (325). This passage illustrates clearly that the film adapter chose to only adapt specific parts of the book.

Oher clearly positions his book in relation to the other books, indicating both the similarities and the differences between them. His intentions with the book are similar to the Tuohy's book in that he also wants to set the record straight on what really happened, and he may also have a financial motivation. Yet, he clearly positions his retelling in opposition to Leigh Anne's version by commenting on her

interpretation of his potential for success in life without the Tuohy's intervention. He backs this up by telling the story of his life before the Tuohy's, which is only fragmentarily referred to in Lewis' book and hardly mentioned in the Tuohy version. This distancing strategy is key to the book's status as a version of Lewis' book in the context of fluid text theory, which is concerned with how to identify a version, because it simultaneously measures the distance between versions. Bryant argues that:

If written works can be known by their rhetorical strategies, then versions, like any written work, can be similarly defined, with the added understanding that the act of 70 revisions, which generates the version, is itself a rhetorical strategy. We know a version, then, not only by its revisions, but also by its revision strategy. A revision strategy may be defined as a set of textual changes designed to have a rhetorical effect that is meaningfully distinct, or distant, from its original. Indeed, I would say that if a revised text reveals to us no revision strategy, it is probably not a version in its own right, but rather the product of a kind of tactical tinkering. Put another way, for a version to have its own textual identity, its revision strategy must create a theorizable distance from its predecessor. (63)

The result shows that racial discrimination in this movie and novel emerges that Michael comes from a black race. This novel also works on three levels the first one is analysis of the National Football League, the second one is as an expose of the insanity of big-time college football recruiting and the third as a moving portrait of the positive effect that love, family, and education can have in reversing the path of the life that was destined to be lived unhappily and, most likely, end badly. Michael proved that he could be freed from the bullying and being capable to equally stand next to white people in America with his strong determination and

hard work. This thesis reveals about racism, sport, and social acceptance in the novel *The Blind Side*. To analyse further about the racism towards Michael Oher and its relation to sports and social integration in groups, communities, and social life's, the thesis is entitled

Chapter Two

Evolution of a Game

Bestselling author Michael Lewis was the first to record Michael Oher's story and publish it both in book form and in *The New York Times Magazine*. The rights to his non-fiction account *The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game* was bought by Twentieth Century Fox with the aim of developing a film. It is therefore easy to suppose that he is the point of origin for the adaptation, although he did not participate in the adaptation process.

Lewis's subject is the salvation of Michael Oher, a black child virtually raised on the mean streets of Memphis. But Lewis also continues what he began with "*Moneyball*" his 2003 best seller explaining new thinking about how to construct baseball teams. He is advancing a new genre of journalism that shows how market forces and economic reasoning shape the evolution of sports. Oher, who today plays left offensive tackle for the University of Mississippi, is a valuable commodity because of the lasting impact on football made by someone who played on the other side of the ball.

The author's purpose is not to tell a simple story about how a kid went from nothing to something because there are many stories out there like that. He was trying to influence people that we all have something in us that can make change and we are capable of so much more than we think. The intended audience is everyone, but we mostly think it is to young adults, especially the marginalised. It is easy to relate to mainly everyone because no matter what age, we all face things that seem to be impossible in the moment, but once we come out of it, we realize

we are something far greater than ourselves. It is likely that few but serious students of baseball and football will go the whole distance with either of Michael Lewis's sports-themed books, *Moneyball : The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* (2003) and *The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game*. *Moneyball* took readers inside the halls of a major-league baseball franchise—that of the Oakland Athletics. This team has combined baseball's lowest payroll with its highest winning percentage through the acuity of general manager Billy Beane, who did it by the numbers using statistics compiled by a curious battery of “outside insiders” who demonstrated that the traditional yardsticks of success for players and teams may be flawed. Only baseball insiders will grasp Lewis's “new baseball.”

The reader does not meet the protagonist of *The Blind Side* until the first page of chapter 2, twenty-five pages into the book. That is because Lewis wants readers to know from the outset the role of his book's antagonist, perhaps professional football history's most violent defensive lineman. In physiology, “antagonist” is defined as “a muscle that acts in opposition to other muscles.” That is how New York Giants linebacker Lawrence Taylor (L.T.) destroyed opposing quarterbacks throughout the 1980's.

The Blind Side doesn't allude to a great many historical events. However, it gives a sense for the crack epidemic of the 1980s and for the decay of black urban communities during the same period. Throughout the 1980s, the use of crack cocaine was extremely high in poor black communities, creating a spike in crime and child neglect. Sean Tuohy and his wife suspect Michael steals something in their house since Michael is very quiet and has odd behaviour toward them. They thought that Michael is just the same as other backward black people in that town;

they generalise their point of view about black people. In fact, black people are stereotyped by white people as brutal and criminal people. The word 'steak' is used to emphasize that black people are stuck to the bad-attitude image. Actually, minority status is the most reasonable situation to give an unfair judgment to the subordinate group. The similar black is also found in *datum*. This word is uttered by Jimmy's father when Michael was playing for his prime football match outside his hometown, the Hurt Village. During the game, Jimmy's father was always yelling at Michael in an unkind way. Using not only black, he also used some words that qualify Michael's appearance with a negative meaning. Jimmy's father was a white man. He thought the existence of Michael in that game was a threat for all players because Michael was the biggest and the only black player.

After all, the use of multiple adjectives to mark people's characterization in an unkind way is categorized as insulting. Michael Oher was born in a community with a serious crack problem, and only left it because a father figure, Big Tony, helped him go to Briarcrest. *The Blind Side* could be compared with *The Short and Tragic Life of Robert Peace* (2011), another nonfiction book about a highly gifted black man who migrates from the inner city to an elite, predominately white community in Peace's case, Yale University.

Lewis telescopes a most remarkable story: the young, troubled life of Michael Oher, from Memphis. He does show how the colleges have developed National Football League tendencies, and how the demand for information about specific talent has been met by people like Tom Lemming and his ground breaking recruiting services of the past 30 years. Oher is a most unlikely story. He was given up by his family, the state welfare agencies, schools, foster agencies, etc., until one

day, an older friend took him to an evangelical school in a wealthy, mostly white, suburb of Memphis in hopes of giving him a Christian education.

Oher has no academic skills. He has a tall and big figure, long-armed, and heavy weight. He always keeps his head down as he walks and wears the same old T-shirt and short pants daily. He has dark tight curly hair, chubby face, thick lips and black skin. He also has such kind eyes and sad-looking face that signifies sadness and depression, and has been beat down by life so much he has no social skills, and does not fit in at all with the other students, until one day, out of kindness and mercy. Michael is a poor boy who has miserable childhood in the west part of Memphis. Although he does not know how to interact with others and has no idea how to learn in classroom, he is really talented in sports. He is given the opportunity to try out for the school's football team, where he runs one drill and stuns the team.

