

**Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places*: A Behavioural Study on Psychological**

**Manifestation of Abuse and Loss**

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places*: A Behavioural study on the Manifestation of Abuse and Loss** 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 Abarna. M during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places*: A Behavioural Study on the Manifestation of Abuse and Loss** 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

April 2023

*M. Abarna*  
Abarna. M

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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.

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## Preface

The project entitled **Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places*: A Behavioural Study on the Manifestation of Abuse and Loss** analyses how the novelist has attempted a powerful and moving exploration of the challenges and the complexities of adolescence, bestowed a testament to the power of human connection in the face of adversity. It also recounts how the novel provides an honest and raw portrayal of mental illness, showing the highs and lows of bipolar disorder and the daily struggles that people with mental health conditions face.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin and the important phases of American Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Navigating Abuse and Loss** depicts the impact of family dynamics on the exacerbating mental health struggles of the protagonists and the way in which they navigate the world around them through their conscious efforts.

The third chapter **Denial as a Defence Mechanism** records how the self-protective function of denial helped the protagonist deal with the two traumatic losses that occurred in her life.

The fourth chapter **Exploration of the Self** throws light on highlights the contrast between the two protagonists, Finch and Violet's external facades and their internal struggles. It also relates how in spite of the fact that their relationship is far from being perfect, and that they face a series of obstacles that threaten to tear them apart, they chose to be there for each other.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## Chapter One

### Introduction

American literature is a vast and diverse field that encompasses the literary works produced in the United States, including its territories and former colonies, from the pre-colonial period to the present day. From the early days of colonial settlement to contemporary literature, American literature has been shaped by a variety of historical, cultural, and social factors, producing some of the most significant and influential works in world literature.

The early colonial period in American literature is characterised by the works of exploration and colonisation. The writings of explorers such as Christopher Columbus and John Smith, and the chronicles of the first English settlements in Virginia and New England, document the experiences of the first Europeans who arrived in North America. These works also reveal the complex and often violent encounters between the colonisers and the indigenous people.

The Puritan era of the seventeenth century marked a significant shift in American literature. The Puritans, who came to America to establish a new society based on religious freedom, produced a body of literature that reflects their religious beliefs and values. The Puritan writers, such as John Winthrop, William Bradford, and Anne Bradstreet, wrote primarily about their spiritual experiences and their quest for salvation. Their works, such as Winthrop's *A Model of Christian Charity* and Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*, are important historical documents that provide insight into the early years of the American colonies.

In the eighteenth century, American literature underwent a period of enlightenment and rationalism. The Age of Reason, as it was called, saw the emergence

of a new generation of writers who rejected the Puritan religious orthodoxy and embraced reason and science. Writers such as Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson wrote influential works that helped shape the political and intellectual landscape of the young nation. Franklin's *Autobiography* and Paine's *Common Sense* are two of the most famous works of this period.

The nineteenth century is often referred to as the golden age of American literature. This period saw the emergence of many great writers who explored a wide range of themes and genres. The Romantic movement, which originated in Europe, had a significant impact on American literature, inspiring writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville to explore the darker side of human nature. Poe's short stories, such as *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Cask of Amontillado*, are still widely read and admired for their psychological complexity and their innovative use of language and narrative structure.

The nineteenth century also saw the emergence of a new genre of literature: the American novel. Writers such as Mark Twain, Henry James, and Edith Wharton created works that explored the complexities of American society and culture. Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is considered a masterpiece of American literature, exploring themes of race, identity, and morality in the context of the American South. James's novels, such as *The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Turn of the Screw* are admired for their psychological depth and their exploration of the complexities of human relationships.

The twentieth century saw the emergence of a new generation of American writers who explored a wide range of themes and styles. The modernist movement, which originated in Europe, had a significant impact on American literature, inspiring

writers such as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and William Faulkner to experiment with new forms and techniques. Hemingway's spare, minimalist prose style, exemplified in works such as *The Old Man and the Sea* and *A Farewell to Arms*, had a significant impact on American literature and continues to influence writers today.

American literature in the mid-twentieth century was marked by significant social and cultural changes, including the impact of World War II, the civil rights movement, and the counterculture movement. The literature of this time period was characterised by experimentation and exploration of new forms and themes, reflecting the evolving cultural landscape of the United States.

One of the most significant literary movements of the mid-twentieth century was the Beat Generation, which emerged in the 1950s and emphasized individualism, rejection of mainstream values, and a search for meaning in a world perceived as empty and alienating. Writers like Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William S. Burroughs were among the key figures of the Beat Generation, known for their experimental writing styles, use of drug culture, and themes of personal freedom and rebellion.

Another notable literary movement of the mid-twentieth century was the Southern Gothic, which emerged in the 1940s and 1950s and explored the dark, grotesque, and often violent aspects of Southern culture. Writers like Flannery O'Connor, Tennessee Williams, and William Faulkner were among the key figures of this movement, known for their use of supernatural elements, exaggerated characters, and themes of decay, violence, and madness.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the rise of the counterculture movement, which was characterized by a rejection of mainstream values and a desire for social and political



change. Literature of this time period often reflected the spirit of the counterculture, with writers like Ken Kesey, Tom Wolfe, and Hunter S. Thompson exploring themes of drugs, alternative lifestyles, and social revolution. The genre of New Journalism also emerged during this time period, with writers like Truman Capote, Joan Didion, and Norman Mailer blurring the boundaries between journalism and literature.

Contemporary American literature continues to reflect the changing cultural landscape of the United States. The postmodernist movement, which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, challenged traditional notions of authorship, genre, and narrative structure. Writers like Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, and David Foster Wallace were among the key figures of this movement, known for their use of fragmented narratives, intertextuality, and themes of paranoia and alienation.

Contemporary American literature refers to the body of literary works written by American authors in the present day. The genre is diverse and covers a wide range of subjects, styles, and forms, reflecting the complex and dynamic nature of contemporary American society.

It focuses on diversity and inclusivity. Many contemporary authors explore the experiences of marginalised groups, such as people of colour, immigrants, the LGBTQ+ community, and individuals with disabilities. These works often challenge dominant narratives and expose the systemic inequalities that exist in American society.

Another prominent theme in contemporary American literature is the exploration of identity and self-discovery. Many authors examine the complexities of human relationships and the struggle to find meaning and purpose in a rapidly changing world. This often leads to introspective and thought-provoking works that challenge readers to consider their own beliefs and values.

In terms of style and form, contemporary American literature is highly varied. Some authors utilise traditional literary techniques, while others experiment with new forms and mediums. For example, many contemporary works incorporate elements of multimedia, such as videos, music, and digital art, to create a more immersive and interactive reading experience.

Contemporary American literature is a dynamic and constantly evolving genre that reflects the complexity and diversity of American society. By exploring a wide range of themes and styles, contemporary authors challenge readers to think critically about the world around them and encourage them to consider new perspectives and ways of thinking.

Contemporary American literature is subversive. It contains an element of the surreal, with bizarre names, plots, and harmonious commentary. Primarily, postmodern works are inherently distrustful. They not only challenge artistic inconsistencies; they allow similar inconsistencies to naturally unfold within the narrative. Contemporary American literature deals with immigrants or decedents of them, women's issues, technological matters, and how these are woven into the American culture.

Jennifer Niven is a contemporary American author of young adult fiction, a screenwriter, and a journalist who works as an associate producer at ABC Television. She has eight novels to her credit. She published her first work of nonfiction *The Ice Master* in 2000. Her first work of fiction, *Velva Jean Learns to Drive*, was published in 2009. *The New York Times* best seller *All the Bright Places*, which has aroused debate ever since its publication in 2015, is one of her most famous works. Niven has written series, non-fiction and fiction. Her works have been translated in over 75 languages.

Penelope Niven, her mother, greatly influenced Jennifer Niven's writing. She began to write at a young age and shared her writing time with her mother. Her mother taught Jennifer Niven not to limit herself or her imagination. Shirley Jackson, Harper Lee, Flannery O'Connor, and Ray Bradbury are the other writers who influenced Niven's writing.

Niven's debut film script, *Velva Jean Learns to Drive* was written in 1995. It was taken as a short film and it won Emmy Award for its screenplay. Niven turned it into a book in 2009. *Velva Jean Learns to Fly* (2011) and *American Blonde* (2014) were released as sequels. During the second and third books in the *Velva Jean* trilogy, Niven also penned the standalone adult novel *Becoming Clementine* (2012).

Non-fiction works of Jennifer Niven include, *The Ice Master: The Doomed 1913 Voyage of the Karluk* (2000), *Ada Blackjack: A Real Tale of Survival in the Arctic* (2003), *The Aqua-Net Diaries: Big Hair, Big Dreams, Tiny Town*, was released in 2010 and *Ada Blackjack, survivante de l'Arctique* (2019).

Niven's works on young adult fiction include *All the Bright Places* (2015), *Holding Up the Universe* (2016), *Breathless* (2020), and *Take Me with You When You Go* (2021) which she co-authored with David Levithan.

Niven won "GoodReads Choice Award" for Best Young Adult Fiction of 2015 for her fiction *All the Bright Places*, "Teen's Choice Book Awards Teen Book of the Year" in 2016, "Dioraphte's Audience Award" for Best Young Adult Book and "Literature Prize for Young Adult Book" in 2016, and "Mare di Libri Book Prize" for Best Young Adult Book in 2016.

Niven's *Velva Jean Learns to Drive* (2009), first book of the series of four books, is a story about the protagonist Velva Jean, a spirited young girl growing up in

the gold-mining and moonshining South, aspired to become a successful singer in Nashville years before World War II. Eventually she develops feelings for Harley Bright, a charming former juvenile delinquent who is now a revival preacher. Velva Jean is forced to decide between preserving her hard-earned house and pursuing her ambition of performing on the Grand Ole Opry as their turbulent love story develops. It was first written by Niven as a film script in 1995. Later she turned it into a book in 2009.

*The Ice Master: The Doomed 1913 Voyage of the Karluk* (2000) is based on the true tragic incident of Arctic adventure of the Karluk in 1913, which was driven off course by arctic storms while searching for an undiscovered continent. The leader of expedition abandoned the team after the ship became trapped in ice. It also throws light on the valiant efforts of the Ice Master, the captain, who travelled to Siberia by foot in order seek help and his heroic act saved twelve people. The crew's desperate search for a route home is vividly recreated by Jennifer Niven in the book with astonishing accuracy.

*Holding Up the Universe* (2016), is the story of Libby Strout and Jack Masselin, two teenagers who met as a result of a cruel bullying game that landed them in group therapy, it explores the love that develops between them. The narrative appeals to the fundamental need to be understood and to be liked. Niven has woven a poignant and thrilling love tale about finding someone who accepts one for what he is—and seeing them right back.

Jennifer Niven stands unique among her contemporary writers because of her ability to capture the complexities of human emotions and relationships in her writing.

Her writing is often characterised by raw honesty and deep empathy for her characters, which allows her to tackle difficult subjects with sensitivity and nuance.

One of Niven's most notable qualities as a writer is her ability to write about mental health issues in a way that is both authentic and respectful. Her debut novel, *All the Bright Places*, dealt with depression and suicide, and explored the depiction of the ill effects of bipolar disorder and the struggles of teenagers coping up with mental illness. In both of these novels, Niven's writing is both emotionally powerful and deeply compassionate.

Another aspect of Niven's writing that sets her apart is her ability to create vivid and memorable characters. Her characters are often complex and multi-layered, with distinctive voices and personalities that make them feel like real people. Additionally, Niven's writing is often praised for its beautiful prose and evocative descriptions, which create a sense of place and atmosphere that is immersive and engaging.

Jennifer Niven's unique combination of empathy, honesty, and literary skill make her stand out from other contemporary writers. Her ability to tackle difficult subjects with sensitivity and nuance, while creating memorable characters and beautiful prose, has earned her a dedicated following of readers and critical acclaim within the literary community.

Young adult literature is a subgenre of fiction for readers between the ages of twelve and eighteen. Teenagers are the primary audience for the genre. To ease the transition between children's books and adult literature, young adult fiction was created. Themes and genres in young adult literature match the protagonist's age and experience. Young adult literature is accessible in a wide range of genres, most of which are also present in adult fiction. Young adults frequently discuss friendship, first love, relationships, and identity. Some authors use the terms "problem novels" or "coming-

of-age novels” to describe works that specifically address issues that are faced by teens. Narratives regarding individuality, self-identity, and life and death are included.

*All the Bright Places* got positive reviews. It was not only a *New York Times* bestseller but was also chosen as the Best Book of the Year by publications including Times, National Public Radio (NPR), the Guardian, and the Publisher’s Weekly. The book was nominated for the Carnegie Medal and the Guardian Children’s Fiction Award.

Niven’s contemporary writers include John Green, Alice Walker, Lauren Oliver, and Rainbow Rowell.

John Green (1977) prefers realistic fiction in the genre of writing. His stories depict the sentiments of actual people in actual circumstances. He writes to influence and inspire. He takes a philosophical and witty approach to the themes of pain, agony, death, oblivion, and many more deep subjects. He lavishly incorporated literary allusions into his works to give them a more refined tone. His stories deal with romance as well as confusion, anxiety, and other concerns, which are ideal for such a challenging time. Teenagers battling all those new emotions found solace and acknowledgment in Green’s books. Some of John Green’s best-known works include *Looking for Alaska* (2005), *Paper Towns* (2008), and *The Fault in Our Stars* (2012).

Alice Malsenior Tallulah Kate Walker (1944) is an American novelist, short story writer, poet, and social activist. In 1982, she won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for *The Color Purple* (1982). Walker has published seventeen novels and short story collections, non-fiction works, and collections of essays and poetry. She was always trying to be creative with her writing styles and to mimic the voices of African American females during the Civil Rights Movement. By using a creative style of

writing and experimenting with new techniques, Walker was able to demonstrate the aesthetic, the creative, and the intellectual fervour, and the rich imagination of the African American women, as well as their tender yet determined spirits.

Laura Suzanne Scheter (1982), better known as Lauren Oliver, is an American author of various young adult fictions and novels, including *The Delirium Trilogy: Delirium* (2011), *Pendemonium* (2012), and *Requiem* (2013), *Panic* (2014), *Before I Fall* (2010), *The Spindlers* (2012), and *Rooms* (2014). Oliver has a unique writing style. She combines diverse writing skills to create a style that flows nicely and is truly beautiful. Her passion for writing started at a young age. In her novel, she used outstanding imagery and plot twists that really captured the reader's interest in the story.

Rainbow Rowell (1973) is an American author best known for young adult and adult contemporary novels. *Eleanor & Park* (2012), *Fangirl* (2013), and *Carry On* (2015) are some of her young adult novels. Her writings are sharp, without flowery descriptions and fancy language. She let her writing style reflect the youth and the personality of her characters. She expresses the thoughts and feelings of her characters comically and directly.

Niven's personal experiences with grief, loss, and mental illness, as well as her admiration for the work of other young adult authors, played a significant role in inspiring her to write *All the Bright Places*. The resulting novel is a powerful and moving exploration of the challenges and complexities of adolescence, as well as a testament to the power of human connection in the face of adversity.

Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places* is a young adult fiction based on Niven's own experience. The book was originally released on January 6, 2015, by Knopf

Publishing Group. The tragic tale explores mental illness and the devastating impact it has on both the person experiencing it and those around them.

Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places* explores themes of mental health, grief, love, and friendship. The book narrates the story of two high school students, Violet Markey and Theodore Finch, who meet on the ledge of their school's bell tower, contemplating suicide. As they work together on a school project, they develop a bond that helps them face their personal struggles and find hope.

The novel tackles the complex issue of mental health and the stigma that surrounds it. Theodore, also known as Finch, struggles with bipolar disorder and depression, and his mental illness is portrayed realistically and sensitively. The novel provides an honest and raw portrayal of mental illness, showing the highs and lows of bipolar disorder and the daily struggles that people with mental health conditions face.

Violet, on the other hand, is dealing with the aftermath of her sister's death, which has left her struggling with the guilt and the depression of the survivor. Through her relationship with Finch, she finds a way to open up and confront her grief. The novel highlights the importance of seeking help and finding support when dealing with mental health issues, emphasizing that no one should have to face their struggles alone.

The novel also explores the power of friendship and the importance of connecting with others. Violet and Finch's relationship is at the heart of the novel, and their bond is both complex and moving. As they work on their school project, they learn to appreciate each other's unique qualities and develop a deep understanding of each other's struggles. The novel shows how friendships can provide comfort and support, even in the darkest of times.

In addition to exploring important themes, *All the Bright Places* is also a beautifully written novel that captures the nuances of teenage emotions and



experiences. Niven's prose is poetic and evocative, and she creates vivid characters that feel authentic and relatable. Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places* is a powerful and moving novel that tackles important issues with sensitivity and insight. The book has resonated with the readers of all ages, and it is sure to remain a classic of young adult literature for years to come.

Niven has stated that her inspiration for writing *All the Bright Places* came from a personal experience of grief and loss. Niven revealed that the idea for the novel began to take shape after the death of a close friend who had struggled with mental illness. Niven also drew upon her own experiences with depression and anxiety in creating the character of Theodore Finch, who is portrayed as having bipolar disorder.

Niven explained that she wanted to write a book that explored the complexities of mental illness and the impact it can have on individuals and their relationships. Niven has cited the work of young adult authors John Green and Rainbow Rowell as sources of inspiration for *All the Bright Places*. Like Green and Rowell, Niven wanted to write a novel that spoke to the experiences of young people in a way that was honest and relatable, while also offering a message of hope and resilience.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Navigating Abuse and Loss**

Pope John XXIII says that the family is the first essential cell of human society. The portrayal of family in contemporary literature is a reflection of the changing times and the evolving dynamics within households. The family has always been an integral part of literature, with authors exploring the complexities of relationships, the bonds that tie families together, and the challenges they face. However, in contemporary literature, a departure from traditional portrayals of the family, with authors exploring new and unconventional family structures can be seen.

One of the most significant changes in the portrayal of family in contemporary literature is the inclusion of diverse family structures. In the past, the nuclear family was the norm, with the father as the breadwinner, the mother as the homemaker, and children as the focus of their attention. However, in contemporary literature, we see families that are headed by single parents, same-sex couples, blended families, and multigenerational households. This shift reflects the changing demographics of modern society and the growing acceptance of non-traditional family structures.

Contemporary literature also explores the challenges faced by families in modern times. In the past, the portrayal of the family was often idealised, with authors focusing on the love and support that families provided. However, in contemporary literature, families struggling with a range of issues, including divorce, infidelity, substance abuse, and mental illness are portrayed. These challenges highlight the imperfections of families and the difficulties they face in navigating modern life.

Contemporary literature also explores the impact of technology on family life. In the past, families spent their time together, engaging in activities such as reading,

playing board games, or simply spending time in each other's company. However, with the rise of technology, families are often disconnected, with each member consumed by their digital devices. Contemporary literature reflects this shift, with authors exploring the impact of technology on family dynamics and relationships.

The portrayal of family in contemporary literature is a reflection of the changing times and the evolving dynamics within households. Authors explore diverse family structures, the challenges faced by families, and the impact of technology on family life. These portrayals offer a realistic and nuanced view of the family, highlighting its imperfections and complexities. As such, contemporary literature provides deeper understanding of the family and its place in modern society.

The novel *All the Bright Places* portrays different types of families, each with its unique dynamics and challenges. The main characters, Theodore Finch and Violet Markey, come from very different family backgrounds. Finch was from a broken home with an abusive father and an absent mother, whereas Violet was from a seemingly perfect family that has been shattered by tragedy. Despite their different backgrounds, both characters struggle with the impact of their family dynamics on their lives and relationships.

The portrayal of Violet's family plays a crucial role in understanding her character and the challenges she faces. Violet's family in *All the Bright Places*, seems to be a perfect one until her sister's death that shatters it. Her family was introduced in the novel as a family that has been traumatised by the death of Eleanor. Violet's parents were struggling to come to terms with their loss. Though Violet's parents occasionally express excessive care and suppress their grief over Eleanor, they are ultimately kind and caring individuals who just want what is best for their daughter Violet. They were

overprotective towards Violet. As she couldn't want to add to their suffering, Violet first feels like she needs to keep things away from them. Eventually, she starts to open up to them, and they start to support her in any way they can. They suppress their rage even when Violet reveals that she had been seeing Finch over their objections and tried to act responsibly in order to help him. At the book's conclusion, they have resumed discussing Eleanor and were there for each other.

Violet's parents were very kind and affectionate towards her. They love and show concern for her. They tried to help Violet to come out of her survivor's guilt and tried to make her realise it was not her mistake that her sister Eleanor died, instead it was an accident. They wanted Violet to be happy and enjoy her life, for that they even hide their own emotions regarding the death of their elder daughter, as it might affect Violet. They also wanted Violet to come out of her fear and travel in car like she used to do before the death of her sister.

...my parents are perfect. They are strong and brave and caring, and even though I know they must cry and get angry and maybe even throw things when they're alone, they rarely show it to me. Instead, they encourage me to get out of the house and into the car and back on the road, so to speak. They listen and ask and worry, and they're there for me. (51-52)

Violet's parents were too concerned about her that they make sure that she didn't have any problems, even if she has any, they take any possible actions they could, to protect and help her to come out of it. When Violet suffers from survivor's guilt, they were always by her side and encouraged her to come out of it as it was not her mistake "She says, 'Nothing that happened is your fault.'" (362). Once Violet was depressed,

grieved and couldn't come out of the loss of her sister and all their effort in supporting her went vain, they took Violet to her school counsellor. Once Violet said that she gets nightmares after the car accident, her mother discussed it with her counsellor. They wanted Violet to come out of mental disturbances completely.

The nightmares started after the accident. She asks about them every time I see her, because I made the mistake of mentioning them to my mom, who mentioned them to her. This is one of the main reasons why I'm here and why I've stopped telling my mom anything. (19)

Sometimes Violet felt too much affection that she got from both her father and mother annoying. She felt she was controlled by them. They wanted to know everything she does and she was asked to give every update of what she was doing and where she was going. This shows that Violet's parents care for her so much and they always make sure that she was safe, wherever she was and in whatever she does.

. . . they encourage me to get out of the house and into the car and back on the road, so to speak. They listen and ask and worry, and they're there for me. If anything, they're a little *too* there for me now. They need to know where I'm going, what I'm doing, who I'm seeing, and when I'll be back. *Text us on the way there, text us on your way home.* (51-52)

Violet's parents not only cared for her but also for her friend Theodore Finch. They even allowed him to spend time with them when they were having their personal family time. This made Finch feel that he too was the part of their family. They didn't treat him like a stranger. This shows the kindness of Violet's parents.

. . . I walk all the way to Violet's, where we build the world's largest snowman. We name him Mr. Black and decide he'll be a destination for

others to see when they're wandering. Afterward, we sit with her parents around the fire and I pretend I'm part of the family. (218)

Initially, Mr and Mrs Markey were happy that Finch was bringing Violet out of the home and out of her shell. After they came to know the truth about Finch, they forbid Violet to meet Finch, as they consider him as trouble. Her parents tried to support Violet as she tells them about Finch's difficulties with depression and suicidal thoughts, as well as the realities of his careless home life.

When Violet was away from her home for the whole night, her parents came to know from her friend Amanda, that she was with Finch, a boy who stood at the ledge of the bell tower. Violet's parents were shocked hearing this. They checked the background of Finch and his family. From this, they came to know the truth about Finch that he has psychological issues, "The boy is troubled, Violet. The boy is unpredictable. He's dealt with anger issues since he was little. This is not the kind of person you need to be spending time with." (237) and that he lied to them about his father and his parents were divorced "He lied to us about his father. The parents divorced last year. Finch sees him once a week" (238). They thought that Finch was a bad influence on their daughter. So, Violet's father warned her not to spend time with Finch anymore.

My father repeats, "No more seeing him. No more of this driving around. I'll speak to your teacher on Monday if I need to. You can write a report or do something else to make up for the work. Are we understood?"

"Extenuating circumstances." Here I am again.

"Excuse me?"

"Yes. We're understood." (239)

Her mother told Violet that they are not controlling or being overprotective towards her but just trying to make sure whether she's doing well.

“You know better than that.” She looks hurt and also angry. “We think we’ve been pretty damn cool, all things considered. But you need to take a minute to understand where we’re coming from. We’re not being overprotective and we’re not trying to suffocate you. We’re trying to make sure you’re okay.” (238-39)

When Violet shared exactly what happened on the day of accident and the death of Eleanor Markey. Her parents too expressed their feelings and grief to Violet, then they huddled together as the way of consoling each other “. . . the three of us huddle together, rocking a little back and forth, taking turns saying, ‘It’s okay. We’re okay. We’re all okay.’” (362).

Though Eleanor, sister of Violet who died in a car accident, plays a role directly in the novel, her memories and death never left the mind of Violet.

She stares out the window. “She was smart, stubborn, moody, funny, mean when she lost her temper, sweet, protective of the people she loved. Her favourite colour was yellow. She always had my back, even if we fought sometimes. I could tell her anything, because the thing about Eleanor was that she didn’t judge. She was my best friend.” (128).

Violet always mourns for the death of Eleanor. In the remembrance of Eleanor, Violet wears her glasses, even though it gives her headache and looks ugly on her. Violet always wanted to live with the memories, both good and bad, of Eleanor.

I have a headache. Probably from the glasses. Eleanor’s eyes were worse than mine. I take the glasses off and set them on the desk. They were

stylish on her. They're ugly on me. Especially with the bangs. But maybe, if I wear the glasses long enough, I can be like her. I can see what she saw. I can be both of us at once so no one will have to miss her, most of all me. (23-24)

Overall, the portrayal of Violet's family in *All the Bright Places* is a poignant and impactful aspect of the novel. It highlights the importance of the emotional support and the open communication in dealing with grief and mental health struggles. It also emphasises the impact of neglect and emotional detachment on young people and the need for understanding and empathy in addressing mental health challenges. *All the Bright Places* is a powerful novel that sheds light on the struggles of young people and the role of family and its impact of mental health support and resources.

In contrast to Violet's family, Finch family, in the novel *All the Bright Places*, is completely broken. His father has abandoned his family to start a new one and was both physically and emotionally abusive. His mother, in her grief, has completely shut down and developed an uncaring attitude. She was never aware of Finch's actions and was not even aware of his expulsion from school. Decca got used to Finch's actions and doesn't seem to care about him. His sister Kate, who was just nineteen, assumes a position that is somewhat like to parenting.

This lack of family support and guidance leaves Finch feeling isolated and alone, exacerbating his own mental health struggles. His father's abusive behaviour and the carelessness of his mother highlights the impact his family dynamics have on his mental health and his struggle to cope with his own problems.

Finch's father, Ted Finch, is a former professional hockey player. He left Theodore, his mother, his sisters Kate and Decca for a much younger woman



Rosemarie. Ted Finch's abusive behaviour still haunts Finch's mother, and he continues to verbally berate and physically assault Finch. Finch lied to Violet's parents and Mr. Embry by saying that his father was dead. Mr. Finch tries his best to maintain his appearances, but his rage always simmers beneath the surface.

Finch and his sisters meet their father every Sunday for dinner as they were forced after their parents' divorce, a year ago, which they hate. Mr Finch welcomes his daughters with a hug but just slap Finch on his back. "He hugs my sisters and slaps me on the back." (68). From this it can be understood that Mr Finch, the father of Theodore Finch, maintains distance from his own son. He doesn't treat his son and daughters equally. He even treats Josh Raymond, his step son better than Theodore and his sisters. When Josh kicked the table's leg, he talked to him politely but when Theodore said that he's vegetarian, his father started to get annoyed and his voice wasn't soft or patient. He says,

Veggie burger?" His voice isn't soft or patient. "I was raised on meat and potatoes, and I've made it to thirty-five." (He was forty-three in October.) "I figured my parents were the ones putting the food on the table, so it wasn't my job to question it. (70)

Finch said that his father gets black moods when Violet asked about the scar in his body. He also said that he was physically abused by his father when he was in the black moods. Finch often becomes victim for his father's anger.

"Where did you get the scar? The real story this time."

"The real story's boring. My dad gets in these black moods. Like, the blackest black. Like, no moon, no stars, storm's coming black. I used to

be a lot smaller than I am now. I used to not know how to get out of the way.” (227-28)

Once when Finch went to his father’s house for dinner, his father was watching television in the basement. When Finch asked him to join the dinner, his didn’t move. Finch hid the television by standing in front of it and this made his father enraged. He said,

“Don’t you come into my house and tell me what to do.” And then he’s off the couch and lunging for me, and he catches me by the arm and wham, slams me into the wall. I hear the crack as my skull makes contact, and for a minute the room spins. (159-60)

From this it is evident that his father never showed affection, care and love towards Finch since his childhood. Throughout the novel, the relationship between Theodore and his father, Ted Finch, is explored in depth through various incidents that highlight the dynamics of their relationship.

Finch's relationship with his father is fraught with tension, conflict, and misunderstandings. From the very beginning of the novel, it is clear that Theodore and his father have a strained relationship. Theodore feels like his father does not understand him and is constantly criticising him. He feels like he is never good enough for his father, and this causes him to withdraw further into himself. The incidents that occur throughout the novel serve to highlight the complexity of their relationship and the challenges they face in trying to bridge the gap between them.

Finch's relationship with his mother is complicated and strained, with both characters dealing with mental health issues that make it difficult for them to connect. Both of them couldn’t understand each other. His mother couldn’t come out her divorce

because she still loves her husband. Through powerful and poignant prose, Niven depicts the struggles that Finch and his mother face, and how their relationship affects the way Finch navigates the world around him.

His father's disappearance from the family made Finch's mother grieve. She says, "I never expected to be single at forty." (39). After being separated from his father, Finch's mother tries to be a cool parent, hiding the grief of her separation from her husband. Finch says,

"This is the extent of her parenting. Ever since my dad left, she's tried really hard to be the cool parent. Still, I feel bad for her because she loves him, even though, at his core, he's selfish and rotten, and even though he left her for a woman named Rosemarie." (38-39).

Finch's mother tries hard to understand her kids, but couldn't be successful in it for which she blames their bad behaviour and his husband who left them.

Mom has stopped eating to study my face. When she does pay attention, which isn't often, she tries hard to be understanding about my "sadness," just like she tries hard to be patient when Kate stays out all night and Decca spends time in the principal's office. My mother blames our bad behaviour on the divorce and my dad. (39-40)

Finch's mother considered him as the man of the house as his husband left her and her children. Finch says, "she wants to count on me as man of the house" (40). She's was worried about Finch. "'Isn't it nice to have your brother back, Decca?'" She says it as if I'm in danger of disappearing again, right in front of their eyes." (40)

Finch's mother seems to be in denial about her son's mental illness. She doesn't understand Finch's condition and was not ready to hear him say about what he feels.

She only gives importance to physical health and doesn't consider about stress or mental health. Moreover, she's barely available for him to talk to.

I can go downstairs right now and let my mom know how I'm feeling—if she's even home—but she'll tell me to help myself to the Advil in her purse and that I need to relax and stop getting myself worked up, because in this house there's no such thing as being sick unless you can measure it with a thermometer under the tongue. Things fall into categories of black and white—bad mood, bad temper, loses control, feels sad, feels blue. (185)

Finch's relationship with his mother is a complex and emotionally charged one, characterised by misunderstandings, guilt, and a deep longing for connection. Despite their difficulties, Finch never gives up on his mother, and continues to try to bridge the emotional divide that separates them.

Finch's relationship with his sister Kate is an important aspect of the novel. She's the only family member who seems to understand Finch. When their father compelled Finch to eat meat, she's the only one who speaks for Finch. She says, "Don't be an asshole, Dad. He doesn't have to eat is he doesn't want to." (71).

She always hears what Finch says and advises him. It is clear that they have a deep bond and care for each other, even if they don't always know how to express it. Kate addresses Finch as "loser," they never show love for each other explicitly but with their care and affection that they show towards each other it can be understood that Kate and Finch understand each other and are always there for each other.

Kate's affection towards Finch is described when Finch left the house, Kate searched for him day and night which is obvious when Violet says, "Kate has gone out to look for Theo and there's no telling when she'll be back." (332). Kate is the one who really cares about Finch, which is evident when she said, "Hey, Theo?" I turn and she's standing beside her car, nothing but an outline the night. "Just be careful with that heart of yours."

Once again: *Just be careful.*" (164-65)

Finch is shown to be a caring and protective older brother towards his younger sister Decca. He takes on the role of a father figure, as his own father is absent and his mother is emotionally unavailable. Finch makes sure that Decca is safe and cared for, even when he is struggling with his own mental health.

Finch's younger sister, Decca, suffers from her parents' absence and separation. She envies Josh Raymond, her step brother, who gets all her father's affection. "Decca's upset. Sometimes I think this Josh Raymond situation is hardest on her since they're practically the same age." (164). This is revealed in the conversation of Finch and Kate when they returned home after Sunday dinner in their father's house.

Finch does care for Decca which is obvious when he said, "I brave Decca's chamber of horrors to make sure she's okay." (165). Finch tried to communicate with her, "I start giving her a big brother pep talk about how life will get better, and it isn't only hard times and hard people, that there are bright spots too." (165). Decca doesn't talk or share her thoughts much, she said to her brother Finch, "Less talking," (166).

Decca is an important source of motivation for Finch. He wants to be there for her and make sure she has a good life. He sees himself in her, and he doesn't want her

to struggle like he does. He wants her to know that she is loved and that she can always come to him for help.

I help Decca in the yard, building a half-snow, half-mud man, and then we walk six blocks to the hill behind my grade school and go sledding. We race each other, and Decca wins every time because it makes her happy. On the way home she says, "You better not have let me win." "Never." I throw an arm around her shoulders and she doesn't pull away. (256)

Decca cared less about Finch leaving their house as she got used to it. When Violet asked about Finch to her, she said, "He'll be back. He always comes back." *That's just his thing. It's what he does.*" (313).

Violet hates Finch's family because she felt that none of his family members really cared for Finch and none listened to him when he wanted to share his feelings and thoughts. None was there for him when he needs them. She said, "His family is just as bad." (341). But she also said, "Everyone is crying, even the dad." (340).

Violet was the one who really cared for Finch. It is evident when she said, "I want to say to her and Charlie and Brenda, to Kate, to his mom: *Doesn't anyone care why he comes and goes? Have you ever stopped to think that something might be wrong with this?*" (313).

Throughout the novel, Niven portrays Finch's family in a way that adds depth to his character and provides insight into his struggles. The situation of family highlights one of the novel's greatest tragedies. No matter how much affection Finch receives from Violet, it can never compensate for the love he doesn't receive from his parents. When Finch goes missing, Violet is considerably more genuinely worried than

his own parents. Thus Niven portrayed two different types of families and how they affect both the protagonists as individuals.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Denial as a Defence Mechanism**

Denial is a psychological defence mechanism that people use to cope with stressful or traumatic situations by denying their existence or significance. It involves rejecting information or feelings that may be too overwhelming to deal with, and instead, creating a false reality that is more manageable. While denial can provide temporary relief, it can also be detrimental in the long term, preventing individuals from acknowledging and addressing their problems. Sigmund Freud, in 1923, first proposed the idea of denial as a defence mechanism. Freud defines denial as a rejection to accept the existence of unendurable feelings or situations and views it as one of the defence mechanisms that work as a protector of the ego from anxiety (Kralik, & Koch, 460).

A form of denial is denial of illness. People who are diagnosed with a serious illness, such as cancer, may initially deny or minimise the severity of their condition. They may avoid medical appointments or refuse to discuss their illness with others. This can be particularly harmful as early detection and treatment can significantly improve the chances of recovery.

Denial is a coping mechanism that can be helpful in the short term, but in the long term, it can be harmful to an individual's mental and physical health. By refusing to acknowledge and address their problems, individuals may be preventing themselves from seeking the help they need to recover. Furthermore, denying a problem can cause it to escalate and become more difficult to manage over time.

Freud also categorises denial as a maladaptive defence mechanism as it works to guard an individual both from real and imagined threats, conflict, or frustrations (Wheeler, 313). Defence mechanism as a part of psychology can also be found in



literary texts such as novels. It is because psychology is connected to human experience and literature is a mirror of human experience in real life, a psychological approach might be a useful theory to analyse psychological issues in literary writings.

Denial is a psychological defence mechanism that allows an individual to cope with uncomfortable or distressing thoughts, emotions, or events by rejecting their existence or minimizing their importance. This mechanism has been extensively explored in literature, where it is often used to add depth and complexity to characters and plotlines.

In literature, denial is manifested in several ways. For instance, a character may deny their feelings towards another character, or they may deny their own faults or mistakes. Denial can also occur on a larger scale, such as when a community denies the existence of a problem or a government denies responsibility for a crisis.

One example of denial as a defence mechanism in literature can be found in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. In the novel, the protagonist, Jay Gatsby, denies the reality of his past and the circumstances that led him to become a wealthy socialite. He creates a false identity for himself, claiming to come from a wealthy family and to have inherited his fortune. Gatsby's denial is a coping mechanism for the shame and guilt he feels about his humble beginnings and the illegal activities he engaged in to become rich. Ultimately, his denial leads to his downfall, as his inability to face the truth about his past and present situation leads to tragic consequences.

Another example of denial in literature can be seen in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. The novel's protagonist, Holden Caulfield, denies his own emotions and the reality of growing up. He avoids facing his own grief and pain by pretending to be detached and cynical. Holden's denial is a way for him to protect himself from the

painful reality of the world and the inevitability of change. However, his denial also prevents him from developing meaningful relationships and finding a sense of purpose in life.

Denial can also be used as a plot device to create tension and conflict in literature. For example, in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, the entire community of Salem denies the reality of the witchcraft accusations that tear the town apart. The characters' denial creates a sense of hysteria and paranoia, leading to false accusations, betrayals, and tragic consequences.

Denial as a defence mechanism is a common theme in literature. It allows authors to create complex characters, explore themes of identity, and create tension and conflict. However, denial can also lead to tragic consequences, as characters who refuse to face reality may be unable to learn from their mistakes or overcome their challenges. Through literature, we can learn about the dangers of denial and the importance of facing the truth, no matter how uncomfortable or painful it may be.

The novel *All the Bright Places* can be analysed how differently Violet Markey deals with the two deaths of her loved ones in this novel. People cope with grief in many different ways; in this case, Violet uses denial as a coping method for dealing with two traumatic losses that occurred in her life.

In *All the Bright Places*, Violet Markey initially exhibits denial as a coping mechanism for her grief following the loss of her sister. Violet and Eleanor are presented as being close siblings in this book. They both have a blog together and a similar group of friends. Violet was next to her sister when the car crash happened, even on the day Eleanor passed away. Thus, it makes sense that Violet's life was deeply wounded by Eleanor's passing. She doesn't necessarily deny that her sister has passed

away; however, she chooses not to engage in any activities that would cause her to think of Eleanor. Violet's denial is first showed when she has a conversation with a school counsellor, Mrs. Kresney.

“Have you driven yet?”

“No.”

“Have you allowed yourself to ride in the car with your parents?”

“No.” . . .

She leans forward. “Have you thought about returning to cheerleading?”

“No.”

“Student council?”

“No.” (21-22)

It is clear from this conversation that Violet is refusing to behave in the same way she did previously to Eleanor's death. This situation is categorised as the self-protective function of denial by Dorpat. Dorpat (32) claims that the self-protective function of denial is a process based on the denier's unconscious fantasies of destroying everything that is painful for them, and not including the real intention in their central attention.

Violet's unconscious fantasy belief that such things are not enjoyable to undertake is the reason for her denial of Eleanor's death as evidenced by her refusal to take part in any activities she engaged before to Eleanor's death. She saw it as uncomfortable since the actions made her think of her deceased sister and caused Violet to feel guilty. When she says, “Maybe because I'm here and she's not, and the whole

thing—every big or small moment I’ve lived since last April—feels like cheating in some way.” (113).

Violet’s guilt came mostly from the fact that she was riding along with her sister on the day of the accident. She was also the one who suggested the sister take the bridge home. Her sense of mounting guilt led her to believe that she was to blame for Eleanor’s death and that she didn’t deserve to be alive. To go more into the reasons behind Violet’s decision to abandon engaging in all of her hobbies as a means of denying Eleanor’s death, it is revealed in one of Violet and Finch’s conversations that she started to feel that the things she used to do were no longer essential. In the conversation with Finch, Violet says,

“But that isn’t why. The why is that none of it matters. Not school, not cheerleading, not boyfriends or friends or parties or creative writing programs or . . .” She waves her arms at the world. “It’s all just time filler until we die.”

“Maybe. Maybe. Not. Whether it’s filler or not, I’m pretty glad to be here.” If there’s anything I’ve learned, it’s that you need to make the most of it. (61)

From this, it can be understood that following Eleanor’s departure, Violet no longer focuses significance on the things that were formerly significant to her. The reason behind this is her sorrow over Eleanor’s death, which makes her feel as though she has no right to be happy considering that she was the only survivor of the car crash while her sister was not. As a result, Violet’s once-enjoyable and thrilling activities begin to lose their significance because they now just act to serve as a constant reminder of her sorrow over Eleanor’s death.

Violet quit writing too, whether it was for her task or the blog. She believed that since the blog's subject matter focuses on sisters, there was no longer any reason to write in it. She further says that when their car crashed, her words died as well. Violet stopped writing for the same reasons as she stopped to drive, join cheerleading, or join school government. It's possible that Violet's intense grief about her sister's passing caused her to think of Eleanor. Violet thus stopped doing it all since she felt it was her just reward for living whereas Eleanor did not.

Violet's denial also affects her relationship with her parents. Her parents were also grieving the loss of their daughter, but they express their grief in different ways than Violet. They visit their daughter's grave and attend grief counselling, while Violet avoids these things altogether. Violet's denial makes it difficult for her parents to connect with her and offer her the support that she needs. They were unable to understand why she was not grieving in the same way they are and why she was avoiding the painful emotions associated with her sister's death.

Violet's denial affects her behaviour through her school work. Before her sister's death, Violet was a high-achieving student who had plans to attend college. After her sister's death, she loses interest in school and begins to struggle academically. She becomes disengaged from her studies and is unable to focus on her school work. Violet's denial is preventing her from processing her grief, which is affecting her ability to function in her daily life.

Violet's denial affects her behaviour is through her interactions with Finch, the male protagonist of the novel. Finch was also struggling with his own mental health issues, and he uses his relationship with Violet as a way to escape his problems. Violet, on the other hand, uses her relationship with Finch as a way to avoid dealing with her

grief. She becomes so caught up in her relationship with Finch that she forgets about her sister and the emotions associated with her death.

The way Violet Markey manages her grief after losing her partner, Theodore Finch, is another example of her denial. Violet was the first one to notice that Finch could be about to commit suicide. She thus made an effort to find him using the hints Finch left behind. Violet expresses a sort of denial by considering leaving the area where she discovered Finch's car after she had a feeling about his presence and was right.

The first thing I see is Little Bastard, parked on the side of the road, right wheels, front and back, on the embankment. I pulled up behind it and turn off the engine. I sit there.

I can drive away right now. If I drive away, Theodore Finch is still somewhere in the world, living and wandering, even if it's without me. My fingers are on the ignition key. (335)

The lines above imply that Violet was aware that it was possible that Finch had left the area by the time she arrived to the lake. Even if she only has an assumption since she lacks solid proof, she is still much too frightened to grasp the reality. As the result, Violet rejected her theory that Finch was trying to leave the lake and may be drowning in it. She also remained in the place for a while since she didn't want to leave because she thought that if she did, she wouldn't learn the truth and that Finch was still alive somewhere.

Freud defines denial as the refusal to acknowledge a situation in reality and creating a more tolerable reality (Wheeler, 318). Based on this statement, Violet creates a more bearable situation by imagining that Finch is still alive and going elsewhere.

Despite her own uncertainty over Finch's death, she finds the situation in reality—which may involve her seeing Finch's body—too scary to even consider. She therefore employed denial as a coping strategy that allowed her to accept a more tolerable reality. Violet thinks that believing Finch is still alive and spending his life without her is better to know he has already left this world.

Even after deciding finally to call 911 and report the incident, Violet continues to protect herself from the unpleasant circumstances by fabricating a different reality. If she had initially thought that Finch was travelling somewhere without naming a specific location, she is now creating her own reality by identifying a location known as the other world. Violet makes an effort to persuade herself that Finch is only transitioning to another place and not quite dead. The world Finch thinks lies at the bottom of the lake is the other world to which she refers. The other missing individuals who had previously jumped into the lake are drawn into the enigmatic world and sent to another dimension. She said, "Men are diving over and over, three or four of them—they all look the same. I want to tell them not to bother, they're not going to find anything, he is not there. If anyone can make it to another world, it's Theodore Finch." (337).

According to Salamon denial is someone's effort to maximise the positive side and minimise the negative side, as their way to reject the reality. This term is related to Violet's idea that Finch travels to a distant universe. When she initially noticed Finch's car parked close to the lake, she tried to persuade herself that he was wandering somewhere else rather than on the lake. But Violet realised there was almost no chance Finch wasn't on the lake when she noticed his clothing, phone, and other items lying on the shore without their owner. Even then, Violet is unwilling to accept that Finch

has probably already passed away; as a result, Violet is imagining a new scenario that has more promise than Finch's death: Finch is just moving to the other world.

Likewise, Violet denied the identity of her boyfriend when the rescue crew eventually discovered Finch's body in the lake. However, she claims that the deceased was a stranger to her. It is evident when she says,

Even when they bring the body up, swollen and bloated and blue, I think:  
*That's not him. That's someone else. This swollen, bloated, blue thing  
 with the dead, dead skin is not anyone I know or recognize.* I tell them  
 so. They ask me if I feel strong enough to identify him, and I say, "That's  
 not him. That is a swollen, bloated, dead, dead blue thing, and I can't  
 identify it because I've never seen it before." I turn my head away.  
 (337-38)

From the lines above, it is clear that Violet once more protected herself by using denial to distract herself from the unpleasant truth. Since that Finch's body has already been located, this might be seen as direct proof of his demise. She still refuses to admit that her partner is truly the dead body, though. She rejected the evidence after seeing it with her own eyes, claiming that Finch's physical attributes were very different from the body the rescuers retrieved.

It is comprehensible that Violet's sadness lasted even after a month given how much Finch means to her and how shocked she is by his death. On the other hand, there is no improvement in her condition. There is a scene in the novel where Violet meets with Mr. Embry, a former counsellor to Finch, for her counselling. Markey did not say much and refused to share her experience with Mr. Embry, which is contrary to how a



typical counselling session should be conducted. But, as the line below demonstrates, there is a justification for her silence:

The thing I can't, won't, mention to him is that I see Finch everywhere—in the hallways at school, on the street, in my neighbourhood. Someone's face will remind me of him, or someone's walk or someone's laugh. It's like being surrounded by a thousand different Finches. I wonder if this is normal, but I don't ask. (348)

Based on Violet's circumstance in the sentences above, it can be concluded that she exhibits denial by changing her perspective to a more pleasant illusion. This suggests that Violet's unconscious mind is still struggling to accept the fact that Finch has passed away. Violet is attempting to protect herself by denying the potential harmful fact—in this case, Finch's death—and turning it into a fantasy in which she claims to constantly see her boyfriend. This circumstance arises because Violet finds it extremely difficult to accept the truth that Finch no longer exists. As a result, her unconscious mind changed reality into a pleasant illusion in which Finch can be seen wherever she goes.

When Violet visited the final location that Finch visited before he passed away at the end of the novel, it was still possible to discern her type of denial about his passing. She added that she was half expecting to see him after parking the car and standing on the grassy side of the Blue Hole. She may still be in denial and keep holding on to her belief that Finch is still alive and only roaming about if she says that she hoped to find her deceased boyfriend in the Blue Hole. Violet's idea, which is recorded in the book, is in agreement with the following assertion:

“I kick off my shoes and cut through the water, diving deep. I’m looking for him through my goggles, even though I know I won’t find him. I swim with my eyes open. I come back up to the surface under the great wide sky, take a breath, and down I go again, deeper this time. I like to think he’s wandering in another world, seeing things no one can ever imagine.” (377)

In conclusion, as literature reflects human experience in real life, psychoanalysis is applied in this study to analyse the results. In *All the Bright Places*, the deaths of Eleanor and Finch serve as two big occurrences that illustrate Violet’s use of denial as a coping mechanism for her grief. But in those two tragic instances, various types of denials are portrayed. By refusing to participate in all the things she used to do while her sister Eleanor was still alive, Violet uses denial as a coping mechanism to deal with Eleanor’s death. The self-protective function of denial is the refers to this circumstance. The activities are considered unpleasant by Violet’s unconscious fantasy since they would only make her think of Eleanor and lead her to feel guilty. Violet felt she was to blame for her sister’s death, it was also an effort on her behalf to punish herself.

## Chapter Four

### Exploration of the Self

Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places* explores the themes of mental illness, grief, bullying, isolation, familial bond, exploration, love and self-discovery. The story revolves around two teenagers, Finch and Violet, who were struggling with their own personal demons, met on the ledge of their school's bell tower, both contemplating whether to jump or not. They form a strong bond as they embark on a school project to explore the hidden and natural wonders of their home state of Indiana, where they both learned about themselves and each other. *All the Bright Places* is a sombre novel and offers a possible real life ending that is not appealing.

The novel is comprised of two parallel narratives, alternating between Finch and Violet's points of view. Niven used this technique to convey the characters' different perspectives on the world and their experiences. It gives the characters an opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings. It also highlights the contrast between Finch and Violet's external facades and their internal struggles.

Theodore Finch, one of the protagonists of the novel, is a senior high school student, depicted as a charming and quirky character who struggles with bipolar disorder. He has a history of suicide attempts and is constantly battling with his own demons. He is portrayed as a constant victim of bullying by his classmates who label him as 'freak' and by his father, who uses emotionally abusive words and this contributes to his depression. His experiences of constant abuse and bullying highlight the damaging effects of bullying.

Violet Markey, a high school senior, is creative, reserved, vulnerable and has low self-esteem. She suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, unable to deal with the loss of her sister Eleanor, who died in a car accident. This incident left her feel numb and disconnected from the world. She tries to commit suicide by jumping from the ledge of her school's bell tower where she encountered Theodore Finch, her classmate. The novel narrates how Violet's life changes after she met Finch.

As the two characters grow closer because of their school project, they begin to confide in each other and share their deepest fears and desires. Finch, himself dealing with mental illness, encouraged Violet to come out of her guilt and suicidal thoughts. Violet too tried to help Finch come out of his depression, suicidal thoughts and undiagnosed mental illness but couldn't succeed. However, their relationship is far from perfect, and they face a series of obstacles that threaten to tear them apart but they chose to be there for each other.

Both Violet and Finch were fascinated towards death and began to explore their state together as a part of their school project, visiting places with strange names and natural landscape with alluring beauty that are unnoticed, leaving behind tokens of their time there. As they spend more time together, they fall in love and begin to heal each other's emotional wounds, still Finch's mental illness worsens, and he becomes increasingly unstable. Violet struggles to understand Finch's behaviour and doesn't know how to help him. In the end, their love is not enough to save Finch from his own demons, and he takes his own life.

Throughout the novel, Niven presents a vivid portrayal of mental illness, bullying, domestic abuse, lack of familial bond, guilt, highlights the stigma surrounding mental health and the lack of resources and support available for people struggling with

it, especially teenagers. She also addresses the importance of seeking help and the impact that a supportive environment can have on those who are struggling.

Exploration as a theme in literature often involves characters journeying into unknown or unfamiliar territory, both physically and emotionally. This exploration can be a way to discover new knowledge or understanding, challenge preconceptions, and ultimately lead to personal growth or transformation.

Exploration can take many different forms in literature. In adventure stories, exploration often involves physical travel to distant or exotic locations, encountering new cultures, and confronting danger and adversity. In science fiction, exploration can involve voyages to new planets or alternate dimensions, grappling with complex scientific concepts and technologies, and encountering strange new life forms.

It can also be a metaphorical journey of self-discovery and personal growth. In these stories, characters may be forced to confront their own limitations, biases, and fears, and must overcome obstacles in order to reach a new level of understanding or maturity. This type of exploration can take place within the character's own mind, as they grapple with existential questions or confront traumatic memories.

Exploration as a theme in literature can serve as a powerful metaphor for the human experience, offering insight into the human condition and the quest for knowledge, understanding, and self-discovery.

Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places* explores the idea of exploration of new places. Exploration plays a vital role in the lives of the two main characters, Violet Markey and Theodore Finch. Violet grieves for the death of her sister, while Finch deals with undiagnosed bipolar disorder.

Despite their initial differences, they bond over a shared project in which they explore the natural wonders of their state, Indiana. Through their journey, they discover more about themselves and each other, highlighting the importance of exploration in both the physical and emotional sense, they were able to find hope, healing, and a sense of purpose in their lives. The exploration of new places is a recurring theme in the novel. Violet and Finch embark on a geography project for school in which they have to explore and report on various natural wonders in their state of Indiana, “You’ll be departing our . . . great state, and before . . . you do, you should . . . see it. You should . . . wander . . .” (29) says their geography teacher. Their geography project is what moves them out of the sphere of school and into the outside world, and is a steady thread throughout the novel. Through this project, they are able to discover new places that they have never seen before, which helps them to appreciate the beauty of their surroundings and allows them to see their world in a different light.

Exploration serves as a way for Violet and Finch to escape from their problems and find moments of joy and peace. They start to open up to each other and begin to find solace in their shared experiences. This also leads to their friendship and ultimately helps them understand each other in a better way. This exploration allows Violet and Finch to see the world in a different perspective.

The foundation of Violet and Finch's bond is their "Wander Indiana" project for US Geography. Finch devises some guidelines for their travelling that says,

No using our phones to get us there. We have to do this strictly old-school, which means learning to read actual maps.

We alternate choosing places to go, but we also have to be willing to go where the road takes us. This means the grand, the small, the bizarre, the

poetic, the beautiful, the ugly, the surprising. Just like life. But absolutely, unconditionally, resolutely *nothing ordinary*.

At each site, we leave something, almost like an offering. It can be our own private game of geocaching. (43-44)

Finch's main aim is to visit the places that are considered as the hidden gems of Indiana. Their inability to drive and venture outside inclement weather is Violet's constraint. Finch encourages Violet in overcoming the driving exception relatively fast. Violet accepts to go with Finch in his car even though she hasn't been in a car since the death of her sister Eleanor, in a car accident, and in the end, she drives by herself to continue their wanderings.

I've got a map in my car that wants to be used, and I think there are places we can go that need to be seen. Maybe no one else will ever visit them and appreciate them or take the time to think they're important, but maybe even the smallest places mean something. And if not, maybe they can mean something to us. And the very least, by the time we leave, we know we will have seen it, this great state of ours. So come on. Let's go. Let's count for something. Let's get off that ledge. (41)

Being present in the world is important to these explorations. Early on, Finch points out that "When we're in the act of wandering, we need to be present, not watching it through a lens" (97). On their first outing, he says this to Violet, and it establishes the tone for the remainder of the book. Finch uses wandering and exploration to stay connected to the outside world, to experience it, and to confirm its reality. This serves as Violet's first step in overcoming her sadness. For both of them, it serves as a reason for spending time together.

The pair's wanderings led them to different kinds of places like the Bookmobile Park, backyard roller coasters, and Indiana's highest point, which is where they first set out on their travels. They continue their research and come to a huge whiteboard where individuals have written their last wishes.

The first place Finch and Violet travelled as the part of their school project is Hoosier Hill. They both have a memorable experience there. They hike to the top. At the top of the hill, they find a small monument that marks the highest point in Indiana. "INDIANA HIGHPOINT, HOOSIER HILL, ELEV. 1257 FT" (95-96)

While at the top, Finch encourages Violet to let go of her fears and grief and experience the moment fully. He suggests that they scream at the top of their lungs, and they both did. The scene is described as liberating and exhilarating for both characters.

The experience at Hoosier Hill is a turning point in the relationship between Violet and Finch. Their first travel together built trust for each other and they became closer and more connected, sharing their hopes and fears with each other. The hill represents a moment of joy and happiness in their lives, and it becomes a symbol of their friendship and the beauty that can be found in the world.

Violet was not so excited to visit the Hoosier Hill which was their first place as the part of their wanderings. She couldn't enjoy the place as Finch does as she was already dealing with the loss of her sister, Eleanor. But she was amazed how Finch could find beauty in everything but she can't. She thought, "I wish I could see it through his eyes. I wish he had glasses to give me" (98).

Hoosier Hill is a place where Finch feels free and alive. Finch enjoys the natural beauty of the hill and feels a sense of connection to it. For him, being at the top of the hill gives him a feeling of control over his life and his emotions. He enjoys the place



completely. The way he saw nature can be understood from their travel to the Hoosier Hill.

Finch sees Hoosier Hill as a place of hope. He goes there to try and find a reason to live. The hill represents a chance for him to start over and escape the difficulties he faces in his life. He sees the hill as a place where he can find peace and happiness, even if it's just for a little while. Hoosier Hill is a symbol of freedom, hope, and escape for Finch in *All the Bright Places*. It's a place where he can be himself and find some relief from his struggles.

When they visited a huge wall that says "Before I Die," Finch and Violet share a transformative experience on the "Before I Die" wall. The wall is a public art project where people write their hopes, dreams, and aspirations before they die.

Finch and Violet meet at the wall, and Finch encourages Violet to write something on the wall. Violet is hesitant, but Finch tells her to write something that she's always wanted to do but hasn't yet. Violet writes, "Stop being afraid, Stop thinking too much. Fill the holes left behind. Drive again. Write. Breathe." (135) and Finch writes: "Play guitar like Jimmy Page. Come up with a song that will change the world. Find the Great Manifesto. Count for something. Be the person I'm meant to be and have that be enough. Know what it's like to have a best friend. Matter" (135).

From their writings in the wall, it can be understood that they wanted to do things as they wish. Violet wanted to stop brooding and to come out of her comfort zone. Finch wanted to have a friend and wanted to do something that can change the world and he wanted to be remembered. As Finch and Violet continue to explore the wall, they discover that some of the messages are heart breaking and tragic, while others

are hopeful and inspiring. They begin to talk about their own dreams and fears, sharing their deepest secrets with each other.

Before I die I want to have kids. Live in London. Own a pet giraffe.  
Skydive. Divide by zero. Play the piano. Speak French. Write a book.  
Travel to a different planet. Be a better dad than mine was. Feel good  
about myself. Go to New York City. Know equality. Live. (135)

Through their conversations at the wall, Finch and Violet develop a deep connection and start to fall in love. The wall becomes a place of healing and hope for them, as they work through their personal struggles together.

The “Before I Die” wall becomes a symbol of the hope and joy that Finch and Violet found in each other, as well as a reminder the importance of reaching out to those who are struggling.

Finch takes Violet to a ride on a backyard rollercoaster, which is a type of rollercoaster that was built by John Ivers, who loves adventures, in the backyard of his house. Finch was amazed by the brilliance of John Ivers, he says, “You may be the most brilliant man I have ever met” (197). Finch is an adventurous and spontaneous young man who is always looking for new experiences, and he takes Violet on the ride as a way to help her overcome her fears and embrace life.

During the ride, Violet initially feels scared and uncertain, but as she begins to trust Finch and let go of her fears, she starts to enjoy the experience. She wanted to ride again and again as the ride excites her. After a ride in the backyard rollercoaster, their relationship grew stronger.

The ride becomes a metaphor for the ups and downs of life and the importance of taking risks and embracing new experiences. The scene marks a turning point in

Finch and Violet's relationship and helps Violet begin to come out of her shell and live life more fully. Finch and Violet's experience on the blue hole is a predominant moment in their relationship and in the story as a whole.

The blue hole is a bottomless lake of about three-acre in Indiana where Finch and Violet go on a school project together. At first, Violet is hesitant to jump in because she is still struggling. But Finch encourages her to take the plunge, and she eventually does. Violet overcame her fears in their visit to the blue hole.

As they swim, Finch and Violet talk and get to know each other better. They share stories about their lives, their fears, and their dreams. Finch opened up to Violet about his personal things. He said to her about his parents' divorce and his father's second marriage. For a brief moment, they both feel free and alive, unburdened by their problems.

However, their experience at the blue hole is not all positive. Later in the story, it is revealed that Finch's behaviour during the blue hole trip was a manic episode, and that he was struggling with undiagnosed bipolar disorder. This adds a layer of complexity to the scene, as it shows the contrast between the temporary escape from reality that the blue hole provided and the underlying mental health issues that were still present.

The blue hole experience is a powerful moment in *All the Bright Places* that highlights the characters' struggles and their brief moments of joy and connection and it is the place where Finch and Violet's love story began and ended as Finch ends his life there. After Finch's death Violet once again visited the Blue Hole Lake and swam in the hope of seeing Finch once again even though she knew she won't find him.

I kick off my shoes and cut through the water, diving deep. I'm looking for him through my goggles, even though I know I won't find him. I swim with my eyes open. I come back up to the surface under the great wide sky, take a breath, and down I go again, deeper this time. I like to think he's wandering in another world, seeing things no one can ever imagine. (377)

Finch's craving to discover new things never stops. In fact, he asks Violet to visit the "nest houses" with him at the end of the book. He cannot take it when she responds prudently, suggesting that they go on Saturday because it would become dark soon. He claims, "You know what? Why don't we just forget it? Why don't I go by myself? I think I'd rather go alone anyway" (275). Finch already feels alone, and Violet's refusal to be there and go exploring with him causes him to feel even more alone, which ultimately leads to his suicide.

In the end, Violet must complete the project even after Finch has passed away. She continues the project as per the plan of Finch, as he left clues and map for her to find the places.

And then I find it in my bag, on my third time checking, as if it appeared out of thin air. I spread it out and look at the remaining points that are circled. There are five more places to see on my own. Finch has written numbers beside each one so that there's a kind of order. (354)

In continuing the project, she learns Finch's last messages to her and eventually comes to a place of forgiveness, Taylor Prayer Chapel. There he left his last message in the Bible. He wrote lyrics for Violet, through which he confessed his love for her. By reading it, Violet began to weep. At the end Violet realised, "it's not what you take,

it's what you leave" (376). It is the most important lesson Finch taught Violet throughout their journey together.

Finch is fascinated with the idea of travelling; it seems to be connected to his desire for a Great Manifesto, about which Cesare Pavese said, "We do not remember days, we remember moments." (315) and his need to constantly be moving forward. Finch finds purpose in exploring new places and making discoveries. His search for new experiences enables him to get away from his burdens. He distinguishes between roaming and becoming lost.

Together, Violet and Finch discuss all the locations they'd like to explore, and even after his death, Violet keeps planning her future travels, in order to complete the project.

For Violet all the travels she made with Finch lingers on her memories even after Finch left her forever. Violet realises that there are still more places for her to travel. For them, travelling represents discovering purpose, discovering beauty, and moving forward.

Through their travels, they discover hidden gems, such as a limestone quarry, a tree that has been struck by lightning, and a blue hole. The exploration of the state is not only a project for school but a way for Violet and Finch to escape their own personal struggles and explore the world around them.

Finch and Violet explored not only places but also their own emotional landscapes. Finch, as he and Violet grow closer, he opens up to her about his condition. Through this exploration of his own mental health, Finch is able to gain a better understanding of himself and take steps towards getting help. Violet, on the other hand,

she spends time with Finch and explores the state, she begins to heal and come to terms with her loss.

In conclusion, the theme of exploration in *All the Bright Places* is an essential component of the novel. It is through the exploration of mental health, self, and the world around them that Violet and Finch grow and develop as characters. The novel emphasizes the importance of seeking help and support for mental health issues and promotes a culture of empathy and understanding. It also encourages to embrace themselves for who they are, to live in the present, and to appreciate the beauty in the ordinary. *All the Bright Places* is a novel that inspires to explore the world around and discover the hidden wonders of life, and to cherish every moment.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

Jennifer Niven is a contemporary American author who has made significant contributions to literature, particularly in the Young Adult Fiction genre. Her works are known for their emotionally charged themes, relatable characters, and engaging storytelling style. Niven has authored several best-selling novels, including *All the Bright Places*, *Holding Up the Universe*, and *Breathless*.

Niven's importance in literature lies in her ability to connect with readers on a deep emotional level and tackle important topics with grace and compassion. Her work has helped start important conversations and has given a voice to people who may otherwise feel unheard. Niven's ability to tell a compelling and deeply emotional story is what sets her apart as a writer. Her works are characterized by their vivid descriptions, relatable characters, and powerful themes. She has the unique ability to capture the complexities of the human experience and convey them in a way that resonates with readers of all ages.

In addition to her works of fiction and non-fiction works, Niven has also written numerous essays on a variety of topics related to literature, writing, and life in general. These essays have been widely acclaimed for their honesty, insight, and humour. They offer a glimpse into Niven's own experiences as a writer and provide valuable advice and encouragement for aspiring writers. Jennifer Niven is an important and influential figure in literature. Niven's unique writing style, relatable characters, and powerful themes make her a standout author in the literary world, and her contributions to the field will continue to be celebrated and cherished for years to come.

Niven's writing style is unique, marked by a powerful emotional impact and a deep exploration of complex human emotions. Her writing is characterized by its

emotional intensity. She has the ability to connect with her readers on a deep and personal level, eliciting strong emotional responses in them. Her novels often deal with heavy themes such as mental illness, grief, and loss, and she does not shy away from exploring the darker aspects of human experience. Niven's writing is both raw and honest, and her prose is imbued with a deep sense of empathy and understanding.

One of the key features of Niven's writing style is her use of vivid and sensory language. She is a master of descriptive writing, painting rich and evocative pictures of her characters and their surroundings. Her prose is often lyrical and poetic, with a rhythm and flow that draws the reader in and keeps them engaged. Niven's descriptions are not just visual; they engage all the senses, creating a fully immersive experience for the reader.

Niven's writing is also marked by her ability to create complex and multifaceted characters. Her protagonists are often struggling with their own demons, and Niven does an excellent job of portraying the intricacies of their emotional lives. Her characters are not one-dimensional; they are flawed and imperfect, with strengths and weaknesses that make them relatable and human. Niven's ability to create realistic and compelling characters is one of the things that sets her writing apart from others in the young adult genre.

Another notable aspect of Niven's writing style is her use of multiple perspectives. Many of her novels are written from the perspectives of two or more characters, giving the reader a more complete and nuanced understanding of the story. By allowing us to see the same events from different angles, Niven creates a sense of depth and complexity that keeps the reader engaged and invested in the narrative. Niven's success and popularity may also serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for emerging writers who aspire to achieve similar levels of success in their own writing.



careers. Her willingness to share her personal struggles and experiences may also encourage other writers to tackle difficult and important topics in their own work.

One of the primary ideologies that the book *All the Bright Places* challenges is the stigma surrounding mental illness. Throughout the story, the main characters, Violet and Finch, struggle with their own mental health issues and face challenges in seeking help and support from those around them. The novel portrays mental illness in a compassionate and empathetic light and encourages the readers to approach mental health issues with sensitivity and understanding.

The novel addresses issues related to social isolation, self-discovery, and personal growth. The characters' experiences highlight the importance of building meaningful connections with others, pursuing one's passions and interests, and seeking help when needed. *All the Bright Places* offers important insights and perspectives on mental health and relationships. The novel encourages readers to approach these topics with empathy, understanding, and a willingness to learn and grow.

Niven wrote *All the Bright Places* with the purpose of bringing attention to the issue of mental illness, specifically depression and suicide. The novel follows the story of two teenagers, Violet and Finch, who met and fell in love while struggling with their own mental health issues. She has spoken openly about her own experiences with depression and her desire to help remove the stigma surrounding mental illness. She has also stated that she hopes the novel will encourage readers to have more open and honest conversations about mental health and to seek help if they or someone they know is struggling.

In addition to raising awareness about mental illness, Niven also wrote the book as a way to honour the memory of a young man named Theodore Finch, whom she knew and who died by committing suicide. Niven has stated that she hopes the book

will serve as a tribute to Finch and as a reminder of the importance of seeking help and supporting those who are struggling with mental illness.

Niven has stated that her own personal experiences with mental health issues and suicide, as well as her desire to start a conversation about these topics, influenced her to write *All the Bright Places*. In interviews, she has discussed how she lost a close friend to suicide and struggled with depression herself, which made her passionate about creating a story that portrayed the complexities of mental illness and emphasised the importance of reaching out for help.

In *All the Bright Places*, Jennifer Niven describes the setting in detail, depicting the rural landscapes and the small-town atmosphere that the characters live in. The setting is an integral part of the story as it provides a backdrop for the characters' emotional journey and their experiences with mental health.

The structure of the novel alternates between the perspectives of the two main characters, Violet and Finch. The chapters are relatively short and are titled with the character whose perspective is being presented. This structure allows the reader to understand the characters' thoughts and emotions and see how they evolve throughout the novel. Additionally, the author uses flashbacks to provide insight into the characters' past experiences, adding depth to their personalities and motivations.

The tone of the novel is generally introspective and contemplative, reflecting the characters' struggles with their inner demons. The author uses vivid and descriptive language to create a sombre and reflective atmosphere that matches the characters' emotional state. However, there are also moments of humour and lightness that provide a contrast to the darker themes of the novel. The tone is ultimately hopeful, highlighting the characters' ability to find strength and support in each other and to overcome their struggles.

The project explores the themes of exploration, family, and denial as a defence mechanism to cope with grief in Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places*. Exploration is a prominent theme in the novel, as the two main characters, Violet and Finch, embark on a journey to explore the wonders of their home state of Indiana. Through their adventures, they discover hidden gems and experience new things that help them feel alive and break free from the constraints of their everyday lives. For Finch, exploration becomes a way of coping with his inner turmoil, as he seeks to escape from his troubling thoughts and find meaning in his life.

Family is also a significant theme in the novel, as both Violet and Finch struggle with difficult family dynamics. Violet is still grieving the loss of her sister, who died in a car accident, and feels disconnected from her parents, who are also struggling to cope with their grief. Meanwhile, Finch's family is dysfunctional, with an abusive father and a mother who is in denial about the extent of the abuse. Both characters feel isolated and alone in their family situations, and this drives them to seek connection and understanding from each other.

Denial as a defence mechanism is also explored in the novel, as both Violet and Finch use it to cope with their grief. Violet initially denies the extent of her trauma, refusing to talk about her sister's death and pushing away the people who try to help her. Finch's death too affected Violet. She began to believe that Finch might be alive somewhere. She eventually learns that denying her pain only makes it worse, and that she needs to face her emotions in order to be healed.

Jennifer Niven's *All the Bright Places* deals with issues of mental illness, suicide, and the struggles of adolescence. There are several potential areas of future research that could be pursued related to this novel.

The novel explores the characters' struggles with mental illness and suicidal ideation. Future research could focus on ways to improve access to mental health resources, identify risk factors for suicide, and develop effective interventions for people struggling with mental health issues.

*All the Bright Places* is a popular young adult novel that addresses important issues related to mental health. Future research could explore the role of young adult literature in promoting mental health awareness and destigmatizing mental illness.

The novel features characters who are dealing with a range of mental health issues, including bipolar disorder and depression. Future research could examine the representation of mental illness in literature and the impact that accurate and positive representation can have on individuals who are struggling with mental health issues.

The novel focuses on the life of the characters during their adolescence, a critical period of development when mental health issues can first arise. Future research could explore the links between adolescent development and mental health, and identify ways to support adolescents who may be struggling with mental health issues. *All the Bright Places* offers many avenues for future research related to mental health, adolescent development, and the representation of mental illness in literature.

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**Expedition of Existence: An Ecological Analysis of Kristin Hannah's *The Four Winds***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Agnes Jeba. S**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Expedition of Existence: An Ecological Analysis** of **Kristin Hannah's** *The Four Winds* 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 Agnes Jeba. S during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Expedition of Existence: An Ecological Analysis of Kristin Hannah's *The Four Winds*** 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**

**April 2023**



**Agnes Jeba. S**

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## Preface

The project entitled **Expedition of Existence: An Ecological Analysis of Kristin Hannah's *The Four Winds*** highlights the immigrant sufferings and crisis of motherhood faced by Elsa Martinelli. The novel is said to be a successful historical fiction because it takes the reader back to the dark period of Great Depression and Dust Bowl to understand the struggle the people had gone through.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Kristin Hannah, her life, works, inspiration, awards and achievements. It showcases the commendable features of her work in general and the novel chosen for study in particular.

The second chapter **Ecological Approach** focuses on the effects of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl that forces people to migrate for a better life

The third chapter **Ecological Feminism** analyses the power of love that initiates a rebellion against capitalism

The fourth chapter **Existential Crisis** unveils the oppression and discrimination faced by the immigrants in their promised land.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the highlighted aspects dealt in the previous chapters and thereby justifies the key term of the title. It also deals with the tone and structure of the novel employed by the writer and validates the study.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature can be defined as an expression of human feelings, thoughts, and ideas whose medium is language, oral and written. Etymologically, the word Literature derives from Latin which means “learning, writing, grammar”. Literature connects the existence of the individuals with large truths and thoughts about their surroundings. Literature offers insights into how society has developed and it is meant to be influential in society because it is alleged to teach us a lesson. It serves as a reflection of fact, a produce of art, and a window to an ideology, everything that occurs within the surrounding can be written about, recorded in and learned from the piece of literature.

American Literature begins with the age of colonialism produced in the area of Unites States. American Literature also depicts the social realities, heredity and environment had inescapable force in shaping human character and is characterized by its self-conscious of a sense of individualism and celebration of the individual experience. American literature provides a unique perspective on the world. It has played a prominent role in shaping the culture and identity. The major themes that predominant in American Literature are The American dream, justice and injustice, relationship with nature, alienation and isolation and survival of the fittest.

Eco-criticism is the term for the association among literature and the environment. It analysis the depiction of life and its connection between the environment as well as the literature. Environmental Literature is writing about an opinion on environmental troubles and is globally regarded as the relationships among men, society, and the environment. It represents the ecological issues with reality. Environmental literature fosters an appreciation for the surroundings, as a result of

advocating an extra sensitivity and ecological understanding of a human with nature. The environment has posed a great hazard to human society.

The Great Depression is a dark period for the Americans. It emphasizes an important period in the history of American Literature. During the period 1930s, many American writers asserted towards writing literary works that inscribed the social impacts of the depression on American societies. During the Great Depression, the united states shifted from a prospering economy to a survival economy. Poverty and Alienation emerged as a recurring theme in the work of a new authors. This depression produced a high level of unemployment and dislocation. The 1930s witnessed a period of starvation and displacement for millions of Americans from every race and gender, especially the working class. Many famers eventually migrate from their own land to the state of California in the hope of finding jobs and food. At the same time women in 1930s moved from their primary domestic roles to being active members of society. They obtain employment and freedom from their domestic world and often responsible for the families' survival.

As a time of economic and political crisis, the Great Depression influenced several authors to express their personal and communal solutions to the effects of depression and this history is mentioned in the literary works, both fiction and non-fiction, for instance the great writer of depression era John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (1937) and *The Grapes of wrath* (1939) reflects the impact of the American Depression in 1930s.

The Indian writer, Salman Rushdie describes, "American Literature has always been immigrant." An immigrant is a person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country. Emigrant Literature deals with the process of relocation for many reasons, including increasing one's chance of employment or improving quality of

life. In other words, immigration is the result of emigration and its subject focuses on the social context in the migrant's country of origin, which prompt them to leave on the experience of hostility and on the sense of search for identity that can result from the displacement and cultural diversity.

The novels of Emigrants often show and explore generational differences in immigrants' families, especially, the first and second generation. These narratives express the experience of immigration and acculturation. This literature is mainly associate with a new land, identification of self and other, and language acquisition. Therefore, longing and hope are two most important elements of relationship between migration and literature.

“Coming-of-Age” is a term refers to describe the conversion between childhood and adulthood. Coming-of-Age is a genre that focuses on the growth of a protagonist from youth to adulthood. Coming-of-Age stories tend to emphasis dialogue or internal monologue over actions and often set in past. The subject of coming age stories is a typical teenager. It focuses on the protagonists' growing from a self-absorbed, immature individual into expressive mature human beings concerned with the welfare of others. The character possesses a clearly defined personality and exhibit growth during the adulthood. The protagonist of Coming-of-Age is about the conversion from adolescence to adulthood, from defined by family or society to defining oneself.

Gender theory discuss the social and cultural differences between men and women. Typically, Western society is male-dominant, or patriarchal. As gender theory has evolved, many theorists argue that gender is a social construct: people are born a certain sex, but their gender is shaped by the society around them. Gender

studies emerged in the field of women's studies, concerning women, feminism, gender and politics.

Feminist Literary criticism covers several critical practices, broadly it applies feminist theory to the study of texts in attempt to understand and challenge representation of women. Feminist criticism have long been interested in how this representation conform to the stereotypical ideas about what is to be a woman. In challenging these stereotypes, which are many and sometimes confusing, they seen them as socially, culturally, and psychologically constant.

Today's women writers have the privilege of western education and money. The majority of these novels depict the domestic struggles of the stereotypical woman. Fiction by women writers contributes a major segment of the contemporary American Literature. Though the women's writer eye one could see a different world and with their assistance one could realize the potential of human achievement. Women novelists while focusing on women's issues, portrays how women do not enjoy an equal status as that of men, how an educated woman pursue a career only if she does not neglect her destined domestic roles or duties.

The writers of Contemporary Literature in America include Kristin Hannah, Elin Hilderbrand, Martha Hall Kelly, Nicholas Sparks, Jodi Picoult, Beatriz Williams, Kate Quinn and others. Contemporary American writers have been recognized by their numerous winning awards and their work reflects the social impact which is reveal through their realistic characters in the literary works. The themes that explored in their works are alienation, transformation, survival, importance of family, gender roles and identity crisis.

Elin Hilderbrand's debut novel, *The Beach Club* (2000) explores the life of workers in the coastal side. The book not only focuses on particular people, but it

thrust into the lives of many people, their emotions, their secrets. The novel sets in Nantucket island of Beach club and Hotel which shape the fates of the men and women and portrays the love between Mack and Maribel. It also deals with the theme of isolation, racism, and familial relationships. Nature calamities also plays a vital role in the novel when a hurricane threatens to wash away the beach club.

Nicholas Sparks bestselling novel, *The Notebook* (1996) is a heartfelt tender story about the enduring power of love which overcomes class, logic and even disease. Nicholas portrays love as an unstoppable power with the ability to change and bring purpose to one's life. The novel explores the theme of love and destiny, wealth and fulfilment, memory and pain. The notebook portrays the love between Allie and Noah who belongs to different social classes and examines how the lovers overcome their obstacles in their life. Their strong emotions and feelings are flooded throughout the novel.

Beatriz Williams is known for her several historical fiction novels, including *A Hundred Summers* (2013), *The Secret Life of Violent Grant* (2014), and *The Golden Hour* (2019). Her novels allow the readers feel fully immersed in the period in which her novels set, allowing them to identify with how women throughout history have struggled and managed to survive. Her bestselling novel *The Golden Hour* which portrays vivid pictures of two women caught between the World War II, their dejections, disillusionment and struggle to adapt to such conditions evaluates their attitude and approach towards life. The story revolves around the theme of love, courage and sacrifice.

The Contemporary American women writers exhibiting an imaginative writing style, Kristin Hannah is marked by vivid but fragmented details, sensuous images, startling juxtaposition and preoccupation with intense experience. In her novel *The*



Four Winds, Hannah mainly focuses on the internal lives of her characters and exhibits a fascination with extraordinary personality types, the dynamic of family and the consequences of wars on the lives of individuals and nations.

Kristin Hannah was born on 25 September 1960 in South California. Hannah graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in Communication. She earned her law degree from the University of Puget Sound in Washington. She began her professional career as a lawyer. However, the fond of reading books provoked her interest to write fictions, later found a great success when she published her first debut novel, *A Handful of Heaven* (1991) made her a literary star in American Literature. In 2004, she won the Rita Award for the novel *Between Sisters*. Hannah published the novel, *Firefly Lane* (2008) has sold over a million copies and made her a great novelist in the Modern American Literature. The novel *The Nightingale* (2015) is critically and commercially a successful novel. The historical novel, *The Great Alone* (2018) has a great influence in literature.

Hannah is the award winning and the bestselling American author of the Contemporary literature. She is the recipient of several awards including the Golden Heart, the Maggie, and the National Reader's Choice award. She is known for writing historical fiction with strong female characters. The common themes in her writings are identity crisis, loss of innocence, migration, death, betrayal and importance of relationship. Hannah is a former lawyer and began to write novels because of the inspiration of her mother, therefore she gives mother and daughter relationship as a significant one.

Hannah's novels are known for their explorations of hope and the strength of female spirit. Her writings centres on the lives of woman in the difficulties and relationships particularly in the families. Hannah's female characters are versatile and

flexible. They struggle with the orthodox issues such as infidelity, appearance, parenthood, and survival. Hannah books typically features strong female leads and her historical fiction explores time period of Great Depression era and World War II in France. Her fiction contains historiographic, manifestations, imaginative constructions of past and self-reflexive narrative. The major strength of her novels explores personal and universal quest. The geographical space and time, various interactions of political events are reflected through her novels. Some of her major works which made her renowned writer are as follows:

Hannah's famous novel *Between Sisters* (2003) a story of life movements and decision which explores the profound joys and sorrows happen in a close relationship, the mistakes made in the name of love, and the promise of redemption. It tells the story of two sisters Claire and Meghann. The younger sister Meghann who made a terrible choice of leaving her sister. But when she becomes a successful attorney, she falls in love a man and believes he can change her mind. At the end, the two sister realizes their mistakes and understands the importance of family.

The novel, *True Colors* (2008) is an emotional and gripping tale of female power and vulnerability which penetrates the emotional insight of the three Grey sisters. The bond between the sisters are unbroken and eventually strengthened, when their mother passed away. After a fatal event intimidated their sisterhood apart, the three women torn between the emotional tension such as jealousy and betrayal. The sisters overcome this threatened tension by their forgiving ability and love for each other. Through this emotional and heartfelt novel Hannah enriches her theme of family and relationships.

In the novel, *Firefly Lane* (2008) Hannah centres the important of friendship. The two opposite friends are Kate Mularkey and Tully Hart. The character Kate is a

simple and flexible girl who doomed to be indulge herself in the family life as an ordinary woman. However, on the other hand, Tully longs and dreams of fantasy and seems to be a girl of ambitions in life but struggles to prove her worth to the world. Both Kate and Tully face jealous, anger, hurt in their friendship relationship. It is a tale about the generation of women who were both blessed and cursed by their choices about promises and betrayals.

The New York bestselling historic romance, *The Nightingale* (2015) Hannah poignantly captures the epic of panorama of World War II. It narrates the story of two sisters who were separated by years and each led their own ways towards the path of survival, love and freedom in German war-torn. The novel also implies the resistance of woman during World War II. Both the sister played a heroic role in the novel by saving Jewish children and rescued them from the concentration camp. Through this novel, Hannah demonstrates the strong will power of women and their daring adventurous. The novel attempts to present the resistance of women, familial love, survival and freedom and also celebrates the resilience of women.

In the novel, *The Great Alone* (2017) Hannah describes wilderness of Alaska and narrates an epic family tale of resilience. The story explores the human survival and a family crisis which offers a glimpse into a vanishing way of life in America. The protagonist Ernt Albright return from the Vietnam war as a volatile man. When he loses his job in America, he shifts his family to a wild remote corner Alaska, where Albright fragile mental state deteriorates and his family learns the terrible truth of him and their own in an isolated Alaska. This novel takes the reader back to the era of environmental disaster and economic collapse.

Hannah was inspired to write *The Four Winds* by the Depression era photograph of Dorothea Lange's "Woman of the High Plains" (1936, Pictured) in

which a woman is pictured as a monumental figure and her gesture is seem to be full of suffering due to starvation and sweltering heat. Incidentally, Hannah has the notion to write about economic troubles and how it forces the famers and common laborers people to migrate from their own land to find the ‘Land of Opportunity’ in the state of California.

Initially, Hannah began her writing career by focusing on love and romances but after the death of her mother, she concerns on the crisis of womanhood and relationships. Her female characters are strong and plays a vital role in the novel by giving importance to family especially, to the bond between mother and daughter. Hope and will power acts as the driving force for the success of her female characters.

Conditions of migrants, seasonal changes, economic troubles, identity crisis, American dream, isolation, importance of relationship and gender roles became a recurring theme in Hannah’s writings and were particularly evident in *The Four Winds* and *The Great Alone*. In *The Four Winds*, Hannah emphasizes how unemployment and ecological disaster forces farmers to migrate from Texas to California. The struggles of the immigrants are expressed keenly with the social and political injustice.

One recurring theme that runs through all the novels are essentially, the exploration of the natural survival as well as their experiences of affirmation and rebellious attitude. Hannah protagonists of all the novels emerge from the private realm and into the public, they experience a conflict of consciousness, for home comes to feel familiar, homogeneous repressive in contrast with the alien, diverse and expressive culture outside to home, she has used these stories to represent the reality of changing pattern of women’s attitude in the private realm of the family. Her stories clearly reveal the existing pattern of thoughts, feelings and actions of the American

women who have to take the burden of familial obligations and social commitments of the outside world.

Hannah's novels are also considered as social and historical novels dealing with the economic problems of commoner people, war, depression era and struggles of women in the society. She uses the novel *The Four Winds* to focus on the unachievable aspect of American Dream, it reveals through the characters of Loreda and her father Rafe. Throughout the novel, Loreda conveys her dreams of going west and this action shifts from reality to fantasy.

Hannah's *The Four Winds* (2021) is a survival and family taming fiction. Through this story Hannah attempts to present the difficulties of farmers and the commoner people during the era of Dust Bowl after the Great Depression. The characters in the novel endures hardships, determination, existence, subordination of women and the ineffaceable representation of America and the American Dream. The farmers are fighting to keep their lands and their livelihoods as the crops suffered, the water is drying up, and dust threatens to bury them all. The impact of Great Depression is often mentioned in the novel *The Four Winds*, depicts the drastic economic crisis that started in the America. The impact of Great Depression is not only in American industrial countries such as New York, and others, but it also has a major impact in Southern American countries whose population depends on agricultural and livestock products at the time of Dust Bowl era during 1930s.

The historical fiction *The Four Winds* portrays the love between Elsa Wolcott and Raffaello Martinelli. The protagonist Elsa belongs to a wealthy family in Texas and introduced as a reclusive woman who spends her years in enforced solitude with books. Meanwhile, Rafe, an immigrant came from Italy who belongs to lower status in the society. Her life changes when she falls for an Italian man Rafe, and she

became pregnant before their marriage and her family enforces her to marry a man whom the society regard as lower class, but their marriage relationship seems to be worse and it is hard to build their life together. The marriage life with Elsa made him to feel trapped and his dream of traveling and adventures is totally shattered and shunned.

In the beginning of the novel, Elsa through the eyes of Rafe is seen as modern and daring woman and he was consequently attracted to her. By contrast, the version of Elsa, after marriage represented her as a stereotypical woman which disappoints him. Moreover, Rafe feels stifled by the bad weather and drought-stricken. It also breaks the bond between Elsa and her daughter Loreda. She views her mother as a lifeless inhibitor of her dreams and fiercely attached to her father's dream of move to the city and having adventures. Tragically, Rafe abandons his family in order to pursue employment opportunities' in the west. During the Dust Bowl era many people travel across United States unemployed in the hope of better future, leading a mass migration towards west in 1930s.

As the situation worsen, a family crisis forces Elsa to decide whether to stay and fight for her own land or leave to the uncertain or unfamiliar land of California for survival and hope for the better future. The farming communities were also abandoned their lands, left unemployed and migrate to the state of California to overcome the poverty. The theme of capturing the immigrant during Great Depression mainly focuses on woman characters, their struggle for survival, their bitter experience and their final emergence as self-assertive individuals, free from bondages imposed by the relationships.

Through her fictional novel *The Four Winds*, Hannah reflects the cultural conflict that all the immigrants uniformly encounter during the period of Great

Depression. She concentrates on her immigrant female protagonists Elsa and Loreda, who were varied in their personality traits, trapped and liberated, timid and rebellious, dependent and independent and attempts to exhibit their harsh and humiliating experiences in California. Though these immigrants are placed in a new land, they try to grapple with old and new ways of life. The novel highlights the inner and outer world of a women, Hannah talks of a woman's heart that experiences pain and struggle.

The second chapter deals with Ecological Approach picturing the intimate reality of the Elsa's family suffering, the plight of the dust bowl and how the major drought devastated the southern plains, as winds eroded the parched land and made a great impact on the life of farmers in the towns, especially Texas.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Ecological Approach**

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. It takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies. The term ecocriticism is first coined by the American scholar William Rueckert in an essay named “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” in 1978. In this essay, Rueckert focuses his attention on “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature.” Rueckert believes that in ecology, man’s tragic flaw in his anthropocentric vision, and his compulsion to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate, and exploit every natural thing. From the 1990s, ecocriticism exerted great influence in the field of literature. Several creative research monographs were published, such as “The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, nature writing, and the Formation of American Culture”, produced by Lawrence Buell in 1995; “The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology”, co-produced by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm in 1996. As Glotfelty and Fromm claim, ecocriticism is:

The study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies. (Glotfelty xviii)

Deep ecologists aim is to create an ecocentric rather than anthropocentric philosophy by recognizing holistic appreciation for the nature world. They believe that the environment has intrinsic value – that it is an end in itself apart from individual human interests. The nascent field of ecocriticism in literary studies centres



on the many different approaches to the conflict of the human- nature relationship as represented in literature. Ecocriticism, a “rapidly changing theoretical approach” that “addresses how humans relate to nonhuman nature or the environment in literature,” is a less fixed category in criticism than evolving interdisciplinary way of examining environmental representation (Johnson 7).

The basic task of ecocriticism is to awake peoples’ ecological consciousness and cultivate the ecological humanity spirit to establish a harmonious society. At first, ecocriticism mainly concentrates on writing about the nature in literary works, it studies how nature is depicted in the texts. It directly criticizes the excessive exploration of human beings and advocates the harmony between man and nature. Social ecology pays attention to the relationship between man and man. It holds the idea that the ecological crisis stems from social problems, and these social problems arise from the unequal interpersonal relationships and structures. Based on the theory of ecocriticism, this thesis *Expedition of Existence: An Ecological Analysis of Kristin Hannah’s The Four Winds* aims to interpret the natural ecology, social ecology and spiritual ecology.

Hannah has extensively shown sympathy in her writing for the working class and struggles. She notably responded to the Great Depression through her novel *The Four Winds* and also presents the economic depression and Dust-Bowl storm of 1930s accounting for massive flight of migrant workers from the land of Texas to other neighbouring states relatively to the prosperous state like California. The novel, *The Four Winds*, is the manifestation of her exquisite literary sensibility with focus on socio-economic survey of the time with the degree of consciousness of the workers to demand for wages commensurate with their work force. For the majority of

Americans, the 1930s were hard times. The phrase ‘Hard Times’ is repeatedly used by the character to show their desperate conditions during the dust storm era.

In the novel, *The Four Winds*, Hannah highlights the American west during 1930s Great Depression and Dust Bowl. It focuses on a poor Martinelli family, the protagonist Elsa driven from her native land and home by drought, economic hardship and changes in the agriculture industry, which follows what Daniel Neal and describes as the “tractoring out” that occurred across the region during this historical moment, as well as crop failure from drought and dust storms (Nealand, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration). In a nearly hopeless situation, they set out for California’s central valley along with thousands of “okies” in search of land, job and better lives.

Hannah opens *The Four Winds*, with a retaining picture of terrible and dangerous dust storm with the great economic depression. The historical story sets in the Texas High Plains is one of the most prolific crops producing areas in the United States. Agriculture plays a vital role in the economy of this region. Wheat and Cotton has been an important crop in Texas. Since 1880, Texas has led all states in wheat production in most years with wheat a sea of gold all around. “Nineteen twenty-nine had been a good rain year, which meant a good crop year, which meant times had been good enough for the Martinellis”(67).

The agricultural industry in Texas and other surrounded areas faces various challenges: environmental and economic challenges. Due to extreme weather conditions and climate change, crop production in the Texas Great Plain is facing a great threat. *The Four Winds* is based on the documented experiences of those living in the American Midwest especially Texas in the 1930s. The constant Dust-Storm and the stock market crash of 1929 led the prices for crops dropped so precipitously that

farmers could not earn enough to pay their mortgages, losing their farms to foreclosure.

The extreme fierce weather condition in the great plains has made growing crops impossible and the great depression has ravaged the farmers and the states. First, prices paid for wheat failed to meet operating costs in 1931, and then the weather proved disastrous for farmers throughout the decade. This led to an increasing number of local farmers to leave to California, a land of milk and honey. Some Martinellis in the Texas attend a meeting with the President Franklin Roosevelt appointed conversation commission in the town. However, the farmers, are angered when the representatives' tell them that the dust storms are man-made disaster and that they need to plant prairie grasses to heal the land and also, they tell the farmers that the government will offer money and mortgage forgiveness to those who agree to plant grasses and sell their livestock. This creates chaos and anger among the folks and exclaim that they need help from the government not charity to save their lives.