Soon at practice, the school field is lined with representatives of nearly major college football in the southeast, and the first drill is interrupted by Clemson assistant Brad Scott telling the staff about Oher's presence on the field, that Oher has a full scholarship waiting for him at Clemson. Michael's achievement in football gives him an opportunity to earn many through scholarships from several colleges. However, he must improve his grades to fulfil the admission requirements. With the help of his private tutor, Mrs. Sue, he graduated from high school with good grades and makes all of the teachers proud of him. They are no longer under estimating his ability in both academics and sports. Oher is eventually adopted by the Tuohy family, a millionaire family, well connected in sports and business, and the culture clash, between a wealthy, devout family and a social

reclusive, poor, giant of a kid takes up the remainder of the book, until Oher eventually enrolls at the Tuohy's alma mater, Mississippi. Michael's life starts to change since he is adopted by Tuohy's family. He wears a brand new rugby shirt and long pants. His personality also changes from the quiet child to a friendly and confident person. He starts to interact with his teacher and the other students. His academics grades are increasing, so he can play sports, graduate from high school and gets a lot of college scholarship.

Lewis's story is satisfying from many perspectives. He goes deep into the modern cultural and financial behemoth of American football to show why it is working the way it is today. He illustrates well, the lingering tensions in America today between the whites and the blacks, the poor and the wealthy, the urban and the suburb, family breakdown, and college admissions.

Lewis gets right many things about that movement: a deep sense of piety, a dedicated work ethic, and at many times an oblivious nature to how the rest of the world works, and an inability to deal with many problems endemic to modern children in a deep way: poverty, family breakdown, etc. Though Lewis does get right the sense of mercy that exists among many, motivated by their faith, to help someone in need, whether they understand the costs or not. Lewis, unfortunately, does not reveal his longstanding personal relationship with the Tuohy family, going back to their undergraduate years until the end of the book. It would have been helpful for a journalist to reveal that early on. And, Lewis is a bit too sympathetic in explaining a fight Oher got into over a personal insult in his freshman year at Ole Miss, it led to a small child being hurt accidentally.

In fact, the term redneck is previously referred only to the rural white people, mostly farmers, who had reddish necks. However, its usage had become slightly diminished and now it included any stereotype of white people. In this condition, Tuohy's family is categorised as white people with a higher status in the society than the other white people who work as farmers. Thus, they simply called other white people there as rednecks.

While *Moneyball* is replete with baseball anecdote—intimate and original portraits of big-league ball players and game situations. *The Blind Side* conveys its dedication to football's modern playbook novelistic ally through one player's poignant if unlikely success story. Sometimes, however, Lewis's narrative goes awry. The reader becomes engrossed in that player's drama, the author runs a literary double reverse and starts talking about the evolving game.

In his zestfully manipulative way, Lewis serves up the menacing presence of Lawrence Taylor act as catalyst for the larger human story that he really wishes to tell. Yet, unless readers accept this subtext for the book's powerful Bildungsroman the rags-to-riches rise of a giant mentioned as 6 feet 5 inches and 330 pounds but destitute black teenager that the primary fact of modern-day football is the position of offensive left tackle, the impact of *The Blind Side* diminishes.

Fifteen years ago this position was the lowest paid in the National Football League (NFL) but is now, after the quarterback, the highest. The offensive left tackle protects the right-handed quarterback's blind side. It is the pass rush the quarterback cannot see coming that results in injuries like the one Lewis describes on page 1: Washington's Joe Theismann's career-ending leg fracture in a 1985 game against Lawrence Taylor and the New York Giants in a "busted" play that

inadvertently caused Taylor to wedge the quarterback beneath another Giants pursuer, with Theismann's leg paying the price.

When Lewis introduces Michael Oher, he is one of the thirteen children of Denise Williams, a crack addict. He does not know his real name, his father, his birthday, or any of the things a child might learn in school like, say, how to read or write. Moreover, he has no experience playing organised football. When national football scout Tom Lemming, who had received thousands of tapes from football coaches and parents who wanted their kids to make the various high school all-American teams he selected, watched a clip of a Gulliverian express bearing down on a Lilliputian attempting to pass, he knew the boy from Memphis was a special case. "The tape was grainy and you couldn't see very well," said Lemming, "But when he came off the line, it looked like one whole wall was moving. And it was just one player! You had to look at it twice to believe it: he was that big. And yet he would get out and go chase down, and catch, these fast little linebackers" (54).

After these epiphanies of a man-child playing a boys' game, Lemming tried to reach Michael Oher by phone. However, Big Mike, as he was known to everyone at Memphis's Briarcrest Christian School, seemed incommunicado. He had no home; he did not even have a phone number. School officials, dubious of Lemming's interest, finally arranged to drive Big Mike to the University of Memphis football facility for a face-to-face interview. There is no evidence that Lewis ever met Michael Oher during or after the writing of *The Blind Side*. There are no photos, but this is how Lemming described him:

He looked like a house walking into a bigger house . . . barely fit through the door . . . He was the solid kind. You also see big guys,

tall guys who weigh a lot, but they have thin legs. They're fine in high school, but in college they'll get pushed around. He was just massive everywhere. (42-42)

The British-Irish writer Rebecca West wrote, "There is no conversation. There are intersecting monologues." Between Tom Lemming and Big Mike Oher in the fall of 2004 there were no intersections. The young behemoth refused to speak: "He shook my hand and then didn't say a word" (154).

Something every other high school player in America was dying for Big Mike left on the table: an invitation to play in the U.S. Army All-American Bowl. What never crossed Lemming's mind was that the player he would soon rank the best offensive lineman in the nation did not have the foggiest idea of who Lemming was or why he was asking so many questions. "For that matter," writes Lewis, "he didn't even think of himself as a football player. And he had never played left tackle in his life" (201).

Michael Oher's silent demeanour may have provided the author with a cover and a rationale for presenting a hero who through most of the book comes across as just as indistinct as his tapes. Readers are usually told rather than shown why the chronicle of Big Mike Oher cannot be other than a book-long work in progress. He had the most intense desire to please, without the ability to do the things that pleased. He had spent his whole life treating his mind as a problem to be covered up. He had grown so accustomed to not sharing a thing about himself, or perhaps never being asked about himself, that he did not even know how to begin. Squarely at the book's human centre are the Tuohy's were Sean, Leigh Anne and

their teenage daughter Collins. Leigh Anne is a wealthy woman who comes from the east part of Memphis. She is known as an impatient and perfectionist person.

At the beginning of the story, Leigh Anne is anxious when she visited the west part of Memphis because she felt threatened by being around black people. But once she got to know Michael, she slowly changes into an empathetic and brave person. It can be proven when she decides to become his legal guardian and provide a tutor for him. She have a courage to come to Hurt Village alone just to find Michael. They were wealthy Memphis family who take Mike from the city's slums to their heart and hearth, adopt the giant sixteen-year-old, and reinvent him for football stardom. After being adopted by Touhy's family, Michael's appearance starts to change and it made him become more confident person. Michael also improves his social skills by being more friendly so that the teachers and the other students change their perception of him. His progress slowly reduces the racial discrimination he faces at school.

We had a black son before we had a Democrat friend!" jokes the football-loving Sean Tuohy. The author and Tuohy went to elementary school together in New Orleans, and much of *The Blind Side* has an as-told-to sound. What the Tuohys learn about Big Mike would not pass muster in a novel: a grade point average of 0.6, a sixth percentile rating for "ability to learn," an absentee rate of forty-six days in the first term of his first year of first grade. (He took first and second grades twice each.) He slept on an air mattress in a trailer but was so heavy he deflated it. With or without classes, he walked to Briarcrest in winter just to find a place to keep warm. *New York Times* book critic Janet Maslin, while commending the author for his sharp dialogue and unerring pull on heartstrings and funny bone,

rightly notes that “parts of this book feel like prefabricated movie moments” out of Lewis’s preference for “buoyant details” over “the bleak ones that are implicit here. (208)

The book’s finest chapter is the sixth of twelve, “Inventing Michael,” which describes a preseason home scrimmage during Oher’s senior year, only his second on the Briarcrest team as left tackle actually a practice game against Munford, a nonconference school, but significantly “the last game of Michael Oher’s football career in which the opposing team wouldn’t have the first clue who he was” (162).