When had the bad years begun, exactly? It was hard to pinpoint. There were so many choices. The stock market crash of 1929, some would say, but not the folks around here. Loreda had been seven years old then, and she remembered some of that time. Folks lined up outside the savings and loan. Grandpa complaining about bad wheat prices (67).

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, On September 6, 1936, in his fireside chat to the nation, shares that, he never forgets the fields of wheat so blasted by heat that they cannot be harvested and can never forget field of corn stunted, earless and stripped of leaves, for what the sun left the grasshoppers took. He sympathises the brown pastures, which would not keep a cow on fifty acres.

The Dust Bowl is the name given to the drought-stricken southern plains region of the United States, which suffered severe dust storms during a drought in the 1930s. As high winds and the choking dust swept the region from Texas to Oklahoma, people and the livestock were killed and crops failed across the entire region. The Dust Bowl intensified the crushing economic impacts of the Great Depression and drove many farming families on a desperate migration in search of work and better living condition.

Environmental ethicists note that many cultural and political readings of nature adopt an economic perspective, focusing on how the land provides instrumental worth to human enterprises. Without always being named as such, the ideology of economic liberalism- complete with Adam Smith's notion of the "invisiblehand"- is probably the clearest target of the environmental critique (Grampp 315). Hannah explains environmental struggles in the failure of crops and dry land farming on the great plains ultimately led to systematic destruction of the economic crisis.

Land is the only hope of the farmers like Martinellis and they are fighting to keep their land and their livelihood as the crops are failing, the water is drying up and dust threatens to bury them all. But still they assess their land as something diamond and says, "We have this land because we worked for it, because no matter how hard life was, we stayed here. This land provided for us. It will provide for you, too, if you let in" (52). The importance of connection between farmers and the land they cultivate translates through generalized descriptions. This technique encompasses broader social commentary, thereby articulating the concerns of the many displaced farmers who lost their farms, livelihood, and relationship to the land.

The protagonist Elsa, a town girl who is unaccustomed to hard work, her life takes a turning point, when she marries Rafe Martinelli, a farmer, and she begins to feel stronger than she ever has before when she learned how to disappear on a farm “work harder than anyone else, spent much of her hours in the garden kneeling in the dirt, watching seeds she planted sprout and push up from the earth and turn green, and each one felt like a new beginning. A promise for the future” (54). She develops a good relationship with her in-laws Tony and Rose. However, her relationship with her husband Rafe is strained by awkwardness and guilt because he is a man of daydream and repeatedly told his daughter Loreda that there was a big beautiful world beyond this farm. He views his wife as lifeless inhibitor of his dreams but Elsa remains quiet and hopes Rafe will notice her efforts as part of his family.

Unfortunately, in 1938, the farm had been reconfigured by wind and drought, combined with the economic ravages of the Great Depression, had brought the Great Plain to its knees. Elsa and her family suffered through these dry years in the Texas Panhandle and the whole country was devastated by the crash of 1929 and twelve million people are out of work and the government didn't bother about the drought, offered no assistance and fund to the farmers who suffered in the Great Plains. The rains had begun to slow in 1931 and the town of Texas was hunkered down in the heat. Poverty is rampant and focuses on conserving the resources for their lives in the dreaded wind and also acknowledges that the drought had drained both her husband and daughter, just as it had dried out the land. “Three years ago, they'd buried a son, but even that loss hadn't broken him the way poverty and the drought had”(64).

Elsa's teenage daughter Loreda who worries about her life on a wheat farm which was limited to her. She is not attached to her family's land in the same way that her mother and grandparents are, instead obsessively attached to her father Rafe. Both

of them constantly think of their dreams beyond the dying wheat farm. “The drought was sucking her dry and the air she breathes smelled of dust and heat. She acknowledges that her neighbourhood friends and families, prepares to leaving to California. “*Jobs for everyone! Land of Opportunity! Go West to California!*”(72). Loreda urges her father to go to west and leave the dying land behind.

Elsa notices the scorching heat that makes farm difficult and as the drought continues to ravage the Great Plains killing the land, times are tough, and the difficult circumstances of life in the Dust Bowl have worn down Rafe even worse. He was different from other farmers and shopkeepers. Every other man in the Texas seemed to live or die by effects of the environment. Unlike his parents Tony and Rose and people like Elsa expect hardship to be a part of life, and they are better equipped to deal with tough times than dreamers like Rafe and Loreda. Elsa does not believe that her husband and daughter appetites for prosperity and adventure lies in the streets of California and she convinces Loreda,

I doubt there’s money lying in the street, Loreda. This Depression is worse in the cities. Last I read, over thirteen million folks were out of jobs. You’ve seen the tramps that ride the trains. There’s a Hooverville in Oklahoma city that’d make you cry. Families living in apple carts. Come winter, they’ll be dying of cold on park benches. (75)

William Rueckert states that “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature, because ecology (as a science, as a disciple, as the basis for human vision) has the greatest relevance to the present and the future of the world” (Glotfelty 107). In this context *TheFourWinds* explores the possible relations between literature and nature, which are examined in terms of ecological concepts. Ecocriticism, then, attempts to find a common ground between the human and the

nonhuman to show how they can coexist on various ways as the environmental issue has become an integral part of the human existence.

Hannah keenly portrays the Dust storm to symbolize the suffocation that Elsa and her family underwent during the tough time of 1930s. The wind in the storm indicates the destruction of the land. Also, the winds that are chasing and fighting against each other may also represent Elsa and Rafe's contrasting relationship, as her husband wants to move but Elsa feels it's best if they stay. The hardships of life on a farm is evident in Loreda's unwillingness to stay on the farm. She feels trapped in their house and vulnerable to nature's fury, which is the dust storm raging outside. "Dust rained down from the ceiling. Loreda felt it collecting in her hair, on her shoulders" (80). Loreda could no longer cope with the failure and isolation as her mother who was stubborn enough to stay in the land with hope. The environmental issue of dust and drought years damage the human health and cause death to many domestic animals on the Great Plains. It wasn't just the animals and people who were drying up. Slowly the land itself is started to dying. Wind and shifting sand had changed the landscape to crack.

The Dust Bowl was a period of severe drought followed by dust storm that devastated large swaths of the American Plains during the 1930s. At the outbreak of World War I, the government encouraged farmers to grow wheat. Land was cheap and farmers ploughed millions of acres of land. Wind carried the top soil away, resulting in huge dust storms. "While the most severe droughts were in 1934 and 1936, leading to widespread crop failure, at least the part of the Plains region experienced severe weather in each year from 1930-1939. Over 400,000 square kilometres of land were ultimately exposed to drought and a combination of water and wind erosion" (Hakim2012).

Hannah describes dreadful dust storm through the appearance of Elsa that her face was brown with dirt and her pale blond hair brown with dust. Every day, Elsa and her in-laws worked together, held their growing family together through the hardships of farm life because they considered the farm land as their home and life. But constantly, the heat roared across the Great Plains, the treeless land was lost the fuel source that the farmers had assumed would last forever. The wind became more ferocious and affects the health of the people especially Elsa's son Anthony falls ill with dust pneumonia and he has the difficulty to breathe. "Ant felt the worst. His cough was brutal and he couldn't eat" (164).

Dust Pneumonia, called the "brown plague," killed hundreds and particularly lethal for infants, children and the elderly. It describes the disorder caused by excessive exposure to dust storms, particularly during the Dust Bowl in the United States. The evidence suggests that thousands of people could have had died due to dust pneumonia during the Dust Bowl era. As a result of Dust Bowl and complications of Great Depression, the lives of the large number of families lives were drastically changed. Loss of homes, jobs, and poor healthcare would have encouraged psychological complications such as depression. The narrative of Hannah attempts to delineate the outrageous dust storm that threatens to bury them all and what they do to the earth mentioning the people who inhabit it. The wind became a clawing, screaming monster that shook the house and rattled the windows and pounded at the doors. Wind blew at over forty miles an hour, day after day, no reprieve, just an endless, terrifying assault. Dust rained down from the ceiling constantly. All of them breathed in it and spit in out and coughed it up. Birds were disoriented by the dust and slammed into walls and telephone poles. Trains stopped on the tracks; drifts of sand moved like waves across the flat land. (163)



Tension between human and nature was the impetus for the western migration, and the novel presents the conflict of human well being against the intractable power of environment. Acknowledging the effects of the dust storms on the earth, in addition to the families who live upon on it, recognizes the environment as legitimate and beyond the control of humans. As the Dust Bowl takes hold, the industrial agriculture becomes apparent. The overuse of the land and the lack of crop rotation and other sustainable practices lead to soil erosion, depletion of nutrients, and the displacement of rural communities. Elsa and her in-laws are contended with dust storm that bury their crops and livestock by making it impossible to sustain their way of life. The relentless storm that enveloped the land and devastated impacts the people and the communities that lived there and forced them to leave their homes and families in search of better lives.

When Anthony becomes too ill, Elsa became helpless and she was forced to face the ever-increasing challenges, as she struggles to keep his son alive in the devastating dust storms. Anthony's hard breathing led her to take him to hospital. He became even more worse and the doctor advises her to leave Texas Panhandle for the sake of her children.

The doctor read the thermometer, then examined Amt and sighed. Your son is seriously ill, which I'm sure you know. He has a high fever and is suffering from severe silicosis. Dust pneumonia. Prairie dust is full of silicas. It builds up in the lungs and tears away the air sacs . . . He's breathing in dirt and swallowing it, Filling up with it. (172)

It was not just Anthony who was dying in the land, it is also the land, the animals, the plants. Everything in Texas began to bury in the sand. The sun had burned everything to dust and the wind had blown in more ferocious way. "We need

to leave Texas” (173). Elsa finally decided to leave Texas. She did not want to go to the unknown land with no job and almost with no money because she considered the Texas and the farmland as her Home but in Lonesome Tree they had to fight against the nature for survival.

The extreme climate of the 1930s, led to an “explosion of demand” for modern seeds, generating large profits for breeding companies that, in turn, invested heavily in innovation (Sutch 219). The Dust Bowl erosion decreases agricultural productivity in the eroded location. The value of agricultural land decreases. So, the price of the agricultural output decreases in the devastated land. Environmental ethicists note that many cultural and political readings of nature adopt an economic perspective, focusing on how the land provides instrumental worth to human expertise. The Dust Bowl charts the migration of Elsa’s family from Texas to California after the situation becomes more worsen in the town. The novel, *TheFourWinds* makes a great effort to expand Elsa’s journey into that of a broader social and environmental Dust Bowl catastrophe through the expressive of environmentalist philosophies and ecological consciousness. Throughout the novel Hannah emphasizes the displacement and decentring of self, perception, home, and power through the natural calamity of ecological theory. Ultimately, it reflects the environmental and spiritual resonances that reflect one another on compassionate human behaviour towards others.

Hannah’s *The Four Winds*, encompasses a compassion and interconnectedness in both the social and the natural worlds. In the struggle for survival during the Dust storm and Great Depression, Elsa reveals the relationship within human commodities between humans and the earth draws from a holistic set of principles revolving around

intrinsic dignity and worth, a decentring of self, and a focus on the collective rather than individual.

Elsa prepares her journey to California in order to escape from the wild toxic dust storm. But Tony and Rose decide to stay behind because they are not ready to abandon their land for anything. ““This will all be yours one day, and it will pass to your children, and then to your children’s children. ‘*The land*’”(74). Tony poured all of his passion and love into the land and he feels hard to leave the land. This shows the importance of connection between the farmers and the land they cultivate. They considered land is greater than its utility. At that time, President Franklin Roosevelt’s administration passed a significant amount of legislation that was designed to help the United States recover from the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Understanding the ecological implications of the dust storms and the drought was difficult for many farmers like Tony, who consistent with their values of land. This emotional tone enables Hannah to enact an emotional polemic against forced misery and degradation that comes from the depiction of ecology itself and the visual representation of landscapes and nature.

The toxic air forces Elsa to leave Texas. However, as a realist, she knows that the road ahead to California will be challenging and the narrative, *The Four Winds*, explores the resilience and strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity through the character of Elsa. She and her children are forced to make difficult choices, including leaving their farm and home land and migrating to California in search of better 2life. Along their way they encounter numerous challenges, including discrimination, poverty and exploitation of employers. Hannah portrays the ecological effects of the Dust Bowl as a stark reminder of the consequences of unsustainable land use and the need for more sustainable farming practices. She highlights the

importance of protecting the natural environment and the need for a more balanced approach to agriculture, which is the long-term ecological impact.

Hannah represents the entire novel *The Four Winds*, to the effects of natural environment. Some of the people in the narrative are frequently disassociated or ignorant of being part of a larger whole of pliability. For instance, Elsa and Loreda though troubled of the environmental issue, they find a way to come out of it only in wilderness. Hannah uses the land as a symbol to show the plight of the farmers and also illustrates the joy and suffering that rules the life.

Hannah vividly shows that human as a part of nature or ecology. The people are driven away from their land as a migrant called “Okies”, which demonstrates that nature is powerful than man and human is dependent on it. The family of Elsa go in search of green pastures and reach California only to witness a battle for survival. She forcefully delineates the state of powerless tenant farmers who struggle for a new life and new self. But they do not fall a prey to crude misery in western countries, instead they shake off their bewilderment, grow angry and fight for survival. Hannah establishes Eco humanistic stances to prove the interdependence of man and nature.

The second chapter sums up the differentiation of adults’ determined hope on the land and the younger generations’ faith in the future to take the next step on progress and eventually they all leave the place at the plight of suffocation the hope brings along with the four winds to the barren lands.

The Third chapter deals with the title Ecological Feminism to present the connection between woman and nature depicting the intimate connection Elsa has to the land and her identity as a woman.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Ecological Feminism**

“She will discover the best of herself in the worst of times”

Ecofeminism developed as a movement led by women and with the participation of men around the world taking actions to address gender-biased issues and to conserve and preserve human and nonhuman habitats. These actions exposed the links between the oppression of women and the exploitation of natural environments. A French feminist scholar named Francoise d'Eaubonne in his work *Le Feminisme ou la Mort* proposed the term “Ecofeminism” in 1974. Ecofeminist theory concerned with the systematic relations of social power in the context of multiple social differences. It asserts that the capitalism reflects paternalistic and patriarchal values as part of specific system of social domination.

Ecology is the study of relationships between organisms and environmental conditions, and feminism focuses on redressing the subordination of women in gendered and sexually differentiated relationships. The combination of ecological and feminist perspective opens up multiple ways of understanding and responding to the complex dynamics of relationships, and not only focus on nature and women but also focus on the interconnections and network of coexistence, which include the entangled categories of race, class, age, ability, religion along with gender, and sexuality.

Eco- feminism was born in the third wave of the feminist movement, which was a product of feminism and ecological perception movement. It was an outcome of the combination of feminism and ecological protection movement. In *The Four Winds*, Hannah focused on the natural connections between women and nature trying

to find the special relationship between depreciating women and depreciating the nature in the eco-feminism. Ecological feminists assert that the domination and subordination of nature and the domination and subordination of women are interconnected and that the one cannot be addressed in isolation from the other. The significance of ecological feminism therefore lies in the articulation of the intersection of the interests of women and nature and finding ways to address these against a broader background of ecological and feminist concerns.

Hannah is deeply influenced by naturalism. Her works often show the symbols of natural objects and discuss the relationships between human and nature. In the novel *The Four Winds*, women played an important role in social life, which was specifically manifested through the characters of Elsa and Loreda. Hannah was well aware of women's awakening consciousness and personality after their lives were ruined. In her views, women play an important role as a new power in the environment, and inject vitality to the American society and economy in the time of crisis, and to bring recovery. She created two main women images Elsa and Loreda to show the women's potential role in the society.

Ecological feminists believe that nature and women are both original sources of human existence and development. The earth, is the foundation of human existence and development. The earth's natural function and women's pregnancy had a striking resemblance. In tradition people are often compared the earth to mother because the earth provides rich production, and a complex life of biosphere, relating to the basic quality of women giving life through their own flesh and blood and feed the people.

The emotional intimacy between earth and women mainly show that both of them are great mothers feeding the human beings. In *The Four Winds*, "the great mother" was a distinct image, a symbol of nature, the reflection of cultural values in

the matriarchal society, and a mystical power to change the humans and nature. The novel is a deeply moving, powerful tale about the strength and resilience of women and the bond between the mother and daughter and the bond between women and nature.

Katherine Wilkinson, states that, “If you are a person, a community, a family, or even a country that’s already facing many threats, whether that’s around health, inequity, whatever the case may be, climate change layers on and makes all of those threats more intense”(Wilkinson 2020). Hannah states in the novel *The Four Winds*, that the drought and climate changes that threatens Elsa’s community and her world, shattering them into immigration. One of the darkest periods of the Great Depression, the Dust Bowl era, has arrived with a vengeance, creating trepidation about the future. When Elsa wakes to find her husband Rafe has fled almost abandoned them in the dust storm, she is forced to make the most agonizing decision in her life, in choosing between her family land or to take her beloved children, Loreda and Ant, west to California in search of a better life.

Ecofeminists use resilience as a word to represent survival. The Resilience emerges through life-sustaining connections, through reciprocal and nourishing relationships of women and nature. In this novel *The Four Winds*, Hannah identified Elsa with nature through her survival in the dreadful Dust Bowl. The mother’s love for her children and the value of family made Elsa’s incredible journey into a story of courage and sacrifice to travel to the uncertain land without money and job.

Hannah made a brilliant representation of the characteristic of immigrants in the era of Great Depression. Most of them were women and hence the female images appeared in this novel were not to enrich the contents, but to reflect feminism. Elsa and her teenage daughter are the two characters integrate together to battle poverty.

Throughout the story, Hannah weaves the intricate friendships women forge to survive and support one another and especially, the tension between mother and daughter. Elsa's relationship with Loreda drives the novel. Elsa must decide whether to stay at home and fight mother nature and the dust storms that threaten to bury them or flee west to California.

Hannah's *The Four Wind*, examines the women being the warriors leading the crusade because it's not always about the men. In the opening of the novel itself, Hannah mentions it was always about the men seemed to think it meant nothing to cook and clean and bear children and tend gardens. But the women of the Great Plains worked from sunup to sundown, too toiled on wheat farms until we were as dry and baked as the land they loved.

The wind has both positive and negative impact imagery upon women. In 1930s women's role was mainly domestic. They were typically in charge of home management and social duties, while men were usually the breadwinners. The hardship was exacerbated by the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, referring to severe drought and financial crisis experienced throughout the Great Plains. Women on farms raised their families despite the dark, monster winds, and physical toil. They raised their children in addition to heavy work routines; and had to contend with extreme weather conditions.

Women started to entering the workforce for the first time in the history of United States, while men's role shifted from wage earners to underemployed during the Great Depression. This shift led to tension and confusion between husbands and wives with striking increase in alcoholism and a rise in domestic violence. During the Great Depression and Dust Bowl, the United States also shifted from a prospering economy to a survival economy.



The narrative, *The Four Winds*, examines the connection between the oppression of women and oppression of nature. To specify the oppression of women, Hannah introduces Protagonist Elsa Martinelli and highlights her transformation from cloistered to brave woman. The novel also illustrates the survival of Elsa along with her children during Dust Bowl and economic crisis in the Great Plains. Her driving force makes her a strong and Embolden Woman. To show the oppression of nature, Hannah establishes the vengeance of dust storm and the devastated field due to over farming. By the wind and dust and the relentless sun, every plant on the earth had either been torn out by the roots or lay wilted or dead. Just as women are viewed as being there to serve for men's needs, Nature is seen as existing for "man" to exploit. This has led to the devastation of the natural environment and the further oppression of the people who live most closely with it. According to Judith Plant, the publisher of *Natural Life*, states,

Ecology speaks for the earth, for the 'other' in human/environmental relationships; feminism speaks for the 'other' in female/male relations. Ecofeminism, speaking for both the original 'others' who seeks to understand the interconnected roots of all domination, as well as ways to resist and change. (Helen, 1997)

Apart from feminism and nature, the struggle between teenage and adulthood has also been discussed in relation to Elsa. It revolves around the life of female protagonist, Elsa Martinellia 25- year- old woman introduced as a cloistered spinster, "spent her years in enforced solitude, reading fictional adventures and imagining other lives" (5). She grows up in solitary confinement in the corners of her room, and sometimes dared to dream of an adventure of her own, but not often. She had always been an outsider of her own family and they repeatedly told that her childhood illness

transformed her life into solitary and fragile one. But there was some pain and longing in her heart which made her to be a silent and ignorant person.

Elsa often compares herself as the fictional Lady of Shalott, a woman trapped in a tower, cursed, unable to leave her room and forever doomed to watch the bustling of life outside. Comparably, Elsa has learned how to disappear like one of those animals whose defense mechanism is blend into the landscape and become invisible. It was her way of dealing with rejection and negligence which sums up how Elsa gradually loses her battle against her surrounding society and also, losses her connection to nature.

There was a pain that came with constant disapproval; a sense of having lost something unnamed, unknown. Elsa had survived it by being quiet, by not demanding or seeking attention, by accepting that she was loved, but unliked. The hurt had become so commonplace, she rarely noticed it. She knew nothing to do with the illness to which her rejection was usually ascribed. (5)

Elsa suffers from the complex about her overall appearance. The strong myth of beauty revolves around her family and neighbourhood which weakens her. Elsa was labelled as sickly and unattractive, not the kind of woman who would attract a “good husband”, she is discounted by her upscale Texas family. “She was not an attractive woman... She was “too” everything --- too tall, too thin, too pale, too unsure of herself” (6). She often imagined herself living somewhere else and her dreams reveal the typical domestic role of women in 1930s.

Despite all the oppression in her own household, Elsa dreams of going to a college. When she approaches her father, who considered her education as a ridiculous idea. Elsa’s restriction to higher education represent the women in the

1930s who were dissuaded higher education in the belief that, in pursuing careers would take jobs from men who needed to support their families. Caroline Bird noticed that the depression was creating a new “lost generation” when she remarked, “Almost everyone knew someone who couldn’t go to college because of the Depression” (The invisible star, 1996).

Hannah highlights the character, Ellen Olenska from *Age of innocence* who dares to rebel against patriarchal concept of womanhood even though her family did not support her. Hannah associates the rebel of Ellen Olenska to Elsa which awakes her to break the prison and boundaries with an Italian migrant man Rafe Martinelli who shows her unique affection she has never experienced and their relationship ends in unsatisfaction and pregnancy. Like the majority of women in the 30s, Elsa is ostracized from her self-righteous family and left to the home of baby’s father. Soon after their marriage life seems to be bitter, because he was a man of dreams whereas Elsa was a realist. The years of drought and dust storms combined with the economic ravages of the Great Depression broke Rafe effectively and made him abandon his wife and two children in order to escape from the harsh environment and economic crisis. The men in the story, escape the disasters by hoping the next freight out of town. The women left behind to save the world.

Ecofeminism insists that there is a deep connection between women and nature. The lead character from *The Four Winds*, Elsa has a deep connection to the land, and her love for the earth is intimately tied to her identity as a woman. Elsa takes a role as caretaker of the environment, working tirelessly to care for the land and her family, even in the face of the extreme hardship but when a devastating drought and dust storm threatens their crops, and causes severe illness to her children and forces her to make the most agonizing decision in life. The mother’s love for her

children and the value of family made Elsa's incredible journey into a story of courage and sacrifice to travel to the alien land without money and job.

Poverty, hunger, fear, grief, and loss follow the Martinellis throughout their journey, highlighting the myriad struggles faced by the real-life Great Plains migrants of the Dust Bowl era. Many people attempted the journey on foot because gas was an expensive commodity. Elsa had a fear and worry that "I could work in a laundry... or a library. But who would hire a woman when millions of men were out of work?" (195-96).

Elsa demonstrated great maternal love in the novel. She was strong, guileless, kind and hard-working woman and has an overriding love of a mother to her children. Hannah created an image of an ideal mother because she sacrificed herself and dedicated all her life to the children. Eventually, she replaced Rafe and took the responsibility of leading and taking care of the whole family.

The combination of cold, hunger, and fear had aged her. All she wanted to do was climb back in bed with her kids and cuddle under the covers and sleep. It was her only escape. But she knew how dangerous escape could be. Survival took grit and courage and effort. It was too easy to give in. No matter how afraid she was, she had to teach her children everyday how to survive. (281)

The above description reveals the strength of Elsa as a mother who was courageous and has survived through hard situations.

Hannah throws light on the relationship between Elsa and her teenage daughter Loreda is highlighted throughout the novel to represent nature in a different perspective. In the first part of the novel, they both struggle to communicate and understand each other and the hurt they cause one another is highlighted frequently.

By switching back and forth from Elsa and Loreda's perspective, Hannah juxtaposes how both the characters perceive and view things with a vast difference. Elsa was once a dreamer and felt trapped just as Loreda, but she was taught that life is difficult and it makes her a survivor. Meanwhile, Loreda sees Elsa as the person who is trying to trap her life into a rough life that she doesn't want, and she resents her mother and views her mother's love as suffocation. "She was mad at her world, and somehow that meant she was mad at her mom most of all" (82). In the second part of the novel, Loreda understands her mother's deep love and her struggle to save them from the danger. Loreda states, "Mom," Loreda said, moving close. "I'm alive because of you. I go to school. I can think because you want to make sure I always do. You haven't failed me. You've saved me" (386).

Gretchen Legler highlights "ecological feminist is an important connection exists between the treatment of women, people of colour, and the underclass on one hand and the treatment of nonhuman nature on the other" (Legler 1997). Loreda, unlike her mother Elsa had the courage to fight bravely against her surrounding prejudice society implies her deep connection with nature. Loreda's love towards Elsa, raised her the feeling of affection she longs in her childhood which she has never experienced before, not even from her husband Rafe for whom she broke her rules. "You taught me love. You, first in the whole world, and my love for you will outlive me" (310).

In the mid part of the novel, Elsa is strengthened with mixed emotions and breaks her shell when her ditch bank camp neighbour Jean, struggled to breathe, she fearlessly entered into the hospital against the immigrant restriction and took the aspirin to save her beloved friend's life. Further, when a man blocked her way, first time in her life Elsa acts brave and takes courage towards the man. "Elsa stepped

closer to the man in the brown security uniform, holding the bat down at her side. Her heart thundering but strangely, felt calm” (399).

In the last part of the novel, Elsa again takes up the courage from her daughter’s love and joined the strikes of workers alliance and fight for a fair wage against the patriarchal capitalist who oppresses the immigrant workers as slaves and treated them with poor wages.

We came to find a better life, to feed our children. We aren’t lazy or shiftless. We don’t want to live the way we do. It’s time,” she said. “Time to say, *No more*. No more company store cheating us and keeping us poor. No more lowering wages. No more using us up and spitting us out and pitting us against each other. We deserve better. *No more*. (432)

Rosemary Radford Ruether pointed out the active role of women in socio-ecological movement and their empowerment for the equality status. she quotes,

Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women’s movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of the society. (Ruether 1975)

Hannah highlights this through Elsa’s embolden attitude and confident to fight back against her fear and inner struggle because she finds no liberation and solution for her economic crisis and voiced out her rights in the society. She reshapes herself and her daughter and also provokes her neighbour workers to strike against the big

growers. She proclaims “A man. It was always about the men. They seemed to think it meant nothing to cook and clean but bear the children and tend gardens. But we women on the Great Plains worked from sunup to sundown, too, toiled on wheat farms until we were dry and baked as the land we loved” (431).

Socialist feminists states that, oppression and exploitation are not equivalent concept. Exploitation speaks to the economic reality of capitalists class relations for men and women, whereas oppression refers to women and minorities defined within patriarchal, racist, and capitalist relations. Exploitation is what happens to men and women workers in the labor force; women’s oppression occurs from the relations that define her For existence in the patriarchal sexual hierarchy- as mother, domestic laborer, and consumer.

Hannah portrays the economic realist of capitalists class through Elsa in *The Four Winds*, when she becomes victim to both exploitation and oppression. As a domestic laborer she endures many struggles in her life and by the capitalist greed, she suffered to her death. In the end of the novel, Elsa was shot by the vigilantes of the powerful land owners and lost her life. At the same time Loreda grabs a gun and aimed the gun at the land owner, Welty’s chest and said “Wouldn’t I? If you don’t get out of our way, I’ll kill you. As sure as I stand here” (434).

Emma Goldman considers that women’s emancipation was eroding women’s ability to love and to mother; it was leading women down from the wrong path to freedom. According to her ‘Motherhood is the highest fulfilment of woman’s nature’, and ‘the most glorious privilege.’ Goldman states, “Emancipation as understood by majority of its adherents is too narrow a scope to permit the boundless love and ecstasy in the deep emotion of a true woman, sweetheart, mother in freedom” (Goldman 1911).

Hannah depicts the motherhood through Elsa. Her fierce love for children and family and own sense of pride helps Elsa to overcome the fear. “She’d only just discovered herself who she was” (436). Even though this moment of courage costs Elsa’s life, she dies surrounded by her loved ones, relieved from the multiple oppression. She dies happily and peacefully for achieving her target. She urges her daughter to find her voice to use against the oppression in life.

Ecofeminist philosophy draws on feminism, ecology, and environmentalism, and philosophy in its analysis of human strength of unjustified domination. It assumes that such domination is neither justified nor inevitable. As an ecology and environmental position, ecofeminist philosophy uses ecology and environment insight about the non-human world and human-nature interaction in its theory and practices.

As Cardyn Merchant states, Social ecofeminism advocates the liberation of women through overturning economic and social hierarchies that turn all aspects of life into a market society that today even invades the womb. (Terra Femina, 1992) In this novel, *The Four Winds*, Loreda voiced out the economic inequality with courage. Her frustration stems from the fact that migrants are trapped in a cycle of endless poverty by the greedy capitalist like Mr. Welty. She understands how the immigrants who had been imprisoned in the slave system, had to wait for the cotton-picking season and need to live their life on relief and credits provided by the wealthy owners.

A heavy pall of defeat lay over the place. The Vigilantes were gone but the point had been made. Power reestablished. Loreda had no doubt that even though Mom had given her life for this strike, it would be broken. If not today, then tomorrow or the next day. Starving, desperate people could only fight for so long. (440-41)



Even after the strike and Elsa's death, the power of the land owners has been re-established. The camp of Welty was again filled with new folks to pick cottons for any wage to put food on the table. Loreda refuses to bury her in the land which deceived her. She wants to drive her mother's soundless body back to Texas and do not have enough money and realizes that nothing is going to change unless they fight back. Her anger carries her to act violently to rob money from Welty's camp. She gets enough money from the cash register and threatens him by saying "If I see you run out after me, I'll shoot you dead" (441).

Empowerment means upliftment of any group or community, which is social, economic, cultural and political status. Eco-feminists believe the root of the ecological crisis stems from the social factors. The word "Feminism" stands for socio-economic justice for women and represents gender inequality and liberation. Elsa's death in the novel *The Four Winds*, represents a failure of American dream, but her voice for the migrant workers' sufferings ends up becoming a martyr rather than a labour leader. She taught Loreda how to be brave and courageous. Loreda carries the memory of her mother as a warrior and the hardships of Martinelli's experienced in California could have left Loreda traumatized and broken, but she has instead found strength in herself and decides to return to California to attend higher education, standing as the first Martinelli girl to go to college. Her empowerment and liberation provide a semblance hope for the future.

But for now, I am an explorer again, made bold by hardship and strengthened by loss, going west in search of something that exists only in my imagination. A life different than one I've known before. Hope is a coin I carry, given to me by a woman I will always, and I hold it now as I journey west, part of a new generation of seekers. (448)

Hannah reveals, how environmental issue and patriarchal capitalism system are linked to nature and women. Hannah created her protagonists' transformation from inflexible to resilience. Her women image reflects the strength of hope and importance of motherhood. Hannah's feminist consciousness and eco-feminism views intentionally expressed the women's voice and their position during 1930s.

The fourth chapter deals with the Existential Crisis to show how the Dust Bowl immigrants find refuge in California and get trapped into the patriarchal capitalistic system.

## Chapter Four

### Existential Crisis

*We draw our strength from the very despair in which we have been forced to live.*

*-Cesar Chavez*

Immigrant literature is a literature either written by migrants or one that tells the stories of migrants. It is a topic of growing interest within literary studies since the 1980s. Migrants are people who have left their home and cultural settings and who started a new life in another setting that is, in most cases, initially strange to them. Immigrant literature often focuses on the social contexts in the migrant's country of origin which prompt them to leave, on the experience of migration itself, on the mixed reception which they may receive in the country of arrival, on experiences of racism and hostility, and on the sense of rootlessness and the search for identity which can result from displacement and cultural diversity.

American immigrant novel is a genre of American novel which explores the process of assimilation and the relationship of American immigrants towards American identity and ideas. America, often seen as a country of immigrants, opens up a unique canvas for expression and a better understanding of the American immigrant experience through literature. The term "immigrant" was coined by Noah Webster in his "American Dictionary of the English Language" in 1829. He defines the term immigrants as "to remove into a country for the purposes of permanent residence."

The novel, *The Four Winds* is an American historical novel that explores the theme of immigration due to Great Depression and Dust Bowl. The novel also illustrates the familial relationships, and economic status to create a diverse genre of

novel, dealing with types of questions such as when the immigrants behind to consider themselves American, and when parents and children will end up switching roles as the young caretaker and the older, but the seemingly helpless beneficiary.

The powerful mother is a common pivotal figure in immigrant fiction, just as sensitive and adamant child, torn between this matriarchal authority and a weaker, abandon father, often assumes the book's central consciousness. Hannah's *The Four Winds* fits the pattern, with its tense mother-daughter duo, Elsa and Loreda. Elsa is the archetypal strong woman who works hard in the field to save every American penny for her children and family. Loreda, her articulate, precocious daughter, seeks her own individual identity and her filled with dreams and fantasies, with or without the approval of community.

During the Depression and Dust Bowl decade, farmers everywhere suffered through the early years of the 1930s as prices fell and the markets for agricultural commodities disappeared, but on the Great Plains the problems were compounded by the worst drought of a century, a dry spell scorched much of the region from Texas to South Dakota. For several years rain refused to fall and it disappeared altogether in some areas in 1934 and again in 1936. Farmers could do nothing but watch their crops wither and die.

The stock market crash of 1929, some would say, but not the folks around here... Folks lined up outside the savings and loan. Grandpa complaining about bad wheat prices. Grandma lighting the candles and keeping them lit, whispering prayers with her rosary... Nineteen twenty-nine had been a good rain year, which meant a goop crop year, which meant times had been good enough for the Martinellis (67).

Hannah's *The Four Winds* takes place in the American west during 1930s Great Depression and Dust Bowl. It focuses on a poor Martinelli family, greatly suffered in the dust storm, forces the protagonist driven from her native land and home by drought, economic hardships and changes in agriculture industry, which follows what Daniel Nealand describes as the "tractoring out", that occurred across the region during this historical moment as well as crop failure from drought and dust storm (Nealand, U.S National Archives and Administration). In a nearly hopeless situation, the family set out for California's central valley along with thousands of "okies" in search of land, job and better lives.

During 1930s somewhere between a fifth and a third of the southwest population suffered the effects of unemployment and severe poverty. "The key to life in this dry heat was conservation of everything: water, food, emotion" (76). Many in this tragic subpopulation found it difficult to obtain adequate food and shelter. Elsa and her family are forced to confront the harsh realities during the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl. Dispossessed and sometimes desperately poor farm families like Elsa and her neighbours were indeed an important element of the migration.

Elsa didn't have the courage to set out on a cross- country journey into the unknown. She wasn't strong enough to survive on her own. She had never lived on her own, never paid rent, never had a job. Elsa and her children drove past a family walking on the side of the road, pushing a cart full of their belongings. People like them who had lost everything and were going west. Looking for something, anything, that offered hope, the family packed its belongings and headed west on California. "More than a thousand miles to *California*, and what would they find there? No friends, no family" (195). Elsa's family were representatives of just one segment of

the population moving to California in the 1930s. “Land of milk and honey, they say” (72).

Working opportunities, the relief system, the climate, the glamour- despite the state’s existing problems. For outsiders were real enough reasons to contemplate a move to California. The images of California had carefully propounded during earlier, most prosperous era. The large number of people from the regions cities migrated to California with a hope and expansive dream means new and fulfilling way of life. On the contrary, the 1930s migrants or newcomers were the victims of discriminations and experiences the trauma of dislocation. Like the dreams which drew many people towards California, the promise of comfortable life. But, unfortunately it was totally a false illusion to the migrants and their expectations were totally shattered.

Flora Robertson’s “Why We Come to California” is a suitable example, which provides another look at expectations of California. It narrates about a story of an unschooled mother, new to California, Robertson evokes the much-used image of a California cornucopia to explain the migration of a hungry people.

And Santy Claus is real,

Come on to California,

Eat and eat till your full. (Robertson, 1940)

The references to the poem “Santy Claus” complicate the meaning, suggesting wonderful dreams of what California will be and at the same time introducing the possibility that all will prove to be a fantasy, a false and empty illusion. The impressive balance of Robertson’s poem captures the mix of hopes and doubts with which most people set out for California. But in reality, they experience the discrimination and struggle to survive in the alien land.

Hannah relates the poem to depict Elsa's imagination of California. "The golden state" (212). As soon as Elsa reached California, she decides to rent a house to stay. But, unexpectedly her dreams were turned into nightmares when she and her children encounter threaten and discrimination. "We don't rent Okies" (220).

The term "Okie" has been historically defined as "a migrant agricultural worker; especially worker from Oklahoma. The term became derogatory in the 1930s when massive migration of 350,000 people landed to California, half of those in central valley. Okie usually described "white" migratory agricultural workers means most migrant agricultural workers were white and traveled westward from the mid western drought and cotton-growing states like Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri during Great Depression and Dust Bowl. In California, the term came to refer to very poor migrant from Oklahoma coming to look for employment.

The okies families migrated from Oklahoma to California. They were often force to work on large farms to support and feed their families. Because of the minimal pay, these families were often forced to live on the outskirts of these farms in shanty houses they built themselves. These homes are normally set up in groups called Squatter camps or Shanty towns, which were often located near the irrigation ditches which ran along the outskirts of these farms. Unfortunately, because of the minimal space allotted to the migrant workers, their outhouses were normally located near the irrigation ditches, and some waste inevitably runoff into the water. These irrigation ditches provided the Okie families with a water supply.

Hannah's *The Four Winds*, Protagonist Elsa and her children refused by the rental owner, calling them in racial slur 'Okies', but their need to stay forces them to move to a ditch campsite where the so-called Okies were lived. Both her Children Ant

and Loreda don't like the campsite and at the same the lives of the people in the ditch made her to wonder how these conditions and sufferings are possible in America.

Elsa meets her new neighbours, Jeb and Jean Dewey and their four children in the ditch bank camp where they were enforced to live. The people of the ditch camp informed her about the cotton-picking season and the difficulties to find work in the states. Elsa is also dismayed to learn that the "*Died o' dysentery*. No wonder, if people drank the water that ran in that irrigation ditch and lived...this way" (226). Even though Elsa felt her children are not belonging to the ditch camp but it is the only choice to her. She could see "Dozens of men, women, and children ambled across the field, toward the road. In the rising sun, they looked like stick people" (227).

The comportment of the native Californians sometimes led to the use of derogatory language and negative stereotyping of cultural outsider. This is evident when Elsa looking for work finds some domestic work in the town. After ten hours of grueling work, Elsa earns only forty cents, and the woman she has been working for threatens Elsa to withhold even that when Elsa questions the low amount. Elsa constantly experiences abuse and exploitation.

The woman looked at Elsa and took a step back, she sniffed daintily, pressed a lace handkerchief to her nose. "Our farmhand deals with the vagrants." ... "Don't speak to me unless I ask a direct question," the woman said. "You may scrub the floors. But mind you, I don't want to catch you shirking and I'll check your pockets before you leave. And don't touch anything but the water, bucket and brush. (230)

The immigrant children encounter the prejudices, violence and discriminations in the schools. This apparently revealed through the children of Elsa. In California, the Martinellis face the dehumanizing prejudice. This dehumanization paves way for



the labor exploitation, violence and other injustices. Even children have been taught to look down on the migrants, as evidenced by Loreda and Ant's experiences at school. The discrimination shows their helpless situation in the foreign land, even as it is revealed that they were being abused and dehumanized.

Some fifth-grader called him an ignorant Okie. Ant told him to take it back and when he wouldn't, Ant punched him. The kid punched back ...The teachers know, Mom. The principal came out and said the boy shouldn't have punched Ant cuz we carry disease. He said, 'You know better than to touch'em, Johnson'. (247)

California was emphatically not the promised land of the migrants' dreams. Although the weather was comparatively balmy and farmers' fields were bountiful with produce, Californians also felt the effects of the Depression. Local and state infrastructure were overburdened, and the steady stream of newly arriving immigrants was more than the system could bear. Migrants who found employment soon learned that this surfeit of workers caused a significant reduction in the going wage rate. Even with the entire family the migrants could not support themselves on the low wages. Many set up camps along irrigation ditches in the farmers' fields. These "ditch bank" camps fostered poor sanitary conditions and created a public health problem. "Typhoid Outbreak in Migrant Camps" (290). This is noticeable in the death of Jean who died of Typhoid in the ditch camp.

Elsa constantly looks for job. More often she could not find any job in California. She sometimes going north and south hoping against hope to find a job of weeding in the fields or doing laundry. "*Hard Times* meant poverty. No jobs. Nowhere else to go" (232). Eventually cotton picking is her only hope but she often doubts herself.

Elsa's life in California becomes even worse. As the harsh winter continues, the ditch bank camp filled by water and struck by a flash flood, many people died in the disaster. "Their belongings, their tent, their stove, their food. Gone" (326). The terrifying of Elsa and her children life is all her saved money were also gone along with the flood highlighting, how fragile their existence has been. But after all they'd suffered by the hardship, the loss, the disappointment, she and her children helping the people with smiling and handing out food which was donated by the Worker Alliance. "Helping people. It gave her hope for the future" (326). Jack Valen, a communist, who headed the rescue effort and save the migrants from the flood.

Grossman introduced the first major approach to estimating immigrant's effect on native wages, which examines the relationship between differences in the relative structure of wages and differences in the relative supply of immigrants across local labor markets. Studies using the regional-comparison method may rely on important immigration events, such as political changes that permitted influx of new foreign labor, to identify exogenous changes in immigration. (Grossman 1982)

In *The Four Winds*, Elsa got a work in the resident of the Welty camp after her lengthy struggle in the ditch camp. But, in the Welty's camp, the workers didn't allow to pay their bills instead they have to work for the debts and also revealed that their daily wages go to their food and lodgings. "They couldn't follow the crops and keep the cabin, which meant that they had to stay here, without work, waiting for cotton, living on relief and credit. So, we're slaves" (354). Like, other workers, Elsa finally realises that they have been made slaves to the land owner Welty. However, cotton picking was the lifeblood to survive.

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, oppressor and oppressed,

stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary constitution of society at large, or in common ruin of the contending classes. According to Marxism, there are two main classes of people: The bourgeoisie controls the capital and means of production, and the proletariat provide the labor. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels say that for most of history, there has been a struggle between those two classes known as class struggle.

Jack, a communist, lead study groups and organize strike against the bourgeoisie like Welty in the society. “I can do to help people who are being taken advantage of by the capitalist system “(333). He has been fighting to make the rich pay their workers a living wage and for the inequity between the haves and the have nots. He also insists that the drought and The Great Depression made millions lost their jobs and migrate to California to search for a better job and life. Thus, the rich owners like Welty, made advantage of these people and paid them poorly for their work in the fields. The bourgeoisie care more about their wallet than the survival of the workers. He says that,

It’s all about class struggle, isn’t it? Serfs against landlords throughout history. Marx and Engels are right. If there was only one class, where everyone worked for the good of all, it would be a better world. We wouldn’t have people like big growers making all the money and people like us doing all the work. We starve while the rich get richer.  
(358)

Hannah manifests the class struggle through the Welty’s camp in California. The relationship between the workers and the land owners is quite complex. The landlords or growers consolidated their substantial power over the workers by cutting

off their wages to very low. The landlords treated the immigrant people as slaves, whether male or female, they experienced discrimination and violence during their time in bondage. They had to live in extremely poor conditions, having only the bare necessities, and were forced to on extensive labor. As a result, the oppression and poor wages, provokes the workers to strike with the support of communalists' which causes a conflict between the workers and the growers.

Hannah depicts Elsa as a resilient woman to enhance the strong female lead in the novel *The Four Winds*. In the last part of the novel, Elsa is strengthened to fight against the land owner Welty representing the people who encounters the maltreatment and discriminations by their landlords. She fights for people who were frightened to open up their voices for their living wage. She asserts that,

*The four winds have blown us here, people from all across the country, to the very edge of this great land, and now, at last, we make our stand, fight for what we know to be right. We fight for our American dream, that it will be possible again... Jack says that I am warrior and, while I don't believe it, I know this: A warrior believes in an end she can't see and fight for it. A warrior never gives up. A warrior fights for those weaker than herself. (426)*

Elsa's revolution is a deadly conflict which highlights the struggle of surveillance in the uncertain land. She led the people with the support of communists to defend the capitalist greed and said "Time to say, *No more*. No more company store cheating us and keeping us poor...We deserve better. *No more* (432)". The Anti-communist vigilantes attack over the strikers resulted in the death of Elsa. Although Elsa finally discovers her voice and uses it to inspire the migrants workers to fight for the survival, she ends up becoming a martyr rather than a labor leader. Her violent

death at the hands of the wealthy elite represents the injustice of migrants. The American dream of prosperity and equality dies along with Elsa, who worked harder to get freedom for her children and the people who were oppressed by the capitalist.

Hannah throws light on the transformation of Elsa from weakness to resilience. As a mentor she has demonstrated for Loreda how to be brave and courageous against the injustice. Although Elsa fights against the capitalist society which is beyond her control. Her revolutionary death possessed a greater potential to arouse a sense of hope among the migrant workers in California. The capitalist greed and their oppression made the Dust Bowl refugees impossible to find success. Elsa's death represents the failure of American dream, but Loreda's narrative at the end of the novel provides semblance hope for the future. The hardships and the death of her mother enable Loreda to be traumatized and broken, but she has instead found strength in herself as a survivor and in the memory of her mother's unconditional love and courage.

The novel, *The Four Winds* explores the struggle and the agony undergone by the immigrants in the alien land. Hannah illustrates the existential threat in a negative way associated with the attitudes towards freedom which results in fatal anxiety and belief in the impossible dream. The chapter sums up the emotional and economic crisis of the people of 1930s who survived amidst the climate problems, drought, dust pneumonia and location prejudice in California.

The fifth chapter Summation sums up the whole research project highlighting the valuable insights and arguments throughout all the chapters.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

The historical novel, *The Four Winds* reflects the real events, which attempts to convey the spirit, manner, and social conditions of a past age in which the great events are reflected by the impact of the people. History shows the strength and durability of the human spirit in the dark period. The reputation of the historical novel lies on the nature with proletarian theme. The historical authors present the events with realistic and naturalistic figure to portray the historical period emphatically and sympathetically from their point of view. History teaches the lessons of hope, which derived from the hardships of the people's life.

Hannah is responsible for the monumental fiction of twentieth century American fiction, including, *The Nightingale*, *The Great Alone* and *The Four Winds* which focuses on the lives of the poor and working-class people. Her methodical approach to the work comes from her training and practice as a lawyer. She consciously put the characters in the terrible things to overcome from their fear and to discover their potential. Her novels are known for their exploration of hope and the strength of female spirit. Hannah's writings centre on the lives of the woman in the difficulties and relationships particularly in the families. The recurring themes in her writings are identity crisis, loss of innocence, migration, death, betrayal and importance of familial relationship.

Hannah focuses on the historiographic, manifestation and imaginative reconstruction of the American past and self-reflective narrative. Her novels typically feature strong female characters and her historical fiction explores the time period of World War II in France and Great Depression era in America. The geographic space and time, various interactions of political events are reflected through her novels. She

associates the Great Depression to the Corona virus pandemic. The collapse of the economy, the effect of massive unemployment and the people's fear for the future influences her to write the novel in order to get strength from the past.

Although the novel *The Four Winds*, focuses on fictional characters, Elsa Martinelli is a representative of hundreds and thousands of men, women and children who went west in the 1930s in search of a better life but they brought nothing more than a will to survive and a hope for a better future. Hannah's strong relationships and time growing in the California were tremendous influences in her novels.

Hannah experienced her first success with the historical fiction romance *The Nightingale*, in which she depicts the life of two French sisters Mauriac and Isabelle who resist occupying the Nazi forces during World War II. The novel attempts to present the resistance of women, familial love, survival and freedom in the German occupied Jewish camps and it also celebrates the resilience of women. It covers the important time in world history and takes an inspiration from real stories of women's resistance.

Hannah's second historical fiction *The Great Alone*, illustrates the Allbright family's move to the Alaskan wilderness to escape from the erratic behaviour found in human nature. It is a story about dreams, heritage, love, loss and epic family tale of resilience. The melodramatic tone of the novel conveys the women's quest for independence and survival in the difficult circumstances. In this novel, Hannah highlights 1970s politics and takes Alaskan culture as inspiration for the novel.

Hannah's *The Four Winds*, paradoxically analyses the exploitation of agricultural workers and the culmination of the thirties' racial focus on the Oklahoma whites' victimization. The novel scarcely mentions the Mexican migrant workers who dominated California fields and orchards into the late thirties, instead implying that

Anglo-Saxon whites were the only subjects worthy of treatment. This focus also seems to join the contemporary journalistic representation of mythologizing the Okies as quintessential American pioneers. The novel also attacks the very assumption about private property and class difference on which the social order rests ideologically. The novel, *The Four Winds*, arguably became a site of confrontation between the thirties anti-capitalist consciousness and the American racial tradition and between manifesting the destiny and manifesting the exploitation or dispossession.

The former President Franklin D. Roosevelt, institutes the New Deal programs and projects that aimed to restore prosperity to Americans after the Great Depression. He promised that he would act swiftly to face the dark realities during Great Depression and assured Americans that he would wage a war against the emergency for the need to stabilize the economy and provide jobs and relief to the people who are suffocated due to the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. Roosevelt also forged a domestic political revolution against the capitalist greed. In governance, especially, FDR policies compromising the New Deal, helped redefine and strengthen both the American state and the American presidency.

The Homestead Act of 1862 was a revolutionary concept of disturbing public land in American history. It offered 160 acres of land to the settlers in the west. This led to a surge of population and more unemployment in the west. National Labor Relation Act of 1935, also known as the Wagner Act, created the National Labor Relations Board to supervise union election and prevent business from treating the workers unfairly.

The Dust Bowl exodus was the largest migration in the American history. Following World War I, the mechanization and falling wheat prices in the thirties led to economic crisis. Families suffered from drought, wind, dust, and death from dust



pneumonia, and the terrible heat forced many people to abandon their homes and search for a new life in California, the Golden State. Predominantly, the upper hands in the state of California, shows their domination over the refugees, discriminating them by calling Okies and forcing to live in squatter camp and to compete scarce jobs as agricultural migrant workers under poor payment.

Hannah's *The Four Winds* explores the Great Depression and Dust Bowl era. She wants her readers to experience the lives of migrants in the alien land. It gives voice to the ten thousands of Americans affected by the depression and drought. As a realist writer, Hannah determined to write the novel that personalized in the real plight of thousands of families who travel west in the hope of making a new life. Displaced by drought, poverty, exploitation, and lack of options, the farmers from Texas and surrounding states headed towards California in the 1930s. Hannah raised awareness through this classical tale of the Elsa Martinelli family to represents the Dust Bowl refugees.

The impetus for writing *The Four Winds* came out of Hannah's determination to place women in the historical landscape. The environmental disaster, the harshness of the Great Depression, significant issue of climate change, the desperate condition of immigrants, their quest for identity, and the American Dream influences her to explore through her writings. Hannah presents the novel as a survival story about love, courage, familial relationship and resilience. Elsa's empowerment and courageous attitude defines the women's commitment and strength in thirties. The portrait of the 'Woman of the High Plains' provokes Hannah to express the desperate condition and lives of the women of the era. She states that *The Four Winds*, is a tribute to such strong women and their strength during the hard times.

The geographical setting of *The Four Winds* constantly shifts, because its characters had to leave their native home to the uncertain land without money and job. It has featured with many vivid descriptions of Texas and California where Elsa's family try to find a better life. The novel set during the historical period known as the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. It was a time between 1929 and 1941, the combination of unprecedented droughts when the dust storms destroyed farmlands and worsened the economic situation for many people throughout the Great Plains.

Hannah's writing style, as displayed in *The Four Winds*, takes the readers back to the period of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl era to experience the suffocation, humiliation and injustice of the people during the time. Through the novel, she throws light on the immigrant condition and inequality status of the people and creates tones of passion, anger, sadness, helpless and desperation, which realistically conveys the story.

Delia Owens, author of *Where the Crawdads Sing*, asserts that, through the women's survival during the harsh and haunting Dust Bowl, Hannah, reminds one that the human heart and Earth as tough, but as fragile as a change in the wind, the mother's extreme suffering relates with the land, which attempts to cross deserts and beat starvation to save her children with a fierce inner strength called motherhood. Owens also states that *The Four Winds* is a timely novel highlighting the worth and the delicate nature of the environment.

The concepts of Ecological Approach, Ecological Feminism, and Existential crisis are used to depict the environmental disaster, economic collapses, sense of self, refugees struggle for the identity and gender roles has its roots in the American Romanticism, as intellectuals like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau explored how land gives an identity and hard work equate to independence. It also

parallels a philosophical embrace by Steinbeck's friend Ed Ricketts, states that people see nature as giving "their own lives . . . meaning and worth" (Astro 72).

The Ecological Approach vividly shows that human is a part of nature or ecology. The people were forced to leave the home land to the alien land as refugees due to the environmental disaster and devastated land, which demonstrates that nature is powerful than the human's ability. Elsa and her family go in search of green pastures in California only to witness a battle for survival. Hannah establishes Eco-humanistic stances to prove the interdependence of man and nature.

The Ecological Feminism reveals, how the environmental issue and the patriarchal capitalist system linked nature and women. Hannah created her Protagonist Elsa's transformation from inflexible to resilience. Her women image reflects the strength of hope and importance of motherhood. Hannah's feminist consciousness and eco-feministic views intentionally expressed the women's voice and their position during 1930s.

The Existential Crisis demonstrates the immigrants' lives in the uncertain lands and their loss of identity. The patriarchal capitalist greed and their oppression made the Dust Bowl refugees impossible to find success. Hannah illustrates the existential threat in a negative way associated with the alienation towards freedom which results in fatal anxiety and a source of hope in the impossible dream.

Hannah enthusiastically proclaims her views upon the environmental issues, prejudices, humiliation, lives of the immigrants, economic crisis through literature. *The Four Winds* clearly portrays the idea of American Dream and its effect of reflecting the social impediments during the Great Depression era. The novel, aptly exposes the dehumanized and anti-people's nature, the American economy, and especially the capitalist system. Hannah has extensively shown sympathy for the

working class and their struggles in her writings. Hannah's *The Four Winds* is the manifestation of her exquisite literary sensibility with a focus on the socio-economic survey of the time with the degree of consciousness of the workers to demand wages to correspond with their workforce.

The novel *The Four Winds*, offers ample scope to the aspiring scholars to focus on the choices and survival of the characters through New Historicism, Crisis of immigration, Alienation, Identity and the Psychological understanding of both the man and nature.

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**A Psychoanalytic Study of Sudha Murty's *The Magic of the Lost Temple***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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**

**ANUSUYA. G**

**(REG. NO. 21APENO3)**



**PG and Research Department of English**

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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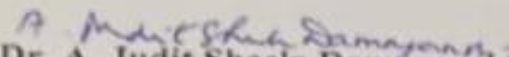
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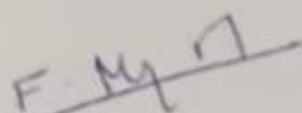
## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled *A Psychoanalytic Study of Sudha Murty's The Magic of the Lost Temple* 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 Anusuya. G during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

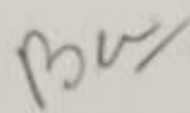
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Psychoanalytic Study of Sudha Murty's *The Magic of the Lost Temple*** 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

April 2023

Anusuya.G

ANUSUYA.G

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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.

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## Preface

The project entitled **A Psychoanalytic Study of Sudha Murty's *The Magic of the Lost Temple*** concentrates on the female protagonists' identity crisis, rebel against oppression and gender bias. It aims to analyse how they equip themselves with essential strength, strong will and avenues to face the hurdles in achieving their goals. It also analyses fictional world of Sudha Murty with the special emphasis on characters, themes, narrative techniques and setting.

The first chapter **Introduction** seeks to introduce the personal life of Sudha Murty. It also presents a brief summary of all her works.

The second chapter **Disintegrated Personality** introduces the personality theory. The psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Gordon Allport and many other humanistic theorist's theories are discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter **Traumatized Womanhood** probes on the seclusion and alienation which an individual experiences as a result of any loss or submergence of love and communication between family relationships

The fourth chapter **Narrative Technique** deals with the narrative technique which Sudha Murty had adopted in her Children fiction.

The fifth chapter **Summation** deals with the future scope of the study and the childhood psyche of the author herself is also traced to bring an effective conclusion.

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

## Chapter One

### Introduction

India is a country of rich cultural heritage. Different religions dwell together. Each of the religion has its own culture. The literature which originated across the Indian sub-continent before and after independence is normally referred to as Indian literature. The renowned literary critic M. K. Naik in his book, *A History of Indian English Literature*, defined Indian English literature as, “Literature written originally in English by authors Indian by birth, ancestry or nationality” (3). In the early days, Indian literature took its shape in the form of sacred writings like Vedas and Puranas, namely *the Upanishads*, *the Rig Veda*, *the Yajur Veda*, *the Sama Veda*, *the Atharva Veda*, *the Ramayana*, and *the Mahabharata*.

With the advent of British rule in India, the English language disseminated the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent. Later the Indian constitution and its legal code were also written in English and it became the most important actuality which Britishers left behind in India. Sujata Ramkrishnarao Khandagale mentioned the emergence of Indian English Literature as “Indian English literature originated as a necessary outcome of the English education in India under the colonial rule” (67). During the British period, western literary models had a great impact on Indian literature. This paved the way to the evolution of literary genres namely novels, short stories, plays, fairy tales, fiction, poetry, biography, autobiography, and many more at a slow pace.

Indian writing in English has been more than hundred and fifty years of age today. All types of literary writings are available in Indian English literature. Indian English fiction has acquired new dimensions after globalization and liberalization of Indian Economy. Indian fiction writers have got national and international awards in

recognition of their achievements in the field. Advent of new information technology in India connected them with literary forces outside and within India. All this enhanced their awareness, communication skills and responses to the changes in the field.

There are many men and women writers who handled and depicted contemporary issues. Traditional themes like Indian poverty, superstitions, culture, child marriage and illiteracy are now replaced by the themes like crumbling family relations, devastating effects of globalization, exploitation of employees etc. These writers came from highest centres of learning in India. The writers like Chetan Bhagat, Amish Tripathi, Shashi Tharoor, Arvind Adiga have presented variety of untraditional themes with innovative techniques. Women writers like Kiran Desai, Arundhati Roy, Sudha Murty got coveted Booker prizes for effective presentation of realistic social, cultural and political situations in India.

Sudha Murty is a renowned writer, a technologist with an innovative and highly regarded with awards for her philanthropic and literary knowledge. Murty is one of the most important Indian litterateurs of recent times. She is born on 19 August 1950 in Shiggaon in Karnataka. She is best known for her post-modern feminist writings and also implemented in her life. A literature of novels, travelogues, technical books and books for children. Sudha Murty's writing inception from the Kannada and later it was translated into English. She completed her B.E Electrical Engineering from B.V.B College by breaking the conservative idea of engineering is only for the male gender. Later she obtained a gold medal from the chief minister of Karnataka and the Indian Institute of Science by proving her best in higher education. After her graduation, she shattered the gender bias of TELCO. By writing a letter to JRD TATA by opposing the 'men only', becomes the first female engineer in the firm. She is the daughter of D.R.H. Kulkarni and Vimala Kulkarni spent her holidays with her maternal grandmother. Her

extensive skill in writing makes her a good litterateur. From her childhood, she started writing and knew the importance of education by her grandmother. It has encouraged her to be a litterateur from “How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories” when the time came, she performed her father’s Shraddha by refuting the men only can do and paved a way for the next generation.

Sudha Murty was born in Madhwa Brahmin family, fell in love and married N.R. Narayan Murty. She is best known for her writing in the aspect of post-feminism. When all the feminist litterateur renders with the crisis of the protagonist, Sudha Murty’s writing redeems from the problem. Sudha Murty’s work mainly deals with social evils, human foibles and the thing happening in our society. All her novels are women-centric mainly portrays the challenges that occur in her protagonist life and how they tackle and overcome. Her writings have a broad knowledge, morality and ethics. She is the receiver of numerous awards for her literary contribution. Especially conferred Padma Shri from A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

*Mahashweta* is an acute story of a beautiful girl Anupama, who was affected by Leukoderma after her marriage. It changes her life completely and the society threatens and humiliates her. Later she confronts it with her will power to create her own identity. The superstitious belief and her mother-in-law Radhakka’s lack of knowledge put Anupama in misery. The life of Anupama and Girija pictures the power of money and poverty. Anupama suffers a lot in the hostel as a motherless child and works hard to pay the education fee. After marriage because of Anand’s silence and his love for beauty makes Anupama to be humiliated. The pain of physical and psychological strengthens Anupama to be brave to face the obstacle in life. Though Anand left her she never commits sins and when Vasant approaches her as a traditional girl she refuses. She shows that without men and dependence she can live in society. When Anand

comes to ask pardon to regenerate their life, she teaches him a lesson and shows her braveness and identity as her achievement. It reflects her customs and culture for a woman is no need to live with a person. As a post-feminist litterateur, Sudha Murty expounds that the life does not end rather it emerges from that point. It is a moral message given to modern society to be independent and courage.

*Gently Falls the Bakula* explains the corrosive effects of money in the family and how it affects life. It presumably explains how the Bakula flower blooms, spreads fragrance and withers though it doesn't fail to spread fragrance. Like that Shrimati loves Shrikant and married but after a lot of humiliation and oppression to save her respect went to create her identity. This novel clearly explains the importance of individual identity to lead a self-respectful life. Though Shrimati studied well for her interest she chooses history subject. It states the freedom of women to choose their career. When Shrikant is in necessity he allows Shrimati to work but after he becomes stable in life, he starts to disdain. She controls herself for the sake of Shrikant but when it hits her self-respect she could not tolerate. Shrimati is more intelligent than Shrikant but her sacrifice and support become nothing. So, she did not feed up with his misery and muddle in her life rather she plans to continue her studies. Though her life became unhappy, she plans to seek happiness through education. Education is not only to create identity instead it is a pleasure for everyone. It helps to attain knowledge and self-identity. Eventually, Shrimati said to Shrikant to continue their relationship as a friendship. She decides to concentrate on her higher studies.

*Dollar Bahu* is a story about two daughters-in-law, how they are treated by the value of money. It not only pictures the life of Vinuta and Jamuna but also depicts the happenings of the society. Gouramma who thinks the grass is greener on the other side by her experience learns that it is a mirage. Vinuta's uncle Bheemanna advises her to

study to create an economic independent life. It shows the perspective of the human mind is changed according to the post-feminist era. Vinuta explicit that women are equivalent to men in handling the profession and household work equally. Though Vinuta is educated and financially independent she adjusts with her mother-in-law and family. When the discrimination shows between Vinuta and Jamuna of her dollar she tolerates and give her best as their daughter-in-law. But when she feels it will affect her son, she plans to go out of her house to give a peaceful life for him. It makes her realize the mistake and changed her life. It not only changed Gouramma's state of mind and also many women's life. However, they are restrained and oppressed by their family and society. After reaching America they change their life into a successful one. Eventually, the value of dollar and grace of the American lifestyle is clashed and gives the lesson that human value is important. The post-feminist era helps female to sculpt their life to be free and independence.

*House of Cards* is a story of how the house made up of cards is fragile. Mridula is educated and mentally strong to choose her career by her interest. She became a teacher and motivates her students to learn many things. When it comes to marriage she boldly discusses with her parents and makes a decision. After marriage, she guides her husband and supports him financially. In obstacle and critical situation, she gives him an idea to come out of his problems. As a perfect daughter-in-law, she did her duty and extraordinarily managed her family, profession and her son. When Sanjay attains high authority, he is corrupted by money. Though Mridula is educated and independent she adjusts with them. But Neha who is independent and belongs to post-feminist era change Sishir and his perspective of the mind.

*House of Cards* teaches female not only to be bold but also pictures that men have to change his thought and opinion about female who belongs to the post-feminist



era. Sanjay becomes alone after Mridula leaves him and his money becomes nothing. It explicitly shows that, “Too much of anything is good for nothing”. *The Mother I Never Knew* is a story of Mukesh and Venkatesh searching for their biological mother. It depicts the life of the feminist and post-feminist era. Venkatesh’s wife Shanta represents the postmodern feminism having a successful and versatile knowledge in business. She perfectly handles the business and house progressively. But Venkatesh’s mother Indiramma leads a submissive and oppressed life.

On the other side, Bhagirathi who belongs to feminism period first lost her education then all her life. When she was informed about train mishaps, she never investigates due to lack of knowledge and believes everything. As a single woman, she brought up her child with all her effort. It shows the importance of education through Bhagirathi and Shanta. Venkatesh plans to do justice for his unknown mother because of his education and humanity. The second novella titled *Mukesh* pictures the real obstacle and tribulation by the character of Nirmala, Rupinder and Sumati of feminism period. To their contradiction, Vasanthi as a post-feminist girl breaks all the customs and trashes the conservative idea of the elders. She proves her knowledge through reality. Nirmala, who is the mother of Mukesh, is a daughter of the village head. To maintain his status and to avoid personal humiliation he forced Nirmala to abandon her son as soon as he is born. Here the caste and social status destroy her life.

Rupinder who worked as a slave in her mother-in-law’s house because of her alcoholic husband. He spoils his health and alienates Rupinder. When she adopts Mukesh the superstitious belief and religion plays a vital role to separate him. Sumati though she married and lived happily she was haunted by her mother-in-law for not having a male child. The discrimination of gender makes her feel grief. After knowing the secret of Mukesh’s past life Vasanthi shows her generosity towards Mukesh because

of her knowledge. She accepts him as he is, it is the maturity of education. *The Mother I Never Knew* is about the tragic life of two women Bhagirathi and Nirmala destroyed by the tradition, customs and superstitious belief. It is mainly because of the lack of education and ignorance of society.

Sudha Murty writes short stories from her childhood. She has become famous for her children fiction writing, short stories and novels. Almost all the feminist writing litterateurs dealt with the problems and sufferings of the protagonist. Sudha Murty carved a new path in writing. She not only discusses the challenges of the protagonist but also gives a solution to their problem and makes them create an individual identity. Sudha Murty in her fiction has given a valuable message for future generations. It is not only to entertain them but also to teach them a moral and standard way of living. In her work, *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* (2004) written in the first vignette depicts the life of illiterate to know the value of education.

Education not only helps her to know the content of calligraphy, but it also redeems her from ignorance. It explicits the life of Sudha Murty's grandmother Kristakka who is curious to know the magazine series titled *Kashi Yatra* written by Karnataka writer Triveni. But when her granddaughter is out of town, it affects her curiosity to know the story. It makes her educate by her granddaughter irrespective of age. And through learning, she learns that going to Kasi will not give any goodness rather helping the poor and needy is real goodness. It shows the eagerness and willingness of a woman for education. Education is not merely knowledge it helps us and others to be successive in life and gain wisdom. Education makes Kristakka feel independent, happy and not to seek help from others to learn.

Sudha Murty's granddad was highly regarded by his belongings for his knowledge. The value of the book is known by the book readers. It is a great treasure which will not reduce by giving. The story alludes the life of American billionaire who is remembered over a century after his death only for offering a lot of books to the library. Though he could not be remembered if he had given his wealth, the value of the book is an enormously precious one. He is recollected considerably following an era of his demise not for his richness however for his beneficent love for books. In the vignette, Appro JRD is the real incident that happens in the life of Sudha Murty. When Sudha Murty finished her studies and plans to work, she comes across the post 'Only Men' allowed to work in an office of JRD, the magnate of Indian industries.

Sudha Murty wrote a letter denouncing his company following the gender bias. Then broke the restriction and proved her best as the first female engineer in the JRD office. She was impressed by his philanthropic approach to social work as a trustee of his wealth. It not only shows the structure of society's discrimination towards women and also the dare of women to crash the frame to create a place in society. In *Amma*, she expresses the importance of education. It shows how the life of Sudha Murty has changed. Sudha Murty's daughter Akshata saved the money for her birthday. She met a boy, who is intelligent but did not have money to do his higher education in St. Stephen's College, Delhi. She gave her savings for his education. It gives her delight and at the same time, it impressed her mother Sudha Murty, to help the poor to be educated. It is the seed of her charity to a lot of orphanages and foundations.

The next non-fiction *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life* published in 2006, deals with the real sufferings of people. *Wise and Otherwise A Salute to Life* is filled with the Murty's encounters with people during her life journey which are beautifully

delineated in this book. Mostly Sudha Murty's writing reflects the real life of someone's inner turmoil.

In *A Bond Betrayed on Rakki Day* she narrates the pathetic situation of male dominances towards the women. Tara expounds the parentless life and as an elder girl, she supports her brother financially. When he grows, he does not even consider her and without her knowledge, he has sold out in a red-light area on Rakki day. Tara suffers from the day because not of her mistake. Without education, she is trapped in the place and is sustained because of not having any support. Education is the only source to make ourselves self-independent. Stove bursts or a dowry death is an awful life of women, who is not educated and bound in the poor family. The doctor once took Sudha Murty to causality. The dowry plays a significant role of women in their agony. Doctor treats them casually but the area appeared as hell to the Sudha Murty. She said: "If there is hell on earth, it is this" (10).

"A Wedding to Remember" is about how Malati's life has tremendous change and how it becomes normal. Malati was affected by Leukoderma after her engagement. So, her fiancé calls off the marriage though he loved Malati. By reading the *Mahashweta* novel he realized his mistake and accepts her wholeheartedly. He doesn't want to be cruel like Anand and changed his mind and comes out of conservative thought. A wedding to remember not only tells women to be courageous but also helps man to come out of his substandard and worst mind. Sudha Murty's writing not only registers the incident happening in the society but also depicts the society and perception of the human mind.

*Unwed Mother* is a story about bearing a child before marriage and how society treats her. The story is about the life of two young girls and their life. In India, a girl

Kusuma becomes pregnant before marriage but the boy doesn't want to marry her. Out of fear and the social gossips she committed suicide. But in Norway, a girl Mary faces the same condition but she is courageously begotten and is brought up with good care. The society doesn't interrupt in her life and as a single mom, she educates him. The society plays a vital part in the life of individual. It provides the braveness to lead a successful life. It shows how society helps the person for his growth and destruction of life. It explains the life of Girija who is working as a cook in a house and her struggle. Though her husband has forsaken her, she is not fed up instead she chooses to live independent by doing work. It shows the bold and positive thought of the woman through earning. She is helping her son to get her an education. When Vasant has everything, he worries for all but Girija is not fed up though she has nothing. She is bold and courageous. Women through their writing express the sacrifice and ignorance of women. Nalini though she is educated and working in the college is willingly to submit herself to work, sacrifice her pleasure for the sake of her son.

At last, she lost everything including self-respect. On the contradiction to Nalini, Yellamma delightfully and correctly handled everything. Even though she is not educated after facing a lot of humiliation by her experience she learnt and gained knowledge. Now her knowledge helps her to lead a self-respectful and independent woman. The story explains how a woman should be bold and dare to take her own decision. *Three Thousand Stitches* is the result of the Sudha Murty's effort. "Light as Many Candles as Possible" pictures the harsh reality of women's condition in the rural place of Karnataka. However, the society tremendously changes some women are still in a miserable condition. It not only expounds the miserable state of women and the way to redeem from their life. This story is about the advice from a father to a daughter. Generation after generation they follow the same Gharwali (Commercial sex workers)

work not because of interest but it is purely of ignorance. Sudha Murty plans to redeem them by using education as the tool. When Sudha Murty could not bear the lifestyle of a small girl who follows her mother.

By R.H. Kulkarni advice she starts changing their life slowly. It is referred to as light as many candles as possible until your life span. It is about the Devadasi of how their miserable and illiterate life turns to be good and standard. By facing a lot of hurdles and humiliation Sudha Murty convince them and make them realize their ignorance and bring back to light by letting the light of education. Not only Sudha Murty helps them to leave their work but also helps them to be independent and give them a status in society. Many of them proved themselves with education and self-work. As a reward, all the Devadasi knit a piece of embroidered cloth and stitched it into a bedspread as a gift. The bedspread consists of three thousand pieces and stitches. Education is the only way to attain respect and knowledge in society.

*How to Beat the Boys* is the autobiography of Sudha Murty how she beaks the convention by being the post-feminist. When she joined engineering almost everyone advised her to change the decision. As an only female, she studied and crashed the myth of 'Engineering is man's domain'. She breaks the restriction that girls are not fit for engineering. She overcomes all her hurdles as an individual female. Finally, she proves that women are not the weaker sex and achieves the first place in her academics. She attains the best place through sufferings. Today she becomes a role model as her father's friend suggest. A life unwritten expounds the clear vision of patriarchal society. Though the women is educated she undergoes many hurdles and troubles. It explicates the life under male dominance and the status of society. When the daughter of zamindar becomes pregnant before marriage her life becomes a tragedy and everyone plans to kill the child. But when she thinks of her daughter her courageousness saved both of

them. After realizing the importance of education and independent life with all her effort as a single parent she makes her daughter attain an individual identity.

The courageous step taken by a woman changed her life maybe she is frightened her life becomes nothing. Even she is educated but for the sake of society, she was alienating to save the respect and honor of his family. It shows the two dimensions of the woman's life that are suffered without economic independence and changes the perception of life with individual identity and economic independence. No place like home is unveiling the distressing life of four girls. Who went abroad to earnings there they have to come across many hurdles. In the present world, women are brave enough to challenge problems. But society is not helping them to lead a peaceful life. To fulfil the needs and settle their family four girls accept to earn in abroad. Nazneem, Grazy, Roja and Neena's life silently explicit the present age crisis of women. It explains the physical and psychological problem of women who suffered in a faraway land. It is a moral message for women to be aware of the consequence of the work. Women are bold now a day but they have to more capable and energetic to break the restriction to create a safe and secured life.

*Alliances Invited* is the story of feminism and post feminism era. When we follow the old convention during the marriage time, but Vanita's marriage was held by breaking the structure of tradition by giving advertisement in the newspaper. The main thing they preferred is in the same community. Later when the society changes her daughter's marriage also resembles Vanita but they did not give importance to caste nor horoscope. It shows the civilized thought of human being. Education helps human beings to come out of old customs and traditions. She desires to be identified as a software engineer but she is referred by the identity of someone's daughter and wife. Education and society help the woman to be knowledgeable. But the patriarchal society

dominates and suppress women in her academic growth. It is about Ashok and Anitha who worked hard to create an individual identity. But when Anita starts earning in abundance Ashok could not tolerate her.

We honour the women as Goddess and other natural things but they are not practiced in day-to-day life. Crisis of coincidence is an eye-opener to postmodern women who are educated but not being wise in their life. It is a real incident pictured by Kiran Bedi an eminent police officer in Puducherry. She talks about how women are ignorant in choosing their life partner and discontinuing their studies in a public meeting. Though women are educated, they not implementing in real life. The educated girls have to be brave and must decide to think about its consequence. Education is important for a female to get an individual identity.

The real use of education has to raise our standard of living and knowledge. It shows the education and financial independence is a tool but the courage is all we needed. The other works written by Sudha Murty are *Mahashweta* (2000), *Dollar Bahu* (2003), *Gently Falls the Bakula* (2008), *House of Cards* (2013), *Wise and Otherwise* (2002), *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read* (2004), *The Magic Drum and Other Favourite Stories* (2006), *The Old Man and His God: Discovering the Spirit of India* (2006), *The Bird with Golden Wings: Stories of Wit and Magic* (2009), *Grandma's Bag of Stories* (2012), *The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk* (2012), *Something Happened on the Way to Heaven* (2014), *Magic of the Lost Temple* (2015), *Three Thousand Stitches* (2017), *The Man from the Egg* (2017), *The Upside Down King* (2018), *Here, There, Everywhere* (2018), *How the Sea Became Salty* (2019), *The Daughter from A Wishing Tree* (2019), *Gopi Diaries: Finding Love* (2021), *How the Mango got its Magic* (2022), and *Magic of the Lost Story* (2022).



Sudha Murty writings mainly focus on the present age female's problem and children literature. She keenly observes the changing of modern society and changes her calligraphy by giving the importance of individual identity. Facing challenges in human life and the importance of human values of this generation along with the downfall of the morality of society in the background of globalization and commercialization are portrayed in her calligraphy.

Abuses and sufferings of protagonist heedless of their social and financial identities find a dissimilar voice in her calligraphy. After realizing education is the only tool to redeem them taking many efforts to provide the needs and education. Her life journey and attempt to save many people are presented in her calligraphy. Though she is a distinguished writer of Karnataka, she did many bits of help to enrich the people of Karnataka. Her novel and children fiction stories have been translated into many languages and English.

Sudha Murty's destiny and acquirements create her the possibility of creative writing of her worries is apparent, and what is propound here is a critical examination of her experience for searching for an identity. It also demonstrates the struggle of her protagonist, self-fulfilment and self-realization in demanding situations they are trapped.

This project is divided into five chapter. The first chapter Introduction seeks to introduce the writer and her work. The personal life of Sudha Murty and all her works are introduced with a brief summary in this chapter. Chapter two deals with introducing the personality theory. The psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Gordon Allport and many other humanistic theorist's theories are detailed in this chapter. Chapter three deals with introducing Sudha Murty's Children stories like *The Magic of*

*the Lost Temple, Grandma's Bag of Stories, How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories*. Chapter four deals with the narrative techniques which Sudha Murty had adopted in her Children fiction. Chapter five deals with the future scope of the literature and the limitations of this study, further the childhood psyche of the author herself is also traced to bring an effective conclusion.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Disintegrated Personality**

Humans have always wondered about the mysteries of creation, foremost among them being man himself. In particular, the working of the mind has, and still is a mystery to be unraveled. Over the years, many scientists have analyzed the workings of mind but have never succeeded in graphing a clear sketch of the human mind. Human psyche is a most puzzling area that neither can be easily predicted nor be easily understood.

Psychology is the scientific study of human mind and its functions. When the working of human mind is analyzed, one's behaviour can be easily traced. In short, psychology studies various human behaviours, which includes all kinds of activities that an individual performs. It studies both the healthy and unhealthy forms of these activities and also makes a study of the nervous system. The outcome of a factual study - important or negligible, beneficial or harmful, good or bad - is within the scope of science so long as it retains its factual nature. Hence, in its role as a positive science, psychology is neutral, neither in favour of one nor in favour of another. Human behaviors can be further classified into Normal and Abnormal behaviours. Normal Behaviour is the concrete subject in General Psychology while Abnormal Psychology studies abnormal behaviour. Abnormal Psychology studies both the external manifestation of human behaviour as well as internal processes and feelings of an abnormal individual. As Ramnath Sharma says, "Abnormal Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour that departs from the normal" (3).

Some of the elements like Relations of mind and body, the Unconscious, Motivation and adjustment, Mental Mechanisms, Causes of Abnormal behaviour, Psycho sexual development, Sexual Perversions, Psycho neuroses, Psychosis,

Psychotherapy, Mental Hygiene, Antisocial behaviour and crime, Mental deficiency, Dreams and Psycho pathologies of everyday life are studied in the field of abnormal psychology. Abnormal psychology also studies the symptoms, causes and cures of mentally diseased individuals.

There is always a difference between a normal and an abnormal person. An individual who conforms himself to the society's own traditions, modes of accepted behaviour and its various forms and functions, is accepted to be normal. But besides Sociability, another quality of the normal being is his complete fulfillment of his needs, which creates balance and strength that retains a balanced outlook even when the prospects are bleak. The normal individuals make conscious or unconscious efforts to maintain their social, economic, physical, psychological health and security too. When the characteristics of an abnormal person are analyzed, he is quite often the victim of mental deficiency or mental disease. In some abnormal people, the intellectual level is fairly high, but their balance is quite disturbed. Emotional instability and inconsistency is more or less a common trait in most abnormal people. 'Maladaptive behaviour' is also an indicator of abnormality. The persons with anorexia and depression show signs of acquiring Maladaptive behaviour in them.

Psychologists have divided the abnormalities into different categories. A Psycho-neurotic person is one who is said to be the victim of conflicts, mental tensions and frustrations. The major aberrations evident in the Psychoneurotic person are a sense of tension, phobias, inattention, anxiety, weakening of memory, extreme irritability etc. Besides these purely mental symptoms, the Psychoneurotic individual also exhibits certain physical aberrations such as extreme fatigue, weakness, constipation and headache. To quote Dollard and Miller, "An intense emotional conflict is the necessary

basis for neurotic behaviour. The conflict must be further being unconscious. As a usual thing, such conflicts are created only in childhood” (127).

Another major form of abnormality can be seen in a Psychotic individual. Psychosis is a more intense mental disease than Psychoneurosis and the individual who has this abnormality lacks balance and his equilibrium is completely disturbed. The personality shows signs of disintegration, disorganization, irrationality and non-conformity. A Psychotic individual is a victim of hallucinations and delusions. The person experiences strange sounds in him that is not audible to others. Dr. Ramnath Sharma defines Delusion as, “peculiar and unusual beliefs that are obviously untrue and impossible. They are self- complementing and are not born experience, hence they cannot be removed by logic, argumentation, or confrontation with facts” (166).

When causes for abnormal behaviour are analyzed, environment and hereditary causes also play a vital role. Heredity involves all those physiological and psychological characteristics that a person inherits from his parents. These characteristics are transmitted through genes. Many scientific studies reveal that the causes, which turn many people to crime, anti-social activity and mental derangement, lie often in their environment. Environmental factors include social and cultural factors, and these have an important influence upon a person's personality. It is the social or cultural factors or both combined that create traumas in human beings that finally result in mental distortion.

Psychiatry is a branch of Pathology, and in other words, it can be called as the science of healing, which considers the causes and cures of mental diseases. The difference between both sciences is remarkable. Abnormal psychology studies abnormal psyche in a more theoretical way but Psychiatry is concerned with its cure and treatment practically. Psychoanalysis is closely related with Abnormal psychology

and is in fact an important pathological technique used by psychiatrists. Through researches in Psychoanalysis, the symptoms of the mental disorder, its prevalence, whether it tends to be either ‘acute’ (short in duration) or ‘Chronic’ (long in duration), and the problems and deficits that often accompany them can be understood. Thus, Psychoanalysis remains influential within Psychology, Psychiatry, and Psychotherapy and across the humanities.

Dr. Ramnath Sharma defines Psychoanalysis as, “a branch of Psychology in which mental processes are discovered through analysis of verbal response” (60). The term Psychoanalysis became popular only after Sigmund Freud’s psychotherapeutic theories and techniques. Freud who was an Austrian Psychiatrist contributed many theories on Psychoanalysis. Some of them include *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), *Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1904), *Three Contributions to the Theory of Sex* (1905), *The Unconscious* (1915), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), *The Ego and the Id* (1923). He is popularly called as the ‘Father of Psychology’.

Freud was the first to explore the ‘Unconscious’ state of mind and its functions. He devised many methods to explore the unconscious. Later this technique came to be commonly known as Psychoanalysis. According to Freud, human unconscious mind includes those experiences that are repressed, because of them being painful or contrary to social norms. The unconscious also consists of instinctive desires which were not allowed to be expressed on the conscious level. These desires are mostly sexual while few are concerned with the ego as well.

Carl Jung, the successor of Freud, thought that Freud’s concept of the unconscious was too much limited. He later studied more about the unconscious mind and came with various theories himself. According to Jung, the Unconscious is so vast that it can never be fully described. Freud had described only a small part the

Unconscious that is formed during the lifetime of an individual. Dr. Ramnath Sharma quotes Jung's definition of the unconscious as, "the totality of psychic phenomena that lack the quality of consciousness" (125). He further classifies it into two types - personal and collective. The Personal Unconscious of Jung includes all that which Freud describes as Fore-conscious and Unconscious. It includes all the experiences that have been forgotten or have been repressed.

The concept of 'Collective Unconscious' is Jung's supreme contribution to Psychology. It refers to the archetypes and the thousands of years of experiences of the human race embedded in every human mind. It also includes all those reactions and tendencies that are characteristics of the human species. There are only the primitive modes of thinking. Jung defines Collective Unconscious as the "deposit of ancestral experience from untold millions of years, the echo of prehistoric world events to which each century adds an infinitesimally small amount of variation and differentiation" (162).

Psychologists like Carl Jung, Alfred Adler and the Neo-Freudians like Erich Fromm, Karen Horney have contributed much to the field of Psychoanalysis. To analyze human behaviours and the working of the human mind, Psychiatrists have invented various methods, which include, Experimental method, Method of Introspection, Case History method and Observational method. Experimental method has serious limitations and in it, it is not possible to control factors leading to Abnormal behaviour. Case history method is widely utilized by Psychologists throughout the world. Here the Psychologists trace the whole history of their patient by listening to them and their relatives and gather an overall knowledge about the patient. Even then, this process has its own limitations and disadvantages, because the relatives may be prejudiced in their answers. So the whole history of the patient can never be traced.

An individual's personality is analyzed before treating or curing his mental disease. The word 'personality' has been derived from the Latin word '*persona*', which refers to the mask that Greek actors wore while acting. However, now the meaning is different in the modern context. Personality is not a fixed state but a dynamic totality which is continuously changing due to interaction with the environment. It is known by the conduct, behaviour, movements and everything else concerning the individual. In the words of Munn, "Personality may be defined as the most characteristics integration of an individual's structures, modes of behaviour, interests, attitudes, capacities, abilities and aptitudes" (569).

Character is an organization of sentiments. Character constitutes the unique individuality of the person. The formation of character begins right from the childhood and the socio-cultural environment plays an important role in it. The nature of personality and character interact with one another. An integrated personality leads to an organized character. On the other hand, disintegration of personality leads to a disorganization of character. Habits, volition, cognition, emotional control and development play an important role in developing a person's character. A Psychopathic personality is one who has a number of characteristics exhibiting anti-social behaviour, inability to get profit from insight or experience, emotional distortion of various kinds, changeable and temporary activities, various sexual deviations, lacking discretion of means and multiple personality.

Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic theory of Personality argues that human behaviour is the result of the interaction of three components of the mind - the Id, the Ego, and the Super Ego. His structural theory placed great importance on the role of unconscious psychological conflicts in shaping a person's behaviour and personality. The Id is the unconscious level which is present from birth, driven by the Pleasure



principle, and which strives for immediate gratification of all desires, wants and needs. The Ego is based on the Reality principle, which strives to satisfy the Id's desire in realistic and socially appropriate ways. The Ego also discharges tension created by unmet impulses through the secondary process in which it tries to find an object in the real world that matches the mental image created by the Id's primary process. The Super Ego is an aspect of personality that holds all our internalized moral standards and ideals that we acquire from both parents and the society. It provides guidelines for making judgment. There are two parts of the Super Ego. The first is the 'Ego ideal' that includes those that are approved of by parental and other authority figures. Second is the 'Conscience' that includes information about things that are viewed as vice by parents and society. These behaviours are often forbidden and lead to bad consequences, punishments or feelings of guilt or remorse.

Personality is the dynamic organization of the Psychophysical traits exhibited in its adjustment with the environment. If the organization of Psychophysical qualities in personality is not orderly or strong, difficulties will arise in the adjustment to the environment. Such personality is called as 'Disintegrated personality'. The most glaring example of a deficiency of integration is seen in the absence of the adjustment with the environment. The reason is that, in the absence of integration the personality is unbalanced, there being no proper blending of the Psychophysical qualities. It is not essential that deficiency of integration will render him incapable of work. Many great people suffered from grave deficiencies in the integration of their personalities. Though this did not hinder or restrict their greatness, their personalities were incomplete and one-sided. With people of average capabilities, any such deficiency will affect even their skills in behaviour. It may be generally said that in the case of deficiency in integration of personality, the person can neither be skilled in his behaviour nor get

success in his life's works. Thus, Psychologists help in the integration of their personalities by giving various suggestions.

Gordon Willard Allport (1897 – 1967) was one of the first American psychologists to focus on the study of the personality. He is often referred to as one of the founding figures of 'Personality Psychology'. He contributed to the formation of Value Scales and rejected both a Psychoanalytic approach to personality and a Behavioural approach. He emphasized the uniqueness of each individual, and the importance of the present context, as opposed to past history, for understanding a person's personality. Gordon Allport defines Personality as, "the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine ... characteristic behaviour and thought" (28). Thus, this chapter discusses all the relevant psychoanalytical theories which are to be interpreted with Sudha Murty's text in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Traumatised Womanhood**

Sudha Murty in her novels probes on the seclusion and alienation which an individual experiences as a result of any loss or submergence of love and communication between family relationships. This alienation makes the characters quest one's identity and acquires a stage of maturity and equability. Sudha Murty depicts women in the simplest manner. She makes it a point that her female characters should essentially belong to rural or semi-rural or middle-class areas. Her female protagonists are delicate, diligent, dedicated and docile. They normally go for complete surrender but the very spirit of self-esteem in them always remains with them, ultimately, forcing them to become insurgences though in a very subdued way. Her women protagonists are sensitive, intelligent and career-oriented.

Sudha Murty's short stories encompass a concern for the younger generation who remain hooked on to the computer and telephone. She writes about the misuse of telephone reminding us of the value of rationale in thoughts with technological progress. Many of Sudha Murty's books portray her outlook which includes a feminine frameset of mind while describing saris, bangles, girly gossips at places, domestic chores, godly worships and many more signifying Indianness and Indian values, yet these books are able to engross men equally like women due to the witty, truthful and vibrant narration influencing readers to seek out innocence of thoughts and inner beauty of sympathizing with the others. Sudha Murty's intention of writing narratives is not to publicize her deeds of charity, but of sharing her experiences of life which include the rich culture of rural, urban and tribal India compelling readers to introspect the significance of being in the humane world of humanity guiding them in the right

direction. Sudha Murty has consciously tried to blend some of these elements in her stories, while studiously excluding gods, goddesses, and supernatural beings. Some of Sudha Murty's short stories are those that she loved hearing many, many years ago, tales that portrayed men and women, boys and girls landing themselves in trouble and somehow extricating themselves from it, with effort and perseverance. They depict human emotions and everyday human activities.

Sudha Murty has gathered these tales from all over the world but has retold them in the Indian setting so that the Indian child finds it easy to relate to these stories. The book *The Magic Drum and Other Favourite Stories* have stories that Sudha Murty had heard as a child and a few other short stories that have been created by her. She says that she realized the role of stories in the life of a child when she is blessed with a granddaughter Krishnaa, which motivated her to bring out her next book *Grandma's Bag of Stories* by taking her back into her childhood. Sudha Murty fondly remembers her grandmother who is popularly known as Krishtakka being very intelligent and loving is a terrific storyteller. Sudha Murty says that her grandmother preferred teaching them the values of life subtly through stories and never believed in preaching empty lessons understandable to a child. The stories had a great impact on her life that she has not forgotten these stories or the values owing to the wonderful narration to this day.

Sudha Murty spends untroubled and hassle-free childhood with her cousins and grandparents in her hometown in north Karnataka named Shiggaon. She says that she could establish a wonderful bond with her cousins owing to the strong bonding power of her grandmother while sharing everything with each other. These stories are a true manifestation of her childhood though there are a few changes made. Sudha Murty feels that stories are vastly important while helping a child learn values, mould values and above all learning morals of life. The book includes stories over long summer days and

nights, as seven children enjoy life with their grandmother in her little town. Grandmother has a bag of stories for each occasion to educate her grandchildren which includes tales of kings and cheats, monkey and mice, bears and gods. It includes short stories on laziness when a man refuses to work or put out the fire until it reaches his beard. He learns that being lazy and pretending to be cool would never help a person in need.