While coaches saw a future National Football League left tackle and everyone at Briarcrest started telling him he was a star, Oher had hardly any interest in football and spent most of his game time in search of someone to fall over. Not even the Tuohy’s could detect a hint of aggression until the scrimmage, that is, when a Munford lineman refused to let up on trash talk all directed at Michael (“Hey fat ass, I’m a kill you! . . . I’m a run your fat ass over!”). Only Leigh Anne, his surrogate mother, could tell when something angered Big Mike, but her back was turned when folks in the stands behind her began to laugh. Oher had lifted his tormentor off the ground and was carrying him, 220 pounds and all, well past the end of the field. Later, when asked what had got into Mike, the coach Hugh Freeze blamed the official’s slow whistle: “You tell Michael, ‘I want you to block until the whistle blows.’ Well, he takes that real literal” (102).

In the absence of Michael Oher’s voice, every scene brings him to life. So does a latter one in the Tuohy home when Mike races down the stairs hell-bent to tackle Collins, the Tuohy’s teenage daughter who has swiped her big brother’s black pants because she thinks they clash with his blazer. This brings up what may

be a moot point. For all of Lewis's second hand sightings of Big Mike, why does the publisher deny the reader a single photograph? The nine illustrations in the September 24, 2006, issue of *The New York Times Magazine* of which Lewis is a staff writer, appearing just prior to the book's publication, would have let readers of the book see why so many coaches pursued him.

Michael Oher's dynamic character can also be seen from his appearance and performance. After he meets the Tuohy's, he gets new clothes and shoes to go to school. He also becomes a famous athlete, not only in the school but also in Tennessee. The success makes Michael Oher feel confidence and comfortable in his new environment. In the novel it is noted that Michael Oher experiences changes in his life. At the first day he comes to the school, he was not able to communicate to the other students. After being a famous athlete, he becomes a friendly person. That progress happens because of motivation that the Tuohys gives to him.

Since Michael Oher's personalities change, he is also a dynamic character. From that explanation, it can be inferred that Michael Oher has many sides of personality in *The Blind Side*. He is an honest person that is proved by his attitude in the Tuohy's house when he stayed for a night. In the very beginning at his new school, he gets hard to study lessons from the teachers, but after he lives in the Tuohy's, he becomes a fast-learner and hard working person to achieve his dream. Therefore, Michael Oher is one of the round characters in *The Blind Side*.

Leigh Anne Tuohy is another major character of the novel. Her round and dynamic characteristic can be found firstly when she asks Michael Oher to sleep in her house. She plans to bring him home for only one night, but after she knows that Michael Oher has no place to stay, she asks him to stay longer. It proves that Leigh

Anne is a great empathic person. In addition to having great empathy, Leigh Anne Tuohy is also a brave woman. She drives her car alone to Hurt Village looking for Michael Oher. The dynamic of Leigh Anne is shown when she meets Michael Oher and asks him to stay at her house. She would have never gone to Hurt Village, a slum area and a dangerous place, if she had not met Michael Oher. She also dares to decide Michael Oher to be a part of her family even a lot of people in her environment do not support her decision.

Thus, since she has many sides of personality, she can be classified as a round character. Great empathy, brave, gentle, caring, and hard worker are personalities that are described in *The Blind Side*. Besides the major characters, there are minor characters that are usually flatstatic characters. He is the only son of the Tuohy's. Sean Junior helps Michael Oher in sport by becoming Michael Oher's coach. Sean Junior also takes a role as a manager of Michael Oher when the universities come to their house in order to ask Michael Oher to get school at theirs. Another minor character in this movie is Mrs. Granger. She is an investigator that was sent by NCAA to investigate Michael Oher.

If the reader occasionally facts the author for applying lacquer to inner-city horror, Michael Lewis brilliantly affirms the implication that the "blind side" points to a nation's disgrace more than to its games-play. As Lewis told a National Public Radio interviewer, he is chastened by a sense that for every Michael Oher, whose blind path is cleared by a freak dynamic of the football industrial complex, there are a legion of lost kids whose sesames remain closed situations.

Chapter Three

Issues of identity and Racism

Racism is the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races. Racism in the United States becomes a crucial issue since slavery and colonial era. Before the Revolution, human slaves were bought and sold in all American colonies. Society distinguished races in different ways. They were separated in education, public facilities, employments, government, housing and so on. They also judged others by their colours of skin, wealth, and physical appearances. Therefore, this circumstance made some unavoidable racial problems in the society

The Blind Side is set in the South, which explains not only its polite racism but also its obsession with football. The title of *The Blind Side* isn't strictly about the game. It's about the way the world might have ignored Mr. Oher's talents. And it's about the colour blind determination of the Tuohy's to cross racial and economic barriers to reach him, not to mention his own willingness to accept the strangeness of this alien world. Undoubtedly there are facets of this process that Mr. Lewis chooses not to stress. It cannot have been as seamless as it sounds.

The writer uses racism and sport theory, the concept consists of stereotype, prejudice and discrimination. *The Blind Side* reflects the effects of racism towards an African American's existence in the midst of the white society. His struggle makes him accepted not only by his schoolmates but also by the society. It is revealed that racism that occurs to an African American can be annihilated by his achievement in sport, in this case, football. There are many conversations that

replicate the unpleasant treatment on the basis of race suffered by black people in America.

Other white characters, such as the tutor Miss Susie and the white teachers in the school work hard and perform their duties. It can be said that the white people in the novel are also attractive, sympathetic, and kind. It was with the help of such a group of white men that Michael achieved his success. However, Michael Oher stated in interviews and autobiography that *The Blind Side* has shaped him unfairly.

The Blind Side movie directed by John Lee Hancock and released in late 2009 at a time of great political polarisation, *The Blind Side* accomplished something that no politician seemed capable of doing, it appealed to audiences across the spectrum of opinion, paradoxically charming members of both liberal Hollywood and the conservative Bible Belt. Making ample use of the key ideological features of the post 9/11 Hollywood race drama, *The Blind Side* grounds itself with a claim to historical authenticity, draws clearly demarcated lines of racial division, and treats existing institutions as the solution to our racial and economic problems rather than their cause. By advancing these positions, *The Blind Side* both partakes in and contributes to the narrative of post-racial progress. It presents audiences with a reassuring notion of change stripped of any transformative implications, thus ensuring that nothing fundamental to the status quo is actually challenged.