Sudha Murty's *The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk* is the fourth book of narratives based on her experiences as a teacher, a writer, and a social worker. The book has twenty-three short stories, and the short stories are mostly based on the personal lives of people who have confided their problems to Sudha Murty. She says it is not unethical as these stories are actual experiences of people who wish these to be written so that they perform the role of lessons for those who face the same situation. A few people encouraged her to write the incidents using their names so that the readers learn through these narratives and do not behave foolishly like the protagonist Vishnu in the short story *Too Many Questions*. Sudha Murty has taken an initiative to present the stories with the prospect of youngsters' views due to her interaction with the new editor.

Sudha Murty too believes in these values and her works are not mere abstract moralizing. As we know, she herself makes sacrifices to be a homemaker, and looks after her family and children instead of pursuing a career in Infosys; she had known at that time that this would have meant giving her a hundred percent to work, and neglecting her home front. This compels readers to brood on the purpose of life. People can share experiences, but true and diverse experiences like Sudha Murty's makes her narrations unique. There are words of wisdom, sincerity, courtesy, respect, appreciation, humour, hate and thanks. There are words that are dynamic, gentle and kind, delicate words of love, all embedded with meaning. The words that flowed from

the pen of great men have created history. Sudha Murty's words of wisdom and her firmly held belief that the happiness one gains in giving is more than the happiness one receives, brings peace and harmony in the minds of the readers, portraying the power of goodness that makes man what he is truly meant to be. Her poise, calmness of mind, or patience acts as a catalyst in bringing her closer to the readers through clear knowledge of her relation to her fellow beings and to her social and professional work. Perhaps the greatest inspiration for motivational writers like Sudha Murty has been her own beliefs and life experiences that provide the raw material making their writings authentic, genuine and powerful.

Most of Sudha Murty's books have short stories that are no more than four to five pages in length and have been narrated in simple words without any lavishness. Many of the short stories deal with issues of what is right and what is wrong in life and give valuable insights into life through the non-description of people who have influenced Sudha Murty in the course of her social work. A few short stories reflect how life can be unfair to a few, teaching values like compassion, empathy, and humanity. We figure out the largeness of heart in Sudha Murty as she helps the needy, recognizes originality or facilitates the pursuit of careers by the intellectually able, even as she goes about her social work and teaching duties. On one hand, some of Sudha Murty's short stories reinforce the right values while on the other hand there are narrations that depict the evils in the society, warning us subtly against the ills that are consequential while showing the right path. The values associated with these narratives can be classified as positive values, negative values, forgotten the values that condemn social evils.

The short story *May You Be the Mother of a Hundred Children* depicts Amba Bai, the paternal grandmother, who spends her time fulfilling the responsibilities of

looking after a large family. Though she is widowed, she cared for women's education, family planning, and the way the society treated widows. Though she is uneducated, she had the diligence and the ability to help women while delivering children. She is meticulous with deep faith in her convictions. *Wedding in Russia* describes a marriage convention in Russia. Marriage invariably took place on Saturday or Sunday in order to save working days. A newlywed couple is required to put on a military dress and visit a war memorial immediately after the marriage ceremony.

Oh, that is the custom in Russia. The wedding takes place normally on a Saturday or a Sunday. Irrespective of the season, after signing the register at the marriage office, married couples must visit the important national monuments nearby. Regardless of his position, he must wear his service uniform for the wedding. (*How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* 80)

The idea behind all this is to rise above personal pleasure and remember their national duty to the freedom fighters. The custom is set to save national time, money and energy. The short story, *Gawramma's Letter* conveys the role that a short story and storyteller play insensitive minds. Sudha Murty grew up in stature addressed a group of college students. A bad girl asked her a question as to how she faced difficult problems in life. Sudha Murty narrates a story of Hanuman from Ramayana who lifted the entire Dronagiri Mountain when he is in a state of confusion. It had a moral that, "When you come across difficulties, you have to grow bigger than the problem" (*How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* 142). Elderly lady Gawramma had narrated this short story to her when she is a child. Stories from Indian mythology have shaped the character of many Indians from generation to generation.

The first short story in the collection, *The Magic Drum and Other Favourite Stories* (2006), “The Superman” is about the lesson that braggarts are taught by a king. Four lazy louts are boasting of their superhuman qualities to one another. First says that he flew to a king’s palace immediately after his birth. His mother had a lot of trouble bringing him back. The second said that he rode a horse and went to the king’s palace when he is just a day old. The third person said that he visited the king’s palace by sitting on an elephant and had lunch with him. The last one said that he flew like a bird to the king’s garden, sat on his lap and his throne. The king’s servant decided to teach them a lesson. He told them to lift heavy boulders which he had got for building a wall. The four people immediately accepted their mistakes and requested the servant to be excused.

The short story, “A Fair Deal” is in fact about the unfair deal between two cheats Himakar and Seetapati. Himakar put cheap pieces of clothes at the bottom of a sack covering it with the silk ones. Seetapati lay dry leaves underneath and put fresh green betel leaves above them. Himakar deceived Seetapati by giving him the torn cloth. Seetapati asked him to clean his well to compensate for his losses. Both began to fight with each other. Seetapati is so wild with Himakar that he put him on the pyre. Both began to argue in the crematorium. Some robbers came to divide their loot at the crematorium when they heard animated human voices. They took to their heels leaving behind their loot thinking that they are ghosts. The two thugs divided it between them and benefited. They are lucky. In fact, this story does not fit in the writing scheme of Sudha Murty. Because it promotes unscrupulous trade practices in order to earn money. They are awarded when in reality they should have been punished.

A great king Vidyadhara ruled Gandhara wisely and fairly. One day he decided to test the honesty of the boys in his kingdom. He distributed some seeds among the



children and promised to allot a place of the prince to a child who grew the biggest and healthiest plant out of it within three months. Children came with beautiful plants to the palace after three months. Pingala is the only boy who had not brought any plant. Because the seeds that the king had distributed are roasted ones that could never yield. King made him the prince for his honesty. It is a seed of truth for other children. The short story, "Haripant the Wise," shows the practical wisdom of an ordinary person in the state. Shiriya Shetty sold adulterated ghee to poor simpletons. He would keep fifteen tins of good ghee and five tins of adulterated ghee in his shop. King trapped him for such unfair practices and brought him to the court of law.

Haripant is deputed to listen to the case and deliver his verdict. He wanted to penalize him for the maximum. So, he gave him three options. Shetty greedily accepted to drink ghee. He had to stop after the third barrel. Naturally he is asked to choose one of the two punishments. He is so money minded that he proposed to take a hundred lashes. However, he could not bear the whips after twenty-five lashes. He is forced to pay thousand gold coins ultimately. Thus, his utter love for money costs him dearly. Vibhandaka is a cruel cloth merchant. Coolie Gunakara is carrying a heavy sack of leftover from the eatery to the rubbish heap. Unfortunately, he slipped near Vibhandaka's shop. The rubbish everywhere around the shop filled the place with unbearable stink.

Vibhandaka forced poor coolie to clean the place many times. Yet he is not satisfied. He wanted Gunakara to sweep his shop with his coat. He argued that if people did not come to his shop due to stink, he would face heavy losses. Haripant decreed that Gunakara should clean the shop, and Vibhandaka should compensate for his death. Wisdom of an experienced person helped to solve the problem and save poor fellow from public humiliation. Devaiah and Devamma of *The Last Laddoo* made a perfect

miser couple. They once purchased ingredients to make two laddoos, one for each. Unfortunately for them, three laddoos are made out of the same material. The question arose as to who should eat the third laddoo. Each one of them is so selfish that they would not let the other eat it. Ultimately, they compromised that a person who speaks first would get only one laddoo; the other one would get two. They abstained from speech for two days. Neighbours suspected something amiss. They entered their house, seeing them lying on the ground motionless, and thought them dead. They took them to the crematorium for last rites. Yet nobody is prepared to speak. When the fire began to burn them, Devaiah shouted. Devamma won the case. When they reached home they found that a dog is licking the last laddoo. "But alas, in the excitement of funeral, the villagers had left the door of the hut open. The old man and the wife rushed in to find the dog licking the last crumbs of the sweets from the bowl" (*Magic Drum and Other Stories* 18). Though farfetched, story brings the sorrowful results of discordance between husband and wife to the fore.

The short story, *The Tastiest of All*, shows the invaluable role that food plays in human life. The king asked four girls the same question as to what is the tastiest thing in life. The first girl answered that meat is the tastiest thing in life. The second girl explained that liquor is the tastiest. According to the third girl, love tasted the best in life. The fourth and the last girl said that hunger is the tastiest item in life. The girl said, "There is one thing tastier than all this. It is hunger. If your stomach is full, the greatest of feasts will be tasteless, but on the empty stomach, the most ordinary, even the stale food will taste like nectar" (*Magic Drum and Other Stories* 21). The short story, *A Bottle of Dew*, shows the importance of hard work in human life. A sage asked people to collect dew, dripping from the banana tree as it contained magic power to transform

ordinary metal into gold. People planted many banana trees, and collected bottle of dew. People came to the sage when dew failed to work its magic.

Sage laughed and asked them to calculate the money that bananas would bring. It opened their eyes. Clever ministers serve as the asset to the king. Devaprasanna's minister Saranga is simultaneously envied and hated for his craftiness by the neighboring states. He gave refuge to two thugs for their skills in barking like a dog and crowing like cock. The king of the neighboring state invited Saranga as a state guest and arrested him for his refusal to favor his ideas. He found out that queen liked shawls of different texture and weave. Unfortunately, he had already honored the king with a shawl. One of the thugs made a plan to sneak into the king's bedroom. He barked like a dog and removed a sentry from the gate. The other one got into the bedroom and stole the shawl. They handed over the same shawl to the queen early in the morning. When the king came to know that the shawl is missing, he is quick to realize that Saranga's brain is behind the theft.

The king thought, "It is better to have such clever people as friends than enemies, he decided, from that day the two kingdoms became friendly neighbours" (*Magic Drum and Other Stories* 56). Instead of making enemies with such a brilliant person he preferred to befriend him. Two Thieves puts forth the importance of intelligence in life. The short story, "A Wedding to Remember," speaks about human relations beyond external appearances and reveals how social stigma is attached to diseases like leukoderma; it also imparts a lesson in humanity. The short story, "The Business of Philanthropy," speaks about the self-centeredness of the younger generation. It illustrates the callousness of the son who feels the money donated by the father is a mistake and money, but Sudha Murty tells Hiralal Jain's son that business

and philanthropy are two different things when he tries to combine philanthropy as a part of the business.

The story of Yellamma and Madha, a very poor couple, illustrates the unique relationship in their marriage in the short story, “Made in Heaven.” The couple believes in sharing trust and happiness in their life full of hardships in a society where marriage is treated as a security measure and wedding ceremonies as a social event. The short story, “Amma, what is Your Duty,” is an illustration of a saying ‘child is a father of the man.’ Sudha Murty’s daughter had taken up a voluntary charity assignment of teaching blind children in school. One day, she came across a bright and ambitious boy who wanted to join St. Stephen’s College, Delhi for further education but he had no money. Akshata saved the money, she would have squandered on her birthday and handed it over to the boy. Sudha Murty is impressed by her daughter’s gesture and started giving donations for the education of the deprived children.

The short story, “Five Spoons of Salt,” shows the ludicrous effect of lack of interactive communication in the members of the family. Gita’s mother asked Gita to put five spoons of salt in sambar. Her grandmother knew of her forgetfulness. So, she herself put five spoons of salt in sambar. Her grandfather, brother, and sister also put five spoons of salt each. In fact, Gita herself had put five spoons of salt. As a result, sambar tasted only salt and nothing else. Had the members of the family communicated among themselves, there would not have been a mess like this. The short story, “The Red Rice Granary,” puts forward the significance of Bonafede intent with which one donates. Sudha Murty’s grandmother always gave away quality rice to the needy hungry people who came to her door. The same grandmother, however, cooked raw red rice for the members of the family. Her grandmother told her: “Child whenever you want to give something to somebody, give the best in you, never the second best. That

is what I have learned from life. God is not there in the temple, mosque or church. He is with the people. If you serve them with whatever you have, you have served God” (*How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* 40).

The title short story “How I Taught My Grandmother to Read” is actually a real-life incident where Sudha Murty teaches her grandmother to read when her grandmother is sixty-two years old and had an ardent wish to learn reading and writing. The story illustrates that determination can overcome any obstacle in life. It also exemplifies that learning is a continuous process and every person does well when he has the willingness to learn. Sudha Murty’s grandmother teaches her the value of determination as she says “For a good cause if you are determined, you can overcome any obstacle. For learning, there is no age bar” (*How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* 7). There is no greater joy in life than to render happiness to others by means of intelligent giving. We must donate generously to the poor and needy.

The short story, “No Man’s Garden,” illustrates selflessness and noble thought of cultivating vegetables for the poor on an island without accepting anything out of the produce. It exhibits an awareness of nature’s resources and ability to judge others’ needs and detachment from the produce. The short story “Ganga’s Ghat,” illustrates that “Money comes with an expectation and spoils the delicate equilibrium of social work” (*The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk* 34). It is the tale of a woman who begins providing hot water to beggars for a bath. The able-bodied in the village appreciate her work and help her achieve the establishment of a bathing-ghat for the beggars.

Humility in success and power, patience and perseverance in failures, are great things one has to learn. Sudha Murty in her narration “Life’s Secret Lessons” conveys that adversities in life teach us that there is a limitation of human power too. There are

situations beyond our control where any amount of wealth cannot help changing the situation. It also helps us understand that when we collect material things; it becomes a burden for the next generation. She says that it is better to reduce the cache while we are alive. A person with a compassionate heart and sound judgment can be a philanthropist. The books portray other human values like empathy, compassion, hard work, truthfulness and a strong desire and willingness to learn.

The collection of short stories, *Grandma's Bag of Stories* (2012) is a wonderful collection of tales told by her grandmother and recollected by Sudha Murty when she herself became a grandmother. The book demonstrates a traditional way of grandmother narrating stories to children after dinner, under the milky night sky, with the breeze blowing cold, children feeling drowsy while listening to the stories and innocence reigning all over. Sudha Murty's book takes back to the good old days in which children are moulded into decent ways of conduct in the family itself. Elderly people played the role of trainers in such institutions. Her lap worked as the educational psychology lab, and her eyes performed the role of a projector of her love, affection, and concern for her children. Sudha Murty's writings carry some social function. Though grandma's stories are meant for children, they are not childish. They envelop message not only for children but also for grownups. They put forward the importance of hard work, honesty, sincerity, and alertness before the readers.

Sudha Murty assumes the role of a wise old grandma in order to be able to narrate the story. She refrains from making a pompous show of her wealth, knowledge and position in front of her readers. The ease with which she puts forward a hundred stories in her four anthologies put forward her commendable narrative skills. As she rightly says, she does not bring in Gods, Goddesses, angles, demons, devils and other supernatural beings in her short stories. Her short stories emerge out of her real-life

encounter with the people of flesh and blood which render them a touch of reality and simplicity.

*The Magic of the Lost Story* (2022) is a beautiful children novel with a vibrant backdrop of the Magnificent Tungabhadra River and the stories around the river. It's the story of curious Noonni, the protagonist who visits her grandparents in Somanahalli where she discovered an ancient stepwell. The book starts with a personalized introduction by the author Sudha Murty. She shares an incident of finding her lost bangles. How she lost a pair of her gold bangles and could find them almost after thirty years. This incident from her personal life makes me realize that sometimes it is always good to forget about materialistic things we lose in life. If they were meant for us, they will reappear in our life from anywhere in the world. She dedicates this book to her granddaughter Anoushka whom she calls Noonni with love.

Nooni is always a curious child and tries to discover many things. Memories of excavating the famous stepwell and experiencing village life for the first time in *The Magic of the Lost Temple* are still afresh in Noonni's mind. Noonni her real name being Anoushka is, a 12-year-old girl who lives in Bangalore with her father (Dr. Shekhar, a busy doctor) and mother (Usha, a banker by profession). She is a happy-go-lucky tomboy who loves all forms of physical activity. She is fairly good at studies and like most of the city kids, she too has joined all sorts of activity classes from time to time, with or without interest and is craving for some real fun during her forthcoming summer vacation.

Nooni's final exam results are out and a ten-week long summer vacation is about to begin. Instead of being happy or excited she is sad that like every year, her parents will have limited holidays. As usual, they will visit a nearby hill station for a few days

and then she will join a summer camp and few more activity classes which seemed repetitive and boring. But a turn of events takes place in a such a way that she gets a chance to spend her vacation with her paternal grandparents who live in Somanahalli, a village in Karnataka. This village is not only known for its picturesque view, good weather and kind people but also is famous for a fabled stepwell.

Nooni's mother Usha is visiting Delhi for some official work and his father Dr. Shekhar is busy with his patients. Nooni would visit her grandparents for the next six weeks. Shekhar along with his friend Vivek drops the girl at her grandparent's house in the village Somanahalli. The conversation between two friends on the way is a flashback of Nooni's father of his younger days. The village people had not seen this stepwell for ages, but stories associated with it could be heard in different versions from many villagers who had stayed there for generations. Nooni's grandpa (Ajja) and grandma (Ajji) are respected elders of this village and they welcome Nooni with open arms. Thereafter starts a vacation which is full of fun and adventure for Nooni. In her first few days itself Nooni makes new friends, learns to ride a bicycle, goes for a picnic and even attends a village wedding. She admires Ajja for his wisdom, simplicity, loving and caring nature and disciplined life while Ajji is like her friend with whom she can share any and everything. Nooni keeps asking questions and Ajji being a patient and loving grandmother, teaches Nooni many new things every single day. Ajji is very caring and loving towards Nooni.

Nooni is very happy with her village vacation and soon gets used to its gentle routine. She too gets to hear the story of the step well from both Ajji and Ajja and develops a secret desire to find the stepwell. One day when she is going on a small excursion to see the Varada River with her friends, she stumbles upon a shrub and in her excitement to go near it, she gets stuck in a swamp.



Nooni's grandmother always cooks meals for the whole village even though there are only three people living in her house. But soon, she gets used to it by engaging herself in helping her grandmother with household chores and a flurry of activities. Nooni starts digging, understanding myths from the people older than her when she thought she finally knew what it was, she went to the archaeological society to help her uncover the ancient structure. Nooni gets to learn many new things in the village. The healthy social environment in the village was new and pleasant for her. The garden maintained by her Ajji and Ajja was full of plants with some or other medicinal importance. The author's knowledge of plants is certainly something worth to mention. Children could definitely know and get motivated to plant trees and have a healthy environment around them after reading the descriptive explanations about different plants by Ajji. While staying with Ajji one-night Nooni asks her to tell a story. Ajji tells her the story of a lost temple near the village. She loved the story very much and believed it to be true. The next day she asks Ajja if the story was real. Ajja told him another version of the story.

Nooni's experience about understanding the beauty of Kitchen Garden, herbs with the help of her grandmother are something which makes us think about kitchen gardens and our reality check about plants at home. Nooni gets to know the importance of bonding of their family with their cows. She gets to see the new born calf and how her grandmother feels very anxious about the delivery of the cow, on how she takes care of the cow like own baby. Nooni along with her friends learns bicycle riding. The way her friends teach her, how she learns cycling is something which makes us start riding cycle. The important aspects of sharing, helping each other's in village at weddings, otherwise. The quality of serene bonds, the selflessness is understood by Nooni by participating in a wedding.

Sudha Murty's works help one reinforce human values so that we as human beings described to be the crown of God's creation are able to prove our worth over lesser living beings by setting civilized goals and achieving them through the right means. The beauties of nature and humankind are responsible for the opportunities in life to serve others through. Her works make one aware of the fact that each new day is a gift with its inestimable opportunities to work towards human happiness. Each narration of Sudha Murty is akin to precious gems, which impart the light of wisdom and values. A writer's personality and attitude have the ability to reinforce the values they inculcate: humility, genuineness and spontaneity, thoughtfulness and compassion, tolerance and a spirit to live.

A writer's individuality shines in her works inspiring us to make the most of our lives through their inspirational words. The novellas and short stories of Sudha Murty have aimed to place the Indian women writers of fiction from a critical perspective, and indicate the significance of this writing to understand various human relationships. Her vision for social change mainly emerges from her presentation of the traditional nature of familial relationships in the context of modern times. Being a contemporary writer, Sudha Murty does not deal with traditional ethics but her short stories centre on the redefined human relationships of present-day culture.

## Chapter Four

### Narrative Technique

The word ‘narrative’ is derived from the Latin word ‘narratives’ and in French, it is ‘narratifive’. Narration is a series of some real or imagined event described by a litterateur. Narrations must be distinguished from a description of qualities, circumstances and from the dramatic laws of events. Narrative Techniques provides deeper meaning for the reader and helps the reader to use imagination to visualize the happenings. Narrative technique plays a vital role in the novel. It is an invisible part of the novel as Henry James states in *Art of Fiction*, “A novel is a living thing, all one and continuous, like any other organism and in portion as it lives will be found, that in each part there is something of each of the other parts” (44). The narrative technique is the most important tool for the literature to become successful.

Sudha Murty has used various narrative techniques such as flashback, flash-forward, the back story and so on. As a postmodern literature, Sudha Murty uses intertextuality, paradox, cliff hanger, narrative hook, plot twist, autobiographical elements and interior monologue. This chapter highlights the narrative techniques of Sudha Murty and analyses of how it plays a vital role in appealing to the aesthetic sense in addition to enhancing the predominant theme.

Intertextuality is a literary device that generates a connection between text and a relational understanding of individual works. It has two types of intertextualities they are referential and typological intertextuality. Referential intertextuality is to use fragments in text and typological intertextuality refers to the use of pattern and structure in conventional texts. In *Postmodernism Theory and Practice* David Clippinger argues thus:

Intertextuality is a method of reading one text against another that illuminates shared textual and ideological resonances, the assertion that all texts and ideas exist within a fabric of relations. The term “intertextuality” refers to both a method of reading that juxtaposes texts in order to discover points of similarities and differences as well as the belief that all texts and ideas are part and parcel of a fabric of historical, social, ideological, and textual relations. As a whole, intertextuality suggests an important break with prior conceptions of the text as an autonomous entity separate from ideology and history...intertextuality proposes that writing, reading and thinking occur in history, and therefore all acts of language need to be considered within an ideological and historical context. In essence, an intertextual reading explores the deep context of any act of textuality, and it pursues the various paths of associations that are, in fact, the crux of a text. (88)

The writing of Sudha Murty is written in the urban settings of Karnataka. Her content incorporates numerous Kannada words other than the English words. She may have been conscious in utilizing such words as she knows how the reader of India, particularly in the metropolitan urban communities. Writers may not write in such a mixed language yet while interpreting, they rarely care. It might be an expressive device concerning the writer however it additionally shows how the author is a keen perceptive of an adjustment in the language use which is a reflection of the society. Here are some of the Kannada words and sentence which comes in the context. Sudha Murty uses Indian terms to create a typical Indian atmosphere. In her novels, she has adorned with a glossary of some Indian words which are present in the novel. She uses the Indian words merely to manifest Indian culture. These are closely related to the cultural

context and therefore, original native words or literal translation is used for location of the context. Sudha Murty intentionally used regional words to give the feel of the nativity to the reader. She words used the anglicised words, “Amma” (14), “Appa” (16), “koel” (04), “Lungi” (06), panchanga (104), “Dabba” (131), “Akka” (136). The meaning for the words in English is mother, father, Asian cuckoo, dhoti, panchangam, and box.

Sudha Murty has chosen for her themes, variety of subjects right from childhood, parenting, youth age, marriage, domestic life, man and woman relationships, quest for self, identity crisis, social acquaintances, various roles and hospitality, struggle, joy and happiness and new woman concept, women empowerment, impact of globalization and modernization. According to Sudha Murty, marriage is a lifelong commitment for better or worse still death do us part. Marriage is a secret bond of two people who should understand each other without even uttering a single word. Their compatibility should be good she talks about how one should save their marriage and maintain happiness of it, and this should be the responsibility of both husband and wife. Marriage is basically more of adjustments, compromises, sacrifice and lot of understanding at every phase of life. One must make sacrifices in order to gain happiness and proper co-ordination amongst couples like the two wheels of a cart properly aligned to progress in the journey of life. One must shun ego and false prestige. Married life is more of giving than receiving. Sacrifice gains happiness for the family.

Man and woman both should be equally responsible for their happy relationship. It is proven fact that man and women are depended on each other in the reciprocal way no one is either superior or inferior. Nature has an equation of maintaining natural balance in the act of procreation. Their relationship is purely based on highly emotionally charged bonding with reciprocal attitude. Man should not impose any

patriarchal domination over his wife and should allow her to grow and develop with his love, support and encouragement both of them should exhibit mutual respect of friendship, companionship, and should aim at saving their marriage at all costs for the sake of their happy married life with enduring solidarity in the marriage frame work. In the domestic sphere women are always regarded as fragile, subordinate, second rated citizens, very often described as belonging to fair sex and vulnerable class which is not true, she is neither subsidiary nor inferior, but she is essentially inevitable part of life and she has a definite role to play in the domestic front. She too is an important segment of family setup. It would be incomplete without the participation of either man or woman they have equal role to play.

With the emergence of New Woman concept, many writers have created and made their characters as highly composed, empowered and strong women despite of plenty of hurdles haunting them. They are not broken, shattered but have the courage to face the challenges on life, as situation and life hands it over to them without any grumbling or crumbling and do not take the shelter of heinous things like committing suicide or simply shedding tears and blaming their fate and situation. They rather become aware of their potentialities and gather courage to face the situation and they prepare themselves to equip the strong elements in their personalities to face the challenges and overcome the worst situations. Sudha Murty has created strong willed women who were initially meek, submissive, docile, lack of confidence and unaware of their potentialities but later on when life turns on them differently, they very aptly rise to the occasion like phoenix to settle their priorities and save their identity to play their role well in the game of either life or family challenges. They become aware of their inner strength and confidence and come forward to combat the situation not by breaking but by growing stronger by gathering courage. They aim at equipping

themselves with essential strength, strong will and avenues to face the hurdles in achieving their goals. There by they emerge as strong new women with quest for self.

Sudha Murty as a successful writer writing in the most familiar and direct way always moves closer to the hearts of readers by depicting very simple, straight forward situations which are not alien but they are very common to all women folk and people. At once readers find familiarity and develop affinity and sympathy for the characters created by Sudha Murty. The present study concentrates on identity crisis, rebel against oppression, gender bias. Thus, it analyses fictional world of Sudha Murty with the special emphasis on characters, themes, narrative techniques and setting. Study of this kind will definitely help us to study fictional world of Sudha Murty with the focus on the themes and techniques.

*Three Thousand Stitches* is a collection of 11 short stories that draw from Sudha Murty real life experiences as an individual and as the chairperson of Infosys foundation. The book narrates many stories the rescue and rehabilitation of 3000 devadasis in Karnatak. In *Magic of the Lost Temple* Little Nooni is off to spend some time with her grandparents in their village, and she gets to do several engaging things like making papads, organize picnics and learn how to ride a bicycle. Her trip becomes interesting when she discovers an ancient well in the middle of a forest, and thrilling when the secrets of this well are slowly uncovered by her and her friends. *How I Taught My Grandmother to Read and Other Stories* is a collection of 25 semiautobiographical short-stories written by Murty. Each of these stories is simple and touching and is packed with values. Funny spirited and inspiring, the book teaches a valuable lesson about the importance of doing what you believe is right and having the courage to realize your dreams.

*Wise and Otherwise: A Non-fiction Book*, is a collection of fifty vignettes of the real-life incidents of Sudha Murty where she encounters ordinary people and extraordinary minds during her travels, which left a profound impression on her. *The Magic Drum and Other Favourite Stories: A Collection of Stories* that include ones that Murty's grandparents once told her, your child will not be able to put down this captivating book. Whether it is a clever princess who finds herself a suitable groom, using nothing but a question, or a couple that gets saved by a magic drum, these short stories will allow your child's imagination to soar. *Something Happened on the Way To Heavens* is a collection of 20 memorable true life stories handpicked by Sudha Murty. *The Bird with the Golden Wings* is nothing but magic each and every story is bound to grab child's attention. These stories have incredible morals that child will surely benefit from. *Grandma's Bag of Stories* brings forth memories of grandparent spinning tales around animals and mysterious characters. Sudha Murty dealt with the theme of emerging impact of the globalization on the lives of people.

Sudha Murty as a creative writer and practicing author seems to be in a common dialogue with her readers rather than an writer who stays in the ivory tower. She thus creates an aura appealing larger public. The main function of literature is entertainment, enlightenment, propagation of ideals, life values and moral, social and ethical yearnings which have a definite message to convey it to their readers by adhering to the fact that virtue wins over vice. The victory of good values always has an upper hand. Though initially evil seems to be taking a lion's share by having its dominance seems to be vanishing in the long run on the path of righteousness. Sudha Murty does not want to deviate from this kind of ethical, moral, creative stand point to establish the writer's strategy of attaining the goal of propagating moral message to readers and audience. There is a clear message for the readers that, money is the essential need for everyone.



So, everyone is after it, but it is not all. It can buy luxuries, comforts and many other things but not happiness. All her novels have very welcoming beginning, well developed middle part of the plot and soothing end with a clear-cut message for all to adopt and follow. The action in her novels always travels forward. Though she has narrated the experiences and memories of the past. By way of flashback techniques, she did not drag it too far.

It is evident that, Sudha Murty does not want to test and play with the patience of readers. With backward and forward movements of characters and events in their life for long period. She co-ordinates the sequence of story part so well that, it has well-knit coherent fusion. She has used literary devices like symbols, metaphors, anecdotes, allusions to enliven the themes. Thus, through the narrative technique, Sudha Murty tries to convey the true essence of her writing. She aims to bring this vision to the reader to make the content of her writing clear, tangible and more effective for readers. The technique used by Sudha Murty brings out the American and Indian atmospheric realistically in her works. She brings out feelings of nostalgia, alienation and depression. Later they emerge as a bold and courage to create their own identity. These narrative devices help the readers to understand the novel clearly. The narration of Sudha Murty seems to give a realistic account of the reality with every possible detail. It seems that she is very pleased with her acting of description. The ability of an artist to recreate essential reality provides her work with many meanings.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

Sudha Murty's writings are always rather plain but what attracts the readers is the depth of her characters and the complexities of their relationships. She has used the modern concepts of time and devices like an illusion, dream, nightmare, and hallucination. She through their novels communicates the fallen nature of humans and human relationships. Sudha Murty has constantly used the term 'relationships' in the context that an Indian woman has to play various roles in the family according to the nature of her relationship, and she is seldom allowed to venture out of her relationship to make a contribution to the public life of the nation. She is also unique in the sense that she writes about the customs and traditions of Gujarat and very skillfully uses local words and terms like -- Ba, Bapu, Mami, Bai -- to indicate relationships. However, the treatment of human relationships in her novellas and short stories is both Indian and universal.

Sudha Murty's female protagonists, who play a pivotal role in human relationships portrayed in these works, are from the middle-class society. Sudha Murty made her ideas of the short story clear in a preface to *The Magic Drum and Other Favourite Stories* in the following words:

If we look outside our country, we find all kinds of folktales that have been told to generations of children in every corner of the world. I have included a few such stories in this collection. Interestingly, while putting together these stories, I noticed that many Indian stories are about Gods, curses, and boons. They also often end with marriage and characters living happily after. Western stories, on the other hand, tend to

emphasize logic and human intellect over other things, while stories from middle-east have a lot of magic and supernatural elements. (2)

Sudha Murty's book *Wise and Otherwise: A Salute to Life* presents fifty-one vignettes offering multiple shades of human nature. This book narrates various true-life incidents that occurred during the course of her social work and teaching, as she went about her chosen task of helping the needy, recognizing true merit and originality or facilitating the pursuit of careers of one's choice to the intellectually capable. The experiences and the values they embody are firmly rooted in the Indian context. The radiance of a lamp can never ignite another lamp unless it continues to smoulder in its own flame. A teacher too, like a lamp needs to nurture a strong willingness to learn before she can influence others with her ideas. Sudha Murty, whom many of her students regard as an ideal teacher, learned early in life that it is a vocation that could help her shape the world. A teacher must not only inform but also inspire. If the inspiration dies out, it is the only information that gets accumulated.

The mind is like a garden which has to be nurtured every day with inspiring thoughts so that the weeds of impure thoughts and actions are taken care of. Every person aspires to reach great heights in life; those of them who fail to achieve the goals are often forced to give up our dreams due to lack of encouragement. A good teacher can be a tremendous source of encouragement and inspiration to her students. Sudha Murty plays a vital role in moulding a person into a good human being with works to improve the lives of others. Her commitment to her chosen vocation of teaching has also served as a strong base in her writings. As an educator and as an individual, Sudha Murty communicates about life and love for others. India has a rich heritage of story-telling texts, including the Jataka Tales, the Panchatantra, and the Kathasaritsagara, which have been enjoyed by generations of readers and listeners. While they are

fascinating as tales and narratives, they are invaluable as parables and allegories that convey moral truths.

Sudha Murty says these stories enrich our morals and are the perfect means to introduce the right values to young people. She says that in every corner of the world, folktales have been told to generations of children. Making a study of these world traditions, she noticed that Indian stories often featured gods, curses, and boons; many of them also ended up with a marriage and the characters lived happily ever after. On the contrary, western stories emphasize logic and human intellect over other things, while Middle-Eastern ones have a lot of magic and supernatural elements. Sudha Murty feels that there are various types of poverty besides an insufficiency of money. These are, for example, poverty of compassion, poverty of tolerance, poverty of concern and regard for others. There is also the poverty of justice, of vision, of integrity, and of human understanding. There is a poverty of humility, of forgiveness, of loyalty. We find a vast number of people starving for love and understanding, especially the old, the disabled and the destitute. Sudha Murty tackles human attitudes in many of her stories which teach lessons and at times astonish us at the mindset of people who are educated and wise yet can be considered literate while there are illiterates like the villager in the story *The Old Man and His God*, *The Day I Stopped Drinking Milk* displaying humanity and culture far better than the city-bred and educated.

Sudha Murty believes that the lessons of humility can be learned from these villagers who do not feign like the rich and well-bred. Sudha Murty learns a lesson of reverence of giving from a villager Thandapa who refuses to accept Sudha Murty's help of school uniforms and bottles, and umbrellas until she accepts a gift of fruit juice throughout the year from him. These incidents taught Sudha Murty lessons of hospitality ensued in India. She acquires humble admiration and learns to accept the

gift while teaching the readers another lesson on human feelings. Sudha Murty depicts another set of human attitudes where children betray their parents in the old age to impinge their hard-earned savings through the narration of the story of an old man who is brought by his own son to the foundation office with the intention of leaving his father in the old age home to retrieve his savings.

Sudha Murty's short stories also depict the values, simpletons like villagers, bear towards the materialistic world, stating that the whole world, the earth, water in rivers, monsoon and other earthly things are out of reach of man, and so there is no meaning in being materialistic. It teaches a poignant lesson on sharing resources and leaving it after one's use for the coming generation as these earthly elements are meant for everyone. Meeting people in the day-to-day life, and experiencing these values have suffused Sudha Murty with the pride of being an Indian leaning back on a rich culture. These short stories help in measuring, correcting and reinstating values by changing the attitudes in society through ethics. Perhaps the deepest crisis of all poverty is a complete lack of sympathetic feeling for one's fellow men, which is actually a dearth of brotherhood and poverty of sustaining beliefs. It would not be wrong to say that Sudha Murty's writings are committed to eradicating this 'poverty' of values.

Sudha Murty's short stories also highlight the orthodox Indian society regarding women's rights, in short stories like "Stove Bursts or Dowry Deaths," where the death of a twenty-year-old lady is later understood as a death actually related to dowry. The short story reflects the social structure, dearth of sympathy and consideration, the common people, the bias based on gender discrimination and unemployment. She creates wakefulness amongst people to readdress the society with universal values. Many of the short stories like "A Bond Betrayed on Rakhi Day" tackles problems of human trafficking like the protagonist Tara, who is subjected to prostitution by her own

brother on the day, 'Rakhi,' a ceremonial thread is tied to a brother marking the lasting bondage between a brother and sister.

Sudha Murty's short stories convey varied morals from modesty to compassion, from fairness to societal concerns which sensitize readers for being true, day to day experience to which people are able to associate easily as the stories reach the people of all the strata in a society. The protagonists belong to humble backgrounds like the tribal couple, or the tribal boy Hanumanthapa or the salesgirl in a local train. As a teacher her writings inspire and motivate professionals like her to raise their standard, a few inspired readers who has read her books review her work voicing her thoughts on *Metro Reader* as "The greatest joy for a teacher is to produce students better than him" (2).

Thus, Sudha Murty through her writings has whittled a place in Indian English Literature and Gujarati Literature respectively. This research can further be extended to study the complexities of human behaviour and socio-psychological dilemmas as well. Stylistic perspective is another angle which is yet to be explored. Very meagre research is done on the works of Sudha Murty who is writing under the category of Indian English Literature. She writes with subtle simplicity but beneath that simplicity lays a deeper understanding of human nature which has not been thoroughly explored. So, there is ample scope of research in her writings, such as women empowerment, exploration of self-identity, the establishment of moral values and the impact of industrialization.

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**Redefining Blackness: A Diasporic Study of Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Ashwini. M**

**(Reg. No. 21APEN04)**



**PG and Research Department of English**

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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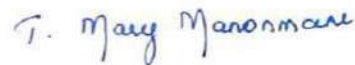
## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Redefining Blackness: A Diasporic Study of Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem*** 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 Ashwini. M during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Redefining Blackness: A Diasporic Study of Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem*** 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

April 2023

Ashwini. M

Ashwini. M

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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.

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## Preface

The project entitled **Redefining Blackness: A Diasporic Study of Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem*** analyses how the characters in the novel are searching for self-identification and are dependent on their locale to help shape their identity. Also, it highly explores racist stereotypes and highlights the richness of black culture.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Claude McKay, his life, works, awards, and achievements. It showcases the rudiments of his works and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Black Diaspora and Harlem** deals with how the immigrants have a double identity where they want to adjust to their host land's culture, alongside being want to remain in the identity of their own black culture.

The third chapter **Primitivism and Black Identity** explores the African-American's attitude to return to the origins, a glance towards Africa that consciously or unconsciously resulted in the process of alienation.

The fourth chapter **Intersectional Discrimination of Women** deals with how the female characters are merely used as allegories for more important moral choices and how they serve as impediments to the advancement of black masculinity and individual satisfaction.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt with in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Twentieth-century Jamaican-American literature introduced a new perspective to the writers as well as the readers, including those from urbanized and marginalised communities. This literature has been influenced majorly by the great African diasporic heritage where the African people were enslaved and shipped to America and to other parts of the world including the Caribbean. This literature also includes oral forms of expression including folktales, sermons, work songs, and rhymes that emerged on the Southern slave plantation which gave way to blues, rap, and jazz in the twentieth century. These expressive forms detail the emotional anguish associated with being black and dispossessed and often included a coded message about the perils of slavery. The national identity of Jamaica is based strongly on Creolization- mixed ethno-racial ancestry and one of the most distinctive aspects of Jamaican literature is its use of the local dialect Patois – the country’s official language.

During the eighteenth century, the United States have taken on many workers from the Caribbean Island to work on the sugar plantations and also recruited men for service during World War I, which made many Jamaicans to settle in America and formed an ethnic group called Jamaican-Americans who have full or partial ancestry from Africa.

As social liberty expanded among Black Americans, they launched their written literature during the second half of the eighteenth century, and their challenge was to reconstruct the genteel and sentimental tone of American literature. Among the themes and issues explored in Black American literature is the role of Black Americans within the larger American society, their culture, racism, slavery, and inequality. At present days, this literature has become accepted as an integral part of American Literature with books such as *Roots: The Saga of the American Family* (1976) by Alex Haley, *And I Still*

*Rise* (1978) by Maya Angelou, and *Home* (2012) by Toni Morrison achieving both bestselling and award-winning status. Literary realism began to flourish in art, music, and literature during the mid-nineteenth century which depicts the contemporary lives of ordinary people. Writers were more dedicated to presenting society's crude realities and used the city's texture and colour to influence the look of their creative project. Literary realism slowly paved the way for modernism in America which benefitted from the diversity of immigrant cultures and it addressed various contemporary topics such as race relations, gender, and the human condition.

Diaspora is broadly understood as migration or scattering of people away from their ancestral homeland. The people of West and Central Africa were enslaved and shipped to America during the Transatlantic Slave Trade from the 1500s to the 1800s and to other parts of the world including the Caribbean, United Kingdom, and Canada. New communities were formed in the places where slaves were dumped and engaged in the renewal of their values and behaviour. For Africans in the diaspora, decolonization means reclaiming their true African identity which slowly gave rise to Pan-Africanism with the aim of unifying and uplifting African nations and diaspora to promote social, political, and economic success. They adopted the English language, passed on what they remembered of their culture combined with what they witnessed on the new land using the new tongue, and reflected on their history, alienation, search for identity, and the quest for their home.

African people were transported as slaves in great numbers to the United States, United Kingdom and also to Jamaica. Almost ninety percent of the Jamaican population are African people who came from West or Central Africa and South-East Africa as they were enslaved to work in the plantations of their white owners. The majority of Jamaican people moved to the United States for occupation and military purposes during the eighteenth century. The Jamaican diaspora refers to the body of Jamaicans who have left



the Island of Jamaica and were found in the far corners of the world, but a large number of Jamaicans in the diaspora were found in the United States and all across the Caribbean coast of Central America.

The term Black diaspora was profoundly used in the twenty-first century and racism marked the flourishing of diasporic writing such as Afro-Caribbean, African-American, Anglo-African, Jamaican-American, etc. Harlem is considered the epicentre of the black diaspora, it is a home of all sorts of the link to diasporic sights, sounds, and struggles, in the words of Alain Locke, Harlem was “the Mecca of the New Negro.” The American writer James Weldon Johnson in his article “Harlem: The Culture Capital” said that the black American’s “advantages and opportunities are greater in Harlem” (4) and it will “become the intellectual, the cultural and the financial center for Negroes of the United States” (4).

Harlem Renaissance, a literary movement that emerged after the end of World War I and led up to World War II, centered in Harlem, New York City was a period of rich cultural and literary activity that gave rise to works that asserted pride in black life and a rising consciousness of discrimination and prejudice. Though it was centered in the Harlem neighbourhood it also influenced many African and Caribbean writers.

Until the end of the Civil War, the majority of Africans and Caribbeans, living in America, were enslaved in the South, and after the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1875, they were denied of their political equality, economic and self-determination. In Langston Hughes’ words, “I swear to the Lord, I still can’t see, why democracy means, everybody but me,” well explain their plight as they were conspired back in to work as unpaid labour in mines, plantations, and on other public work projects, and were subjected to brutal forms of corporal punishment and overwork.

As life in the South became increasingly difficult, the majority of the African and Caribbean Americans began to migrate to the North to a place called Harlem and the

future movement arose was called Harlem Renaissance. It was at the time known as New Negro Movement named after Alain Locke's anthology *The New Negro* published in 1925. Many involved in the Harlem Renaissance were part of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century great migration out of the South into the Northeast and Midwest. On the cultural and sociological level, the literary movement redefined how America and the world viewed Black Americans.

This new identity led to a greater social consciousness and expanded their intellectual and social contacts internationally. Harlem Renaissance works thematize oppression and self-expression before the backdrop of imperialism and global migration. It also brought along a new creative energy for black literature in America with the emergence of writers such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Claude McKay, Alain Locke, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Huston, Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Nella Larsen, etc.

Wallace Thurman's *The Blacker the Berry* (1929), is a novel that exposed colour prejudice among African-Americans and described his female protagonist, Emma Lou, trying to find her own way in the supposedly liberated racial and sexual atmosphere of the 1920s. The novel was published during the height of the Harlem Renaissance and through his protagonist, he expressed that black skin presents more struggles for a woman than a man. The novel was one of the most widely read and most controversial works of the literary movement which explores the prejudice within the family and the black community. The author described Emma's life in Harlem, her dreams, and the decisions she makes in order to survive and she finally comes to terms with her skin colour for the acceptance of herself by herself.

Langston Hughes' *Not Without Laughter* (1930), is a debut novel in the Harlem Renaissance series, where the characters are from a typical negro family in the Middle West. The novel examined in detail about the experiences of working-class and poor blacks, the black language, and the importance of black music to black life. The

protagonist of the novel is a young boy Sandy who struggled to create an identity for himself outside the struggles between the whites and blacks and tried to find balance within his unstable home. Hughes wrote the novel at a time when African-American culture had gained prestige in White American society. It is an early Great Migration novel in which the blacks travelled North and West in search of opportunities. The tragedy of racism is felt throughout the novel as experienced by an ordinary Afro-American in White society.

Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940), tells the story of a young twenty-year-old black man, Bigger Thomas, who got into a worse situation after he killed a young white woman in a brief moment of panic. It deals with the effects of the Great Migration where many African-Americans left the oppressive social conditions of the South and moved to the North. The story reflects the hopelessness and prejudice experienced by the blacks in America and narrates the events of what it meant to be black in America. The author's exploration of Thomas' psychological corruption gives the readers a new perspective on the effects racism had on the oppressed black community. Racism pushes Black people into a dangerous state of mind in order to protect themselves and are also forced to act slavishly before their white oppressors. The novel addresses the white American society's responsibility for the repression and dehumanisation of blacks.

Apart from the writers such as Thurman, Hughes, and Wright, Alain Locke and W. E. B. Du Bois are the two most important Harlem intellectuals who emancipated the Negroes to strive for civic participation, political, and economic equality. In *The New Negro* (1925), Alain Locke urged the blacks not to rely on the old model of thinking and to embrace a new spirit and become a new negro, which is the symbol of a new era.

W. E. B. Du Bois was one of the eloquent advocates for black cultural nationalism and encouraged the development of Black literature and art. In his *The Souls of Black Folks* (1903) which is a collection of fourteen of his own essays, he argues that

there is a shortage of resources and opportunities available for blacks and points out the need for change.

Claude McKay, a Jamaican-American writer and poet, was born in Sunny Ville, Jamaica to farmers, Thomas Francis and Hannah Ann Elizabeth. He was a central figure in Harlem Renaissance whose writings promoted spiritual freedom, and humanitarian social and political values. His writings challenged White supremacy and celebrated Black lives, especially Jamaican culture. In London, he deepened his love for socialism and is referred to as the first Black Journalist in Britain.

A poet from the first he has written many poems and published many poetry collections such as *Songs of Jamaica* (1912) which is his first published book of poems, and several other poetry collections such as *Constab Ballads* (1912), *Harlem Shadows* (1922), *Selected Poems* (1953), *The Dialectic Poetry of Claude McKay* (1972), *The Passion of Claude McKay: Selected Poetry and Prose* (1973). His popular poems include “If We Must Die” (1919), “America” (1921), “Enslaved” (1921), and “I Shall Return” (1922) which set the tone for the Harlem Renaissance and gained the respect of many younger poets of the century.

McKay has also written five novels and a novella including *Home to Harlem* (1928), *Banjo* (1929), *Banana Bottom* (1933), *Amiable with Big Teeth* (2017), *Romance in Marseille* (2020), and a novella, *Harlem Glory* (1990). Apart from his poems and novels he has authored a collection of short stories titled *Gingertown* (1932), two autobiographical books *A Long Way from Home* (1937), *My Green Hills of Jamaica* (1979), and an anthology of essays titled *Harlem: Negro Metropolis* (1940). Several of his works were published posthumously which is an addition to his oeuvre.

In 1977, McKay was named the national poet by the government of Jamaica and was awarded posthumously the Order of Jamaica for his contributions to literature. His first novel *Home to Harlem* (1928), won the Harmon Gold Award in literature. He has

also won Musgrave Medal in 1912, Literary Guild Award in 1937 and Harlem Foundation Award for his literary achievements. As one of the first African- American poets of the Harlem Renaissance, he influenced later poets including Langston Hughes.

In 1907, an English gentleman Walter Jekyll in Jamaica encouraged McKay to write dialect verse and also became his mentor, and he later set some of McKay's verses to music. He was introduced to British Fabian socialism in his teens by his elder brother Uriah Theophilus McKay and he also became acquainted with the writings of Marx. In his brother's library, he spent reading classics to develop his skills as a writer and poet and was also exposed to the ideas of communism and evolutionary naturalism.

McKay first came to the United States to study Agriculture at a historically Black, Tuskegee Institute, founded by Booker T. Washington where he first encountered the harsh realities of American racism which formed the base for his subsequent writings. In 1914, he immigrated to New York where he was forced to take a series of menial jobs such as carriage and cabinet maker, and waiter before he invested in a restaurant. Distressed by the discriminatory barriers against African-Americans in the twentieth-century white-dominated society, McKay expressed his feelings through writing which served as a rebellious voice against the devastating effects of racism.

In those opening years of the Harlem Renaissance McKay's writings attracted the masses to the city and to the struggle for a new African-American literary voice. He enjoyed the company of artists and activists both Black and White and for this reason, he was both envied and respected among his contemporaries.

McKay became disappointed with African-American leadership and with the state of race relations in the United States, and felt that the leaders of Harlem Renaissance, particularly W. E. B. Du Bois and Alain Locke were discouraging artists extremely from portraying the Black experience honestly.

Refusing to enter the 1926 Opportunity prize contest, he wrote to Alaine Locke:

I am afraid I must tell you frankly of the Afro American judges, I am afraid of their influence. Although I have strong social opinion I cannot mix up art and racial propaganda. I must write what I feel, what I know, what I think, what I have seen, what is true, and your Afro American intelligentsia won't like it. (2)

McKay also felt that Black editors particularly of small magazines famous during the Harlem Renaissance period, worried more about the reactions of White benefactors and audiences than they did about the integrity or political efficacy of the art. With this criticism of the Harlem Renaissance leaders, he left America for Russia in 1922, where he attended the fourth congress of the communist international. He returned to America, not until 1934, by that time the literary movement had ended, and its writers dispersed. On his return, he wrote about Harlem Labour Movement for publications such as "American Mercury" and "The Nation."

"Harlem Shadows" (1922), appeared in McKay's well-known poetry collection of the same title *Harlem Shadows* and this poem is about the sex workers of nineteenth-century Harlem society. The speaker of the poem talks about a group of young women who work as sex workers and extends his empathy by implying that racism and poverty have pushed them into such professions. The poem connects the women's struggles to the broader oppression and disempowerment of black communities. The language of the poem provides an in-depth glimpse into the author's mastery of language description.

"If We Must Die" (1919), is a poem which is often read as a call to end anti-black racism and as an inspiration to oppressed people around the world to fight for their freedom. In this poem, the speaker addresses a group of oppressed people, identifies himself as a part of it, and describes they are surrounded by "mad and hungry dogs." He then proposes that violent resistance is the only way to end their struggles and says that

they can die like men fighting back rather than dying like hogs. It is written in Shakespearean sonnet form and became well known for voicing out against racial struggles.

*Songs of Jamaica* (1912), was the first poetry collection published by McKay and it was awarded the Silver Musgrave Medal by the Institute of Jamaica. The book was dedicated to Sir Sydney Olivier, the former Governor of Jamaica, for his “sympathy for the black race.” The book marked the emergence of a new poetic voice and it was the first collection of verse written in Jamaican Patois, a dialect of Jamaica. It also marked the influence of McKay’s mentor, Walter Jekyll who has written the preface to the work.

*Amiable Big White Teeth* (2017), published posthumously by Penguin Classics sixty-nine years after the death of McKay was a work which talks about the tensions between black nationalism and the global approach to solidarity that reached the higher ground in the 1930s. The novel provides insight into this relatively understudied moment in Black American history. It revolves around the second Italo-Ethiopian war in the mid-1930s where African-Americans saw Italy’s military campaign as a direct attack on black sovereignty. But the United States communists tried to reframe the conflict as not being about race at all and this debate between the communists and black nationalists become the center of the novel.

McKay’s *Banjo: A Story Without a Plot* (1929), as the subtitle suggests there is no definite plot to the novel and it is more of a picturesque description of racism that happens to the novel’s central character Banjo and his friends and it is considered as a sequel to the McKay’s *Home to Harlem*. The novel tells different stories of being a coloured vagabond during the 1920s, also portraying McKay’s important theme that blacks should have high regard for their heritage. It depicts how blacks are treated with contempt and as the result they feel alienated. The poverty associated with the blacks also makes them victims towards verbal insults.

From all the prose and poetry that McKay wrote, *Home to Harlem* (1928), is proclaimed as his most famous novel won the Harmon Gold Award for Literature which is a prestigious award for African-American art and was also known as the first bestselling novel written by African-Americans. The novel details the journey of the main character Jake Browns, an African-American, to find something he always considered as “home.” The novel becomes increasingly complex and interesting when the author decides to hide the meaning behind every place he goes and every woman he meets.

McKay's *Home to Harlem* opens with the main character Jake Browns who was a former soldier in World War I (1914–18) leaving his duty which he considers as just another series of menial jobs and goes to London. He has a white girlfriend in London who treats him very well, but he can't get his experiences of racism out of his mind. When Jake's girlfriend keeps him inside during the race riots that erupted in London, he realizes he needs to go home to Harlem. When Jake Brown goes home to Harlem he strolls through the neighbourhood, happy to be surrounded by the nightlife of Harlem. Almost immediately Jake meets a woman, a "little brown girl" who captures his heart and whom he searches for in the rest of the novel. He then meets Zeddy, an old army buddy and tells him all about his departure from Havre, France. He goes to Baltimore and notes that the various people in Harlem are often fighting with each other, just as white people and black people fight.

Jake begins to work as a longshoreman, taking small jobs, as he doesn't want to take money from Rose, his new girlfriend. *Home to Harlem* also describes the rich nightlife of Harlem as Jake visits each cabaret and buffet flat in order to find his “little brown girl.” Meanwhile Jake realizes Rose is having an affair, which is not surprising because she is free with her love, but he decided to leave her for good. He left Harlem to work on the railroad, becoming the third cook on a dining car. He left Harlem in order to



get away from Rose and the influences of the nightlife there. Jake meets Ray, the Haitian waiter, who works on the train because his father is in prison and can't pay for his college anymore. He teaches Jake about philosophy and Sapphic poetry, African history, the formation of Liberia, and the queen who ruled Ethiopia. After these interactions, Jake started to think about whom he is as an African-American compared to what blacks are in other countries. Also, Ray thinks about how his power has been stripped away in Haiti, and he realizes white men never have a problem with confidence among black people because whites have all of the power.

Ray has decided to change his life and gets a job as a mess boy on a freighter. Jake doesn't want to go back to working on the dining car without Ray, so he decides to stay in Harlem. Springtime in Harlem is in full bloom, and Jake finally sees Felice, that is his "little brown girl," whom he has been looking for all this time. He comes to know that Zeddy is Felice's ex-boyfriend and the enraged Zeddy tells Jake he'll get justice, because Jake is a draft dodger and an army deserter, and police are rounding up draft dodgers and deserters in Harlem. As Jake is worried about his reputation, Felice says they need to go to Chicago as it is a place where black people are welcome. The novel ends with them heading for the subway station, to go to Chicago together and leave Harlem behind.

McKay tried to deconstruct a myth about Harlem as a home for the New Negro, as the central characters of the novel- Jake and Ray, try to escape the hold of Harlem. All the characters in the novel are searching for self-identification and are dependent on their locale to help shape their identity. The novel highly explores racism and racist stereotypes and also portrays the richness of the black culture. The lack of unity among African-Americans is highlighted throughout the novel with the interactions between each character who are a descendant of various African populations that settled in America.

Though *Home to Harlem* became a bestseller, it was both praised and condemned for its realistic portrayal of African-American life during the 1920s. W. E. B. Du Bois, an American sociologist, historian and Pan-Africanist, accused McKay of portraying blacks in a negative light. In his journal, "The crisis," criticised the novel, "for the most part nauseates" him, but he felt on the other hand the book is not "wholly bad." Yet from other sources, the book received praise on artistic grounds. Langston Hughes in a letter to Alain Locke, a black scholar and one of the leaders of the Harlem Renaissance, described the novel as "the flower of the Negro Renaissance, even if it is no lovely lily" (88). Also, a review in the black journal "Opportunity" commented on the novel for its frankness and the portrayal of black life by saying:

Mr. McKay's book gives me the feeling of fidelity to the phases of life which he touches. The picture is not meant to be complete, to be sure, but what is put down before us is done with an eye that looks straight and unblinkingly at the object. There are moments when the style falters slightly, but on the whole, the quality of writing is good. (151)

As the title suggests *Home to Harlem* is a novel showing the journey of the main character, Jake Browns, to find something he was deemed as home. His identity as a slave descendent migrating from the South makes Harlem as his dream city. Carrying on with this idea, the next chapter of the thesis is the elaboration of the ideas of diasporic elements in the novel as experienced by Jake Brown as well as other characters of the 1920s Harlem, a period when white landlords and homeowners resisted the black movement into their communities.

## Chapter Two

### Black Diaspora and Harlem

Claude McKay, born in Jamaica, experienced racism probably for the first time in the country's white capital Kingston which made him write his most famous poetry collection, *Songs of Jamaica*. He then left for the United States in 1912 to attend Tuskegee University in Alabama where he once again encountered intense racism and hated the "machine-like existence there," and quickly left to study at Kansas State University. Upon his education in Kansas, he settled for a time in Harlem. When McKay first set foot in Harlem, he was naïve and carried with him an interest in black diasporic nationalism, and later became an influencing voice in the rebirth of African-American arts known as the Harlem Renaissance.

As the early twentieth-century American publishing industry afforded more opportunities for McKay than those available in Jamaica, he became one of the many Caribbean writers and intellectuals who migrated to the United States and published their works in America. He first published several of his works under the pseudonym Eli Edwards, but later realised that he does not have to mask his racial identity so, he started publishing works under his name and openly alluded to his identity as an accomplished first-generation Jamaican American migrant. McKay lived and worked in American society's socioeconomic base, which restricted the black's socioeconomic advancement and movement on American soil. Wayne Cooper, a literary artist and editor in his work *Claude McKay: Rebel Sojourner in the Harlem Renaissance: A Biography* (1996) wrote, McKay "found white restaurants, water fountains, restrooms, and other public facilities closed to him (65)." McKay published several of his works including the poem "The Tropics in New York" in America while he lived there as a labourer.

McKay left for England in 1919 as he had no personal commitments that tied to him in New York. In London, he wanted to live near the British Museum, but he found

that “blacks were considered unsuitable tenants,” which deeply affected his youthful admiration of England. He started stressing that Blacks should unite themselves as a more cohesive ethnic group for self-protection and he experienced an intense nostalgia for Jamaica and he was eager to return to Harlem. After his short stay in America, he worked as a stoker on an Atlantic steamer to travel to Soviet Russia where he enjoyed a tremendous personal triumph as the Fourth Congress spokesman. His visit to Soviet Russia as a Communist party member marked the height of his involvement with revolutionary politics as he developed a serious perspective for revolution in America on the problem of racism. His life of meandering travel and political drift became the foundation of his novel *Home to Harlem* where he chronicles the peripatetic lives of two young men Jake Browns and Ray from across the African diaspora.

Diaspora was a new term derived from the Greek word *diaspeirein* where *dia* means ‘through’ and *speirein* means ‘to scatter.’ The term was first coined by the translators of the Hebrew Bible into Greek in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC originally associated with the Jewish diaspora and was later used to refer to the diaspora in general. It took a broader light only during the second half of the twentieth century when it was used alternatively with the word migration as many people migrated from their homeland to other parts of the world, especially to the United States and the United Kingdom between the two World Wars. Recent diasporas were no longer religious diasporas, but they happened because of political, economic, and voluntary migration to improve the condition of their lives and due to the fear of war.

The minority diasporic population was once referred to as refugees, expatriates, and much worse as asylum seekers before the term diaspora was studied as a distinct category. The people in the diaspora or their ancestors have been dispersed from their original centre to one or more foreign regions that are peripheral and they share a collective memory or myths about their homeland. They believe that they are not fully

accepted into their host land and therefore feel partly alienated and fragmented from it. They try hard to fit into their host land and to be called themselves members of a large community by expressing a desire for roots in the new space rather than the old. Diaspora is therefore often associated with nostalgia, a search for identity, survival, and a sense of belonging.

Diasporic studies are a field of scholarship that is a form of postcolonial studies that focuses on the themes of political domination, racism, subalternity, gender, language, and identity. Robin Cohen, a social scientist in the field of migration and diaspora says that diaspora has the memory of a single traumatic event of the dispersal and says that the people in diaspora actively create a spatial homeland out of an imagined one. He also distinguishes voluntary migration from the victim diaspora of slavery and genocide and the labour diaspora of the colonial plantation economy. Likewise, for the black people in the diaspora, the experiences of Africa, the transatlantic or Middle Passage, slavery, southern plantation tradition, emancipation, reconstruction, post-reconstruction, Northern migration, urbanization, and racism all have produced a residue of shared memories and avenues of reference for black Americans.

Black Americans strive to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without having the doors of opportunity closed in his face and the development of his identity as an American of black descent. The history of Jamaican immigration in the United States is entwined with slavery and post-emancipation migration. On the other hand, Jamaican immigrants and native-born African-American are often misunderstood to be sharing a single history as a result of stereotypes and misconceptions which leads to intra-racial conflicts. McKay's novel *Home to Harlem* portrays the conditions of blacks in the American diaspora from across the world such as Jamaican, Haitian, African-American, Caucasian, etc. All these people are identified as black, yaller, mulatto, or

negro which are perceived as derogatory and reductive labels to call someone from sub-Saharan African ancestry or the Caribbean.

Harlem was the final destination of the black community during the early twentieth century which is the time setting of the novel *Home to Harlem*. Discrimination towards the black community culminated into anxiety and the desire of black intellectuals and social activists to fight for equal rights as fellow Americans developed. Many African-American political activists including W. E. B. Du Bois and other human rights fighters started encouraging African-American writers and artists to carry out the mission of racial equality through arts and culture. This finally paid off with the revival of the African-American arts and culture known as the Harlem Renaissance in which many writers use the city of Harlem itself as the theme of inspiration. One such writer who featured Harlem as a home is McKay through his main character Jake Browns who in the opening of the novel *Home to Harlem* was working on a freighter that carried the United States soldiers.

Jake worked as a stoker in an American freighter when America declared war upon Germany in 1917. He originally signed in as a soldier to fight beside the white, but because of his blackness he was made to work as a stoker and he worked and slept with Arab crew members who were also hired to carry out menial jobs on the ship. He hated the Arabs because they never keep themselves and their surroundings clean, and this hatred towards the “dirty jabbering coolies” is the only reason for the white soldiers to flatter Jake by calling him to be “same like” them. But he knew that “if he was just like the white sailors, he might have signed on as a deckhand and not as a stoker” (2). From Brest, Jake set out for Havre leaving his stocking job as he was disappointed with that because “he had enlisted to fight. For what else had he been sticking a bayonet into the guts of a stuffed man ... Toting planks and getting into rows with his white comrades at the Bal Musette were not adventure” (3).

Jake travelled to many places and worked in a lot of jobs and each of his journeys becomes his search for a home. He first sailed for Brest, worked for a chocolate company, worked as a longshoreman and he even “toted lumbers” to build resting places for the American soldiers. He has travelled then to France and London, as a docker he found many works there and made friends over there who were close enough to call him “darky,” but he still does not feel like he belongs with them. These migrated people, like Jake, had no other option but to work under their white masters as servants even though the whites pretend to call them with friendly contempt. But the people in the diaspora and particularly blacks “preferred white folks’ hatred to their friendly contempt” (3), because their hatred made them feel “strong and aggressive” (3).

McKay portrays a big riot that happens between the coloured people and white men that happened in London for over three days that included knife and gunplay, and all Jake felt for was the need to run away from the “awful fever of lonesomeness” (5). There were many historical pieces of evidence to prove the large-scale racist attacks on the coloured communities almost in all parts of Britain during the first half of the twentieth century. Although migrant workers have been indispensable for the growth of Britain’s economy, racism has sometimes been widespread. There was a colour bar that prevented the blacks from obtaining accommodation and jobs. Seeking to stir up racism, there have been many political speeches that were openly racist, and laws such as the Coloured Alien Seamen Order of 1925 restricted the employment of black workers, thus making the lives of immigrants more onerous. Jake had a white girlfriend in London who does not want him to go out during the mass riot and he immediately wanted to run away from the “kind-heartedness of his lady of the East End,” whom he thought only as a “creature of another race” (5), after the riot. He wanted to leave for Harlem which he had left two years before and says, “I was crazy thinkin’ I was happy over heah. I wasn’t myself. I

was like a man charged up with dope every day. That's what it was. Oh, boy! Harlem for mine!" (5).

Harlem for Jake is described as something able to move him. His identity as a slave descendant migrating from the South makes Harlem as his dream city and as his home. It is stated that Jake is an American deserter from World War I before he decides to be a ship worker. His harsh experience of racial discrimination occurred in South America, Germany, and some cities in Europe giving him a prolonged longing for Harlem where he once felt freedom. At the beginning of the First World War, black Americans began to reconsider their relationship with the American nation and democracy as a result of the urgent need for war. World War I marked an important historical moment in the historical development of the modern diaspora. Many blacks including Jake enlisted to fight in the war, but they were treated with contempt by the white soldiers. Jake was made to carry lumbers and was also made to work as a stoker. Jake's shipmate Zeddy Plummer also recalled the "everlasting unloading ...of ships" (12) and he also mentions the "fatal fights between black men and white in the *maisons closes*" (12). Jake tried hard to get a chance over the top, but he got nothing other than the lower jobs. He described his predicament by saying:

Why did I ever enlist and come over here? he asked himself. Why did I want to mix mahself up in a white folks' war? It ain't ever was any of black folks' affair. Niggers am evah always such fools, anyhow. Always thinking they've got something to do with white folk's business. (5)

The immigrants have a double identity which means they perceive the world through the consciousness of the colonisers as well as through their own vision. The immigrant suffers from social invisibility and inferiority to the extent they started dressing up like the Westerners. They suffer from double identity as they want to adjust their personality according to the new land's culture, but at the same time, they want to



remain in the identity of their own culture. In this dilemma they are unable to get any identity, even if they accept the culture of the new land, their appearance remains the same as where they were born. They cannot escape from the personality of their native place and their inherent qualities cannot be changed. An immigrant who willingly wants to be a part of his new culture by trying his best to change his personality, but the host land may have some norms for an immigrant, therefore that immigrant is facing a conflict within his own mind. This dilemma of acceptance and rejection of norms runs through his whole life in the host land. His identity becomes a mixture that is not fully accepted either by the new land or by his own culture, thus his acceptance in the new culture always remains questionable.

During the first part of the twentieth century, white European standards of beauty dominated the fashion world, and white European hair and facial characteristics were considered normal and desirable. African-Americans had often tried to imitate those characteristics by straightening their curly hair and minimizing their African features. Jake Brown in *Home to Harlem* preferred to wear an English suit that “fitted him loosely and well, perfectly suited his presence” (6). He tried to assimilate into the larger community however, at the same time, white Americans viewed all non-white Americans, especially blacks regardless of legal status, as different.

As W. E. B. Du Bois in his book, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1907) has discussed, African-Americans’ experience of double consciousness where they have the desire to become full citizens within the United States society, yet they retain their distinctiveness as blacks. He says, “from the double life every American Negro must live, as a Negro and as an American” (145). Jake Brown, a negro at heart and blood preferred to fit into the society of white Americans by dressing himself up in white manners. He adopted white fashion to get social acceptance which made him look admirable and attractive. He experiences this double consciousness as he strives to get acceptance into the white

men's society, on the other hand, also his primitive passion for going against the norms of American culture made him resist their clothes which he describes as:

The fine gray suit English suit was no longer serviceable for parade. The American suit did not fit him so well. Jake saw and felt it . . . Jake had learned to prefer the English cut of clothes. Such first-rate tweed stuff, and so cheap and durable compared with American clothes! . . . It didn't feel right, didn't hang so well. There was something a little too chic in American clothes. (178-79)

The most common problem that emerges among the dislocated and displaced people is the sense of nostalgia and this is pointed out by Salman Rushdie in his *Imaginary Homelands* (1991), where he states that "exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars, of salt" (76). Jake, an immigrant from the South, lives alone in Harlem away from his family in Petersburg, in the South eastern region of the United States. He often reminisces about his family, especially about his little sister whenever his friend Ray mentions his education. When he first met Ray's girlfriend Agatha who was a well-educated woman, he is immediately reminded of his sister who "might have turned out something lak this ef she'd 'a' had a chance to talk English like in books and wear class-top clothes" (129). Jake and his sister are not given an education because they lived in the South where African-Americans were denied of their political and economic equality and were conspired back into fields as unpaid labourers during the first half of the twentieth century.

Also, when Jake thinks of love, he is reminded of the way how his mother "usetter love pa and do everything foh him" (130). He is dissatisfied with his life of living here and there without a constant career and no one to love him. This feeling of loneliness

makes him depressed and emotionally upset. Even when he became sick his thoughts are pushed back again to his family.

He heard the word “ambulance” repeated several times. He thought first of his mother. His sister. The little frame house in Petersburg. The backyard of bleached clothes on the line, the large lilac tree and the little forked lot that yielded red tomatoes and green peas in spring. (133)

Another major diasporic feature is dislocation which causes several problems for the people in the diaspora. If the displacement is a forced one, then the suffering it causes will be severe compared to voluntary migration. The state of displacement is obviously not comfortable for immigrants as John McLeod in his work *Beginning Postcolonialism* (2000) said, “Although migrants may pass through the political borders of nations . . . they can be deemed not to belong there and disqualified from thinking of the new land as their home. Instead, their home is seen to exist elsewhere, back across the border” (212).

Raymond or Ray is a Haitian immigrant and a friend of Jake whom he met on the railroad. Haiti is a Caribbean country with an overwhelming population of African descent being the majority community. During World War I, “Uncle Sam,” as Ray says, which is a common personification of the federal government of the United States or the country in general, took control of Haiti’s political and financial interests to promote and develop American business. Ray’s father was one of the officials of Haiti who revolted against the American government and thus he was arrested by the United States Marines. It is said, “they told him to shut up and he wouldn’t, so they shut him up in jail” (86). And Ray’s brother was killed by the Marines because of his active rebellion which pushed him to work on the train because he had “nobody to pay” (86) for him at the university, so he had to get out and work.

Ray is a first-generation immigrant and he faces loneliness and alienation in the new country because he couldn’t mingle with others easily and he is often discriminated

against. He is a well-educated man and he studies whenever he gets a little time. In the novel, he is often described to be reading books and magazines, and he is often mocked by the chef and his fellow workers who call him “professor” because they think he is crazy as he is always reading books. Ray feels powerless to break out of his situation perhaps even more because he goes against the white expectations that he should be uneducated. When everyone is getting ready for their next day’s shift at the dining-car, the chef called Jake after looking at the sleeping Ray and said, “better leave that theah nigger professor alone and come on ‘long to the dining-car with us. That theah nigger is dopey from them books o’hisn. I done told befoh them books would git him yet” (99).

Ray always felt that he is alienated in his host land he feels, “Harlem is too savage about some things” (81). When Jake took Ray to a cabaret, he couldn’t enjoy the nightlife in his settled land and he wishes he could get over his misgivings about brothels and be like Jake, freely doing whatever he wants. The diasporic community even though try to adjust to the new culture, they are not completely willing to follow the new land’s culture. When they find themselves dislocated from their homeland, they strive to remember and locate themselves in a nostalgic past. He gets angry whenever he thinks of the whites who have superior power, whereas he is just being “black and impotent” (96) in the new land. He thinks of Haiti and says, “how proud he was to be the son of a free nation. He used to feel condescendingly sorry for those poor African natives; superior to ten millions of suppressed Yankee “coons.” Now he was just one of them and he hated them for being one of them” (96).

The diasporic community is often discriminated against in their host land because they attempt to follow their own culture and tradition. It became an unavoidable issue in the settled society for the diasporic community. After Jake returned to Harlem, he and his friend were hired at a certain pier to unload pineapples at eight dollars a day. They both worked along with several black men and what appeared strange to Jake was that they

were not allowed to go outside the gate for lunch. But his “primitive passion for going against regulation urged him to go out” (28), and that is when he found out that there was a strike going on in the company and the new workers were hired for scabbing. Jake was disappointed for one reason the white society often stereotypes blacks for doing low jobs and also because the blacks behave in such a way as proving their claims. When one of the strikers asked him to sign up for their union, Jake rejected his offer by saying:

I ain't no white folks' nigger and I ain't no poah white's fool. . . when I made New York I done finds out that they gived the coloured men the worser piers and holds the bes'n a' them foh the Irishmen... things ain't none at all lovely between white and black in this heah Gawd's own country. (29)

Issues of belonging, class, gender, kinship, and, migration status each have a particular influence on the way individuals faced problems at work. The diasporic workers are subjected to bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination, as well as violation of statutory rights, such as health and safety, failure to pay wages, and overwork. Jake takes a job as a third cook on the railroad where he meets many black men who are also enlisted to work as waiters in the dining-car. The setup of the railroad is racist as the passengers in the dining-car are white and the employees are all black, which represents the way that life is for black Americans. The black employees in the dining-car are treated badly by the chef and the darker their skin, the nastier he is to them he says, “done think some hell, you down-home black fool. Ain't no thinking to be done on here” (78). McKay uses the character of the chef to portray how the blacks are being treated at their working place. The chef harasses everyone who works for him, but none more than the fourth waiter, whom he calls “mule” which is a racist term used to address a black. He says, “quit jawing with me, nigger waiter, or I'll jab this heah ice-pick in you' mouf” (104).

The accommodations for the black workers are so bad that they have to get drunk in order to tolerate the filth. The miserable conditions of the workers are revealed when they are made to sleep in a quarter infested with bugs and the rooms were so filthy, without proper lighting compared to the accommodation of other men. McKay gives a descriptive image where the workers get bitten by bugs and the picture of the bugs running for cover when the lights are on gives an idea of how the workers are ill-treated. He also gives an image where one of the waiters, under “the thin flame of gaslight he was killing bugs” (91). Also, the workers were not provided with proper food, and once the chef said that he would “spit in you’ eats- (107)” as he has “done do it a’ready” (107).

Survival in the settled land for the diasporic community is yet another major problem. They have to face problems of survival as they have to adjust to the environment, language, culture, and society. When Jake was leaving for a cabaret with his friends, they saw a ring of people gathered around the corner of the street and found two black men and a woman fighting in the middle of the crowd. Jake’s immediate thought after witnessing this fight was “it’s the same ole life everywhere . . . In white man’s town or nigger town” (176). His friend Billy narrates a story where a black professor who always taught his students about black rights and so on was attacked by a “bad nigger” (177), and when Billy questioned him, he tried to attack him in turn, but Billy escaped because he had his gun with him. He says, “Harlem is lousy with crazy-bad niggers, as tough as Hell’s kitchen, and I always travel with mah gun ready” (177). The blacks in Harlem are pushed to the extent to carry a gun along with them to protect themselves from racist discrimination. They tried to live in a settled society by accepting and adjusting to the problems and sufferings they face.

The diasporic people do not want to leave their cultural patterns of existence and therefore in the settled land, they attempt to create imaginary homelands that they feel are similar to the home they left behind. To Jake, Harlem is the symbol of home, comfort,

and acceptance. To him, Harlem is seen as the centre of his movement and also as the centre of the black community containing entertainment, fun, and hope for a good life. It symbolises the uprising and rebellion of the black people against the racist infrastructure that was imposed upon them. When Jake returned to Harlem after two years and described it as a “contagious fever of Harlem. Burning everywhere in dark-eyed Harlem . . . Burning now in Jake’s sweet blood” (9), thus Harlem became his home in which he had the physical security. However, when Zeddy threatened Jake that he would reveal him as an army deserter which would cause him great trouble, Jake finally decides to leave Harlem. Harlem is a place that Jake dreams of, but since he cannot find security in Harlem anymore, he decides to leave.

One of the major themes of *Home to Harlem* is the idea of home. Black Americans repeatedly search for places where they feel at home which is sometimes closely linked with a sense of belonging or the lack of it. In the initial stage of the settlement, the diasporic individual only gets a negative view of society, but later they derive enough experience to face the suffering and tend to look for better economic opportunities. Jake Brown represents the experience of many members of the Black diaspora as his life story represents his moving back and forth across the Atlantic, and Ray’s immigration represents the dislocation of the modern black experience. The black community retreated to black neighbourhoods to escape white violence. The blacks in Harlem responded to their restriction on their lives by expressing their cultural pride in their own unique musical genre that came to be called the blues and jazz, etc., which portrayed their feeling of longing, grief, and desire, which is discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter Three

### Primitivism and Black Identity

The word primitive has changed from its fifteenth-century meaning of original or ancestral to the late eighteenth-century reference of “aboriginals, inhabitants of prehistoric times, natives in non-European lands” (19), says Marianna Torgovnick in her work, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (1990). In art historic terms, it referred to the painters before the renaissance, then to all early art, and finally to tribal art such as that of native Americans, Africans, and others. Yet when used in Western culture, the term contains the political agenda that puts the civilized over the primitive in a cultural hierarchy. In this hierarchy, as Torgovnick explains, the primitive is culturally constructed as the inferior Other and serves as an empty signifier that reflects Western desires and anxieties (9). Firstly, primitivism was fostered during the modern period by two phenomena, one is the ‘Age of Discovery’ that brought Europeans into close contact with a wide array of unknown cultures from Asia, Africa, and Oceania. As a result of the technological advantages of the West, their new relationship with these cultures often included exploitation and colonial rule. Secondly, it was fostered by anxieties caused by the rapid social, economic, and political changes of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

Primitivism was a sort of antidote to modernity itself. It was a nostalgia for an imagined state of nature where humankind is assumed to have lived more instinctually and in closer harmony with the natural and spiritual world. The Negro writers have made a significant contribution to American letters where they write for their people who are bound together by colour consciousness and they transcend the racial theme by writing for the world at large which tends towards the universal. Black Americans in the early twentieth century were obsessed with the dream of racial identification. Their attitude represented a return to origins, a glance towards Africa that consciously or unconsciously



marked a rejection of American civilization and resulted in the process of alienation. World War I marked a collective and irremediable shell-shock that affected not only the soldiers but also the artists of the day. They headed for human subconsciousness and also for the primitive origins of mankind in an attempt to cure all the defects of modern man.

Likewise, colonialism and slavery were the main reasons for the origination of the Jazz music genre in the African-American community which became one of the new arts of the twentieth century. Jazz represented true world music from its very beginnings, having much more in common with the music of Haiti and Martinique than anything that was heard in the rest of North America. Suffering from the brutality and oppression at the hands of white supremacy, enslaved blacks found solace working through songs, religious songs, and field hollers which is the historical type of vocal work song sung by field slaves in the United States to communicate and vent feelings.

Some African-Americans wanted to move away from musical forms such as spirituals which were immediately connected to the slavery days. They invented their own musical style which expressed the sense of longing, loss, and desire and came to be called the blues. Jazz and blues in its original setting both expressed and incited the savagery of its creators. Anne Faulkner in her article, "Does Jazz Put the Sin in Syncopation?" explained that, "jazz originally was the accompaniment of the voodoo dancer, stimulating the half-crazed barbarian to the vilest deeds" of "brutality and sensuality" (16).

The association of jazz and blues with the primitive was strengthened by the many jazz musicians who understood that one style promoted another and produced songs with titles such as "Futuristic Jungleism" and "Jungle Jamboree." Langston Hughes accepted that jazz was savage music which strengthened his attachment to primitivist concepts. In his essay, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1926), he says, "Jazz to me is one of the inherent expressions of Negro life in America: the eternal

tom-tom beating in the Negro soul, the tom-tom of revolt against weariness in a white world, the world of subway trains, and work” (4).

McKay’s *Home to Harlem* was most famously immersed in the primitivity of the jazz scene. He uses jazz and blues to illustrate the terrible effects of racism on Harlem’s Black community at home and abroad. During the 1920s jazz and blues were considered an embarrassment to some assimilationist and conservative black elites who wished to assimilate into mainstream America. Jazz still had a strong anti-middle-class sentiment at the time it was created. *Home to Harlem* incorporates jazz and attempts to imitate its rhythms on the page in this spirit of rebellion against the middle class.

McKay presents a scene in Harlem’s favourite cabaret, the “Congo,” which is meant exclusively for blacks where “drum and saxophone were fighting out the wonderful drag “blues” that was the favourite of all the low-down dance halls” (22). Blues songs have lyrics that speak of either love or loss. In expressing their pain and desperation, they produce beautiful, wild music that unites all the listeners, and the height of blues music is matched by its depth of despair.

He describes a pianist playing jazz in a Philadelphia cabaret and the rhythms of jazz evoke an exotic, colourful, and sensual atmosphere within a primitive scenario, where “the piano-player had wandered off into some dim, far-away, ancestral source of music. Far, far away from music-hall syncopation and jazz, he was lost in some sensual dream of his own. No tortures, banal shrieks and agonies” (121).

Lawrence Levine in his *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (1977) explains that “Jazz was denounced as barbaric, sensuous, jungle music which assaulted the senses and the sensibilities . . . destroyed order and self-control” (293- 94). As a proof of this statement, the pianist in *Home to Harlem* feels a jungle-like atmosphere in the cabaret, and the clients of the cabaret were caught up in their own free native rhythm, remembering the past, and celebrating the midnight life in Philadelphia.

McKay writes:

Like black youth burning naked in the bush. Love in the deep heart of the jungle . . . The sharp spring of a leopard from a leafy limb, the snarl of a jackal, green lizards in amorous play, the flight of a plumed bird, and the sudden laughter of mischievous monkeys in their green homes . . . Like a primitive dance of war or of love. (121)

As Levine says, “jazz became associated with what Esman has called the “vital libidinal impulses . . . precisely the id drives that the superego of the bourgeois culture sought to repress” (293). McKay pictures a scene where Zeddy’s sorrows are chased away by the “barbaric harmony” (34) and the rhythmic repetition of the blues, illustrating how blues music is employed and perceived as a liberating and cathartic force. Here, blues has a similar effect to that of jazz and the same exotic associations.

Access to these cabarets was frequently provided to white Americans, as that was the only place where whites and blacks could mingle. The general opinion among the whites is that jazz both expressed and encouraged its creators’ brutality. An article titled “Why Jazz Sends Us Back to the Jungle,” claims that jazz makes everyone savage even the most intelligent audience and they believed that the spread of jazz threatened to destroy Western civilization. Many cabarets of the Black Belt were closed because the whites claimed the place to be the corner of indecent doings.

McKay describes a scene where a group of white men hang out in the club of Madame Suarez and enjoy it on a regular basis. However, they shut down the establishment just as the music and the men’s interaction with the women they dance with start to grow explicit. The men are actually a vice squad and they take all of the female employees into custody and arrest Madame Suarez.

McKay writes:

No wonder the whites, after five centuries of contact, could not understand his race. How could they when the instinct of comprehension had been cultivated out of them? No wonder they hated them, when out of their melancholy environment the blacks could create mad, contagious music and high laughter. (164)

McKay through Jake describes the savage beauty of black women who dress in an elegant style and their features are highlighted to emphasize the richness of each skin. He compares their beauty to that of ancient Egyptian women's beauty and says that "they resembled the wonderfully beautiful pictures of women of ancient Egypt," on the other hand, white women are reduced to the level of "faded carnations among those burning orchids of tropical race" (66).

McKay's view of primitivism is essential to understand his novel and his commitment to challenging the race-uplifting politics of elite Harlem intellectuals. Harlem is projected in the novel as the metropolis of primitivism. According to the description given by McKay, Harlem is a vibrant place packed with energy, vibrancy, and enthusiasm. It is given as an exotic and savage place where one would "turn rioting loose in all the tenacious odors of service and the warm indigenous smells of Harlem" (18). McKay also connects a sense of estrangement and drift to black life in Harlem. He depicts the lost characters who replaced their native African spirit with white norms and standards, causing them to live roaming lives in a society dominated by white people. Feeling this sense of alienation and drift, and uncovering the primitive, modernist artist turned the desire for origin into connection, unification, and closeness with oneself, others, and the environment, the qualities that primitive tribes are said to still possess.

The home in *Home to Harlem* becomes a metaphor for the blacks' desire for the origin- a return to the original, unadulterated life of Africa, where the sexual and violent are just a part of existence and people are bonded with themselves, others and their surroundings. Harlem is thus depicted as a pristine natural place that is not polluted by the excessive racial tensions between blacks and whites because it is predominately black and it offers the blacks an escape from the pressure of mainstream society. The low-class black people who spend their days providing services to wealthy white people and playing the roles that are expected of them in society, return home, let loose and just being themselves by enjoying in the cabarets and brothels. Harlem's cabarets and restaurants are given African names such as the "Congo," the "Sheba Place," and the "Nile Queen Restaurant." Its main public place is a cabaret named "The Congo," and its exotic name, shifts readers' imagination to the wild places of Africa. McKay writes:

But the Congo remained in spite of formidable opposition and foreign exploitation. The Congo was a real throbbing little Africa in New York. It was an amusement place entirely for the unwashed of the Black Belt . . . The Congo was African in spirit and color. No white persons were admitted there. (18)

Making Harlem pristine natural surroundings of Africa, McKay presents blacks as primitive people who freely express their intrinsic sexual desire and its people are compared to wild animals, Jake "sniffled the street like a hound" (6); "Zeddy's gorilla feet dancing down the dark death lurking in his heart" (34); "Like a lazy leopard the mulatress reclined against Jake" (24). Harlem is thus a savage place where the animal, the sensual, and the instinctual dwell.

McKay makes Jake explore Brooklyn as a black spatial alternative to Harlem. Brooklyn represents an alternative space where the black community thrives. McKay does this to clarify that Harlem was not the only space black people desired. The

differences and similarities between Harlem and Brooklyn in *Home to Harlem* emerge in the interior of the Myrtle Avenue gin-fest hosted by Miss Curdy and Miss Susy. Like in Harlem, there is dancing, gambling, jazz and blues, music, drinking, and a sexual atmosphere on Brooklyn's Myrtle Avenue. However, the wild and vibrant nature of the scene in Brooklyn fades in comparison to the one in Harlem as "Gin went round. . . Desultory dancing . . . Dice . . . Blackjack. . . Poker. . . The room became a close, live, intense place. Tight-faced, the men seemed interested only in drinking and gaming" (42).

Harlem's black community is overcrowded and mostly poor, and their ways of living include prostitution, selling drugs and alcohol, gambling houses, and entertainment. While life in Harlem is difficult, it also symbolises the black community's uprising that is expressed through artistic brilliance, creativity, and joyful engagement in the pleasures of life with full racial pride as "there is no jazzing like Harlem jazzing over the other side" (169).

Among the characters in *Home to Harlem*, Jake, and Ray are considered to be the novel's main representatives of primitivism. Jake follows his instinct, has a strong sexual appetite, and he likes to feast and drink excessively. Even though he belongs to that group of blacks who do not have a permanent job, he nonetheless experiences great pleasure. He is portrayed as an exotic negro male who is commercially circulated by both whites and blacks and he was "a high favourite wherever he went. There was something so naturally beautiful about his presence that everybody liked and desired him" (65).

By nature, Jake is good and he is portrayed to be having some mysterious primitive quality that draws other people around him. Also, he embodies the virtues of lower-class blacks, but his life is a celebration of alternate ways of living, as opposed to the dull conservatism of white society. He is one of the characters in the novel who breaks the stereotypical portrayal of blacks and his "primitive passion for going against regulation urged him" (31) to oppose scabbing whereas his friend Zeddy Plummer who

accepts and praises scabbing, says, “I got to live and I’ll scab through hell to live” (31). Also, he out of real patriotism goes to World War I, but when he witnesses blacks being treated as servants to whites, he does not hesitate but comes back to Harlem, to his own sphere.

By breaking the rules and transgressing the boundaries, Jake becomes a new primitive, and his instincts are associated with the pristine freedom the Africans once enjoyed. His lifestyle and sexual attitude are positively represented as something liberated from the social restraints of whites. Unlike Ray, Jake does not feel he is “black and impotent” (96), even after living in uncertain conditions. However, because of his lack of education, he felt an American contempt towards foreign immigrants which McKay describes, “Jake was very American in spirit . . . And as an American Negro he looked askew at foreign niggers. Africa was jungle, and Africans bush niggers, cannibals. And West Indians were monkey-chasers” (84).

The elite Harlem intellectual is reflected in the characterisation of Ray. He is a Haiti immigrant who yearns for an ideal place and often dreams of returning home. He is in Langston Hughes’ words “Nordicized intelligentsia” because he identifies himself with the white middle-class values and at the same time gets furious at the racial discrimination of whites. As someone who emigrated from “Hayti” and whose ancestors had probably come from someplace in Africa, he can no longer feel himself being defined by nationality. As an enthusiastic reader of D. H. Lawrence, Sherwood Anderson, and James Joyce and he dreams of making something with words. To him, it is no longer desirable that African-Americans live in a white society and he feels that the blacks need their own social space and identity. He is the one who educated Jake about the small island “Hayti,” how the black slave and the leader of the Haytian slaves fought and conquered the slave owners. He says, “the universal spirit of the French Revolution had reached ad lifted up the slaves far away in that remote island; that Black Hayti’s

independence was more dramatic and picturesque than the United States' independence" (82).

Clare Corbould in his book *Becoming African-Americans* (2009), says that "For many Americans, white and black, Haiti was the Africa of the New World. Its physical accessibility meant that many Americans could travel there, unlike Africa" (164). Ray also connects his roots to Africa with "Hayti" and describes the greatness of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the slave leader to Jake in the dining car. He quotes Wordsworth's sonnet addressed to L'Ouverture as an elegy, that expresses Wordsworth's admiration for the black hero who has transformed the slave rebellion into a revolutionary movement. McKay mentions the lines of the poet who writes, "Toussaint, the most unhappy Man of Men! . . . Oh miserable Chieftain!" (83). Ray also explains to Jake that Africa was not a jungle as he dreamed of it and that slavery was not the distinct role of blacks.

Ray reminisces about Abyssinia, the only place that remained free and independent from the earliest records of history until today, and compares it with Hayti which was conquered by the United States during World War I. He claims that white people can say "bold, challenging things like a strong man" (96), and whose skin colour gives way to glory and power, whereas he feels impotent being black in white society. His thoughts race back to the days as "the son of a free nation" (96), and hope that he would return back to his home to "retire behind the natural defences of his island" (97). He feels constantly alienated from his own self as well as other black people, and he dreams about "Hayti," displaced in his surroundings. He imagines:

Immediately he was back home again. His father's house was a vast forest full of blooming hibiscus and mimosas and giant evergreen trees . . . Now he was a young shining chief in a marble place; slim, naked negresses dancing for his pleasure . . . gleaming-skinned black boys bearing goblets of wine. (98)



Even though Ray's extensive education has made it difficult for him to enter into primitivism and the new black consciousness, the unstable political and social conditions in "Hayti" has landed him into the heart of a naked primitive world which he yearns for. He felt that his intelligence has not helped him in the new world of Harlem where he felt alone, hurt, and neglected. However, he maintains the natural, innocent qualities the primitive African people are imagined to have despite the socio-political problems. He continues to drift alienated from his own self and others, and for this very reason at the end of the novel Ray leaves for Europe. Life burned in him much more intensely than in Jake and he could never get satisfied with the simple things that life offers which are sufficient for Jake. He says, "any upset – a terror-breaking, negro-baiting headline" (163-64) in the newspaper make him miserable and to ward off his sorrows he hums a melancholic note of blues music which he felt as a key to himself and to his race. He feels his own education is useless and says:

I don't know what I'll do with my little education. I wonder sometimes if I could get rid of it and go and lose myself in some savage culture in the jungles of Africa. I am a misfit – as the doctors who dole out newspaper advice to the well-fit might say – a misfit with my little education and constant dreaming, when I should be getting the nightmare habit to hog in a whole lot of dough like everybody else in this country. (168)

Primitivism has thus a good political value in *Home to Harlem*, but it is a value that is only shown to be shared only by men. Women are not included in McKay's political appropriation of primitivism discourse, and his commitment to the patriarchal ideology of American individualism is highlighted by their absence. The discrimination of women is the main discussion in the next chapter, as the fundamental prejudice that he strives to abolish on the level of race is perpetuated by his attitude towards women on the level of sex.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Intersectional Discrimination of Women**

The Harlem Renaissance, historically referred to as the New Negro Renaissance was a movement for social upliftment for blacks during the first part of the twentieth century. The movement's major goals were to provide a positive representation and redefine the stereotyped perception of African-Americans through art and literature. After the civil war, black leaders strove hard to control racism and to create a respected place for Black Americans within the surroundings of white Americans. Thus, Alain Locke and W. E. B. Du Bois promoted an assertive black identity, the New Negro, that attempted to counteractive pervasive racial stereotypes of the time. This New Negro identity was typically associated with strong, cultured, educated men. The whites used this term to represent the dangerous post-slavery Negro who they feared threatened their way of life.

The New Negro identity is almost always associated with men and women's roles within the New Negro movement are far less defined and they are entirely ignored within the discussion. Women are typically portrayed as a support for men, and they are portrayed as contributing to the movement by encouraging the New Negro men, not by the women representing the New Negro themselves.

In Paul Laurence Dunbar's essay, "Representative American Negroes" (1903) he writes, "I have spoken of 'men and women,' and indeed the women must not be forgotten, for to them the men look for much of the inspiration and impulse that drives them forward to success" (206).

Women are acknowledged only through the lens of men's inspiration, rather than their developing, prominent success in their own right. Even writers like Elise Johnson McDougald, who emphasized women's education and careers outside the home, still promoted gendered roles within the movement. She assumes that this identity is male,

and sees the New Negro as the new generation of black men who are the hope for the race's future. Women in her discussion are relegated to supporting roles, encouraging black men toward their leadership roles.

An essay titled "The Task of Negro Womanhood" by Elise Johnson McDougald discusses four groups of women that include a very small elite leisure group, the progressive professional group, those in trades and industry, and finally those in domestic services. She explains the professions of African-American women during the time of the Harlem Renaissance.

Only elite women were able to uphold the norms of the white middle class, they were the ones who received increased equality and respect from white Americans. Due to prejudice and a lack of opportunities, professional and industrial work was frequently restricted to women of colour. As a result, black women generally had to turn to domestic tasks. Although McDougald emphasizes the absence of opportunities for women, she also honours their sacrifice and the advantage it brought for the advancement of other black women. These effects of discrimination towards black women's economic situation were also because of the discrimination toward African-American men.

African-American women were more likely to work than white women, because of the racial prejudice towards black men in the workplace, which frequently resulted in low wages, to support their families. According to Carole Marks, the director of Black Studies, the problem was that women's roles distinctly varied from those of their male counterparts.

The acceptable role of the female in the Harlem Renaissance was that of salon hostess, entertainer, or prostitute. Therefore, women writers and other non-hostesses were ignored as contributors to the movement and were pushed into the backdrop of the movement's success. In truth, African-American women were a crucial and essential

component of the Harlem Renaissance and deserved better than to be violated by African-American society in general.

Jake in *Home to Harlem* is forced to quit his longshoreman job out of pride and respect. He looks for shelter once more in Harlem's nightlife. The Harlem cabaret scene Jake walks into is a vibrant and spacious representation of a varied diasporic black life. It is a dynamic place that is anything but inactive, it is alive with "Dandies and pansies, chocolate, chestnut, coffee, ebony, cream, yellow" (20), which has been teased to the height of anticipation. The intensity in the room drove some people insane, the only thing that disturbs the peaceful atmosphere is an angry woman "jazzing" a table "into the drum", knocking down the cabaret performer, and ending the evening's performance. McKay writes, "A raging putty-skinned mulattress stamped on her ribs and spat in her face! That'll teach you to leave mah man be every time" (20). Here, McKay's Harlem scene foreshadows the problematic position that women hold in his imagination of black life and culture.

Jake's return to Harlem parallels McKay's conviction that black life and culture are beautiful and should be valued as such. In addition to that Jake develops his sense of respectability and manhood upon his return. It can be said Jake, early in the novel says, that the English woman he lives with after his military desertions are insufficient to heal his wounded masculinity and she "could do nothing to please him now. She tried hard to get down into his thoughts and share them with him. But for Jake, this woman was now only a creature of another race—of another world" (5). According to McKay, neither Europe nor sex across the colour line will heal Jake's racial wounds or appease his aesthetic sensibilities.

Jake's damaged manhood starts to repair after re-establishing contact with jazz and the celebration of black culture found in Harlem, including his night out with Felice, his "little brown girl." Following a night with her, "he woke up in the morning in a state

of perfect peace . . . He was satisfied” (9). Felice is portrayed as his felicity, she brings him happiness and is a medicine that heals him, and because of her, he appears to have regained his strength of dignity and manliness. His association with the unnamed English lady he abandoned is in sharp contrast to this. She, like the military, did not fulfil his sense of manhood.

The re-establishing encounter with Felice foreshadows a pattern where black women are largely reduced as mere tools against which New Negro manliness is evaluated, satisfied, or finds expression. This explains why, Jake spends the majority of the time passively looking for Felice and hanging out with the men. Despite giving him something the English woman cannot, Felice is conspicuously missing from *Home to Harlem* until the very end. She is a minor figure, much like other women in the novel. McKay is straightforward when he declares that New Negro women have no place in discussions about black humanity. The pattern for women projected in this story is that, they are annoying but essential hindrances men must put up with while trying to figure out who they are as individuals.

Although McKay’s *Home to Harlem* does not explicitly address masculinity and, in many ways, expands the social roles that women can play in society, the novel’s narrative is however a celebration of social, geographic, and economic independence that only men could obtain in 1920s Harlem. The novel also suggests that the only woman who could walk around the streets with a little ease would be a prostitute.

The majority of the female characters in the novel are either full-time or occasional prostitutes, and this situation is completely normalised and domesticated without any criticism of the fact that, prostitution is essentially the only profession available to black women in which they can earn a respectable living. Nathan Huggins in his work *Harlem Renaissance* (1971) has said that primitivism is “a social fantasy” (188), as it is likely socially unacceptable for women to have relied solely on their bodies

and instinct for survival. The black women are portrayed as missing primitive traits throughout the entire novel.

A prostitute in *Home to Harlem* can enjoy many of the same liberties as a male because she is both economically free and geographically mobile. But because of this kind of female independence, an intriguing tension emerges in McKay's novel. On the one hand, he appears to appreciate the sexual liberation that some women enjoy as a sign of their capacity to take part more completely and equally in society. On the other hand, many of these same women are set up to be barriers to black men's independence.

The protagonist Jake feels no moral resentment towards Felice and for the majority of the chapter, he makes an effort to track her down again. Later in the text, despite Jake's openness towards female sexuality, he cannot accept Rose, as an entertainer. His enmity arises from Rose's relationship with money and from her ability to use her power to control the men in her life. When Rose says he does not have to work when he is with her, he rejects the offer by saying "never lived off no womens and never will" (25). When he decides to leave Rose, she starts to criticize him which suggests that her opinion is a threat to Jake's masculinity.

McKay romanticises the relationship of Rosalind, a prostitute to her procurer Jerco. He tells a tale through Ray who was their friend. Both Rosalind and Jerco were good tenants, paid their rent on time, and were kind to everyone. When Rosalind became ill with the flu and bedridden, Jerco panicked because she was his only source of money. Still, Jerco refused to sell anything that belonged to his lover, even though they would bring a lot of money for him, in order to get along because he loved her too much to do that. When Rosalind died soon after, Jerco slits his own throat unwilling to live without his love. McKay narrates this story to illustrate that people in low positions in society can still be good at heart.

Rosalind is much more to Jerco than just a way to make money, and McKay wants to insist that true love and respect for another person are still possible, even in a field where love is subordinate to money:

I have been forced down to the level of pimps and found some of them more than human. One of them was so strange . . . Never thought he could do what he did. Something so strange and wonderful and awful, it just lifted me up out of my little straight thoughts into a big whirl where all of life seemed hopelessly tangled and colored without point or purpose. (150)

W. E. B. Du Bois referred to the idea of code-switching when he discusses how African-Americans had to reconcile their dual identities of Blackness and Americanness while navigating everyday whiteness in his work, *The Souls of Black Folk* where he says, “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” (14). Susy and Curdy, two black women are trapped in the process of adapting to white capitalist society and developing a bestial survival mentality, as a result, they wilfully harm and abuse others in more or less the same way that whites have harmed and exploited them.

‘Gin-head’ Susy and Miss Curdy are the two female characters who try to imitate the manners and glammers of the white bourgeois class and are chastised and mocked by other blacks. Both Susy and Miss Curdy are from the working class, Susy works as a cook and Miss Curdy, a former business girl, appears to be unemployed and carries an “old and worn and flat” (39) purse. But despite their poor social standings, these ladies distinguished themselves from Harlem. Susy, who was “splendid in her matriarchal way” (52), is portrayed as a character who invites men, primarily “yaller” ones to her house to drink gin, in the hope that one of them will stay with her, and gives free gin for the men she likes. She is portrayed to be wearing fashionable shoes, cares for her appearance, and

also has a predilection for lighter-skinned men, though she herself is dark-complexioned. When Miss Curdy was younger and hanging out with the “upstage race gang” (42), she boasts of being a member of a real society. Also, Susy gets repulsed by Harlem and prefers the goodness and quietness of Brooklyn. Both Susy and Curdy represent those blacks who still wanted to accommodate and imitate white New York. Susy says:

This here Harlem is a stinking sink of iniquity. Nigger hell! That’s what it is. Looka that theah ugly black nigger loving up a scrimpy brown gal right befoh mah eyes. Jest daring me to turn raw and loose lak them monkey-chasing womens thisanight . . . this Harlem is sure nigger hell. Take me way away from it. (62)

In terms of colour, black women are frequently referred to as “chocolate-brown and walnut-brown girls” (5). Sometimes these women are only seen as physical parts, serving the needs of Harlem men. Jake describes the Harlem women as “them tantalizing brown legs! . . . Brown girls rouged and painted like dark pansies. Brown flesh draped in soft colorful clothes. Brown lips full and pouted for sweet kissing” (5).

McKay uses a variety of fashionable hues to convey a sort of anti-essentialist viewpoint on race. For example, he combines the distinction between colour as skin and colour as clothing.

McKay quotes:

All the various and varying pigmentation of the human race were assembled there: dim brown, clear brown, rich brown, chestnut, copper, yellow, near-white, mahogany, and gleaming anthracite. Charming brown matrons, proud yellow matrons, dark nursemaids... The girls passed by in bright batches of color, according to station and calling. High class, menial class, and the big trading class, flaunting a front chiffon-soft colors framed in light coats. (179)



Despite the fact that the narrator has used clothing and colour as a juxtaposition that immediately conjures up a train of correlated thoughts for the readers, the colours in the previous passage which are generally used to describe fashion are exclusively used as the signs of skin colour. Consequently, the colours of fashion are entirely absent. McKay thus implies that skin tones are just as diverse as clothing, their meaning also lies in their decorative worth, and a fact that race does not denote a fundamental characteristic, rather it only has a superficial definition.

The female characters in *Home to Harlem* do not share the lower-class Harlemites' new primitive sensibility, rather they are the members of a long legacy of sexist and misogynist society that portrays women as coarse, depraved and jealous. Women like the cabaret singer Congo Rose wants to be abused and dominated by men, as "she exhibited her bruises and blackened eyes with pride" (71). There is a scene where Rose discusses Jake's treatment of her to one of her friends, saying that in her opinion violence and love go hand in hand. Whereas Jake despises violence, particularly when it involves women because his mother used to tell him "Nevah hit no woman" (72). Jake does not like Rose and he only stays with her because she asked him to stay when he was in a need of a steady mate. When he declines to have an intimate relationship with her, he gets provoked by Rose until he loses his cool and strikes her twice. Even though it was violent, she is delighted that he is displaying some sort of passion for her:

Gertie Blake was there and Rose was telling a happy tale . . . Didn't hurt enough. Honey, it's the first time I ever felt his real strength. A hefty-looking one like him, always acting so nice and proper. I almost thought he was getting sissy. But he's a ma-an all right. (72-73)

Jake feels ashamed of himself for assaulting a woman so he takes a stroll. But when he returns, he overhears that Rose is boasting about the confrontation with her friend. When Jake decides to leave her and in order to stop him from leaving, Rose

persuades him to have intercourse with her because she believes that the struggle proves he loves her. Also, black women are considered dishonest persons and Jake claims that while black males are just “ugly and brutal,” black women are cunning and vicious animals who lie to both themselves and others in order to enhance their own selfish ends. Jake says, “a woman could always go farther than a man in coarseness, depravity, and sheer cupidity. Men were ugly and brutal. But beside women they were merely vicious children” (43).

Women are described using derogatory language in various passages throughout the novel *Home to Harlem*. When Zeddy was staying together with Susy, the enjoyment of Harlem’s low life was prohibited to him, because she was jealous of him “in the proprietary sense” (51). From that prohibition, Zeddy began to discover that it was not fine to live off sweet with women’s earnings. He became furious and complained about his life to Jake by telling, “That plug-ugly black woman is ornery like hell. I ain’t gwine to let her bridle and ride me . . . Black womens when theyse ugly am all sistahs of Satan” (51).

Another woman named Aunt Hattie was a renowned cook among the lowly of Harlem’s Black belt who cooked delicious home-cooked food. She was described to behave in an indecent manner with Jake who went there for dining. She rubbed her body “against Jake’s shoulder and a sensual light gleamed in her aged smoke-red eyes” (12). Another instance is where Jake described the fight between two women as, “sometimes they turn mah stomach, the womens. The same in France, the same in England, the same in Harlem. White against white and black against white and yellow against black and brown. We’s all just crazy-dog mad. Ain’t no peace on earth with the womens” (21).

Women are also shown to be pitted against each other over men. When Madame Laure goes to Rose’s apartment thinking it was Jake’s residence. The two women fight over who loves Jake more. Laura insults Rose that her house was a “spohting house”

meaning that Rose is a prostitute, and Rose in turns accuses Laura of looking like one herself. The conflict between these women shows that there are levels of society even within the so-called underworld of prostitution.

McKay also depicts a fight between two West Indian women in which the laundress was driven insane by mistrust and a desire for vengeance over her co-worker. The laundress “was crazy with suspicion and jealousy and a feeling for revenge. She challenged her rival to fight the affair out (191).” Moreover, women are perceived as unreliable in the matter of commitment.

When Felice meets Jake after a long time, she decides to leave the man that she is seeing and move along with Jake. She takes Jake’s hand and says, “Le’s get outa here quick, ‘cause Ise got somebody with me and now I don’t want see him no moh” (185). Also, Zeddy when he talks about his precious love life says, “women left him when he could not furnish the cash to meet the bills” (35). Not only are women excluded from the politics of primitivism but they are also excluded from any serious relationship with men.

Further, in *Home to Harlem* black women work as stagehands to support Jake, a black male hero, as he individuates himself in the uncivilised environments of Harlem, Chicago, and Baltimore. The scene at Madame Suarez’s buffet flat is a great representation of how gender relations are fabricated to increase Jake’s sense of masculinity. Jake shows off with pride after triumphantly conquering Madame Suarez’s cabaret.

Following Jake’s gaze which describes the exotic beauties as being posed as if the women were statues or painted images, one’s imagination moves into the exotic Harlem scene where Jake is a king surrounded by beautiful women. McKay describes Jake displaying his masculine privilege as a noble savage surrounded by exotic women of Harlem.

In this scene, black women exist just as a background image to highlight Jake's primitive self.

Jake had never seen colored women so carefully elegant as these rich-browns and yellow creams at Madame Suarez's. They were fascinating in soft bright draperies and pretty pumps and they drank liquor with a fetching graceful abandon . . . One girl, who was the favourite of Madame Suarez, and the darkest in the group, looked like a breathing statue of burnished bronze. (66)

McKay in his novel *Home to Harlem*, acknowledged and lamented the unfairness of the patronage system which he believed might reduce his creative output. The New Negro Womanhood, though defined differently by each member of the movement, had a significant societal impact on Black Americans' encouragement to represent the right kind of black women to the outside world. This new concept opposes racial and gender stereotypes, and the definition of true womanhood as purity, submissiveness, and domesticity, and redefined the feminine framework as an opposition to the pervasive racial and gender stereotypes of the time. Many writers examine the constructed nature of this identity through textual and social dialogue, looking at the social effects that are supported, resisted, and disregarded through that promoted identity. These opposing societal pressures are clearly represented by the roles that women play within the New Negro identity.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summation**

Claude McKay, a Jamaican, who reached the status of cosmopolitan citizen of the world, was a fascinatingly paradoxical figure whose sociable life, vivid poetry, and fiction constitute one of the most fascinating chapters in African-American literature. He was a black nationalist and a primitivist alongside being a modernist, and a key figure in the Harlem Renaissance. As a poet, novelist, and critic, three powerful forces cast a heavy impact upon his life, he is praised as one of the first writers to express the spirit of the Harlem Renaissance. His fertile mind, which was filled with the literatures of western civilization, his Jamaican-African soul, which was always vibrating close to the surface, and his personal perception of the eternal truth, goodness, and justice, made a huge impact in all of his works. Even as a child, he found a new world of thoughts through reading widely among the literature of English, and continental writers from which he developed the highly intuitive capabilities of a poet.

McKay broke free from the many aspects and growing perception of modernism. Although McKay's career was somewhat different from that of the typical black writer of the 1920s, he represented much of the characteristics of the New Negro. His move from rural Jamaica to the metropolis and the literary world of the 1920s, is itself symbolic of the larger Black movement from the rural South, to the broader view of the cities of the North. In his prose, McKay generally emphasises black values and rediscovers black folk-culture with other Black Renaissance writers.

McKay flourished as a poet during the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s. During this period, his poems challenged white authority, while celebrating Jamaican culture. He also wrote stories about the trials and tribulations of a black man's life in both Jamaica and America. McKay made no secret of his hatred of racism and believed that racist people were stupid, short-sighted and full of hate.

McKay spoke directly about racial issues and his choice to focus on the working class. His association with Harlem's working-class people taught him much about African-American living conditions and fuelled his resentment of those in power. He found the necessary stimulus in the ideas of young white intellectuals who questioned the cultural assumptions that dominated literature and art. He was one among a small group of black intellectuals in Harlem who supported international socialism as a means of a better social and economic conditions in America. However, he never raised his political activities above his art, but his desire to be a writer with a social conscience led him to join the radical literary rebellion and maintain that position throughout his life. His literary influence was particularly important in his portrayal of the black working class, and in the connections, he made between Africa, black America and the West Indies. In his novel, *Home to Harlem*, his depiction of Harlem and its lower-class citizens was criticised as negative depictions by notable critics such as W. E. B. Du Bois, but McKay later gained recognition as a literary force in the Harlem Renaissance.

As a novel of black American literature, *Home to Harlem* is recognizably a product of the 1920s. As an exploration of people of colour, the book is exciting and delightful, radiating a zest for life and an honest and detached passion. McKay portrays a black man who comes from Harlem, a coloured quarter of New York, after the war. There are bits of the novel that are beautiful and fascinating, the continued changes upon the themes of the beauty of coloured skin, the portrayal of the fascination of their new yearnings for each other which Negroes are developing. In order to portray drunkenness, fighting, lewdness, sexual promiscuity, and complete lack of restraint in the most vivid and vibrant colours possible, he has employed every art form and applied emphasis. As a picture of the Harlem life of Negroes, it is, of course quite natural and unadulterated.

McKay's *Home to Harlem* is a fictional portrayal of a vast African diasporic reality in the first half of the twentieth century. Proletarian characters who depict the

varied diasporic paths of the New Black reality and Renaissance are the main subject of his complex and largely masculinist portrayal of modern industrial life. McKay's Caribbean roots and peasant upbringing inform his global and working-class viewpoint in this novel, revealing the black space, place, and cultural production of a common man. This approach is a subtle alternative to the official Renaissance and its focus on the pastoral ideals of people or the "Talented Tenth." Thus, it can be said that his novel is an alternative or a renewed understanding of the New Negro. Also, it is an attempt to engage a culturally diverse notion of African American community while expanding notions of race by travelling through the varied contours of urban space and the people inhabiting these oppressive spaces.

*Home to Harlem* offers a dynamic array of viewpoints and life experiences from which to examine African-American conceptions of beauty, politics, and New Negro Cultural output. McKay is actually looking for a broader perspective on the New Negro, one that embraces a working-class viewpoint and a sense of personal dignity. The book celebrates Black culture's Jazz in addition to capturing Harlem's artistic spirit. In fact, it perfectly depicts the depravity, crime, unemployment, poverty, and overcrowding of Harlem that drove residents to seek refuge in places like Brooklyn, Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Philadelphia. The navigation of a larger black experience by the protagonist Jake Brown basically begins and ends in Harlem. Jake, as the New Negro represents the communal elements of black life for McKay and is both an international and a local artist.

The second chapter, Black Diaspora and Harlem deals with how in the early twentieth century, when the novel is set, Harlem was the black community's ultimate destination. Black intellectuals and social activists became anxious about the whites' discrimination against the black community and became motivated to battle for equal rights for all Americans. The project shows how the immigrants have a double identity

where they want to adjust their personality to the land's culture alongside being want to remain in the identity of their own black culture. It shows how the characters are facing conflict within their own minds with the dilemma of acceptance and rejection of norms in the host land.

The immigrants' sense of nostalgia is pointed out by McKay through his characterisation of Ray and Jake who live alone away from their family and their own community. With no stable job and no one to love him, Jake is unhappy with his existence of wandering around and becomes despondent and distressed due to his loneliness. Ray, a first-generation Haitian immigrant, struggles with loneliness and isolation in his new country because he finds it difficult to socialise and encounters discrimination frequently. It is also discussed how the people in the diaspora are subject to bullying, harassment, victimisation, and discrimination, and how the issues of belonging, class, gender, and migration status each have a particular impact on how people confronted problems at work.

The third chapter, *Primitivism and the Black Identity* shows how the 1920s saw the rise of Jazz and Blues which infiltrated American music and negro singers found a greater public receptivity. The primitivity of the Jazz scene was famously depicted in McKay's *Home to Harlem*. He illustrates the horrific effects of racism on the Black population in Harlem both domestically and internationally through jazz and blues. He tries to reimagine the white popular version of primitive and provide a potential remedy for the cultural maladies that contemporary black people experience as a result of being constrained by social constructs like race, class, gender, and sexuality.

McKay's Harlem is predominately black and it offers low-class black people a break from the pressure of the dominant society. In this primitive space of Harlem, black folks give themselves over to the sheer rhythm of delight and indulge in night after night of drinking, dancing, gambling, fighting, and mating without giving a thought to



conventional social standards. McKay also links black life in Harlem to a feeling of separation and drift. By replacing their natural African spirit with white norms and standards, his characters lead wandering lives in a world ruled by white people. After sensing this sense of alienation and drift and exposing the primitive the modernist artist transformed the need for origin into connection and unification, the qualities that primitive cultures still possess.

Among the characters in *Home to Harlem*, Jake and Ray are the novel's main representatives of primitivism. Jake is nice by nature and possesses some enigmatic primitive character that attracts others to him. Also, he exemplifies the positive traits of working-class black people, yet his existence is a celebration of other lifestyles rather than the dull conservatism of white culture. Jake becomes a new primitive as a result of breaking the rules and pushing the limits, and his natural tendencies are linked to the unfettered freedom that the Africans previously experienced. Ray believes that black people in America should have their own social space and identity because it is no longer desirable for them to exist in a white society. Despite the socio-political issues, Ray retains the organic, innocent characteristics that people in primitive Africa are thought to possess. However, he continues to drift alienated from his own self and others.

The third chapter, Intersectional Discrimination of Women deals with how McKay, to broaden the audience's understanding of black humanity and society sacrifices female characters. Women in their New Black society are merely used as allegories for more important moral choices. They serve as either impediments or pawns for the advancement of black masculinity and individual satisfaction. The majority of the time, the roles of all the female characters are to appease or support McKay's manly imagination tools for securing the prideful masculine existence. Although there are women in the narrative, their primary function is to serve as contrasts that push Jake to strive for greater levels of masculine security and integrity.

This project holds the diasporic study of McKay's *Home to Harlem* which is discussed in the previously mentioned chapters using the three major themes of the black diaspora, primitivism, and discrimination of black women that are predominant in the novel. The main character Jake repeatedly searches for places where he feels at home, which is intimately entangled with a sense of belonging and he represents the experiences of many members of the Black diaspora. McKay's black-anarchist proletarian ideology shines through his characters and settings, always envisioned in a transnational African diaspora. Search for a home, alienation and lack of a sense of belonging are predominantly discussed throughout the novel which proves the diasporic imagination used by McKay. The episodic and wandering form of *Home to Harlem* through which McKay's characters discover their diasporic identity, disaffection and disappointment that attend a modern world characterised by ephemerality, oppression, and loss.

The characters' harmonious outlook on life, the sweetness of their sensuality, and the simplicity of their relationships completely masks the moral reflection that one has of the coloured people as a flabby group. *Home to Harlem* is a reflection of the minority view on people in the diaspora, and produced as a result of dissatisfaction with the world, with the rich vocabulary and innocent excitement. It attracts instant attention for its depiction of racism and black sexuality. Many critics have praised it as a self-affirmative expression of African-American sensuality. Also, it thematises oppression and self-expression before the backdrops of imperialism and global migration. By recognizing other places where the black community flourished, McKay's portrayal of black life and ideas of community in 1920s black society in the United States investigates the wonder, excitement, and boundaries of Harlem.

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**Rebellion and Defiance in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Brightlin Leema. W**

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**PG and Research Department of English**

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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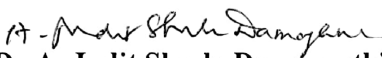
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## Certificate

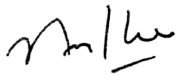
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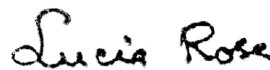
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Rebellion and Defiance in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*** 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**

**April 2023**

*W. Brightlin Leema*  
**Brightlin Leema. W**



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## Preface

The nineteenth Century American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne is best known for his novel *The Scarlet Letter*. His works initiated the most durable tradition in American Literature that is marked by a depth of psychological and moral insight seldom equaled by any American writer. Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is considered to be the first quintessentially classic work of American literature in style, theme, and language. Set in the Puritan Massachusetts Bay Colony during 1642 to 1649 the novel tells the story of Hester Prynne, who conceives a daughter with a man to whom she is not married and her struggles to create a new life of repentance with faith and dignity.

The project entitled **Rebellion and defiance in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*** analyses the effects of sin on the lives of his characters in the Puritan Regime and delves into human alienation and the consequent rebellion and defiance in the face of repressive laws.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the tradition in American fiction, New England Renaissance, Dark Romanticism and that of the symbolic romance that assumes the universality of guilt and explores the complexities and ambiguities of man's choices, along with the biography of the writer.

The second chapter **Human Faith** explores the external grace with which Hester Prynne who conceives a daughter with a man to whom she is not married, struggles to create a new life of repentance with dignity by transforming the shame of guilt into ability.

The third chapter **Wages of sin** analyses the Christian thought taken from New Testament that the wages of sin is death, through the three sinners; Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, and Roger Chillingworth.

The fourth chapter **Psychological Trauma** reveals the consequences of the tormented souls from their sense of guilt.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters.

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

## **Chapter one**

### **Introduction**

Nathaniel Hawthorne was a key figure in the development of American Literature. His works often focus on history, morality, and religion. Much of Hawthorne's writing centers on New England, featuring moral metaphors with an anti-puritan inspiration. His fiction works are considered part of the Romantic Movement and, more specifically, Dark Romanticism. His themes often center on the inherent evil and sin of humanity, and his works often have moral messages and deep psychological complexity. He was the master of a prose style that is unique, spartan and raw, and yet richly varied.

New England is the oldest clearly defined region of the United States, being settled more than 150 years before the American Revolution. A large influx of Puritans populated the greater region during the Puritan migration to New England, largely in the Boston and Salem area. The mid-19th century has often been described as an "American Renaissance" of literature due to the large number of literary masterpieces created during this time. Sometimes referred to as the New England renaissance, because it was centered in New England, this period ran from about 1830 until the end of the Civil War and it has been closely identified with American Romanticism and an intellectual movement known as Transcendentalism. The American Renaissance was significant because it was the first time in history that American writers were considered equal to or even better than European writing.

American Renaissance, also called the New England Renaissance, was the period from the 1830s roughly until the end of the American Civil War in which American literature, in the wake of the Romantic Movement, came of age as an expression of a national spirit. One of the influences in the period was the Transcendentalism, apart from the Transcendentalism, there emerged during this period great imaginative writers like Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Walt Whitman, whose novels and poetry left a permanent imprint on American literature.

Romanticism was an artistic, literary, musical, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe towards the end of the 18th century. Romanticism was characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism, clandestine literature, paganism, idealization of nature, suspicion of science and industrialization, as well as glorification of the past with a strong preference for the medieval rather than the classical. It had a significant and complex effect on politics, with romantic thinkers influencing conservatism, liberalism, radicalism, and nationalism.

Dark Romanticism and the themes of their writings-imposed judgment and punishment for those who commit sin, resulting in alienation and self-destruction. Dark Romanticism is distinguished by an emphasis on human fallibility that gives rise to lapses in judgment that allow even good men and women to drift toward sin and self-destruction. Dark Romantics tends to draw attention to the unintended consequences and complications that arise from well-intended efforts at social reform. Dark Romantics present individuals as prone to sin and self-destruction, not

as inherently possessing divinity and wisdom Dark Romanticism views it in a much more sinister light than does transcendentalism, which sees nature as a divine and universal organic mediator. For the Dark Romantics, the natural world is dark, decaying, and mysterious; when it does reveal truth to man, its revelations are evil and hellish. Dark Romanticism frequently shows individuals failing in their attempts to make changes for the better.

Hawthorne was born in Salem, Massachusetts, on July 4, 1804. Hawthorne's ancestors had lived in Salem since the 17th century and have rooted New England immigrants who had been living since the founding generation. Hawthorne was the son of Nathaniel and Elizabeth Clark Hathorne. His earliest American ancestor informed much of his writing. His ancestors, John, and William Hathorne were particularly important to Hawthorne's views on religion and faith. William Hathorne worked as a magistrate who was also a staunch Puritan. One of his most despicable acts was to condemn a Quaker woman to a public whipping. His son, John, was no better and acted as one of the judges during the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. Hawthorne felt shame at his ancestors' actions. His father, a sea captain, died of yellow fever while at sea. After his father's death, Hawthorne's mother Elizabeth moved her and her children back into her parent's house.

Hawthorne attended Bowdoin College. There, he acknowledged his passion for writing and decided to become a writer. During that time, Hawthorne lived in the general environment of his society strictly connected to the rules of the Puritan mindset, and he was a supporter of a covenant with God and

devoted himself to work for the sake of God. Puritan society was against committing a sin, which made them stiffer towards the people who conformed to sinful rules in Christianity. While Hawthorne was writing, his work was affected by the environmental and incidental problems of his district. Later, Hawthorne added a 'W' to his name, to keep relations away from the side of his family.

When Hawthorne began writing fiction, he was drawn into a search for material in the careers of his early ancestors and the history of colonial New England. Hawthorne chose mainly American materials, drawing especially on the history of colonial New England and his native Salem at the time of his early American ancestors. Heir to the Puritan tradition and alert to the transcendental thought prominent in his region and time, he subjected both to his skeptical, questioning scrutiny in the moral and psychological probing that is characteristic of his fictional works. Throughout the work, the nature images contrast with the stark darkness of the Puritans and their systems.

A native of Salem, Massachusetts, Hawthorne often incorporated the history of New England, and some lore related to his own ancestors, in his writings. As the father of the American Romance, he used it as the medium of conveying his vision of the dark side of people, and of his ancestors. It became his method of artistic communication between the actual experience and the imagination; the connection between the facts and the hidden meanings or lessons from them. Hawthorne's most famous novel examined the human soul and morality, certainly a cautionary tale about the dangers of well-intended social reform and

blind religious fervor. He believed that for all of the weaknesses, hypocrisy and suffering, “the truth of the human heart” usually prevails. Hawthorne impinges on the one-dimensional Puritan concept of evil and the religious laws of the first settlers against the limitations of regulations.

Hawthorne wrote considerably less since he had fallen in love and needed to make more money than he could expect from his writing. The girl was Sophia Peabody, the semi-in-valid daughter of a Salem dentist and the sister of Elizabeth Peabody, a noted feminist and reformer, and of Mary Peabody, and the educator Horace Mann. Hawthorne obtained a position as measurer in the Boston Custom House. He held the job for two years, resigning just before the newly elected Whig administration had a chance to throw him out. Then he joined the Transcendentalists at Brook Farm, although he was interested more in finding a place where he and Sophia might live than in the Utopian dreams of the Transcendentalists. Unhappily the experience did not turn out as he had hoped, and he left Brook Farm in the fall of 1841. Ultimately, though, he was able to make use of the Farm as the setting for *The Blithedale Romance*.

Despite their unpromising future, Hawthorne and Sophia Peabody were married. For income they had only the promise of payment for whatever he might write. He set to work with enthusiasm, however, and brought out the tales now to be found chiefly in *Mosses from an Old Manse* and some minor works, especially stories for children. But such writings did not bring in enough income for the family, especially after Una was born, and again Hawthorne sought out his friends for a



political position. This time they responded by persuading President Polk to appoint him Surveyor at the Salem Custom House. He began his duties and left in the summer when he was forced out of office by the new Whig administration of Zachary Taylor. Angered and yet eager to return to writing, he began *The Scarlet letter* almost immediately and so rapidly that the book was finished.

The nameless narrator, who shares quite a few traits with the book's author, takes a post as the "chief executive officer," or surveyor, of the Salem Custom House, the place where taxes were paid on imported goods. The narrator describes his Custom House colleagues as "wearisome old souls" and Salem, the town where it was located, as old and run-down. He finds the establishment to be a run-down place, situated on a rotting wharf in a half-finished building. His fellow workers mostly hold lifetime appointments secured by family connections. They are elderly and given to telling the same stories repeatedly. The narrator finds them to be generally incompetent and innocuously corrupt.

One rainy day he discovers some peculiar documents in the upstairs storage area of the Custom House. Looking through the pile, he notices a manuscript that is bundled with a scarlet, gold-embroidered piece of cloth with a red letter "A." The narrator examines the scarlet badge and holds it briefly to his chest, but he drops it because it seems to burn him. He then reads the manuscript. It is the work of one Jonathan Pue, who was a customs surveyor a hundred years earlier. An interest in local history led Pue to write an account of events taking place in the middle of the

seventeenth century, a century before Pue's time and two hundred years before the narrators.

The narrator has already mentioned his unease about attempting to make a career out of writing. He hopes to make his own mark as a writer and be remembered as a "scribbler of bygone days". He believes that his Puritan ancestors, whom he holds in high regard, would find it frivolous and "degenerate". Nevertheless, he decides to write a fictional account of Hester Prynne's experiences. While working at the customhouse, surrounded by uninspiring men, the narrator finds himself unable to write. When a new president is elected, he loses his politically appointed job and, settling down before a dim fire in his parlor, begins to write his "romance," which becomes the body of *The Scarlet Letter*.

The preface sets the atmosphere of the story and connects the present with the past. Hawthorne's description of the Salem port of the 1800s is directly related to the history of the area. The Puritans who first settled in Massachusetts in the 1600s founded a colony that concentrated on God's teachings and their mission to live by His word. But this philosophy was eventually swallowed up by the commercialism and financial interests of the 1700s. The ambivalence in his thoughts about his ancestors and his hometown is paralleled by his struggle with the need to exercise his artistic talent and the reality of supporting a family. Hawthorne's references to Emerson, Thoreau, Channing, and other romantic authors describe an intellectual life he longs to regain. His job at the Custom House stifles his creativity and imagination. Hawthorne feels a tugging that haunts him like his

ancestors. Hawthorne also shares his definition of the romance novel as he attempts to imagine Hester Prynne's story beyond Pue's manuscript account. A careful reading of this section explains the author's use of light and setting as romance techniques in developing his themes. Hawthorne asserts that, at the right time with the right scene before him, the romance writer can "dream strange things and make them look like truth".

Hawthorne's work is distinguished between Hawthorne's pronounced consciousness of sin and Puritanism. The great interest in Hawthorne in the twentieth century led to frequent and eminent reappraisals of his work, including, of course, new evaluations of his Puritanism. "Puritanism" had become by now a convenient tag to apply to any writer who has either a deep consciousness of sin or a belief in original sin, which in turn has become confused with a belief in innate depravity, a position which varies greatly from the general tradition of Christian belief. Hawthorne's differing attitudes toward Puritanism refer specifically different facets of this one large concept. Puritanism was not a theology alone. Although it became the American branch of Calvinism, it also gave its name to a characteristic way of life. Hawthorne's theme Puritanism was also associated with the American struggle for political liberty.

Hawthorne's nonfictional attitude toward Puritanism in general can be indicated simply, if not thoroughly, because there are only a few instances of his discussion of it. He tells us of a conversation he had with G. P. R. James, the novelist, concerning the Puritans, "about whom we agreed pretty well in our opinions". James

later wrote him a note asking him to come to a haymaking, admonishing him to leave his “grim old Puritans” at home. Hawthorne’s four major romances were *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) and *The Marble Faun* (1860).

*The Scarlet Letter* is a work of historical fiction, published in 1850. Set in pre-independent America, just prior to the Thirteen Colonies their traditional groupings were New England. Set in the Puritan Massachusetts Bay Colony. Containing several religious and historic allusions, the book explores themes of legalism, sin and guilt. It is considered a masterpiece of American literature and a classic moral study. In his romance *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne reveals the real condition of the human soul and points out the confusion and inconsistency with the Puritan conception of sin, thus, the conception of evil.

*The House of the Seven Gables* is a Gothic novel written beginning in mid-1850 and published in 1851. The Gothic novel follows a New England family and their ancestral home. In the novel, Hawthorne explores themes of guilt, retribution, and atonement, and colours the tale with suggestions of the supernatural and witchcraft. The setting for the novel was inspired by the Turner-Ingersoll Mansion, a gabled house in Salem, Massachusetts, belonging to Hawthorne’s cousin Susanna Ingersoll, as well as ancestors of Hawthorne who had played a part in the Salem Witch Trials of 1692. *The House of the Seven Gables*, has an archetypal theme of withdrawal and return, which Hawthorne interpreted as isolation and redemptive reunion. Hawthorne’s statement on man’s relationship to the

past, could be considered as determinative for the future, and on whether, or how, man can escape from the bondage which the past imposes. *The House of the Seven Gables* was a piece of charmingly poetic realism, a sort of forerunner of the “local color” tales of old New England that were so popular after the Civil War.

In the same year, he also published *A Wonder Book for Girls and Boys*, a collection of short stories retelling myths from Greek mythology. Its sequence of, *Tanglewood Tales*, was published in 1853. *The Blithedale Romance* is the third major novel, published in 1852. The novel about a group of people living in an experimental community, was based in part on Hawthorne’s disillusionment with the Brook Farm Utopian community near Boston in the 1840s. The novel dramatizes the conflict between the commune’s ideals and the members’ private desires and romantic rivalries. Hawthorne’s depiction of Coverdale is intimate and detached, sympathetic and ironic. He exposes his narrator’s faults a paralyzing self-absorption, a tendency to inspect and probe the hearts and minds of other persons, an inability to sustain genuine commitment as well as his appealing qualities of stumbling humour, earnest if sometimes awkward sincerity, and a time at least, hopefulness that the world can be made new through communities grounded on socialist values and principles.

Hawthorne’s last of the four major romances, *The Marble Faun or, The Romance of Monte Beni*, was published in 1860. Set in Italy, it was written on the eve of the American Civil War. It is one of the works Hawthorne called romances “unrealistic” stories in exotic settings. The novel’s central metaphor is a statue of a

faun by Praxiteles that Hawthorne had seen in Rome. In the faun's fusing of animal and human characteristics, Hawthorne found an allegory of the fall of man from amoral innocence to the knowledge of good and evil, a theme that often had been assumed in his earlier works but that here received direct and philosophic treatment. The faun of the novel is Donatello, a passionate young Italian who makes the acquaintance of three American artists Miriam, Kenyon, and Hilda—who are spending time in Rome. When Donatello kills a man who has been shadowing Miriam, he is wrecked by guilt until he is arrested by the police and imprisoned. Both women are tainted by guilt.

Hawthorne called *The Scarlet Letter* a romance, not a novel. The novel is aimed at a minute fidelity to the ordinary course of man's experience; the romance permits modest use of the "marvelous" or imaginary. Romance like the novel must not serve the truths of the human heart and must subject itself to artistic laws. With this pronouncement in mind, *The Scarlet letter* is based on actual life, and it's the delineation of life will be colored somewhat by the intrusion of the "marvelous," that the story will nevertheless reveal inner or psychological truth, and that the narrative will give artistic form to the confusion of actual experience. Hawthorne unifies *the scarlet letter* as an insistent concern with guilt in the human psyche. Hawthorne's consideration of guilt and its effect so appealing to modern readers is its psychological validity. The Puritan society of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is portrayed as harsh, unconscious, dark, and imaginative. It rules by striking

strict laws. Every individual who lives in this society has to submit to the limitation of freedom.

Nature abounds in *The Scarlet Letter*, and darkness, shadows and moonlight are all part of the Gothic ambience. The overall atmosphere of the novel is dark and gloomy, a proper milieu for the Gothic tradition. In writing *The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne was striking out a new direction, psychological romance, while using some of the elements of a far older tradition, the Gothic novel. Nathaniel Hawthorne had deep bonds with his Puritan ancestors and created a story that both highlighted their weaknesses and their strengths.

The early critics viewed *the scarlet letter* as an outstanding literary achievement. If they found it a bit gloomy, they were nevertheless pleased that there finally was a work by an American author who could stand with the best being produced in England. Literary Historians have found it useful in studying the Romantic Movement and, more particularly, the traditions of the Gothic, the historical, and the sentimental novel. The New Critics have discovered that Hawthorne's flair for neatness of organization gives them material for analysis such as they seldom find outside of the lyric poem. Readers interested in psychology, especially Freudian psychology, turn to it as a fascinating and illuminating study of repression. Readers interested in archetypes can find them here, and those interested in symbols have a field day since there is hardly a concrete detail in the book that fails to have more than one level of meaning.

Social critics interested in the work of art as a depiction of a particular culture have discovered that it is a rewarding task to determine how Hawthorne pictured-and distorted the life of seventeenth century New England. Present-day moralists have found exciting subtleties in Hawthorne's treatment of sin that eluded earlier readers. Only the philosophically minded readers have found the book thin, and for a good reason. Interested primarily in man's moral and psychological dilemmas, Hawthorne left meta- physical considerations for others. *The Scarlet Letter*, therefore, remains a book to be read not as a monument in literary history but as a work unceasingly capable of engaging the mind and emotions. English writer Mary Anne Evans called *The Scarlet Letter*, as the "most indigenous and masterly productions in American literature". Most literary critics praised the book, but religious leaders took issue with the novel's subject matter.

Alison Easton one of the modern interpreters, offers in 1996 Easton shows how Hawthorne tried to understand the complexities of class between individual desire, which is ignored by the social order and circumstances that are the conditions under which that individual must live in society. Again, it comes from Edward Tanguay, he thought that Hawthorne has a deep understanding of human shame and the torture of the soul. The story was necessarily dreamlike, but this "radiating power" of the letter seemed to just get a little spooky and unbelievable. This story has its unique dreaminess, uncanniness, and is clearly a classic. On the other hand, 20th-century writer D.H. Lawrence said that there could not be a more perfect work of the American imagination than *The Scarlet Letter*



Hawthorne's Romanticism admits of only the individual rebel acting out of inner conviction. His Romanticism did not include Transcendentalism. If he was attracted by the Transcendentalists' emphasis on the individual and rejection of social convention, there is nothing in *The Scarlet Letter* to indicate an acceptance of their metaphysics. He is far closer to the Puritan belief in the depravity of man than to the Transcendental belief in man's perfectibility, what he is, really, is a skeptic who tends to doubt what man can accomplish either by his reason or by divine inspiration. Only the human affections seem to be worthy of man's trust, and even they when unsupported by the mind can render a man or woman helpless to cope with the depravity of others. The protagonist finally prospers because she combines the head and the heart, with the balance tipped on the side of the heart. Hawthorne's determinism is rigorous enough to suggest that the human will have only limited choices available to it, but not so rigorous as the determinism of later naturalistic novels in which the individual has no choice, With the Calvinists, he substantially agreed that man is inherently sinful.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Human Faith**

*The Scarlet Letter* is a work of historical fiction by Nathaniel Hawthorne, published in 1850. Set in the Puritan Massachusetts Bay colony during the years 1642 to 1649, the novel tells the story of Hester Prynne, who conceives a daughter with a man to whom she is not married and then struggles to create a new life of repentance and dignity. Containing a few religious and historic allusions, the book explores themes of legalism, sin and guilt.

Religion is a set of beliefs to which one subscribes. It is an external thing. Faith, on the other hand, is internal. It is one's own relationship with God or a divine being. In *The Scarlet Letter*, faith is celebrated while religion is treated with skepticism and some condemnation. Hawthorne succeeds in placing faith above religion by praising Anne Hutchinson, a historical figure. He called her "sainted" and suggested roses could bloom from her footprints. Hutchinson was among the first Puritans to settle in Massachusetts. As the colony grew, she felt that the ministers and government officials were beginning to emphasize adherence to a religious institution over following one's own faith. This was contrary to the teachings of Puritanism, and she was not afraid to say so.

Hutchinson believed one should be able to read and interpret the scriptures without a minister dictating one's thoughts. She also believed in personal revelation and the ability to commune with God on one's own and not just in a church. Hawthorne's favorable mention of her suggests he agreed with her sentiments.

Hawthorne further criticizes the external institution of religion in the way he portrays Arthur Dimmesdale. Dimmesdale is the town's minister. Everyone loves him and thinks he is just the holiest and best person alive, nigh unto angelic. In truth, however, he is utterly a pollution and a liar. Throughout the novel, one could realize by degrees that Arthur Dimmesdale is the one with whom Hester Prynne committed adultery. Hester is publicly shamed and condemned, but Dimmesdale hides his guilt inside, afraid of incurring public wrath and humiliation. His inner corruption is held up as a metaphor for the church as an entity with all piousness on the outside, and inward corruption. Depicting Dimmesdale in this way furthers Hawthorne's criticism of religion as an organization. "such loss of faith is ever one of the saddest results of sin"(20).

In Puritan Boston, Massachusetts, a crowd gathers to witness the punishment of Hester Prynne, a young woman who has given birth to a baby of unknown paternity. Her sentence requires her to stand on the scaffold for three hours, be exposed to public humiliation, and to wear a scarlet "A" for the rest of her life. As Hester approaches the scaffold, many of the women in the crowd are angered by her beauty and quiet dignity. When commanded and cajoled to name the father of her child, Hester refuses.

As Hester looks out over the crowd, she notices a small, misshapen man and recognizes him as her long-lost husband, who had been presumed lost at sea. When the husband sees Hester's shame, he asks a man in the crowd about her and is told the story of his wife's pregnancy. He angrily exclaims that the child's father

should also be punished for his immoral act and vows to find the man. “The dishonor that besmirches the husband of a faithless woman” (15). He chooses a new name, Roger Chillingworth, to aid him in his plan.

The Reverend John Wilson and the minister of Hester’s church, Arthur Dimmesdale, question her, but she refuses to name her lover. After she returns to her prison cell, the jailer brings in Chillingworth, now a physician, to calm Hester and her child with his roots and herbs. He and Hester have an open conversation regarding their marriage and the fact that they were both in the wrong. Chillingworth demands to know who fathered Hester’s child, but Hester refuses to divulge that information. He accepts Hester’s refusal, stating that he will find out the man’s identity anyway. Chillingworth threatens to destroy the father of Hester’s child if Hester ever reveals the fact that Chillingworth, is her husband. “Individuals of wiser faith, indeed, who knew that Heaven promotes its purposes without aiming at the stage-effect of what is called miraculous interposition, were inclined to see a providential hand in Roger Chillingworth’s so opportune arrival” (36).

Following her release from prison, Hester settles in a cottage at the edge of town and earns a meager living with her needlework, of extraordinary quality. She lives a quiet, somber life with her daughter, Pearl, and performs acts of charity for the poor. She is troubled by her daughter’s unusual fascination with the scarlet “A”. The shunning of Hester also extends to Pearl, who has no playmates or friends except her mother.

If little Pearl were entertained with faith and trust, as a spirit messenger no less than an earthly child, might it not be her errand to soothe away the sorrow that lay cold in her mother's heart, and converted it into a tomb?—and to help her to overcome the passion, once so wild, and even yet neither dead nor asleep, but only imprisoned within the same tomb-like heart.(65)

As she grows older, Pearl becomes capricious and unruly. The church members suggested Pearl be taken away from Hester. Hester, hearing rumors that she may lose Pearl, goes to speak to Governor Bellingham and ministers Wilson and Dimmesdale. Hester appeals to Dimmesdale in desperation, and the minister persuades the governor to let Pearl remain in Hester's care.

Dimmesdale's health has begun to fail, the townspeople are happy to have Chillingworth, the newly arrived physician, take up lodgings with their beloved minister. In close contact with Dimmesdale, Chillingworth begins to suspect that the minister's illness is the result of unconfessed guilt. He applies psychological pressure to the minister because he suspects Dimmesdale is Pearl's father. "In no state of society would he have been what is called a man of liberal views; it would always be essential to his peace to feel the pressure of a faith about him, supporting, while it confined him within its iron framework" (37).

One evening pulling the sleeping Dimmesdale's vestment aside Chillingworth sees a symbol that represents his shame on the minister's pale chest. Tormented by his guilty conscience, Dimmesdale goes to the square where Hester

was punished years earlier. Climbing the scaffold in the dead of night, he admits his guilt but cannot find the courage to do so publicly in the light of day. Hester, shocked by Dimmesdale's deterioration, decides to obtain a release from her vow of silence to her husband.

Hester meets Dimmesdale in the forest and tells him of her husband and his desire for revenge. She convinces Dimmesdale to leave Boston in secret on a ship to Europe where they can start life anew. Inspired by this plan, the minister seems to gain energy. "To the high mountain-peaks of faith and sanctity he would have climbed, had not the tendency been thwarted by the burden, whatever it might be, of crime or anguish, beneath which it was his doom to totter" (46).

On Election Day, Dimmesdale gives one of his most inspired sermons. As the procession leaves the church, however, Dimmesdale climbs upon the scaffold, confesses his sin, and dies in Hester's arms. Later, most witnesses swear that they saw a stigma in the form of a scarlet "A" upon his chest, although some deny this statement. Chillingworth loses his vengeance and dies as well, leaving Pearl a substantial inheritance.

After several years, Hester returns to her cottage and resumes wearing the scarlet letter. When she dies, she is buried near the grave of Dimmesdale, and they share a simple slate tombstone engraved with an escutcheon described as: "On a field sable, The letter A, gules."

The experience of Prynne and Dimmesdale recalls the story of Adam and Eve because, in both cases, sin results in expulsion and suffering. But it also results

in knowledge specifically, in the knowledge of what it means to be immoral. For Prynne, the Scarlet Letter is a physical manifestation of her sin and reminder of her painful solitude. She contemplates casting it off to obtain her freedom from an oppressive society and a checkered past as well as the absence of God. Because society excludes her, she considers the possibility that many of the traditions upheld by the Puritan culture are untrue and are not designed to bring her happiness.

As for Dimmesdale, the “cheating minister”, his sin gives him “sympathies so intimate with the sinful brotherhood of mankind” (46), “that his chest vibrates in unison with theirs” (46). His eloquent and powerful sermons derive from this sense of empathy. The Dimmesdale narrative is quite in keeping with the oldest and most fully authorized principles in Christian thought. His “fall” is a descent from apparent grace to his own damnation; he appears to begin in purity, but he ends in corruption. The subtlety is that the minister’s belief is his own cheating, convincing himself at every stage of his spiritual pilgrimage that he is saved.

Chillingworth’s misshapen body reflects the anger in his soul, just as Dimmesdale’s illness reveals his inner turmoil. The outward man reflects the condition of the heart. This observation is thought to have been inspired by the deterioration of Edgar Allan Poe whom Hawthorne “much admired”.

Hester Prynne was rejected by the villagers even though she spent her life doing what she could to help the sick and the poor. Because she was shunned, she spent her life mostly in solitude and did not attend church. Instead, she retreated into her own mind and her own thinking. Her thoughts began to stretch and go beyond

what would be considered by the Puritans as safe. She still saw her sin, but she began to look on it differently than the villagers did. Hester Prynne began to believe that a person's earthly sins do not necessarily condemn them. "Heaven, likewise, had frowned upon her, and she had not died. But the frown of this pale, weak, sinful, and sorrow-stricken man was what Hester could not bear and live!" (73). She even went so far as to tell Dimmesdale that their sin had been paid for by their daily penance and that their sin would not prevent them from reaching heaven.

Hester Prynne was alienated from Puritan society, both in her physical life and spiritual life as adultery was a major punishable sin, and public trials and punishments were used as a tool to prevent others from committing adultery or other crimes. When Dimmesdale died, she knew she had to move on because she could no longer conform to the Puritans' strictness. Her thinking was free from Puritan religious bounds, and she had established her own moral standards and beliefs. Over the passing years the condition of Dimmesdale worsens, and he finds no way out except publicly confessing what he had done. But when his daughter Pearl wants to be publicly recognized by her father, he refuses, which clearly reveals the dark side of Dimmesdale's character.

At the end of novel Hester along with her daughter and lover wants to leave Boston and move to Europe so that they can live a happy life. But Dimmesdale dies before moving to another place and before death, he publicly confesses his sin. After the death of Dimmesdale, Prynne and her daughter leave Boston. The story ends



with Hester losing both her lover and her pride, as Dimmesdale prefers to preserve his moral standing instead of comforting his lover.

As *The Scarlet Letter* is a mirror unto the society that existed in the 17th century Puritan America, which has been considered a reflection of implementation of Puritan laws that did not give equality to men and women even though women were strong, brave, industrious, kindhearted, and with a lofty devoting spirit, their whole life was very tragic in the end. It deeply reveals not only the Puritan's bitterness and the women's hardship, but also the strength of the Puritan consciousness and the lowness of the women's status.

This heroine of the novel, Hester Prynne, has such a noble character that she is undoubtedly recognized as having been determined to break the manacles of set traditions. Although Hester suffers enormously from the shame of her public disgrace and from the isolation of her punishment, in her inner heart she can never accept the Puritan interpretation of her act as she believes that her desire for love of freedom is not evil, but with dignity and grace. Hester retains her self-respect and survives her punishment with ever growing strength of character.

Hester shows a rebellious spirit coolly ignoring the comments passed by the people of that community. With this valuable spirit, she defies power and puts up a tenacious fight against the set traditions as she thinks that the Puritan society with its self-denying doctrines cast dishonor upon human passions. They judge by external signs instead of the interior conscience of men. They cannot understand the heart of humanity, so everyone of the community must comply with rules of Puritanism. The

rulers do not allow breaking away with the “Holy Community” anyway, let alone to revolt it. When she walked to the scaffold from the prison, she held her head high and remains in full public view without shedding a tear, as if by her own will. Hester’s rebellious spirit is also reflected in the elaborate needlework beyond the Puritan laws that call for somber, unadorned attire. She shows her skill in needling work, and it seems like that she takes pride in her token of isolation.

Hester uses individual rights and regards them as weapons to fire the Puritanism. Her beautiful hair is hidden under her cap; her beauty and warmth are gone, buried under the burden of the elaborate scarlet letter. When she removes the letter and takes off her cap in the forest, Hester once again becomes the radiant beauty. Symbolically, when Hester does these actions, she is in fact removing the harsh, stark, unbending puritan social and moral structure. Obviously, what Hester has done manifests her challenge to the whole dismal severity of the puritanical code of law. In her deepest heart, she can never accept the puritan rules and becomes a rebel against the rules.

The illegitimate children were considered as a stigma and a symbol of shame and disgrace, but Hester raises her child by herself. She names the child Pearl, as being of great price purchased with all she had, her only treasure. In Hester’s opinion, Providence, in the person of this little girl, has assigned to Hester’s charge the germ and blossom of womanhood, to be cherished and developed amid a host of difficulties. However, it has reached her ears that some of the leading inhabitants decide to deprive her of her child only because they cannot trust an immortal soul,

such as Pearl. Considering Hester, Pearl is her very life, her only treasure purchased with all she has.

Hester defends her right to raise Pearl bravely while in the confrontation with Governor Bellingham. This is how she rebels and challenges the church and the secular ruler in public. Although Hester is isolated and cut off from help, and so conscious that it seems scarcely an unequal match between the puritanical magistrates, she still sets forth and is ready to defend them to the death. She cries with almost a fierce expression, "God gave me the child. He gave her in requital of all things else, which she had taken from me. She is my happiness" (32).

Hester, as an ordinary woman, cries out for nothing else, but for her indefeasible rights, which shows her extraordinary courage and rebellious spirit. With Dimmesdale's interference, Hester succeeds in keeping her Pearl with her. She breaks the puritan rule permitting sons to have the right of succession and accepts the inheritance from Roger. Thus, Pearl becomes the richest heritor in the New Land. At last, she visits Europe and finds her lover. Pearl's happiness shows Hester's win to Puritanism and humanism's win to Puritanism.

Hester breaks the holy idea that the bad people cannot save or relieve themselves until they appeal to God's help and changes it through her deeds. Though at her time, it was the art almost the only one within a woman's grasp of needlework; Hester possesses it that sufficed to supply food for her thriving infant and herself. Her needlework was seen on the ruff of the Governor; military men wore it on their scarves, and the minister on his hand; it decked the baby's little cap; it was shut up,

to be mildewed and molded away, in the coffins of the dead. These noble and holy places are decorated with her fine needle work.

Undoubtedly, Hester gains her self-sufficiency in economy without appealing to God's help. She does not even turn to her lover Dimmesdale or her husband Chillingworth, who should have been responsible for her miserable life, for help. This is a clear proof of Hester's rebellion against the Puritans that women are not dependents upon men. They can earn their living with their own hands and intelligence. Hester's needle work is not only an art, but also a way for her to let off her emotions and passions. Women derive a pleasure, incomprehensible to the other sex, from the delicate toil of the needle; to Hester it might have been a mode of expressing, and therefore soothing, the passion of her life.

Hawthorne brings out the potential conflict between the community and Hester to a peak when the community summons Hester before them to decide whether they should deprive the mother of her child. Pearl is a mischievous and almost unworldly child, whose uncontrollable nature reflects the sinful passion that led to her birth. Pearl's character is closely tied to her birth, which justifies and makes the "other worldliness" about her very important. She is a product and a symbol of an act of adultery, an act of love, an act of passion, a sin, and a crime.

Hawthorne, states:

. . . the infant was worthy to have been brought forth in Eden; worthy to have been left there, to be the plaything of the angels, after the world's first parents were driven out. The child had a

native grace which does not invariably coexist with faultless beauty; its attire, however simple, always impressed the beholder as if it were the very garb that precisely became it best. (21)

However, she “lacked reference and adaptation to the world into which she was born” (21).

Hawthorne’s condemnation of Puritanism continues in this chapter. His strongest rebuttal of the society’s self-serving, false piety occurs when he ironically contrasts the Puritan community’s treatment of Hester and God’s treatment of her. He notes of Hester’s fellow citizens, “Man had marked this woman’s sin by a scarlet letter, which had such potent and disastrous efficacy that no human sympathy could reach her, save it were sinful like herself” (21).

Hawthorne also designs this chapter to advance the knowledge of Pearl, both in appearance and actions. She is constant motion with “rich and luxuriant beauty”. Her actions are full of fire and passion. When the Puritan children fling mud at Pearl, she scares them off. She is an “angel of judgement” and an “infant pestilence”. When Hester is told the governor cannot see her immediately, she firmly tells the servant she will wait. Her determined manner indicates to the servant how strongly she feels about the issue of Pearl’s guardianship.

The community forces Dimmesdale to recognize Hester as a parishioner and as her minister to plead for her and her child; his acquiescence ironically underlines his failure to come to her aid in his natural role. The community, as an activator of the narrative to this point, has created an apparent

strength that from their stance should be maintained; consequently, they conclude here to be the activator in the narrative.

In the end Hester escapes the iron rules of Massachusetts Bay Colony, later to return to her own volition. She assures other sinners that at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed, to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness.

Throughout the novel, the nature images contrast with the stark darkness of the Puritans and their systems. A rose bush's beauty forms a striking contrast to all that surrounds it. Later, the beautifully embroidered scarlet "A" is held out in part as an invitation to find "some sweet moral blossom" (1), in the ensuing, tragic tale and in part as an image that "the deep heart of nature" (1), may look more kindly on the errant Prynne and her child than her Puritan neighbors do.

The Puritan community sees Hester as a fallen woman, Dimmesdale as a saint, and would have seen the disguised Chillingworth as a victim a husband betrayed. Instead, Hawthorne ultimately presents Hester as a woman who represents a sensitive human being with a heart and emotions; Dimmesdale as a minister who is not very saint-like in private but, instead, morally weak, and unable to confess his hidden sin; and Chillingworth as a husband who is the worst possible offender of humanity and single-mindedly pursuing an evil goal.

Hawthorne's embodiment of these characters is denied by the Puritan mentality: At the end of the novel, even watching and hearing Dimmesdale's

confession many members of the Puritan community still deny what they saw. Thus, using his characters as symbols, Hawthorne discloses the grim underside of Puritanism that lurks beneath the public piety.

Besides the characters, the most obvious symbol is the scarlet letter itself, which has various meanings depending on its context. It is a sign of adultery, penance, and penitence. It brings about Hester's suffering and loneliness and provides her rejuvenation. In the book, it first appears as an actual material object in The Custom House preface. Then, becomes an elaborately gold-embroidered A over Hester's heart and is magnified in the armor breastplate at Governor Bellingham's mansion. Here Hester is hidden by the gigantic, magnified symbol just as her life and feelings are hidden behind the sign of her sin.

Every chapter in *The Scarlet Letter* has symbols displayed through characterization, setting, colors, and light. Perhaps the most dramatic chapters using these techniques are the chapters comprising the three scaffold scenes and the meeting in the forest between Hester and Dimmesdale. Hawthorne's ability to introduce these symbols and change them through the context of his story is but one of the reasons *The Scarlet Letter* is considered his masterpiece and a peerless example of the romance novel.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Wages of Sin**

During the Protestant regime, the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation was a human rights movement. The Reformation not only laid the groundwork for religious human rights but also built the platform for the more expansive conceptions of individual liberty that shaped the political development of the West. The continuing importance of the churches in the human rights movement is affirmed. There is some significance in simply proclaiming human rights norms of liberty, equality, and fraternity if for no other reason than to pose an embodiment against which a community might measure itself, to preserve a normative totem for later eras to make real.

The conceptual human rights ideals of the good life and the good society depend upon the visions and values of human communities to give them content and coherence. Religion is an ineradicable condition of human lives and human communities. Religions inevitably define the meanings and measures of shame and regret, restraint and respect, responsibility, and restitution that a human rights regime presupposes. Religions must thus be seen as indispensable allies in the modern struggle for human rights.

The Puritans who settled Massachusetts Bay Colony believed that all mankind was depraved and sinful because of Adam and Eve's fall in the Garden of Eden. Because Adam and Eve were willful and disobedient to God, they brought upon mankind the curse of depravity, sometimes called Original Sin. For this



reason, *The New England Primer* (1683), which was used to teach reading in Puritan schools, began with “A: In Adam’s Fall / We sinned all”. Most Puritans could be sure of eternal punishment in hell; the few that were “elect” would go to heaven.

The expression “The wage of sin is death” comes from the New Testament, where Paul writes to the Romans (6:23). In puritan society, sin was taken as a bigger contract and a hefty disadvantage on the soul. In *The Scarlet Letter* sin is the worst thing imaginable, when Dimmesdale was talking to the youngest one of the church members who was very much concerned about her sin that she didn’t listen to her mother. The scenario is described as, “Satan, that afternoon, had surely led the poor young girl away from her mother’s side, and thrown her into the pathway of this sorely tempted, or shall we not rather say?” (85).

The most recurring theme in *The Scarlet Letter* is the consequence of sin and guilt. This is important to the story because Puritans felt that sin was extremely evil. Puritans often tried to use guilt to get people to confess to crimes. This theme plays an important role in *The Scarlet Letter*.

In *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne presents three sinners: Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, and Roger Chillingworth. Each of the three sinners represents a separate case of sin; Hester is an open sinner; Dimmesdale is a secret sinner and Roger Chillingworth is an unpardonable sinner. Each one of these sinners is first isolated from society on the committal of the sin, then alienated and ultimately regenerated. In the case of Hester Prynne, the open sinner, regeneration takes place by her secret confession within herself that impels her to do the suffering

humanity. This accounts for her regeneration. In the case of Arthur Dimmesdale, the secret sinner, regeneration takes place by open confession in public. And in the case of Roger Chillingworth, the unpardonable sinner, regeneration does not take place by his own effort but on account of Dimmesdale's last prayer to God for grant of forgiveness to him.

Hester Prynne is the primary example of how this theme affected the characters of the story. She experiences the consequences of sin, by being harassed by the people of the town and constantly mocked for her actions. The Scarlet Letter on her chest was a symbol of shame and she was shamed daily. She was on the frontline of the assault and took the heat for her sin, which in turn, took a toll on her health and wellbeing. She got weaker and weaker as the story went on, as both her consequence and her guilt began eating away at her, physically and emotionally. Her guilt wasn't just because of the Scarlet Letter she wears but because she was holding the secrets of two men Dimmesdale and Roger Chillingworth. She must conceal Dimmesdale's transgression, which is like hers and Roger Chillingworth's identity which definitely took a tremendous emotional strain on her Hester Prynne also had a child Pearl because of her sin.

Dimmesdale and Chillingworth, both "sinners" for their part in this spectacle are valued as revered members of the repressive community, while Hester is an outcast because of her publicly acknowledged sin. These "iron men and their rules" provide a backdrop for Hawthorne's story that keeps the conflict alive

because public appearances and penance were dramatically important parts of the Puritan community.

The Puritans had great difficulty in loving the sinner and hating the sin in Massachusetts Bay Colony. When Chillingworth asks a person in the crowd about Hester's crime, he is told that the sentence was softened from death by "their great mercy and tenderness of heart" (8), because she is a beautiful widow and probably was "tempted to her fall"(8). It is said that this penalty is wise because she will be "a living sermon against sin". The only softening of the community's opinion is from the young woman in the crowd who says that no matter how Hester might cover the letter on her dress, she will always know inside that she is a sinner and the "blackness" of Hester's sin and reports that only the intervention of the minister, Dimmesdale, has persuaded him that the minister is a better judge of arguments that will cause Hester to reveal the name of the child's father.

Dimmesdale's voice, which affected his congregation "Like the speech of an angel," also exhorts Hester to name the father. In a speech filled with hypocrisy and desire to force Hester to make the decision about his public confession, he challenges her to reveal his name:

What can thy silence do for him, except it tempt him yea, compel him, as it were to add hypocrisy to sin? Heaven hath granted thee an open ignominy, that thereby thou mayest work out an open triumph over the evil within thee, and the sorrow without. Take heed how thou deniest to him—who, perchance, hath not the courage to grasp it

for himself—the bitter, but wholesome, cup that is now presented to thy lips! (10).

While the community calls for Hester's blood, those who are equally sinful remain silent. The only escape from public scrutiny is the forest. The lovers are caught up in a web of lies and deception. They can safely meet and discuss Chillingworth's identity and their plan of escape in the forest and haunt of the Black Man. Here Hester and Dimmesdale plan their escape to Europe where they can follow their hearts and forget the rigid rules of their Puritan society.

The Puritan conscience is too deeply ingrained in Dimmesdale, and though he dabbles in sin on his way back to the Puritan stronghold, he is still a Calvinist at heart. If he is to remain true to himself and honest, as Hester says he must for his conscience's sake, must go back to the world in which he is comfortable, even if it eventually means his public humiliation and death. He would not feel at home in the forest where the laws of nature surpass the bars that imprison individuals in Boston.

. . . had a story about the scarlet letter which we might readily work up into a terrific legend. They averred, that the symbol was not mere scarlet cloth, tinged in an earthly dye-pot, but was red-hot with infernal fire, and could be seen glowing all alight, whenever Hester Prynne walked abroad in the night-time. And we must needs say, it seared Hester's bosom so deeply, that perhaps there was more truth in the rumor than our modern incredulity may be inclined to admit. (73)

When the townspeople became aware of what Hester has done, they forced her to wear an ultimate sign of punishment, The scarlet letter “A”, for adultery had to be always worn on Hester’s bosom.

The scarlet letter “A” stood for adultery, a crime committed by anyone having sexual relations outside of marriage, and anyone who had committed this sin was forced to wear the letter on top of their clothing as a form of public shaming during the puritan era in *The Scarlet Letter*. Adultery was evaluated as one of the worst sins a woman could commit, therefore punishable by the whole community. The punishment was also taken extremely seriously by the community because the Puritans saw this sort of crime as damage to their own reputation. However, Roger Chillingworth returns from the sea and seeks revenge on Hester’s lover. When one investigates the retribution imposed upon her, it may seem intense and cruel, especially for a Puritan society.

Throughout the novel, it is apparent that Hawthorne feels that the punishment Hester received was brutal and self-degrading. Wearing the letter made Hester the talk of the town. When she walked through the marketplace, she received lofty looks, as if society was denying her for her malfeasance. Hester was then living on the outskirts of town, isolated from her neighbors, and trying to let out with her daughter Pearl. After many years of being swept out of society, Hester realized that her punishment was far worse than she deserved. Hawthorne sympathizes with Hester because of the emotional crises she encounters.

Hawthorne sees her as the victim quite often and accuses it of her youth. She was forced to marry Roger Chillingworth at a young age, although she apparently had no feelings for him. Hester's crime was one out of affection, not malice. It is obvious throughout the novel that she has strong feelings for Dimmesdale, and they overshadow her respect for the Puritan code of law. Although Hawthorne does not approve of adultery, he often feels that Hester's sin is somewhat out of condition. She has nobody in her life. Her husband is lost at sea, and she lives with nobody.

Dimmesdale was the first man Hester really loved, and she feels that because of these occurrences, her punishment far outweighed her crime. Throughout the novel, it is very transparent that Hester does not endure Puritan traditions and is not very orthodox. It appears that she has overcome her guilt and her love for Pearl is unmatched, yet the scarlet Letter she wears always reminds her of her adulterous sin. As Hawthorne expresses, it is prominent to Puritans that they have little or no empathy for cranky people.

After bringing up Hester as the novel's protagonist, Hawthorne stirs up the central conflict of the novel by bringing Hester into direct contact with her antagonist, Chillingworth, the husband she has betrayed by committing adultery. Chillingworth vows to discover the identity of Pearl's father, who at this point is equally curious about who Hester's lover is and why she is so dead set on protecting him.

It is strongly suspected that Dimmesdale is the father of the child, as they wonder if Chillingworth has made the same realization, or if Dimmesdale will keep his secret. Dimmesdale, Hester, and Chillingworth all keep their relationships with one another a secret, so all three characters exist in isolation within the community, although Hester is the only one who has been officially banished.

Dimmesdale was isolated from the community in some different ways than Hester Prynne. He gets along fine with the townspeople; however, he is isolated because of guilt. He knew he had contributed to Hester Prynne's problem and that guilt of knowing was slowly eating away at his life inside of him. He was isolated and sickly and was always in the care of his physician, Roger Chillingworth, who was also isolated from the community as well. His need for revenge and the way he dressed scared the townspeople into thinking that he was sent by the devil to go and get Arthur Dimmesdale. Roger Chillingworth's obsession for revenge turned him into an older man and furthered him from the community.

When Dimmesdale gets sick, it's Chillingworth's chance to start his revenge and let Dimmesdale get his punishment. However, Dimmesdale's punishment is to keep silent. He can't handle the situation to keep such a secret and he not only gets psychically but physically sick. In other words, his hypocrisy drives him sick. Chillingworth pretends to be a doctor and starts taking care of Dimmesdale.

Dimmesdale becomes thinner and paler, struggling under the unrevealed guilt of his deed. The occasional habit of pressing his hand to his ailing heart has now become a constant gesture. He turns down the suggestions of a wife as a

helpmate, and some parishioners associate his illness with his strong devotion to God. Dimmesdale, although he discusses the secrets of his soul with his physician, never reveals the ultimate secret that Chillingworth is obsessed with hearing.

Dimmesdale can basically feel Chillingworth's dark side. When he first sees him, he is 'overcome with terror.' (79) He can't help him but had to ask Hester for help: 'Who is that man?', 'I shiver at him! Dost, thou know the man? I hate him, Hester!' (79) Despite of Dimmesdale's suffering, Hester can't tell him anything due to her oath to Chillingworth. By not telling him anything, Hester protects Chillingworth's new identity. His obsession with Dimmesdale and his revenge increases and Chillingworth becomes more and more of a sinner. He intentionally gives him the wrong medicine, consequently there's not only any chance for him to get better but to get worse. "He now digs into the poor clergyman's heart, like a miner searching for gold" (59) and uses his knowledge to torture Dimmesdale. Instead of choosing to kill him, quick and painless, he tortures him. He makes Dimmesdale regret his sin every day without even knowing who his punisher is.

As time passes, the conflict escalates with the growing friendship and dependency between Chillingworth and Dimmesdale. Chillingworth opens Dimmesdale's shirt while he is sleeping and sees a mark, convincing Dimmesdale is Pearl's father. Meanwhile, Hester lives in solitude with her daughter, becoming philosophical about the nature of her crime and the role of women in society.



In the climactic scene, the forces of repression and ambiguity directly confront the human need for confession and forgiveness when Hester and Pearl join Dimmesdale on the scaffold in the middle of the night. But Dimmesdale admits he is too weak to publicly reveal himself as Pearl's father, and Hester realizes that Dimmesdale, though he has been able to remain a member of society, has possibly suffered more than she has. Unlike Hester, Dimmesdale has kept his sin a secret and continues to wear one face in public and another in private. Hester sees how Chillingworth has added to Dimmesdale's anguish and inquiries whether she is at culpability for having concealed Chillingworth's identity.

As Chillingworth becomes more and more absorbed in practicing "the black art," the townspeople notice the physical changes in him, and they begin to see "something ugly and evil in his face." His laboratory seems to be warmed with "infernal fuel," and the fire, which also leaves a sooty film on the physician's face, appears to come from hell. As the people in town watch this struggle, they feel that this disciple of Satan cannot win and that the goodness of Dimmesdale will prevail.

There is a parallel to the puritan method of punishing Hester with the scarlet letter "A". Dimmesdale feels the pain whenever he sees her wear it every day on her bosom. Chillingworth not only tortures Dimmesdale, but also Hester because she must watch her lover getting worse and worse every day. Moreover, her husband is the reason why her love must suffer, and she can't tell him. Chillingworth's plan is to make "Hester understands the likely consequences of his action and thus of her own the power of her silence before she commits herself.

He threatens that she should give away his identity, to blast Dimmesdale's reputation, even to kill him" (144). After Dimmesdale's death, Hester leaves the community, but returns for unknown reasons and chooses to live out her life in quiet solitude, wearing her scarlet letter "A" by option and acting as a confession to other women who have violated societal norms.

...vileness before his congregation, but he does so equivocally so that his hearers think him but the more nearly divine: The minister well knew-subtle, but remorseful hypocrite that he was! -the light in which his vague confession would be viewed. He had striven to put a cheat upon himself by making the avowal of a guilty conscience but had gained only one other sin, and a self-acknowledged shame, without the momentary relief of being self-deceived. He had spoken the very truth, and transformed it into the veriest falsehood (169).

Hawthorne identifies the progression of the story as the darkening close "a tale of human frailty and sorrow" (1). Dark to begin with, it grows steadily deeper in the gloom. Almost every image has a symbolic function, no scene is superfluous. One would perhaps at times welcome a loosening of the structure, a moment of wandering from the path. The weedy grass plot in front of the prison; the distorting reflection of Hester in a breastplate, where the Scarlet Letter appears gigantic; the tapestry of David and Bathsheba on the wall of the minister's chamber: the little brook in the forest; the slight malformation of Chillingworth's shoulder, the ceremonial procession on election day-in every instance more is meant than meets

the eye. The intensity of *The Scarlet Letter* comes in part from a sustained and rigorous dramatic irony, or irony of the situation. This irony arises naturally from the theme of “secret sin” or concealment.

The main question of *The Scarlet Letter* that goes towards sin is if Hester had sinned alone: “Had Hester sinned alone?” (81). Hester hadn’t sinned alone because of the sins of the townspeople and other characters of the novel. The minister hides his sin, and Chillingworth hides his identity. Dimmesdale had the sins of adultery and lying. Roger had the sin of seeking and planning revenge against Dimmesdale and is even depicted as the devil. This shows how she comes to terms with the fact that other people have sins hidden in hearts which proves she isn’t the only sinner. The scarlet letter gave her a special power by saying, “she felt or fancied, then, that the scarlet letter had endowed her with a new sense.” (81). The scarlet letter gave her the ability to see other people that had sins hidden and she could help them with that.

Hawthorne feels that once she has overcome her guilt and has accepted her punishment, then Hester should be able to start over from scratch and unload this heavy burden from her back but that doesn’t happen. Hester then soon realizes when Pearl looks at her that she isn’t alone. She also realizes by speaking of that, “She shuddered to believe, yet could not help believing, that it gave her a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts.” (81). The sin remains with Hester for seven years until her death, and the Puritan community never seems to forgive her for her sins.

## Chapter Four

### Psychological Trauma

Trauma has been and is a part of human life and it involves experiences of fear, terror, and disempowerment that overwhelm the defense and threaten to paralyze the vital functions of a person. The reasons for trauma lie in the disconnection and alienation between humans and their environment, the mind and the body, the self and others, and its influences, individual consciousness, and personal communication.

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud gives two related reasons for it. First, the victim of trauma hopes to acquire mastery over the event through repetition. A person hopes that by acquiring mastery over the cause of the trauma, the current repercussions of the first trauma could be overcome. The second reason that Freud gives is the “Death Wish”: a rehearsal of death through a traumatic event. According to Freud, a human being wants to die, but on his/her own terms. By rehearsing death via traumatic experiences that could prove fatal and acquiring mastery over them, the victim hopes to prevent his/her untimely death.

The story of *The Scarlet Letter* presents before us three sinners – Hester Prynne, Arthur Dimmesdale, and Roger Chillingworth. Each of the three sinners represents a separate case of sin; Hester is an open sinner; Dimmesdale is a secret sinner and Roger Chillingworth is an unpardonable sinner. Each one of these sinners

is first isolated from society on the committal of the sin, then alienated and ultimately regenerated.

In the case of Hester Prynne, the open sinner, regeneration takes place by her secret confession within herself that impels her to do the suffering humanity. This accounts for her regeneration. In the case of Arthur Dimmesdale, the secret sinner, regeneration takes place by open confession in public. And in the case of Roger Chillingworth, the unpardonable sinner, regeneration does not take place by his own effort but on account of Dimmesdale's last prayer to God for grant of forgiveness to him. So, when we concentrate on the problem of sin that dominates the book, we forget the story element of *The Scarlet Letter* and find ourselves caught in a serious psychological problem that grips us all. The psychological impact of the subject of sin on the mind of the readers makes the book a psychological romance.

At the beginning of the novel, Hester appears on a scaffold holding her infant daughter in her arms by bearing the scarlet letter 'A'. This signifies the shameful meaning of adultery. Society stands as severe mental pain for Hester at this moment. It seems, the townspeople are surrounded to burn her with their hateful looks and words. Thus, the townspeople play a fierce role in the psychological conflict for Hester as they keep throwing intolerable curses upon her "At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester's forehead" (53). Hawthorne's central character, Hester Prynne commits adultery with Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, by which Hester gives birth to a girl.

Trauma resulting from the discovery of the adulterous affair between Dimmesdale and Hester is very real in *The Scarlet Letter*; Hester had a fair chance of dying because of it “This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die. Is there not law for it? Truly, there is, both in the Scripture and the statute-book” (56). Had Dimmesdale been found out as Hester’s lover, a similar fate would probably have awaited him. While Hester’s traumatic “wound” is closer to healing than Dimmesdale’s. Dimmesdale finds it necessary to return to it: he flagellates himself to induce the pain. Furthermore, he is constantly reminded of his trauma by Chillingworth.

Another “rhythmic motif” used in *The Scarlet Letter* is the horror of loneliness which reveals the conditions of the tormented soul. Both Hester and Dimmesdale suffer from their sense of guilt, and each falls victim to the horror and inflictions of the soul. In fact, the novelist has delineated in this novel an allegory of sin in terms of head and heart. In all there are three sinners in the novel, each representing a separate case of sin but taken together, all the three stands for the Cosmic view of sin. Perhaps, all the sinners of the world can be discussed under three heads – the open sinners, the secret sinners, and the unpardonable sinners, and all these cases of sin are represented in this novel through the three major characters. Hester represents the case of an open sinner who is isolated, alienated and regenerated through secret confession.

Arthur Dimmesdale is a secret sinner who is isolated and alienated both within and without but regenerated by means of open confession. Roger Chillingworth represents the case of an unpardonable sinner who is isolated, alienated and regenerated only after his death on account of Dimmesdale's prayer. Throughout the novel, the theme of sin, isolation and regeneration is developed in a systematic manner. And it is this theme of sin, isolation and regeneration that provides unity to the content and the structure of the plot of *The Scarlet Letter*. 'Pearl' is also used as a unifying force in *The Scarlet Letter*. She walks with Hester like her shadow and is a living symbol of Hester's sin and guilt. With her self-like qualities Pearl has been associated with the demoniac spirit.

Hawthorne indicates the scorn of society for Hester, and it keeps her mentally distressed. Hester Prynne finds herself punished and humiliated publicly as she is forced to stand on a public scaffold with the scarlet letter "A" for adultery on her bosom for three hours. She also receives the command that she must wear the shameful symbol for the rest of her life. The townspeople say evil and harsh words about her. "At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead. This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die" (82).

The townspeople's hatred creates extreme psychological anguish in Hester. While confronting the townspeople, she clasps her three-month-old child closely to her bosom due to the shame she endures. Her action defines her inner fear

although she has put up a haughty smile with a burning ruddiness on her face. Hester becomes mentally feeble because of her sense of guilt as sin breaks down the mental strength of human beings. Hester starts spending her life through emotional misery for being alienated from society. Hester is surrounded by people who do not consider her as their own. Hawthorne displays Hester's inner agony in an internal and external manner.

Hester Prynne suffers immensely from public humiliation and isolation within Puritan society. Hester symbolizes a woman who, whether intentionally or not, rebels against unnatural rules of sexual repression. When she passes the town, the children even pursue her at a distance with shrill cries, acting cruelly. Every time new people arrive, their curious gaze at the scarlet letter functions as a peculiar torture for her and brands it afresh in her soul. Lack of resources, social support, and an increased feeling of isolation in the neighborhood transform Hester from a beautiful, elegant, and passionate young lady into a poor, fatigued woman with a seemingly empty soul.

Despite her loss of acceptance in her place, her identity, and normal connections with her community, which create chronic stress and make her feel helpless and despair, her ability continually to love others and help the community that rejects her paradoxically endows her with much strength and a sense of belonging. "She never battled with the public but submitted uncomplainingly to its worst usage" (169). Her consistent intolerance and love gradually overcome



townspeople's hatred and even transform their feelings for her into love. "the scarlet letter ceased to be a stigma which attracted the world scorn and bitterness, and became a type of something to be sorrowed over, and looked upon with awe, yet with reverence too" (244). After so many toilsome and devoted years, she eventually establishes a connection with the community and finds her self-definition and sense of belonging and gains her salvation by herself.

Hester's shameful existence does not give her any scope to leave Boston as she is aware of her fellow sinner who dwells in the same city. She makes this decision for the self-punishment of her guilt by expressing the fortune of her daily shame. Again, she agonizes over her daughter's unusual behavior. Her daughter, Pearl, becomes a source of mental torture for her. Hester moans in "O Father in Heaven, - if Thou art still my Father, what is this being which I have brought into the world" (100). Hawthorne here visibly characterizes Hester's inward feelings about her daughter's behavior.

Hawthorne provides Pearl with less adaptation to society where she apparently lacks mutual communication and company. Her playmates used to do such doing like which crafting through the sticks, a bunch of rags, and flowers. But Pearl seems to be a demon offspring in the eyes of the townspeople. Pearl possesses a somewhat absurd and even disturbing personality due to her trauma. When she is born, she isolates with her mother. "Never since her release from prison, had Hester met the public gaze without her" (117).

Hester Prynne could not comprehend her daughter's psychology as she seemed sometimes gentle and affectionate sometime furious and violent. Hester's sin turns into shame and shame turns into inner change; she gradually becomes savior in then town. Thus, she earns the title of the Sister of Mercy as Hawthorne says "She was self-ordained a Sister of Mercy; or, we may rather say, the world's heavy hand had so ordained her, when neither the world nor she looked frowned to this result" (172).

Hester merely plays a vital role by aiding townspeople in an epidemic rage. Hester reveals her psychological emotion by disclosing the identity of Roger Chillingworth to Arthur Dimmesdale. Hester's psychological craving for being punished strengthens her mind not to repudiate her position as a sinner. Thus, Hawthorne shows a woman of a strong and undaunted mind through internal sufferings and individual romantic beliefs.

Arthur Dimmesdale punishes himself in private for his shameful guilt. But Dimmesdale is burdened with his crime internally not only for being a minister but also a human being. Hawthorne presents the image of Dimmesdale through the interior conflict of his mind, that neither he can confess his guilt because of his social status nor can hold firmly his sense of sin.

Arthur Dimmesdale, Hester's real love and the father of Pearl, serves the community as a well-educated Puritan minister, who devotes his life to God and

remains passionate about his religion. His trauma lies in the disconnection between his body and soul, his external reputation, and his internal sins. He contains a great wealth of interior life, a private and secret life. In the townspeople's eyes, Dimmesdale appears sacred and maintains a high status. People admire him for his eloquence and moving sermons, an admiration that seems ironic given his hidden nature. On the outside, he seems to crave recognition and power and his status as the spiritual leader of the community is high.

Dimmesdale self-torture and self-punishment condemn his health and leads to physical failure. People "deemed the young clergyman a miracle of holiness" (244). Despite his inner truth, in sharp contrast to what seems should prevail, the more he is worshipped, the more his inner soul struggles. The more others view him as a saintly, wise, holy man, the more he suffers while paradoxically feeling the necessity to maintain such appearances.

Hawthorne demonstrates less tendency of Dimmesdale's mind to get revealed the crime of him as he earns an ample amount of faith from society. Even the public veneration tortures his mind as he is the secret culprit veiled to their eyes. And the physician Roger Chillingworth plays him off by serving mental torturous treatment for a very long duration as Dimmesdale is literally going to surrender his crime. The minister becomes intensely sick as physician's action holds a role of chief actor rather audience in the realm of minister mind. "He became, thenceforth, not a spectator only, but a chief actor, in the poor minister's interior world" (150).

In the meeting with mother and daughter, Dimmesdale's utterances to the daughter of Hester define his inner fear of overwhelming shame "Nay; not so, my little Pearl!" answered the minister; for, with the new energy of the moment, all the dread of the public exposure, that had so long been the anguish of his life, had returned upon him; and he was already trembling at the conjunction in which-with a strange joy, nevertheless- he now found himself. "Not so, my child. I shall, indeed, stand with thy mother and thee one other day, but not tomorrow!" (163). It is a mental dilemma that his sin might get revealed or he is being crushed in his own heart although he finds new energy to fulfill innocent Pearl's wishes. Minister has an affliction of standing on the scaffold as it makes him a kind of sinner and because of this, he refuses Pearl's offer. It conveys the view of psychological torture of Dimmesdale that he is holding for so long. It further expresses his inward destruction which is more painful than death.

Hawthorne displays the realization of the minister's inner thoughts about the ongoing status in "The minister well knew-subtle, but remorseful hypocrite that he was! -the light in which is vague confession would be viewed" (154). Dimmesdale's mental agony becomes clear too while thinking of the solemnity of their sin, which is low in weight of Chillingworth's more malicious revenge "We are not, Hester, the worst sinners in the world. There is one worse than even the polluted priest! That old man's revenge has been blacker than my sin. He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of the human heart. Thou and I, Hester, never

did so!” (209). This leads the poor minister to become more familiar with the corrupted belief of Rome rather than his inborn duty of the church “His inward trouble drove him to practices, more in accordance with the old, corrupted faith of Rome, than with the better light of the church in which he had been born and bred” (155).

Psychological conflict dwells in another major character’s mind in Hawthorne’s masterpiece Roger Chillingworth, who is introduced as a physician and physically deformed, long absent husband of Hester Prynne. His mental suffering is caused by his adulterous wife, which makes him revengeful and inwardly depressed. This poor Chillingworth is disturbed psychologically and, his deformed shoulders mirror his gnarled soul.

Though Chillingworth does not take part in Hester and Dimmesdale’s sin, their action has a great impact on his psychology. Hawthorne alters this gentle and old physician’s mind from being merciful to merciless and makes him intimately revengeful against the fellow sinner of his adulterous wife. “Calm, gentle, passionless, as he appeared, there was yet, we fear, a quite depth of malice, hitherto latent, but active now, in this unfortunate old man, which led him to imagine a more intimate revenge than any mortal had wreaked upon an enemy” (149). And the physician contends the name of the fellow sinner from Hester “I charge thee to speak out the name of the fellow-sinner and fellow-sufferer” (71).

Chillingworth claim seems rightful while urging the similar punishment for the fellow-sinner as his wife is suffering ” ...though he were to step down from a high place, and stand there beside thee, on thy pedestal of shame” (71). Chillingworth’s inward disturbance is clearly visible through this expression of despise. Unfortunately, the aim of vengeance against Dimmesdale makes him internally disheartened, while Dimmesdale counts his final breath and escapes from the hand of old Roger Chillingworth. Thus, Hawthorne makes this poor Chillingworth the greatest sinner by coldly seeking revenge.

The infantile countenance of this masterpiece of Hawthorne is Pearl, who is the daughter of Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale. The human embodiment of the scarlet letter and her parent’s sin, Pearl lacks adaptation to the child world. Due to her mother’s guilt of shame, both Pearl and Hester stay alienated from society, which keeps Pearl’s inner world different from other children. “Pearl was a born outcast of the infantile world”(98). Hawthorne organizes the magnificent framework of inner thoughts of Pearl although she is a child. Hawthorne uses this innocent child in his masterwork, to bring out the inner and outward trauma of the major characters Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale.

Pearl’s internal curiosity does not end with the sign of her mother’s bosom but the hand of Dimmesdale over his heart also keeps her little mind busy. She brings alteration on her mother emblem, which shows the exterior psychological change for Hester. Pearl makes Dimmesdale fail to admit his adultery. This is an

expression of external action to dig out the inner conflict. Hawthorne fantastically puts Pearl's existence for intensifying the psychological aspects of other characters.

Nathaniel Hawthorne runs his pen profoundly through his own psychological and graspable stratagem to comprehend human psychology, which is already being discussed constantly in each major character and incident. Hester Prynne lives her life through a variety of modifications and succeeds in changing the mind of society for her by transforming her shame of guilt into ability. Dimmesdale, being inwardly tortured and a priest tries to make confession of his shameful deeds by counting last moment of his life. Chillingworth coldly seeks vengeance against the minister by tormenting him as a physician. Hawthorne creates little Pearl as the consequence of her parents' guilt and leads her to play some dynamic role in certain incidents. Henceforth, Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is successfully a psychological novel where all characters are designed to recognize their own individual identities.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

Hawthorne's works belong to Romanticism specifically, Dark Romanticism, cautionary tales that suggest that guilt, sin, and evil are the most inherent natural qualities of humanity. Many of his works are inspired by Puritan New England combining historical romance loaded with symbolism and deep psychological themes, bordering on surrealism. His depictions of the past are a version of historical fiction used only as a vehicle to express common themes of ancestral sin, guilt, and retribution.

Hawthorne's high rank among American fiction writers is the result of at least three considerations. First, he was a skillful craftsman with an impressive architectonic sense of form. The structure of *The Scarlet Letter* is so tightly integrated that no chapter, no paragraph, could even be omitted without doing violence to the whole. The book's four characters are inextricably bound together in the tangled web of a life situation that seems to have no solution, and the tightly woven plot has a unity of action that rises slowly but inexorably to the climactic scene of Dimmesdale's public confession. The same tight construction is found in Hawthorne's other writings also. Hawthorne was also the master of a classic literary style that is remarkable for its directness, clarity, its firmness, and its sureness of idioms.

Hawthorne's greatness lies in his moral insight. He inherited the Puritan tradition of moral earnestness, and he was deeply concerned with the concepts



of original sin and guilt and the claims of law and conscience. Hawthorne looked more deeply and perhaps more honestly into life, finding in it much suffering and conflict but also finding the redeeming power of love. There is no Romantic escape in his works, but rather a firm and resolute scrutiny of the psychological and moral facts of the human condition.