The Blind Side is chiefly concerned with the life of a poor Black teenager. It is not a story about how one of society's oppressed members can work to transform the people and institutions around him; rather, it is a story about how society can transform one of its oppressed members into an ideal, post-racial citizen. *The Blind Side* is based on Michael Lewis' bestselling 2006 book of the same name which is,

in turn, based on true events. This connection to reality was even further reinforced when the real life Tuohy's walked down the red carpet at the Academy Awards in early 2010. Such pretences of authenticity, however, should not be mistaken for incontestable objectivity, and it is worth noting the remarkable incongruity between the real-life Michael Oher's reaction to the film and that of his adopted white family. In his autobiography, Oher makes it clear that even though he found the film entertaining, it was also a source of 'wounded pride'. Oher devotes only a couple of paragraphs to his reaction to the film, but here's part of what he has to say:

I liked the movie as a movie, but in terms of it representing me, that's where I had a hard time loving it. I felt like it portrayed me as dumb instead of as a kid who had never had consistent academic instruction and ended up thriving once he got it. Michael Oher states about movie. Quinton Aaron did a great job acting the part, but I could not figure out why the director chose to show me as someone who had to be taught the game of football. Whether it was S.J. moving around ketchup bottles or Leigh Anne explaining to me what blocking is about, I watched those scenes thinking, 'No, that's not me at all! I've been studying — really studying — the game since I was a kid!' That was my main hang-up with the film. -I Beats The Odds From Homelessness, to The Blind Side and Beyond, Michael Oher.(15)

It is significant that the transformation of Michael into a post-racial citizen is predicated on his solitude. For a film purportedly about race, its cast remains remarkably vanilla. The roles of people like Big Tony and his son Steven are

diminished, and with the exception of several drug-dealing gang members and a few token bureaucrats, *The Blind Side* keeps the number of its Black characters into a minimum. This isolation of Michael serves to protect entrenched racial regimes against disruption. Whereas a single teenager can be easily integrated into the dominant order the entire Black community poses a greater challenge. One may be reminded of the words of US President Andrew Johnson who publicly voiced his concern that the immediate introduction of ex-slaves into the US citizenry might overwhelm "the digestive powers of the American government."

Michael Oher suffered from racial discrimination because of his physical characteristics such as the size and his skin colour which indicate that he came from the black race. As a rejection forms of his existence, Michael experienced the explicit discrimination in the forms of non-verbal antagonism such as the cynical look of his classmate and discrimination in the form of avoidance. He also faces automatic discrimination which reflected in the prejudicial treatments from white people due to the negative stereotypes of black people who are always related to crime. There was several Michael's effort to overcome his racial problems.

That changed at Myrtle Beach. At Myrtle Beach, something happened. "At Myrtle Beach," said Harrington, "Big Mike got angry." The minute he walked onto the court for their first game, the crowd was on him. They called him names. Black Bear, Nigger. They called him names that neither he nor his coach cared to repeat. Harrington wasn't shocked by more subtle forms of racism away from the basketball court, but it had been a long time since he'd seen the overt version on it. "I don't think there's a white coach with a black kid on his team, or a black coach with a white kid, who could have any racism in him," he said. Big Mike responded

badly; Harrington hadn't seen this side of him. He began to throw elbows. Then he stopped on the court, turned on the fans, and gave them the finger' (84-85)

First, he tries to improving his social skills by interacting with the other students and his teachers. Second, he gradually practises football to improving his athletic skills and is able to lead his team to victory. Third, he increasing his academic skills and graduated from high school with good grades. Michael's progress slowly reduces the racial discrimination he faces at school and makes the teachers no longer underestimate his ability in both academics and sports. Michael proves that he can be free from the bullying and being capable to equally stand next to white people in America with his strong determination and hard work

Michael's racial identity becomes an empty signifier. His Blackness is impoverished; it has been atomized and individualized, deprived of its subversive sting and rendered safe for white consumption. All that remains is a dark complexion and a taste for mainstream hip hop. It is through such means that non-dominant groups are appropriated and as Herbert Marcuse once put it 'digested by the status quo as part of its healthy diet,' Representatives of the dominant order the privileged post-racial citizen-are allowed choosing culture, to casually sample the cultures of conquered peoples like a consumer requesting a tasting spoon at an ice cream shop. In *The Blind Side*, this cultural cannibalization is most often represented in the actions of little Sean Junior his flippant use of the Spanish word 'mañana' to say good bye, his donning of a Native American headdress at a school Thanksgiving pageant, and his animated performance of Black hip hop. Michael is merely the next phase, was not Michael castrated of this process, the latest representative of a non-dominant group for the ruling order to commodify.

Oher gives credit to people in the Black community who volunteered their time to help him learn to play sports from an early age and the film treats Michael's athleticism as something that did not take root until he came under the benevolent wing of the Tuohy's. Prejudice is the act of discrimination against someone or something that has no cause. A prime example of prejudice is feelings of racism. This is apparent in *The Blind Side* as Michael is a black male who lives with a white family. Another source of prejudice is socio-economic status. Michael comes from an impoverished area, and the Tuohy's live in a very nice, wealthy part of town. Before the Tuohy's decide to let Michael stay for a while, Mr. Tuohy is sceptical of allowing him to live at his home. He does not think a black man should live in his house, as do other people who talk to the Tuohy's about their decision. This preconceived idea that Michael is bad due to his skin colour is known as prejudice. It is noticeable how the prejudice affects Michael at home and in school. There are three things that make someone prejudiced: stereotype, emotions, and discrimination. The Tuohy's get a phone call from a family member who says, "I'm just going to go ahead and ask...do y'all know there is a coloured boy on your Christmas card? (167). This shows that even their family members are prejudiced against Michael because he has a different skin colour.

Zach went and had a look at Michael Oher for himself and couldn't deny the family resemblance. Their skin colour was an identical dark chocolate. Their features, in the context of their huge selves, seemed small and delicate. They both had ears designed for men half their size and narrow eyes that closed almost shut when they laughed or became angry. (305-306)

Although the focus of the study has been on a race and class, no assessment of *The Blind Side* is complete without at least briefly considering the film's treatment of gender. Some of the more celebratory responses to the film's have singled out Sandra Bullock's Oscar-winning portrayal of Leigh Anne. While this performance has been praised for a variety reasons-the real-life Leigh Anne, for instance, wrote that she loved Bullocks '*fabulous ta-tas-most writers*' have emphasized how Bullock played Leigh Anne as a strong woman who refuses to conform to traditional notions of female subservience or docility. But before singing Bullock's praises too loudly, *The Blind Side's* seemingly positive treatment of women must be seen in a broader context. Considered in this fashion, Bullock's strong performance quickly slips into its opposite, and what initially appears as progressive and forward-thinking turns out to be based on the perpetuation of old hierarchies and exclusions.

True southern racism isn't a hatred of black people. The old southern plantation owners most definitely did not hate the blacks. They liked them very much, just not when they become up pity. In movie, the fact that Bullock's character takes in a homeless black man doesn't make her not a racist. It means she's got herself a house negro.

The Blind Side gives us the most egregious representation of a black man since Stepin Fetchit, totally emasculated, simple, and pliable. Leigh Anne rescues Michael like and treats him like a big neutered Saint Bernard puppy. He's more of a pet, or a pet project, than a self-determined human being. She even helps him by correcting his black vernacular, teaching him to speak White: speaking like a black man is wrong, except of course when her son, Sean Junior does it, then it just makes

him cool. And to make sure things stay safe and clean, we are told that when Michael is taken, by college recruiters, to titty bars, the experience gives him nightmares surely, developmentally, that's alarming. There are, of course, the bad blacks, the ones who have sex and drink and aren't submissive, but instead of treating them with concern, with understanding that they, too, need better opportunities, they are threatened with Christian guns the good guns, the righteous kind protected by the second amendment.