Hawthorne's eminence could be in his mastery of allegory and symbolism. His fictional characters' actions and difficulties obviously express larger generalizations about the problems of human existence. But with Hawthorne this leads not to unconvincing pasteboard figures with explanatory labels attached but to a sombre, concentrated emotional involvement with his characters that has the power, the gravity, and the inevitability of true tragedy. His use of symbolism in *The Scarlet Letter* is particularly effective, and the scarlet letter itself takes on a wider significance and application that is out of all proportion to its literal character as a scrap of cloth.

Hawthorne's work initiated the most durable tradition in American fiction, that of the symbolic romance that assumes the universality of guilt and explores the complexities and ambiguities of man's choices. His greatest short stories and *The Scarlet Letter* are marked by a depth of psychological and moral insight seldom equaled by any American writer.

The preface serves as means of authenticating the novel by explaining that Hawthorne had discovered in the Salem Custom House the faded scarlet A and the parchment sheets that contained the historical manuscript on which the novel is

based. However, there is no serious, scholarly work that suggests Hawthorne was ever actually in possession of the letter or the manuscript. This technique, typical of the narrative conventions of his time, serves as a way of giving his story an air of historic truth. Furthermore, Hawthorne, in his story, "Edict and the Red Cross," published nine years before he took his Custom House position, described the incident of a woman who, like Hester Prynne, was forced to wear a letter "A" on her breast.

Nathaniel Hawthorne drew his personal and childhood experiences to write his literary works. The event that affected him and showed in his writing was "...the infamous Salem witch trials had taken place more than 100 years earlier, the events still hung over the town and made a lasting impression on the young Hawthorne..." The event had an impact on him from a young age, it affected his writing and helped him in the development of a strong-minded main character in his book *The Scarlet Letter*.

In *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne utilizes the structure and ideology of the Puritan society to explore the problematic cultural inheritance whose issue is of primary concern for his own historical past. Initially, the novel deals with the life of Hester Prynne, who lives in Puritan Boston of the mid-seventeenth century. She has committed adultery and therefore, she is sentenced to wear the scarlet letter 'A' on her dress as a reminder of her sin. At the end of the novel, the minister Dimmesdale, who had committed adultery with Hester but hid his flaw from the Puritan town, reveals his secret after his sermon in front of the whole

congregation because of historical compunction. Thus, the minister repents his guilt and admits his fault. In this respect, the narrator constitutes that Puritans are but human beings who commit blunders.

Hawthorne's literary reputation is inextricably linked with Puritanism and the Puritans. The critics have made much of his Puritan subject matter and his sympathetic treatment of Puritan themes. Some have come close to identifying Hawthorne with Puritanism, as though he were a spiritual contemporary of Cotton Mather born out of his time. W. C. Brownell, for instance, saw in Hawthorne a genuine son of the Puritans and called *The Scarlet Letter* "the Puritan Faust". In a rather sweeping generalization, he asserted that Hawthorne's writings were almost invariably successful when they dealt with Puritan themes. He attributed the didactic tone of Hawthorne's fiction to his preoccupation with Puritanism, and in many other ways related Hawthorne's literary accomplishments with Puritan subjects and influences. Herbert Schneider similarly sees Hawthorne as reviving the best in Puritanism, "the empirical truth behind the Calvinistic symbols. He recovered what Puritanism professed but seldom practiced-the spirit of piety, humility, and tragedy in the face of the inscrutable ways of God?"

One of the most prominent symbolic elements in the novel is the scaffold and the social, religious, and political importance of it in the colony of Massachusetts. It reflects the whole gamut of punishment and human civilization. The scaffold stands for the public display of banishment and punishment. For the author, it is an alternative to the penal machine but in the religious world of

Puritanism and the Puritanical society, it stands for a profane space where the sinners and the sins of the society are destroyed. It stands for the enforcement of the sermon and thus it is like a holy place for purgation. It is made of iron and wood and is raised at a higher altitude from the ground for the gaze of the public.

There are three scaffold scenes which the author has depicted. The first is the appearance of Hester Prynne with an illegitimate child. In this scene she is subjected to shame and indignation. In the second scaffold scene readers find the attempted confession and hallucination of Dimmesdale in the dark night and in the third scene Dimmesdale again confesses. It is very interesting to note that this confession comes out on the Election Day Sermon. It is followed by the union of Dimmesdale, Hester, and the child Pearl. The scaffold denotes the backbone, foundation, and stability of society and this is the turning point of transition which comes in the lives of all the major characters like Dimmesdale, Hester, Pearl and Chillingworth. The presence of Hester on the scaffold is related to sin, immorality, and shame. Pearl the little child is looked symbolically as the child of evilness and sin.

The graveyard, the prison and the scaffold are connected to the cycle of punishment, suffering, trauma, and death. The symbols used by Hawthorne are successful in evoking untold history, subtle sensibilities, human complexity, psychological dilemma, and autobiographical elements. His use of symbols and deep psychological analysis proves that he is undoubtedly one of the best writers not only in American literature but world literature. The characters like Hester Prynne

present an indomitable will of the mind. Her desire to protest, to fight, to deviate, to struggle unto the end and to live reflects the willpower of a character and this will power evolves out from the conscious state of mind. It reflects the strongly built personality of a character, and it is psychological in nature. One cannot deny that this novel has a puritanical setting and in the religious world of puritans an extra care is given towards redemption, purgation, divinity and sin and Hawthorne is courageous enough to figure out the emotional crisis of the humankind and the dilemma of the human mind to choose between the correct and the incorrect, moral and the immoral. He successfully unfolds the various spheres of the human mind hopes, beauty, purity, triumphs, sinful tendency, temptations, malignity, desperate struggles, depravations, desire for revenge, hysteria, self-destructive tendencies neurosis and innocence.

Several critics have called Hawthorne a psychological dreamer surrounded by his own sense of mystery. He can be compared to Hester Prynne, the heroine of his novel. This comparison comes from a common point that both are mystic psychological dreamers. His consciousness is marginalized through the painful act of his ancestors. This can be one of the most basic reasons that he often writes about human follies and sin. The kind of psychological art which Hawthorne deals with often involves external manifestations, secret springs, metaphysical insight and the play of words.

Hawthorne lends his customary ambiguity and vagueness to many of the questions by citing various points of view or options related to incidences without

anointing any one of them as true. One such incident involves what people saw when Dimmesdale exposed his bosom on the scaffold. He presents several possible versions of the spectators at the scaffold that day including that some saw no letter on Dimmesdale's chest. He attributes this last version to the loyalty of friends to Dimmesdale.

Hawthorne explains that the moral of the story, gleaned from an old manuscript of the testimony of people who had known Hester, is based on "the poor minister's miserable experience", and he states a kind of moral for us: "Be true! Be true! Be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait by which the worst may be inferred. "This often quoted moral about being true to oneself leaves the reader thinking about the characters in the story.

Chillingworth shrivels up and vanishes because his revenge has consumed him and made him inhuman. Without his victim, he has no reason to live. But Hawthorne also adds mercy to Chillingworth's death. He explains in a lengthy paragraph that love and hate have a lot in common, and perhaps in the next life, both the spurned husband and the minister will rest in peace.

Pearl's fate is most interesting. The reader is never given a confirmed version of her life but is left to believe she lived a long and happy one, married and the mother of children. Hawthorne ironically notes that her rise in wealth certainly elevated her and Hester in the eyes of the colony that once spurned them. And he further adds that she could have married a "Puritan of the most devout nature." Having seen her father, the devout Puritan, one would certainly not wish

that fate on Pearl. Hawthorne hints that her life elsewhere is much happier than it would have been had she married in the New World. The tear she shed at Dimmesdale's death was truly evidence that she would grow up to be humane. And her love and generosity toward Hester are obvious.

*The Scarlet Letter* written from an omniscient third-person perspective in which the narrator describes the thoughts and feeling of the main characters as well as the general sentiments of the townspeople, shows how the characters function in their larger community. Since the characters are often reserved and secretive, the narrator's commentary on what they are experiencing internally is very important. The narrator also frequently adds commentary about characters and their actions, which shapes the reader's perception. His lament on Dimmesdale who cannot overcome his fears and doubts, makes the reader more likely to see Dimmesdale as a weak and ineffective character. The narrator addresses the reader directly, calling attention to the fact that they are participating in an interpretation of a work of fiction.

After the initial framing device of the introduction, told from the point of view of two hundred years after the events, the entire story is told as a fictionalized recreation of events the narrator has learned about, positioning the story as an embroidered version of true events. The narrator maintains this "based on a true story" effect by referring to rumors and reports handed down through the years, such as when he describes the mark on Dimmesdale's chest, saying "according to these highly respectable witnesses. "Hawthorne raises questions about the nature of

truth and storytelling, as well as peoples' tendency to fabricate stories out of real life events.

*The Scarlet Letter* effectively encapsulates the emergence of individualism and self-reliance from America's Puritan and Conformist roots. Hester contemplates casting it off to obtain her freedom from an oppressive society and a checkered past as well as the absence of God. As the society excludes her, she considers the possibility that many of the traditions upheld by the Puritan culture are untrue and are not designed to bring her happiness. The more society strives to keep out wayward passion, the more it reinforces the split between appearance and reality. The members of the community who are ostensibly the most respectable are often the most depraved, while the apparent sinners are often the most virtuous.







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**Trauma and Domestic Violence in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**DEVADHARSHINI BENITTA. J**

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**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Trauma and Domestic Violence in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us*** 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 Devadharshini Benitta .J during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
Dr. A. Judit Sheela Damayanthi

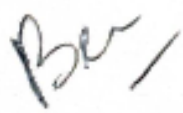
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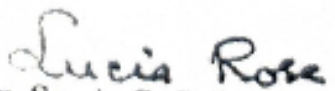
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Trauma and Domestic Violence in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us*** 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**

**April 2023**

*J. Devadharshini Benitta*  
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## Preface

The project entitled **Trauma and Domestic Violence in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us*** analyses the struggle of the protagonist, Lily Bloom who grew up in an abusive household, her childhood goes that traumatic events. She also experiences physical abuse at the age of twenty-three. Psychological stress and trauma haunt her. Therefore, she experiences inner conflict. This project analyses how the protagonist overcome her inner conflict and became independent.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of American Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases rudiments of chosen work for study.

The second chapter **Domestic Violence** depicts how the protagonist was tortured however she was able to overcome and leave her abusive relationship by her husband.

The third chapter **Inner Conflict** throws light on how Lily Bloom fights with inner conflict. She chooses negative valence to resolve with her inner conflict despite all her traumatic past, she fights for the better future and she gets it.

The fourth chapter **Trauma** records the reason of Lily's traumatic events from her childhood. It also focused on how she recovers from it.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

“Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become” says C.S. Lewis

Literature generally can be any written work, but it is especially an artistic or intellectual work of writing. It is one of the fine arts, like painting, dance, music, etc. which provides aesthetic pleasure to the readers. It differs from other written works by only its one additional trait: that is aesthetic beauty. If a written work lacks aesthetic beauty and serves only utilitarian purpose, it is not literature. The entire genre like poetry, drama, or prose is a blend of intellectual works and has aesthetic beauty of that work. When there is no aesthetic beauty in any written work that is not pure literature.

“American literature has never been content to be just one among the many literatures of the western world. It has always aspired to be the literature not only of a new continent but of a New World” says Christopher Dawson

American literature means largely the body of literature created in the united states, which is in North America. While founding of the united states as a nation may be traced to the American Revolution in the eighteenth century, its multi-cultural heritages are rooted in the various explorations of the New world that had started several hundred years before the American

Revolution. Thus, we begin our narrative of American literary history by first looking at exploration writing related to the discoveries of America.

American literature is the product of a diversity of peoples, regions, philosophies and ways of life. Beyond the intrinsic pleasure and usefulness of knowing more about the history of this literature, a focus in American literature or American studies can benefit in several ways. American readily promoted the work of American writers, prompting many readers to consider for the first time their own authors, past and present. Furthermore, that the nation had reached such a significant milestone enabled many within the intellectual class to entertain seriously, perhaps for the first time. The notion that the united states might possess an aesthetic culture worthy of some consideration.

In its earliest days, during the 1600s, American literature consisted mostly of practical nonfiction written by British settlers who populated the colonies that would become the United States. John Smith wrote histories of Virginia based on his experiences as an English explorer and a president of the Jamestown Colony. These histories, published in 1608 and 1624, are among the earliest works of American literature.

Romanticism is a way of thinking that values the individual over the group, the subjective over the objective, and a person's emotional experience over reason. It also values the wildness of nature over human-made order. Romanticism as a worldview took hold in western Europe in

the late eighteenth century, and American writers embraced it in the early nineteenth century.

The human cost of the Civil War in the United States was immense: more than 2.3 million soldiers fought in the war, and perhaps as many as 851,000 people died in 1861–65. What emerged in the following decades was a literature that presented a detailed and unembellished vision of the world as it truly was. This was the essence of realism. Naturalism was an intensified form of realism. After the grim realities of a devastating war, they became writers' primary mode of expression.

Advances in science and technology in Western countries rapidly intensified at the start of the twentieth century and brought about a sense of unprecedented progress. The devastation of World War I and the Great Depression also caused widespread suffering in Europe and the United States. These contradictory impulses can be found swirling within modernism, a movement in the arts defined first and foremost as a radical break from the past. But this break was often an act of destruction, and it caused a loss of faith in traditional structures and beliefs. Despite, or perhaps because of, these contradictory impulses, the modernist period proved to be one of the richest and most productive in American literature.

The United States, which emerged from World War II confident and economically strong, entered the Cold War in the late 1940s. This conflict with the Soviet Union shaped global politics for more than four decades, and the proxy wars and threat of nuclear annihilation that came to define it

were just some of the influences shaping American literature during the second half of the twentieth century. The 1950s and '60s brought significant cultural shifts within the United States driven by the civil rights movement and the women's movement. Prior to the last decades of the twentieth century, American literature was largely the story of dead white men who had created Art and of living white men doing the same. By the turn of the twenty first century, American literature had become a much more complex and inclusive story grounded on a wide-ranging body of past writings produced in the United States by people of different backgrounds and open to more Americans in the present day.

Women in the writing profession in the twenty first century experience fewer obstacles to their career development compared to their nineteenth and twentieth century counterparts. The advent of feminist movements has given women writers significantly more power to express their opinions more openly. Nonetheless, women still have to contend with male criticism and gender inequality in contemporary literature. Many online stores have a category for 'women's fiction,' which stocks books that deal primarily with women's concerns. The writing industry is still unwelcoming to female writers and objectifies women sexually.

In her poem "The Scholar," Olivia Gatwood describes women's struggles in a patriarchal world. She describes a woman whose thighs are bait for men's gazes as she goes about her business at the river. She struggles to get home to write about how her lover has fallen in love with another lady living in Europe.

She is expected to love him despite his blatant lack of affection for her whereas women who have extramarital affairs are often hounded. The poem illustrates that women writers still have to use feminine charm to gain a following in the literary world.

The status of female authors and poets has changed in the twenty first century. Due to the work of their predecessors and feminists, women writers do not face as many unjust remarks as their nineteenth century counterparts. This advantage notwithstanding, women writers still have to prove to their publishers that their works are worth publishing. Men are still the dominant figures in both the writing industry and their works despite improving female representation. The creation of women's categories in online and offline literary repositories does not seem discriminatory at first. However, the absence of a sub-category for male writers in the same repositories reveals the gender bias. This disparity has often attracted criticism from feminists in the literary world and given women writers more reason to fight patriarchy in the industry.

Several female authors have carved their way into the domain of males, claiming tremendous success in their endeavor. They created masterpieces one after the other, making it impossible for the rest of the world to ignore them. In their absence, the literary world suffers. Some of the famous female writers are Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Alice walker, Margaret Atwood.

Maya Angelou was an American memoirist, popular poet and civil rights activist. She published seven autobiographies, three books of essays,

several books of poetry and is credited with the list of plays, movies and television shows spanning over fifty years. She received dozens of awards and more than fifty honorary degrees. Angelou is best known for her series of seven autobiographies, which focus on her childhood and early adult experiences. The first *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), tells of her life up to the age of seventeen and brought her international recognition and acclaim.

Toni Morrison, was an American novelist. 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. In 1988, Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved* (1987); she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993.

Alice Walker (born February 9, 1944) 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. She has faced criticism for alleged antisemitism and for her endorsement of the conspiracist David Icke.

Margaret Eleanor Atwood (born November 18, 1939) is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, teacher, environmental activist, and



inventor. Since 1961, she has published eighteen books of poetry, eighteen novels, eleven books of non-fiction, nine collections of short fiction, eight children's books, and two graphic novels, and a number of small press editions of both poetry and fiction. Atwood has won numerous awards and honors for her writing, including two Booker Prizes, the Arthur C. Clarke Award, the Governor General's Award, the Franz Kafka Prize, Princess of Asturias Awards, and the National Book Critics and PEN Center USA Lifetime Achievement Awards. A number of her works have been adapted for film and television.

Contemporary romance is a subgenre of romance novels, generally set contemporaneously with the time of its writing. The largest of the romance novel subgenres, contemporary romance novels usually reflect the mores of their time. Heroines in the contemporary romances written prior to 1970 usually quit working when they married or had children, while those novels written after 1970 usually have, and keep, a career. As contemporary romance novels have grown to contain more complex plotting and more realistic characters, the line between this subgenre and the genre of women's fiction has blurred.

Most contemporary romance novels contain elements that date the books, and the majority of them eventually become irrelevant to more modern readers and go out of print. Those that survive the test of time, such as the works of Jane Austen are often reclassified as historical romances. In

a 2014 survey of romance readers, contemporary romance made up 41% of print and 44% of ebook sales compared to other romance subgenres.

Colleen Hoover (born December 11, 1979) is an American author who primarily writes novels in the romance and young adult fiction genres. She is best known for her 2016 romance novel *Its Ends With Us*. Many of her works were self-published before being picked up by a publishing house. Hoover sold about twenty million books as of October 2022.

Hoover was born on December 11, 1979, in Sulphur Springs, Texas, to Vannoy Fite and Eddie Fennell. She grew up in Saltillo, Texas, and graduated from Saltillo High School in 1998. She married Heath Hoover in 2000, and they have three sons. Hoover graduated from Texas A&M-Commerce with a degree in social work. She worked various social work and teaching jobs until starting her career as an author.

In November 2011, Hoover began writing her debut novel, *Slammed*, with no intention of getting published. She was inspired by a lyric, 'decide what to be and go be it', from an Avett Brothers song, 'Head Full of Doubt/Road Full of Promise,' and incorporated Avett Brothers lyrics throughout the story. Hoover self-published *Slammed* in January 2012.

Hoover's novel *Hopeless* was self-published in December 2012. It follows a girl who was home-schooled all her life before going to public high school, reached #1 on the *New York Times* Best Seller list on January 20, and remained there for three weeks. It was the first self-published novel to ever top the list. A companion novel, *Losing Hope*, was published that

July. *Finding Cinderella* is a free novella that Hoover published in 2014. It features several of the same characters as in *Hopeless* and *Losing Hope*. A paperback was released with several bonus features, such as a new epilogue and Hoover's own "Cinderella story".

Hoover's novel *It Ends with Us* was published in 2016. Hoover described it as "the hardest book I've ever written." The novel concerns domestic violence and, according to Hoover, was written to advocate for domestic violence victims. The story was inspired by Hoover's experience as a child growing up in a household with domestic violence which carried through her adult life. The book's main character, Lily, experiences domestic violence at a young age witnessing her father's abuse towards her mother on top of experiencing it firsthand, then ends up in a violent relationship as an adult. It is the story of a woman's struggle to break the cycle of abuse and rise above to create a safe life not only for herself but for her child.

In 2021, Hoover experienced a surge in popularity due to attention from the BookTok community on TikTok. As a result, in January 2022 *It Ends with Us* was #1 on *The New York Times* best sellers list. As of 2019, the novel had sold over a million copies worldwide and been translated into over twenty languages. The novel won the 2016 Goodreads Choice Award for Best Romance.

Sarah Pekkanen, International bestselling author of *Perfect Neighbors* says that *It Ends with Us* isn't an ordinary love story. 'It will break your

heart while filling you with hope, and by the end of this gripping, pulse-pounding novel, you'll be smiling through your tears.'

A sequel to *It Ends with Us* titled *It Starts with Us* was published on October 18, 2022, and published by Atria Books. Simon & Schuster released the details of the extensive marketing campaign for the novel, which became the publisher's most pre-ordered book of all time. Some of her best novels are *Ugly Love*, *Reminders of Him*, *It Starts With Us*.

Colleen Hoover's *Ugly Love* (2014) is a standalone romance novel set in contemporary San Francisco. The story predominantly alternates between the primary characters Elizabeth Tate Collins and Miles Mikel Archer. Tate, a registered nurse pursuing her master's degree, is in her early twenty. Miles, an airline pilot, is in his mid- twenty. The chapters from Tate's point of view are set in the present, while the chapters from Miles's point of view are set six years in the past. The third person narrative voice is direct and unflinching, but Miles's chapters incorporate a poignant poetic narrative in addition to prose. Through Tate and Miles's clandestine romance, Hoover explores the themes of The Duality of Pleasure and Pain, Relationship Boundaries Versus Emotional Walls, and Fear and Control as Roadblocks to Love.

*Reminders of Him* (2022) is at once a conventional romance and a reimagination of the genre. Kenna Rowan, age twenty-six, returns to her hometown near Denver after being in prison for five years. She is determined to have a relationship with her four-year-old daughter, Diem

Landry. The story offers elements of the romance genre: the hesitant movement toward new love by those wounded by previous relationships, and the affirmation of hope as characters find their way to new beginnings through friends and family. However, Kenna is hardly a typical romance heroine. She was in prison for a drunk driving accident that killed the only man she ever loved—Scotty Landry, the father of Diem. Diem is now being raised by Scotty's parents, Grace and Patrick Landry. In its exploration of the dynamics of grief, the complicated psychology of forgiveness, and the heroic struggle for a second chance, the novel tests how to handle guilt and self-doubt and shows how a bandaged heart can find its way to love again.

*It Starts With Us* by Colleen Hoover chronicles the rekindled romance between lost lovers and childhood friends Lily Bloom and Atlas Corrigan. Published in 2022, *It Starts With Us* is the sequel to Hoover's popular 2016 novel *It Ends With Us*, a New York Times best seller, winner of the 2016 Goodreads Choice Award for Best Romance, and an upcoming film. Written from the alternating perspectives of both Lily and Atlas, *It Starts With Us* explores the complexities of divorce, domestic violence, and trauma.

This Project deals with the domestic Violence, challenges faced in her relationship and escape from that through this novel *Its Ends With Us*.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Domestic Violence**

An act of violence is an attack or invasion on the physical and psychological integrity of a person and can be in the form of violence against one particular sex caused by gender differences. That violence against women is very frequent and common. That violence against women occurred in the product of patriarchal society. In this case, men dominate the social institutions and bodies of women.

Meanwhile, Bell Hooks in her essay *Understanding Patriarchy* say that “Patriarchy is a political – social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak especially females” (1). It means that Patriarchy is a social political system that demands that men dominate inseparably and make them superior to all things. Anyone is considered weak, especially women.

The form of patriarchy can be seen from the mastery of love. In her other book, *Feminism is for Everybody* Hooks say that “Love in patriarchal culture was linked to notions of possession, to paradigms of domination and submission wherein it was assumed one person would give love and another person receive it” (101). It means that love in patriarchal culture is associated with the idea of ownership, with the paradigm of dominance and surrender in which it is assumed that one individual will give love and another individual receives it.

Based on these problems, the feminism movement emerged. Feminism is considered as a form of politics that aims to intervene and change the unequal power relations between men and women. Feminism as a political theory or a political practice that strives to liberate all women: colored women, poor women, lesbians, elderly women, and also economically heterosexual white women.

The term gender has psychological, social, and cultural connotations that distinguish between men and women in carrying out certain masculinity and femininity roles in society. Masculine and feminine gender roles that are culturally formed, debated, mapped in biological differences between women and men that make these different gender roles appear as part of the biological nature of men and women and not as a cultural construction.

The feminist movement was initially a movement of a group of Western women activists, who later gradually became an academic wave in universities, including Islamic countries, through the 'woman studies' program. The word feminism was first coined by the French socialist activity, Charles Fourier, in 1837. The idea he advocated was the transformation of women by society based on interdependence and combining personal emancipation with social emancipation.

The feminist movement can be divided into three waves: the first wave occurred in the mid-nineteenth century until the early twentieth century; The first wave in the late nineteenth century was not the first appearance of feminist ideals, but it was the first real political movement for

the Western world. In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft published the revolutionary *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. In 1848, about two-hundred women met in a church. They came up with twelve resolutions asking for specific rights, such as the right to vote. Reproductive rights also became an important issue for early feminists. After years of feminist activism, Congress finally passed the nineteenth amendment in 1920 and gave women the vote. This was almost thirty years after New Zealand became the first country where women could vote. First-wave feminism had a fairly simple goal: have society recognize that women are humans, not property. While the leaders of first wave feminism were abolitionists, their focus was on white women's rights. This exclusion would haunt feminism for years to come.

The second wave occurred in the late 1960s until now; Second-wave feminism took place in the 1960s and '70s. It built on first-wave feminism and challenged what women's role in society should be. Inspired by the Civil Rights movement and protests against the Vietnam War, activists focused on the institutions that held women back. This meant taking a closer look at why women were oppressed. Traditional gender and family roles were questioned.

Three main types of feminism emerged: mainstream/liberal, radical, and cultural. Mainstream feminism focused on institutional reforms, which meant reducing gender discrimination, giving women access to male-



dominated spaces, and promoting equality. Radical feminism wanted to reshape society entirely, saying that the system was inherently patriarchal and only an overhaul would bring liberation. It resisted the belief that men and women were basically the same. Cultural feminism had a similar view and taught that there is a 'female essence' distinct from men.

And third wave emerged in the 1980s. This was an era of reclaiming. Important cultural touchstones include Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*, the Guerilla Girls, and punk rock riot grrls. Many women more freely expressed their sexuality in how they spoke, dressed, and acted. This sometimes bewildered second wave feminists, many of whom had resisted traditional femininity. While many ideas and mini-movements swirled around in this time, the one 'rule' was that there weren't rules. A woman should choose how she lived her life.

Third-wave feminism also became more conscious of race. Kimberle Crenshaw, a gender and critical-race scholar, coined the phrase 'intersectionality' in 1989. The term refers to how different kinds of oppression – like those based on gender and race– intersect with each other. While mainstream first and second-wave feminism had largely ignored or neglected racial disparities within gender, the Third wave paid more attention. The phrase 'third-wave feminism' was coined in 1992 by Rebecca Walker, a twenty-three-year-old Black bisexual woman. When the

internet became more commonplace, it was even easier to hear perspectives and ideas from feminists around the world. Feminism was expanding.

Meanwhile, in the discourse of feminism there are several schools of different arguments about the causes of women experiencing oppression. At least from the discourse of feminism that can be known how each theory of feminism - cultural, liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist, psychoanalysis, existentialist, postmodern, multicultural, and global, and ecofeminism – arrange their arguments to explain how oppression of women occurs in the community that liberal feminists want to free women from aggressive gender roles — that is, from roles used as an excuse or justification to give women a lower, or no place at all, place, both within academies, forums and markets. They emphasise that patriarchal society confuses sex and gender, and considers that only jobs associated with feminine personalities are appropriate for women.

The novel *Its Ends With Us* presents two peripheral female characters who are close to Lily, Allysa Kincaid and Jenny Bloom. Concept of hegemonic femininity is referenced in this section to analyze how these characters respond to domestic violence. It has been argued that Attitudes play a role in how individuals other than the perpetrator or victim interpret and respond to violence against women. The attitudes are themselves also determined by several factors such as social norms, communal attitudes toward gender, and the influence of peers and colleagues.

Even though Allysa and Jenny exist in the novel as Lily's support system, both characters tender ambivalent responses to her experience with domestic violence. Allysa is the younger sister of the abuser, Ryle Kincaid, and the best friend of the abused, Lily Bloom. These conflicting roles shape her ambivalent responses to the conflict between Lily and Ryle to a large extent, both in terms of her reactions and in the way she helps Lily. As Lily's friend, she wants to warn Lily about her brother's abusive personality. However, her position as the subordinate in the family and her filial love prevent her from warning Lily about the potential danger posed to her by Ryle. Readers can detect through Lily's narrative voice the ambivalence in Allysa's response when she sees Lily's bruises after the second incident of abuse has occurred.

'Ryle,' Allysa whispers. 'What did you do to her?' She walks around the counter and pulls me in for a hug. "Oh, Lily," she says, running her hand down my back. She pulls back with tears in her eyes, and her reaction confuses me. She obviously knows Ryle is responsible, but if that's the case, it seems she would be attacking him, or at least yelling. (237)

In this instance, Allysa demonstrates her concern for Lily's wellbeing, but what is absent from her reaction is a condemnation of her brother's violent behavior or any feelings of resentment toward Ryle for hurting Lily. After she learns about the fight, she wants Lily to know instead about her brother's traumatic past involving the death of their older brother,

Emerson Kincaid. Even though Allysa does not ask Lily to forgive Ryle, she justifies Ryle's acts of violence in a way by mentioning his childhood trauma.

As a result, Lily is convinced to give Ryle another chance because she is convinced that Ryle can change and that he is still essentially a kind man. Allysa embodies womanly characteristics that facilitate her subordination as a sister and that sustain the domination of her brother. Next, Lily's mother, Jenny Bloom, is the last person to know of the abuse Lily has experienced. Jenny Bloom's beliefs about gender roles and married life have been shaped by her abusive relationship with her own husband. She perceives home and family as sacred and she wants to provide her daughter a home.

Therefore, she decides to stay in the abusive household and endures her husband's violent attitude toward her until he dies from cancer. Her beliefs about the sanctity of marriage also drive her to do everything she can to prevent outsiders from learning about her husband's violence against her. Jenny's attitudes surface in Lily's case too, and they become apparent when she asks Lily to lie to the people at the hospital about the cause of her injuries. "tell them you slipped on the ice" (110).

The manner in which Jenny and Allysa help and advice Lily reveals that they regard domestic abuse to be a problem that will end after the abused leaves her abuser. When Lily first decides to tell Allysa about the abuse, Allysa's response is, "As his sister, I wish more than anything that

you could find a way to forgive him. But as your best friend, I have to tell you that if you take him back, I will never speak to you again” (315).

From this excerpt, it can be inferred that Allysa’s conflicted position also affects the way she proposes solutions to Lily’s problem. Next, when Lily tells Jenny everything, Jenny also advises Lily implicitly to leave Ryle for good, “Every time you choose to stay, it makes the next time that much harder to leave. Eventually, you lose sight of your limit altogether, because you started to think, ‘I’ve lasted five years now, what’s five more?’” she grabs my hands and holds them while I cry. Don’t be like me, Lily” (335). She speaks from her own experience. However, all her internalised beliefs about women and their roles constrict her from truly helping Lily in finding a proper solution to her problem.

In this case, Jenny can only offer Lily her emotional support. The perspectives of both the supporting female characters on how Lily should end the abusive relationship are facile. Their dialogs imply that leaving the abuser is enough action. Domestic violence as a lack of understanding about the immense actual complexity of the issue of domestic violence. In this instance, Lily’s family members and the people closest to her, Allysa and Jenny, do not actively help Lily to deal with the abuse. They do not help Lily to critically assess her situation or assist her in finding a safe haven away from Ryle.

They also never attempt to persuade Lily to report Ryle to the police. In fact, ending the cycle of abuse is not a simple matter. Many women can

leave their abuser only after they use their agency and resources to employ strategic life choices. It is evident that the family members and friends play pivotal roles in the victims of domestic abuse, providing them with the resources and the emotional support they require.

In the novel, Lily learns a lot just by living in proximity to Jenny and Allysa. In turn, these life lessons help her to make her final decision. She learns from Allysa how to see the positives in her situation and how to cherish her unborn baby. Lily also realizes that unlike her own mother, she has been accorded many privileges in the form of financial stability and other resources. These advantages allow her to leave Ryle. Lily's discussion with Jenny also presents her with the opportunity to learn from Jenny's experiences with domestic violence and apply that learning to her own situation.

*It Ends with Us* is an empowering narrative, the issue of domestic violence discussed in the novel is simplified through its plot and through the perspectives of the peripheral characters as demonstrated by their varied responses to the abuse Lily undergoes in her marriage. The narrow viewpoint of the public and the lack of a layered understanding of the complexity of domestic violence is influenced by myriad factors such as self-conception, internalized patriarchal norms, traditional gender roles, social perspectives on marriage, occupations, and homosocial bonds with

peers. The significance of the psychosocial issue of relational violence is also reduced by the way in which it is resolved in the plot of this novel.

Jenny and Allysa claim repeatedly that the problem will be settled once Lily leaves her abuser, Ryle. Next, the novel places the onus of the resolution of her problem squarely on Lily, who is shown as the primary decision-maker in confronting domestic violence. Besides Atlas, the other peripheral characters do not provide Lily with any concrete suggestions or real assistance. Thus, the society, as it is represented by the people around Lily, does not function maximally as a positive system of support to her in her time of need. This failure to extend real help stems from the limited understanding of the peripheral characters with regard to domestic violence. Lily's support network of friends and family members is not even privy to all her decisions.

By the end of the novel, Lily is able to leave her abusive relationship. She manages to discuss her future with Ryle and makes him understand that separating is the best solution. However, the solution of divorce seems too facile a resolution for the grave transgression of battering a woman within the institution of marriage. The abuser is left unpunished and is left free to potentially abuse other women in the future. The book seems to suggest that leaving one's abuser is enough.

However, domestic violence is an insidiously intricate problem, and proper representation of this psychosocial evil is mandatory because inaccuracies in depicting this issue in popular literary genres such as

romances could influence the wider understanding of the problem. Popular culture exists in various forms and people consume it to obtain information as well as entertainment. However, people often overlook the fact that it wields the power to shape their perspectives on discrete issues.

The following chapter deals with the inner conflict experienced by Lily Bloom as the main character and how she resolves the inner conflict.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Inner Conflict**

As a social creature, human life cannot be separated from problems and conflict. Conflict is defined as a contradiction or bickering situation which causes disputes and affects the attitude and behavior of a person, group, or society. Conflict can occur in our family, environment, society, and even within ourselves. The conflict that occurs within ourselves and fights over in our own minds is called inner conflict. The inner conflict, which is also called psychological conflict, is a problem that arises due to a contradicting desire that occurs in a person's soul and mind. Inner conflict as a situation that can push a person in two or more different directions at the same time. This situation makes people experience confusion because they have to choose one of two or several options.

Inner conflict is a conflict that occurs in a person's or story's character mind and soul. Moreover, inner conflict is defined as a conflict experienced by humans within themselves or the internal problem of a human being. Inner conflict can happen because of past trauma and bad tragedies, which then causes negative effects on their victims, such as stress and confusion. Many needs that occur in humans often lead to desires to fulfill our needs and if not fulfilled can lead to inner conflict. Moreover, inner conflict is considered as negative energy or emotional attacks that cannot be handled at the moment. As a result, many people who are experiencing it either suppress, deny, or believe that it does not exist. This kind of conflict can

arise from several factors, such as: conflicting desires, poverty, love, and past trauma. Conflict can cause various effects on individuals and relationships.

Conflict in literary work is something that cannot be separated. Even literature also shows how to resolve the conflict as well. Conflict is an intrinsic element in a literary work and the essence in developing the storyline. Therefore, authors are required to not only dwell on the problem of writing style and technique but also pay more attention to the problem of presenting conflict and also to solving it. Conflicts that happen in the story into two types, there are external conflict and internal conflict. External conflict is a conflict that occurs between a character and something outside her/himself. Usually, the external conflict happened because of problems with nature or the human environment.

Internal conflict was also known as inner conflict is a conflict that arises within the individual, especially when a person or character faces several choices or chooses between two or several possibilities that contain motives or causes that drive one's actions or the basis of one thought. Furthermore, Jones categorises conflict into three types, there are social conflict, physical conflict, and psychological conflict.

Social conflict is an external conflict caused by social interaction or a problem that arises as a result of human relations. For example, regarding oppression, war, humiliation, and other social cases. social conflict as a struggle for values or demands for status that become a part of society that

will always exist. Social conflict is a form of temporary social interaction. This conflict usually occurs between characters against other characters, characters against community figures or groups, as well as social conflicts involving two community groups with different interests.

The physical conflict which is classified as an external conflict is a conflict caused by a clash between characters and the natural environment. For example, conflicts or problems experienced by a character due to weather, long drought, floods, landslides, and other events caused by nature. Psychological conflict is a type of conflict that happened between a person or character within his/herself. This conflict begins with a conflict in the person's mind which then causes some problems. For example, inner turmoil, stress, and anger.

The inner conflict experienced by Lily Bloom and Lily Bloom's inner conflict resolution. Inner conflict is usually indicated by the existence of doubt and confusion because they have to choose between two or several motifs that appear at the same time. Then this indecision and confusion will cause tension in making a decision or choice. From analysing the novel *Its Ends With Us* the inner conflict experienced by Lily Bloom will be categorised into three types of inner conflict proposed by Kurt Lewin. They are Approach- Approach Conflict, Approach- Avoidance Conflict and Avoidance- Avoidance Conflict.

This Approach- Approach Conflict type of inner conflict happens when someone experiences two positive motives or more at the same time.

Then, they will experience indecision and confusion because they have to choose one option between the two options that both they liked. This confusion arises because it is difficult to choose one of the options. In this part, the researcher will present the approach-approach conflict experienced by Lily Bloom from the data that the researcher has collected. The approach-approach inner conflict experienced by Lily, when Lily has to choose to open a floral shop or keep working at a marketing firm.

But what makes it even worse is that I absolutely love gardening. I love flowers. Plants. Growing things. It's my passion. It's always been my dream to open a florist shop, but I'm afraid if I did, people wouldn't think my desire was authentic. They would think I was trying to capitalise off my name and that being a florist isn't really my dream job.

It really is a great name for a florist. But I have a master's degree in business. I'd be downgrading, don't you think? I work for the biggest marketing firm in Boston.

Owning your own business isn't downgrading, he says. (14)

From Lily conversation with Ryle, it is known that Lily faced with two choices that got her in the indecision situation, and both of the choices were positive motives. The first option can be seen that Lily wants to open a floral shop which has been Lily's dream job for a long time and is her passion. While the second option from that is to keep working at a marketing

firm that is positive motive because it is profitable for Lily since her workplace is the biggest marketing firm in Boston.

Even though at first, Lily was hesitant to open a floral shop that indicated by the word “*but*”, because she has anxiety that she will be thought of as downgrading if she chose to open a floral shop instead of working at the biggest marketing firm. Then Lily needs advice about her anxiety. But, after hearing Ryle’s advice that it is not downgrading, Lily became more confident in her option to open a floral shop. This inner conflict focuses more on Lily’s indecision to choose between open a floral shop or keep working at the marketing firm.

Another approach-approach conflict is experienced by Lily when she has dinner with her mother and Ryle in the restaurant and accidentally meets Atlas there. “My chest is still constricted and my stomach is flipping, and I can’t tell if it’s leftover nerves from kissing Ryle or if it’s the presence of Atlas” (136). After parting ways with Ryle in the parking lot, Atlas suddenly appeared there. Lily was feeling nervous, but she was not sure if it was because it was from her last kiss with Ryle or because Atlas had appeared there. At this moment, Lily doubts whether she was nervous because of her kiss with Ryle earlier or because she met Atlas. The two options in this situation are both positive motives for Lily. Because both of the options give her pleasure, where she is happy because of the kiss from Ryle, and she is also glad she met Atlas again after a long time.

This Approach – Avoidance Conflict of inner conflict arises when there are two different motives that contain a positive motive and a negative motive at the same time. These motives then lead to indecision and doubts experienced by an individual when deciding the decision. The first inner conflict experienced by Lily in the novel *It Ends with Us* happened when she was fifteen years old, which she wrote in her diary, or it was actually a letter she wrote to Ellen DeGeneres, but she never sent it to Ellen.

“I don’t know if I should say something to my mother. I hate to be nosy, because it’s none of my business. But if that guy doesn’t have anywhere to go, I feel like my mother would know how to help him since she works at a school” (32). It started at the night when she saw through her bedroom window that someone living in an old empty house behind her house. The next day, Lily found out from Katie that someone who lived in that old house was a senior named Atlas Corrigan. When they were on the same bus, Lily noticed Atlas, who looked very unkempt and smelly. Lily feels sorry because maybe Atlas cannot take a shower because there is no access to water and even electricity in that old house. Besides that, Lily also thought that Atlas might not have any food and drink to consume, so she secretly gave some of the food and drink she had at home.

However, Lily cannot keep helping him continuously and secretly. Moreover, she is just a young girl. From there, Lily was undecided whether she should tell her mother, who might be able to help Atlas. Still, she also did not want to interfere too much with other people's problems, and who

knows that Atlas maybe just ran away from home because there was a little problem with his parents instead of not having a place to stay. Lily's desire to help Atlas by asking her mother for help is a positive motive, and Lily's unwillingness to interfere too much in other people's business is a negative motive.

Another situation of approach-avoidance conflict shown when Lily invites Atlas to her house. "He left right after your show was over. I wanted to ask him if he needed to use our shower again, but that would have cut it real close to time for my parents getting home" (63). Lily's inner conflict happens when she invites Atlas, without her parents knowing, to watch The Ellen DeGeneres Show in her house since there is no television and not even electricity access in that old house where Atlas lives. When the show was over, Atlas left her house. Lily wanted to offer Atlas to take a bath at her house again since Atlas did not have water or a bathroom in his place, but Lily was afraid that she would be caught because her parents would be home from work soon. The positive motive of this choice is Lily's urge to offer a shower place to Atlas, while the negative motive is that Lily afraid that she will get caught by her parent for sneaking a boy into their house.

After a few occasions, Lily helped Atlas and asked him to watch The Ellen DeGeneres Show together at her house. They are getting closer but still do not know about each other clearly.

I don't know what he meant by that. I don't know if his mom died, or if she gave him up for adoption. We've been friends

for a few weeks now and I still don't really know anything about him or why he doesn't have a place to live. I would just ask him, but I'm not sure if he really trusts me yet. He seems to have trust issues and I guess I can't blame him. (103)

When Lily asked Atlas about the meaning of his name and told him to ask his mother since Atlas did not know the meaning of his name, Atlas answered with an ambiguous answer, and she could not understand that. Nevertheless, Lily does not ask Atlas further because it seems that Atlas is not ready to tell Lily about his personal problems and the reason why he lives in that old house. Lily's curiosity about Atlas and why he has no place to live is a form of positive motive. At the same time, Atlas's trust issue that made him unable to fully trust Lily to talk about his personal problem is a negative motive. The longer Atlas and Lily know each other, They get closer and Atlas begins to trust Lily. Yesterday, he heard the chaos in Lily's house, and he also heard Lily yelling, so he came to her house to check Lily's condition.

“For a second, I wanted to tell him it wasn't like that—that my dad never hurts me and that he was just trying to get me off of him. But then I realised I'd be using the same excuses my mom uses” (113). The next day when they met, Atlas saw Lily get stitches on her forehead, and he was worried. Atlas asked Lily what happened yesterday, but Lily chose to lie to Atlas. Atlas was disappointed that Lily lied to him. Then, Atlas shows the scars on his body to Lily and makes Lily concerned about what Atlas went



through to have that many scars on his arm. Lily experiences an approach-avoidance conflict. Where Lily wants to say that her wound was not because his father hurt her on purpose but because his father was trying to get rid of her, but she felt that for that reason, Lily would only use it as an excuse for her father's action. Lily's positive motive is she wants to be honest with Atlas that her wound was caused by her father, who was trying to get rid of her, not because her father intentionally hurt her. The negative motive is Lily realises that it would be an excuse, just like what her mother used to do when her father abused her, and she hates when her mother always makes an excuse for her father's actions.

When Atlas decided to move to Boston to stay with his uncle who is living there, Lily wanted to beg Atlas to stay, but she realised that it would only show her immaturity side. Then Lily held it, even though in her heart she was not willing if Atlas moved to Boston. "I held on to the heart while we kissed, wanting to believe it was a gift for no reason at all. But part of me was scared it was a gift to remember him by when he leaves for Boston" (152). a few days after Atlas said he wanted to move to Boston, Lily tried to get that out of her mind by not asking Atlas about his decision to move to Boston. They are still living their day as usual. That night, after eating the cookies she made with Atlas, he gives her a gift, a heart-shaped wood that was carved by himself. Then they kissed. In her mind, Lily wants to believe that Atlas's gift is an ordinary gift, but the part of her was afraid that it was a farewell gift before he moved to Boston.

On another night, her father suddenly fights with her mother right after they come home from going to some community function. Lily was still in her room with Atlas, who happened to be there. “I heard him call her a whore and then I heard the first blow. I started to climb out of my bed but Atlas pulled me back and told me not to go in there, that I might get hurt. I told him it actually helps sometimes. That when I go in there, my father backs off” (153).

when Lily’s father and mother’s fight got out of control and her father started abusing her mother, Lily wanted to go out of his room to stop her father. But Atlas kept her from leaving the room because he was worried that Lily would be hurt by his father. Then, Lily told Atlas that sometimes her presence could help her mother, that when Lily appeared, her father's anger would get calm. Where the positive motive is Lily wants to go out of her room to help her mother, who was abused by her father, while the negative motive is when Atlas prevents her from getting out because he was worried that Lily might get hurt too. After Atlas tried to stop Lily, who was carrying a knife to threaten her father, Atlas took her back to the room.

He walked over to the bed and grabbed his jacket and started putting on his shoes. “We’ll go next door,” he said. “We’ll call the police.”

The police.

My mother had warned me not to call the police in the *past*. She said it could jeopardise my father’s career. (155)

Atlas suggest Lily to call the police so they can stop her father since both of them probably would not be able to stop Lily's father, who is an adult meanwhile, they are just a teenager. But Lily had doubts because her mother forbade her to call the police when her father abused her mother. Her mother's reason is that if his father were arrested, it would only destroy his father's career as a town mayor. The positive motive of the conflict is Atlas's offer to call the police so that they can stop her father. While the negative motive is Lily's mother prohibition from calling the police because it will jeopardise her father's career.

Avoidance-avoidance conflict is the type of inner conflict that happens when someone faces two or more different choices that all of which are negative motives at the same time. This conflict also makes people who experience it feel confused about choosing between these options since none of the choices they like are beneficial for them. The avoidance-avoidance conflict was experienced by Lily when she was fifteen years old.

He was so hot and shaking so bad I was just scared to leave him on the floor. I laid down next to him and every hour for the next six hours he continued getting sick. I kept having to take the trash can to the bathroom to empty it out. I'm not gonna lie, it was gross. The grossest night I've ever had, but what else could I do? He needed me to help him and I was all he had. (139)

When Atlas gets sick, Lily takes care of him in her room since there is no bed in that old house where Atlas lives, and there is no one who can take care of Atlas other than her. His body temperature is very hot, and he keeps throwing up, which makes Lily even more worried. In this situation, Lily experienced an Avoidance-avoidance conflict where she faced two different negative motives. The first negative motive is Lily felt disgusted while cleaning the trash can filled with Atlas' vomit. While the second negative motive is no one can take care of Atlas other than her. Another avoidance-avoidance conflict happened to Lily when Atlas decided to move to Boston to stay with his uncle.

I don't want him to move to Boston, Ellen. I know that's selfish of me because he can't keep living in that house. I don't know what I'm more afraid might happen. Watching him leave or selfishly begging him not to go. (152)

The two motives faced by Lily are both negative motives. For Lily, if she begs Atlas not to move to Boston, it will show her selfish side, and if Atlas stays, he will live again in that old house that is actually not worth living in. But she also did not want Atlas to leave her alone. Lily experienced an avoidance-avoidance conflict since there was no better option for her at this moment. All she has is whether she should watch Atlas go to Boston, leaving her, or selfishly hold Atlas to stay with her and live in that old house.

After Lily agreed to do a one-night stand with Ryle, they got closer like what Ryle said before that his feeling for Lily was sincere. Moreover, Ryle shows his seriousness by joining Lily for dinner with her mother.

Every inner conflict needs to be resolved, so it will not cause a prolonged inner conflict and overthinking. There are three types of valences; positive valence, negative valence, and neutral valence. The existence of this valence allows the character to assess the needs they will choose in resolving an inner conflict, whether it is a positive, negative, or neutral choice.

Positive valence is a positive choice for the character. Positive valence aims to resolve a conflict, so the existing conflict is not to be avoided but to take some action so that the conflict is resolved. The first positive valence found in the novel *It Ends with Us* is resolving inner conflict that happened in this quotation.

“I’m opening up a floral shop, but it’ll be a couple of months, at least” (43). Lily chose a positive valence in resolving her inner conflict. Although Lily was confused about whether to continue working at a marketing firm or opening a floral shop, in the end, Lily chose to open a floral shop which has been her dream job since she was young. The sentence “I’m opening up a floral shop...” indicated that Lily takes an action to resolve her inner conflict. Therefore, this is categorised as a positive valence.

Negative valence is a valence for rejection and something that people do not like. This negative valence is the choice that the character does not

like and wants to avoid. So, the character will act away when dealing with things that they do not like and want to avoid. The negative valence used by Lily to resolve her inner conflict is found in this quotation “I would just ask him, but I’m not sure if he really trusts me yet” (103). Lily keeps her desire to ask further questions about Atlas's family because Lily is unsure if Atlas trusts her to tell Lily about his problem and family. Lily chose to avoid asking a personal question to Atlas. This is a form of negative valence used by Lily to resolve her inner conflict that indicated by the sentence “...but I’m not sure if he really trusts me yet” (103). Lily chose to resolve her inner conflict by avoiding it.

Neutral valence is the valence used when the character is faced with a situation in overcoming inner conflict by taking unwanted actions but at the same time also does not reject it. In this case, the action taken to resolve the inner conflict is taken the midway. This neutral valence is used by Lily to resolve the inner conflict

“Okay, so I found out who the guy is, and yes, he’s still going over there. It’s been two days now and I still haven’t told anyone” (32). Lily has not told anyone, even her mother, that there is a boy living in the old house behind their house and probably needs help. Lily uses a neutral valence to resolve her inner conflict. The neutral valence used by Lily is indicated by the sentence “...I still haven’t told anyone” (32). which means that she has not taken any action yet but also did not avoid it either. She cannot tell her

mother because she is still trying to find out that Atlas might stay in that old house because he wanted some alone time away from his family.

Lily Bloom experienced inner conflict, Besides, Lily also tries to resolve the inner conflict that happened to her. There are three types of inner conflict experienced by Lily, there are; approach-approach conflict, approach-avoidance conflict, and avoidance-avoidance conflict. The most dominant type of inner conflict experienced by Lily is approach-avoidance conflict. And then there are three types of valence that used by Lily to resolve her inner conflict, there are, positive valence, negative valence, and neutral valence. The most used valences by Lily are positive and neutral valence. Then Lily used negative valence to resolve her inner conflict.

The next chapter shows that Lily Bloom's way of coping with her trauma is learned from her experience during her life.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Trauma**

The word trauma derives from the Greek word for wound. It was initially used to refer to a physical injury, but throughout the twentieth century, particularly in the second half, the word has increasingly become associated with psychological trauma rather than physical. Especially after the world wars, the returning soldiers called for a diagnosis for the mental trauma that they carried with them after the war.

Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, rape, or natural disaster. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea. While these feelings are normal, some people have difficulty moving on with their lives. Psychologists can help them find constructive ways of managing their emotions.

Emotional and psychological trauma is the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter your sense of security, making you feel helpless in a dangerous world. Psychological trauma can leave you struggling with upsetting emotions, memories, and anxiety that won't go away. It can also leave you feeling numb, disconnected, and unable to trust other people. Traumatic experiences often involve a threat to life or safety, but any situation that leaves you feeling overwhelmed and isolated can result in trauma, even if it doesn't involve physical harm. It's not the objective



circumstances that determine whether an event is traumatic, but your subjective emotional experience of the event. The more frightened and helpless you feel, the more likely you are to be traumatized.

The term trauma is understood as not upon the body but upon the mind whose ideas contributed to the birth of trauma studies. People may have experienced traumatic stress in their life that some of them may recover and some others may have longstanding and ongoing symptoms for years or even a lifetime. However, traumatized people's responses are influenced by several factors, including duration, severity, and the presence of previous traumatic experiences. The psychological distress symptoms of traumatized people simultaneously call attention to the existence of an unspeakable secret and deflect attention from it. It can be understood that someone with a traumatic experience is not easy to express his feeling or to tell his story even though to his family.

Lily Bloom, the main character from the novel of Colleen Hoover's, *It Ends with Us*, grows up in an abusive household that her father abuses her mother repeatedly. Lily's childhood goes through that traumatic events. She suffered in her teens. She feels sorry for her mother because her mother never wants to leave her father until her father dies. Later on, she finds herself in the same situation as her mother. Lily experiences physical abuse when she is twenty- three years old. Facing psychological stress and trauma in her next phase of life that a trauma haunts her, sooner she starts to understand what her mother felt when she was a child. In her understanding,

Lily tries to recover from her psychological problem until she realizes how she should react to understand the situation. Becoming wiser, Lily tries to narrate her stories by writing them down on paper and pretending to write them to Ellen De Generous because she doesn't talk to anyone about her situation.

The reflection of Lily Bloom's trauma can be seen from her behaviors which show the symptom of trauma: "...shuffling cards just calms me down sometimes and gives me something to focus on" (31). In her journal writing when she pretends to write to Ellen DeGeneres, she states that she is experiencing traumatic symptoms, she finds comfort in shuffling cards, it helps her to focus. "I felt so defeated, but I was too scared to say anything to her about it" (110). Lily is stuck when her mother tells her not to tell anyone about what has happened.

I walked straight to the kitchen and I opened a drawer. I grabbed the biggest knife I could find and . . . I don't know how to explain it. It was like I wasn't even in my own body. I could see myself walking across the kitchen with the knife in my hand, and I knew I wasn't going to use it. (154)

People who experience trauma will experience the appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. In Lily's journal writings, she describes how she feels at the time; she grabs the knife in a conscious state, knowing she's not going to use it. It suggests that Lily has been experiencing hallucinations. People who experience trauma will experience the

appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. In Lily's journal writings, she describes how she feels at the time; she grabs the knife in a conscious state, knowing she's not going to use it. It suggests that Lily has been experiencing hallucinations.

When Lily Bloom becomes adult, she meets Ryle Kincaid as her future partner. Ryle shows up to Lily on top of a rooftop clearly upset, and kicks a chair out of frustration. Following that, it reveals that Lily has just returned home from her father's funeral, and Ryle is a practicing neurosurgeon. Despite the fact that they have never met, Lily confides in Ryle what her father uses to abuse her mother.

My father was abusive. Not to me—to my mother. He would get so angry when they fought that sometimes he would hit her. When that happened, he would spend the next week or two making up for it. He would do things like buy her flowers or take us out to a nice dinner. Sometimes he would buy me stuff because he knew I hated it when they fought. When I was a kid, I found myself looking forward to the nights they would fight. Because I knew if he hit her, the two weeks that followed would be great. (16)

As a kid, Lily tells her mother to leave him but it becomes the norm of their marriage, as she states that “But the abuse was inevitable with their marriage, and it became our norm” (17). Lily anticipates the next abuse from her father. People who experience traumatic events will start to combine

their past and their present; Lily seems delayed in reality because of what happens next after their parent's fight.

Lily and Ryle have become very close. Ryle and Lily attend a dinner with Lily's mother at Bib's Restaurant, which is actually owned by Atlas. Lily is taken back when she sees Atlas, recalling a childhood memory that put her in a bad mood. Atlas is very sweet to her until she moves to Boston, and after they return home, Lily doesn't talk to Ryle about Atlas. Yes, Lily mentioned Atlas when they first met, but he has never met him. When the casserole in the oven burns out, Ryle and Lily are drinking wine in Lily's apartment. Ryle opens the oven door and waves the smoke away. He gets burned after reaching the Casserole without a pot and injuring his hand. She starts laughing at him while drinking three glasses of wine, and then Ryle pushes her.

In a matter of one second, Ryle's arm came out of nowhere and slammed against me, knocking me backward..... Pain shoots through the corner of my eye, right near my temple..... So much gravity, pushing down on my emotions. Everything shatters. My tears, my heart, my laughter, my soul. Shattered like broken glass, raining down around me. (138)

"Goddammit, Lily," I hear him say. It's not funny. This hand is my fucking career" (138). Ryle apologizes to Lily; he says everything happened so quickly that he does not intend to push her. Lily is shocked and confused, and she feels angry and sad all at the same time. She can't believe what has

just happened. All she could think about at the time is her father apologizing to her. Lily appears to be under pressure to put her trust in Ryle after what he has done to her. She tells herself many times that she needs to be sure she could trust him. When Lily comes to have relationship, she finds difficulties. Lily has demonstrated that she has been lasting effect and feeling anxious.

Ryle's apology brings Lily comfort. But Lily still feels disappointed in her heart, and her thoughts are inconsistent. "I can't tell if I'm more disappointed in him or myself. Him for losing his temper in the first place or me for somehow finding comfort in his apology" (188). Lily is perplexed by her disappointment, not knowing whether she is disappointed because Ryle's gets lost his temper or because she easily forgives him, making Lily similar to her mother, who tolerates her abusive father. Another self-conflict Lily has is when she calls Atlas to pick her up after the tense exchange between Lily and Ryle. She decides to write a letter to Ellen at Atlas' House, just like she does when she is sixteen.

Lily has conflicting emotions that make her agitated to respond to Ryle, so knowing that they both want to have the conversation, Lily begins asking him naked truth. At the time, Lily doesn't have much to say to Ryle, so she waits for him to go first and wonders how he will react. Ryle's response to her is that he doesn't know what he is supposed to say either, then Lily gathers her emotions and lets off on him.

Yes. I kept the magnet Atlas gave me when we were kids. Yes.

I kept the journals. No, I didn't tell you about my tattoo. Yes,

I probably should have. And yes, I still love him. And I'll love him until I die, because he was a huge part of my life. And yes, I'm sure that hurts you. But none of that gave you the right to do what you did to me. Even if you would have walked into my bedroom and caught us in bed together, you still would not have the right to lay a hand on me, you goddamn son of a bitch. (323)

Lily feels exhausted, she is tired, and she presses her face against pillow so she could barely breathe. "The pain in his voice ripples through me, and when I lift my tear-soaked face to look at him" (324). Departing from Lily's childhood background, it is not so good and not so bad either.

Lily grows up in an abusive family; her father is abusive to her mother. In her childhood, she likes to write a letter to Ellen DeGeneres until she turns sixteen. She is a big fan of Ellen. Her diaries are her outlet; whenever she needs to feel better, she writes down her feelings. She writes a letter to Ellen about a homeless man who lives behind her house at the time; Lily's neighbour, Mrs. Burleson, who lives there, has died, and the house is deserted and dark. When she looks at the old house, she notices a small amount of light coming from it.

so I noticed the light right away. It wasn't bright, but it was coming from that old house. It looked more like candlelight than anything, so I went to the back porch and found Dad's binoculars. I tried to see what was going on over there, but I

couldn't see anything. It was way too dark. Then after a little while, the light went out. (31)

From her bedroom window, Lily looks out onto the backyard. Lily is fascinated by the man who lives there; on her way to school, she notices something moving around behind the house when the man carries a backpack. Lily asks her friend, Katie, about his name and his name is Atlas: he's a senior. Katie says to Lily that Atlas smells bad, and Lily can't help and seems to defend Atlas.

From her writing that shows Atlas, the writer believes that Lily is a very caring person to treat a stranger like Atlas. "I wanted to yell at her and tell her he can't help it and that he doesn't have any running water" (33). Lily is the one who doesn't get physical abuse from her father. But, growing up in a household where her parents sometimes get into fights doesn't make her afraid to deal with people; instead, she is brave and wants to help people in difficulties.

when she meets Ryle, her future husband for the first time, after her father's funeral, Lily catch a flight straight to Boston and trying to find a rooftop because she really needs a fresh air and silence. She meets a stranger named Ryle Kincaid on a rooftop; he is a neurosurgeon; they don't take too long to find comfort in having a conversation, like before she meets Atlas. So, they start telling each other the "naked truth." Lily is the first to tell the truth, and the naked truth is her father's funeral speech. Her mother, Jenny Bloom, asks Lily to deliver the eulogy for her father, but Lily refuses

because she is uncomfortable doing so. She believes that eulogies should be delivered by those who have respect for the deceased, and she has little respect for her father as a result of what he does to her mother. Even so, her mother says that is the only thing her father would have wanted. As a daughter, she loves her father, but as a human, she hates him. Afterwards, Lily starts to give her eulogy, but she makes no mention of her father's good deeds while he is still alive.

Lily tells Ryle, about her dream of opening floral shop, gardening and flowers as her passion. Six months later, she buys a former restaurant space. The condition of the restaurant looks unused that there is a table, old chairs, and other items, as well as a lot of dust. Then while Lily is cleaning, Allysa comes in because she sees a "Help Wanted" (43) sign outside. She does not need a job, but she says she is happy to help, so she offers to do the designing, and Lily eventually hires her. Lily's vision is to be brave and bold, so she comes up with the idea of using darker colors to celebrate winter and death instead of the sweet side of flowers which she makes clear to Allysa.

Instead of painting the walls a putrid sweet color, we paint them dark purple with black accents. And instead of only putting out the usual pastel displays of flowers in boring crystal vases that make people think of life, we go edgy. Brave and bold. We put out displays of darker flowers wrapped in things like leather or silver chains. And rather than put them



in crystal vases, we'll stick them in black onyx or . . . I don't know . . . purple velvet vases lined with silver studs. The ideas are endless. (46)

From the quotation, Lily thinks differently and fairly confident about it, it's a new perspective, her interpretation about the idea is very clearly, which makes her arriving at solutions, people may grow in strength and shows her courage. Being adult, Lily looks back at her young life, absolving herself of what she thinks or knows at the time.

The first writings are about Lily's first meeting with her childhood crush, Atlas, a homeless boy. She starts to write about how she sees someone sneak into the abandoned house behind her house and casually brings up how she shuffles cards while her parents are fighting. She has no friends when she is younger, and the people who are supposed to help her are the ones who cause her trauma, and she never see a professional about what she has gone through. Her coping mechanism of choice is to write in her diary as if she writes a letter to Ellen DeGeneres.

The second evidence of Lily's expressive writing is when her writing makes a time jump of 6 months, it is significant that readers can get to see Lily's growth and how she separates herself from her childhood. Lily has the same experience as her mother as an adult. Ryle has hurt her a few times in their relationship. The first time Ryle hurts his hand and Lily laughs, he becomes enraged and pushes her. It could be argued that addresses the letters to Ellen, she feels better; she seems to be speaking to someone rather

than simply writing everything down, Lily's only way to discuss and narrate her thoughts and feelings is to write in a diary and pretend to write to Ellen DeGeneres.

... I was in bed shuffling cards. I know that sounds weird, but it's just something I do. I don't even know how to play cards. But when my parents get into fights, shuffling cards just calms me down sometimes and gives me something to focus on. (31)

The last diary is when she rereads as an adult about Atlas after seeing him for the first time in years; she feels the need to read about Atlas in the past to find closure because she is currently in a new relationship with Ryle. This part of her diary is when her father finds out about Atlas and her father hits Atlas with a baseball bat. After this, Lily stops writing the diary because she wants to take a break. However, Lily finds it difficult to write a letter to Ellen, she knows exactly the only thing that can make her feel better is to let it out on paper but she is still processing about what happens to Atlas and to think about it alone. In this case she feels so much pain.

Here, she distances herself from her trauma; acknowledges what she has gone through, yet she feels like she needs to write it down at least one more time. When Ryle physically abuses Lily, he pushes her and chokes her. Lily calls Atlas to pick her up, and they go to Atlas's house. Concerned about the complex feelings she has; she decides to write down her feelings like she used to as a teenager while hiding in Atlas' place and staying away from Ryle. Lily writes the last entry.

The last time I wrote to you, I was sixteen. I was in a really bad place and I was so worried about Atlas. I'm not worried about Atlas anymore, but I am in a really bad place right now. More so than the last time I wrote to you. (280)

From the quotation, it is seen from that passage that Lily builds her stories on the last time she writes; she finds nothing better than not writing them down on paper. Lily finds a way through expressive writing. Lily realises that what she used to think actually is harder than what she now experiences. It is seen that Lily needs to understand her past to start a better life she uses expressive writing as a coping mechanism as a teen and able to reread it as an adult. She finds healing from reading her old journals.

In the last chapter, Lily finally breaks the cycle of abuse. She decides after the baby is born and tells Ryle that she wants to divorce because she thinks about the baby's life: "It isn't until this moment that I finally make a decision about him, about us. About what's best for our family" (357). She knows that if she keeps the relationship with Ryle, it will be bad for their daughter because Lily is afraid of losing control of his emotions and hitting her. Thus, the cycle ends here; Lily doesn't want it to repeat in her daughter's life.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

Colleen Hoover is an American novelist. According to *New York Times*, she is known for her seventeen best seller novels and novellas. She is famous with the new adult and young adult contemporary romance genre works. Her first book, *Slammed*, is published in January, 2012. Some of her works are *Confess* (2015), *It Ends With Us* (2016), *All Your Perfects* (2018), *Hopeless* (2012), *Losing Hope* (2013), *Finding Cinderella* (2013), and etc.

Colleen Hoover graduated from Texas A&M-Commerce. She had many social work and began her career in writing. In 2015, her novel, *Confess* was awarded the Goodreads Choice Award for Best Romance category, while she also was awarded the Choice Award for Best Romance in 2016 for her novel entitled *It Ends With Us*. She said that *It Ends With Us* was the hardest book she had written. The Novel *It Ends With Us* have shifted their perspective on domestic violence, helping them understand why a battered partner might struggle to leave an abuser they still love. Hoover recalls even more personal stories from fans.

*It Ends With Us* by Colleen Hoover is the story of a woman's struggle to break the cycle of abuse and rise above to create a safe life not only for herself but for her child. *It Ends with Us* is an empowering narrative. It portrays domestic violence realistically, the issue of domestic violence discussed in the novel is simplified through its plot and through the perspectives of the peripheral characters as demonstrated by their varied

responses to the abuse Lily undergoes in her marriage. It portrays domestic violence realistically, every character in the story serves a direct purpose and gives the full picture of Lily's life. Although the character Allysa has a storyline that adds context and emotion to the overall story. Same with Lily's father, although he is a background character, he is still a major part in the story because of his relationship with Lily.

The narrow viewpoint of the public and the lack of a layered understanding of the complexity of domestic violence is influenced by myriad factors such as self-conception, internalized patriarchal norms, traditional gender roles, social perspectives on marriage, occupations, and homosocial bonds with peers. The significance of the psychosocial issue of relational violence is also reduced by the way in which it is resolved in the plot of this novel. Jenny and Allysa claim repeatedly that the problem will be settled once Lily leaves her abuser, Ryle.

Next, the novel places the onus of the resolution of her problem squarely on Lily, who is shown as the primary decision-maker in confronting domestic violence. Besides Atlas, the other peripheral characters do not provide Lily with any concrete suggestions or real assistance. Thus, 'the society' as it is represented by the people around Lily, does not function maximally as a positive system of support to her in her time of need. This failure to extend real help stems from the limited understanding of the peripheral characters with regard to domestic violence.

Lily's support network of friends and family members are not even privy to all her decisions. By the end of the novel, Lily is able to leave her abusive relationship. She manages to discuss her future with Ryle and makes him understand that separating is the best solution. However, the solution of divorce seems too facile a resolution for the grave transgression of battering a woman within the institution of marriage.

The abuser is left unpunished and is left free to potentially abuse other women in the future. The book seems to suggest that leaving one's abuser is enough. However, domestic violence is an insidiously intricate problem, and proper representation of this psychosocial evil is mandatory because inaccuracies in depicting this issue in popular literary genres such as romances could influence the wider understanding of the problem. Popular culture exists in various forms and people consume it to obtain information as well as entertainment.

However, people often overlook the fact that it wields the power to shape their perspectives on discrete issues. Therefore, it is important to critically analyze items of popular culture to evaluate the ways in which products such as books, cinema, and music represent prevailing social difficulties. By using *It Ends with Us* as its corpus and the peripheral characters as its focus, this study aimed to bridge the gaps in the scholarly discourse about the portrayal of domestic violence in literature.

The novel *Its Ends With Us* has been focusing on Lily Bloom, the main character and narrator of the story. Lily was afraid of her father's

reactions, and therefore hid her relationship with Atlas from both of her parents. Not only to protect herself, but also her mother and Atlas. However, by using her diary, Lily also managed to get her feelings out through expressive writing, without actually having to confide in anyone. That is, until Atlas gets so badly hurt at the hands of her father that she cannot fathom writing about him. After this traumatic experience, Lily instead suppresses what she has gone through, choosing not to write in her diary anymore.

Lily never really acts as though she has gone through something traumatic as a child: other than her feeling anger at her parents for making her experience gendered violence, she does not show any symptoms of hyperarousal as an adult. This can be seen as a result of her actively suppressing her memories. However, when Ryle has hit her more than once, she does start to show signs of hyperarousal once again, which is demonstrated when Ryle finds the magnet and her diary. After the last time Ryle hits, her she writes another entry, serving as a form of therapy for her, further tying her use of diary entries together with scriptotherapy.

She both identifies with her teenage self on multiple occasions, but she does however grow as the story progresses, and we see more of a dissonant narrator towards the end of the novel. By rereading her entries as an adult, as well as experiencing gendered abuse directed towards herself, she considers her mother more than she did as a teenager.

It was also shown in the analysis that the novel does not belong to a single category, demonstrating that stories of gendered violence does not always have to be straight forward and linear, but rather a complex story that has more to it than meets the eye. It is shown several times that *It Ends With Us* contains concepts from both stories of bondage and stories of deliverance.

In the end, Lily moves on from Ryle and leaves her abusive relationship, for the sake of her daughter, as to not repeat the cycle. She used expressive writing as a coping mechanism during her teenage years, and narrating her experiences would also come to help her in the future.

Lily Bloom experienced inner conflict, Besides, Lily also tries to resolve the inner conflict that happened to her. The internal conflict happens to Lily, Hoover reveals Lily's inner struggle to understand the complexity of leaving an abusive relationship. At the novel's beginning, Lily looks upon people like her mother with a mixture of pity and disgust, not understanding why they would not just leave their abusive partners. Lily demonstrates the immense resilience that it takes to live in a situation such as her own. She ultimately proves the depth of her strength by making the extremely difficult decision to break the cycle.

Hoover's novel probe dark theme: abusive relationship, toxic relationship, infidelity. She's been open about her personal connection to some of the things. She said that her father physically abused her mother, and that *Its Ends With Us* was inspired by her mother. The themes in her



books, while obviously dramatized and created for our entertainment, draw on a lot of what's actually happening in this world. The novel *It Ends With Us* describes abuse, it also highlights the strength it takes to break the cycle. It was interesting to be inside Lily's mind while she is trying to figure out what to do next in her life and who she wants to include in this journey

Themes of jealousy, emotional abuse and generational cycles are insightfully and powerfully explored in *It Ends With Us*. What starts as a love story becomes more of an examination of what love is and *isn't*, as well as the self-sacrifice that often defines relationships that live on an emotional rollercoaster. Colleen's sensitivity to these potential triggers, and the way she approached what is a challenging subject. While she has a message to tell people who are caught up in generational cycles, there is no judgement or preaching involved, rather there's understanding and awareness shown through believable character development. The ending was beautifully handled and brought tears to the eyes of the readers.

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**Breaking the Silence: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**  
**(Re-accredited with A+ Grade by NAAC)**  
**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

**Divine Thendral. A**

**(Reg. No. 21APEN08)**



**PG and Research Department of English**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Breaking the Silence: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*** 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 Divine Thendral. A during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Breaking the Silence: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*** 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**

**April 2023**

*Divine Thendral.A*

**Divine Thendral. A**



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## Preface

The project entitled **Breaking the Silence: A Study of Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*** analyses the dilemma and the quest of identity of the Indian middle-class women. It deals with the dilemmas of the protagonist in holding familial and social identity with new aspirations and choices in the male-dominated society. It mainly focuses on how the protagonist breaks her long silence to emerge herself as a new woman.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the literary fame of Shashi Deshpande. It showcases the merit of her works and also the success of the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Quest for Identity** deals with the quest of the protagonist, Jaya in affirming her true identity.

The third chapter **Tradition and Modernity** describes how Jaya, a traditional submissive Indian woman transformed into a courageous optimistic woman.

The fourth chapter **Marital Conflict** deals with the institution of marriage citing examples from the lives of women belonging to the lower and middle class.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature is a term used to describe written artistic words, especially those with a high lasting artistic value. Literature is any artwork which uses language. It is a medium in which a person creates an artwork out of the tools he or she has. In literature, the tools used to create artwork are words which are used in expressing human experience, feelings, emotions and thoughts. Literature is a total experience shaped into beauty and attractiveness. Literature is defined as a piece of writing that is valued as a work of art, especially novel, play, and poetry. Literature is also defined as the written or oral composition that tells stories, dramatic situations, and expresses emotions, and analyses and advocates ideas.

Literature also refers to the creative and imaginative writing which is designed to engage readers emotionally and intellectually through the major literary genres such as novels, drama, and poetry and other sub genres like fable, parable, and short stories. Literature is a reflection of social, political, economic, and cultural realities. It is a part and parcel of man's self-realization and a symbol of man's success and failure. It explains human nature, calibre and his or her destination.

Indian Literature or Indian English Literature is a type of organization where English Writers work. The primary language of the writers is English and their co-native languages could be any language of India. History of Indian Literature started with the works of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and Michael Madhusudan Dutt followed by Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo and R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao contributed to the expansion and popularity of Indian English fiction in the 1930s. It

is also associated, in some cases, with the works of members of the Indian Diaspora who subsequently comprise works in English.

Indian Literature in English refers to that body of work by writers from India, who writes mainly in the English language and whose native or co-native language could be one of the numerous languages of India. Indian Literature is also intimately linked with the works of associates of the Indian diaspora, who was born in India but presently reside out of India. India has produced a number of celebrated novelists who write in English. Though the first well-known Indian English novelist was R. K. Narayan, there were many writers who experimented with English fiction and found success. The celebrated contemporary authors are Arundhati Roy, Kiran Desai, and Aravind Adiga who won The Booker Prize. Chetan Bhagat and Jeet Thayyil are the newcomers who became well known in a very short time.

Arundhati Roy came to the limelight with the publication of her first novel, *The God of Small Things*. The novel generated a great wave in the world of English fiction both in India and abroad. The narrative techniques and the powerful use of the language with a tinge of her native Malayalam have given an exuberant experience to her readers. *The God of Small Things* also won the Booker Prize for English Fiction. Arundhati Roy's nonfiction works also shares her anti-establishment views, as well as unorthodox thought about freedom and equal rights irrespective of sex, colour, and social status.

Kiran Desai is a writer who has experimented with varied forms of narrative techniques in fiction. Kiran Desai's talent in the use of irony and humour makes her novels worth reading. Kiran Desai, daughter of Anita Desai, had won the Booker Prize for her second novel, *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006). *The Inheritance of Loss*

deals with a number of themes from eventful rustic life to pangs insurgency. Kiran Desai is an outstanding woman author of contemporary India.

R. K. Narayan is the first great Indian English writer who had a considerable audience abroad. R.K. Narayan novels share the essence of Indian culture in all its true colours. Like Thomas Hardy's Wessex, he created Malgudi, the imaginary place with typical Indian settings in its splendid form. The Guide is considered his masterpiece. His works are *The English Teacher* (1945), *Mr. Sampath* (1949), *The Man Eater of Malgudi* (1961), and *Swamy and Friends* (1935).

*The White Tiger* is the first novel by Arvind Adiga which made him popular in India and abroad. Aravind Adiga won Booker Prize for literature in 2008 for *The White Tiger* which surprised the readers with its narrative strategy and realistic presentation of the world of corruption prevalent in all realms of Indian life. Many of the situations in the novel have parallels with contemporary Indian events. Adiga's other novels are also worth reading and he is a celebrated author who has something to say to the world.

Shashi Deshpande is one of the most accomplished contemporary Indian Women Writers in English. Daughter of the renowned Kannada dramatist and Sanskrit scholar, Sriranga. She was born in Dharwad in Karnataka in 1938. At the age of fifteen, she went to Bombay, graduated in Economics, and moved to Bangalore, where she gained a degree in law. She devoted early years of her marriage to the care of her two young sons. Later, she took a course in Journalism and for some time worked in magazine. She is an award-winning Indian writer whose talented craftsmanship includes nine immensely popular novels: *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980), *If I Die Today* (1982), *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *Come Up and Be Dead*

(1985), *That Long Silence* (1988), *The Binding Vine* (1994), *A Matter of Time* (1996), *Small Remedies* (2000), *Moving On* (2004), *In the Country of Deceit* (2008) and *Shadow Play* (2013).

The novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980)- focuses the world of 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.

*If I Die Today* (1982) is Deshpande's detective novel. The setting of her novel is in the campus of medical college and hospital. Guru, a cancer patient, who is admitted in the hospital, destroys the peaceful life of the doctors. In the novel there are two murders. The narrator, Manju helps the story to unfold.

In the novel *Roots and Shadows* (1983) the protagonist, Indu is well-educated, modern, middle-class woman. The novel pictures the world of Indu. Her husband, Jayant is a well-educated but a conservative type of man. The story deals with the agony of Indu in a tradition-bound and male dominated society. *Come Up and Be Dead* (1985) is another detective fiction by Shashi Deshpande. The novel sets in girl's school. This novel was first published in a magazine in serials. Kshama is a central character. In the story there are many mysterious deaths in to girl's school.

*The Binding Vine* (1994) depicts the story of Urmila. Like other protagonists of Deshpande, she is an educated, middle-class wife. With Urmila the story focuses on Mira (Urmila's mother-in-law) who is a victim of marital rape and Shakuntala (a rape-victim's mother). Deshpande in these novel comments on the issues like sexual

violence, rape and society and marriage in Indian society. Unlike her other protagonists Urmi fights not for herself but for other women.

Unlike the other protagonists of Deshpande, a male character is a centre of the novel *A Matter of Time* (1996). At the first time she makes a man, Gopal the protagonist of the novel. Three generations of women of the same family are presented here. Gopal has abandoned his family. Sumi is in mental trauma because of his abandonment. After that she takes up a job for herself and for her daughters. She has coped with the tragedy with remarkable stoicism. The society gives worst punishment to Sumi because she is a rejected woman by her husband.

Deshpande has written umpteen short stories in the following anthologies: *The Legacy and Other Stories* (1978), *It Was Dark* (1986), *The Miracle and Other Stories* (1986), *It Was the Nightingale* (1986) and *The Intrusion and Other Stories* (1994). She has also written four children's books: *A Summer Adventure* (1978), *The Hidden Treasure* (1980), *The Only Witness* (1980) and *The Narayanpur Incident* (1982). Deshpande has won many awards and honours including the Padma Shri award in 2009.

Deshpande is one of the prominent contemporary women writers in Indian writing in English. Her protagonists find themselves entrapped in the roles assigned to them by society, but achieve self-identity and independence within the confines of their marriage. The present study, based on the selected novels of Deshpande deals with the complexities of man woman relationship especially in the context of marriage, the trauma of disturbed adolescence.

Deshpande feels that women must venture out of the familial framework to give full expression to her individuality and identity. Deshpande's novels are the



realistic depiction of anguish and conflict of the modern educated middle-class women caught between patriarchy and the tradition on the one hand and self-expression, individuality independence on the other, her protagonists feel lost and confused and explore a way to fulfil themselves as a human-being. Deshpande's concern and sympathy are essentially for the women. She has given an honest portrayal of her fears, sufferings, disappointments, and frustrations. Besides traveling the woman's struggle to secure self-respect and self-identity, the author lays base the multiple levels of oppression, indenting sexual oppression.

The protagonists in Deshpande's novels are on the road to self-discovery. Usually, some domestic crisis propels them in the quest. Shashi Deshpande's novels also frequently ruminate over the condition of human alienation and the vicissitudes of time. The past resides with the present and the novels often digress into Indian myths, fables, and folk tales that show the power of tradition and the society's reluctance to change. But her novels are infused with a rich inclusiveness, which in itself enhances the possibilities of the hope. Her novels are essentially reflective of the unenviable situation of the beleaguered contemporary Indian women, which she has depicted with great artistic finesse and astounding originality. Deshpande's commendable realistic depiction of the contemporary Indian women's situation and the prognostic solution, she puts forward her novels an imperishable importance for their efforts.

Deshpande's female protagonists are generally caught in a web of painful circumstances, their struggle and the outcome of which is usually the basis of novel. Marital Discord, a lack of understanding between man and woman. Deshpande deals with the treatment of domestic relationship, especially disturbed man-woman relationships and the resultant alienation in middle-class Indian family. The main

reason behind this is temperamental incompatibility, which is further aggravated by loneliness, lack of communication, escapism, isolation and also quest for identity. Almost all the novels of Shashi Deshpande focus on the problems of marital disharmony-the conflict and discord in husband-wife relationship.

The portraiture of women in the entire world over has been all-too-myriad in their complexion, as they have been all-too-rich in their composition and all-too-variegated in their character. Picked up from the different times and diverse climes, even a random sample of these images soon reveals the wide spectrum of richness of their code, content and treatment, their colours and contours. There is, however, no denying the fact that the one-time idealized and idolized images of women have undergone some unprecedented metamorphosis all the world over, especially in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

According to Indian tradition, a woman must defer to her husband in every possible respect. She must make the marital home pleasant for him. She must cook the meals, wash the dishes, and take care of the children. She must never enquire about money and she must acquiesce to her husband's every demand. But what happens when the old customs lose their power and the woman no longer believes her life should be determined in this narrow fashion. This prospect is the underlying theme of Deshpande's novel, *That Long Silence*, in which her lead protagonist, Jaya, undergoes profound changes against the backdrop of an India that is also evolving. There is a shift in values and women have started acknowledging themselves the co-equals of man. Though the high hopes of Feminism have been washed away in the present social milieu, the relationship between man and woman becomes one of structured interdependence. Still the woman has to work for her liberation without resigning herself to her destiny. Gender – equality remains a myth.

A major preoccupation in recent Indian women's writing has been a delineation of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships. In a culture where individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas, and marital bliss and the woman's role at home is a central focus; it is interesting to see the emergence of not just an essential Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural displacement. Deshpande has joined the growing number of women writers from India on whom the image of the suffering but stoic woman eventually breaking traditional boundaries has had a significant impact.

The finite dimension of the relationship between man and woman has been prescribed by man and not by woman. Man, who is ruled by the mastery-motive has imposed her limits on her. She accepts it because of biosocial reasons. Very often, this acceptance is not congruent with the reality that lies underneath. Modern women prefer to exercise her choice and break away from her traumatic experiences. Women are now portrayed as more assertive, more liberated in their view, and more articulate in their expression than the woman of the past. Instead of downgrading the elements of suffering at the hands of her lover or husband or man, she has started asserting her substantive identity in action, not in words. Whether it is Devi of Githa Hariharan's *the Thousand Faces of Night*, or Sita of Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, or Lucy of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*, the women have established a coherent class structure-one of assertion of identity and defiance of male supremacy, and protest at being subordinated by man.

The male ego has given the woman an inferior status through the ages. Man has relegated her to a second-class citizen. A group of Indian women novelists in their hybridity of thought and multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious social dimensions have conceptualized the women problem in general and middle-class and

upper-class women in particular. While the gynocritics think that too many women in too many countries speak the same language of silence, some Indian women novelists like Githa Hariharan, Shashi Deshpande, Arundhati Roy, and Anita Desai have tried with sincerity and honesty to deal with the physical, psychological and emotional stress syndrome of women.

Deshpande's fifth novel, *That Long Silence* (1988), won the Sahitya Akademi Award, given by the Indian Academy of Arts and Letters to outstanding works written in any of India's twenty-four major languages in 1990. The main character of *That Long Silence* is Jaya, a girl born into a middle-class family. When she is young, Jaya is clever, curious, and bright, all qualities considered unladylike by mainstream society. Jaya's grandmother encourages her to act more conventionally so she can get a husband when she grows up, explaining that civilized and cultured girls are skilled at cooking, cleaning, and household labour. In addition, she tells Jaya to learn to be more accommodating and to keep quiet when she disagrees. All young women will have to build good relationships with their in-laws at some point and learning to make a good impression will go a long way towards helping her do this in the future.

Eventually, Jaya learns to play the part of a subservient woman, while retaining a sense of individuality. She writes in her free time, though she has failed to become successful as an author. As she grows up, Jaya becomes keenly aware of the fact that people, in general, do not like it when she expresses herself or her individuality, and so she learns to hide it. Jaya refers to this stifling of herself and her ideas as "the long silence" since it stretches across her life from childhood to middle age. Only Jaya's father encourages her in her writing and sees her as an individual.

Jaya gets an education, and after college, she marries Mohan, a successful businessman. Jaya and Mohan disagree on many things and their marriage is not intimate or happy. There is no place in their relationship for Jaya to express her point of view, as Mohan expects her to go along with everything he says unquestioningly. Jaya takes care of the household while Mohan works, feeding him and cleaning up after him as if he were one of their two teenage children.

When Mohan is suspended from his job due to misconduct, Jaya is compelled to take account of what her life has become. Jaya and Mohan are forced to move from their spacious apartment into a small and dingy one, while their children stay behind with relatives. Jaya begins writing more to supplement the family income. Some of her articles are frank and open about her dissatisfaction, including the way in which her husband is unable to connect with her or their children. Though Mohan is not happy with the article, he does not say anything about it to Jaya. She merely senses from his expression that he does not like her writing and automatically and unthinkingly seeks to please him. Mohan faces further disgrace when he is found guilty of counterfeiting at his job and fired. Jaya's sister Kusum visits Jaya and discusses her own husband from whom she has recently separated. Jaya thinks that Kusum's abusive husband and her own distant one has very different flaws but that they stem from the same cultural expectations of the way men should treat women. Next, Jaya meets with her brother Ravi, who speaks harshly about Mohan. When Mohan learns about this, he is angry with Jaya.

It is clear that Mohan needs Jaya's support and love while he faces a trying period, but neither of them has ever been comfortable talking about their feelings and fears with each other. Mohan has no idea how to ask for what he needs, and Jaya has no idea how to offer it. The situation becomes even direr when the couple's son,

Rahul, runs away from home. Eventually, Mohan leaves the house. Thinking about what has led to their separation, Jaya understands that she is partly to blame for withdrawing from her husband during his trying time.

Jaya recognizes that the long silence has stifled communication and openness in her family, making it difficult to support her husband and vice versa. Mr. Kamat, an elderly man in her apartment building helps Jaya think through her feelings about herself as an individual and her relationship towards her husband. The book ends with Mohan sending a telegram to Jaya saying that he will be home soon. In addition, his job is willing to take him back. Jaya is ready to accept Mohan back into her life, and she vows that never again will she let the long silence separate them emotionally from each other.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Quest for Identity**

Deshpande's novels are about human relationships, especially between father and daughter, husband and wife and mother and daughter. In all the relationships, woman occupies the centre and the story moves through her consciousness. Her novels reflect the lives of suffocated women in search of refuge from suffering. While searching for a solution to their private problems, the female protagonists move from the self to the sufferings of the other women. This paves way for an assertion and recognition of their self-hood.

Deshpande reflects in her writings a realistic picture of contemporary middle-class woman. They find themselves trapped in the roles assigned to them by society and attempt to assert their individuality. They confront their husbands, and revolt against their family traditions in quest of freedom. They do try to redefine human relationship and behaviour. They choose to remain with their families but reject the roles prescribed to them by the society. They try to achieve self-identity and independence within the context of marriage.

Deshpande concerns herself with the plight of the modern Indian woman trying to understand herself and to preserve her identity as wife, mother and, above all, as a human being. Her unequivocal feminist stand has got her a distinctive place in the contemporary Indian English fiction. G.S. Amur rightly observes: "Women's struggle in the context of contemporary Indian society, to find and preserve her identity as wife, mother and, most important of all, as human being, is Shashi Deshpande's major concern as a creative writer" (G.S. Amur 10).

Deshpande's Indian women are placed between tradition and modernity, family and profession, culture, and nature. In her novels, she involves different types of suffering women characters. To the first type belongs the mother figure- the traditional woman who believes that her husband and family is everything. Whatever be her troubles she cannot leave her husband. She struggles for making up relationship with him at any cost.

Jaya's mother from *That Long Silence*, Indus from *Roots, and Shadows*, and Saru's mother from *The Dark Holds No Terrors* belong to another type. The second type of suffering women is the opposite of the traditional type. These women are bolder and self-reliant that she cannot confirm to the Sita's version of woman hood. Most of Deshpande's women belong to the category that are neither traditional nor radical. These women may walk out of her home against her sufferings. They can be called fugitives who seek refuge to escape from domestic professional sexual traps in which they find themselves.

Deshpande's heroines find it even difficult to adjust to their parental relationships and they have hatred towards their mothers who are dominating. They consider marriage as an escape. But later they find out that marriage is another trap which makes them leave their professional career. They accept and succumb as home makers. They soon find that their attempts to reconcile to homemaking make them suffer more. When they find that they are not happy at home, the female protagonist attempts to escape from the domestic roles as well. They turn their heads towards their parental home and consider them to be peaceful place for their traumatic soul. It is there they begin to search for their identity from their search for knowledge. To Deshpande's women, playing different roles as daughters, wives, mothers,



homemakers, and professionals is a painful process. They choose to be themselves. They accept themselves as they are. They determine to face any situation. They rely only on the self which shows them the way to meet with the problems of their lives.

In *That Long Silence*, Deshpande has presented not a woman who revolts openly in the beginning and later reconciles to the situation, but a kind of woman who wants to revolt, ultimately does not. Her inner turmoil is so bitter that she is unable to speak them out and remains silent in order not to be frustrated and disappointed after the disapproval of her action by the society. She is unable to unfold the truth. Her image becomes like that of a bird that has wings and knows that it can fly, but, somehow, does not. In the same way, Jaya is aware of her abilities and she knows that she can expose them openly, but somehow, she does not. She always remains silent, which indicates that the traditional roles of women still have primacy over all the newly acquired professional roles.

Jaya is the protagonist in Deshpande's *That Long Silence*. It is the story of a woman who found herself. She has portrayed the irony of a woman writer Jaya who is also a young house wife. She questions her life, her beliefs, and her relationship with others. From the beginning of the novel to the end, Jaya undertakes an emotional journey towards the perfect selfhood. Her silence is symptomatic of alienation and apprehension that is fixed in every woman's life. Jaya realizes her dignity, individuality, self-respect, and freedom through self-fulfilment within the family and society.

The very title of the novel, *That Long Silence*, given by Deshpande, suggests the failure to communicate and assert one's own self. In this novel, she uses first person narrative to unfold the mute tale of Jaya. She delicately delineates the swings

of mood, the see-saw moments of joy and despair, the fragments of feelings perceived and suppressed, heart-wringing anguish of the narrator protagonist, Jaya, a housewife and a failed writer. During the period of her quietude the protagonist undertakes a journey towards her own self. She endeavours to search for her own identity which seems to be lost somewhere during seventeen years of her marriage.

Jaya, in the beginning of the novel, confesses that she is going to reveal her real self. In order to do so, she alienates herself from her real self that is veiled under the taciturn attitude of Jaya. She moves back and forth in time to recall her submissive and docile self. Just like a staunch feminist she, as mentioned by 'Satbir Kaur':

seeks to discover the female author's quest for empowerment through self-expression by escaping the controlling authority of the male in the realm of social/sexual power" and examines the 'double colonization' of women under imperial and patriarchic condition. She also dares to "expose, question and challenge the age-old traditions and prejudices in male-dominated society." (Satbir Kaur 15- 20)

As a writer, she is supposed to present her views and ideas before the society but she kept quiet diving into her past, struggling with her present and trying to live her future. Jaya is a modern woman but her husband, Mohan is a traditionalist rooted in customs. According to Mohan, a woman sitting before the fire, waiting for her husband to come home and eat hot food is the actual role of a woman. The difference in their attitude regarding womanhood is the main reason of the problems and misunderstanding in their marital life. Jaya thinks,

A woman can never be angry; she can only be neurotic, hysterical and frustrated. There's no room for anger in my life, no room for despair either. There is only order and routine-today, I have to change the sheets; tomorrow, scrub the bathrooms: the day after, clean the fridge. (147-148)

Jaya has been a sufferer since her childhood. She is treated in a harsh manner by her mother and grandmother. Jaya is reminded that; “a husband is like a sheltering tree” (137). The novel provides a realistic portrayal of the married life of Jaya and her husband Mohan. The novel relates to the inner perception of the protagonist. The woman in this novel is who finds her normal routine so disrupted that for the first time she can look at her life and attempt to decide who she really is. But the question arises if she could decide. A constant question that keeps haunting her is who she is. She fails to find herself. “An utter stranger, a person so alien to me that even the faintest understanding of the motives of her actions seemed impossible” (69). Hence her painful cries- “I can’t cope, I can’t manage. I can’t go on” (70). In such a domestic setting she finds her female identity pathless. She is stuck up in a confusion which is evident in the lines, “I could and couldn’t do, all the things that were womanly and unwomanly” (83). Jaya is the same Suhasini and Sita; the pseudonyms Jaya uses to write about the hardships of house wives. Both Suhasini and Sita are as Jaya says, the many selves waiting to be discovered, each self-attached like a Siamese twin to a self of another person, neither able to exist without the other.

Jaya’s self-interrogation brings out a truth that a woman has an identity only as a husband’s wife or father’s daughter or son’s mother. The real face, the real identity never comes out. The personality of Jaya cannot be found because she is

defined only in relation to others. Even a well-educated society sees a woman as a possession not as an individual. Jaya's husband Mohan renamed Jaya as Suhasini which has got a meaning like a soft, smiling, placid, motherly woman. Jaya felt that her identity was at stake. She realizes that a woman must transcend silence in order to attain selfhood. A woman's relation with her family must burgeon within the totality of her life as a woman, only then it can lead to a perfect fulfilment.

Thus, it becomes evident that Jaya is a fragmented self with a tormented consciousness. She does not know her identity and does not enjoy individuality of her own. She sees herself as someone's daughter, wife, and mother, having no status of her own. She therefore says, "I was born. My father died when I was fifteen. I got married to Mohan, I have two children and I did not let the third live" (2).

In order to achieve a state of complete family life as a woman, Jaya is forced to suppress every aspect of her needs that refuses to fit into her role model of a wife and a mother. Her other two most important aspects, are her writing career and her relationship with Kamat. Kamat is an advertiser and he lives alone in the apartment at Dadar- Bombay. He is somehow different from other men because he has no problem in doing unmanly works like cooking, washing, etc. He is a smooth floating person, listens in a keen manner to all the women. Jaya is more attached to Kamat but this can be called as a passing cloud affair. Jaya says that, "With this man I had not been a woman. I had been just myself" (153).

With Kamat Jaya throws away all the silence within her. She erases every public sign of identity. It is from kamat she receives motivation for her writing career. He says, "Take yourself seriously, woman. Don't skulk behind a false name" (148). She finds solace in the embrace with Kamat. But soon she rejects this urge towards

kamat. She does so to safeguard the marital bond. Jaya gives up her career and Kamat also. She fails to identify herself and does not enjoy her own individuality. She lives up to this dedicated wife's role at the cost of losing her identity. She remembers her relationship with her husband- "I am Mohan's wife, I had thought, and cut off the bits of me that had refused to be Mohan's wife" (191).

Jaya is immensely talented in creative writing. She has given up writing just because Mohan does not like it. A desire of self-expression stimulates every creative writer, and if it is suppressed, it certainly creates asphyxiation and mental agony. Jaya's imaginative writing is castigated by her husband as 'self-revelation.' When she writes a story about a husband who could not reach out to wife except through her body. As the story receives the first prize, Jaya's husband gets it too personal and asks, "How can you reveal us? How can you reveal our lives to the world in this way?" (144). When she writes a true story, Mohan fears that people who read it would think that it is about them. So, he wants her instead to write for the newspaper column 'Sita' about the daily routine of a middle-class housewife. Jaya has shaped her life according to the desire of Mohan and loses her own self and identity. She admits:

It hadn't been Mohan's fault at all. And it had been just a coincidence, though it had helped, that just then Mohan had propelled me into that other kind of writing. 'I encouraged you,' he had said to me. He was right. But, I went on with my chest-beating fit of penitence, Mohan had not forced me to do that kind of writing. I'd gone into it myself. With my eyes wide open. (148)

Jaya asks for her individuality to be valued equally along with that of a man. Jaya who is confident of her individuality and hopeful of a change in Mohan's attitude moves beyond the cultural stereotypes. S. P. Swain observes:

The tragic predicament of the Deshpande protagonists is the outcome of male-domination in a patriarchal culture. Their silent suffering is socio-psychic in nature. In her quest for identity, the Deshpande protagonist moves from despair to hope, from self-negation to self-assertion. Her struggle throughout is to attain wholeness, completeness, and an authentic selfhood (S. P. Swain 125).

Shashi Deshpande is incomparable for her portrayal of Indian middle-class women with their turmoil, frustrations and for the long silence, which has been their lot for many centuries. It is clearly observed in this novel that the novelist presents a sensitive portrayal of a woman where tradition is breaking down and new challenges are tormenting her with the awakening of her consciousness.

Jaya in her quest reached at a situation of compromise. She agreed to change herself and hoped for a change in Mohan who had written a telegram that announced his arrival. The compromise on the part of woman, as well as man, makes Shashi Deshpande a liberal writer who does not commit to a writing that chooses ultimate freedom for women and assigns domestic chores to men. N. Sethuraman rightly puts it: "Deshpande never supported the radical view of 'Amazon Utopias', female realms where men have been relegated to secondary roles. The novelist moved a step ahead of the female dominated vision and portrayed the female psyche" (N. Sethuraman 194).

The novel, *That Long Silence* is the critical analysis of one of the social institutions- marriage. Marriage means to be at home, to care of the children and the husband and to be away from the rest of the world. Marriage hinders the growth of the right to free expression of the mother. The society is made to believe in labelling all the relationships a married woman has, a woman's contribution to the society is in terms of an obedient wife, daughter and sister. The fearful thoughts of the collapse of her marriage particularly the death of Mohan. This fear haunts her day and night.

The whole exercise in the novel, *That Long Silence* is for Jaya's eventual articulation, which will break her long silence. She goes through passivity in these words, "I will have to erase the silence between us" (192). Jaya from the first day of marriage till now, feels like her husband has not accepted her real self -Jaya. But Jaya while arguing says that, "Suhasini was dead, yes, that was it, she was the one Mohan was mourning, she'd walked into the sea at last. No, the fact was that I 'd finally done it- I'd killed her" (121).

The protagonists in Deshpande's novels are on the road to self-discovery. Thus, Jaya corks her anger and abandons her ambition. She gets ready to act as peacock, and emulates Sita, the Indian epitome of female perfection. She does write under a false name and finds excuses for it. At the end of the novel, she abandons fear to follow her desires, that she must erase the silence, and speak Sanskrit not the Prakrit. She had been speaking Prakrit all along, the language she believed Mohan wanted to hear. Now finally, she can share the same language, and enjoy speaking it. She has come a long way, and this journey forms the substance of the novel. Deshpande believes that a transformation of the self-portrayal of Indian middle-class women can happen with the endeavours of the women themselves who first search

themselves. Through this search they undergo a confrontation with their own selves which make them evolve as independent human beings.

*That Long Silence* traces the passage of a woman through a maze of doubts and fears towards Jaya's affirmation. Looking at the man-woman relationship objectively, the novelist does not blame entirely the men for the subjugation of women. She sees how both men and women find it difficult to outgrow the images and roles assigned to them by the society. This novel deals with female quest for identity aptly in which the female protagonist longs for self, identity, and self-dependence because she suffers from silence and lack of communication with her husband. Jaya wants to liberate herself in order to respect her own feelings and desires. She can evaluate the expectations of her life, and realizes the emotional frustration and trauma she has undergone over the years by being silent and submissive. She evolves into a woman with her own identity, having gained tremendous fortitude and confidence. On one hand, the novel teaches women to fight the silence and express themselves, and, on the other, it gives a message to the male community to try to understand women in a better way. The novelist feels that men and women can lead a happy, peaceful, and blissful life by mutual understanding.

The novel is aptly called *That Long Silence* and it depicts the plight of an educated Indian woman of our time. In a way the protagonist, Jaya, is like any modern woman who resents her husband's callousness and becomes the victim of circumstance. By implication her character represents the modern woman's ambivalent attitude towards marriage. Deshpande hints at the modern woman's refusal to comply with the wishes of the husband. Jaya is both the individual and the type, and the reader is free to take her in any manner he likes.



Deshpande's fictional achievement is not supposed to be seen in terms of her subscription or non-subscription to feminism, for a writer of some substance is committed to human situation and not necessarily to any ideology. She, for herself, chooses the path of conciliation without succumbing either to absolute acquiescence or to the temptations of embracing the feminist mould, which she would have with slight manipulation of her creative endeavour. However, her insights and depth of perception ensure that her fictional creations rise above the staple ideological work, and go on to become serious reflections on the human condition with particular focus on the perils and predicament of her sex in their world. It is the quest of Jaya for an authentic selfhood and finds through her rebellion against the patriarchal core of society.

Jaya represents the middle class educated woman in India during 1990s. She tries to find her identity throughout the novel for her role clarity, her life or is she living for someone else. She searches her identity as an individual and where her emotions are getting subdued. It suggests that the endemic imbalance in a marriage causes the frustrations, disappointments, failures rather than the endurance and solace.

## Chapter Three

### Tradition and Modernity

The term modernism relates with the development of science and technology and its impact on society. Much revolution is brought not only of freedom fighting movements but also of writings. In the western world the notion of women empowerment is reflected in Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* which dates back to 1924 and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949).

In western world development of woman is in isolated state where as in India development of woman is association with kinship from members of her family. As far as India is concerned the progress of women took place during colonization on account of globalization and its impact was seen in post colonialism. The complex Indian society where women are suppressed on account of patriarchal society undergone transformations because of modernization. It brought rational thinking in women. The struggle for independence was one side movement and the struggle for individuality of women was the other side.

*That Long Silence* is about Jaya, a middle-class woman and her struggle to bear the things silently and a decision after strong determination. Jaya's silence is symbolic of most of the women of the world who are unable to express themselves as individuals. Jaya had imagined for herself a life of an independent girl, going with both hands in her pocket but it was not to be because women in India have been under the pressure of circumstance, customs and traditions, all of which restraints women to be independent. Jaya's father was pragmatic, progressive and radical; he had dreamt that her daughter would go to oxford for higher studies, win prizes and excel all other

girls. But her father died before his dream could be transformed into realities. After her father's death, the question of her marriage arose. It was to change the course of life. The girl who as her father had imaged was to win laurels became Mohan's because her elder brother wanted to be free of the responsibility of her younger sister.

The feminist consciousness of Shashi Deshpande is felt in the novel for promoting woman to a higher stage of democratic thinking at the end. The gradual transformation of a woman in the modern generation combating hegemonic society to transform herself from a traditional stereotype to a modern woman thus involving in a paradigm shift is of importance. With a gift of sharp psychological insights into the subtleties of human mind and society and aided by richly evocative, unassuming and unpretentious style, Deshpande ideally tracts of human consciousness and creditably represent it in fiction. Her novel *That Long Silence* is an education in the consciousness of people, particularly women. In her own words, Deshpande says about the novel:

And then I wrote *That Long Silence*, almost entirely a woman's novel, nevertheless, a book about the silencing of one-half of humanity. A lifetime of introspection went into this novel, the one closest to me personally; the thinking and ideas in this are closest to my own. (Jain 210)

Jaya-Mohan relationship is tempting to fit into this neat slot of the very real human tragedies caused by male attitudes of superiority. The assumption of the masculine right to control is seen in Mohan's attitude to Jaya's writing career. It is he who sets the parameters for the kind of writing his male ego and the norms of male-dominated society might permit her to indulge in. He boasts, "From the very

beginning I've allowed you to write, I've encouraged you, I was proud of you" (119). But, in reality, his wife's writing was merely an extension of his own status. And because he is unable to recognize her identity as distinct from his own, his fragile male ego had been unable to accept when she had won a prize for a story of "a man who could not reach out to his wife except through her body." (144). Mohan, to whom she is not a writer but a possession to be exhibited, is worried: "They will think I am this man. How can I look anyone in the face again?" (144) Stricken with guilt at her unfeminine selfishness, Jaya had quit writing.

Jaya of *That Long Silence* when required to face a tough situation temporarily seeks shelter in neurosis which evades her responsibility as an adult individual for her without her being aware of it. Her suffering has a beneficial effect on her. It initiates the process of discovery of feminine consciousness which leads in the last analysis to her fresh perception of life. She emerges at the end of the ordeal with certain willingness to compromise with life's problems while earlier she showed a surprising lack of accommodation and expansiveness.

Women after getting married are not allowed to have the identity which they have since childhood. They are not allowed to carry the name of father, but husband; this is a common phenomenon in Indian families. Deshpande highlights this when Jaya has a conversation with Ramukaka on the family tree, where Ramukaka says to Jaya that she's a part of Mohan's family and that she doesn't have place in their family as she got married:

Look, Jaya, this is our branch. This is our grandfather-your great grandfather-and here's father, and then us-Laxman, Vasu and me. And here are the boys- Shridhar, Jannu, Dinkar, Ravi...' 'But

Ramukaka, I'd exclaimed, 'I'm not here!' 'You!' He had looked up, irritated by the interruption, impatient at my stupidity. 'How can you be here? You don't belong to this family! You're married, you're now part of Mohan's family. You have no place here. (142-143)

Women are given more instructions compared to men is a general concept which exists in Indian tradition; the reflection of these is shown in the present novel of the novelist: People like Vanithamami and Ramukaka are some examples. Vanithamami repeated maxim, "A husband is like a sheltering tree," (32) intends to say that a wife should be dependent on her husband, and that husband is the person who gives protection to wife, and that the wife is passive. The word of Vanithamami repeatedly echoes in the mind of Jaya.

Jaya memorizes the association of her with her family; the dedication she had. Whatever sacrifices, she had for her family had not made her comfortable, but kept on disturbing her. Superficially she was different, but there were internal conflicts creating disturbances and making her restless; those all remained buried under the surface. In reply to the advice of Vanithamami, the revolutionary reply of Jaya goes on in the mind of her; "What did Vanithamami know of marriage and husbands?" (138). The traditional men like that of Ramukaka who says "Remember, Jaya, the happiness of your husband and home depends entirely on you", (138) and the advice of Dada, "Be good to Mohan, Jaya", forces Jaya to accept them that the responsibility should be shouldered only on wife.

Jaya is an apparently satisfied housewife. Having married a responsible man, Mohan, and blessed with two children, Rahul and Rati, and a comfortable home, and material comforts, she seems to have almost nothing to ask for, in life. To achieve this

stage of fulfilment as a woman Jaya has systematically suppressed every aspect of her personality that refused to fit into her image as wife and mother.

In the earlier stages of the marriage, Jaya wants to have a beautiful home by overcoming all the tribulations; to prove herself an ideal wife and mother, she doesn't care her own feelings; to achieve a self-imposed idealistic life, she struggles internally. She couldn't pay attention to her own desires; when cared for her desires; she may not adjust the relationships of here in the traditional society where women as to adjust according to men. Though she has her own feelings, she has to act according to her husband; she has to balance relationship. She can't make decisions according to her properly, as she has to follow the decisions made by her husband. The suppression of her own desires creates conflict in her. The unending routine household practices generate boring and frustrated life, and so she finds her life unbearable. Silence is the only thing where she can have shelter. She has to simply follow her husband and remain passive and adjust herself. One of the instances is where she is asked to stay in Dadar flat without her concern:

I remember now that he had assumed I would accompany him, had taken for granted my acquiescence in his plans.... the truth is simpler. Two bullocks yoked together...it is more comfortable to move in the same direction. To go in different directions would be painful; and what animal would involuntarily choose pain? (11-12)

The needs of a woman can't be identified and taken care of; she has to depend on her husband; it is he who knows what he wants; it is he who knows what kind of life he wants to lead. A wife has to remain passive and follow husband. Money matters are not the whole and sole which can fulfil the needs of a wife. If it is so, it

would be materialistic. To portray this Deshpande creates the characters, ‘Mohan’ and ‘Jaya’ and compares them to that of Yajnavalkya and Maitreyee. Jaya imagines pondering around the answer to give reply to Mohan, if Mohan asks her what she wants. Her answer could be equivalent to that of Maitreyee’s who rejected offer of her philosopher husband Yajnavalkya’s half of his property to her. Jaya says that she has been denied to know what she wants, and that she doesn’t know what she wants:

The truth is that it was Mohan who had a clear idea of what he wanted, the kind of life he wanted to lead, the kind of home he wanted to lead, the kind of home he would live in, and I went along with him . . . Maitreyee who so definitely rejected her philosopher husband Yajnavalkya’s offer of half his property. ‘Will this property give me immortality?’ she asked him. ‘No,’ he said, and she immediately rejected the property. To know what you want [...] I have been denied that. Even now I do not know what I want. (25)

Jaya suppresses her inner feelings, she finds that she doesn’t express the truth; the essential core had been out her in the chronicle of daily events: But of course, the truth was that there were only the bare skeletal outlines of that life in these diaries. Its essential core had been left out Jaya has been a short story writer of moderate success. Although Mohan takes pride in the fact of being the husband of a writer, he strongly objects to her themes which he suspects to have strong autobiographical overtones. On a particular occasion he says:

They will all know now, all those people who read this and know us, they will know us, they will know that these two persons are us, they will think I am this kind of man, they will think I *am* this man. How

can I look anyone in the face again? And you, how could you write these things, how could you write such ugly things, how will you face people after this? (143-144)

Jaya however, feels that she has related her experience only after transmuting it into something entirely different. But she has been “scared of hurting Mohan scared of jeopardizing the only career I had, my marriage” (144). So, in spite of her best judgment, she gives up writing fiction and settles down to writing middles to newspapers which pose no problem to anyone. As a modern woman she moves freely with Kamat. She seeks consolation from him and becomes into herself: “it had been a revelation to me that two people, a man and a woman, could talk this way. With this man, I had not been a woman. I had been just myself – Jaya” (153).

In spite of the ‘so asexual’ nature of their relationship, it is significant that she has never known how to address him. Nevertheless, it is in his presence that she becomes uninhibited and sheds the crippling silence she imposed on herself as part of erasing every public sign of her identity. She gets from Kamat the best of her father’s concern for her reassurance and comfort and the best of attention that she would like to have from Mohan. He can chide her like her father when she is in the wrong. He says to her, “I’m warning you -beware of this “women are victims” theory of yours. It’ll drag you down into a soft, squishy bog of self-pity. Take yourself seriously, woman. Don’t skulk behind a false name” (148). He can encourage her like an elder brother: “...spew out your anger in your writing, woman, spew it out” (147). As that of a sister, she shares the feelings of here for mutual concern. She says,

It’s a joke to you, but I know what it is. A woman can never be angry; she can only be neurotic, hysterical, frustrated. There’s no room for



anger in my life, no room for despair either. There's only order and routine-today, I have to change the sheets; tomorrow, scrub the bathrooms; the day after, clean the fridge... (147-148)

Deshpande concretizes Jaya's plight in the well-known childhood bed-time story of the wise sparrow and foolish crow. Jaya's married life has been lived almost on the same lines as the sparrow's. She has built an edifice of security which she can crawl, reptile like, and feel safe. She says, "And so I had crawled back into my hole. I had felt safe there. Comfortable" (148).

Attending to the needs of the husband and tending and caring for the children become her full-time occupation. She states in unequivocal terms that Mohan is her profession, career and means of livelihood and as Kamat points out that she derives a strange satisfaction in making him dependent on her. Unconsciously following her aunt's advice to treat her husband as a "sheltering tree" (32) she, like Gandhari of the Mahabharata symbolically bandages her eyes and grows blind to his weaknesses.

Jaya takes to wearing huge dark glasses like a faithful wife, gets her eye brows shaped and hair cut short to look exactly like the wife of an executive. In the process she becomes dwarfed and annihilated as an individual but it all goes unnoticed even by her. Her protest, largely unconscious, remains wrapped in an uneasy wordlessness finding its occasional expression in such acts as her adamant patronage of Kusum, whose feeble-mindedness she seems to borrow for a while. She suppresses her anger and takes the shelter of silence. She suffers silently for the stability of her family.

Jaya's absorption into the family fold is so total that from a fiercely independent girl she gradually deteriorates into the "stereotype of a woman: nervous, incompetent, needing male help and support" (76). It remembers Robert Frost's poem,

*The Road Not Taken* where he speaks about choices in life, a choice of optimism, a choice of bright future in decision making when Jaya out on choices to be made by her: “I’ve always thought-there’s only one life, no chances of a reprieve, no second chances. But in this life, itself there are so many crossroads, so many chances” (191-192).

Deshpande wants the women to break that long silence to get their place in the man-oriented world. After the mental and physical suffering due to the failure to speak in defence, Jaya decided not to remain a silent victim anymore. She received the telegram from her husband that he will return but reviewed the whole situation and thought whether they would go back in the normal state of life. In the case of present scenario, it was not acceptable to Jaya anymore because the authority would peep into Mohan once again. She would not allow Mohan to become her master therefore she says to herself that she will have to speak, to break the silence. But she was not to fight for herself alone. She needs her equality in physical, mental and emotional and so on.

At the end of the story Jaya questions herself and tries to find the answers, she concludes: “What have I achieved by this writing? The thought occurs to me again as I look at the neat pile of papers. Well, I’ve achieved this. I’m not afraid any more. The panic has gone” (191). Jaya finally keeps hope on changes. She says: “We don’t change overnight. It’s possible that we may not change even over long periods of time. But we can always hope. Without that, life would be impossible. And if there is anything I know now it is this: life has always to be made possible”(193).

Deshpande portrays the strong woman Jaya that she waits for the arrival of her husband. The days of solitude make her to think a lot and the days were become a

meditation like saint make her to breaking the silence in the end. The decision made by Jaya set an example of the other women that she is an Emergence of New Woman. Jaya marks and end to the traditional woman who bears the problems in silence. Thus, Jaya transforms from a traditional woman of adjustment to a courageous and optimistic woman of transformation from traditional to modern.

Deshpande through *That Long Silence* has depicted the dilemma of Indian woman caught between tradition and modernity. In her quest for identity, Jaya tries to carve a niche for herself in a society which is men-centric and totally against her wish. She resists being relegated to someone else's identity and fight for her own individuality. Though many reformers and women organizations have worked for the upliftment of Indian women but still there is a long way to go and not all women have achieved complete autonomy on themselves. Deshpande is one of those Indian novelists who have worked on many issues relating survival of women in Indian society. She has tried to portray the silences inhibited by women and how they are trying to overcome it in patriarchal society. In this way, she has raised her voice as a protest against all stereotypes rules and regulations imposed on women in the name of tradition.

## Chapter Four

### Marital Conflict

The theme of marriage holds a great fascination for Deshpande. In most of the cases, marriages culminate in a travesty of faith man and woman seeks in each other, leading to suffering and the conflict between traditional limitations and modern aspirations. Deshpande critically analyses the institution of marriage in the modern context in *That Long Silence*. Through this simple story of Jaya, Deshpande has raised many issues related to matrimony, and questioned the concepts of love and marriage. As S.P. Swain opines: “A sensitive and realistic dramatization of the married life of Jaya and her husband Mohan, it [*That Long Silence*] portrays an inquisitive critical appraisal to which the institution of marriage has been subjected to in recent years” (S.P. Swain 87).

Deshpande depicts two different pictures of Indian women at two parallel levels in *That Long Silence* – the lower-class women engaged in menial domestic chores to earn their living; and middle-class women of some financial independence. She further divides middle class women into two categories: those who never question their marriage and submit to insult, injuries and humiliation without any complaint; and those who, refusing to become the victim of trends, raise voice against their oppression. Jaya, the protagonist, belongs to the second category of middle-class women. In the beginning, she is not different from other women of her class, but towards the end, there is a great change in her personality.

Deshpande brings out the similarities and differences among Jaya and other female characters in the novel – among women of different generations (Jaya, her mother and her grandmother), among women of the different classes (Jaya, Nayana

and Jeeja), among women of the same class and generation (Jaya, her cousin, Kusum and her neighbour, Mukta).

The condition of women from lower class, as presented by Deshpande, is really pitiable. Their suffering starts much before their marriage. They start adding to the family income at a tender age, the way Jeeja's granddaughter, Manda, does. They continue working and earning all their life. They are married off at the age considered suitable by their parents, to any boy who has one head, two eyes, two ears, two hands and two legs like any man. Marriage does not bring any positive change in their lives, but it brings with it endless pain, suffering and burden. They have to work to earn bread for the family, as in most cases husbands fail to earn, and become targets of their husband's ill-treatment.

The lives of Jeeja and Nayana, housemaids of Jaya, are like a hell. Their life is a continuous drudgery. They both receive very bad treatment at the hands of their husbands. Nayana has an apathetic attitude to life. She wants a son not because she expects any help from him in her old age, but because she does not want her child, her daughter, to suffer at some drunkard's hands as she herself has suffered. Nayana says to Jaya,

Why give birth to a girl, *behnji*, who'll only suffer because of men all her life? Look at me! My mother loved me very much, she wanted so much for me ... a house with electricity and water, shining brass vessels, a silver waist chain, silver anklets ... and what have I got? No, no, *behnji*, better to have a son.(28)

Jeeja's husband is also a drunkard like Nayana's and often beats her. The burden of the whole household is on her shoulders, yet she never complains. She

accepts his second marriage as perfectly justified because she fails to give him any child. She has only one question: “With whom shall I be angry” (52). Tara’s life is another example of the suffering and the marital problems of the lower-class woman. Her husband, Rajaram, is a drunkard and he treats her very badly. He even beats up Tara when she refuses to give him her earning. Frustrated by such a miserable married life, she curses her husband and says: “So many drunkards die ... but this one won’t. He’ll torture us all to death instead” (53). Jeeja shuts her up saying that husband is a symbol of social prestige because he “keeps the Kumkum” (53) on her forehead, and “what is a woman without that” (53)?

The situation of women belonging to middle class is different. Work outside the house, for them, in most of the cases, is not a compulsion but a matter of choice. They receive much better treatment as compared to lower class women. But the idea that marriage is the only career and husbands the only destiny for a woman does not lose ground here also. They also become victims of trends, but their suffering is more mental than physical.

Middle class girls get good education and caring atmosphere in family, but they are also conditioned to mould themselves to suit the requirements of their future life partner. From early girlhood, a girl is conditioned in a certain way by the society so that she can be a good wife in future. She is taught to merge her identity in that of her husband. In childhood, Jaya used to be of witty and inquisitive nature which made her grandmother say, “Look at you – for everything a question, for everything a retort. What husband can be comfortable with that?” (27).

Jaya is thus conditioned towards the comforts of her future life-partner. At the time of Jaya’s marriage, Ramukaka tells her that the happiness of her husband and

home depends on her. Dada advised her to be good to Mohan. And Vanitamami tells her about the importance of being with a husband: “Remember, Jaya ... a husband is like a sheltering tree .... Without the tree, you’re dangerously unprotected and vulnerable” (32). These words keep on echoing in the ears of Jaya and she realizes that since a husband is like “a sheltering tree,” he must be nourished and nurtured adequately even if the wife has to suffer to give it nourishment.

After her marriage, Jaya, who used to consider herself independent and intelligent, shapes herself to suit her husband’s model of a wife. She gets transformed into “almost the stereotype of a woman: nervous, incompetent, needing male help and support” (76). Apparently, she has all the material comforts and is almost satisfied. But she has to compromise and suppress many aspects of her individuality for this. In order to become an ideal wife and mother, she devotes herself to the comforts of her husband and to the maintenance of the house. In this process, she feels that she has no identity, no status of her own. When the editor of a magazine asks her to give them her bio-data, she feels that she has nothing meaningful in her life. She thinks of only irrelevant facts: “I was born. My father died when I was fifteen. I got married to Mohan. I have two children and I did not let a third one live” (2).

In fact, Jaya keeps on changing herself according to her husband’s likes and dislikes. As a result of this, her individuality gets annihilated. Now whatever she practices or whatever she follows is dictated by only one consideration and that is, what her husband will think of it. In order to please her husband, she even transforms her appearance. She gets her hair cut and wears dark glasses. After marriage, Jaya slowly and painfully, learns what is expected of her. She learns how sharply defined a woman’s role is. A wife should not be angry with her husband because that undoes his position of authority. She knows very well that to survive within marriage, one has to

learn many tricks, and silence is one of these tricks. Therefore, she silences her emotions as well as her physical desires.

A woman is often given no right to express her physical desires. She has to submit to the desires of her husband. Jaya also follows the same tradition which results in frustration in her marital life. She pines for emotional communication between her and her husband. But she finds in her relationship with Mohan nothing except emptiness and the suppressed silence as she tells Mukta: "... nothing between me and Mohan either. We lived together but there had been only emptiness between us" (185).

Jaya realizes that despite seventeen years of married life, they have not become one, only their bodies occasionally meet, not their souls. Jaya, like Indu of *Roots and Shadows*, subdues her independent spirit to the expectations of her husband. She describes her relationship with Mohan as a mechanical and forced relationship:

A pair of bullocks yoked together .... A man and a woman married for seventeen years. A couple with two children. A family somewhat like the one caught and preserved for posterity by the advertising visuals I so loved. But the reality was only this. We were two persons. A man. A woman.(8)

Marriage is expected to bring joy, glory and fulfilment to both man and woman. But in most cases, as in the novel, marriage fails to give the promised happiness to the individuals, especially to the woman. According to Indian tradition, a wife is expected to stay at home, look after the babies and keep out the rest of the world. She is expected to have the qualities prescribed in Indian tradition. But Jaya



resents the role assigned to a wife in our country. To Jaya, married life becomes unbearable and monotonous. She gets frustrated and says: “Worse than anything else had been the boredom of the unchanging pattern, the unending monotony” (4).

Marriage stifles the growth and right to free expression of a wife. A woman’s role and contribution to the society is defined in terms of her role as a wife, daughter, sister or mother. Commenting on her married life, Jaya says that waiting is a part of her existence:

But for women the waiting game starts early in childhood. Wait until you get married. Wait until your husband comes. Wait until you go to your in-laws’ home. Wait until you have kids. Yes, ever since I got married, I had done nothing but wait. (30)

Jaya has to stifle her creative urges to save her career as a wife. Mohan objects to her creative writing because he finds that her themes reflected the autobiographical details. In order to avoid conflict in her marriage, Jaya gives up creative writing. Then she starts writing middles in newspapers which cause no trouble to her husband, which do not hurt him as Jaya says: “I had relinquished them instead, all those stories that had been taking shape in me because I had been scared – scared of hurting Mohan, scared of jeopardizing the only career I had, my marriage” (144).

Mohan is a traditionalist who wants Jaya to conform to his expectations. He wishes his wife to be modern and educated, but also expects her to have traditional qualities like submissiveness and flexibility. As a husband, Mohan never tries to understand his wife, her emotions and her psychological needs. On the other hand, Jaya annihilates the creative aspect of her personality to keep Mohan happy. She devotes herself to the care and fulfilment of her husband’s and her children’s needs.

Thus, obedience and loyalty, the virtues of Hindu womanhood, degenerates into a silent bearing of oppression.

Marriage not only hinders Jaya's intellectual growth, but also undermines her sense of self. Mohan gives meaning to her existence. Her status as a wife, as mother, as a housewife owes itself to Mohan. She is aware that Mohan is her profession, her career and her means of livelihood. But this also denies her place as an individual. This realization that she has no existence as Jaya but only as a complement of Mohan becomes more acute when Dr. S. K. Vyas, her brother's classmate, invites her to his house with Mohan:

And drop in some time—with your husband, of course. With your husband, of course— what did he mean by that? Was it impossible for me to relate to the world without Mohan? A husband is like a sheltering tree ... Vanitamami, did you, without knowing it, speak the most profound truth I'm destined to heart in my life? (167)

A woman is subordinated in a number of ways and this result in disharmony between the two sexes. A husband denies his wife the right of her individuality. He wants her to see the world around her only in the way he would like her to see. He expects complete devotion, complete allegiance to his vision of life from his wife. This is what Mohan wants from Jaya when he is charged with corrupt activities. He seeks emotional support from Jaya. Having failed to get any sympathy from Jaya, Mohan leaves the house. This proves to be a traumatic experience for Jaya. Like any other traditional Indian wife, Jaya cannot bear Mohan's absence. Even the thought of his death horrifies her: "The thought of living without him had twisted my insides.

His death had seemed to me the final catastrophe. The very idea of his dying had made me feel so bereft that tears had flowed effortlessly down my cheeks” (96-97).

After Mohan’s departure, she feels that she is secure only with Mohan and has no face to show, no identity without him. It awakens her to her real place in life. Under these frustrating circumstances, Jaya gets terribly disturbed and starts questioning herself. She rethinks over her marital relationship. She hopes to be on equal terms with Mohan, and at the same time, accepts the established norms and values. Now Jaya comes to know that the reason of her depressing condition is not the society alone, but she has to take the responsibility of her own state and work according to it.

The idea of marriage as “two bullocks yoked together” is rejected by her. Understanding that life cannot be lived in vacuum, she no longer looks at Mohan and herself as two bullocks, rather as two individuals with independent minds. She realizes that meaningful co-existence can be achieved only through understanding and compassion, not through domination, subjugation or rejection. Sarala Parker beautifully sums up the idea when she says: “The important insight that Shashi Deshpande imparts to us through Jaya is that women should accept their own responsibility for what they are, see how much they have contributed to their victimization instead of putting the blame on everybody except themselves” (Parker 86).

Jaya makes her choice by refusing to become a victim of trends and is determined to break her long silence which has plagued her family since long. But there are other women who, like Jaya, belong to the middle class, but unlike her, suffer silently without protest taking the suffering to be their fate. The figures of

Vanitamami, Kusum, Mukta, Mohan's Mother and Mohan's sister, Vimala can be quoted as examples. Vanitamami, "who had never known what it was to choose" (45), represents another facet of the traditionally suppressed woman. After her marriage, her life was ruled by her mother-in-law. As a daughter-in-law, her role has remained submissive and she is allowed no participation in decision making. The interest she takes in Kusum is the only protest she can register successfully. Kusum is also a victim figure. Passive surrender and insecurity which have been her lot in her mother's home pursue her in the new family after marriage. Kusum becomes insane as she has internalized all her anger. She becomes a burden on her family. Finally, she commits suicide.

Women are the victims of generations of conditioning in which a woman is unchangeably suppressed. The husband is traditionally given the role of mentor and guide. To serve one's husband is considered to serve God. The slightest sign of independence on her part is not acceptable to him. Mohan's father, for example, is shown as dominant and authoritative figure embodying the patriarchal attitudes. He wants fresh food to be served when he returns home. Mohan's mother's failure to provide fresh chutney late one night drives him to wild fury. He picks up the plate and throws it. Mohan's mother picks up the plate, cleans the wall and sends her son next door to borrow some chillies. Patiently, she prepares fresh chutney, lights the fire, cooks the meal again and sits down to wait which is an important part of a woman's life, not of men. Talking about women being treated cruelly by their husbands, Mohan says that this tolerance of violence is the strength of women. But Jaya thinks differently as she says, "He saw strength in the woman sitting silently in front of the fire, but I saw despair. I saw a despair so great that it would not voice itself. I saw a struggle so bitter that silence was the only weapon. Silence and surrender" (36).

The chains of traditional marriage are heavy. In the absence of any other alternative, wives often seek consolation in obsession or mental slavery leading to physical decay, disease and death. This unacknowledged martyrdom becomes an essential part of a housewife's existence. She is expected to subordinate her own needs to those of her family. She is supposed to bear her exploitation and suffering silently as her fate. Mohan's mother and his sister, Vimala, both suffer throughout their lives. But they never utter a single word of protest. Finally, they die in silent agony without getting any help from their in-laws.

No doubt, some generation-wise changes are seen in the attitude of man towards marriage and towards woman also, but basically man remains a patriarchal figure, exercising his authority. These generation-wise changes are not limited to man only, but are also seen in the case of women. In the novel, women belonging to the older generation like Ajji, Mohan's mother and Vanitamami endure the tyranny and injustice of male-dominated society as a natural way of life. They are depicted as docile and subdued figures following the tradition as a virtue.

The uneducated women portrayed in the novel, though victims of male chauvinism, adapt themselves to the tradition completely. But the protagonist, being educated and awakened, fails to conform to the views of the women belonging to the older generation. She feels angry when these women ask her to conform to tradition. The main reasons of difference in the attitudes of these women are the generation gap and education. Deshpande shows the influence of mother on daughter, and of father on son in spite of the generation gap between them. Vimala, Mohan's sister, follows her mother in suffering silently as Jaya says: "I can see something in common between them, something that links the destinies of the two ... the silence in which they died" (39).

Mohan, like his father, holds that a wife is a docile animal who can never be angry. When Jaya talks to him in a daring tone, he retorts, “How could you? I never thought my wife could say such things to me. You’re my wife .... My mother never raised her voice against my father, however badly he behaved to her” (82-83). In fact, Mohan had seen his mother obeying his father and bearing the insults silently. But Jaya is brought up somewhat differently by her father, in an unconventional manner. This disparity in background is also a reason of lack of understanding and clash of expectations between them. But Jaya has to adapt herself to the expectations of Mohan.

In India, a girl is married not only to a man, but also to his family traditions. She has to adapt herself according to his husband’s family rituals and traditions without any complaint. Jeeja’s husband and her son, Rajaram, represent the male domination in lower class. The son follows the father in drinking and beating his wife. They demonstrate their manhood by being violent to their wives. Thus, Shashi Deshpande minutely analyses the institution of marriage by taking examples from the lives of women belonging to the lower and middle class.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summation**

In the post-colonial Indian Literature, themes regarding the gender issues have been the pivotal point of attraction of many Indian writers. The mount of feminist movement raised questions regarding the status of entire women community. Indian constitution, after independence, offered identical rights to Indian women. This changed the approach of Indian women regarding their rapport with her family members. It also distorted their attitude about the marriage. Women begin to locate themselves in the conflict of tradition and modernity and this made them alienated from self and society. Man-woman relationship, marital discord, gender discrimination, delineation of self, search for identity, male hegemony and female subordination, power and sexual politics etc. are the prevalent themes in the fiction of contemporary writers.

Shashi Deshpande is the representative women of her country. In her writings she has highlighted the various problems regarding the existence of women in the society. She belongs to a society that is basically patriarchal and so she wants the complete autonomy of women. In her writings she depicts women caught in the web of tradition and modernity, Women who are trying to break the age-old customs and traditions prevalent in the society, and women who struggle to get equal right and opportunities just as men.

Deshpande feels that woman must venture out of the familial framework to give full expression to her individuality and identity. Deshpande's novels are the realistic depiction of anguish and conflict of the modern educated middle-class women caught between patriarchy and the tradition on the one hand and self-expression, individuality independence on the other hand. Her protagonists feel lost

and confused and explore a way to fulfil themselves as human-beings. Shashi Deshpande's concern and sympathy are essentially for the women. She has given an honest portrayal of her fears, sufferings, disappointments, and frustrations.

In her writings Deshpande has portrayed the characters of the women existing in the Indian society. Women in our society are perceived to be warm, gentle, decent, dependent and submissive, ready to accept anything imposed by man and are able to adjust to any situation. In fact, these kinds of women are preferred, while women who are of an independent nature, bold, brave and dominating are not liked and accepted by the societies.

The customs and traditions followed by most religions in our society also are pro-men and are not woman friendly. However, because of western education and influences, women are now trying to change themselves. They want to break the age-old subjugations which are imposed on them. They don't want to remain within the four walls of their houses any longer but want to have their own identities and names.

The protagonists in Deshpande's novels are on the road to self-discovery. Usually, some domestic crisis propels them in the quest. Shashi Deshpande's novels also frequently ruminate over the condition of human alienation and the vicissitudes of time. The past resides with the present and the novels often digress into Indian myths, fables, and folk tales that show the power of tradition and the society's reluctance to change. But her novels are infused with a rich inclusiveness, which in itself enhances the possibilities of the hope. Her novels are essentially reflective of the unenviable situation of the beleaguered contemporary Indian women, which she has depicted with great artistic finesse and astounding originality. Shashi Deshpande's commendable realistic depiction of the contemporary Indian women's situation and



the prognostic solution, she puts forward her novels an imperishable importance for their efforts.

The primary focus of attention in Deshpande's works is 'woman', her tensions and irritations, pain and anguishes. Her works suggest that compromise is what characterizes the life of the common who resist openly the social conventions and traditional morality. She finds herself caught in the obstacles like desires and despairs, fears and hopes, loves and hates, withdrawal and alienation, suppression and oppression, marital discord and male chauvinism etc.

The culture that created a Sita and a Gandhari has denied existence to woman except as a daughter or sister, a wife or daughter in law and a mother or mother-in-law. The Hindu society has denied woman the possibility of being a "she", a person capable of achieving individuation. It is in such a culture, Deshpande's novels are concerned with a woman's quest for self, an exploration into the female psyche and an understanding of the mysteries of life and the protagonists place in it. *In That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande presents, the middle-class educated woman, Jaya to show the clash between tradition and individuality, persona and self, idealism and pragmatism. The novel begins with an unconventional marriage leading to the problems of alienation, accommodation and adjustment.

Jaya in *That Long Silence* is revealed in her rebellion against the roles assigned by culture forcing the woman to be a daughter or sister in her parental family and to be a wife or mother in her husband's family. She wants to liberate herself from the shackles of tradition and exercise her rights for the manifestation of her individual capabilities. The novel *That Long Silence* is the struggle for the liberation of the self. It deals with the protagonist Jaya's attempt to assert her individuality and realize her

freedom. It depicts how it brings her into confrontation with family and also with male-dominated society. The protagonist presents herself as the woman who wants to go in self-quest, and are free from the restrictions imposed by society, culture, nature and also from their own fear and guilt.

The archetypal characters like Seeta, Draupadi and Gandhari are used to influence the characters and infuse a sense of morality in them. The protagonist, Jaya, the modern educated English-speaking woman breaks the role model of wife and asserts her way, shapes her life fearlessly, without feeling any guilt for deviating from the tradition. On achieving selfhood, Jaya realizes that she can no longer be the blind folded Gandhari to be the pativrata but must emulate to scorn timidity to gain self in the critical point of her life. She looks backward and begins to see how her life has been developed up to this point. She reveals that the roles of persona that stands in the shadow of tradition has haunted her selfhood.

Deshpande has portrayed the feelings and tone of Indian life, the ordinary problems of everyday life. A life of complete inwardness, of a subjective indulgence is not for Jaya. Nor is complete conforming and total draining out of individuality, the proper way out of the dilemma. One cannot live in fragments; the absolute self and the relatedness must join hands and hope for the fuller enjoyment of life.

The use of the first-person narrative point of view provides Deshpande with the control which gives shape and significance to the intense agony that Jaya experiences. The protagonist accepts the reality of her situation, her existence in relation to her family. She shifts from past to present. She tries to fathom her real role in life. Her awareness of individuality makes her feel on one hand a sort of desire to be free, on the other hand it makes her visualize her life without her husband. She

emerges through the tension between her two worlds as a determined strong-willed modern woman who is prepared to face life, accept her responsibilities and not willing to escape from or avoid them. Deshpande's use of the myths of Seeta, Gandhari and Maitreyee sharply focuses the plight of the existence of an educated woman in tradition-oriented society, at the same time revealing her awareness of the new challenges of a modern woman in a traditional society.

Deshpande's heroines are of identifying their uniqueness by opposing to imposed social rules. The women present themselves as one who want to go in self-quest and are free from their own fear and guilt. Jaya in *That Long silence* being a writer is expected to present her views and ideas before the society but still she remains silent. The novel depicts a woman facing the problems, who is representative of girls brought up in the middle-class families. In the end Jaya wants to break the long silence and search for self.

Shashi Deshpande portrays the average middle-class woman's deeply felt but never so well-expressed experiences of life. In her works the conflict between tradition and modernity finds a prominent place. A woman may be seen and understood by her father in one way, her husband in another way, her son and daughter in some other ways and by herself in yet another way. Keeping all these views she has reflected the middle-class women in her fiction who are educated and are very much in contact with the society, dealing with the critical problems like love, sex, marriage, settlement and individuality. They are not satisfied with the rhetoric of equality between men and women but want to see that the right to an individual life and the right to development of their capabilities are realized in their own lives.

*That Long Silence* is the portrayal of Jaya and her convulsion and conflicts. The novel reveals her life who is a woman writer and also a young housewife. She is supposed to present her views and ideas but in contrary she remains silent. In spite of her education and influence of the modern thought of the west and other advanced countries, she still compares herself with the image of Sita, Draupadi, Gandhari and other ideal mythological characters. She tries her best to keep balance between husband and wife, "Ours has been a delicately balanced relationship so much so that we have even snipped of ourselves to keep the scales on an even keel" (17).

The physical relationship between husband and wife, is again the case of a dominating husband and a suffering wife. Even if the husband hurts the wife, she remains silent. Jaya, the heroine, too, has been cast in the same mould. She cannot say, "yes," when her husband asks her whether he has hurt her she has to tolerate everything, "The emotion that governed my behaviour to him there was still the habit of being a wife, of sustaining and sustaining him" (98). It obviously shows a forced relationship and not a natural one. We see not a harmonious and natural relationship but lack of communication one is unable to express feelings to the other.

In the novel *That Long Silence*, Deshpande presents the meaning of silence. As she herself put it, "You learn a lot of tricks to get by in a relationship, silence is one of them. [. . .] You never find a woman criticizing her husband, even in case it might damage the relationship" (60). Jaya is a modern woman rooted in tradition, whereas her husband, Mohan is a traditionalist. The difference between their outlook is so great that they fail, time and again, to understand each other. To Mohan, a woman sitting before the fire, waiting for her husband to come home and eat hot food is the real "strength" of a woman, but Jaya interprets it as nothing more than despair.

The difference in their attitude is the main cause of their failure to understand each other.

Because of differences in attitude, Mohan-Jaya marital life grows shaky and gloomy. It becomes more of a compromise than love, based on social fear rather than on mutual need of each other. Lying alone in a small house, in her stream of thought, Jaya, too, looks at her marital relations where there is no conversation left between them. This unhappiness is reflected not only in her conjugal life, but also in social life.

There grows a silence between the husband and the wife. It creates a gap between them. Mohan keeps on asking questions, but she does not find a word to answer them, "I racked my brains trying to think of an answer" (31). Analysing every situation that causes destruction in her person life. She thinks not only of herself but also of others which causes a type of irritability in her marital conduct. Thus, all the troubles emerge from their unequal cognitive status. For a well-balanced conjugal life, there should be understanding between husband and wife. They should supplement and not supplant each other. Further more, they should know each other physically and emotionally.

In *That Long Silence*, Deshpande intends to break the silence that has surrounded women, their experience and their world. One readily recognizes the middle-class ethos and people that one comes across in the novel. The novelist's contribution lies in the heightened sensitivity and the fresh insights on the well-known types and situations. The action of the novel is triggered off by a crisis in a middle-class family. Mohan, the narrator's husband had been caught in certain malpractices, as a result of which he now faces an inquiry. In order to escape the scene, Mohan decides he and his wife Jaya would go and stay at the Dadar flat. Jaya silently accepts

her husband's decision and accompanies him though in silent resentment, to their present exile at the Dadar flat.

In the process of self-examination and self-criticism, Jaya is flooded by the memories of self-criticism, she is flooded by the memories of the past of her earlier life, her marriage with Mohan, the frustrations and disappointments in her seventeen-year-old married existence, her personal failures all these begin to haunt and torment her. In her evaluation of the past, she gets the guidance for her future. Jaya can no longer be a silent, passive partner to Mohan. The novel ends with her determination to speak, to break her long silence.

It is obvious that in *That Long Silence*, Shashi Deshpande is trying to erase a long silence and struggle with the problems of self-revelation and self-assortment through the character of Jaya and also about other women who never broke their silence. For instance, at one point in the novel, Jaya discovers that she does not figure in the family tree that her uncle, Ramukaka, had prepared with great pains and of which he was so proud. When Jaya asks her uncle why her name is not included in the family tree, she is given to understand that she now belongs to her husband's family and not to her father's. But this is only half of truth. Neither her mother nor her Kakis, not even her grandmother that indomitable women, "who single headedly kept the family together find a place in the family tree" (143). Jaya in her feeling of fear finds that her name and existence, along with those of other women in the family are completely blotted out of the family history. The novel, as it were, is Jaya's protest against the kind of treatment that is given to women in our culture and her attempt to give another version of history from women's point of view.

Jaya had not done proper justice to her own talents in her anxiety to fulfil her roles of a wife and mother. Years back, she had made a good beginning as a writer by producing a story, which had won the first prize and was published in a magazine. But Mohan's response to the story was most dishearten. He assumed that the story was about their personal life. He was apprehensive and hurt at the thought that people would think that he was the kind of man as portrayed in the story. Similarly, this incident had left a deep impression on Jaya's psyche and affected her career as a writer.

The real reason for Jaya's failure was her fear. She was afraid of failing, afraid of writing. She had crawled back in to her hole. She had resumed her career as a wife, as a mother. In the meantime, Mohan had suggested that she should write light, humorous pieces in the newspapers, what they called 'middles'. Jaya had then started her weekly column "Seeta" which had won the approval of the readers, the editor and above all of her husband. Thus, the novelist makes it clear that not only patriarchy has kept silent on the subject of women, but under patriarchy, women have also recoiled from telling the truth about their sex.

In the absence of her husband, Jaya comes out of a sudden change. She comes out with all that she had suppressed in seventeen-year's silence. What she has written is evidently the novel, revelation of selfhood. The novel is mostly concerned with women like Kusum, Mohan's mother and many other victims like them-victims of patriarchy and also of their silence. *That Long Silence* puts into nut shell the history and evolution of women through four generations that Jaya has known and promises a better future for women.

What has Jaya ultimately achieved by her writing, by her getting all the ghosts that bothered out of her system on to the paper! In Jaya's own words: "I'm not afraid any more. The panic has gone. I'm Mohan's wife, I had thought, and cut off the bits of me that had refused to be Mohan's wife. Now I know that a kind of fragmentation is not possible. The child, hands in pockets, has been with me through the years. She is with me still". (19)

*That Long Silence* is a self-criticism. The important insight that Shashi Deshpande shares with us through character of Jaya is that women should take their own responsibility for any victimization, instead of putting the blame on everybody except themselves. It is only through self-analysis and self-understanding, through self-analysis and self-understanding through courage, they can begin to change their lives. They will have to fight their own battles; nobody is going to do it to them.

Shashi Deshpande is undoubtedly a writer who looked into the problems of women. She charts women's emotions starting from the pangs of a growing up girl to the void created because of the non-fulfilment of a woman's yearnings. Jaya comes to the conclusion that marriage subjugates and enslaves women. She has been forced to follow her husband's wills and desires. She is not entitled to have her own autonomous existence. Shashi Deshpande becomes successful in the novel to transform Jaya's mute suffering into revolting thinking to gain her own identity. It symbolises Jaya's endeavour for self-revelation and self-assertion. By the end of the novel, the protagonist within the power matrix of the family also undergoes a radical change: her fears and insecurities are replaced by confidence which is a vital ingredient of happiness in the life of a human being. Now she wishes to exercise her choice; her self-esteem motivates her to break the silence while her capabilities, make



her speak through her writing. So, the narrative records Jaya's movement from the feminine phase as she subverts the patriarchal system, while remaining a part of it.

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**Exploring Magical Realism in Walter Ferris' *Death Takes a Holiday: A Three Act Play*, The English**

**Translation of Alberto Casella's *La Morte in Vacanza***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Divya Dibashini. S**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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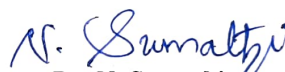
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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Exploring Magical Realism in Walter Ferris' *Death Takes a Holiday: A Three Act Play*, The English Translation of Alberto Casella's *La Morte in Vacanza*** 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 Divya Dibashini. S during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Exploring Magical Realism in Walter Ferris' *Death Takes a Holiday: A Three Act Play*, The English Translation of Alberto Casella's *La Morte in Vacanza*** 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**

**April 2023**

*Divya Dibashini. S*  
**Divya Dibashini. S**

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## Preface

The project entitled **Exploring Magical Realism in Walter Ferris' *Death Takes a Holiday: A Three Act Play*, The English Translation of Alberto Casella's *La Morte in Vacanza*** analyses the personification of death in its pursuit of finding the value of life and the reason for humans to despise and fear death. It also records the idealistic quality of life and death through the actions and behaviour of human beings and undertakes a comparative study of the depiction in Walter Ferris' play *Death Takes a Holiday: A Three Act Play*, the English translation of Alberto Casella's *La Morte in Vacanza*.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of Italian Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases Alberto Cassello's rudiments of the drama chosen for study.

The second chapter **Magical Realism** depicts the truth of death and the purpose of existence together. It emphasizes that wisdom is not intended to be a panacea for the difficulties in life.

The third chapter **Philosophical Proposition** records the philosophical voices of pain, misery, and heartache as the doorways to our innermost souls and the answer to the greatest pursuit.

The fourth chapter **Conflict Narrative** throws light on the major struggle between the characters and their unassailable desires which is an action against their society by a need to survive a moral sense of right and wrong.

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

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



## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Every day is a story that unfolds. From the one who relishes solitude to the one who finds life amidst the sound-filled colours of humans, like the crashing waves, everyone has got stories to tell. Weaved and weaved through inscriptions on the walls to descending folklore to treasuring in inked words, Literature is born. Literature is an expression of human expression in the form of written or oral works based on thoughts, opinions, and experiences, to feelings in an imaginative form, a reflection of reality or original data wrapped in aesthetic packaging through language media.

Literature is a journey of emotions and feelings that pulls infinite realities. It is not the beginning or the end, but the truth that reflects the classifications of our choices such as surrealism, gender identity, conflicts, discrimination, existentialism, nihilism, marxism, feminism and so forth. Hence Paul L Homer claims,

Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become. (28)

A body of literary works is Literature. 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. System variety of Literature classified such as language, national origin, historical period, subject matter and genre.

Literary works are the result of human activities that live in a society with all problems. Literature is the result of human creation that expresses the thoughts, ideas, understandings, and responses of the feelings of its creator, about life by using imaginative and emotional language and can be seen as a social phenomenon.

Amidst every other literature, Italian literature has quite a detailed exposure to arts and culture which were flavoured with philosophy based on politics, metaphysics, aesthetics, dialectics, etc. This led the way to prominent polymaths such as Galileo Galilei, Leonardo da Vinci, Niccolo Machiavelli, Dante Alighieri, Giovanni Boccaccio and Michelangelo whose ideals and principles vastly influenced Western philosophy.

The premise of love gave rise to the earliest Italian poetry around 1220 at the Court of Emperor Frederick II in Sicily which was later appreciated and replicated throughout the nation and gradually enhanced with additional themes like morality and politics. By the latter half of the 13th century, the significant literary movement *Dolce stil nuovo* (sweet new style) which centred around the idea of 'Divine Love', influenced by the Sicilian school and Tuscan poetry, had emerged. It was fundamentally philosophical, intellectual, and metaphysical in its detailed exploration of love, life and womanhood in moral consciousness.

The rich ideal of spiritual exploration followed by significant writers such as Cavalcanti and Dante is now intentionally and instinctively became the foundation of numerous contemporary Italian writers like Italo Calvino, Elsa Morante and many more. Among them, one of the Italian playwrights, Alberto Casella, whose 1923 romance, *La Morte in Vacanza* was revised for the American stage by an American screenwriter,

Walter Ferris in 1930 under the title *Death Takes a Holiday: A Comedy in Three Acts* by Walter Ferris is the focus of this project.

Alberto Casella was an Italian playwright, screenwriter, director and politician. He has always had a passion for theatre and made his acting debut in his mid-teen years. After graduating from high school, he started writing in Savona, where he focused on poetry and narrative before enlisting in the First World War and the Libyan War.

Casella embraced fascism upon his return to Savona in 1920 and was regarded as one of its founders. He was the director of the fascist weekly '*Liguria Nuova*' of the Savona Federation. Additionally, he served as the secretary of the Fascio di Savona and was also elected to the City Council and had his first significant theatrical achievements during his time in Savona.

Casella wrote his first play, *Vautrin*, in 1921 and his second, *Prometheus*, a few years later. But his prominent accomplishment is his 1923 play, *La Morte in Vacanza* which was well received by both spectators and critics. Its English adaptation for the Broadway Theater in 1929 by Walter Ferris paved the way for the 1934 film of the same name and the 1971 television movie *Death Takes a Holiday*, which pulled in enormous success and served as an inspiration for the 1998 Hollywood movie *Meet Joe Black*.

Literature goes through countless metamorphoses depending on the time period it is written in, ranging from the nostalgic manner of Greek and Roman literature to the reality of modern society. The post-World War II era has had the greatest influence on literature worldwide of all the genres it generated. People started to look past the allure of nature and concentrate on rebuilding the destroyed society.

Fascism, Nazism, Communism and many more ideologies gained root at the top; the writers tend to stand for and spectators tend to choose. Literary activity in Italy during the Great War was based on a very wide range of genres and individual work the aesthetic value of which was highly varied. Nonetheless, in order fully to understand the phenomenon, and given the importance of the memory of the conflict, it is necessary to try and reconstruct, as far as possible, the larger picture, setting aside the literary merit of particular works, and referring also to the literature created by the popular classes. Nor can one afford to neglect the impact on the Italian literary memory of fascism, which largely hinged upon the myth of the Great War. But most of all, it was the unbearable deaths that enormously shifted the literature to a new landscape. Hence, George Santayana quotes, "Only the dead are safe; only the dead have seen the end of the war" (*Soliloquies in England and Later Soliloquies*, 102).

For many young intellectuals, the Great War constituted the first test or trial of their creative powers, for some of them a chance to reflect and to experiment, while for others it was their sole opportunity to fashion a work that can unequivocally be defined as literary. It is in no way far-fetched to claim that the first mass war in history engendered a mass memory of the event, on condition that we include occasional writings and the literary production of the popular classes, a mass of texts constituting in its totality an authentic epic of modernity that inaugurated the era of mass testimony.

Literature was thus an exceptional response to an exceptional event, in anticipation of which many Italian intellectuals had already mobilized in order to reflect upon the meaning of a possible conflict and, sometimes, to invoke it. This was true of Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, who was already singing the praises of war in the 1909

*Manifesto del futurismo* (The Futurist Manifesto) of Giovanni Papini, who was prepared in 1914 to exalt a hot bath of black blood and of Gabriele D'Annunzio, the theoretician of a society that was aristocratic and despised democracy, and the bard of Italian colonial adventures.

In the field of war narrative, subdivided as it is into a great variety of genres, there were numerous novels, a good proportion of them being virtually the sole fruit of individual authors who wrote only of their own wartime experience. Such authors were either concerned to bear witness to the drama or adventure through which they had lived more or less in harmony as the case may be with the post-war mood, when fascism in fact took control of, and largely moulded the memory of the conflict and the modalities of its representation or else to rework in some way the terrifying experiences they had endured. *Trincee. Confidenze di un fante* (Trenches. Secrets of an infantryman) by Carlo Salsa, a man by no means averse to compromises with fascism, but capable all the same of creating a work that must rank as one of the most emblematic Italian narratives of the war.

Adopting a lean, dry style, Salsa described with unrivalled power the atrocious nature of the conflict, the experience of mass death and of the grotesque entwining of life with death that had characterized it, and the horrors of the frontline, but also stories of friendship and deeds of courage arising from the solidarity between fellow soldiers.

In 1924, immediately after the devastating loss of lives in World War I and amid the initial stages of fascism in northern Italy, among all the literary writers' similar perception, Alberto Casella wrote the metaphysical drama *La Morte in Vacanza*,

reflecting the countless loss of lives which even the Death is worn out and goes on a quest to understand the significance of the embrace of mortals to existence.

Maury Yeston, the composer of the 2011 *Death Takes a Holiday* (musical) explains in his 2017 interview that the brilliant play was written in 1927 in response to the overwhelming killing in World War I and the pandemic that followed. All Death wants to do is collect people's souls. Exhausted from the scale of killing and death, the Death unintentionally confronts a girl, Grazia who has been in a car accident and it cannot take her because the potency of her life is so huge. Death sends her back into the world and resolves that it finally needs to know why people hate it so. Why do they dread it, why are they afraid of it, why do they cling to life, why is that important? And so tantalized by taking a few days off, nobody will die on the earth because Death is not collecting them, it will spend a weekend with a family in Northern Italy and evidently, it falls in love, and discovers that what makes life so precious is that life is not endless and therefore what one has in life should be loved as much of it as one can while they are here.

The aesthetics of ancient Greeks fed the rise of art and culture around most parts of the world. Their important playwrights such as Aristotle, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes influenced the famous William Shakespeare, Aphra Behn, George Bernard Shaw, Henrik Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, Anton Chekhov and so on till now. The ancient Greek and Roman dramas were mostly concerned with the religious ceremonials of people. It was the religious elements that resulted in the development of drama. As most of the Bible was written in Latin, common people could not understand its meanings. Hence the clergy tried to find out some new methods of teaching and

expounding the teachings of the Bible to the common people. For this purpose, they developed a new method, wherein the stories of the Gospel were explained through living pictures. The performers acted out the story in a dumb show.

The history of modern play traces back to the dramas of antiquity. The western drama began in ancient Greece, where dramatists wrote plays to compete in national competitions honouring Dionysus, the god of wine and ecstasy. These plays were comedies, tragedies, or satyr plays, a kind of bawdy burlesque. Not many survived into the modern era. The works of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, *Prometheus Bound* and Euripides' *Medea*, and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* are among the few that remain intact and are still performed today.

When the Roman Empire expanded into Grecian provinces, the Romans encountered the popularity of performed dramas and scattered this concept throughout the rest of Europe. A natural byproduct of this growth was that writers interpreted dramas in different ways, expanding them beyond the three basic categories of comedy, tragedy, or satyr play. Plays possessed greater nuance and sophistication, and the subjects explored were more varied and diverse.

Greco-Roman dramatists Livius Andronicus and Gnaeus Naevius were the first major playwrights of the era, though only fragments of their work have survived. They set the stage both literally and figuratively for the Roman dramatists to follow, including Plautus, Lucius Accius, and Seneca the Younger.

A play is built with a beginning, middle and an end followed by different structures of acts and scenes such as One Act, Two Act, Three Act, Four Act and Five Act that deal with the prologue, conflict, raising, falling and denouement. Casella penned

the play, *La Morte in Vacanza* into the classic three-act structure of the Greeks. It has a set-up, conflict and resolution; the basic beginning, middle and end as Aristotle calls it.

Firstly, the set-up follows the introduction of the characters and the motive of the plot. In the play *Death Takes a Holiday*, Death meets Duke Lambert on a secret quest for life. Secondly, the conflict follows a shake on the motive of the plot by raising a tenacious challenge between the choices of holding on or letting go of a promise forever. In the play, Death falls under the vulnerability of love and it was its curse and its blessing.

The last structure resolution follows the struggle of facing the challenge of falling to the final solution and the consequence and making a permanent impact on all the characters. In the play *Death Takes a Holiday*, all the characters fight for Grazia's life, even Death explains to her to stay behind with her loved ones but Grazia chooses to lock her heart inside Death and breathe the life of love into it. The play from its start to finish strode magnificently; and according to Pittsburgh Press, this Italian translation by Walter Ferris is a triumph of technique, good taste and fine drama.

Since the advent of cinematography, this three-act framework has served as the foundation for films. Some popular films which are mastered in this structure are *Star Wars*, *Avatar*, *The Hunger Games* and *The Matrix*. Walter Ferris' translation, *Death Takes a Holiday*, acted with great success at the Ethel Barrymore Theater, New York. This striking drama has established itself among the important plays. It is based on the poetic conception of Death suspending all activities for three days during which period it falls in love with a beautiful girl, and through her, it realizes why mortals fear him.



The mood of *Death Takes a Holiday* is established with remarkable skill and while it is charged with exciting moments, it is a perfect background for a love story that is as simple as it is appealing. The character who symbolizes Death is for the most part a very human sort of person, with none of the conventional claptrap that might easily have been dragged in for a mere effect. This play arouses thought, stimulates discussion, and presents a novel and optimistic philosophy on the problems of love and death. *Death Takes a Holiday*, in spite of the early restriction that prevented widespread production at first, has established itself as one of the most popular and successful plays for amateurs. It is one of those rare combinations that appeal to schools, colleges, churches and little and community theatres.

This project focuses on the blend of magical realism through the vulnerable flow of love between a mortal and an immortal, the philosophical approach of life and death and the choice of conflict narrative between mortality and immortality in Walter Ferris' English translation of Alberto Casella's Italian play, *La Morte in Vacanza*. The next chapter examines the magical realism painting the play with the engagement of the supernatural elements creating a compelling challenge in the reality of life.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Magical Realism**

“You're saying that humans need fantasies to make life bearable. No. Humans need fantasy to be human. To be the place where the falling angel meets the rising ape.”

Realism is a line drawn around life and surrealism breaks the line. It is not a place to escape reality; it is a place to understand reality and writers make it possible through paper dreams and fantasy begins. Fantasy breaks into mythology, folklore, epics and everything postulates through a fictional universe. Creating a Universe is a talent, but to conjecture reality through surreal elements is a challenge which is called magical realism; the faded line between realism and surrealism.

The very first rudiment of magical realism can be, surprisingly, traced shortly after the First World War in Europe. To be specific, it arises in the Weimar Republic in the 1920s. Fragile Germany, heavily defeated and coping with political violence and extreme economic difficulties, is undergoing an unstable period. The country is seriously suffering from the destruction of the economic system; moreover, the post-war situation burdens the Republic with demands for reparation. The desolated era experiencing constant anxiety makes an effort to find a new meaning of the unfortunate reality. By that time German art is enriched by magic realism which refers to a new form of painting. The term is said to be introduced by Franz Roh (1890-1965), an art critic, who brings the idea of art attempting “to produce a clear depiction of reality that includes a presentation of the mysterious elements of everyday life” (Bowers, p. 131). More precisely, the magical realism painting resides in an accurate portrayal of a concrete object which is not, nevertheless, released from the mysterious intangible aspects of life. Thus, it is obvious that the word realism in magic realism stands for the realistic depiction of an

object, whereas, the term magic refers to the eeriness within human beings since the world has to face the age when the enchantment weakens and modern mankind uncovers its monstrosity. However, the inter-war period gives ample scope for new ideas apart from Roh's magic realism, which is ultimately a source of confusion pervasively related to it.

German magical realism emerges simultaneously with surrealism and its styles have some characteristics in common which lead to the fact that the pieces of work of several later artists are greatly influenced by both magical realism and the surrealist style. Moreover, there is even an opinion that one art movement is a branch of the other.

Magical realism naturally does not remain in a place of its German territory and pushes forward the frontiers of its activity across Europe. The word 'magical realism' had no special meaning for Roh. Among other words such as ideal realism, expressionism, and neoclassicism, Roh believes that magical realism is the most suitable and is an aesthetic concept. At the same time, Guenther states that Roh never offers a brief description of magical realism. With the disappearance of expressionism and the end of the First World War, Roh's magical realism and objectivity emerged. Guenther considered the magical realism of Roh as a type of art that had emerged by the "consequences of the First World War as well as the death of Expressionism" (Guenther, 1995, p. 34). Because of the urgent need for painters to express themselves and to represent the modern age; "they need more realism and rationality to portray the period in which they live" (Bowers, pp. 8-9).

Magical realism is different from fantasy and it moves through the authentic environment of reality with the essence of ethereal existence without any logical or

psychological perception. When Roh created the phrase, he intended it to designate a genre of work that deviated from the stringent rules of realism, relating it to paintings and sculptures but it wasn't until the 1940s in South America and the Caribbean that the term came to identify an artistic literary movement.

In 1926, Bontempelli, the Italian critic, poet, and novelist published the *900* (Novecento) magazine to define and disseminate magical realism in Italy, and far beyond, the concept became more widely known in Italy and Germany as a result of this wider audience. In 1927, Bontempelli was the first to describe magical realism throughout literary circles. "He considers it as a literary weapon that supports his fascist ideology to establish a common culture and identity for Europe" (Taner, 2015. P. 48). After the First World War, Bontempelli felt that humans needed to build a new myth because it might help bring humanity together. Hence, magical realism is not a re-enactment of history but rather an interpretation of mystery and everyday life like a miraculous journey.

Magic realism conquers not only European countries, but also traverses the ocean and gets to Latin America. A French-Russian Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier (1904-80), who comes across a variety of artistic movements thanks to his temporary stay in France until 1930, brings it to the American continent. After returning to Cuba, strongly influenced by the European experience, he establishes a distinct form of magic realism. This version, which is known as marvellous realism, stems from the demand for depicting not only the material but as well the non-material aspects of life, nonetheless, is fully aware of the diversity between Latin America and Europe. Hence, marvellous realism represents the mingling experiences and the multicultural Latin American world that form a particular ambience and diverse understanding of reality. In other words,

there is a clear divergence, since magic realism as an art form focuses on a new distinctness of actuality, whereas marvellous realism deals with the range of both the general and the individual perspectives that reality is composed of. Consequently, the marvellous in the term refers to any uncommon happenings or inscrutable presence that cannot be clarified by rational science. To sum it up, the term ‘marvellous realism’ refers to delimiting the territorial boundaries of the style rather than marking it off from magic realism in terms of features, however, the concept of marvellous realism, although originally inspired by magic realism is much closer to the subsequent magical realism.

It is obvious that the historical context features in the development of magical realism since it brings a strong wave of euphoria that desires to strengthen the collective consciousness and to build its own modern Latin American literature. Owing to the boom of the literary technique and probably the most famous Latin American magical realist writer, the Columbian Gabriel José Garcia Márquez (1927), who is, actually, mostly associated, as one of a few, with magical realism even among the wide readership, magical realism is frequently, and mainly incorrectly is considered to be a purely Latin American domain. Nonetheless, the conception has been originally imported from Europe, restored and modified on the continent, and popularized and diffused back to the rest of the world afterwards. Even though the narrative technique visibly fits into the Latin American world, its artistic potential allows the authors to apply the concept to a range of settings and backgrounds. Among other essential features, it provides a possibility to defy the fixed notions of the world by means of questioning reality and the existence of one single truth. Moreover, the archetypal pattern is a story depicting people living on political or social margins or those who struggle through a lack of social,

possibly political power. In other words, it tends to disrupt the fixed perspectives without regard to the nature of the perspective. Hence it is no surprise that magical realist pieces of work can be recognized even in countries where it might seem unexpected or cultural backgrounds from North America, across the Old Continent, African countries up to Asia.

The oxymoronic idiom ‘magical realism’, flourishing mainly in the 1980s, may provoke a bizarre impression since it juxtaposes two seemingly antagonistic terms. However, focusing closely on the concept unification of them becomes relatively comprehensible. Even though the magical part of the term refers to magical happenings such as weird and creepy atmospheres, uncommonly gifted people, marvels as well as apparitions that occur in the stories, great emphasis is put on the matter-of-fact depicting the supernatural happenings. The writer is supposed to present such phenomena without causing any disturbance within the narration and the reader should, subsequently, accept “both realistic and magical perspectives of reality on the same level” (Bowers 4).

The form of introducing the extraordinariness is crucial for the style, for the realist portrayal marks it off fantasy and science fiction. In a word, it does not tear it from the material reality by throwing it into the impalpable world of imagination where readers are given space for making opinions based on their non-reading experience.

Magical realism requires full acceptance of fiction as it is presented without regard to the extent of its probability. The realistic side of magical realism is not by far complicated and yet there are, at least, two significant features that could be certainly pointed out. Magical realist writers build their stories on particular contexts interlinked

with historical references not only to determine the text by being pointedly situated but also to challenge the fixed notions of history and historical process as such.

David Young and Keith Hollaman's often cited statements that in a magical realist story, there must be an irreducible element, something that cannot be explained by logic, familiar knowledge, or received belief. While there are numerous characteristics that may be assigned to works of magical realism, there must always be an irreducible element present in a realistic setting in order for the text to be considered magical realism. Some primary examples that exemplify this include Jose Arcadio's blood which travels from his home to his birthplace and alerts Ursula of his death and Remedios Beauty's ascension towards heaven in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; Carlos's magical imagination allows him to envision the fates of 'the disappeared' in *Imagining Argentina*; and the psychic powers that connect Saleem who the other one thousand children in *Midnight's Children*.

In these notes, the supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence—admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Magic is no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing.

The play *Death Takes a Holiday* is an inspiration by the First World War and the magical realism fused inside is the perception of Death on all those lives that were lost and the value of life. "The aim of magical realism, however, is not to provide an escape from life's realities, rather, it aims to familiarize the readers with the subject before returning them to real life with a fresh perspective on their ability and importance" (Paul, 1993, p.8).

Hence the Death observes,

I'm about to take a holiday. Again that sounds incredible, doesn't it? Even to me. Think of it... for the first time in history there will be no murders, no fatal accidents. No man will even die in his bed. Not a leaf will fall, or a star from heaven. Nothing will decay, nothing crumble. There will be only life, and growth. . . A sort of cosmic springtime. . . (43)

The aspects that magical realism is made up of, namely imagination and fact, are mixed, thus resulting in a tale that does not match any of its authentic elements. In common usage, (magic) is a condition of wonder as well as an experience of seeing what goes beyond the comprehension. "Magical realism is a term in which two oxymoron are made" (Bowers, 2004, p. 77). It is an effort to illustrate that there is more than the human is capable of in what he knows and does in his daily life. In *Death Takes a Holiday*, Ferris portrays how Casella uses magical realism to raise questions about the nature of the worlds we inhabit and presents the answers through the reader's own conclusion.

Magic is both an unexpected and shocking aspect of a story that occurs without any reasoning and can cause irrational events. It is always focused on creating something unique that is a departure from the standard of our life. According to the Oxford Dictionary, "It is a unique and thrilling quality that makes things appear different and special from the ordinary things" (Kindersley, 2011, p.408).

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, magic serves as a means of redirecting, liberating, and softening discussions of truth in our period when we seem to privilege the hard facts of empirical truth. Death enters the human world to experiment with the truth of life that holds the desire of men to stay and claims, "How should I know who have never



experienced a mortal sensation? What could terror mean to me, who have nothing to fear? Or pity, when I must not pity? Or kindness, or aspiration or love? These are only words to me whose meaning I am curious to discover” (43).

Realism is a type of painting that portrays fact, without embellishment and focuses on the real image instead of sugar-coating. It is primarily concerned with everyday social matters. According to Abrams, "Realism is a recurring mode, in different eras and literary styles, it is portraying the human experience of life in the literary works" (Abram, p. 260).

The authors and the poets include realism in their works since literature is a reflection of society and Casella has captured realism to show the true image of the public. In *Death Takes a Holiday*, during a conversation about the mysteries of life with the Major, Death throws shade on the truth of religion as just a state of handling human emotions on life rather than a truth of life. “But they are never left alone. Fear is the proof of that. And religion builds fantastic pictures to still that fear and to make life seem less hard” (109).

According to Amaryll Chanady there are three main criteria to determine whether a text belongs to magic realism or not. The first criterion focuses on the presence of two different levels of reality. The natural and the supernatural. Magic realism is characterized by two conflicting, but autonomously coherent, perspectives, one based on an 'enlightened' and rational view of reality, and the other on the acceptance of the supernatural as part of everyday reality.

In fantasy the supernatural is presented as problematic and in magic realism it is not presented as problematic but in a matter of-fact way which does not disconcert the

reader. In *Death Takes a Holiday*, the presence of Death as a human character blends with reality and its examination and opinion on such reality acts as an enlightenment. “But has it never occurred to you, Major, that death may be only more simple than life, and perhaps more desirable?” (108)

The second is Antinomy which simultaneous presence of two conflicting codes in the text. Magical realism involves a resolved antinomy since the narrator does not show the rational and irrational as being contradictory. Both are a part of the made-up world. The paranormal looks to be no different from regular life experiences. In the play, *Death Takes a Holiday*, despite Death is a supernatural element taken a human form and presents a mysterious vibe around the people it meets and nevertheless everyone maintains their normal and formal persona around it.

Grazia

Your very Serene Highness.

Shadow

Oh, please! Titles are too formal for you and me. (101)

The last criterion authorial reticence refers to the absence of obvious judgments about the veracity of the events and the authenticity of the worldview expressed in the text. Authorial reluctance in magical realism makes it easier for people to accept it. Hence *Death Takes a Holiday*, incorporates the supernatural into the code of the natural and clarifies its boundaries when Death is confronted to choose between love and honour and hence Death agrees, “I gave myself life, and with it the little rules by which it is lived. and now, I, Death, must bow to life” (144).

One approach to considering how magical realism enables representations of moments of truth in fiction is to examine how an established work of magical realism accomplishes this. In an interview with *Big Think*, Salman Rushdie claims that what we often consider to be ‘true stories’ don’t always reveal the whole truth about the situation or events being depicted. This is why, according to Rushdie, a story that includes an element of the fantasy, the mythological, or the fairytale is valuable because it gives another door into the truth, and another way of portraying the reality of a cultural, political, or historical moment. A well-known example of this is Toni Morrison’s portrayal of slavery in the novel *Beloved*. Morrison uses elements of magical realism in *Beloved* to highlight the horrific nature of slavery and its lasting effects on those who survived. The particular form of magic used serves to emphasize the importance of keeping cultural memory alive and helps renegotiate established ideas of what it means to be enslaved.

Morrison addresses the cultural anxieties that stem from the subjective nature by which the slave experience is portrayed in many slave narratives through the implementation of the ghostly character of *Beloved*, who is positioned as a luminal figure because of her race and otherworldly abilities, and whose function in the text underscores for readers the enduring traumatic effects of slavery. The inclusion of the ghostly presence of Beloved is what guides the trajectory of the novel’s protagonists, Sethe and Paul D., in their confrontations with their past.

The encounter with *Beloved* reveals that even though one may be physically free from slavery, the psychological acceptance of that freedom is not easy. *Beloved*, as a

physical embodiment and reminder of the horrific nature of slavery, provides another means of representing a traumatic period in American history.

The idea that historical, political, or cultural events and issues may be (re)presented through the inclusion of magical elements within a narrative in order to illuminate the ‘truth’ of these issues is central to magical realism’s twentieth-century roots and its continued development in the twenty-first century.

In *Death Takes a Holiday* the magical realism techniques help Casella create an environment that lures the readers into its depths forcing them to question the accepted ways of perceiving reality. A historical, realistic discourse set in Italy enters into conflict with an archetypal, mythical discourse that presents the cosmology of life, unfolding a dialogical encounter between two realizations which are love and honour and hence Death argues,

You ask me to make this sacrifice as a man, when my desire is greater than a man could know. You ask me to give up love when I long for love with a surpassing hunger... You are in terror and I'm in agony. Why do men fear my coming? I do not see how they can bear their lives. Their courage is magnificent. I am proud to have worn the garment of this flesh.

(141)

In a 2015 interview about his most recent novel *Two Years Eight Months and Twenty-Eight Nights*, Salman Rushdie spoke of the continuing relevance and fascination of magical realism and that magical realism is not just a fad. The fable, the surreal story, is just another way of getting at the truth, and if it has good, deep roots in the ‘realism’

part of magical realism then it can intensify a reader's experience of the truth, crystallize it into words and images that stay with one.

Hesitation and questioning make magical realism a viable genre for dealing with daily issues because it creates a mental attitude in readers that opens them to questioning dominant paradigms. Hence in *Death Takes a Holiday*, Ferris showed how Casella questioned the value of life and the reality of elements it brings through the character of Death, invoking enlightenment and realization among the readers. Every work of art is unique and has different notions but certain things it includes are the same like the characteristics it follows.

Magical realism has four major characteristics, which are; realistic setting, magical elements, limited information and criticism. These characteristics blend throughout the plot and are true to the genre on which the plot dwells. The realistic setting is the surroundings in every magical realism work that are widely recognized in the reader's world.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, the supernatural element, Death visits the real world for a change of attitude and examines the philosophy of life through human flesh. "I am to be Prince Sirki... no other. I shall be a mortal and must be treated as a mortal, in every particular. I require that no one under this roof, and no one who may visit you shall show repulsion of fear, on pain of my instant displeasure" (48).

The magical elements every narrative of magical realism has fantasy aspects that do not exist in our reality, such as interacting elements, dead characters, and psychic abilities. Yet, the story portrays them as commonplace. In the play, *Death Takes a Holiday*, Ferris captured Casella's natural portrayal of Death in a human form adhering to

the culture and the code of conduct which raises a conflict of love and honour near the end. "My own pain has taught me what human suffering can be" (137).

The limited information deals with the plot to normalize magic as much as possible and emphasize that it is a component of everyday existence, magical realism authors purposefully leave the magic in their works unexplained. Hence this limited information acts as the major raising tension when Casella ends the play with an ending under the interpretation of the readers that whether Death took Grazia choosing love over honour or left alone letting honour win in the play even though it had realized the truth that love is a powerful force as Death itself. "And love is greater than an illusion, and as strong as death!" (151).

The final characteristic criticism proves that magical realism is frequently used by writers to provide an implied critique of society, particularly of politics and mainstream activities. In the play *Death Takes a Holiday*, the main criticism is the war, which is the reason for Death to visit the mortal world for a vacation and an examination of the life and the other minor criticisms of lust, daily pleasures, religion and journalism.

"I have been joining in your games and in your dances. I have won some bits of metal at a little wheel. It seems to me that we are like children, playing with toys, passing the time while we wait for something... for that thing of great price" (70).

To conclude, the magical realism which Casella handled throughout the drama *La Morte in Vacanza* undergoes the authentic characteristics of the genre it promises and Ferris made a brilliant translation of the play into English without disturbing the

originality. The following chapter analyzes the philosophical approach through the elements and strategies Ferris translated from Casella in the play *Death Takes a Holiday*.

## Chapter Three

### Philosophical Proposition

"Art is not merely an imitation of the reality of nature, but in truth a metaphysical supplement to the reality of nature, placed alongside thereof for its conquest."

Literature is ultimately grounded on experience and imagination. It does not replace philosophy. There are certainly critical and speculative urges of human thinking which can be fulfilled by philosophy alone. But there are philosophical implications of literature; hence, we often go to literature for specific intelligent insights and illuminations. Philosophical discourse presupposes literary discourse. Philosophical thinking with its demand for conceptual clarification and system building presupposes a careful use of language. It is such a use of language that nourishes the literature. A literary text is not an isolated entity. This vast network of interrelationships sustains both literary and philosophical discourses. Outside of and independently of such a context, we cannot have either literary or philosophical discourse.

The philosophical approach is defined as an approach that suggests that the larger purpose of literature is to teach morality and to probe philosophical questions, in the words of Samuel Johnson. It is believed that authors intend to instruct the audience in some way. This approach forces the readers to dig deeper, discover moral values, and ask questions instead of accepting things the way they seem. In this way, *Death Takes a Holiday* can be interpreted in various ways rather than just one.

The philosophical approach has the longest history and critics believe that the importance of literature lies not just in how the message is conveyed but in the message itself as well. Additionally, they often judge literary works by their ethical



teachings and by their effects on readers. Literature that is ethically sound and encourages virtue is praised while literature that misguides and corrupts is condemned. Some modern critical theories resist the idea that literature has a didactic purpose; however, many of the greatest writers have considered themselves teachers as well as artists.

Some practitioners of the moral/philosophical approach include Matthew Arnold, Plato, Aristotle, and Horace. Arnold suggests that the most important thing about literature is its moral or philosophical teaching. He believed that works must possess a high seriousness to convey that teaching as well. He firmly believed that literature, poetry in particular, is an important source of moral and spiritual inspiration and would one day replace philosophy and religion entirely. While this belief of his has not yet come true, today many can accept his idea that there is in fact moral and religious significance in literature.

Plato acknowledged literature's power as a teacher by believing it was capable of corrupting morals and undermining religion. He insisted that literature must exhibit both moralism and utilitarianism. On the other hand, Aristotle and Horace viewed literature as capable of fostering virtue. They believed it portrayed usefulness and beauty; therefore, literature should be both delightful and instructive.

Advantages of the philosophical approach include its usefulness for works which present an obvious moral philosophy and for when considering the themes of works. This approach does not view literature strictly as art that is isolated from any moral implications. It recognizes that literature can affect readers either subtly or directly. Finally, it implies that both the message and the way it is conveyed in a text are important.

Disadvantages of the philosophical approach mainly include it being too judgmental. This simply means that some believe literature should be judged primarily or solely on its artistic merits and not on its moral or philosophical content. People who hold this belief generally think literature is meant to be art and nothing more. They focus more on how the work is written and admire that instead of looking for the meaning of the work and asking questions.

*Death Takes a Holiday* is a brilliant translation of a fantastic work of fiction. Through the apt descriptions of Casella, the reader discovers that the most valuable things in life rarely take material form. Its labyrinth of meaning is often simplified to moral lessons. “Love is greater than illusion, and as strong as death!” (151) *Death Takes a Holiday* is a play of wisdom, it does not act as a solution to the problems of life, because having true wisdom means understanding that life’s problems have no easy remedy. The most remarkable philosophical voices embrace suffering, unhappiness and heartbreak as keys to our very souls. Philosophy must not present a cure for eternal strife.

There are not many novels that sift through the behaviour that humans exhibit in the way that *Crime and Punishment* by Dostoyevsky does. *Crime and Punishment* goes into explicit detail about the main character, Raskolnikov’s psychological nature as he plots and commits murder against an old pawnbroker, is guilt-ridden by his actions and struggles with the thought of turning himself in. The readers know he is someone who believes himself to be an ‘extraordinary’ person who feels he is above the law and whose life is more important than others. After Raskolnikov commits his murder, before he is punished in a corporeal sense, his own mind throws him into a primitive state of anxiety,

stress, and worrying about everything around him. This is the state of being that man first encountered where the only concern was surviving to the next day, and this is the state that a community attempts to shelter man from.

Dostoyevsky's novel attempts to put the reader in the mind of a remorseful killer to give an idea of why criminals commit crimes and the type of punishments they can face by explaining the origin of the feeling of guilt and the philosophy of punishment. As civilization continues to advance, different kinds of criminals will always appear, but the psychology of crime will remain.

There are certain points of contact between philosophy and literature. In the absence of a universally accepted definition, we may at most say that philosophy is a document of human experience. Similarly, there is no universally accepted definition of philosophy. It is said that philosophy deals with some of the most intractable intellectual problems faced by mankind. Though it is said that philosophy is highly cerebral and argumentative yet like literature it has a persuasive aspect. The total transformation of philosophy into an academic discipline is comparatively recent.

Great philosophers often wrote for the general educated public. Descartes, Locke, Hume, Mill and others generally did not write for fellow philosophers exclusively. They wanted to reach out to the general readership. The books of the great masters of philosophy, excluding a few, up to the 19th century were written in non-technical language. Kant and Hegel were exceptions. They coined many terms and their style put their books beyond the reach of ordinary readers. The persuasive tone was confirmed not just by literature. The philosophers too wanted to persuade and hence like literature, philosophy too made use of rhetoric.

The persuasive tone is clearly present in the dialogues of Berkeley. Poetic persuasion is a part of the philosophy of Nietzsche. Elements of autobiography were introduced by Descartes in his philosophical writings. Fiction as a genre belongs to literature. But philosophy also sometimes makes use of fiction. Philosophy is not exclusively presented in the form of fiction, but the frequent use of fictional fragments is a part of the craft of many philosophers.

Thought experiments constitute another point of contact between philosophy and literature. The aim of a thought experiment is to enable the reader to have an intuitive grasp of an important and difficult philosophical issue by using fiction. A philosopher discovers that a philosophical difficult idea may be explained by making an appeal to the power of the imagination of the reader. Imagination here is sustained by a myth or a story. Effective communication is the goal. For effective communication of an idea a philosopher may conduct a thought experiment and in this thought experiment often metaphors are present. Here we find literature coming to the aid of philosophy. Some thought experiments philosophies are rightly famous. Plato's myth of the cave may be understood as a thought experiment.

Descartes' two thought experiments are often called hypotheses. One is the dream hypothesis and the other is the malignant demon hypothesis. Neurath's boat is a famous thought experiment by which Neurath attempted to justify coherentism. The thought experiments Descartes was ultimately concerned with laying the foundation of his foundationalism. Heidegger's metaphor of the river also contains a half-submerged thought experiment which aimed at giving an account of the knowledge situation in which the dichotomy between the knower and the known emerges.

When one investigates the relationship between philosophy and literature three fundamental aspects of the issue particularly stand out. First, the readers find philosophy in literature. There are many major works of literature which are in certain ways concerned with philosophical issues. Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Camus, Kafka and Sartre are modern literary masters whose works are full of philosophical insights.

Secondly, readers find literature in philosophy. Plato criticized the art of literature but he himself was a master of that art. His philosophical works are full of literary beauty. Similarly, the Upanisadic texts are basically philosophical texts. *The Upanishads* are often considered to be the fountainheads of Indian philosophy. But they may be read for their literary beauty. Voltaire, Rousseau, Russell etc. are philosophers. But in their philosophical works, we find much that can be admired for their literary worth.

Philosophy in literature and literature in philosophy do not constitute the whole story. Over and above them there is a third aspect which we may call the philosophy of literature. Philosophy of literature may be understood as a second-order discipline which investigates the foundations and presuppositions of literature. What is the intention of the author is relevant for the appreciation of the value of a text, what is the meaning of a text, can there be a diversity of the meanings of a literary text, what is the root of the evocative power of literature, should literature have a utilitarian end these are some of the questions that may be found in the philosophy of literature.

Philosophical discourse is not completely devoid of rhetoric. Philosophy is often presented as literature. When it is resented as literature then it makes use of rhetoric. In the analytic tradition of philosophy, this rhetorical aspect of philosophical writing is often frowned upon. Philosopher A. J. Ayer says, “a metaphysician is a misplaced poet then

this rhetorical aspect of philosophical writing was kept in view” (Ayer, p.59). The analytic tradition in philosophy unlike the interpretative tradition was less inspired by the scientific ideal of precision and clarity than the literary ideal of evocation and free play of meaning. The element of suggestiveness and indeterminacy of meaning found in the literary ideal is frowned upon by analytic philosophers. But in the interpretative tradition, it is often held that the difficulty and imprecision of a text are often the mirror image of the difficulty of the context. Human response to the universe, which results in knowledge and values often, is a complex response and this complexity is reflected in the difficulty of the text. To hope for simplicity, clarity and precision in such a situation may be treated as a hope against hope.

The philosophical approach deals with questioning other people’s perceptions and there are various discussions regarding anything. This approach can be seen as the most pragmatic approach. The classic philosophical approach is based on seeing the world from different perspectives. It can be sometimes too good to be true. For example, philosophers taking up the topic of maintaining always a positive and harmony in society are not possible. Sometimes there are negative results and influences making it unrealistic. Rational thinking is avoided in this kind of approach and it contains a multitude of classifications, which are its six main branches that grow through a work of art.

Metaphysics; the word ‘Meta’ means after, so the literal translation of metaphysical is after the physical. Metaphysics processes questions that science cannot explain. This philosophy is determined to determine the relationship between mind and matter. It is the philosophical approach to reality, existence, the nature of being, the

physical world, and the universe. It is the idea that changes, identity, space, and time are all wrapped up together in the human experience. Metaphysics asks questions about our consciousness and how we relate to the world. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle's *The Metaphysics*, written over two thousand years ago, is considered one of the greatest philosophical works of all time. At the heart of the book lie three questions. Firstly, what is existence, and what sorts of things exist in the world? Secondly, how can things continue to exist, and yet undergo the change we see about us in the natural world? And lastly, how can this world be understood? Aristotle's fascinating answers to these questions set in motion two millennia of debate from thinkers all over the globe, making *Metaphysics* an essential addition.

Ferris' translation *Death Takes a Holiday* shows that Casella intertwined the truth of Death and the meaning of life through the various opinions and perceptions of the characters. He highly intellectualized the plot using rather strange imagery, frequent paradox and extremely complicated thought. At the beginning of the play, Death reveals to Duke Lambert that its appearance to man is based on the man's perception of death. It quotes, "In justice to myself I ought to say that my true appearance is somewhat more attractive than this, but unfortunately I can appear to man only as he imagines me to be" (40). Here Casella brings the truth that metaphysics is a state of mind. By the end of the play, when Death is forced to reveal its true form to Grazia by breaking its human facade, it is astonished to know that Grazia had always seen it the same. She acclaims, "But I have always seen you like that. You are not changed" (151).

Epistemology is derived from the Greek *epistēmē* (knowledge) and *logos* (reason), and accordingly the field is sometimes referred to as the theory of knowledge.

Epistemology has a long history within Western philosophy, beginning with the ancient Greeks and continuing to the present. Along with metaphysics, logic, and ethics, it is one of the four main branches of philosophy, and nearly every great philosopher has contributed to it. It is often referred to as the theory of knowledge. It delves into the definition, scope, and parameters of knowledge and knowledge formation. It seeks to explain how we acquire knowledge, how knowledge relates to notions like justification, truth, and belief, and how and where it falls in the spectrum of certainty and error. It is a study that asks big questions about knowledge, our motives and our justified belief, and so on.