Feldman believes that prejudice is when people think something negative to other people just because they are a member of certain groups. Stereotype is perception while discrimination is behaviour. Thus, when people act on negative stereotypes, the result is discrimination. Discrimination is "negative behaviour toward members of a particular group" (545). Prejudice and discrimination occur in ethnical group such as African American who have different skin colour with the White American. Many people have been captivated by the story of National Football League (NFL) player Michael Oher. Oher was born and raised in severe poverty in Memphis, Tennessee, to an absent and then later deceased father and a drug- addicted and mostly absent mother. He lived most of his life in the projects, where he was often left alone to fend for himself and his eleven siblings. He then found himself in various foster care homes, was homeless from time to time, and throughout all these experiences, suffered greatly in school. Oher was able to turn all this around by focusing on sports namely, basketball and football.

During his senior year at high school, he made up several years of schooling so he could be eligible to play college football; then he attended the University of Mississippi on a football scholarship, was a first- round draft pick in the NFL, and

ultimately won a Super Bowl ring when his team, the Baltimore Ravens, won the 2013 Super Bowl. Oher's story became widely known when Michael Lewis wrote the *New York Times* bestseller *The Blind Side* and then subsequently when John Lee Hancock set the book to screenplay and produced the movie *The Blind Side*, both of which centre on Oher's life. Even though these white authored narratives garnered much public attention and acclaim, Oher takes offense to and has contested both narratives. In response, Oher wrote an autobiography, *I Beat the Odds: From Homelessness, to The Blind Side and Beyond*, where he sets out to write a more complete story and "separate fact from fiction." In reference to Lewis's book, *The Blind Side*, Oher states that he was never consulted and that Lewis had almost completed the book before he ever had a conversation with Oher. In his autobiography, Oher writes, "He was just wrapping up his writing of the book, so the timing worked out well. After a couple of discussions, he felt he had the story he needed to help bring a human face to the position of left tackle" (203).

Oher was no less offended by the movie version of his life. Oher explains that the movie is largely embellished and omits key people and events from his life. Oher points out that the Tuohy's were not the only influential family in his life. In truth, Oher met the Tuohy's during his senior year of high school. College scouts had already taken an interest in him and were already attending his high school games regularly. By his own admission, the Tuohy's were most helpful to him as he struggled with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility due to his grades.

One particular scene showed Michael having a flashback after he had gotten in a fight with another guy that lives in the area. The guy had been

tormenting him about how he was living with a rich white family. He was telling Michael to get with the daughter of the family he was staying with, which offended Michael. This made Michael start to fight the guy and the guy pulled out a gun. The gun went off and this triggered the flashback for Michael. The flashback caused Michael to start crying and feel a lot of emotions. This brief moment full of panic for Michael is a minor symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder.

Melinda Smith described post-traumatic stress disorder in an article titled “PTSD: Symptoms, Self-Help, and Treatment”: “Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) can develop following a traumatic event that threatens your safety or makes you feel helpless” (Smith, 2016). Michael was frustrated that the friend was talking badly about Collins, so he got angry. His sympathetic nervous system made him anxious and his adrenal glands made him angrily aroused. This caused him to get aggressive and throw a punch at the friend. Violence, like physical fighting, is an example of what results from aggression. *The Blind Side* incorporates the psychological principle of aggression in several different ways, which resemble everyday acts of aggression. Perhaps most upsetting to Oher is how the movie portrayed his character as someone who is slow and childlike with no athletic ability whatsoever. Oher states:

“I could not figure out why the director chose to show me as someone who had to be taught the game of football. Whether it was SJ moving around ketchup bottles or Leigh Anne explaining to me what blocking is about, I watched these scenes thinking, ‘No, that’s not me at all! I have been studying really studying the game since I was a little kid!’”.

Oher is upset about how the white authored narratives fail to represent who he is. Beyond the impact the movie has had on Oher, we make the case that the film narrative has far-reaching social implications. The movie is produced and consumed as a colour blind text that dismisses race, resulting in the (re)production of white supremacy as the social norm. The film within the particular racial context in which it was produced, in which it continues to be consumed and contested in, and that which it ultimately (re)produces.

First, Leigh Anne's independence and mobility are sustained by rigid class structures. Leigh Anne does not have to work or cook. She has the freedom to shop and spend as much as she pleases because of her husband's business investments in his restaurants which magically run by herself. To see such independence positively would require us to forget all the shoulders upon which Leigh Anne stands. She can only afford to be a cheerful giver insofar as her husband continues exploiting countless other mothers and fathers as his underpaid and overworked employees. Thus, if the picture of strong womanhood painted by *The Blind Side* is to be considered feminist, it is not the feminism that has been articulated by collective struggles for emancipation; rather, it is the feminism of Sarah Palin.

Second, Leigh Anne's empowerment is premised on racial subordination, and even though her adoption of Michael is depicted through a post-racial lens, more traditional racial hierarchies become apparent during the scene in which Leigh Anne confronts a group of drug-dealing Black gang members. When the gang's leader makes sexually-threatening remarks, Leigh Anne silences him with a threat of her own: "If you so much as set foot downtown, you will be sorry. I'm in a prayer group with the D.A., I'm a member of the NRA, and I'm always packing. In

this way, Leigh Anne over comes her adversaries by appealing to her own privilege (her connections with city officials) and by reinforcing Memphis' geographical lines of racial and economic segregation. Thus, *The Blind Side* resurrects the old image of the Black man as sexual predator, but whereas the lily white maidens of yesteryear needed chivalrous white men (i.e., lynch mobs) to defend their honour, Leigh Anne is strong enough to defend herself. If this is progress, it is one purchased at a terrible price, and here, *The Blind Side* is not very different from those unfortunate advocates of women's suffrage who often couched their demands in the language of white supremacy.

Finally, just as Michael's integration is predicated on his isolation, *The Blind Side's* version of female empowerment is conspicuously confined to Leigh Anne. Noteworthy here is the role of Leigh Anne's teenage daughter Collins the only major character to have fewer lines than Michael. Collins is a mystery. She barely appears in the film, and while Leigh Anne, Sean, and Sean Junior. each have their own roles to play, Collins' contribution to the story is negligible. She is Leigh Anne's shadow, the symptom marking the limits of Leigh Anne's empowerment. Seen in this light, Leigh Anne performs a familiar function. In both cases, this empowerment is predicted on very claustrophobic confines; Michael and Leigh Anne are emancipated only in the most individualistic of terms, and their place in the dominant order leaves wider practices of oppression safely intact.

The Blind Side displays three big psychological principles throughout the portion of their lives. The three principles are prejudice, minor signs of post-traumatic stress disorder, and aggression. Three things are necessary for something to be considered prejudiced, and *The Blind Side* shows all three: stereotypes,

emotions, and discriminatory actions. Post-traumatic stress disorder is exhibited through Michael's flashbacks of his dramatic childhood parting with his mother. Finally, aggression is shown through actions on and off of the football field by Michael, but is also showcased by several other characters in the movie. All three principles tie together to make *The Blind Side* accurately portray human social behaviour.