Plato wrote a philosophical work, *Theaetetus* in the early-middle 4th century BCE that investigates the nature of knowledge and is considered one of the founding works of epistemology. Like many of Plato's works, the *Theaetetus* is written in the form of a dialogue, in this case between Socrates and the young mathematician Theaetetus. In the dialogue, Socrates and Theaetetus attempt to come up with a definition of episteme, or knowledge, and discuss three definitions of knowledge: knowledge as nothing but perception, knowledge as true judgment, and, finally, knowledge as a true judgment with an account. Each of these definitions is shown to be unsatisfactory as the dialogue ends in aporia as Socrates leaves to face a hearing for his trial for impiety.

As one of the major works of Plato's theory of knowledge, the *Theaetetus* was influential on Platonism from at least the time of the Skeptical Academy of the 3rd century BCE through the Neoplatonism of the 6th century CE. It has also been the subject of increased attention in modern times as a result of its influence on Edmund Gettier, who



challenged the existing definitions of knowledge as a justified true belief in a paper that investigated Plato's theory of knowledge as outlined in this work.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, readers can find Casella's aim to elucidate the essence of existence and being with the main purpose of epistemology to explore, describe, and define knowledge. It is the main motive of the play since the beginning and the purpose of Death to take a human form in the world of life. Hence Death claims,

How should I know, who have never experienced a mortal sensation?  
What could terror mean to me, who have nothing to fear? Or pity, when I  
must not pity? Or kindness, or aspiration or love? These are only words to  
me, whose meaning I am curious to discover. In particular I should like to  
know something of love. It appears to be a potent force which makes men  
do quite mad things.... It is the word most often on the lips of man when  
he goes with me, unless he is old and spent with life. (43)

Logic originates from the Greek word 'logos', which has a variety of translations, such as reason, discourse, or language. It is traditionally defined as the study of the laws of thought or correct reasoning and is usually understood in terms of inferences or arguments. It teaches how to differentiate between good and bad reasoning and how to construct valid arguments. It seeks answers to questions about valid reasoning, the difference between a good argument and a bad argument and the fallacies or errors of an argument.

The Stranger, by Albert Camus, is a novel about Meursault and how he is a "stranger" to society. The public has come to know of him as a murderer, which, in the event, he did murder an Arab. But what the public fails to understand about him is his

lack of emotions toward killing a man, and even though it shouldn't be part of the case, Meursault's failure of mourning over his dead mother's casket. Society does not understand his existentialistic beliefs. His existentialistic beliefs lead him to believe his life has no meaning. Meursault's common sense is that everyone dies eventually, and their lives do not matter in the end. Meursault is a "stranger" and an absurdity to society because he does not show any emotions, he has no meaning for life, and his only certainty and guarantee is death. Meursault's logic leads him to believe there is no God, and if there was, He would have already led him to understand life and his role in society. But Meursault has not found any religion to comfort him before death but instead is left with his thoughts and the hope to live another day until his inevitable death arrives. His life and everyone else's life is meaningless to Meursault because to him, he will not be remembered after his execution for being a simplistic man, but a cold-blooded murderer who has no emotions or feelings. Meursault does not have any meaning in life and no understanding of the meaning in other lives around him. "I had only a little time left and I didn't want to waste it on God" (The Stranger, 120).

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, readers can note that Casella indirectly brings the reader's intellect into conformity with abstract truth which is mainly Death and its exploration of life. Through the human form, Death experiences the logic of human nature with which it comes to a conflict in choosing between its truth and the truth from a human's perspective. "I gave myself life, and with it the little rules by which it is lived. And now, I, Death, must bow to life" (144).

Ethics is also known as moral philosophy and is often referred to as the study of morality. It seeks to address questions about how one should live life, how one defines

proper conduct, and what one means by a good life. It's a study that teaches the virtue of life and how one can put these virtues into practice or what is even virtue in this state of life. So an examination of literature and ethics entails an engagement with the moral principles or values intrinsic to literature.

The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse by Louise Erdrich is a master of character studies and stories with complicated moral dilemmas. It follows Father Damien Modeste, a priest on the Ojibwe reservation of Little No Horse. He carries a big secret: he was assigned female at birth but has been living as a man, a fact that he worries about being revealed as he approaches old age. That fear only intensifies when a troubled colleague comes to the reservation to investigate the life of the possibly false saint Sister Leopolda, who Damien knows all about. Caught between telling the truth about Leopolda and revealing himself, or lying to protect them both even though he believes she is evil, Damien confronts hard truths about himself and the world.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, readers can observe that Casella invites the readers to explore rational decision-making, with the hope of establishing standards for ideal behavior. Even the beyond of all knowledge, qualities and expressions is tested under the state of ethics. It proves that everything that enters certain logistics must adhere to the state of ethics. "Because I assumed your flesh, must I assume your weakness, too?" (143).

In the world of philosophy, Aesthetics refers to the study of everything related to beauty, art, and good taste. This includes how one defines art, how one feels when viewing art or witnessing beauty, how one judges the works of art, and how one forms the taste. This branch of philosophy concerns itself with questions that include what is

art, and its success, its expression of feelings, its vehicle of truth, whether good taste is innate or learned or is art and morality connected.

In Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Grey*, all three of the main characters; Dorian Gray, Basil Hallward, and Lord Henry, remark on the beauty of the portrait, showing their views were aligned with Aestheticism. Apart from the portrait, which was the most prominent symbol, art was also showcased in the operas perfumed by Sibyl Vane, architecture, and music. Dorian's infatuation for Sibyl is significant as he loves her because "she is all the great heroines of the world in one" (Wilde, 2012), showcasing a love for her art of acting rather than as an individual. The lengthy prose describing the artistic intricacies and valuable items in the houses of the nobility best conveyed by Lord Henry, also showcases the decadence in that period. The novel can be seen as a microcosm of the 19th century Aesthetic movement as it explores the tenets of Aestheticism through its characters.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, readers observe that Casella gives free rein to imagination and fantasy through the lead character Death for the pursuit of beauty. Death quotes, "I see things that are gracious, and young, and fragrant; and sometimes I desire them, with a vague and aching tenderness...." (44).

Politics or Political Philosophy examines various concepts related to politics, government, laws, liberty, justice, rights, authority, state, and even ethics (ethical ruling). It discusses how states should be built and run, and how their constituents should act. It posits and attempts to answer questions about the definition of government, its actions, its importance, its rights and rules, the extent of its power and so on, and so forth.

The famous historical game series by Ubisoft *Assassin's Creed*, a political conflict between the Assassins and the Templars is largely ideological. The Templars believe that a perfect, happy utopia can only be established under extreme rule and order. Humanity is too flawed to be left to its own devices, so someone must control and guide it. It is only natural that the Assassins would latch onto communism as it is the extreme opposite of capitalism. However, once again, the Assassins are not communists; they simply embrace that economic system because it allows them to fight the Templars in the world of politics.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, readers can understand that Casella presents a subtle touch on politics and religion. Since Death is beyond all knowledge, it does not give any significant thought to the matter but a simple understanding. During the conversation with Baron, Death comments on the lifestyle of the rich as an immature correspondence to life. "I have been joining in your games and in your dances. I have won some bits of metal at a little wheel. It seems to me that we are like children, playing with toys, passing the time while we wait for something. . ." (70) It questions their quality of life where they do not find correspondence with what the world has to offer.

It seems to me that men have not began to discover the magnificence of their life. . . . To breathe the perfumed air of a garden! To feel one's strong body moving in the sun! To feel thought flashing on the mind, and emotion like a glowing fire in the soul!. . . There is splendor here, if one can find it. Out there is the night, crowded with beauty! And we herd inside, feverish over little games. Why? (71)

When Baron tells Death about the passion of many people who have given their lives for religion, Death merely reflects that it is such a defence of their opinions and bravery. It neither appreciated nor depreciated, just passed an understatement that they died in defence of their own opinion but at least they were not afraid.

These six themes are very broad representations of the many categories in Philosophy. Certainly, within these categories are even more philosophical movements that give birth to more studies seemingly ad infinitum. But that is the nature of philosophy. It is a thinking subject. It is a progression. It is meant to move forward, oftentimes by looking backwards. The philosophical approach in the literature is not a field of academic investigation in the way found in mathematics or science. Philosophy makes use of literature in the sense that philosophical ideas are often brought to the readers through literature.

Philosophical discourse and literary discourse are closely connected. Historically, as well as conceptually philosophical discourse presupposes literary discourse. Many ways of using language widely employed in literature such as rhetorical, fictional, allegorical etc. are also widely used in philosophy. The greatness of a literary work is determined by the intensity and success with which such a work is engaged in the philosophical preoccupations of the age. Some of these preoccupations are universal and this partly explains the near-universal appeal of the great work of literature.

The next chapter analyzes the conflictual crises and choices Death faces in between its truth and the truth it incorporates as a human in the translated play *Death Takes a Holiday*.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Conflict Narrative**

‘Conflict is the soul of literature.’

Conflict is a sensational tension. For every proficient action, there has to be a conflict to bring out a knowledgeable result or tolerably enthralling argument. Whether it is a significant football derby on a Friday evening or an exchange of stances in a mellow coffee house between two artists, there needs to be a wonderful touch of productive conflict.

People often experience conflict in their day-to-day life due to interaction and communication. Whether consciously or not, and intentionally or not they are often the cause and make an impact on the future, both near and long term. In fiction in order to attract readers, the author must stir emotions within the readers themselves. That is by exposing the problems of conflict in a story through the characters. Without a cause for the character to act, there is no rising action because there is no viable point from where to start.

The cause of conflict is the way the author starts a story and the characters direct the purpose of the story. The author makes one or several characters in the story in a certain situation. Characters make decisions or actions that may impact future time, either in the nearest-term or long-term solution to the problem.

In literature, conflict gives meaning to the entire plot. Beyond one's interest to have the hang of it till the end, a conflict lays out detailed layers of different perspectives that open the world to our eyes. In the book *Workplace Wars and How to End Them*,

Kenneth Kaye, an American psychologist and writer, stated that if people manage conflict constructively, they harness its energy for creativity and development.

Conflict is a writer's main tool for building the world of their novel or short story. It can reveal uncomfortable truths about what it means to be human and can express a writer's views on a topic via characters and actions. Conflict is a driving force for the plot, and mastering it is integral to improving writing skill.

Traditionally, conflict is a central literary element of narrative or dramatic structure that creates challenges in a story by adding uncertainty about whether the goal will be achieved or not. In works of narrative, conflict is the challenge the main characters need to solve to achieve their goals. However, the narrative is not limited to a single conflict. While conflicts may not always resolve in a narrative, the resolution of a conflict creates closure or fulfilment, which may or may not occur at a story's end.

Conflict was first described in ancient Greek literature as the *agon*, or central contest in tragedy. According to Aristotle, in order to hold the interest, the hero must have a single conflict. The *agon*, or act of conflict, involves the protagonist and the antagonist corresponding to the hero and villain. The outcome of the contest cannot be known in advance, and according to later critics such as Plutarch, the hero's struggle should be ennobling.

Even in modern non-dramatic literature, critics have observed that the *agon* is the central unit of the plot. The easier it is for the protagonist to triumph, the less value there is in a drama. In internal and external conflicts alike, the antagonist must act upon the protagonist and must seem at first to overmatch them. For example, in William Faulkner's *The Bear*, nature might be the antagonist. Even though it is an abstraction, natural



creatures and the scenery oppose and resist the protagonist. In the same story, the young boy's doubts about himself provide an internal conflict, and they seem to overwhelm him.

Similarly, when godlike characters enter, correspondingly great villains have to be created, or natural weaknesses have to be invented, to allow the narrative to have drama. Alternatively, scenarios could be devised in which the character's godlike powers are constrained by some sort of code, or their respective antagonist.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, though Death is in the pursuit of life's value, it is bent to the code of taking a vacation for only three days when all the living organisms stay alive dodging the course of end.

I am about to take a holiday. Again that sounds incredible, doesn't it? Even to me. Think of it... for the first time in history there will be no murders, no fatal accidents. No man will even die in his bed. Not a leaf will fall, or a star from heaven. Nothing will decay, nothing crumble. There will be only life and growth... a sort of cosmic spring time... But don't be alarmed. It can't go long, or there would be a serious overcrowding. Of course, that will be remedied by another world war, but that gives me so much work. I shall take three days only, and crowd as much as possible into them. After that I must go back. (43)

In the end, Death still keeps its code of leaving the mortal world by the stroke of twelve at the final day even after falling madly in love with a mortal woman Grazia. Conflict in literature refers to the different drives of the characters or forces involved. It may be internal or external that is, it may occur within a character's mind or between a character and exterior forces. It is most visible between two or more characters, usually a

protagonist and an antagonist, but it can occur in many different forms. A character may as quickly find themselves in conflict with a natural force, such as an animal or a weather event, like a hurricane.

The literary purpose of conflict is to create tension in the story, making readers more interested by leaving them uncertain about which of the characters or forces will prevail. In *Death Takes a Holiday*, the personification of death negotiates a deal in an endeavor to experience the mortal sensation to find a satisfactory solution but falls in love aside from its purpose, which sets the play to the major struggle between the characters and their unassailable desires.

There may be multiple points of conflict in a single story, as characters may have more than one desire or may struggle against more than one opposing force. When a conflict is resolved and the reader discovers which force or character succeeds, it creates a sense of closure. Conflicts may resolve at any point in a story, particularly where more than one conflict exists, but stories do not always resolve every conflict.

If a story ends without resolving the main or major conflicts, it is said to have an open ending. Open endings, which can serve to ask the reader to consider the conflict more personally, may not satisfy them, but obvious conflict resolution may also leave readers disappointed in the story.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, when the climax rises with Death's decision between its identity of surreality and reality, Casella ends the story by leaving the main conflict an open ending to the readers' imagination with the final description, "He stands with his arm about her, as the leaves fall and the bells peal. At the stroke of twelve there is a sudden and complete darkness" (151).

Shakespeare's plays have the rich essence of conflict thrown between class and power and the moral outlooks of life. For instance, the greatest play, *King Lear*, raises the conflict between family values, which layers the major conflict into different minor patterns, affecting the characters both internally and externally. In the bargain, the conflicts found in *Death Takes a Holiday* have a similar touch on the surface, but the source of those conflicts in the play rises after a solid deviation from a purpose which coats the play with a unique essence.

Pinning this spot of triggering deviation as the primary source that levels throughout the play, Ferris ultimately captured the commencement of the cardinal conflict, suffocating the characters out of choices in the end. According to Robert McKee, "A story must not retreat to actions of lesser quality or magnitude, but move progressively forward to a final action beyond which the audience cannot imagine another" (Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting, 209).

Basically, in literature, there are two conflicts called Internal and External; they pave the way through characters, society, nature, technology, supernatural, fate and self either violently or nonviolently. This is the essential driving force behind a story. Again, to this concept, McKee, in his book, states the Law of Conflict, "Nothing moves forward in a story except through conflict" (Story: Substance, Structure, Style, and the Principles of Screenwriting, 210).

The effect of conflict is already known that a thing or previous actions lead to other things or actions arising in the future. And so did the conflict that has to happen will provide impact, this could be in the form of positive and negative. The impact of a conflict depends on the cause of the conflict itself. And this has become part of a series of

events in a story. In presenting the impact of conflict, the author does not directly elaborate further but after the other and creates a new event by presenting the impact of the conflict. This probably is done by the author to attract the readers. This can be a form of the message contained in a story by the author who wanted to convey to his readers.

The effect of conflict determines how the conflict is resolved. Hence Casella ends the play with an open ending by leaving the solution to the readers' imagination which is a brilliant form of involving the readers' thoughts in the storyline. Human life must have had problems in his life. And people try to deal with a variety of ways became make our life peaceful. Kenney states that kinds of conflict in a novel are divided into two categories; internal conflict and external conflict.

Internal Conflict is the tension of pursuing satisfaction. Interpersonal conflict is a struggle that takes place in the character's mind, because of dual desires or different wishes and choices. A character may have to decide between right and wrong or between two solutions to a problem. Sometimes, a character must deal with his or her own mixed feelings or emotions. The conflict of man versus self is an internal battle that characters wage within themselves and results in affecting their actions, motivations and interactions with other characters. Internal conflict happens inside a person. He or she is unsure about something and yet the person needs to act. The person may have all of the resources necessary to act and yet, the person is uncertain.

One famous example of internal conflict in literature occurs in *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, a classic example of a character fighting their internal demons. In the play *Hamlet*, the ghost of Hamlet's father tells him that he was murdered and that Hamlet must avenge him. Throughout the play, Hamlet feels conflicted about whether someone

actually did murder his father, and how to seek revenge in a noble fashion. The play's famous 'to be or not to be' soliloquy has Hamlet struggling with this internal conflict and lamenting his self-doubt. Ultimately, this mental struggle results in Hamlet's own downfall, as he does not take action until it is too late.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, the two main characters, Grazia and Death, intertwine with the idea of satisfaction. Grazia wants to find life in her lifeless depths. She says, "There is something out there... which I must find first" (22). Death wants to understand this kind of desire of the mortals. Hence it says, "There is something here... to be known and felt... something desirable that makes men fear me and cling to their life. I must know what it is!" (44). Through this extraordinary personal conflict, they hold inside, as they venture into life to fill the emptiness they cannot let go of, both the characters Grazia and Death, the essence of life and death, fall on a cosmic result called love.

Repression between fear and might is compared to the rest of the characters; the host, Duke Lambert is the only one who compresses the horrendous truth inside him throughout the play until the very end. The might to break his apprehension, to protect his people and the cold moss of fear that is spreading around his chest, also for protecting the same people; he is helplessly strangled in between. Eventually, the Duke breaks his repression when he finds his son Corrado to go after the threat and collects his courage even though he, along with everyone in the castle, knows none can avenge the majestic Death. Duke states, "I was desperate, sir. It was my son's life against my promise. I had no choice" (136).

Seduction and crisp trepidation are other characteristics of internal conflict. Aside from the vulnerable nakedness of love between Grazia and Death, there is an arousal of

seduction and trepidation among the other ladies who were around him. This specific density of emotion leaves the women coldly shaken and alluringly dazed out of words. They fight to find a better word or to understand but to just eventually let this mystical sensation vandalize their feelings. Hence Rhoda wonders, “I keep thinking I’ll meet him on the stairs, or in the hall. I don’t want to meet him, and yet I hope he will be there. I don’t want him to speak to me, and yet when he does I wish his voice would never stop” (87).

External conflict is when the main character fights against something or struggles to overcome something outside. It is something outside of the person. The person may have some control over the situation or may have zero control. The conflict appears because of suspense and problem. Besides, conflict occurs between the characters of the story with something outside of themselves perhaps with the environment or another character. The external conflict deals with Man Vs Man, Man Vs Society and Man Vs Nature.

Man Vs Man involves two characters struggling against each other. The conflict can manifest in different ways, from a physical altercation to irreconcilable differences in morals or beliefs. Two characters have motivations, desires, needs, or beliefs that place them in opposition to each other. This type of literary conflict places characters in a situation where these motivations and beliefs are tested. While the conflict may be resolved with one character defeating another, it can also be resolved through persuasion or conversion. In Shakespeare’s play *Othello*, Othello is in conflict with his confidant, Iago. Iago believes that Othello is after his wife, a conflict that only deepens when

Othello promotes another man over Iago. Slowly, Iago begins to take measures to destroy Othello.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, all the characters come under a fine touch of curiosity and lack of comprehension, but it is Corrado who has a furious hold on to this. From the beginning, he is the one who persistently kept asking his father about Prince Sirki's strange behaviour and the surroundings he is refusing to acknowledge. Hence Corrado argues, “But you’re alarmed, Father, you’re terrified. I must know why” (125). At the end of act II, Corrado breaks off with his father’s order to save his love, Grazia, and firmly threatens to kill the Prince if the Duke once again refuses to tell him who is Prince Sirki.

Man Vs Society is a rebellion against family expectations, social norms, governing bodies, and the like—is one of the most common themes in literature. When one or more characters rebels against the expected behaviours or codified structures of their society, this is called man vs. society conflict.

In Shakespeare’s classic *Romeo and Juliet*, the titular couple is forbidden to marry because they come from two warring families. The thought of their union drives their families to violence. However, their youthful passion brings them together. Romeo and Juliet both struggle with man vs. society conflicts, as each tries to understand why their families are enemies and why they cannot be accepted.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, due to the human form Death has taken, it is motivated to take action against their society by a need to survive, a moral sense of right and wrong, a desire for happiness, freedom, justice, love. But this rise of the conflict comes to a fall at the word of honour, a promise Death made in breathing life into its lifeless depths as it claims, “So... Again I am caught by my own folly, I gave myself life, not knowing the

force that is in life, nor the force that is in love. I gave myself life, and with it the little rules by which it is lived. And now, I, Death, must bow to life” (144).

The fall of the conflict pauses midway, and the conflict gets a new grip when Grazia is confronted with the final choice before her family while Death hurtfully watches his love crumble. The irony of the end approaches the Death which should have been its end which it is entitled to. Grazia states, “But I couldn’t live here without him. I know he seems a little... terrifying to you; but I’m happy with him, and safe, and so contented. He’s kind, Mother, and more tender than any one I’ve known; even more tender than you. I’ve found the happiness I’ve looked for so long” (146).

Man Vs Supernatural is a character vs. supernatural conflict occurs when a character faces resistance from a supernatural force, such as fate, magical forces, otherworldly beings, religion, or dieties. In the *Harry Potter* series, the supernatural takes the form of wizardry. Harry battles Lord Voldemort with wits and magical powers in a classic good vs. evil story. Harry also battles with his own relationship to magic. This is a combination of two literary conflicts: character vs. supernatural, and character vs. self. The combination of these two types of conflict is common in literature where the characters who struggle with fate, religion, or the supernatural are likely to also wrestle with the confines of being human in the face of the supernatural.

In act III of *Death Takes a Holiday*, next to Corrado, the rest of the characters in the hall, altogether confront Death behind the probability of losing themselves in the process. This raises a provoking and philosophical argument of conflict between a symphony of love and loss, the belief of forever and the end of the beginning and every



inch of dream and reality are tested beyond one's imagination, leading to a vulnerable war of words between the characters and the supernatural being.

There are worlds between us, and I cannot reach your minds. You ask me to make this sacrifice as a man, when my desire is greater than a man could know. You ask me to give up love, when I long for love with a surpassing hunger... You are in terror and I am in agony. (142)

The final chapter sums up the whole research project highlighting the delivery of valuable insights and arguments throughout all the chapters.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

An interpretation of life as life shapes itself in the mind of the interpreter, a work of art is born of the brain and heart of its author who has put themselves into its pages; and are instinct with its individuality. The mark of a really great work is that it has something fresh and original to say and it is stated in a fresh and independent way the author by the strength of his genius can uphold the true essence of their piece of work more powerfully than the common race of human can do. The truth remains that the value of literature is in the measure of its authenticity.

The first chapter Introduction deals with the origin of Italian Literature and Alberto Casella who was an Italian playwright, screenwriter, director and politician whose major inspiration to write the play *La Morte in Vacanza* was due to the cause of the Great War. The historiography of Italy in the First World War and the Italian campaigns requires examining a number of issues. First, the 1915–1918 Italian war against Austria-Hungary and her German ally was a sideshow war within the wide context of the war. Eventually, it became known as the Italian war, in spite of Italy's involvement on other fronts and the eventual involvement of the Allied troops in Italy.

The obvious consequence is that most of the literature on Italy in World War I is in Italian, which is also the consequence of the language gap; because of this, English speaking historians lacking Italian language skills have paid rather scant attention to the subject, until recently. Second, the Great War is also a historiographical issue. Early works were influenced by the rise to power of Fascism in 1922 and by its subsequent alliance with Germany.

Casella started writing in Savona, where he focused on poetry and narrative before enlisting in the First World War and the Libyan War. He embraced fascism upon his return to Savona in 1920 and was regarded as one of its founders. He was the director of fascist weekly *Liguria Nuova* of the Savona Federation. Additionally, he served as the secretary of the Fascio di Savona and was also elected to the City Council.

Casella wrote his first play, *Vautrin*, in 1921 and his second, *Prometheus*, a few years later. But his prominent accomplishment is his 1923 play, *La Morte in Vacanza* which was well received by both spectators and critics. Its English adaptation for the Broadway Theater in 1929 by Walter Ferris paved the way for the 1934 film of the same name, as well as the 1971 television movie *Death Takes a Holiday*, which pulled in enormous success and served as an inspiration for the 1998 Hollywood movie *Meet Joe Black*.

Several ideologies gained ground at the top, including fascism, nazism, communism, and many more; writers typically advocate for these ideas, and viewers typically support them. The Great War era in Italy saw a tremendously diverse spectrum of literary genres and individual works, all of varying artistic quality. However, in order to fully comprehend the phenomenon and give the significance of the conflict's memory, it is necessary to attempt to reconstruct, as much as is humanly possible, the bigger picture, putting aside the literary merit of specific works and making reference to literature produced by the lower classes as well. Furthermore, one cannot afford to ignore how fascism affected Italian literature, which was heavily influenced by the Great War Myth. But, the painful deaths were what fundamentally changed the literary landscape.

Alberto Casella wrote the metaphysical drama *La Morte in Vacanza* in 1924, reflecting the untold number of lives lost to the point that even Death is worn out and embarks on a quest to comprehend the significance of the embrace of mortals to existence, at a time when fascism was just beginning to take hold in northern Italy, immediately following the devastating loss of life in World War I.

In the play, Death's only job is to gather people's souls but when the Death confronts Grazia, a girl who has been in a car accident, but it is unable to take her because of the enormity of her life's potential since it is worn out from the scale of murdering and death. It sends her back out into the world and decides that it must discover why people despise it so much. Why do they loathe it, why do they fear it, why do they fight for their lives, and why is that significant? As no one will perish because Death won't be collecting them during those few days off, it decides to spend a weekend with a family in Northern Italy and interestingly, Death then encounters a loving relationship and realizes that the fact that life is transitory makes it so significant. Death concludes that one should therefore make the most of their time on earth by loving as much as they can.

The three-act framework of the Greeks is used in Casella's drama *La Morte in Vacanza*. It has a beginning, middle, and an end, or what Aristotle refers to as the fundamental beginning, middle, and end and hence it was excellently translated to the English language by Walter Ferris under the name, *Death Takes a Holiday: A Comedy in Three Acts*. In the Ethel Barrymore Theater in New York, Walter Ferris' translation of *Death Takes a Holiday* was performed to great success. This powerful drama has made a name for itself among the major plays. It is based on the poetic idea of Death who for

three days ceases all activity. During this time, it falls in love with a lovely girl and learns from her why mortals dread Death.

*Death Takes a Holiday* takes a lot of expertise to set the tone and even though it is filled with exciting moments, it serves as the ideal backdrop for a love story that is both straightforward and endearing. Most of the time, the person who represents Death is a very human-like persona; he or she lacks any of the clichés that could have easily been added for effect. This drama delivers a fresh and upbeat philosophy on the issues of love and death while also provoking thought and discussion. *Death Takes a Holiday* has established itself as one of the most well-liked and prosperous plays for amateurs, despite the early restriction that first prohibited widespread performance. The little and community theaters, churches, colleges, and schools all find it to be one of those uncommon mixtures.

In Walter Ferris' English translation of Alberto Casella's Italian play *La Morte in Vacanza*, the primary focus of this project is on the colouring of magical realism through the vulnerable flow of love between a mortal and an immortal, the philosophical approach of life and death, and the conflictual choice between mortality and immortality.

The second chapter, Magical Realism focuses on the fantasy and magical realism are distinct from one another in that the former moves through the real world while the latter lacks any sense of reason or psychological understanding. It wasn't until the 1940s in South America and the Caribbean that the phrase began to characterise an artistic literary trend. When Roh used the phrase, he intended it to designate a kind of writing that departed from the strict norms of realism, comparing it to paintings and sculptures.

True acceptance of fiction as it is delivered, regardless of how likely it may be, is necessary for magical realism. Magical realism's realistic side isn't particularly complex, but there are at least two key aspects that should be noted. The authors who dealt with magical realism base their narratives on specific settings that are linked to historical references in order to both challenge conventional ideas about history and the historical process as a whole as well as to define the text by being pointedly positioned in those settings.

The First World War served as an inspiration for the play *Death Takes a Holiday*, which also incorporates magical realism to explore the value of life and how Death views all the lives that were lost. Casella employs magical realism to raise concerns about the nature of the worlds we live in and then leverages the reader's inference to provide the solutions.

The authors and the poets include realism in their works since literature is a reflection of society and Casella has captured realism to show the true image of the public. In the play, during a conversation about the mysteries of life with the Major, Death throws a shade on the truth of religion as just a state of handling human emotions on life rather a truth of life.

The presence of Death in the play as a human character blends with reality and its examination and opinion on such reality acts as an enlightenment. The paranormal looks to be no different from regular life experiences. Death is a supernatural element which has taken a human form and presents a mysterious vibe around the people it meets and nevertheless everyone maintains their normal and formal persona around it. The magical

realism techniques help Casella create an environment that lures the readers into its depths forcing them to question the accepted ways of perceiving reality.

The third chapter is the prerequisite for philosophical conversation. Careful use of language is necessary for philosophical reasoning because it calls for conceptual clarification and system development. Such linguistic use is what feeds literature. A literary work cannot exist in a Hoover. The intellectual and literary discourses are both supported by this enormous web of connections. We cannot have either literary or philosophical conversations outside of or independently of such a setting.

Fantastic tales can be found in *Death Takes a Holiday*. The reader learns that the most valuable things in life hardly ever manifest in physical form because to Casella's accurate descriptions. Its complex content is frequently reduced to moral precepts. This play about wisdom is not intended to be a panacea for life's difficulties because true wisdom is the knowledge that there is no quick fix. The most outstanding philosophical voices accept pain, misery, and heartache as the doorways to our innermost souls. There must not be a philosophical panacea for unending conflict.

Through conversations with the varied viewpoints and perceptions of the characters, Casella wove the truth of Death and the purpose of existence together. He heavily intellectualized the story by employing very bizarre imagery, frequent paradoxes, and incredibly difficult concepts. Death tells Duke Lambert at the start of the play that how he appears to men depends on how they see death. The reality that metaphysics is a condition of the mind is shown by Casella. Death is shocked to learn that Grazia has always seen it the same by the play's conclusion when it is made to disclose its true shape to her by shattering its human facade.

The fourth chapter throws light on the personification of death that negotiates a deal in an endeavour to experience the mortal sensation to find a satisfactory solution but falls in love aside from its purpose, which sets the play to the major struggle between the characters and their unassailable desires. The effect of conflict determines how the conflict is resolved. Hence Casella ends the play with an open ending leaving the solution to the reader's imagination which is a brilliant form of involving the readers' thoughts in the storyline.

In *Death Takes a Holiday*, due to the human form Death has taken, it is motivated to take action against their society by a need to survive, a moral sense of right and wrong, a desire for happiness, freedom, justice, and love. But this rise of the conflict comes to a fall at the word of honour, a promise Death made in breathing life into its lifeless depths.

This project focuses exclusively on the magical realism, philosophical approach, and conflict narrative that Casella crafted throughout the drama *La Morte in Vacanza* which is a few of the many intricate themes, structural elements, and interpretive ideas that elevated this play to one of the best works of literature.

This play has a wealth of information that can be explored and analyzed for future research purposes, including its cinematographic screenwriting by its narrations and choice of understanding, psychological interpretations through the characters' decisions, actions, and behaviour patterns, the post-war crisis through the sequence of events it focused on and the impression it relates, and the cultural materialism it has through the behaviour and attitude of the characters, especially the action and reaction of Death in the play to everything it faces and acts upon.



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**The Destructive Legacy of Slavery: An Analytical study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Jesintha Joselin C.**

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**Thoothukudi**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **The Destructive Legacy of Slavery: An Analytical study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*** 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 Jesintha Joselin C. during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **The Destructive Legacy of Slavery: An Analytical study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*** 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

April 2023

*Jesintha Joselin C.*

Jesintha Joselin C.

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## Preface

Toni Morrison is one of the most celebrated authors in the world. Her novels have earned, countless prestigious awards including the Pulitzer Prize and the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama. As the first African-American woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, Morrison's work has inspired a generation of writers to follow in her footsteps.

The project entitled **The Destructive Legacy of Slavery: An Analytical study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*** analyses the sufferings of the slaves who experiences the physical, emotional, and spiritual devastation wrought by the white owners.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of African American literature and its characteristics. It showcases the author's contribution towards African American literature with special reference to the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Racial Wounds** depicts Sethe and other women characters who undergo dehumanising insults under white owners who beaten them brutally and harass sexually.

The third chapter **History and Memory** deals with the memory of the protagonist Sethe who recall her memory about her dead child which transforms.

The fourth chapter **Quest for Self** explains about the protagonist search for identity of herself by facing lots of struggles

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature is written in English languages from United Kingdom crown dependencies, the republic of Ireland, the United States and the countries of the former British Empire. The earliest forms of English were a set of Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Great Britain by Anglo-Saxon invaders in the fifth century and are called Old English. The English spoken after the Norman conquest is known as Middle English and this form of English lasted until the 1470s.

African American literature was launched in North America during the second half of the eighteenth century. These writings tend to incorporate oral forms such as spirituals, sermons, gospel music, blues and rap. African American literature focused on the slavery of African people who settled in America. Many writers emerged during this period and voiced the struggles faced by African people. The African American slave narratives developed into its classic form and tone between 1840-1860, when the Romantic Movement in American literature was in its most influential phase

African American literature constitutes a vital branch of literature of the African Diasporas. It has been influenced by the great African heritage, oral culture which is rich in poetry. During the nineteenth century, former slaves like Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass wrote slave narratives, which became a mainstay of African American literature. Slave narratives were categorized into three distinct forms as tales of religious redemption, tales to inspire the abolitionist struggle, and tales of progress. After the end of slavery and the American Civil War, a number of African American authors continued to write nonfictional works which reflected the



condition and struggles of African American people. Harlem Renaissance brought new attention to African American literature which marked a turning point and produced lot of black women writers. Other writers also expressed their thoughts and ideas about their experience in relation with American people. The antebellum slave narrative highlights the brutalizing horrors of slavery in order to justify forcible resistance and escape as the only way a black could preserve for his or her humanity.

The Harlem Renaissance from 1920 to 1940 brought new attention to African American literature. Langston Hughes was one of the leading black writers in that time period. Numerous black artists, musicians, and others produced classic works in fields from jazz to theatre. Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston are the two most influential writers to come out of the Harlem Renaissance.

The proof of an African heritage was evident in the elements of African American music. Consciously or sub-consciously, Old Africa, the mother country of civilization, remained the most important source of originality for blacks and eventually, for many musical attempts in American nationalism. The soul of music evolved in Africa from an inseparable combination of the sister arts of music, drama, and dance and was expertly woven into the people's language and customs.

Many authors evolved in African literature, who created a way for the upcoming African writers like Wole Soyinka a celebrated playwright of black America. His work earned him the 1986 Nobel Prize for literature. Another most important author was Chinua Achebe, who was called as the father of African literature and the most dominant figure in African American literature and produced the impact of western influences on traditional African society. John Pepper Clark,

contributed significantly to the Nigerian renaissance of the late 50s and early 60s. Ngugi wa Thiong'o who was the most important East African novelist.

Some of the prominent African American writers of the 20th century are Richard Wright, Gwendolyn Brooks, Alice Walker and Alex Haley. Their works focus on the plight of the black people in the United States. Chinua Achebe was Africa's best-known novelist and the founding father of African fiction. The publication of his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, in 1958 not only contested European narratives about Africans but also challenged traditional assumptions about the form and function of the novel. His creation of a hybrid that combined oral and literary modes.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, was at the centre of the politics of English departments in Africa, championing the change of name from English to simply Literature to reflect world literature with Africa and third world literatures at the centre. One of the novels, *Weep not, Child*, was published to critical acclaim in 1964 followed by the second novel, *The River Between* in 1965 and *A Grain of Wheat* in 1967 was a turning point in the formal and ideological direction of his works. His lectures and essays also appeared worldwide including *Writers in Politics* (1981-1997), *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986) and more on.

Buchi Emecheta was born to Ibo parents; she worked as a community worker in Camden, North London. She began to write about the role of women in the Nigerian society in *The Bride Price* (1976), *The Slave Girl* (1977), winner of the New Statesman Jock Campbell Award, and *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) an account of women's experiences in raising the children in the face of changing values in traditional Ibo society.

Different from other writers whose works were generally set in the rural southern plantations or in the urban Northern ghettos, Morrison's works deal with Midwestern black communities situated in Ohio. Her works provide debates that are significant to American literature and to American history in terms of Black identity.

Toni Morrison was the first black woman who won the Nobel Prize for Literature. She was born in 1931, as the second of four children, in Lorain, a small town in Northern Ohio. She was the only black child in her first grade class and also the only one who could read. Morrison's natural inclinations for literature drew her to the treasury of world classics in her adolescences.

She graduated with honours from high school and then attended Howard University, where she changed her name to Toni. Then she returned to Howard University as an instructor in 1957. During this time she married the Jamaican architect Harold Morrison. But her marriage dissolved even before her second son was born. She divorced in 1964, moved back to New York, and started working as an editor for Random House. Toni Cade Bambara and Gayle Jones were among the many black writers she published here. She published the autobiographies of Angela Davis and Muhammad Ali.

Morrison wrote her first novel *The Bluest Eye* in 1970 that examines the experience of the black girl as she faces the ideal of beauty and the reality of violence within a black community, in a setting of poverty and low social status the characters hurt each other even if they do not want to do so. After the publication, Morrison status was increased and she worked on the publication of many reviews and essays on black history and American contemporary issues.

In her second novel *Sula*, Morrison deals with a community's concept of good and evil portrayed through the relationship between two women Nel and Sula, and their relationship with that community, in these two African American women have combined to two characteristics being both "the ship and the harbor." The peace women, especially Eva, the grandmother and Sula, the granddaughter, are powerful black women characters.

Her *Song of Solomon* reveals a shift in the author's perspective and focuses the attention on the life of a young black man in search of his identity, encompassing the relationship between race and class. This novel was the first Black Book of the month club selection since Richard Wright's *Native Son*, and it made Morrison the winner of the 1977 National Book Critics Circle Award.

Her fourth novel *Tar Baby*, set on a Caribbean island, it is the only one of Morrison's novel to deal with white characters, it is about the evolution of an intimate relationship between unlikely couples, Jade, a jet set fashion model falls in love with young vagrant only to become estranged there. He is not discouraged by their breakup but pursues her with the hope of reconciliation between the black man and the black woman and it can only occur when they mutually understand they are both victims of racial exploitations.

*Beloved* is her fifth novel, and it catapulted her to the forefront of discussions about the role of black women in contemporary political, academic, and literary American society. Her bareness is a witness to the importance of the black imagination in the shaping of African American and American literature. However, the merits she earned along her career path were a result not only of her capacity for

translating the inner, personal, and communal lives of black people into words and images, but also of a national awareness of black people's artistic production.

*Jazz* (1992) set in Harlem in 1928, *Jazz* is a disturbing psychological study of a childless African American couple desperately seeking to come to terms with their frustrations and aspirations. Their fragmented, directionless, lives propel them toward the grotesque and the absurd.

*Paradise* (1998) is essentially two separate books that overlap occasionally until they meet tragically at the end, this was the book which tells the story of black town of Ruby, Oklahoma its citizens, its founders, its reason for being and the difficulties it has been trying to maintain its identity as it heads into 1970s.

*Love* (2003) is Morrison's elegy for the vital black society that was lost with desegregation. May, Christine, Head, Junior, and Vedaevan, all women obsessed with Bill Cosey. The wealthy owner of the famous Cosey's hotel resort, yearning that dominates the lives of these women long after his death.

*Her Mercy* (2008) examines the roots of racism going back to slavery's earliest days, providing glimpses of the various religious practices of the time, and the showing the relationship between men and women in early America that often ended in female victimization.

The novel chosen for the present study is Morrison's fifth novel *Beloved*, published in 1987, the first book of a trilogy Morrison intended to write about different kinds of love. In this novel she focuses on the nature of mother love and the American obsession with ownership grounded in slavery. The search for identity and the clarification of roles veiled by centuries of oppression and exclusion are themes

that are discussed through poignant visual images in *Beloved*. In the novel, this identity is concerned mainly with the question of motherhood. Basing the novel on historical slave narratives as well as on the folk and the classic tradition, Morrison discusses maternal love in bondage, speaking of things that only art can deal with, “unspeakable things unspoken” to use the title of one of her essays, that are brought painfully to the surface. Building her language upon the black oral tradition, Morrison retells the story of slavery in literary terms, a kind of artistic revision of the African American past through the perspective of the black woman writer.

*Beloved* was inspired by true of Black American Slave women, Margaret Garner. She escaped with her husband Robert from a Kentucky plantation and sought refuge in Ohio. When the slave masters overcame them, she killed her baby, in order to save the child from slavery she had managed to escape. Morrison later said that, “I thought at first it couldn’t be written, but I was annoyed and worried that such story was inaccessible to art” (42).

In a critical essay about *Beloved*, Deborah Horvitz says that, “the text is so grounded in historical reality that it could be used to teach American history classes” (157). *Beloved* is set in a specific historical context and is based on the real lives and sufferings of black slaves, and more specifically, on the lives of Margaret Garner, her children and husband, the main point is not to discuss what really happened in their anonymous lives. Instead, it is, as Morrison explains, the necessity of working with the motivation behind the act and its implications as a way to keep in touch with the ancestors in order to find the black people's own identities. This link with the past, with the ancestors, depends largely on the ability to reconstruct memory.

*Beloved* shows a uniqueness of visual perceptions, especially in relation to the white man, who is referred to as “man without skin” and to the lack of colour that

permeates the novel. *Beloved* is somehow concentrated on the violent acts committed against black people during and after slavery, extrapolating the physical pain and reaching levels of unimagined psychological and social damage. In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison depicts the journey of the African Americans past of lifetime of slavery and she ultimately portrays its effects and how it individually affects each character. Almost all major characters have gone through dehumanization from the white community.

In her *Beloved* a slave interior life is recreated with a moving intensity. It is difficult, sometimes lushly overwritten but profoundly imagined and carried out with burning fervour. Morrison's versatility, technical and emotional range appears to know no bounds. *Beloved* is written in an art minimalistic prose that is by turns is by rich, graceful, eccentric, rough, lyrical, sinuous, colloquial and very much to the point. It is an affirming novel strong enough to break the heart. Toni Morrison says about this novel in interview as: "What was on my mind was the way in which women are so vulnerable to displacing themselves, into something other than themselves".

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* shows the mental condition of the characters, who were former slaves. The slavery has devastated them physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. This has continued to haunt these characters even after freedom and they are still slaves, not able to come out of that. The negative impact of the slaver has great effect on these African Americans that they have lost their sense of self. Throughout the novel, such examples of self-alienation are found. In Freud's *Studies in Hysteria 1893-1895* writes that there is "an intimate relationship between the story of the patients suffering and the symptoms of his illness" (135).

The novel is the story of the two former, Sethe Garner and Paul Garner, whose traumatic experiences as slaves in Sweet Home in Kentucky farm cause them sharing memories. In part, the novel provides the story of Sethe's struggle to escape the slave farm at Sweet Home and live in freedom with her children, ended tragically with discovering her former master the death of her youngest daughter. Similarly, Paul D's story that begins at Sweet Home following his escape, capture, and imprisonment in Georgia. All the characters Paul D, Sethe, Denver, and the ghost Beloved each of them try to come to terms with their pasts. The novel highlights the brutality and cruelty of slavery institutions. It also presents the past sway the slaves even after their freedom.

Sethe, the central protagonist of *Beloved*, incurs inveterate hatred and a feeling of anger from the women in the community because of her refusal to define herself as a breeder of slaves. In the course of the novel, Morrison redirects this moral outrage to the institution of slavery. She shows readiness to kill her own baby to save the other children from the slavery, when the white masters come to claim Sethe and her children as their property. She finally kills her Beloved, which shows her love for children as she wanted to save them from brutal slavery. Though the community was not happy with this act of Sethe's killing her own child, she appears there as the slave mother who dares to claim her children as her property.

In *Beloved*, Morrison continued investigating the same themes as the other novels like dehumanization, cultural identity and segregation as well. The famous Canadian author Margaret Atwood praised Morrison's *Beloved* in a review for the *New York Times*:

Indeed, Ms. Morrison's versatility and technical and emotion range appear to know no bounds. If there were any doubts about her stature



as a preeminent American novelist, of her own or any other generation  
'Beloved' will put them to rest. In three words or less, it is a hair-raiser. (1)

*Beloved* is the best illustration for African American literature in term of the richness of portrayals of slavery. On one hand, this research adopted the Critical Race Theory in order to understand more about the issues of racism depicted in the novel.

Toni Morrison has presented the realistic picture of African American lives through her novels. She thinks that in the slave narratives so many issues and aspects related to the lives of African Americans are missed out and forgotten. She feels that it is dangerous if one forgets the past or never tries to understand it. She also feels that it is her responsibility to bring out these facts before her readers and make them aware and think about the horrible and terrible conditions of African Americans during slavery. Toni Morrison has depicted the picture of slavery and its effect on the lives of African Americans in *Beloved*. It also discusses Toni Morrison as a critique of an institutionalized dehumanization in this novel. *Beloved* presents how the African Americans were dehumanized by the established institutions during slavery.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Racial Wounds**

Morrison's eye and vision are full of 'Black Book' and a collection of African American literature. *Beloved* brings a poignant history of the era of slavery and facilitation by black women. She brings out the fate of peoples who used to kill the girl children in the past because they were oppressed by men in society. In this situation, the young children are accustomed to facing slavery. Morrison portrays the women as black who were oppressed by nature and anger in order to protest the domination of American society.

The novel is set twelve years after the end of the American Civil War. There are nine slaves who work on Sweet Home: Sethe, Paul D, Baby Suggs and her grown son Halle, and other five slaves. Although all the slaves who on Sweet Home are affected by slavery, in the first place, it is Sethe who has to endure and suffer the most pain. Sethe got raped and whipped by a schoolteacher's nephews, and she was treated in such a cruel way that she ultimately was driven to kill her two year old daughter.

Sethe lived on a 124, Bluestone Road with her daughter Denver and her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, face the sufferings and experiences of subaltern women. Morrison uses the flash back technique to depict the sufferings of black women. She recollects the memories of being slave in Mrs. Garner's farm house. "Men every one. Beg to differ, Garner. Ain't no nigger men" (12).

The African perspectives is full of mother's realities confronted in stereotype style and paradoxically related with slave women, so the mother needs their security and safe life while suckling the other victims. Baby Suggs identified in the beginning of their lives are full of women who are subaltern and facing the margins of slavery among the African people. Due to her carelessness, Sethe loses her family and her

mother's relationship. Sethe is an ideal of black mother, and a black woman in terms of racism and sexism. Terry Paul Caesar's article, "Slavery and Motherhood in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*" states that "when Sethe tries to explain to Beloved why she cut her throat, she is explaining an anger handed down through generations of mothers who could have no control over their children's lives, no voice in their upbringing" (112).

Sethe was married to Halle, a slave who was trying to make his mother free. They had two sons and a daughter when they were on the Sweet Home Plantation. Because of Mr. Garner's death, Mrs. Garner transferred the ownership of the Plantation to her Brother-law, the schoolteacher. The schoolteacher and his nephews treated the slaves brutally. Sethe is very keen and facing difficulties in labour. They treat her children like slaves and bear witnesses to what Sethe has done to them in the work shed. Before Garner's death, the rule of the Plantation was that if they would get paid for the work they do in the Plantation, they offered them certain degree of freedom. Halle worked hard to free his mother, Baby Suggs. He paid the debt to Mr. Garner and free his mother. After Garner's death, the rule was changed. Halle found it difficult to pay the debt for his wife and three children. Halle, Paul D, Paul A, Sixo and Sethe planned to escape from the plantation. Thus the story revolved around the impact of slavery on black people. The novel hinged on the death of Sethe's infant daughter, Beloved, who mysteriously reappeared as a sensuous young woman. Beloved's spirit came back to claim Sethe's love. She struggled to make Beloved gain full possession of her present and her experience was treated with many fundamental complexities in her quest for freedom.

*Beloved* is clearly a ghost story, dealing with the spiteful, sad or rebuked spirit of a baby girl who died in a horrible way some years previously. The girl, Beloved,

initially manifests herself as a poltergeist, haunting 124, Bluestone Road, and those who have in some way betrayed her. Despite the fact that the spirit is a baby, she “throws a powerful spell” (5). But Paul D, the last of the Sweet Home men, exorcises this ghost soon after his arrival, and the restless and relentless spirit is forced to take more drastic measures. She assumes a human shape, at the age she would have been had she lived, and returns to confront Sethe, the mother, who has wronged her in two ways: first by murdering her, and second by denying her. For eighteen years, Sethe has been systematically keeping the past at bay, her days devoted to the “serious works of beating back the past” (86).

The reincarnation of *Beloved* compels Sethe to confront her personal past, a past that up until then had been unspeakable, to come to terms with the fact that she murdered her baby daughter. In this novel, then, “nothing ever dies,” (44) especially our private ghosts, the skeletons we think safely locked in our closets, at least until we put them to rest. Because “anything dead coming back to life hurts,” (42) what Sethe must undergo is an agonising private exorcism of her own. Seen in this light, the novel takes on a supernatural character. It is a novel that describes how a girl child is killed by her mother and how the dead girl attempts to evade her subaltern being. Though Sethe and Beloved both are subalterns, their sufferings are different. Sethe knew what it was to be a slave in America. Sethe’s killing her own daughter was not out of spite or any negative notion. She killed the unnamed child because she wanted her not to witness the travails of slavery.

The murdered child identifies herself immediately after her appearance as “Beloved,” the name that Sethe had inscribed upon the unnamed baby’s tombstone. She asks Sethe about the “diamond” earrings she (Sethe) used to wear, earrings that had been confiscated from her. *Beloved* has the skin and complexion of a newborn;

her only disfigurements three parallel scratches on her forehead and a neck scar, “the little curved shadow of a smile in the kootchy-kootchy-coo place under her chin” (281) appear to be the stigmata left by Sethe’s assault on her. Finally, Beloved hums a song that Sethe had herself made up and sung to her children, a song no one else could possibly know. Hearing the song, Sethe becomes convinced of “a miracle that is truly miraculous,” (207) the return of her baby girl.

Morrison says, “the number of black Africans who never made it into slavery were those who died either as captives in Africa or on the slave ships” (16). The dedication suggests the possibility that Beloved might herself be one of those unfortunates who experienced the slave ship passage, presumably smuggled in sometime before the Civil War and the establishment of the Northern blockade.

This hypothesis proves to be a powerful instrument of naturalistic recuperation. For one thing, Beloved’s previously obscure, if not opaque, monologue becomes accessible, if not transparent. The monologue reveals that Beloved is haunted by the slave ship experience; for her, “it is always now there will never be a time when I am not crouching and watching others who are crouching too” (248).

It also explains Beloved’s “unnatural” attachment to Sethe. The monologue specifies that the woman with Beloved’s face (her mother) quite literally abandoned her daughter by throwing herself into the ocean:

I cannot lose her again my dead man was in the way like the noisy clouds when he dies on my face I can see hers she is going to smile at me she is going to her sharp earrings are gone the men without skin are making loud noises they push my own man through they do not push the woman with my face through she goes in they do not push her she

goes in the little hill is gone she was going to smile at me she was going to. (250)

Beloved's mother goes in of her own accord; she prefers death to slavery at about the same time Sethe is making a very different decision when confronted with very similar circumstances. Having been abandoned by her original mother, Beloved attaches herself to the reincarnation of that mother (Sethe) like a parasite. All this is representative of the mental and psychological pressure that Beloved indirectly claims she has experienced. The process of bothering a concerned person involves the dialectic of subjugation and oppression attached to slavery. The characters, whether Beloved or the people without skin, do and behave differently, symbolising multiple holdings of perception.

Beloved is a condensed symbol of the trauma of slavery. She is a psychological construct of a violent event too horrible for the waking state to accept. "Bearing witness to one's own trauma makes and breaks a promise: the promise of the testimony as a realization of the truth" (Laub 73).

They either surrender or attempt to surrender to the powers and lose their individual beings, or they escape by jumping into the sea or throwing their infants into the sea just to be drowned. The novel throws light on how traumatic the experiences of the subalternity which forced them to do all this. Furthermore, *Beloved* emphasises the negative and destabilising impact of slavery on subaltern consciousness. "Who is the beloved?" the question asked. Beloved or Sethe? For much of the novel Sethe is unable to be recognized as Beloved for slavery has denied her wholeness and motherhood. Pointing out the dehumanizing pressure of slavery, Elizabeth Ann Beaulien asserts:

Slavery's debilitating impact reached beyond the institution of motherhood though. By denying the possibility of family, slavery not only disrupted the natural maternal bonding process a mother and the child share but denied all blacks, regardless of gender, participation in the most symbolic microcosm of American society. (18)

The fact that the white man calls her "beloved in the dark and bitch in the light" (284) explains the name she chooses for herself. Other mysterious circumstances the earrings, the scars, the song can be accounted for not unlikely incidents drawn from her personal history or from her close association with Denver in the days following her arrival at 124, Bluestone Road. In some way, one can fully naturalise Beloved's existence, appearance, and behaviour.

The novel's treatment of slavery, makes clear that the institution perverts the relation between Self and other, master and slave, by dehumanizing both the parties:

White people believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle. Swift unnavigable waters, swinging screaming baboons, sleeping snakes, red gums ready for their sweet white blood..... But it wasn't the jungle blacks brought with them to this place from the other [livable] place. It was the jungle white folks planted in them. And it grew. It spread. In, through and after life, it spread, until it invaded the whites who had made it. Touched them every one. Changed and altered them. Made them bloody, silly, worse than even they wanted to be, so scared were they of the jungle they had made. The screaming baboon lived under their own white skin; the red gums were their own. (234)

The white slave owners throughout history propagated the myth that black people are the origin of the jungle, which resulted in a self-fulfilling prophecy that spread the horrors of slavery to everyone who was affected by the practise, including slave owners and slaves alike, who were united in their lack of humanity and wild eyes. This create fear which drives the white people to behave in a barbaric manner as slave owners, and the cruel abuse drives the slaves to become so demoralised by society, and so mentally and physically devastated, that the only way for them to live is to give up their sense of self and their humanity. The slave owner wished “to turn every young black woman into a brood mare” (White 72).

Morrison seemed to be at her best in documenting slavery and its aftermath in this novel. The treatment of slaves as beasts of burden and the sexual exploitation of African women by European men were depicted artistically. Sethe’s trauma began when she was taken from her mother by a system of slavery that regarded the children as property and the adults as work animals that had no time for raising children. Sethe was raised in a communal environment by Nan. Since she was in charge of cooking and caring for all the slave children, she had no time to nurture them. Both Sethe’s mother and Nan came as slaves from Africa during the middle passage. Being women, they had to endure unbelievable torture, for they were raped innumerable times. Their only means of resistance was to kill any child born out of such union and to refuse to put their arms around their rapists.

The female slaves were also cruelly branded on the chest in order that their owners could always recognize and claim them. When Sethe’s mother grabbed her daughter and showed her the brand on her chest, it was a sad commentary. Since Sethe had not been permitted to know her mother, Sethe’s mother could not mark her identity for her daughter in anything but a brand that indicated that she was a slave.



Sethe's awareness of black colour and rejection of white-perceptions and inscriptions of herself, her children, and other slaves as non-humans were synthesized with her black feminist sense of self-sufficiency. Sethe reconciled gender differences first with her husband, Halle Suggs. Later she lived with Paul D, painful and unattractive history of black women in the States where black women had always been mothers and labourers, mothers and workers. They had worked in the fields with men.

The life history of Sethe was not less crucial and frightfully horrifying. She was a helpless victim of the slavery system. Poverty, hunger and destitution were causes of the black community that brought them down to their knees to obey their white masters who provided them food for their labour. Physical torture and sexual assaults were rampant, especially for young black women. Children were forcibly taken away from their mothers and were put to work somewhere. Sethe too was deserted from her mother and two sons, who were never retrieved.

Many events were intertwined with her struggle to sustain and survive. These events included her mother's death, her marriage to Halle, a whipping that nearly killed her, her escape and refuge in her mother-in-law's house, her recapture and the infanticide of her child, her period of imprisonment, her subsequent years in 124, Bluestone Road, her sons Howard and Buglar being driven away from there, and years passed in an all female household with a ghost-daughter as the third member.

The novel describes how slavery obliterates humanity and a sense of self identity. In order to tell the story of a slave, a slave master, and a descendent, Morrison uses a disjointed structure of storyline and an omniscient third person narration throughout the entirety of the novel. This allows for different points of view

to be involved at all times. *Beloved* lends a voice to individuals who were previously silent, as well as to a history that has been covered up for a very long time.

*Beloved* gives us a vivid picture of the dehumanising effects of slavery on the body and mind of the slaves. The most dangerous of the effects of slavery is its negative impact on the former slaves' senses of self, and the novel contains multiple examples of self-alienation. Paul D, for instance, is so alienated from himself that at one point he cannot tell whether the screaming he hears is his own or someone else's. Consequently, Paul D is very insecure about whether or not he could possibly be a real man, and he frequently wonders about his value as a person.

The slaves of American were not treated as human beings, but rather as commodities. They were bought and sold in the market like the animals we see now. Their prices were determined on the basis of their strength, gender, and age. Such was the condition of the slaves before they were bought. But the real predicament in their lives started when they were bought by their owners. And it is this predicament that Morrison depicts in her novel *Beloved* through the characters of Sethe, Paul D, Stamp Paid, Halle, and others.

The subhuman treatment of Sethe is to be found when we see schoolteacher describing her animal characteristics to his pupils. Sethe feels estranged from herself when she hears the word schoolteacher. That is why she sees the best part of herself only among her children. But ironically enough, they are also the victims of an identity crisis. Denver conflates her identity with Beloved's, and Beloved feels herself actually beginning to disintegrate. Baby Suggs has also been a prey to slavery, which denied her the ability to be a true wife, sister, daughter, or loving mother. So, in a way, Sethe is only carrying forward these never ending paralysing effects of slavery.

This loss of identity and disbelief in one self is also to be seen in the character of Paul D. But unlike Baby Suggs, he has developed a self-defeating coping strategy to fight with the emotional pain forced on him through slavery. Any feelings he had were locked away in the rusted tobacco tin of his heart, and he concluded that one should not love anything too intensely. While the other slaves like Jackson Till, Aunt Phyllis and Halle became insane, Paul D remained true to his self at least for some part or if not the whole. Sethe also fears that she will go mad at the end. Literally, she indeed becomes mad when she kills her own daughter. The only way she could save her daughter from the dehumanising effects of slavery was by killing her.

Unlike classic slave narratives such as Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass's, Morrison depicts more in detail the impacts of slavery by exploring the inner feelings and consciousness of the enslaved individuals rather than portraying some conspicuous incidents, that are common in slave narratives. By seeing and experiencing Sethe's and other character's inner feelings and consciousness, the slaves lives were like and how they struggled to overcome the brutal abuse and oppression of the whites.

The following chapter examines memory functions in a variety of contexts, primarily through personal memory, collective memory, and supernatural remembrance. Rather than an event being remembered through the passing on of stories from generation to generation, anyone can encounter a remembrance. Remembrances play out as a vivid recounting of an event one did not personally experience; Sethe experienced that, and she recollects her memory and brings it out as a hard memory.

## **Chapter Three**

### **History and Memory**

Morrison's *Beloved* reconceptualises American history. Most apparent in the novel is the historical perspective: Morrison constructs history through the acts and consciousness of African American slaves rather than the perspective of the dominant white social classes. But, in *Beloved*, she undergoes historical methodology of another critical shift in that history-making becomes a healing process for the characters, the readers, and the author.

*Beloved* clearly presents, as a novel of remembrance through a stream-of-consciousness technique that provides fragmented and frightening hints, the narrative meanders through the minds of various characters to slowly reconstruct a portrait of the past, both individual and communal. It finally closes on the day of killing, remembered consecutively by three different people, and then moves out again from there to draw the resurrected. The revived history in *Beloved* concerns a dead child. Indeed, the novel's protagonist, who kills one of her daughters in order to save her from a life of slavery, has a historical basis.

Most characters in the novel repress themselves and try not to evoke the painful memories of their pasts, despite the characters' memories intruding into their present lives. Beloved, Sethe and Sethe's long-dead mother entered a closed circle of violence and loss, manifested in the scars that marked each one. The novel is about the dynamics of the characters' efforts that act simultaneously that remember and forget the past. *Beloved* deals with the memories of what people remember and the act of remembering. It proves its effects on the individual psyches of black and white people, as well as the repressed memory of slavery in the make-up of the American nation. Andrews and McKay stated that "Beloved is the forgotten spirit of the past that

must 'be loved' even if it is unlovable and elusive, The line recapitulates the tension between repression and rememory featured throughout the novel. At the same time, the more evident meaning is intensely ironic..." (124).

In Morrison's *Beloved*, mothers have to deal with the memories of a double-sided dilemma represented by being misunderstood by their communities and abused by male enslavers. In this novel, mothers have to deal with the memories of the slave masters look at black women and how they sexually assault them, a fate that Sethe experiences and from which she wants to prevent her daughters. She, therefore, keeps a tough memory, which is reluctant to be articulated. It is the memory that spoils the women psychologically by reducing them to inhuman entities. Many characters in the novel are still haunted by the memory of the past.

Sethe seems locked in memories of her escape from slavery, the failure of her husband, Halle, to show up at the planned time of escape, her murder of her child, and the Kentucky Plantation referred to its benevolent white slave owner as Sweet Home. After years of wandering, one of the Sweet Home men, Paul D, inadvertently arrives on her porch, locked in his guilt, alienation, and shame from the psychic scars of slavery. When Paul D and Sethe become lovers, his arrival initiates the painful plunge into the past through the sharing of their individual stories, memories, and experiences. Unable to tolerate the presence Beloved as ghost, however, he drives it away, only to be driven away himself by his inability to cope with Sethe's obsession with Denver, whom he calls "room-and-board-witch" (193). A bond of affection unites Sethe, Denver, and Beloved until Denver realises that her mother has become oblivious to her and has begun to devote her attention exclusively to Beloved. Denver realises she must abandon the security of home to get help for her mother and to rid their lives of beloved once and for all as she watches her mother deteriorate physically

and mentally in the grips of overwhelming guilt and consuming love. With the help of the black community, she eventually rescues her mother, and Beloved vanishes.

Toni Morrison begins *Beloved* with the sentence, “124 was spiteful” (1). She uses the numbers 1, 2, and 4, and there is a remarkable absence of the number 3. It is so because Sethe’s third child, called Beloved, was killed by her. ‘Spiteful’ here means full of malice or of bitter memories. It is a place where Sethe wants to live with her past. She feels guilty for her act of killing her daughter, Beloved. As a slave narrative, the novel portrays the situation of the common slave. In their slavery days, they didn’t have any right to keep their children; many a time, their children were killed or separated from them by their masters.

Sethe’s daughter, Beloved, returns from the grave after twenty years, seeking revenge for her death. Through the use of flashbacks, fragmented narration, and myth, Morrison details the event that led to the crime and her refusal to seek expiation from the black community. Sethe, the central character in the novel, describes the relationship between the individual and the historical unconscious:

“If a house bums down, it’s gone, but the place - the picture of it stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don’t think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened” (43).

In *Beloved*, Morrison addresses the trauma of remembrance, the problem of exploring how former slaves live with impossible memories that are too painful. They can remember the horror in a manner in which it can be digested, in a manner in which the memory is not destructive. The future was a matter of keeping the past at

bay by beating back the past in order to disremember the traumas and humiliations of Sweet Home and the days she killed Beloved to keep her safe from her school teacher. Paul D, like Sethe, was haunted by memories of Sweet Home, of his failed escape from bondage and the chain gang. They both worked hard at repressing memories and avoiding dangerous talk that might cause them to re-experience the horrors of their enslavement. Thus, when Paul D began telling Sethe the story of an experience with a school teacher, she stopped him, saying,

more might push them both to a place they couldn't get back from. He would keep the rest where it belonged: in that tobacco tin buried in his chest where a red heart used be. Its lid rusted shut. He would not pry it loose now in front of this sweet sturdy woman, for if she got a whiff of the contents it would shame him. And it would hurt her to know that there was no red heart bright as Mister's comb beating in him (86).

While she murdered Beloved to save her from the future, she raises Denver by “keeping her from the past” (51). *Beloved* moves through a series of narrative, starts and stops by complicated Sethe's desire to forget or disremember the past. Sethe tries to keep the information about her infanticide hidden from everyone, including herself, but the nuanced ways in which Sethe's concerted effort to forget is thwarted.

There were several things occurring at once. First, Sethe's verbalization of love triggers her memory of selecting a tombstone for the baby she murdered. The phrase “there it was again” (5) signals that this is a memory that recurs and that brings the ambivalent emotions of consolation and anguish. Second, the memory of tombstone triggers her memory of the shameful circumstances of getting it engraved. In this memory, the reality of gender and oppression converge, for the engraver offers to place seven letters - the name “Beloved” on the headstone in exchange for sex.

Thirdly, this memory raises the issue around which the entire novel is constructed and which is the consequence and responsibility that she must carry for her actions. When Paul D arrives at Sethe's home on 124 Bluestone Road, Denver seeks to frighten this unwanted guest away by telling him they have a "lonely and rebuked" (16) ghost on the premises. The obsolete meaning of rebuked repressed not only suggests that the ghost represents repressed memory, but that, as with anything that is repressed, it eventually resurfaces or returns in one form or another. Paul D's arrival is a return of sorts in that he is reunited with Sethe, his friend, from Mr. Garner's Sweet Home Plantation.

If Sethe's individual memories exist in the world as fragments of a historical memory, then, by extension, the individual process of recollection or rememory can be reproduced on a historical level. It says that the memories of the past in Morrison's *Beloved* are expressed with an idiosyncratic term, rememory, which signifies both verb and noun. It can also refer to the ongoing process of remembering due to the deep impact of the experiences that black people witness, leave them with troubled minds. Sethe's process of healing in *Beloved*, her process of learning to live with her past, the central ritual of healing and Sethe's remembrance of and confrontation with her past ritual of healing correspond to the three sections of the novel. In Part one, first the arrival of Paul D, then of Beloved, forces Sethe to confront her past in her incompatible roles as a slave and a mother. Moving from the fall of 1873 to the winter, the second part describes Sethe's period of atonement, during which she is enveloped by the past, isolated in her house with Beloved, who forces her to suffer over and over again all the pain and shame of the past. Finally, part three is Sethe's ritual clearing, in which the women of the community aid her in casting out the voracious Beloved, and Sethe experiences a repetition of her scene of trauma with a



difference this time she aims her murderous hand at the white man who threatens her child.

In *Beloved*, Morrison employs memory to deconstruct the discourse and history promulgated by the dominant people. By creating the memories of her characters, she revises the history of slavery and reveals its traumatic effects on African who were in America. *Beloved* depicts slavery through the memories of the characters, and as the characters recount their experiences, the telling gives the characters a sense of self as well as subjectivity. Morrison is concerned with the importance of coming to terms with the past in order to reconstruct one's fragmented self. *Beloved* reveals the ex-enslaved people's reconstruction of their body and soul in order to give themselves a new self and a future.

Baby Suggs, memory recollection enables her to construct history in the sense that she reveals what she underwent as a slave woman, a detail not recorded by official history; an aspect silenced by Western discourse. As an unaccounted for, Baby Suggs makes a revelation that is not recorded by modern history: the inhumane treatment of black slaves, the rape of black women by their white owners, and the atrocious abuse of their motherhood. The recollection of her traumatic suffering enables her to participate in the restitution of the official history of slavery.

In *Beloved*, there is a relationship between Beloved's arrival and Sethe's memory. It is only after Beloved's arrival in the house as a young woman that Sethe's painful memories begin to emerge. Beloved compels her to speak those unspoken stories and, in this way, reveal her pain and relieve herself of the burden of the past. Beloved compels Sethe to remember her own mother. Sethe's nameless mother is among the African slaves who experienced the ordeal like Sethe, Sethe herself was also separated from her mother. The cycle of mother-daughter loss, abandonment, and

betrayal is inherent in *Sethe* and *Beloved*. However, *Sethe* does have specific memories about her mother; she remembers the day Ma'am showed her her secret mark on her body:

She picked me up and carried me behind the smokehouse. Back there she opened up her dress front and lifted her breast and pointed under it. Right on her rib was a circle and a cross burnt right in the skin. She said, "This is your ma'am. This," and she pointed, 'I am the only one got this mark now. The rest dead. If something happens to me and you can't tell me by my face, you can know me by this mark'. Scared me so. All I could think of was how important this was and how I needed to have something important to say back, but I couldn't think of anything So, I just said what I thought. 'Yes, Ma'am,' I said. 'But how will you know me? How will you know me? Mark me too,' I said. 'Mark the mark on me too.' (72-73)

They try to escape the history hanging over their heads. Most of them are caught in the extreme burden of history that they want to escape. Souls from the past creep into their lives to make them unstable. To get rid of this instability, the black Americans need to face what they have willingly placed in place to remove. They need to lift the suspension of memory.

According to Khawaja et al., "the apocalyptic trauma is merely a passing state that promises moral rectitude and change in the future" (115). his perspective of considerations of the phrase "not a story to pass on" (323). But she reveals many of the horrible cruelties of slavery inflicted on black people. Basing her novel on a historical incident, Morrison remains the incident and the era and offers us a depiction of blacks' lives during slavery and the Reconstruction era. Through the interior lives

of the characters and their memories, Morrison has created a much more powerful narrative than actual historical documents.

One of the main functions of memory in *Beloved* is evoking the past in the characters' minds. The past's entry into the present is most dramatic when Beloved visits Sethe's home as the reincarnation of the dead daughter. Many critics generally agree that *Beloved* symbolises the reincarnated past returned to the present. *Beloved* serves as a memory as well as a memory-evoking entity, she is for Sethe a site of memory that constantly invokes the memories of her past.

Sethe is forced to confront all of the buried and long forgotten memories that Beloved brings with her. Before that, she firmly believed that Ma'am was physically dead. And she tries to escape from any emotional bond with her dead mother. When her mother was hanged, she didn't know why she was hanged. Probably, it could have been because she was caught in her attempt to escape from the plantation. Sethe buried her memory of the time she was with Ma'am, not because her relationship with her was small and vague but because she doesn't want to remember the pain that goes along with it. Their contact was prohibited by the masters. So, if she remembers Ma'am, she has to believe that her mother deserted her.

When Paul D. insists that Sethe and Denver should leave the haunted house, Sethe responds, "No moving. No leaving. It's all right the way it is" (17). This firm resolution to stay attests to Sethe's will to voice the pain piercing her heart and her soul. The scar the past has left on her is not only psychological but also physical. She tells Paul D: "I got a tree on my back and a haunt in my house, and nothing is between them but the daughter I am holding in my arms. No more running-from nothing. I will never run from another thing on this earth" (18). The tree on her back alludes to the

beating she received at the hands of schoolteacher and other white boys seeking milk from her breast. By then she had just delivered her daughter, Beloved.

As such, Sethe is a captive of the memory of the past. She cannot live in the present, nor can she plan for the future. She fights the power of the past plaguing her present: "Nothing better than that to start the day's serious work of beating back the past" (86). Sethe worked hard to remember as little as possible in order not to be held by the memory of the past. But, no matter how hard Sethe tries to forget her traumatic experiences, the memory of the past haunts and affects her. From the opening of the novel, we are reminded that Sethe is haunted by the spirit of something supernatural her beloved. With the painful memory of her past and the guilt of killing her daughter, Sethe has lived a disrupted life, especially since the spectre of her dead daughter has haunted her place and psyche.

Sethe will never be able to forget the memories of Sweet Home Plantation, where she was enslaved for many years. This place imposes itself on her memory of her sons. It seems that Sethe's memories are mingled with what she has experienced in Sweet Home, when she tries to recall the faces of her boys, the memories of Sweet Home come suddenly to her mind.

Then something. The splash of water, the sight of her shoes and stockings awry on the path where she had thrown them, or Here Boy lapping in the puddle near her feet, and suddenly there was Sweet Home rolling, rolling, rolling out before her eyes, and although there was not a leaf on that farm that did not make her want to scream, it rolled itself out in shameless beauty. (7)

When Sethe tells the story of her and her mother to Denver and Beloved, she is frightened. She finds within herself that she remembers those things that she

doesn't even know she remembers them. She assumes that she forgets everything but it is stored in her subconscious mind. Those pictures and vague words come back in her mind and she realizes that they are inside her. The place which Paul D refers to as the locked or rusted tobacco tin, stores past memories. Those are memories which can never be lost or forgotten from the mind, but at the same time one doesn't wish to acknowledge. She doesn't want to recall them because when she recalls them, she has to recall all the grief and pain associated with it. Although she forgets the exact words from Ma'am, but still the feelings and images are hidden in the deepest recesses of her mind. Sethe is shocked that she can ever find meaning in a code, which she thinks she no longer will remember or understand. Sethe's mother's friend, Nan tells her that she is the only child her mother didn't kill. She memorize days of middle passage like informs Sethe that Ma'am, other children were products of rape, which was committed by white masters on black slave. She hates those children because when she sees them she memorize the traumatic condition which she had to bare during the rape and afterwards. She kills them; it is an expression of anger towards her white masters who raped her. She didn't kill Sethe because she was named after her father. She allows Sethe to survive because it is a pleasurable memory. Nan tells Sethe about those days when her mother and Nan were together from the middle passage. Both were taken up many times by the crew.

She threw them all away but you. The one from the crew she threw away on the island. The others from more whites she also threw away. Without names, she threw them. You she gave the name of the black man. She put her arms around him. The others she did not put her arms around. Never, Never. Telling you. I am telling you, small girl Sethe (74).

Ella, who helped the escaped slaves, also does not feed the child whose white father raped her. Beloved wants to know everything about Sethe. She demands that Sethe should reveal her memory and the story about her life before she arrives at Sweet Home. She wants from Sethe to memorize her African connection, her mother and her final goodbye right after Sweet Home when she cuts the throat of Beloved. She forces Sethe to listen to her own voice and remember her own mother, her mother with that special mark on her body, her native language, dances and songs.

The following chapter will deal with the self identity of women who undergoes sufferings due to racism, which leads to a lifelong sufferings and the way they sacrifice their life for the sake of the white people was explained.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Quest for Self**

When Sethe escapes from Kentucky Plantation with her children, she is chased and captured by the Master of the Sweet Home and his nephews. As she finds the people approaching her to take her children, she attempts to kill them in a woodshed in an effort to save them from being put into slavery again. She succeeds in killing only one of her four children, an 18-month-old “crawling already? girl” (111).

An act of infanticide condemns Sethe, and she is declared a culprit by society. Then Sethe decides to live her isolated life in a house at 124 Bluestone Road with her children. The act of cruelty that took place in Sethe’s life is, moreover, an act that can be analysed on the basis that Sethe has been suffering in her life. The first incident occurs when Mr. Garner, the owner of Sweet Home, dies, and Schoolteacher becomes the new owner. The schoolteacher’s treatment of all slaves is extremely rude, and he treats all black slaves as if they are animals. While teaching his nephews, the teacher puts Sethe on the animal side of the list of features. Sethe many times overheard these lessons. He draws a thick line between an animal and a human being. And for clarifying this, he gives a more obvious example where he classifies Sethe as a representative of the animal. He says, “No, no. That’s not the way. I told you to put her human characteristics on the left and her animal ones on the right. And don’t forget to line them up” (228). Sethe feels humiliated by this unforgettable incident. It also changes Sethe’s approach towards white folks. The example depicts the suffering of the black community, especially the black women, who are ill-treated and suffer more than their counterparts. And this suffering has a psychic and bodily impact on their lives.

Not only this, Sethe is even deprived of the role of being a mother. It is so brutal for her that she has to feed white boys with her own milk rather than feed her own child. And she is humiliated to be in the position of breeder, like an animal feeding a human being. Sethe feels robbed of her identity and sense of self. Even she loses the fundamental essence of a mother. The attacks that happened upon Sethe were common for slaves, and many slaves were victims of such attacks in their lives. They were never seen as people but as an object that could be used for the owner's advantage.

Sethe's husband, Halle, who was too inept to protect her, creates a wrong impression about men. Halle's manliness has proven the stronghold of slavery, and, therefore, Sethe's close relationship with another slave, Paul D., was granted to some extent. Paul D., another slave of Sweet Home, meets Sethe after eighteen years. His appearance in Sethe's life gives a turn to Sethe and her daughter Denver's isolated lives. This gathering can stand in as a substitute for traditional family members, if not for Sethe and Paul D, then at least for Denver. However, Sethe's notion about Paul D fails when he demonstrates his inability to understand Sethe's frustration and her committing such a heinous act of murder.

Paul D. is basically incapable of comprehending the complexity of Sethe's actions. He believes that she should have found a different way. Moreover, Sethe, who hopes desperately for Paul D's support in struggling, is shattered by his reaction. Therefore, Sethe's quest for self gives the aspect that a slave's identity is labelled in the views of white people. Apart from this, the community interprets the dreadful act of Sethe, rather using their opinions than the views of their white masters. Thus, Sethe's act of killing her own child can be understood from two viewpoints. Some critics consider that it is an act of savagery, while others see it as heroic. Sethe's



activity as a heroic revelation of the white idea of slavery. But rather than understanding Sethe's act, the black community rejects her completely: "Those twenty-eight happy days were followed by eighteen years of disapproval and a solitary life" (204).

According to her community, being a member of the group, her act of abolition is unforgivable, and that is why she has been rejected from the community. Her isolated life at 124 Bluestone Road can be understood as an act of redemption for her identity. Sethe closes herself in on those premises 124, which limits her life. She tries to find out how to search for her inner voice and true identity. Throughout the novel, Beloved's obscure identity is mysterious and complex. Beloved is a condensed symbol of the trauma of slavery. She is a psychological construct of a violent event too horrible for the waking state to accept. "Bearing witness to one's own trauma makes and breaks a promise: the promise of the testimony as a realization of the truth" (73).

Beloved, as a ghost and an allegorical figure, has strong and destructive power. It terrorises and damages 124 Bluestone Road. Her appearance drives away Sethe's two sons, Howard and Buglar, and even the family dog. Beloved, a real woman appears in the flesh: "A fully dressed woman walked out of the water. She barely reached the dry bank of the stream before she sat down and leaned against a mulberry tree" (60). She first appears soaked wet, as if a newly born baby, in front of Paul D, Sethe, and Denver as they return from the Carnival. Looking at her, Sethe feels the sensation of her water breaking, as she felt at the time of Denver's birth. The incident depicts that Sethe remembered the birth of her babies and her sensitivity towards the issue of childbirth. Sethe's body senses her baby's surprise just before her mind does so. Beloved plays a vital role in Sethe's life. As far as Sethe's alter ego is

concerned, she constantly unifies her identity with that of her child. Sethe names Beloved without any intention of naming herself after her. When the priest at her child's funeral addresses the living "Dearly Beloved" (5), Sethe believes that the Reverend refers to her dead daughter. And instead of engraving the real name of her child, she engraves "Beloved" on her baby's headstone. The name alludes to both Sethe and the dead, and it also demonstrates how Sethe merges her identity with Beloved. Moreover, Sethe seems devalued and embarrassed by her experience as a slave, and she cannot love Beloved. Therefore, she puts herself into caring for and tendering her children. Her role as a mother becomes her identity. Sethe regards all her children as "the best thing she was, was her children" (296).

Another very important role of Beloved is that she functions as Sethe's alter ego. The book contains a number of monologues of Beloved that reflect upon her alter ego. In general, Beloved's role in the novel is absolutely crucial in the formulation of Sethe's identity. Beloved is a powerful symbol of the link between the present and the past, as well as the ghost of Sethe's murdered daughter. Sethe's identity is formulated through the connection to her past, which she obtains through the ghost of Beloved. Therefore, Sethe's and Denver's lives are connected with the past that is impersonated in Beloved. With the arrival of Beloved, Sethe's wounds caused by slavery opened again. It demonstrates Beloved's sway over Sethe and Denver.

On the other hand, Beloved's negative influence on the main characters is also quite clear. Denver becomes envious of Sethe after the appearance of Beloved and wishes to form a relationship with her sister. It indicates Sethe's desire to restore the broken bond with her daughter and Denver's longing for a sister. Denver first recognises the relationship between Sethe and Beloved: "Sethe was trying to make up for the handsaw; Beloved was making her pay for it. But there would never be an end

to that, and seeing her mother diminished shame and infuriated her” (295). After witnessing Sethe’s breakdown, Denver decides to prevent her, from suffering from the devastating influence that Beloved has on her mother. The very moment when Denver begins to act like an adult can be marked as Denver’s quest for identity. At this particular moment, Denver shoulders the responsibility for her mother and seeks some help within the black community. When the act is taken into consideration, Beloved can be regarded as having a positive effect. In the novel, there are two moments where positive power is especially evident. The first moment takes place when Sethe, Beloved, and Denver go skating together.

Beloved’s other power of evil is further demonstrated when Denver is forced to go outside the four walls to ask for help. This is understood as significant progress in Denver’s maturation. Denver transforms into a woman the moment she begins to participate in society. She also accepts full responsibility for her family’s future. This act can also be perceived as Denver’s quest for identity. In other words, by escaping the walls at 124 Bluestone Road, Denver becomes aware of her place in society. As a result of Denver’s responsibility, Sethe starts to recover mentally. It is activated by the black community, especially by the black women who drive Beloved out of 124 Bluestone Road. Consequently, it is Beloved who provokes Sethe’s inner transformation. Beloved’s disappearance signifies that Sethe is able to be freed and released into the present. One day, Sethe and Denver are taken to the carnival.

During the night, “all the time the three shadows that shot out of their feet to the left held hands. Nobody noticed but Sethe, and she stopped looking after she decided that it was a good sign. A life. Could be” (57). Sethe is emotionally prepared to start a new life and feels the emergency of a family. Indeed, Beloved stands here as

a key element in the construction of Sethe's quest for identity. *Beloved's* appearance is essential for Sethe and Denver in the process of finding themselves.

In *Beloved*, the character of Denver is dynamic and always engaged in searching herself through all efforts. Denver is the daughter of Halle and Sethe Suggs. At the time of escaping from Kentucky Plantation, Sethe was pregnant, and Amy Denver, a white girl, helped her give birth to Denver in a broken canoe on the bank of the Ohio River. Sethe wants to remember Amy Denver's help forever, so she names the baby child after her. Denver can be called a rescued child because, when Sethe killed her first baby girl in a woodshed, she also tried to kill Denver. But she was rescued by a slave man named Stamp Paid. Denver feels lonely in the house at 124 Blue Stone Road after her grandmother, Baby Suggs, dies and her two brothers run away from the house.

Denver's brothers Howard and Buglar run away from the house for two reasons. First, they are terrified by the act of Seth killing their sister. And the second reason is that they feel horrified about the existence of a ghost in that house. Though her brothers run away, Denver never leaves the house. But she remembers her brothers' advice to take care and to protect herself from their mother. Denver appears in the novel when Paul D comes to house 124. She feels that since Paul D has arrived, she is being ignored by her mother.

Even she observes that Sethe and Paul D are only busy remembering the past. Denver says, "How come everybody who run off from Sweet Home can't stop talking about it? Look like if it were so sweet, you would have stayed" (16). Paul D's entrance in 124 Bluestone surprises Denver because, for a long time, she has not seen anyone who wanted to visit that house. Furthermore, she recalls how members of 124 have left it, saying, "All that leaving: first her brothers, then her grandmother-serious

losses since there were no children willing to circle her in a game or hang by their knees from her porch railing” (14-15).

Denver was admitted to Lady Jane’s School for a short time. She remembers that she was happy because she was not so lonely and used to learn how to read and write. But, one day, a young boy, Nelson Lord, asks her whether her mother killed her newborn baby. The teasing question muddles Denver and blocks all her senses. She informs her grandmother, Baby Suggs, of this, and Baby Suggs decides to excuse Denver from school. As a result, Denver’s schooling stops forever. Moreover, Denver’s schooling could help her understand the world better, but it seems the guilt of her mother does not allow unravelling her from the past. Though Denver has no crime for being the daughter of Sethe, she had to remain away from education, which could also help to make her life free.

Denver’s grandmother Baby Suggs dies after a few days when her brothers leave the house. Denver always feels safe in the presence of Baby Suggs. But, after her death, Denver confines herself in 124 Bluestone Road and only remembers the teaching of her grandmother about people and society’s behaviour.

Grandma Baby said people look down on her because she had eight children with different men. Coloredpeople and whitepeople both look down on her for that. Slaves not supposed to have pleasurable feelings on their own; their bodies not supposed to be like that, but they have to have as many children as they can to please whoever owned them. Still, they were not supposed to have pleasure deep down. She said for me not to listen to all that. That I should always listen to my body and love it. (246-247)

Denver learns from Baby Suggs that slaves are obligated to do unwanted and undesired things. Because slaves are exploited and abused for owner's pleasure, they are ashamed after being raped. She also understands and follows Baby Suggs words that she should not worry about happenings but must love her body.

Baby Suggs death disturbs Denver, she blames the whites for the death of the person she loved the most. For Denver, Baby Suggs is the only person she feels secure with. "She had done everything right, and they came into her yard anyway. And she didn't know what to think. All she had left was her heart, and they busted it so even the War couldn't rouse her" (247). Denver's annoyance surges about the whites, and she thinks that they took away the slaves souls more than anything.

Paul D's arrival at 124 Bluestone disappoints Denver because she eagerly waits for her father to come. But she hears that it was not her dad who arrived at her house but Paul D., "I thought it was him, my daddy. Nobody comes to this house anymore. But when I got downstairs, it was Paul D, and he didn't come for me; he wanted my mother" (245). Before Beloved's appearance at 124 Blue Stone Road, Denver hardly knew much about their past because of her mother's inability to recall it. Even she feels left out because she is not involved with anyone. Therefore, it causes her to consume herself in the events of the past. Sethe observes that it is abnormal behaviour for Denver when she speaks about the disappointment of Paul D's arrival. As Sethe knows, Denver is soft-spoken, but she does not understand that her outspoken behaviour comes from her frustration with her ignorance of the past. Therefore, Denver looks away from the rest of the world before Beloved comes.

Most incidents show that Denver's deafness is very powerful. She believes that Beloved got her hearing back, which makes Beloved solve her problems later. Beloved becomes a strong reason to bring back Denver's hearing. She always

considers Beloved a family member, and before Beloved's appearance in 124, she was connected to the spirit of Beloved. She considers the spirit to be both a companion and a protector of her life. Denver adores her mother, but she does not fully trust her because of what her mother did to her older sister. Moreover, she feels it can happen to her too. As a result, she is terrified and sceptical of Sethe's actions, she says, "I love my mother but I know she killed one of her own daughters, and tender as she is with me, I'm scared of her because of it. She missed killing my brothers and they knew it. They told me die-witch! stories to show me the way to do it, if ever I needed to" (242).

This indicates a lack of attachment to former slaves and her children because they are taught not to get attached to anyone. Denver is terrified that Sethe will kill her children again. This doubt makes her constantly aware of her surroundings out of fear of death. When the ghost girl, Beloved, appears in the flesh at 124, Denver shows her commitment to it. Beloved after spending a few days at 124 Bluestone Road, Morrison points out, "Denver was pleased because it kept her patient awake longer" (65). Denver believes it is her responsibility to care for and protect Beloved because she is not only a companion but also a symbol of the real family Denver lacks in her life. Insecurity and disbelief are always with Denver, and she feels unrest from all thoughts about her mother. When Beloved comes to House 124, she becomes Denver's best companion. Therefore, Denver supposes that Beloved must be protected by Sethe. Though Sethe is her mother, she does not feel so. In Denver's solitary thoughts, she says:

there she was. Beloved. Waiting for me. Tired from her long journey back. Ready to be taken care of; ready for me to protect her. This time I have to keep my mother away from her. That's hard, but I have to.

It's all on me. I have seen my mother in a dark place, with scratching noises (243).

Denver believes Beloved's reappearance is solely for her benefit because she recognises Denver's need for her. Denver also focuses more on the present and the possibility of a new life. This prospect of a new life and something to look forward to caused her to grow up. Denver no longer looks to the past but to the future. Denver believes that her father is coming back for Beloved and her. She does not want to believe that Halle left her; rather, she wants to believe her father did not come because he did not wish to come. This is her faith, trust, and love for her father. She perhaps thinks of him more because Baby Suggs passed away and no one remains to care for her and protect her from Sethe. Denver says, "I always knew he was coming. Something was holding him up. He had a problem with the horse. The river flooded; the boat sank and he had to make a new one. Sometimes it was lynch mob or a windstorm. He was coming and it was a secret" (245).

Denver's longing for her father, Halle, focuses on her internal desire for her father's love and company. "He was too good," Halle says of Baby Suggs, "who portrays Halle as someone who can do no wrong. From the beginning, he was too good for the world" (398). Denver is not well aware of the act of killing and the runaway of Halle at the time when her mother was abused by the schoolteacher's nephews. She considers Halle a saviour. She thinks that her father would come back and protect her from the horror she feels at 124 Bluestone Road. From Denver's stream of consciousness, it can be noticed that her experience of slavery is less than others and, therefore, its harshness is not known to her. She believes that slavery is an evil force that killed her sister.



Denver wants to know what slavery is but shows her ignorance about it. It indicates that mere thought cannot tell anyone about the misery of slavery. Denver's imaginary about slavery and ex-slaves demonstrates that her identity is safer than the life of real slaves. She defines it as whatever it is, it comes from outside this house, outside the yard, and it can come right on in the yard if it wants to. Sethe, after losing her jobs, fully engages herself in caring for her daughters, particularly Beloved. Even so, she does not search for another job. Denver notices that the relationships that are developing between Sethe and Beloved are not safe for Sethe. But Denver sees nothing wrong because Sethe is content. Moreover, Beloved's true intention shows that she does not want Denver in Sethe or her relationship. Firstly, Denver wants to stay alert for any sign that Beloved is in danger. But she finds that Beloved's demands are increasing, and Denver finds it to be a threat to Sethe.

Denver's realisation that Beloved is harmful to Sethe shows her maturity. Beloved becomes a reason for Denver to end her childish behaviour and to be a grown-up woman who must take care of her family. So Denver decides to leave the house and go into town. For Denver, another major aspect of achieving self-confidence is the lack of an established family. Slavery imparted everyone's roots and sense of self. It causes every slave to shatter with identities and brings them into the condition of the duality of their identity, where they forget their role in life.

Denver is not a direct sufferer of slavery but seems to compare with what she heard and knew from her grandmother about it. Her understanding enables her to deal with the various challenges she faces. Her search for her personality in the real world gives her a new force to live her life better with some responsibility as a sister, a daughter, and member of the black community. Aside from that, Denver successfully

represents herself in order to reclaim her self-worth and recognition in the eyes of the community.

Baby Suggs questions indicate that slavery had blunt the sense of self of black men and women and even they find it is no use in the old age as they are habituated for that. Nevertheless, she understands the meaning of freeness when she realises her son has more sense of being free than her, “And when she stepped foot on free ground she could not believe that Halle knew what she didn’t; that Halle, who had never drawn one free breath knew that there was nothing like it in this world” (166).

Baby Suggs, then, hinges her physical and spiritual coherence on a connection with the community which, for Morrison, reigns- supreme from any journey towards self. Rather, she pleads for self-assertion with communal overtone. Baby Suggs frees from slavery at the age of sixty. During the years, she is abused and harassed for sex. Her eight children, from six different fathers, a sense that black women are subject of oppressed and sexual abused.

The experience of one’s cohesiveness and reality as oneself is dependent on this primary relationship and on the loving response and recognition from others. Moreover, when Baby Suggs receives her daughter-in-law and four children, she throws a party for all the neighbours and supplies food in such abundance that it stirs up feelings of resentment in the neighbours as if she makes herself better than they are and can afford to be so generous with her sources. After the blackberry party, she smells disapproval because people see her as a very proud woman. Baby Suggs’ fascination with the world of colours withdraws her connection from the community, isolates her from others, and dissolves her for gaining appropriated self.

Sethe points out that Baby Suggs suffered in her lifetime more than she did during her death. She further explains that Baby Suggs did not allow any to love her.

It shows that one who struggles to know herself for a long time and does not find in her life stops searching herself and accepts death as the ultimate search for her identity.