Despite all of these drawbacks, however, there is still something important here worth retaining. With these two characters the Black man and the white woman a spectre lurks in the background of the film's narrative, the possibility of these two characters coming together in radical solidarity. Rather than working to find an individual place for themselves in the existing regime of power, these two characters could very easily serve to call into question the systems of domination that have historically subordinated Blacks and women. While *The Blind Side* buries this potential and never lets it see the light of day, its phantom-like presence is there for anyone who wishes to uncover it. Just as an image of empowerment can easily slip into its opposite, so too can an image of subordination become a site for social struggle and emancipation.

Chapter Four

Michael Oher's Blind side in, '*The Blind Side*'

Michael Lewis's *The Blind Side*, makes a counterintuitive argument: that the pivotal position on a football team today is the offensive left tackle. Through the story of Michael Oher, a top-notch football prospect with the rare qualities of a "perfect" offensive left tackle, *The Blind Side* traces how the position's importance has evolved, and how money has affected the game.

The Blind Side interweaves two stories. The first story is the evolution of American football towards a passing game where quarterbacks rose in value, became targets and finally needed greater protection. The second is the story of a lost boy taken in by a white southern family and given an opportunity to pursue his gifts that he seemed destined to be denied. Those gifts just happened to make him ideally suited to provide the now much more valued quarter back protection. Lewis is a wonderful writer whose books are informed, accessible and entertaining. Instructed to imagine football as another place where he can protect his white benefactors, Michael begins to excel for the first time in his life. Significantly, while the real-life Oher gives credit to people in the Black community who volunteered their time to help him learn to play sports from an early age, the film treats Michael's athleticism as something that did not take root until he came under the benevolent wing of the Tuohy's.

Lewis's source text belongs to the nonfiction genre, which is very well suited to presenting two parallel storylines, one about the evolution of the left tackle position in American football and the other a biography of a football player. The length of the novel allows the author to elaborate where necessary and introduce as many characters as he pleases. The novel can be categorised in the genre of nonfiction sports literature. The novel was successful in terms of sales for sports literature, but had the movie adapted the same narrative as the novel, it is doubtful that it would have found such a large audience as it did. Michael's sports talent is another meme that has been replicated and changed. In the novel, Lewis recounts several incidents where coaches and others are blown away by his "freakish physical skills" when he arrives at Briarcrest (76).

The other obvious symbol in *The Blind Side* is, the idea of the 'blind side' in other words, the field of vision that a quarterback can't see when he's throwing the ball, since he's faced in the opposite direction. For a right-handed quarterback, this would be the area to the quarterback's left. As Lewis interprets it, the blind side was a major weakness in the game of football as it was played before the mid-1980s: big, fast tacklers could tackle quarterbacks from their blind side, without being seen until it was too late to react. *The blind side* symbolises, first, the major rethinking of football that took place in the eighties and second, the unlikely players, like Michael Oher, who seemingly emerged from thin air after the eighties. Lewis shows us largely unanalysed but inexorable trend in football working its way from the pros to the high school game to the collides. With the life of the single young man produce a narrative of great and surprising power

The Blind Side works brilliantly as football history. Lewis traces the journey from Bill Walsh's 49ers, through Lawrence Taylor and the rise of great linebackers

to the realisation on the launch of free agency that teams would pay a lot more money for a left tackle than they were paying so far. Lewis is able to tell a compelling story and educate the less knowledgeable football fan without coming off as condescending,

The heart of the book however is the story of Michael Oher, a kid who seemed destined to be a lost cause, born in a place and a system that was destined to fail him. The Tuohy's, who adopted Oher into their lives, emerge as a kind and loving family who believe the worst stereotypes of southern wealthy evangelicals. While the book could be read as an uplifting tale of the difference, that kindness can make in the life of someone less fortunate. However, the fact that it took such an unusual interest from a white family to give Oher any chance in life paints the United States economic system as the villain of the piece, it is a shocking state of affairs for the richest country in the world where inter-generational poverty is both expected and accepted.

The cynic can't help but wonder about the motives of Sean Tuohy in taking Oher in. Lewis is friends with Tuohy which makes him a less than objective judge. However, on balance chose to accept Lewis interpretation of the Tuohy's motivations in taking Oher in. It certainly seems evident that Leigh Ann Tuohy went above and beyond in how she cared for Oher while he was in her care.

Oher's childhood of grinding deprivation might have put him on a path to riches. Lewis commits some perhaps dubious sociology when he declares that a miserable ghetto childhood can be excellent preparation for football: "It made you angry, it made you aggressive, it made you want to tear someone's head off. The National Football League was loaded with players who had mined a loveless, dysfunctional childhood for sensational acts of violence." In addition to studying

the life of Michael Oher and the recent history of football strategy, *The Blind Side* paints a picture of the football industry and football culture in the early 2000s. In Memphis, Tennessee and, we're led to believe, throughout the country that football is more than just a sport: it's a billion-dollar industry and a huge part of millions of people's lives, with its own unique culture and values. In particular, the novel studies the lengths to which coaches and managers will go to recruit top football players for their programmes, and the consequences that all this flattery often has on the players themselves. *The Blind Side* implicitly asks, is football such an important part of so many people's lives? From the perspective of fans, football is important because it showcases the best a community has to offer. Football is entertaining to watch, but it also represents a chance for a community to compete against other communities. In this sense, football strengthens the bond between people who live in the same place: by cheering for their team, they're also celebrating the town, city, or state where they live.

From the perspective of coaches, managers, and businessmen, however, football is also important in the sense that it's a massive, lucrative industry. National Football League teams generate tens of millions of dollars of income every year, and pay their players accordingly well. Even at the college level, where players are forbidden from accepting a salary, a good football team can be an enormous asset to a school, since it generates interest, boosts donations, and brings glory. *The Blind Side* doesn't suggest that football insiders are motivated purely by economics, but the novel does draw attention to high financial stakes of signing or trading a player, an aspect of the game that many fans aren't fully aware of.

Because of the huge cultural and financial importance of football, coaches will go to absurd lengths to recruit talented players: they recognise that, by signing the right talent, they could generate enormous sums of money for their programmes. Toward the end of Michael Oher's high school career, when it's clear that he's going to be a talented National Football League player, football coaches from Division I colleges try to convince him to attend their schools.

The novel emphasises the amount of money that the colleges lavish on recruiting Michael: coaches wear expensive suits, spend hours researching how to flatter Michael and his family, and travel across the country, all in the hopes of wooing Michael. Expensive as the wooing process is, it's nothing compared to the money that Michael could generate for a Division I college by playing football there. Later in the book, the NCAA begins investigating the Tuohy family for manipulating Michael into attending the University of Mississippi. The idea that the Tuohy's would go to such lengths just to get someone to go to a college seems laughable; however, football is such a huge part of American culture, and such a big moneymaker for teams, that the idea isn't quite as silly as it appears.

For the most part, *The Blind Side* refrains from passing judgment on the Division I recruiting process or the centrality of football in general whether intentionally or not, the book depicts a disturbing level of entitlement that football stars enjoy because of their talent. At the University of Mississippi, Michael Oher and his teammates are encouraged to take only the easiest classes: they're in college to play football, not to learn. After *The Blind Side* was published, the University of Mississippi, along with other Division I schools, came under investigation for giving out too many easy A's to its athletes. Similarly, football players aren't always appropriately punished for their actions.

At the heart of Michael Lewis's novel *The Blind Side* is a question: why would two rich parents, Sean Tuohy and Leigh Anne Tuohy, with two biological children of their own, adopt an impoverished inner-city teenager, Michael Oher, and lavish love and attention on him? Throughout the book, characters propose various cynical answers to this question: they suggest that the Tuohy's are exploiting Michael for his football talents, or that they're motivated by white guilt or pure condescension. Nevertheless, Lewis argues that sometimes things just are how they appear to be: the Tuohy's treat Michael Oher generously because they're extraordinarily generous people.

By examining the Tuohy's relationship with their adopted child, Michael Oher, *The Blind Side* makes a series of interesting points about generosity, in effect, asking, "What is generosity?" From the beginning, the novel suggests that people are generous to others because they recognise their common background. Sean Tuohy, a wealthy businessman and the basketball coach at Briarcrest Christian Academy, notices Michael Oher shortly after he enrolls, on scholarship, at the school; shortly afterwards, he arranges to pay for Michael's lunches. Sean feels a need to help Michael out and give him encouragement and support, not just because he's a nice guy but because Sean also came from an impoverished household and worked hard for his success, and had help from other people: he sees it as his duty to help out others in the position he was once in.

The Blind Side further suggests that people are generous because they feel a more abstract, universal duty to help people in need a duty that's often rooted in religious conviction. Leigh Anne Tuohy, the woman who, probably more than anyone else, gives Michael Oher the love and support he needs to succeed is a pious Christian; indeed, she says more than once that God has given her family money "to

see how [we're] going to handle it." But even if extraordinary generosity is sometimes the product of a Christian background or of certain life experiences, it may also be an innate gift, which some people have and some people don't. The well-to-do Memphis community in which *The Blind Side* is set is full of wealthy, Christian families, surely some of them headed by self-made millionaires, but only the Tuohy's choose to help Michael Oher. Furthermore, the Tuohy's choose to help Michael, rather than any number of other impoverished, lonely teenagers. In all, then, *The Blind Side* suggests that generosity is a mysterious, ineffable quality. Certain people feel a deep need to help certain other people, and sometimes they can't explain why, exactly, they feel this need.

The Tuohy's not only adopt Michael Oher; they also help him gain a first-rate football scholarship at their alma mater, University of Mississippi, give him endless love and support, and generally treat him like one of their own children. However, many people have criticised and questioned the Tuohy's near-miraculous generosity. Some would argue that the Tuohy's generosity is really just self-interest.

In the final third of the novel, for instance, the NCAA mounts a full-scale investigation of the Tuohy's relationship with Michael, questioning whether they only adopted Michael to ensure that he would play football for their beloved alma mater, and whether they accepted bribes to pressure Michael to choose Mississippi. Furthermore, some readers of *The Blind Side* have interpreted the Tuohy's treatment of Michael as condescending. They've argued that Sean and Leigh Anne chose to adopt a black, inner-city kid to assuage their sense of guilt with their own wealth and privilege, or that they treated Michael like a docile pet rather than respecting him as a mature, independent human being. Critics of the film version

of *The Blind Side* took this argument even further, seeing the film as symptomatic of a “white savior complex” in Hollywood.

There is no explicit evidence in Michael Lewis’s novel, however, to suggest that the Tuohy’s are motivated by anything other than benign generosity and a strong sense of duty to the unfortunate. Furthermore, the novel shows how the Tuohy’s give Michael the tools he needs to become emotionally and financially independent, and live a mature adult life. As the novel ends, the Tuohy’s are in the process of donating money to a foundation for inner-city teenagers, suggesting that they’re interested in helping others, not boosting their college. Ultimately, the Tuohy’s exhibit extraordinary generosity toward Michael, helping him become a talented National Football League athlete and a confident young man.

In addition to telling the story of the life of Michael Oher, *The Blind Side* studies the history of professional football since the 1970s an era during which many coaches and managers began to rethink the way the game was played. The novel shows how Michael Oher’s spectacular success as a left tackle reflects some major changes in football strategy in the 70s, 80s, and 90s, which resulted in a much stronger emphasis on passing and, therefore, protecting the quarterback. Beginning in the late seventies and early eighties, some football insiders, particularly Bill Walsh, the talented head coach of the San Francisco 49ers, began to challenge the conventional wisdom that football is a game only of strength and endurance. Walsh introduced elaborate plays that required the athletes to think tactically and pass the ball more efficiently than they were used to doing. Because he emphasised passes more than runs, furthermore, Walsh recognized the importance of good quarterback protection in the midst of an offensive play:

without linemen to protect the quarterback, the other team would tackle the quarterback before he could throw the ball.

As *The Blind Side* shows, Bill Walsh's protective, pass-heavy style of football caught on in the NFL for a number of reasons. First, and most obviously, Walsh's style caught on because it worked: under Walsh's leadership, the 49ers had several spectacular seasons, and their quarterback, Joe Montana, is still recognised as one of the best in NFL history. Montana was a great quarterback not simply because of his talent, but because Walsh recruited big left tackles who could protect Montana's blind side that is the area Montana couldn't see because his body was turned in the opposite direction and gave him an extra split-second in which to pass. At the same time, the protective style, bolstered by big left tackles, caught on in the NFL because of skyrocketing player salaries.

With quarterbacks in the 1990s and 2000s commanding massive, forty million-dollar salaries, the NFL needed to protect its athletes from injuries, or risk shelling out tens of millions for an athlete who could no longer play football. Thus, NFL teams began spending much more on their linemen in general and their left tackles in particular: the best way to keep the quarterback playing was to protect his blind side with a good left tackle. In all, then, Walsh's protective strategy caught on, not only because it was the best way to win games, but because it was the smartest long-term economic decision for big NFL teams.

The changes in football strategy that occurred in the 80s and 90s had some major consequences for the way that people viewed the different players. In particular, Walsh's style brought new importance to the position of left tackle, but oddly not much visibility. Among NFL insiders, the left tackle became one of the most respected positions. The new importance attached to the left tackle challenged

the old belief that linemen were all equally valuable, and worked together as one team now, left tackles were seen as soloists, defending against the other team single-handedly. At the same time, however, left tackles remained relatively obscure from the perspective of the average NFL fan: running backs and quarterbacks continued to get most of the attention, while left tackles remained the unsung heroes of many games.

In many ways, Michael Oher embodies the contradictions inherent to the role of the contemporary left tackle: he's big and imposing, meaning that the other players always notice him in a game, but he's also quiet and unassuming, meaning that he's often less popular than his teammates. Furthermore, he has extraordinarily strong protective instincts, as measured by his career aptitude tests, suggesting that he's a natural for a protective role on the football field. In all, Lewis argues that Michael Oher didn't become a highly sought-after football player simply because he was a great player he attracted attention because he came along at the perfect time, when football coaches and managers realised how important big left tackles like Michael could be.

Overall, *The Blind Side* is simply a thoroughly enjoyable novel and well deserves its regular placing on lists of the greatest sports novel of all time. While less influential than Lewis other great sports novel *Moneyball*, it's a more entertaining read for non-diehard fans of the relevant sport. However that Lewis had an opportunity to go deeper into the reasons like socioeconomic, education, and the collegiate and professional sports system operating in the USA that's why the outcome for Oher was different from the outcome for so many others. Lewis touches on the key damning statistics around how many great athletes fail to take

their lifeline due to the education system which is failing them. Some deeper exploration would have been a welcome addition.

Toward the end of the book, Michael Oher gets in a violent fight with a teammate, Antonio Turner, who insults Leigh Anne Tuohy, his guardian. During the fight, Michael injures a three-year-old child, and later flees the scene. Michael is never tried for beating up his teammate or for accidentally hurting a child. His coach, Ed Orgeron, doesn't even tell him anything about controlling his emotions or being careful not to hurt innocent people instead, he just says, "It's lonely at the top." Whatever one thinks of Michael's decision to defend his adopted mother's honor, the incident leaves one with the distinct impression that Michael and his teammates are never really held accountable for anything they do wrong. In some ways, Michael Oher seems more emotionally stable and less entitled than his teammates, due to his strong family support. Nevertheless, the football industry seems to create a group of elite athletes who, in the short term, are treated like princes, but who, in the long run, end up uneducated and unequipped to deal with adult responsibilities.

Chapter 5

Summation

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. In the initial stages of the American literature the writers emphasised on the writings dealing with national imagination and go on to create a romantic sensation in the corpus of American literature. The module also analyses the development of realism and different currents of literary movements in the 19th century history of American literature. The American literature basically is the corpus of literary works produced in the English language in the United States. In general it depicts the socio-political-cultural and economic dynamisms of the United States. To trace history, for almost more than a century, America was merely colonial provinces scattered along the eastern seaboard of the North American continent from where only a few brave souls dared to venture towards the west. After a successful revolt against the British colonisers, America achieved independence. But in the initial phases of American history, the different provinces of America had their autonomy and were considered many nationalities until the emergence of the unified sense of American nationalism which led to the formation of the United States as an independent and sovereign nation state. Gradually, by the end of the 19th century the United States extended her territory

across the regions. Any study of themes and techniques in United States literature depends crucially on how American literature is itself defined. This is vital because it can be categorised in a variety of ways through the utilization of different criteria.

Michael Lewis, the bestselling author of *The Undoing Project*, *Liar's Poker*, *Moneyball*, *The Blind Side*, and *The Big Short*, among other works, lives in Berkeley, California, with his wife and three children.

“Courage is a hard thing to figure. You can have courage based on a dumb idea or mistake, but you're not supposed to question adults, or your coach or your teacher, because they make the rules. Maybe they know best, but maybe they don't. It all depends on who you are, where you come from. Didn't at least one of the six hundred guys think about giving up, and joining with the other side? I mean, valley of death that's pretty salty stuff. That's why courage it's tricky. Should you always do what others tell you to do? Sometimes you might not even know why you're doing something. I mean any fool can have courage. But honor, that's the real reason for you either do something or you don't. It's who you are and maybe who you want to be.” (56)

Michael Lewis

The Blind Side displays all of Lewis particular writing strengths: the ability to drive a story forward, the eye for both the big picture and telling detail, shrewd wit, and an unerring instinct for discerning social complexity. *The Blind Side* novel is based upon the real life story. Those setting of place and time explain the social environment where Michael Oher used to live and where he lives after he meets the Tuohy's. Hurt Village and White American areas are examples of the social

environment that are very different. Difference in the social environments result in conflicts or unequal treatments experienced by Michael Oher as an African American who lives in the Whites American's community. He has no friends at his class. He is not able to understand the lessons that the teachers give. Almost all the teachers want to give up on him. They believe that he will fail on their class. Those are examples of racial issue shown in *The Blind Side* novel.

“People like to talk about ‘Cinderella stories,’ but Cinderella didn't get her happy ending without lifting a finger. She had to show up at the ball, be charming and smooth, and win over the prince. Of course she had help along the way, but ultimately it was up to her to make the fairy-tale ending happen.”

-Michael Oher, *I Beat the Odds From Homelessness, to the Blind Side, and Beyond*

The racism toward Michael Oher can be reduced by sport. Since he lives in the Tuohy's house by joining a football team in his school, Michael Oher easily makes friends. A football team has the same purpose that is winning the competition. In achieving the goal, each member has to have a strong communication and trust one to another in the team. After analysing the novel, it can be seen that racism still exists in the 21st century particularly in Tennessee, the United States of America. The act of racism gives a bad on toward them. It is difficult in neighbourhoods, educational opportunities, or even in another challenge of life. There is another aspect that they can fight for the challenges, that is through achievements. Nevertheless, people need to continue their life regardless of the

worst condition that has happened, because life is something worthy to struggle for with its problems and difficulties.

The Blind Side novel is adapted from the experience of National Football League player Michael Oher. While the readers understand the success story of this black athlete through the novel, they are also subtly instilled with Western-centrism, and thus form the identity and worship to the Western world. Said pointed out in "*Orientalism*" that the East is the Orientalised East, the East oppressed by the West with the help of discourse authority, and Orientalism is a manifestation of the cultural hegemony dominated by the West. In today's world, the competition of comprehensive national power is not only reflected in the political, economic, and military aspects. Cultural competition also plays an important role. The United States uses movies and other cultural products to export Western centralism and cultural hegemony in order to seek global cultural hegemony, and even world hegemony. Therefore, when we accept films and other foreign cultural products, we must take a critical attitude, take the essence and discard the dross. Oher was neither famous nor was his story public knowledge before the book was published, although he was making a name for himself in the world of sports due to his athletic abilities around the time of publication. Yet, as Michael Lewis' research for the book showed, his story is traceable, and after the publication of the book, it was featured in several newspaper articles in the three years leading up to the release of the film. However, despite articles in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Reader's Digest* and *People Magazine*, far from everyone knew the story before watching *The Blind Side* in theatres, and the lack of knowledge of the original also influenced the adaptation.

This novel truly represents the issue of social mobility which can be found in the main character. Social mobility is the moving of individuals or groups' social status or object from one status to another, it can be higher or lower. For completing the study, the writer takes the theory of social mobility by Sorokin (1959) and uses two forms of social mobility for analysing the biography of Michael Oher, based on its types, vertical mobility, which is divided into two types: ascending and descending, and based on its scope, intergenerational mobility. Vertical mobility refers to transitions of individuals or social objects from one social group to another group on the different level, and its type: ascending means that there is a transition of individuals or social objects from lower class to higher class while intergenerational mobility refers to switching of a person's social object or status in the same generation. Two forms of social mobility, vertical and intergenerational mobility are shown clearly in Michael's attitude, expression, and people around him.

As for vertical mobility and ascending started when he gets a chance to be a Wingate's student, and meets the Tuohy family then becomes their adoptive child. Being the Tuohy family adoptive child, his athletic size and his football skill lead him to be a successful football player then he becomes a member of NFL team in 2009. The 58 inter generational mobility is portrayed between Michael and his parents. His father passed away due to suicide and his mother is a drug and alcohol addict who has 12 children but her children are taken away from her by Family Service. She lives a poor life in Hurt Village with her health problem. She does not want to see Michael because of her condition.

Michael, himself, was a homeless traumatic poor boy who is quiet and his face does not look friendly. He does not have parents who take care of him until he

meets the Tuohy's and becomes their adoptive children. Due to the Tuohy's supports, love, all facilities given to him, and his skill and efforts in football, he becomes a successful football player and a member of National Football League team in 2009. Through all his traumatic past made him living a poor life before, he tries to get up and fight for the better future and he gets it. Therefore, he has completed the process of social mobility through his efforts and luck.