The mere possession of bodily freedom is insufficient for a slave. Along with the freedom of the body, one should be aware of oneself. That is, mastering the body and gaining knowledge of oneself are important factors in life. Having reached her worth, Sethe realises, like others, that she has claimed both her body and herself. Further, it is to be noted that to become masters of themselves, they will have to undergo certain experiences. First, the slaves must undergo certain life restrictions. Secondly, the slaves should define their own identity instead of entrusting and depending on others. Baby Suggs makes an inquiry to the schoolteacher regarding names and terms.

Baby Suggs does not agree with her schoolteacher and tries to maintain her slave identity. That is, she is in search of her own free self. In fact, she is wise enough to recognise that simply changing her name is not enough to achieve self-mastery. She took another step towards claiming her freedom. She studied a number of conceptions of the white community. Having studied, she realised that every black man, black woman, and black child should go as per their realisation.

The limitations and hardships are the centres of women's lives. Morrison aptly shows it through many examples in *Beloved*. Sethe's slave background and the cruelty of murdering her daughter paralysed her. Morrison provides insights not only into the thoughts and actions of these black slaves but also into the structure and working plutocracy that denied them basic human rights, which affect their external behaviour as well as their internal world.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summation**

Morrison is an extraordinary women's activist figure in American modern literature. Her distinction lies in the depiction of black society in America. Her female characters can be witnesses supporting her work. Morrison demonstrates her outrage by having sexist and supremacist ideas in connection to the white group. She concentrates on ethnic social incentive as a community for the entire black group, a group that needs societal support and imperativeness. They require a place where womanhood can be drilled like whatever is left of the female, notwithstanding race, gender, and sexual orientation.

Race is just a while later clarification for the mistreatment of African individuals. Without a doubt, at that point, Morrison's inclination of area is pertinent in taking shape the way of the African's abuse, for the financial premise of both race and sexual orientation persecution is unsecured in slavery. The author's women's activist cognizance is known for its unique broadness through the delineation of Sethe. She prescribes in the novel that joining the class battle contrary to private enterprise is the simply useful answer likely for the African individuals in the white-ruled American culture. It finds the most oppressed period of subjection ever. Subsequently, the creator has brilliantly achieved something in her push to make this novel undeniably political and irreversibly striking. It is a striking narrative line concerning the perseverance of the legacy of slavery.

At the outset, she weaves the issues and challenges of African American struggles physical and psychological traumas that are the residue of slavery, racism, low status in history, etc. and shows how her black female characters can lose their

sense of who they are in extreme situations. Sometimes the quest in search of self-identity becomes successful, as in the case of Sethe in *Beloved*. Though it is with the community's help that Sethe gets back to herself and the ghost of Beloved is drawn away by the village women.

The black female protagonists face the dilemma of the restrictions placed on their freedom stemming from the source of their existence. Morrison looks at personal relationships between men and women from a black feminine perspective and, at the same time, tries to comprehend the fury, frustration, and anger of the blacks.

Black women were seen as white men's property, and he could do whatever he pleased with them; rape became an entrenched aspect of plantation life. The black woman belonged to the animal species and therefore needed not be accorded the courtesies due to human beings. The quest of the black female character is not only external but also internal. The characters strive to unravel the complexities of their racial identity and gender issues. The brutal racist system shapes their individuality and lives. The imposing patriarchal system is also emphasized in this novel. She wants her characters to emerge from the traditional roles assigned to them and become aware of their selves and identities. She believes that a black woman can change the world by redefining herself and rewriting her blackness. Thereby, we show the beauty of being black. Surrounded by poverty, oppression, abuse, and struggles for liberation, black women face innumerable and significant challenges at both a personal level and in terms of their socioeconomic status. In this novel, the black female protagonist faces an internal journey to discover her authentic black female self.

The deeply rooted African American issue of colour has left its impact on black women writers such as Morrison. In an environment filled by centuries of violent oppression, inequality, and injustice, Morrison believes that continuity between past and present is crucial because it creates bonds, mutual obligations, and a shared communal history of struggle. Though black women's lives as slaves robbed them of their awareness of their homeland, culture, and language, residues of them preserved in the memories and their indomitable pride in their race got expressed consciously or unconsciously through subdued or subtle voices. The black female characters by and large attempt to discover their own selves in the course of their lives. The novels are contextualized in the history of African Americans, past, present, and taking a tentative leap towards the future. They operate within the framework of slavery, reconstruction, world war, depression, feminist movements, capitalist America, etc. For Morrison, black American history is not only a means for reclaiming their black cultural past and forging an identity, but also a means of re-examining it to provide a corrective as against the distortion of it by the whites. And as a black woman and as a woman, it becomes imperative for her to rewrite American history from a black woman's perspective, forging a voice and an identity out of a confrontation with mainstream cultural discourses. Morrison believes that the reclamation of the history of black people is of paramount importance, and that debating the documented history is what is called for. Being a woman, she looks minutely upon black women's issues and their roles. It is one of the reasons women are centered, and the self becomes central to Morrison's concern. She endeavors to create a concordant African American female identity. Therefore, the black female characters evolve out of a black culture, even as they question it for their own

marginalization and exploitation. The characters subvert the racist white cultural domination and the stereotypes by forging an independent self-identity.

*Beloved* demonstrates how history is not over and done with. By giving voice to previously silenced stories told by women who have little power over their lives' destinies, Morrison allows us to re-vision history. This novel is Morrison's attempt as a writer to analyze the devastation of slavery on vulnerable blacks. Morrison retells history through the lives of ordinary people, with female characters who struggle in a world created for the convenience of others. This novel explores the emotional legacy of slavery among black people in the United States. Set in the years before, during, and after the American Civil War, it centers on three generations of black women: Baby Suggs, Sethe, and Denver.

In *Beloved*, Morrison presents the maternal bonds that connect Sethe to her children and inhibit her own individuation and development. Sethe develops a dangerous maternal passion that results in the murder of one daughter, her own best self, and the estrangement of the surviving daughter from the black community, both in an attempt to salvage her 'fantasy of the future', her children, from a life in slavery. However, Sethe fails to recognise her daughter Denver's need for interaction with this community in order to enter womanhood. Denver finally succeeds at the end of the novel in establishing her own self and embarking on her individuation with the help of her beloved. Contrary to Denver, Sethe only reaches individuation after Beloved's exorcism, at which point Sethe can fully accept the first relationship that is completely her relationship with Paul D.

This relationship relieves Sethe from the ensuing destruction of herself that resulted from the maternal bonds controlling her life. Beloved and Sethe are both very

much emotionally impaired as a result of Sethe's previous enslavement. Slavery creates a situation where a mother is separated from her child, which has devastating consequences for both parties. Often, mothers do not know themselves to be anything except a mother, so when they are unable to provide maternal care for their children or their children are taken away from them, they feel a lost sense of self. Similarly, when a child is separated from his or her mother, he or she loses the familial identity associated with mother-child relationships. Sethe was never able to see her mother's true face because her smile was distorted from having spent too much time, so she wasn't able to connect with her own mother and therefore does not know how to connect with her own children, even though she longs to.

The earliest need a child has is related to the mother; the baby needs milk from the mother, Sethe is traumatised by the experience of having her milk stolen because it means she cannot form the symbolic bond between herself and her daughter. Due to the painful nature of their experiences in slavery, most slaves repressed these memories in an attempt to leave behind a horrific past. This repression and dissociation from the past cause a fragmentation of the self and a loss of true identity. Sethe, Paul D, and Denver all experience this loss of self, which could only be remedied by the acceptance of the past and the memory of their original identities. *Beloved*, serves to open these characters up to their repressed memories, eventually causing the reintegration of their selves. Slavery splits a person into fragmented figures. The identity, consisting of painful memories and an unspeakable past, denied and kept at bay, becomes a self that is no self. To heal and humanise it, one must constitute it in a language, reorganise the painful events, and retell the painful memories. As a result of suffering the self, subject to a violent practise of making and unmaking, the self, once acknowledged by an audience, becomes real. Sethe, Paul D,



and Babby Suggs, who all fall short of such realisation, are unable to ‘remake’ their ‘slaves’ by trying to keep their pasts at bay. All of the characters in *Beloved* face the challenge of an unmade self; composed of their ‘remembrances’ of the self is the desire for an ‘uncomplicated past’ and the fear that remembering will lead them to a place they can’t get back from.

Despite its popularity and status as one of Morrison’s most accomplished novels, *Beloved* has never been universally hailed as a success. The novel is an exploration of family, trauma, and the repression of memory, as well as an attempt to restore the historical record and give voice to the collective memory of African Americans. Indeed, critics and Morrison herself have indicated that the controversial epitaph to *Beloved*, “Sixty Million and More”, is drawn from a number of studies on the African slave trade, which estimate that approximately half of each ship’s “cargo” perished in transit to America.

*Beloved* is haunted by the loss of her African parents and thus comes to believe that Sethe is her mother. Sethe longs for her dead daughter and is rather easily convinced that Beloved is the child she has lost is such an interpretation. House contends to clear up many puzzling aspects of the novel. Just as Morrison blurs the boundaries between metaphorical and actual rape, she conflates the metaphorical battle of a woman fighting her demons into a literal confrontation. Morrison does so by creating tangible equivalents of the psychosomatic symptoms and by emphasising Morrison’s concern with familial ties.

*Beloved* is the narrative of a black female slave, Sethe, who becomes conscious of her subhuman position on the Sweet Home Plantation, which confidentially forces her to expand a pursuit for sovereignty. The novel is based on a newspaper clipping about a fugitive slave in Ohio who killed her own infant rather

than see her return to bondage in the South. In the novel, gender oppression is not an observable problem that subsists between African men and women, but is one that exists within the context of an economic relationship between master and slave. Race is simply an afterthought explanation for the oppression of the African people. Undoubtedly, then, Morrison's preference of location is irrelevant in crystallising the nature of the African's oppression, for the economic basis of both race and gender oppression is unobscured in slavery. The novelist's feminist consciousness is known as an original breadth through the depiction of Sethe. She recommends in the novel a united class struggle in opposition to capitalism as the merely practical answer likely for the African people in the white-dominated American society. It discovers the most subjugated phase of slavery in the history of Africans.

Consequently, the author has luminously accomplished something in her effort to make this novel indisputably political and irreversibly striking. It is a striking storyline concerning the endurance of the inheritance of slavery. It is as well a narrative of the origins of a culture and of a people whose livelihoods depend on the periphery of life and death. They have administered to produce that culture and to keep their past alive. Morrison's awkward concern in the carnival of black women's potency, their values, and beliefs, shoots from a longing to correct the incorrect that have been historically levelled against black women. She inquires about how to rejoice the legends of black women like Baby Suggs and Sethe and interlace their dreams into myths that tolerate us to recuperate their history.

The narrative becomes the conscious novel. It creatively embellishes an unforgettable blend of past and present experiences. It narrates various extensive flashbacks that centre on several facets of the slave era of American history: the

horrors of the Middle Passage, the lives of slaves on a plantation, and the impact of the Fugitive Slave Act.

The character of Beloved is a place of play where the subjugation of the past and the condition of opportunity in the present crumple. She is killed by her mom to set her aside from the unpleasantness of bondage. Her passing is a direct result of one side of the pairing. When she arrives at 124 as the young female, she makes the fleeting pair crumple. She makes Sethe remember her mom and the overlooked African language of her youth. Sethe at first declines to acknowledge Beloved as her dead infant and, in like manner, denies the past for the reason of her maternal blame. Be that as it may, in doing so, she is in this world where she is distracted by the past. For the time of her life at 124, and beloved systems a sort of rise inside which the past and the present are one, and old damages are called forward, recalled, and put to rest.

The enslavement of Africans dehumanized them to such an extent that the feasibility of fostering a family was a bleak possibility for them. Husbands and wives, parents and children were violently snatched away from each other. *Beloved* shows how the anti-family system of slavery makes it impossible for the black family to play its role of imparting emotional and material support and shaping the identity of its members.

The black male slaves reacted with deep humiliation and outrage at the sexual violence of their women, which resulted in their psychological emasculation. Halle's act of smearing butter all over his face indicates his psychotic reaction to his role as a mute and helpless witness to the sexual violence done to his wife by the nephews of the schoolteacher. Morrison severely castigates white men for believing "that slave women are not mothers; they are 'nasally dead,' with no obligations to their offspring

or their own parents” (258). Slave children were unable to develop emotional bonding with their mothers because they were weaned as early as two to three weeks after birth.

The female slave’s role under slavery was that of a profit-making machine, and it was only incidentally that she was a wife, mother, and homemaker. With an emasculated father and an ever-absent mother, the black family failed miserably to play its role as a basic socialization unit for the black child under slavery. Morrison’s fiction is a testimony to the Miltonic spirit of black mothers, evidenced in their heroic efforts to keep afloat the tenuous structure of their families. The mothers in Morrison’s canon possess physical and emotional regenerative powers crucial to the very survival of the black family. They circumnavigate the deluge of oppression even at the cost of their lives to ensure the survival of their brood.

These black women are towering pillars of strength for their families. They understand the historical contingencies that curbed their own potential as well as that of their men. Sethe shows superhuman will in her successful but tortuous attempt to smuggle her children to freedom and safety. Her stubborn motherly love will not allow her children to suffer the dehumanisation caused by slavery. Sethe’s strong maternal instinct impels her to slit Beloved’s throat to save her from the horrendous life of slavery.

Morrison shows the existence of a strong symbiotic relationship between family and community. The black community, with its powerful presence, saves Sethe’s life by exorcising the ghost of Beloved at the climactic conclusion of the novel. The exorcism saves the family from dissolution and initiates its members into the community.

Morrison tries to convey the idea that a mother should be treated as a subject, a person with her own needs, feelings, and interests. To endure those feelings of pain and torture from the family or patriarchal system is not positive for a mother. By accepting the pain, the selfless mother will make the dominant male more controlling towards her and also make herself more tortured. Physical and sexual torture causes psychological injuries to women. She does not only write to the black community, but she brings the subject matter of real race relations and racial history to the forefront of the American literary conscience. In order to underscore the tragic effect and victimization of racism and sexism, Morrison creates female characters, who, in striving for some sense of identity and autonomy, are made isolated by community members who wish to uphold a standard of normality. When faced with such isolation, the characters feel alienated from society.

The novel weaves their memories as they come to terms with their personal and collective past. Sethe, the protagonist, commits infanticide to save her daughter from a fate worse than death. Toni Morrison's concerns bear witness to the forgotten or erased past of African Americans. In her narrative, Morrison calls attention to the way she engenders her characters in order to dramatize what she perceives as perhaps the cruelest legacy of slavery an alienation even from the self. Sethe's search for meaning and wholeness in slavery and in liberty is explored in this novel. Morrison uses *Beloved* as a vehicle to propose solidarity as the remedy for African Americans. The novel concludes that at the end, Sethe not only subverts the stereotype image forced on her but also constructs self-realization.

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**From Personal Shame to Post-apartheid Regrets: An Analysis of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

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**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **From Personal Shame to Post-apartheid Regrets: An Analysis of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*** 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 Jessy, S during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **From Personal Shame to Post-apartheid Regrets: An Analysis of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgraces*** 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**

*S. Jessy*  
**Jessy. S**

**April 2023**

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## Preface

The project entitled **From Personal Shame to Post-apartheid Regrets: An Analysis of J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*** analyses the life and thoughts of the fifty-two-year-old protagonist David Lurie as he's forced to face himself and reckon with his feelings about women, sex, race, age, and power after his sexual affair with a young student leads to his downfall. It highlights the political issues as main focus which are concerned with South-African apartheid system of racial isolation.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of African Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Subjugation of Women** explores how women of different races and classes experience different forms of oppression. The incidents in the novel highlight the vulnerability of women in a society where they are often seen as objects to be controlled and dominated.

The third chapter **Racial Identity Crisis** shows the struggle of a white man David Lurie and his daughter in the quest of their lost identity being the victim of racial revolt and sexual assault.

The fourth chapter **Post-apartheid Challenges** focuses the legacy of apartheid and its impact on the lives, which forces the people to give up their land and leave South Africa.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Contemporary literature is defined as literature written after the end of World War II in 1945. Postmodern literature was written roughly 1945 to 1980. Popular literature developed its own genres such as fantasy and science fiction. Later it paved the way for many literature such as American literature, Australian literature, African literature, Caribbean literature and so on.

African Literature, the body of traditional, oral and written literatures in Afro-Asiatic and African languages together with works written by Africans in European languages. Traditional written literature which is limited to a smaller geographic area than is oral literature is most characteristic of those sub-Saharan cultures that have participated in the cultures of the Mediterranean. In particular, these are written literatures in both Hausa and Arabic, created by the scholars of what is now northern Nigeria, and the Somali people have produced a traditional written literature.

The relationship between oral and written traditions and in particular the literatures is one of great complexity and not a matter of simple evolution. Modern African literatures were born in the educational systems imposed by colonialism, with models drawn from Europe rather than existing African tradition. But the African traditions exerted their own influence on these literatures.

After World War II, as Africa began demanding its independence, more African writers were published. Such writers as, in western Africa, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ousmane Sembene, Kofi Awoonor, Agostinho Neto, Tchicaya u tam'si, Camera Laye, Mongo Beti, Ben Okri, and Ferdinand Oyono and, in eastern Africa, Ngugi wa Thiong'o , Okot p'Bitek , and Jacques Rabemananjara produced poetry,

short stories, novels, essays and plays. All were writing in European languages, and often they shared the same theme, the clash between indigenous and colonial culture, condemnation of European subjugation, pride in the Africa past, and hope for the continent's independent future.

In 1910, after years of conflict and warfare, the Afrikaner community and the British established a nation-state called the Union of South Africa. The national party was formed by the Afrikaners, while the British constituted by the South African Party. These two parties shared power until 1948, when the National Party won the General election. The Afrikaners immediately established the policy known as apartheid, which means Apartness in Afrikaans. Every population group considered non-European by the government was governed separately and subordinated at every level to white South Africans.

However, as liberation groups grew in strength around the globe in the 1960s, the resistance movement in South Africa gained strength. Steven Biko led the South African Students Organisation (SASO) to form the Black People's Convention in 1972. This group helped to launch the Black consciousness movement. Then, in 1976, a revolt by students in Soweto against an offensive educational system spread like wildfire throughout the country. In 1997, organizations associated with the black consciousness movement were banned, and many of the people involved were put into jail or forced into exile.

During the final years of the apartheid era and subsequent transition to democracy, South African writers responded to the ever-present political turmoil and its daily effects on the people of the country. They chronicled or satirized state enforced racism and explored the possibilities of resistance. Literature that embraces these issues

helped to shape definitions of ethnic identity and national unity. Apartheid and post-apartheid literature have become political narratives initiating a closer look at the juxtaposition of writing and ethics.

With liberation and increased literacy since most African nations gained their independence in the 1950s and 1960s, African literature has grown dramatically in quantity and in recognition, with numerous African works, appearing in Western academic curricula and on “best of” lists compiled since the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. African writers in this period wrote both in Western and in traditional African languages such as Hausa.

In all the genres, postcolonial hybridity such as glossing, abrogation and linguistic pluralism features. The multiplicity of thematic preoccupations and executions in post-apartheid South African literature illustrates how political change affects the country’s literacy expression. This multiplicity occasioned by the new political realities, defines the new political realities, defines the new trajectory South African literature.

J.M. Coetzee, in full John Maxwell Coetzee, South African novelist, critic, and translator noted for his novels about the effect of colonization. His father worked for government and also was a sheep farmer. When Coetzee was eight, his father lost the job due to differing views from the apartheid government. Then the family moved to Worcester. He emigrated to Australia in 2002, where he has an honorary position at the University of Adelaide. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 2003 and knighted in the Order of the Dutch Lion in 2010. Coetzee has also been active as a translator of Dutch and Afrikaans. J.M. Coetzee is known for his portrayal of his native country both during and after apartheid. His postcolonial orientation draws upon myth

and allegory as freely as it does realism. Coetzee is further distinguished by his acute awareness of marginalization, his affinity for rural settings, and his unique take on ethnolinguistic identity.

Kafka strongly influenced J.M. Coetzee. Coetzee has revisited authors of the past, rewriting Robinson Crusoe as *Foe* from the female castaway's point of view and reimagining Dostoevsky in the *Master of Petersburg*. Author Rian Malan describes Coetzee as A man of almost monish self-discipline and dedication.

J.M. Coetzee is a writer who is strongly influenced by his own personal background of being born and growing up in South Africa. Although a white writer living in South Africa during apartheid, Coetzee grew to believe in and write with strong anti-imperialist feelings. Many of Coetzee's personal experienced and beliefs can be seen in his works. Coetzee also writes about the laws that divided himself and others into racial categories that served to further alienate him.

Despite the acclaim that Coetzee has received, both in South Africa and outside it, his fiction has been slow to attract sustained critical attention. Coetzee's novels deal with the sufferings that human beings inflict on one another, where as agents of the state or as the victims of their own obsessions. Colonialism and its legacy form the basis for much of his fiction. Also permitting his work is the issue of the treatment of animals and the perception of difference in the rights of humans and the rights of animals, a perception that Coetzee often Challenges. Coetzee is known for his portrayal of his native country both during and after apartheid. His postcolonial orientation draws upon myth and allegory as freely as it does realism.

Teresa Dovey sees in J.M. Coetzee's novels a fusion of novelistic and critical discourses. They are criticism-as-fiction or fiction-as-criticism. In 1988 the first full-



length study appeared, Teresa Dovey's *The Novels of J.M. Coetzee: Lacanian Allegories*. Dovey points out that his books are remarkable for their brainy women who speak to their children about literature, philosophy, theory. She was the one who was the first to notice that Coetzee's novels did theory on themselves.

Tony D'Souza, a novelist, continues the NBCC's *In Retrospect* series, with an essay on J.M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace* (1999). Souza says that, *Disgrace* is a pitiless and errorless book about the condition of the human experience at the end of the twentieth century; while not altogether without hope, the book and its condemnation of the basic state of modern humanity. Boyd Tonkin, an English writer, journalist and literary critic and also the literary editor of *The Independent* newspaper acclaimed that *Disgrace* is A masterpiece, perhaps the best novel to carry off the Booker in a decade. Paul Bailey, an English author praised the novel that, *Disgrace* is a subtle, multi-layered story, as much concerned with politics as it is with the itch of male flesh. Coetzee's prose is chaste and lyrical and it is a relief to encounter writing as quietly stylish as this'.

Coetzee began writing fiction in 1969. His first book, *Dusklands*, was published in the South Africa in 1974. *In the Heart of the Country*(1977) won South Africa's then principal literary award, the CNA prize, and was published in Britain and the USA. *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980) received international notice. His reputation was confirmed by *Life & Times of Michael K* (1983), which won Britain's Booker prize. *The Childhood of Jesus* (2013), *The School Days of Jesus* (2016), *The Death of Jesus* (2019).It was followed by *Foe* (1986), *Age of Iron* (1990), *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), and *Disgrace* (1999), which won the Booker Prize.

Coetzee also wrote two fictionalized memoirs, *Boyhood* (1997) and *Youth* (2002). *The Lives of Animals* (1999) is a fictionalized lecture, later absorbed into *Elizabeth Costello* (2003). *White Writing* (1988) is a set of essays on South African literature and culture. *Doubling the Point* (1992) consists of essays and interviews with David Attwell. *Giving Offense* (1996) is a study of literary censorship. *Stranger Shores* (2001) collects his later literary essays.

The two phases of Coetzee's career can be roughly divided based on his relationship to South Africa. The first phase lasts through the last years of apartheid and the presidency of Mandela, culminating in the publication of *Disgrace* in 1999. The second phase is on-going since he has been a citizen since 2002. It seems apparent that *Disgrace* is the final novel that derives most of its ideological and narrative intensity from the need to resist colonial violence and pressures of the apartheid state.

The Australian phase novels and autobiographies are much more focused on literary and ethical concerns. Coetzee was always an opponent of apartheid and the Nationality Party in general, but he chose to deal with politics in his works obliquely, unlike other South African writers and intellectuals, such as Nadine Gordimer. The key quote to help understand this perspective was given in a 1987 interview during the death throes of apartheid.

In times of intense ideological pressure like the present when the space in which the novel and history normally coexist like two cows on the same pasture, each minding its own business, is squeezed to almost nothing, the novel, it seems to me, has only two options which is supplementarity or rivalry. For Coetzee, the role of literature is too important to allow it to merely supplement politics. In his eyes it is necessary for novelists, and artists in general to create their own reality and history that challenges

real-world events on its own terms, and, one assumes, striving for universality and timelessness that are beyond the province of merely history or politics.

Coetzee has gained many awards throughout his career. The novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* was awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1980 and three times winner of the CNA Prize. *Age of Iron* was awarded the The Sunday Express Book of the Year award, and *The Master of Petersburg* was awarded the Irish Times International Fiction prize in 1995. He has also won the French Femina Prize, the Faber memorial Award, the Commonwealth Literary Award, and in 1987 won the Jerusalem Prize for literature on the freedom of the individual in society. He was the first author to be awarded the Booker Prize twice for *Life & Times of Michael K* in 1983, and *Disgrace* in 1999. Coetzee was awarded the Order of Mapungubwe by the South African government for his “exceptional contribution in the field of literature and for putting South Africa on the world stage”. In 2003 he won Nobel Prize for Literature.

In *Duskland* (1974) he juxtaposes a parody of a project report on the Vietnam War and an early explorer’s journal of wagon trip to South Africa’s semi-desert Northern Cape .It is a critique of the violence inherent in the colonialist and imperialist mentality of the Western world. In the *Heart of the Country* (1977) is a critique of colonial pastoral writing. It is written in the form of a diary kept by a young woman on a sheep farm. It is a work of irresistible power. *The Master of Petersburg* (1994) is set in St. Petersburg and narrated by Dostoevsky. In it Coetzee dealt directly with circumstances in contemporary South Africa. It is a well plotted literary thriller with lots of dramatic situations unfolding simultaneously like a murder mystery, an extra-marital affair and the death of a child. Coetzee’s *Foe* (1986) turned to *Robinson Crusoe* for inspiration, writing the narrative from the perspective of the mute Friday, Crusoe's slave whose tongue has been cut out. It makes him move to an international

arena as he tests the limits of the discourses of post-modernism, post-colonialism, feminism and the possibilities of talking about the victims of colonization without speaking for them. *Summertime* is as much about the genre as it is about identity; therefore, its unique use of life-writing must be understood even before examining how it creates identity. *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), in which Coetzee explored the themes of colonialism. *Life and Times of Michael K* details the protagonist's difficult childhood and his dangerous journey from Cape Town to the rural village where his mother was born during a fictional civil war that broke out during the apartheid era. *Age of Iron* (1990) is a self-reflexive narrative of marginal woman. In it he gives a picture of social and political tragedy in a country ravaged by racism and violence. Through this he reacts against the tyrannies of his time and cruelty of apartheid South Africa.

J.M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* is about a lot of things, but at its heart it is an anatomy of racial hierarchy change in contemporary South Africa. A very quiet side note to this is its analysis of man's disgraceful treatment of animals. *Disgrace* is a pitiless and errorless book about the condition of the human experience at the end of the twentieth century; while not altogether without hope, the book and its title is a condemnation of the basic state of modern humanity. At the time of its publication, *Disgrace* was lauded primarily as a searing examination of racial tension and the legacy of apartheid in South Africa, a contemporary classic of postcolonial literature.

The novel revolves around the life of David Lurie, a South African professor of English. A divorcee with an active sexual life, Lurie invites trouble when he starts having an intimate relationship with one of his own students. It is Melanie Issacs who leads him to his disgrace as she presses sexual assault charges on Lurie. Lurie eventually resigns and goes to Eastern Cape to reside with his daughter Lucy. Country

life seems promising to Lurie until the father-daughter duo becomes a victim of a terrible attack by three men. The men attempt to kill Lurie by burning him and rape his daughter. They also kill their dogs and steal Lurie's car.

Lucy, who does not want to report the rape to the police, is bound to live with her disgrace-her ravaged body. She eventually becomes withdrawn, taking no interest in her farm and the chores that earlier kept her occupied. Despite Lurie's repeated persuasions, Lucy refuses to press charges of rape on three men. The father-daughter relationship eventually changes for the worse and Lurie decides to return to Cape Town.

Towards the end of the novel, Lurie returns to his daughter's farm to find out that she is pregnant by one of the rapists. She refuses to terminate her pregnancy. David understands that Lucy will eventually be forced into marrying Petrus, an acquaintance, and a helper at the farm, and therefore, resigning to her fate. Lurie seems to mature beyond his exploitative view of women. In recognizing the right of Lucy to choose her course in life, he finally puts their strained relationship on a more equal footing first time in his relationships with women. His pursuit of a sexual relationship with Bev Shaw also marks something of a path toward personal salvation, by annihilating his sexual vanity and his sense of superiority. The attack on Lurie and Lucy by the three men really becomes the turning point in this novel. The scene holds significance for a number of reasons. The attack on the father- daughter duo wasn't a personal one. Rather, it was an attack on White supremacy. For them, Lurie and Lucy are representatives of the whites.

This explains why the men chose to kill the dogs. In the past, black men were taught to fear dogs during the apartheid. Dogs were supposed to be symbols of white

power and oppression. The issues in this novel deal with many of the contemporary concerns of South Africa. *Disgrace* portrays the black-brighten picture of the South African society with a different note where the whites are the oppressed and marginalized section of the community, and where the hunter became the hunted. The following chapter deals with Subordination of Women.

## **Chapter Two**

## **Subjugation of Women**

One is not born, but rather becomes woman. No biological, psychic or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female takes on in society; it is civilization as a whole that elaborates this intermediary product between the male and the eunuch that is called feminine (The *Second Sex* 330)

When a child is born, there is no difference between the sexes in terms of what they are capable of. Differentiation begins when boys are told of their superiority and how they need to prepare for the difficult, heroic path in life. Pride in his sex is pointed out to him by adults. The girl's sexual anatomy does not receive the same reverence. When a girl becomes mature she realises that it is no privilege to be the mother, as men control the world. This revelation helps her to understand that a father's life has a mysterious prestige.

Man is always the subject and woman is always the object or 'Other'. Man is seen as the superhero, who has identity and exists independently and woman is considered as the subordinate, dependent on the subject. The object is observed and the subject is the observer. The subject takes action and the object is acted upon.

The woman's character is moulded by her situation. Women are not socially independent. Woman's inferiority in society is a result not of natural differences but of differences in the upbringing of man and woman. Male domination is not inherent or fated but conditioned at every stage of development. Man learns his power and woman is not born passive, mediocre or immanent. Rather, she is socialized to believe that a woman must embody these characteristics and she is conditioned to believe that denying her true self is the only way to achieve happiness and gain acceptance.

Coetzee's *In the Heart of the country* (1977) scrutinizes the evidence of patriarchal suppression in Afrikaner society and its consequences on the life of woman. In the novel, Magda's father the oppressive patriarchal order and Magda's struggle stands for self-expression. Magda uses the language that doesn't reject the historical and cultural definition of female subjectivity. In his paper, Kehinde (2006) reported that Magda stands for the standard of Coetzee's radical woman who reverses an apathetic portrayal of women reflecting a Freudian justification for her predicament shedding light on public dilemma and her personal experience.

Magda suffers from deep sense of alienation caused by the inability to capitulate her role as submissive daughter who is responsible to fulfil the requirements related to the Afrikaner woman. The novel represents the patriarchal norms of considering women as a subordinates with a particular position in the social order. Magda status is reflected through her melancholic soliloquy when she says:

His land is full of melancholy spinsters like me, lost to history, blue as roaches in our ancestral homes, keeping a high shine on the copperware and laying in jam. Wooed when we were little by our masterful father, we are bitter vestals spoiled for life. The childhood rape. (2)

In the novel *Disgrace*, Coetzee describes the social changes that took place after the apartheid policy abolition. Coetzee depicts the social change that had occurred after the policy of apartheid was abolished. Through this novel he deals with social issues prevalent during Post-apartheid era especially that which concerned race and gender. Inequality in male-female relationships and the existence of patriarchal cum racist stereotypes were a common feature in South Africa. J.M.Coetzee introduces the protagonist David Lurie, who is fifty-two years old and divorced, as a womanizer. He



is an exploiter and an extremely selfish man. For almost a year, he regularly visits Soraya, a professional prostitute. His life has become quite monotonous and mechanical, but at the same time she gives him satisfaction. “Technically he is old enough to be her father; but then technically, one can be a father at twelve” (1).

For David in the microcosm and for most men in the macrocosm, this remark is iconic. They yearn for younger girls despite their own age. David Lurie has always enjoyed young women like his daughter Lucy, therefore at first he goes Soraya comes first, then Melanie. When things go bad, David Lurie, who has been divorced five times, still visits Rosalind, his ex-wife at her home. He puts it as “someone to count on when the worst arrives; the fall in the bathroom the blood in the stool” (43).

His solution to the sex issue is that he is not married. He is a womaniser, which is the cause of the breakdown of his marriage. He believes “a woman’s beauty does not belong to her alone. It is part of the bounty she brings into the world. She has a duty to share it more widely” (16).

He is not happy with his marital partner’s sexual life. He yearns for a sexual fulfilment that his marriage does not provide. He gains with women about his daughter’s age, first Soraya and then Melanie, for sex and fulfilment.

David’s family was shattered; therefore he spent his youth in a big joint family with his mother, aunt, and sisters. He to divorced five times in the second half of his life. He thinks that being around ladies has turned him into a womaniser and made him lover of women. He needed ladies like Soraya for a while now, even if only for ninety minutes a week, to satisfy his physical cravings. On the other hand, Soraya is married and has kids, but her husband does not know much about who she is outside the home. Although deemed a career, prostitution was not a socially acceptable practise. Instead

of being acceptable and respectable, it was still considered taboo. In a patriarchal environment where Soraya lived, prejudices based on patriarchy harm women. Soraya worries that her husband's dominance as a man will be threatened. He learns that his wife is taking use of her sexuality for someone than him. She tries to cover up both her spouse and her clients knew who she was.

The paradox of seeming freedom and vulnerability is captured in Coetzee's *Disgrace*. Soraya battles racial and male oppression as well as other forms of abuse. Soraya and Melanie, two ebony women, contend with predatory males like David who has a habit of approaching the people he wants to be with. By doing this, he abuses not only in their race but also their gender and sexual orientation.

Soraya is a victim of oppression brought on by business and white men. She receives only half of what she is due for the services she provides. The company she works for, *Discrete Escorts*, takes the other half. They don't see her as a person, just an item, whose utility is what matters to them. ".....in a sense they own Soraya too, this part of her function" (2).

After all, Soraya lives in a patriarchal society where men are the only ones with authority and women are constantly afraid of and subservient to them. The novel's impact on private spaces being invaded and inter-racial relationships produce tension.

Melanie replaces Soraya in his not long after she leaves. She attends his university as a student and is thirty years her senior. With wine and music, he attempts to win her over. She hears him tell her that she should let others enjoy her attractiveness. Before she sees it, he forces himself on her once more.

On Sunday morning he drives to the empty campus and lets himself into the department office, from the filing cabinet he extracts Melaine Isaac's enrolment card and copies down her personal details: home address, Cape Town address, telephone number. He dials the number.

(18)

It is paradoxical that Melanie does not learn to assert herself and is helpless despite the fact that her favourite authors are feminists like Toni Morrison, Adrienne Rich and Alice Walker. David, on the other hand, is a Byron devotee and opts to follow scandals of that kind.

David forcefully has sex with Melanie. She is powerless before him, her teacher. As a result, he takes advantage of her helplessness by harassing and exploiting her sexually. She battles on in silence since she is traumatized and unable to talk about her exploitations. Because she lacks the courage to speak out and is ignorant; she is overpowered by masculine domination. The author calls attention to the repressive attitudes that exist in society against the helpless and uninformed women. She is also compelled by cultural authority to accept abusive relationships.

Melanie is unable to simply reject David. David is simply concerned about his desires. Despite being her teacher, he goes beyond his bounds and the obligations he has to his pupil. Women are the object of desire in his eyes. He combines power and desire. Melanie is tricked into having sex with him by him. He blatantly disregards the bond of trust, respect, and moral obligations even after having been her instructor. Due to racial and sexual dread, Melanie gives in to Lurie's impulses; Ironically, Lurie was betrayed by someone who used his position to their advantage.

On the day when the complaint is filed, the memorandum reaches him from the office of the Vice-Rector, and Student affairs notifies him of the complaint lodged under article of the University's code of conduct, dealing, "With victimization on grounds of race, ethnic group, religion, gender, sexual preference or physical disability" (39).

He is contacted to talk about the grievance and a question regarding Ms. Isaacs's attendance. Despite the fact that she had only attended two lessons in the previous month, the incident was not recorded. Instead her attendance was noted. Although she didn't take the mid-term, the records show that she received a score of seventy. David intended to manipulate Melanie into feeling obligated to him by making life simple for her. The complaint made against him astounded him. He is confident that Melanie would never have done such a thing because he is aware of her lack of understanding of her authority. He is aware that she is too frail to wield womanly power.

Melanie was raised in a patriarchal culture that is ruled by her father and boyfriend, and she is afraid to challenge them. Because, she is unable to object, they are forcing her to file a complaint against her teacher. Her teacher's credibility had been ruthlessly shattered following the incident. She had gone to him hoping for some direction but was duped. The political issue that underlies the individual's case is the more important one. Melanie serves as a symbol for black women who experience double oppression in society. Professor Lurie wanted to be honest but knew he couldn't go beyond pleading guilty, ignores his natural impulses. He even informs the media that the experience has enhanced him and given him a chance. He is made the target of mockery, and his picture appears in the newspaper with a waste paper basket turned upside down over his head, making him appear foolish. He became a target for ridicule in the entire town. That is a shame for him since he cannot imagine a worse shame.

The committee men offer him one final opportunity. To accommodate both his and their point of view, a draught statement is created. He is not fired, simply ordered to take a leave of absence. He is therefore spared from the most severe punishment that the women asked. It is clear that the males favour David and do not care about Melanie, the victim of violence. The ladies try to speak up for the sexism victim, exhibit resistance, and are ready to fight back.

The committee and society are dominated by men who work to subjugate women. Their choice represents the patriarchal society, which is fought for by people in positions of authority. Women in the society are definitely colonised twice, by both imperial and patriarchal views. This dual oppression that colonisers established remained after colonialism, leading to the exclusion of women.

Due to his weakness for women, David ends up losing his work and respect, but he doesn't feel bad about it. David had to leave Cape Town and go to his daughter Lucy's isolated farm in the Eastern Cape since he became disgraced. She had been there for six years as a communal member, and when the commune disbanded, Lucy relocated there with her friend Helen. She chose to remain alone due to women and her experience with a disintegrated family. By looking for a companion through a complicated relationship with her own gender, she has discovered a solution of fulfilment and emotional wholeness.

David has never been able to comprehend the nuanced bond that exists between Lucy and Helen. Lucy, who identifies as straight, occasionally indulges in moments of homosexuality in an attempt to defend herself from men, but she miscalculated the consequences. The males view it as going against her gender expectations, and wish to correct her, making it clear that they do not agree with her decision to remain in the

country side, without a male counterpart, which goes against socially accepted gender standards. Her status is maintained through gender manipulation and exploitation. She is restrained and rendered helpless by being robbed and raped.

The therapeutic actions that women initiate are usually stymied by the pressure of male domination. It accurately portrays how men rule and how helpless women are. Women who wish to be as powerful as men are silenced by physical and emotional abuse. She faces practically all of the same things as other women would under patriarchal imperialism, including marginalisation and subordination. “Petrus swiftly and efficiently lays out the wares, sells them, takes the money, makes the change” (116).

She was unaware that Petrus was following her and waiting for the right opportunity to attack. David was convinced that he had accurately foreseen the scenario and that those people were locals who were acquainted with the locals and knowledgeable about Lucy and the forestry station. Petrus stayed silent when questioned about the incident and gave no reason for his absence.

Though the circumstances have made the blacks powerful and whites powerless, they never forget the past when the blacks were their subordinates. They were a segregated community when apartheid existed and at present when the blacks have got their rights back, they are trying to show their superiority. It is intolerable for David, how could he even imagine being Petrus father-in-law. David still lived in the past, his thinking had not matured with time. Lucy had changed her circumstances. For her, marriage was for her protection, not for procreation, a marriage of convenience. She was marrying to become part of the establishment.

The macrocosm focused on the whites in New South Africa who were battling in a fast changing social environment, while Lucy is a victim in the Microcosm. The whites are made to comply with the new requirement of role reversal. The cost of the black man's rage against white dominance throughout history is evident in the changing social and political climate. They have suppressed their anger, anguish, sorrow, and dread towards white people who, eventually finds a market.

David later loses his reputation after becoming the target of public mockery and scandal. Having sex fills the void in David's life. He is superior to Soraya and Melanie, he uses sex to dominate the women's lives. For Petrus, having sex can be humiliating because he wants Lucy to feel defenceless and exposed. All the women, Soraya, Lucy and Melanie have to endure both physical and suffering. Coetzee's novel explores the political and social climate that persisted even after apartheid.

Cross-racial relationship takes centre-stage in this novel. Female sexuality also plays an important role in the novel. Being racially and sexually disadvantaged these women do not have the power even outside the Apartheid structure. History has moved ahead but the power of the whites persists. The relation between sexism and racism has its implications on women. The device of sexuality is ironically used in the novel. The treatment of sexuality and its impact on the lives of white and the black women are distinctly different. Coetzee explores the complex connection between race and sex where the women's part is more complex. The novel illustrates the subordination of women and inequalities in male-female relationships. The next chapter deals with Racial Identity crisis.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Racial Identity Crisis**

Racial identity plays a role in the physical and psychological features of humans. Physically, humans in different parts of the globe endure different conditions and environments. Humans adapt to their environments and obtain different physical traits, henceforth, these physical traits have become adjacent to race. The apartheid state emphasized the distinct racial identities that were the hallmark of South Africa's defining population. Racial distinctiveness and, with it, hierarchy had, however, its origins in South Africa's colonial past and can be traced throughout much of the country's turbulent history prior to 1948. Even within broad racial categories, there



existed further distinctions based on class and affiliation. The line between race and class was itself blurred, and inequalities may be contextualized by ideological as well as socio-economic and political concerns. It is a pattern that may be traced long before the rise of the apartheid state. However, there also existed a competing form of identity based on multiracialism. This emphasized unity and was particularly evident in political activism that agitated for full political equality. The history of racial identity in South Africa, has therefore been linked to the tension between the opposing strands of unity and divisiveness.

*Disgrace* can be analysed as a representative work of the new South Africa where the social problems relating binary oppositions such as black-white, white immigrant, powerless-powerful are stressed. David Lurie, the protagonist of the novel *Disgrace* tries to illuminate how starting over and adapting to the new times, with no remnants of the past, is the best approach to deal with the country's changes. Frantz Fanon's concept within the field of post-colonialism which he articulated in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) have much relevance in *Disgrace*.

*Disgrace* revolves around the life of David Lurie, a professor from Cape Town. Being separated from his wife, Lurie satiates his sexual needs by frequenting a brothel. He finds Soraya, a black prostitute, quite satisfactory. With her departure, he pursues a student, Ms. Melanie Issacs and forces her into a sexual relationship. He is expelled in disgrace for his refusal to accept responsibility for his acts. He visits his daughter Lucy's property as a guest and learns about her way of life while helping to look after the farm and kennel. Also, Lurie starts working for Lucy's friend Bev Shaw, who owns an animal clinic. He participates in the disposal of the dead animals, developing a strong bond with them in the process. Lucy and Lurie are brutalised by three black

men. Lurie is injured and Lucy is sexually assaulted. Even though Lucy becomes distant from her father and the tragedy, it was the attack that made their tainted and perplexing relationship more bearable. When Lucy discovers her pregnancy, she resolves to wed her neighbour Petrus merely for safety.

The incidents in *Disgrace* take place in post-apartheid South Africa where the social, economic, cultural and political equations of the apartheid era are rewritten. Lurie's transformation from an egoistic macho to a compassionate man conscious of his responsibilities, is seen in Frantz Fanon's theory about the three revolutionary phases in the development of national culture for the colonized. In the light of Fanon's text, *The Wretched of the Earth*, he argues about the revolutionary changes in South Africa in 1994. The former colonizer is seen in the same way as the colonized usually is, as a helpless native, regardless of racial identification. In *Disgrace*, a white native tries to understand the culture of his new country.

While a white minority ruled South Africa, apartheid was a political and social system that separated races. The South African social formation is described as one of the internal colonialism or colonialism of a special type by the South National Liberation Movement, the American National Congress, and its Allies. There is no physical divide between the colonializing force and the black people it colonised, which makes the colonial system in South Africa unique or distinctive. However, the connections between the black majority and white minority bear the hallmarks of old colonialism, including as economic exploitation and uneven power relations based on race. The contestation of a type of colonial control and its legacy always resulted in a change in the dynamics between blacks and whites following the end of apartheid rule. A minority group known as Afrikaners, lost their position in society. Black people first held positions that were comparable to or even higher than those held by white people.

Lurie's position as a white native in South Africa makes him a hybrid, he is English but not British, only South African. While Lurie turns his creative side into a conventional western platform, he is also aware that the coming years will bring about unavoidable changes. Lurie's feeling of alienation is also understood in a specific socio-political context. The political changes in South Africa make him feel lost in his own country, so he turns to the traditions of the imperial culture, of which he was raised as a colonial and an honorary part. Fanon in his *Black Skin, White Masks* argues, that this only reasonable given that all colonised people share an inferiority complex brought on by the loss of their local culture and therefore they find themselves "face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is, with the culture of the mother country" (18).

Lurie's inability to adapt to the environment as a result of his male sex and his superior position within the South African power system during apartheid, are also highlighted by Coetzee. Lurie's world-view is revealed in his discussion with Lucy on her choice of lifestyle, which include voluntary work at the Animal Welfare Clinic, and having best friends without an academic degree. Lucy mocks her father when she says, "you think I ought to be painting still lives or teaching myself Russian. You don't approve of friends like Bev and Bill Shaw because they are not going to lead me to a better life" (74). On another occasion, Lucy's indignant comment challenges her father's polarized view: "well, contrary to what you think, people are not divide into major and minor" (198). The fact that Lurie's humiliating dismissal ultimately occurred as a result of his reluctance to accept responsibility for his actions, go public with them, and participate in counselling reveals his own sense of superiority. I'm not prepared to be reformed. I want to go on being myself" (77).

There is no advancement or development because the colonised creates imitations of the dominant society. Fanon states that, “after a century of colonial domination culture becomes rigid in the extreme, congealed and petrified. The atrophy of national reality and the death throes of national culture feed on one another” (172). As for Lurie's life, demeanour, and thoughts, this is also accurate. He is fully aware of this when he reflects on his dislike of women who:

It is a resistance he had to Lucy's friend before. Nothing to be proud of: a prejudice that has settled down. His mind has become a refuge for old thoughts, idle, indigent, with nowhere else to go. He ought to chase them out, sweep the premises clean. But he does not care to do so or does not care enough. (72)

The second phase of Fanon's theory, when “the colonized has his convictions shaken and decides to cast his mind back” (159). In other words, the indigenous thinker resists assimilation by recalling his true identity. Lurie, who already struggles with his scepticism about using English to convey the stories of the new South Africa, is undoubtedly impacted by his own hybridity. He finds himself in an ambiguous situation where he is still colonised by Europe and European ideas because, he is the representative of white natives in South Africa.

The political changes in South Africa make Lurie reevaluate his representation as a once colonizing member of society. Hybridity reserves the rules of identification that the dominant discourse applies on the colonized, when the rejected knowledge of the colonized intervenes, thus alienating this basis of authority. The power shift in contemporary South African society will have an all-pervading impact on Lurie. The understanding is shown in his reflections on the English Language and its role as a

colonial repressor for native South Africans: “He would not mind Petrus’ story one day. But preferable not reduced to English. More and more he is convinced that English is an unfit medium for the truth of South Africa... Like a dinosaur expiring and setting in the mud, the language has stiffened” (117). This can also be found in Fanon’s assertion that “To speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization” (Black Skin 17-18).

In the case of Lurie, the attack on Lucy's farm, when Lurie is beaten and set on fire while Lucy is being gang-raped by three black men, represents a clear rupture from the past. Everything he had previously believed about himself and the world around him is altered on that day. Even if his self-esteem remained unharmed and he was holding his head high, he immediately felt that his power and authority had been destroyed when he was forced to abandon his life in Cape Town. But after their fruitless ordeal, he realises that any remaining influence he once had, has been totally destroyed. Even his instinct to defend his own child was ineffective. He has suffered solely because of his role as an ambassador for the apartheid state for the first time in his life. This fact can best be seen in the only information about her experience of violation that Lucy unwillingly reveals to her father, the significant detail that the men who raped her did so in a frighteningly familiar and personal manner: “It was so personal.... It was done with such personal hatred. That was what stunned me more than anything. The rest was expected. But why did they hate me so? I have never set eyes on them (156)”. This realisation sheds fresh light on Lurie's notion of self and his idea of the other. He questions whether he needs to adapt, in order to fit in, and where he fits in this new state.

Fanon claims that this break with the past in the second phase does not signify a revolutionary transformation in the cultural production. This stage starts when the colonised understands that he has more to offer than what the colonial society believes. Land dispossession was one of the central political-economic issues of the apartheid system but restitution promised the redress of such loss. It enabled former land holders to reclaim spaces and territories that formed the basis of earlier identities and livelihoods. Petrus, a significant character, is a black who once worked as a dog man for Lucy in her farm. With the collapse of apartheid, Petrus progressed from his post as assistant to co-proprietor of the farm. The colonizers no longer hold any power over the natives. He is a steady worker and eventually earns considerable wealth. Even when Petrus is suspected of having alliance with the people who raped Lucy, she and Lurie are left helpless unable to even ban him from their farm. As Lucy remarks, “He is not some hired labourer whom I can sack because I my opinion he is mixed with the wrong people. That’s all gone, Gone with the Wind” (133). After Lucy discovers of her pregnancy, she decides to sell her land to Petrus and to be accepted under his shelter as his mistress. Petrus desires “subjection” and “subjugation” from Lucy (159). His stance goes to show that the psychic deformations and injuries left behind by racism and colonialism cannot be mended merely by material reparation or by simply reversing economic and political power- structure:

But isn’t there another way of looking at it, David? What if ... What if that is the prize one has to pay for staying on? Perhaps this is how they look at it: they see me as owing something. They see themselves as debt collectors, tax collectors. Why should I be allowed to live here without paying? Perhaps this is what they tell themselves. (158)

The rape incident can be interpreted as a convergence of the racist sexist thinking about the black body, which has always projected onto the black body a hyper sexuality. Many of the racist and sexist stereotypes from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that were applied to black men are now thought to be characteristics of psychopaths. In response to Petrus' silence on the rapist's identity and his inability, in Lurie's opinion, to provide a plausible explanation for his absence during the attack, Lurie says:

But though Petrus is paid a wage, Petrus is no longer, strictly speaking, hired help. It is hard to say what Petrus is strictly speaking. The word that seems to serve best, however, is neighbour.... He sells his labour under contract, unwritten contract, and that contract makes no provision for dismissal on grounds of suspicion. (116-117)

Even though Lurie realizes circumstances have changed, he is still mired in the advantages and glories of the past and regrets that he is unable to act as he did in the good old days. His repetition of "in the old days" connotes nostalgia about the past and registers his desire to reverse the hands of the clock. Hence, he laments the loss of the privilege that would have made it possible for him, to take it. The problem with Lurie is that, even though he recognizes that times have changed and indeed notes that, "it is a new world", he refuses to come to terms with it. Thus, even though he is aware that the old hegemony of master and slave has disrupted, and in fact remarks that "knows it, and Petrus knows that he knows it, he stubbornly clings to the past (116-117). Therefore, Lurie struggles to maintain the old dynamics of racial superiority and domination of the apartheid era out with Petrus even to the extent of losing temper and sending him packing.

The conflict, untold misery, and injustice caused by recent acts of violence against humans by other humans were the initial element of apartheid's devastation, and it had an impact on all parties involved in one way or another. All were a victim of the apartheid regime in some form. After apartheid was abolished in South Africa in the 1990s, a court-like restorative justice body known as the truth and reconciliation commission was established. They were adamant that apartheid should be viewed as a much more horrific atrocity, a crime against humanity.

This was not intended to equate any of these moral transgressions. This has to go hand in hand with the understanding of several victimhoods, each of which is connected to various levels of pain and suffering. As a result, some binary distinctions break down, particularly in the dyadic categories of victims and perpetrators. It is no longer possible to distinguish between groups of individuals and label one set as perpetrators and the other as victims. They are not easily bounded or able to be separated. The instance of Petrus serves as an illustration of this blending of categories. He initially works as Lucy's dogman or assistant. Lucy is a white woman. Later, after the apartheid regime is abolished, he and Lucy share ownership of the property. He is a victim, having been denied access to the land he worked on under the apartheid system as the dogman. However, he becomes a perpetrator when he fails to report Lucy's rape. Since dogs are the least valued domestic animals in South Africa, Lurie's newly discovered sympathy for other creatures even allows him to put himself in the shoes of animals, particularly dogs. The nationalist phase, which is called "combat stage" by Fanon, is the phase "where the colonized writer, after having tried to lose himself among the people, with the people, will rouse the people. Combat literature, national literature, revolutionary literature emerges" (159). For Lurie, this third phase begins when he realizes that the sacrifices and changes, he has made are not enough.



The future lies in the next generation of South Africans. “I suspect it’s too late for me. I’m just an old rag serving out my sentence. But you go ahead. You are well on the way,” Petrus tells Lucy (216). Lurie’s thoughts can be read as representing the future nation of South Africa, as can be seen in the following, where he ponders the fact that he will become a grandfather, not enough.

What will it entail, being a grandfather? As a father he has not been much of a success, despite trying harder than most. As a grandfather he will probably score lower than average too. He lacks the virtues of the old: equanimity, kindness, patience. But perhaps those virtues will come as others virtues go: the virtue of passion. (217-218)

The white people like David Lurie's behaviour towards the blacks in South Africa, the way they are presented, and dealt from the white man's perspective and the distortion of the reality has made the novel *Disgrace* a work of racial identity. The following chapter deals with Post-apartheid challenges.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Post-apartheid Challenges**

The term "postcolonial" originally referred to the time following colonisation, whereas colonialism is a practise or policy of economic dominance in which a powerful country imposes political, racist, economic, and cultural issues on the colonised groups through exploitation, degrading treatment, and torture. J.M. Coetzee gives a realistic account of the injustice experienced by the native Africans and how that oppression drives them to use violence in his postcolonial novel *Disgrace*. Coetzee also illustrates how the suffering and persecution in the apartheid system started to have the opposite impact over time. White people started to experience harsh and oppressive treatment in the post-apartheid society. Natives gained upper hand, and the apartheid regime started to wane.

The long history of unfair racial discrimination against the native Blacks compelled them to respond violently to the oppression and violence of the Whites. White people consequently fell into a marginalised and helpless position in society. In

his analysis of the conflict between the oppressor and the oppressed, Coetzee focuses on the challenges of a reticent college professor, his harassment claim, the sad events that occurred at his daughter's farmhouse, and the power dynamics between Negros and white people. In the evolving context of an apartheid-free South Africa, *Shame* depicts the struggle of the native Africans who were initially dominated as well as a sense of remorse among the white people who were formerly in supremacy.

*Disgrace* is a paradigmatic narrative offering an expressive critique of the socio-political turbulence, and ethnic complexities of human condition blockaded from colonial rule and legacy of apartheid. Published just half a decade after the official abolition of the apartheid regime in South Africa, this popular masterpiece provides a blunt appraisal of the troubled country's social order after the chaotic aftermath of centuries of racial oppression under colonial rule. Hence, it is a bleak tale of human suffering in post-apartheid South Africa. It analyses the diverse issues related to racial discrimination, white guilt, black vengeance, relocation of political power and consequential issues of disruptive past and distrustfully shared future.

Racial discrimination was outlawed in South Africa by the Post-apartheid Constitution, which was enacted in May 1996. Native Africans mobilised the reversal of the entire social structure after the power of governance was transferred from whites to them. Following apartheid, native Africans mistreated white people. David Lurie, a fifty-two year old man, is the protagonist of the novel. He works as a communication professor at the Technical University of Cape Town and has gone through two divorces. Women are Lurie's weakness. He even goes to a prostitute named Soraya to satiate his arousing needs.

It surprises him that ninety minutes a week of a woman's company are enough to make him happy, who used to think he needed a wife, a home, a marriage. His needs turn out to be quite light, after all, light and fleeting, like those of a butterfly. No emotion, or none but the deepest, the most unguessed at; a ground bass of contentedness. (5)

At a technical university in Cape Town, David Lurie teaches Communication Skills and Advanced Communication Skills. He enrolls in Romantic Literature lessons to show off his love of literature, although he is most at ease around ladies. He becomes a natural woman lover and, to some extent, a womaniser when among ladies. He nevertheless was able to attract the women he desired. He engages in sexual activity with one of his pupils. He interacted with tourists, prostitutes, and even the wives of his co-workers. A young Melanie Isaacs, his Romantic Literature student, once catches Lurie's eye. She seems wary when he talks to her and is hesitant to even look at him. Lurie invites her to visit his residence in a friendly manner. When Melanie arrives, Lurie asks her to join him for dinner. At first, she baulks, but Lurie takes advantage of the moment to make his request. He asks Melanie to spend the night with him. Melanie is being courted by Professor Lurie, who is old enough to be Melanie's father. The young student is consequently subjected to sexual harassment by her professor, exemplifying the victim-victimizer syndrome. One flaw of Lurie's results in a number of dishonourable relationships. But in case of Melanie, his student, it's altogether different. Lurie seduces her forcefully and this immoral act results in his disgrace.

Lurie's unrestricted steps make his behaviour questionable. His unethical actions give birth to numerous other problems. He feels quite awkward while delivering his lecture in the presence of Melanie who is reluctant to have sex with Lurie. Lurie is a white Professor who misuses his position while exploiting his native

student sexually. Melanie is a girl from deprived section who directly cannot resist or ignore the man in power. She is a student of Theatre Studies. She also attends Lurie's Romantic Literature class. Once Melanie could not appear for the mid-term test, but Lurie rather marking absent awards her seventy marks. Lurie goes morally unscrupulous and professionally corrupt because of his lustful affair with the student.

Melanie was used by Lurie for his sexual enjoyment, and Lurie was used by Melanie for her own gain. The primary offender who convinces his pupil to engage in sexual activity is Lurie. When Melanie's father contacts the professor, he lets him know that she will no longer be taking the course. He asks Lurie to comfort his daughter and explain the value of a university education. Melanie, according to her father, has a great deal of respect and admiration for him, so she will adhere to the professor's orders without a doubt. Lurie is in a life-or-death circumstance. There is a prickling feeling in Lurie's troubled conscience. He had a desire to confess to Mr Isaacs. He says, "I'll see what I can do. Why not come clean? I am the worm in the apple, he should have said. How can I help you when I am the very source of your woe?" (37). But now everything was unmanageable and Melanie's father accuses Laurie for his illicit act. Mr Isaacs says, "‘Professor’ . . . You may be very educated and all that, but what you have done is not right. . . We put our children in the hands of you people because we think we can trust you. If we can't trust the University, who can we trust?" (38).

The Vice-Rector for Student Affairs sends Lurie a letter about his unethical behaviour at the university. The committee questions Lurie about the discrepancy between recording Melanie's absence and giving her seventy points on the midterm exam, even though she did not show up. The committee also explained to him what would happen if he were proven guilty. Lurie is well aware that everyone is talking about his affair, even if the group protects his identity. Soon after the students in the

campus celebrate Rape Awareness week. Women shout slogans against the rapists and a pamphlet is dropped through his door with a message “YOUR DAYS ARE OVER, CASANOVA” (43). The malicious rumours have left Lurie feeling extremely wounded and insulted. Because of his inappropriate relationship with Melanie, Lurie is forced to suffer humiliation and disgrace.

Lurie does not want the committee to continue his investigation, and he also does not want to make efforts to safeguard his interests anymore. He makes an open heart confession before the enquiry committee, “True enough, I was having an affair with the girl” (42). In the end when he gets ready to leave, he says, “I have said the words for you, now you want more, you want me to demonstrate their sincerity. That is preposterous. That is beyond the scope of the law. I have had enough. Let us go back to playing it by the book. I plead guilty”(55). There appears Lurie’s photograph in the students’ newspaper. A man was shown holding a dustbin above his head like a dunce’s cap. Lurie receives a call from the Chairman who advises him to apologize in writing. But Lurie wilfully replies: “Repentance belongs to another world, to another universe of discourse” (58).

Consequently, Lurie is terminated from his teaching position. He, thereafter, goes to stay with his daughter Lucy at her farm in the Eastern Cape. Lucy has a farm where she earns money by keeping dogs, selling flowers and agricultural products in the market. She has a servant named Petrus. He is a polygamous-married Black African whose farm adjoined Lucy’s farm and he works for Lucy as a dog-man. Lurie engages himself in enjoyable activities in the country side and goes for a walk with his daughter and her dogs. Lucy introduces her father to the people who visit her stall. Bev Shaw is a native woman who is a good friend of Lucy. She runs a clinic for pet animals. Her

noble services to cure wounded animals make Lurie feel that Bev is a priestess, who is making effort “to lighten the load of Africa’s suffering beasts” (84).

Three men break into the farmhouse the following day. When they have a chance, they attack Lurie and shoot the caged dogs that Lucy is boarding while pretended to need Lucy's phone to call for help for a sick relative. David later theorises that this was done because black people in South Africa are told to avoid dogs because they are symbols of white supremacy and oppression. Everything in the farm house is destroyed by the three visitors. They also steal Lurie's car, coats, shoes, and revolver from Lucy. Lurie is struck on the head, so he loses his conscious. When Lurie regains his conscious, he is assaulted again and thrust into the lavatory. He gets severely injured and meanwhile they batter Lucy and rape her.

Lurie finds him helpless and keeps shouting for help “Take everything. Just leave my daughter alone” (94). They splash some methyl spirit on him and set fire. Lurie’s scalp, eyes and ears are burnt. They crush the telephone and puncture the tyres of the car. Lurie is much worried about what the men did to his daughter. He asks her about the mishap. Lucy replies, “You tell what happened to you. I tell what happened to me” (99). Lurie wants to register a complaint about the mishap. Ettinger, an old man who lives nearby, convinces them to make safety measures in the farm because the police will not protect them every hour. J.M Coetzee portrays the widespread disorder and anarchy after the fall of apartheid. The whites were at risk and they had to bear the consequence of their brutality done to the natives.

Lurie comes to know that his daughter was raped by the native men when he fell unconscious and confined in the lavatory. One night while sleeping soundly, he had a hallucination in which his daughter Lucy calls him to protect her. He cannot sleep

afterwards because Lucy's painful voice upsets him and also because of his physical affliction. His wrist, eyes and scalp are burnt woefully. For the first time, Lurie realizes about the trauma experienced by women. Lucy had neither marital experience nor did she have a male lover. Lurie feels sorry for his daughter who was savagely raped by the three native blacks. The violent assault upon him and his innocent daughter becomes the most excruciating experience, which unnerves him to the core. This occurrence has also been explicated as a sort of vengeance for the crime of sexually exploiting his own girl-student, who was of his daughter's age.

The actual visible cause for the rape was the racial discrimination, extreme poverty and deprivation experienced by the native people in the post-apartheid regime, which drove them to attack the white people. Two policemen come to the farm house to enquire about the crime. Lucy outlies the mishappening that took place on the farm house, but Lucy doesn't disclose anything about the rape. Lurie later argues with her why she did not inform the police about being raped by the savages? Lucy affirms, "I have told the whole story. The whole story is what I have told" (110). Lurie and Lucy turn out to be the victims of the social and political conditions prevailing in South Africa after the apartheid regime. They make up their mind to safeguard themselves from further crimes against them. Lucy opines that it is better to hush the matter otherwise it may lead to more distress. The white minority is no more privileged and the subjugated natives have gone aggressive. The public shame is not the only reason for Lucy's passiveness. Her denial to register a police complaint is rationalized by the delicate condition of the whites in post-apartheid time.

After a few days when Petrus comes back to the farm with his wife, Lurie comments suspecting the disappearance of Petrus during the mishap. Lucy retorts that she cannot direct him because he is his own master. Lurie conjectures how an incident



of violent attack and rape works on women's confidence and infects their personality. Lurie is also doubtful about Petrus's pretensions. He doubts that Petrus might have an association with the three men who attacked them "The worst, the darkest reading would be that Petrus engaged three strange men to teach Lucy a lesson, paying them off with the loots" (118). Lurie conveys Petrus, "I find it hard to believe the men who came here were strangers. I find it hard to believe they arrived out of nowhere, and did what they did, and disappeared afterwards like ghosts" (118). After his humiliation and disgrace at the University, he arrived at Lucy's farmhouse for peace of mind, but surprisingly Lurie underwent a different kind of disgrace there.

In this novel "Apartheid" is indicated as "the old days". Lurie dreams of those days when whites had the dominion and authority to employ and suppress the natives. But now, everything has reversed. Natives have started to subjugate and oppress the whites. This represents that apartheid was on the verge of decline, but peaceful and harmonious coexistence among the races has not been accomplished yet. Petrus, the servant, organizes a party to celebrate the purchase of a land through the loan granted by the government. In the party, Lurie and Lucy catch sight of the two savages who assaulted them. Lurie decides to call the police, but Lucy thwarts by saying that it will spoil the joyful mood of Petrus. Lurie is not able to pull himself together after the brutal rape of his daughter. He is highly concerned about his daughter's safety. He counsels Lucy to leave that farm and come to Cape Town. Lurie says, "Lucy, it really is time for you to face up to your choices. Either you stay on in a house full of ugly memories and go on brooding on what happened to you, are you the whole episode behind you and start a new chapter elsewhere" (155). Lucy refuses to move to Cape Town. She believes that the sexual assault on her was an act of punishment against the white community, an act of racial discrimination. Her silence over the violence imposed on

her can be identified as agreement over the long prevailed silence of the colonized, represented in other books such as *Foe* (1986) and *In the Heart of the Country* (1977).

The three rapists act as possible agents of revenge, reflecting Lurie's violence towards Melanie and bringing an ultimate end to his white supremacy. It is also probable that the attackers cannot see outside the physical limits of Lucy's colour. As Lucy recollects the aggression, she narrates how personal and racially motivated everything was. Lucy opines: "It was so personal . . . it was done with such personal hatred. That was what stunned me more than anything. The rest was . . . expected. But why did they hate me so? I had never set eyes on them. [...] The shock simply doesn't go away. The shock of being hated, I mean" (156). The gang rape of Lucy, a white girl, by black men was an act carried out of vengeance for the apartheid rule and the exploitation of black people, and a reaction to the racial discrimination imposed by colonialism. The incident wears some historical implications also. Lucy points out: "It was history speaking through them, a history of wrong. Think of it that way, if it helps. It may have seemed personal, but it wasn't. It came down from the ancestors" (156). It's through such examples that redemption will be achieved for the "crimes of the past by suffering in the present" (112).

Lurie instructs Lucy and offers money to go to Holland where her mother lives, but Lucy is reluctant to leave the farm. Lurie then becomes fully aware of all the wrongs he has done to women. Lucy observes no difference between her father molesting his students and the rapists. Lucy discerns that her misfortune is the price which she has to pay for staying in a place that belongs to these natives. She is shaken up when Lurie informs her that Petrus and his friends want her as their slave. Hence, the subjugation and exploitation of the whites became the order of the day.

In the post-colonial era, a transition was taking place where the native people started to suppress and oppress the white people in South Africa. The white people were thrown on the periphery and were made to bear the consequences of their past atrocities. They were now dependent on the natives for their safety. The differences of their opinions lead to worsen the relationship between Lucy and her father. Lurie makes up his mind to return to Cape Town. Lurie visits Melanie's house to meet up with her father. Lurie expresses regret to Mr. Issacs for misusing his daughter and ruining her career. He says, "I apologize for the grief I have caused you and Mrs. Issacs I ask for your pardon" (171). Mr. Issacs feels relieved that David Lurie asked for forgiveness to him. Self-realization takes place in Lurie, a transformation has come-over him. His moral transformation is conspicuous from his apology, remorse and confession. He makes a strong impression on Melanie's mother and sister by bowing down to them "With careful ceremony he gets to his knees and touches his forehead to the floor" (173). Lurie asks apology by kneeling down before Melanie's father. Lurie goes back to the farm and comes to know that Lucy is pregnant, on account of the rape. He counsels her to go for an abortion, but she disapproves the decision. Lucy now wants to take decisions on her own. She decides to assert her identity and she is courageous enough to dominate the traumatic experience. She also raises a question to her father: "Why? I am a woman, David. Do you think I hate children? Should I choose against the child because of who its father is?" (198). Lucy's decision of being a mother may be a venture on her part to alleviate the disgrace heaped upon her and make herself deserving of grace. Her resolution for not aborting her baby is also motivated by her love for motherhood. Moreover, her determination to give birth to the child of a black man is a metaphor of new emerging South Africa. Petrus desires to marry Lucy and give her legal protection. Both the father and daughter talk about on Petrus's offer and

Lurie disapproves his daughter's option of marrying a man, who already has two wives. But Lucy considers the choice a convenient social and financial deal:

Petrus is not offering me a church wedding followed by a honeymoon on the wild coast. . . . I contribute the land, in return for which I am allowed to creep in under his wing. Otherwise, he wants to remind me, I am without protection, I am fair game. (203)

Through Lucy's molestation, J.M. Coetzee highlights the repercussions of losing power. Lucy is well aware that Petrus is not a powerful man, but he has the power to subjugate the white minority people like her. Lucy accepts humiliation to live a peaceful life ahead, by giving away her property to a native man. She asks her father to leave: "David, we can't go on like this. Everything had settled down, everything was peaceful again, until you came back. I must have peace around me. I am prepared to do anything, make any sacrifice, for the sake of peace" (208). In fact Lucy indirectly conveys his father that his presence may disturb the peace of her life. Lurie at times realizes that he was not a nice father to Lucy, so he determines to be a good grandfather to Lucy's child. Hence, Lurie confronts all the adverse circumstances. He is degraded from a genuine human being to an ordinary man who was punished for his sexual weakness. The novel concludes, with David Lurie taking a dog to intentionally ending its life to relieve from pain and suffering. Lurie discards his ideological stand and dedicates himself in the active service to the society. Lucy understands the new historical situation in South Africa that is to forego the white privilege in the country's hinterland. This situation is quite unaware to Lurie. He tries to avoid Lucy from the alliance with Petrus, he himself wants to protect Lucy from the clutches of rural black man but it is in vain. Thus the whole situation seems to be the instance of post-apartheid South Africa in J M Coetzee's *Disgrace*.

In the transition from the Colonial to Postcolonial era, the novel paints a depressing picture of South Africa. The racial discrimination that existed in South Africa in 1999 has been depicted truthfully by Coetzee. Because of the political system's corruption, public safety was not assured. Racial injustice and crimes were pervasive even as the apartheid system was about to collapse. It came out that victims included white folks like Lucy and Lurie. After apartheid, white people were frequently attacked, forcing them to give up their land and leave South Africa. Few people, like Lucy, made the decision to endure all the difficulties that were there in the aim of witnessing a new era of racial harmony. Consequently, J.M. Coetzee accurately depicted the situation of the white minority in post-apartheid South Africa. The following chapter deals with summation.

## **Chapter five**

### **Summation**

J.M. Coetzee is celebrated for his postmodernist explorations of themes of the coloniser and the colonised that both elucidate and draw on the history of South African apartheid. He is a writer who is strongly influenced by his own personal background of being born and growing up in South Africa. Although a white writer living in South Africa during apartheid, he grew to believe in and write with strong anti-imperialist feelings. His works develop a complex view of colonialism and its legacy of gender and racial prejudice. Many of his stories re-enact the Robinson Crusoe scenario with its encounter between the coloniser and the colonised and the dialectic of self and other that informs the relationship. Coetzee posits the inherent division of the self and, by extension, the multiple subjectivity of the authorial persona, thus challenging the presumptions of Western rationality and the realist novel to totalising narratives of history. Refusing to recognise the boundary commonly thought to separate fiction and history, he felt compelled by a moral obligation to respond to the horrors of apartheid that he witnessed for many years in his native Cape Town.

Coetzee developed an elaborate aesthetics of allegory, allusion, and metatextuality, meant to deliver an ethical response to the marginalisation of the other, if not a political one. Coetzee foregrounds the processes of writing and speech in the lives of his characters, many of whom are authors whose texts form portions of the narratives, thereby adding additional layers of meaning. In awarding him, the Nobel Prize, the Swedish Academy praised Coetzee as a scrupulous doubter, ruthless in his criticism of the cruel rationalism and cosmetic morality of Western civilisation, and also cited him for work that in innumerable guises portrays the surprising involvement of the Outsider.

J.M.Coetzee's novels constitute a form of postmodern metafiction that declines the cult of the merely relativist and artistic. He has absorbed the lessons of modern linguistics and the textual turn in structuralism and post-structuralism yet seriously addresses the ethical and political stresses of living in and with a particular historical locale, that of contemporary South Africa. Despite the acclaim that Coetzee received, both in South Africa and outside of it, his fiction has been slow to attract sustained critical attention. Coetzee was a philosophical idealist whose fiction graphically portrayed the breakup of the dominating, rationalist subject of colonialism but who, depending on where the argument was grounded, offered neither an analysis of the play of historical forces nor a moral anchor in the search for a humane response to colonialism and apartheid. As an intellectual figure in South Africa, he has consistently engaged with the politics of the past, particularly the contemporary ethical ramifications of the colonial past, alongside the more recent and bitter history of oppression under apartheid.

Although contemporary South Africa is seldom mentioned or referred to explicitly in most of J. M. Coetzee's novels, the land and the concerns of the country

permeate his works. His novels deal with the suffering that human beings inflict on one another, whether as agents of the state or as victims of their own obsessions. Colonialism and its legacy form the basis for much of his fiction. Also permeating his work is the issue of the treatment of animals and the perception of a difference between the rights of humans and the rights of animals, a perception that Coetzee often challenges.

The quality of Coetzee's writing, both in general and in *Disgrace* specifically, is that it has an extremely learned flavour. Coetzee is a well-educated man, and it shows in every little allusion and reference that he makes. Coetzee's writing exemplifies the amazing amount of content that he has read, researched, and absorbed over the course of his career, both as a scholar and a writer. When their powers are combined, these elements like pithiness, immediacy, and bookishness make for a unique, thought-provoking, and compulsively readable writing style. Coetzee's words reveal complex ideas and emotions. Besides its concision, his writing has two trademarks. First, *Disgrace* takes place in the present tense, which has the effect of pulling us right into the moment during every moment, regardless of whether David is delving inward, merely sitting around thinking his deep, brooding thoughts, or if he is experiencing the outside world in a moment of extreme panic, like realising that his body is literally being lit on fire.

Coetzee was pressured to leave South Africa because this book was eventually judged to be too critical of blacks. The charge against him was led by liberals, including Nadine Gordimer, who would not tolerate any depiction of South African blacks that wasn't glowing and idealised. Coetzee equally depicted blacks the way he portrays whites and any other group, flawed and imperfect. *Disgrace* has been analysed in terms of Homi Bhabha's notion of ambivalence as well as the power relations between the



coloniser and the colonised. Coetzee here shows that the interaction between the coloniser and the colonised reproduce as well as transform how they see the world and how they act within it.

Time and setting are critical components of *Disgrace*. Published in 1999, the novel shines a light on South Africa and its emergence from Apartheid, a social and political system of segregation that allowed whites to subjugate black people. Under Apartheid, blacks were not even considered to be legal citizens of South Africa, and they were forced to attend separate schools, go to separate hospitals, and receive separate public services. When blacks were deprived of their citizenship, they were divided into self-governing tribes called Bantustans. *Disgrace* takes place only several years after the end of Apartheid, and as a result, knowing a little bit about the geography and systems of Apartheid is really helpful in understanding the undertones of this book. The novel begins in the far western reaches of South Africa, in Cape Town, where David is a professor at the university. Cape Town was generally considered to be part of white South Africa during Apartheid. It appears to be more advanced and cosmopolitan in *Disgrace*.

Coetzee uses animals to symbolise the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa. Snake, dogs and pigs are mentioned predominantly in the novel to symbolise characters behavior and settings. Dog is utilised to symbolise poverty or life without dignity, rights, chance, property or weapons. David uses a dog to attack Pollux, a Black man, at the end of the novel, an act that causes his daughter to send him away. In this, Coetzee shows that David's empathy has bounds. He uses the animal that helped him feel empathy to perpetrate an act of violence during which he showed none. David's interactions with animals reflect both his self-awareness and his state of grace. Sex is also as a symbol of domination as in Lucy's Rape. The most important is that sex serves

as a source of shame as in David and Melanie's relationship and again in Lucy's rape, the shame which leads to disgrace. The opera becomes symbolic of David's delusional state of vanity and his shifting perception of himself. Throughout *Disgrace*, David Lurie is working on an opera about Lord Byron and his lover, Teresa. David identifies with the famous Romantic poet Lord Byron in a way that elevates himself in his own mind in an arrogant way. Petrus, the neighbour of Lucy wants to watch a football match with African language commentary, he turns up the volume, Lurie mutes it. The language preference is evidence for the change of power. The regional language commentary is a symbolism of the denial of English. The remote button is a symbolic representation of power.

In *Disgrace*, J.M. Coetzee scrutinises the nature of human desire, specifically looking at the relationships between power and sexual yearnings. A depressing portrait of a nation in transition, the novel draws its influence from the current social and political unrest in South Africa. David's loss of power, his loss of sexuality, and the shifting power relationships between once-exclusively dominant or subordinate groups are all examples of how this theme of transition is portrayed throughout the book in various ways. *Disgrace* explores the downfall of one man and dramatizes the plight of a country caught in the chaotic aftermath of centuries of racial oppression. By resisting the relegation of each group into positive and negative poles Coetzee portrays the whole range of human capabilities and emotions.

J.M. Coetzee discussed the issue of geriatric sexuality in his novel. This novel said that when David was fifty-two years, he was a very sexually active man, which all he was worrying about was sex. He married twice in his lifetime and in the beginning of the book he was sleeping with a prostitute to fulfill his sexual needs. The huge conflict was when Laurie which is David crosses both departmental and

generational boundaries when he sleeps with his student which he taught. The student which Lurie slept with was put in a difficult situation when he crosses his boundaries. No such professor should commit such an act, because he should be their role model and teaching them good morals. Laurie's position of power gives him an unfair advantage which made the young student drop out of school and charged for what she had done. Laurie was fired and publicly humiliated for his action when the student's boyfriend told him "Stick to your own kind" (128).

The second chapter deals with the Subordination of Women, explores the theme of women's subjugation in post-apartheid South Africa. The protagonist, David Lurie, is a middle-aged white professor who has an affair with one of his students, Melanie Isaacs. The affair leads to David's downfall, and he is forced to resign from his teaching position. Throughout the novel, women are often reduced to their physical appearance and sexual appeal, and David is dismissive of women who do not meet his standards of attractiveness. Overall, *Disgrace* portrays a society where women are often subjected to objectification, violence, and discrimination, highlighting the need for greater gender equality and social justice.

The third chapter deals with Racial Identity Crisis. *Disgrace* is a complex and nuanced exploration of racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa, highlighting the challenges and opportunities presented by the country's transition to a more equitable and just society. David is part of the minority group that once held power and privilege under the apartheid regime but is now viewed with suspicion and hostility by the black majority. His affair with Melanie, a mixed-race woman, further complicates his racial identity and underscores the fraught racial dynamics in South Africa. Lucy, a white South African who has chosen to live among and work with black South Africans,

seeks to bridge the racial divide and build relationships based on mutual respect and understanding, while David struggles with his own prejudices and sense of entitlement.

The fourth chapter deals with Post-apartheid Challenges, shows how the background in post-apartheid South Africa, the legacy of apartheid and its effects on South Africans, especially black South Africans, are explored. White South African David Lurie, the main character, is compelled to face his own privilege and prejudice in the post-apartheid world. The power relationships between white and black South Africans are discussed in the novel, as well as how these relationships have changed since apartheid was abolished. As Lurie's relationship with his student Melanie Isaacs examines the power dynamics and moral dilemmas surrounding such relationships, gender and sexuality are also significant themes. The novel also examines women's experiences, especially that of Lucy Lurie, who endures a brutal assault.

Coetzee never intends to focus solely on the protagonist or to depict the unique tale of the few white characters. He attempts to describe the destined disgrace of those white South Africans, who still obstinately cling to colonial ideology and who are ready to display it in whatever form. However, Coetzee's literary power does not stop here. He is really warning the whites of the danger of stubborn colonial ideology and is pointing a road out of disgrace for them. Colonialism nowadays has by no means disappeared, and still is a real phenomenon. It is with the world as vision or powerful ideology. We may find the number of articles in British and American newspapers and magazines in recent years calling for recolonization of Africa. This is actually the evidence of whites' racial superiority, and they are trying to find means of justification of continuing imperialist activity. Therefore, both the black and the white are displaced, confused and helpless in the wake of colonialism. Though the wound is too smart to heal, both the black and the white are trying their best to search for a new way

for them to coexist in peace and harmony. With *Disgrace* as an enlightenment, people are still engaged in a continual search for a solution to the existing problems in the wake of colonialism.

*Disgrace* is thus about a person's humiliation, his punishment and the human nature. It forces the people to confront the darker side and deal with ethical issues and the baser instincts of humanity. It addresses significant issues such power relations, the predicament of white people in post-apartheid times, vanity, regret, role-reversal, violence, and shame. Overall, *Disgrace* is both merciless and compassionate. By portraying the disgrace of a typical white South African, Coetzee foretells the doomed disgrace of colonial ideology and actions and suggests that the only way out is to give them up, and to reach compromise with the natives so that grace can be gained, as what Lurie obtains at the end of the novel *Disgrace*.

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**Mapping the Generational Conflict between the Patriarchy and the Resistance: A Study of  
Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting***

A project submitted to  
**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**  
**(Re-accredited with A+ Grade by NAAC)**  
**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  
**Joshi. L**  
**(Reg.No.21APEN12)**



**PG and Research Department of English**  
**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**  
**(Re-accredited with A+ Grade by NAAC)**  
**Thoothukudi**  
**April 2023**



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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Mapping the Generational Conflict between the Patriarchy and the Resistance: A Study of Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*** 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 Joshi. L during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Mapping the Generational Conflict between the Patriarchy and the Resistance: A Study of Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*** 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**

**April 2023**

  
**Joshi. L**

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## PREFACE

The project entitled **Mapping the Generational Conflict between the Patriarchy and the Resistance: A Study of Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*** analyses the dichotomy between the male and the female roles in two completely different cultures, Indian and American cultures. It recounts the human relationships in the patriarchal society in the language not only of fasting and feasting but of greed, craving, taboo, denial, and disgust.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of Indian English Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Entrapped Gender and Social Roles** depicts the middle-class patriarchal families of India, who discuss, plan, plot, control, govern the activities of their children, be it marriage or going abroad for studies. It also states how in their over-domineering concern, they tend to ignore the inadvertent possibility of entrapping their own offspring.

The third chapter **Patriarchal Mothers and Neglected Daughters** records the psychological trauma undergone by the daughters when the mothers venture into their own individual worlds by rejecting their right to be loved and cared and also how such negation of motherhood would render the future generations crippled.

The fourth chapter **Generational Spheres of Oppression and Resistance** throws light on the distribution of power and its hierarchy in the Indian society and how with the synthesis of self-recognition and effort by the women and the male capacity of action can women be released from the oppressive conditions of patriarchy.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title. The researcher has

followed the guidelines prescribed by MLA Handbook Ninth Edition for the preparation of the project.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Indian Writing in English began as a product of the encounter between India and Britain. Since 1835, English has been the essential medium of educated Indians, and of higher education. From 1857 and 1900 English education took rapid strides, and the climate was favourable for a new flowering of the creative Indian genius. The next twenty years saw a further spread of English education. There were more schools, colleges and universities. There were more number of English newspapers and the number of readers of such papers, increased larger than ever before. In this way Indian writing in English has achieved a new range and power.

Indian English novel has a long and respectable history. National awakening and political uprising gave a great impetus to the Indian novel. The nineteen thirties and forties constitute the most flourishing decades in the history of Indo English fiction. The eminent Indian novelists in English like Ruth Parawer Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande have published great novels, worldwide recognition as great writers and their works have been translated in different languages of the world.

The novelists themselves with the aspiration of their compatriots portrayed various phases of India's struggle for freedom. The more achieved work of the established Indian novelists are increasingly acquiring the status of classics. Some of the Indian novelists have dealt with the problems of Indian immigrants in England. Prominent novels on this theme are; Anita Desai's *Bye-Bye, Blackbird, Reginald* and Jamila Massey's *The Immigrants* and Kamala Markandaya's *The No-Where*. Most of the novels, however, are concerned with one or another aspect of Indian life.

Freedom struggle movement, partition, the clash between the tradition and the modernity, political events are some of the recurrent themes of Indo-English Fiction. Raja Rao deals with Indian metaphysics. Mulk Raj Anand is concerned with the Markandeya presents rural India, Malgonkar recreates history and Nayantara Sahgal draws upon the Indian political situation.

The Renaissance in the modern Indian Literature begins with Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), the father of Indian Literature in English. As a propagandist, reformer, thinker, master of written words he has influenced Toru Dutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu, Sir Aurobindo Ghose, Nehru and Gandhi. The earliest literature in English was in form of essays, biographies and treatises. English writing has genuinely come of age, during the last decades. There has been marvelous improvement in the quality and quantity of creative works being published by Indian English writers both in India and abroad. Indian English Fiction holds the center-stage as fiction is the most powerful and characteristic form of the literary expression today in global context. Another feature that has further enriched this field is the diasporic writing by Indian English writers now settled in different parts of the world.

The term diaspora as derived from diaspeirio which literally means a scattering or dispersion of a group of people to an alien land, away from their traditional homelands. In olden days, the term is used for the worldwide scatterings of Jews outside Palestine. Now-a-days, it is applied to “a number of ethnic and racial groups” living abroad. The diasporic writings are generally marked by a sense of isolation and far-remoteness from the mother country. Hence such words as immigrant, exile and refugee are also applied to this brand of writing. “Immigrant” indicates a location, a foreign settlement, and a physical movement, while “exile” evokes a variety of relationships with the mother-country—alienation, exile, self-imposed exile, political



exile and so on. The word refugee denotes a person taking refuge in a foreign land for safety or for

self-fulfilment. The diasporic writings combine all these features and attitude in texture.

Anita Desai only does consider herself part of the Indian Diaspora, but she is certainly seen by many as one of contemporary India's greatest literary figures. Anita Desai is a leading member of a generation of writers who have carved out a niche for Indian fiction in English – today a burgeoning literary arena with writers of Indian descent or origin chiming in from around the world. Through sensitive psychological probing and sharp social critique, her novels chart the emotional lives in people struggling to find meaning and stability within the framework of a society in transition.

Early in her career, Desai was compelled to write in secret to avoid conflict with her husband's family; today her daughter Kiran Desai is also a novelist. "This makes," Desai has explained, "for a great intimacy and companionship between us, the first I have ever experienced." Today, Desai spends most of the year in the United States, where she is a Professor Emerita of humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Anita Desai is recognized as the first Indian author who addresses feminist themes seriously focusing on the condition of women in India. Her novels depict the external social and political circumstances of their female characters. Desai concentrates on the exploration of the psychological condition of the oppressed women who turn out to be the protagonists. Bipin Panigrahi characterizes aptly the conflict of Desai's characters as one "between reason and instinct, the will and reality involvement and detachment".

Anita Desai is considered as the writer who introduced the psychological novel in the tradition of Virginia Woolf to India. Included in this, is her pioneer status of writing of feminist issue. The mastery of this insight can be observed in her novels. *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), *Clear Light of Day* (1980), or *Cry the Peacock* (1980). Nevertheless, the 1980's saw Desai's shift of interest from the female towards the male protagonist which carried with them themes classified traditionally rather as male related, such as trade, raw deals and mercenary motives as specified in *In Custody* (1984).

The emergence of the feminine sensibility is a concept of reality in the fictional world of Anita Desai. She is one of the most recognized figures in Indo-Anglian fiction. Her novels have remarkably exposed the evidence of Desai's awareness and handling of several problems related to women, from a psychological point of view. She has emerged as an artist of exceptional ability in studying and expressing the feminine sensibility in an adequate form.

Anita Desai has excelled particularly in highlighting the miserable position of highly sensitive and emotional women tortured by isolation and loneliness. The most recurring themes in all her novels are the hazards and complexities of man-woman relationship, the founding and nurturing of individuality and the establishing of individualism. She has presented the plight of introspective, hypersensitive, depressed women and assertive women in her novels. She has portrayed the male-female dichotomy in multi-dimensional perspectives. The male-female relationship is not necessarily pleasant and perhaps that explains the presence of psychic tension in all her works.

*Fasting, Feasting* (1999) is above all, a work whose main concern is the plight of women in India. It is impossible to stay simply with what is termed "feminism" in the

Western sense. *Fasting, Feasting* is a novel which attempts to interconnect its two parts in one work. The “difference” alluded to by Desai already in the title of her book *Fasting, Feasting* can stand for the two parts of the novel respectively, the first part of the story revolves around the situations in India (the country of “fasting” which refers not only to the religious aspect, but also to an unwilling “fasting” of the poor people of the country) and in the second part of the story encapsulated the events in U.S (the “feasting” of the individual characters is relative and multiple at the same time as perceived by the main protagonist of each part respectively).

Anita Desai, the most powerful contemporary Indian novelists in English, was born as Anita Mazumdar in Mussorie, a hill station near Dehradun in the northern India to a Bengali father and a German mother on June 24, 1937. Her father DN Mazumdar is a Bengali businessman and her mother Toni Nime was of German origin. She began to write at the age of seven and published her first story at the age of nine. She grew up speaking German at home and Bengali, Urdu, Hindi and English at school. She continued her higher education in literature too, in Miranda House College at the University of Delhi. She received her B.A Degree in English literature in 1957. She worked for one year after her graduation at Max Mueller Bhawan in Calcutta. She got married to Ashvin Desai, a businessman. The couple had four children Rahul, Tani, Arjun and the youngest is Kiran. Desai herself describes her upbringing as “the greater gift I could have been given as writer”.

Her first book, “*Cry the Peacock*” was published in England in 1963, and her better known novels are *In Custody* (1984) and *Baumgartner’s Bombay* (1988). She once wrote “*I see India through my mother’s eyes*, as an outsider, but my feelings for India are my father’s, of someone born here”. She never considered trying to first publish in India, as she thought no one would be interested in a fiction written by an Indian writer and it

as first in England that her work became noticed. U.S readers were slower in recognising her, which was due to England's natural interest in India and the U.S's lack of comprehension regarding the foreignness of her subject.

Desai writes only in English and she has repeatedly said that it was a natural and unconscious choice for her "I can state definitely that I did not choose English in a deliberate and conscious act and I'd say perhaps it was the language that chose me and I started writing stories in English at the age of seven, and have been doing so for thirty years now without stopping to think why." She is considered as the writer who introduced the psychological novel in the tradition of Virginia Woolf to India. While many people today would not classify her work as feminist, she believes this is due to changing times

"the feminist movement in India is very new and a younger generation of readers in India tends to be rather impatient of my books and think of them as books about completely helpless women, hopeless women. They find it somewhat unreal that the women don't seem to realize how very much this movement is". She also says that her writing is realistic "Women think that I am doing a disservice to the feminist movement by writing about women who can have no control over their lives. But I am trying, as every writer tries to do, even in fiction, to get at the truth and to write the truth."

Desai considered *Clear Light of Day* as her autobiographical book, because she has written about her neighborhood in Delhi although the characters are not based on her brothers and sisters. She was exploring in the novel, the importance of childhood and memories as the source of a life. She had wanted to start the book at the end and move backwards into the characters' childhood and into the childhood of their parents

etc. She said that when she had gone as far back as their infancy the book just grounded to a halt; it lost its momentum. It told her that it was done and it couldn't be carried further. But she still had a sense of disappointment, about the book, because the intention had been different. The character of Raja is identified with her in the sense that he is so immersed in all the types of literature and culture and is so concerned with protecting the multicultural heritage of India. His worries about the family of the Muslim neighbour for the loss of all that Muslim culture and literature contributed to India.

While Desai has taught for years at Mount Holyoke and MIT, and spends most of the year outside of India, she does not consider herself part of the Indian diaspora. Although she does not fit in the Indian box anymore as she said, she considered herself lucky for having not left India until late in her life, because she feels that she has been drifting away from it ever since "I can't really write of it with the same intensity and familiarity that I once had." Yet she cannot feel at home in any other place or society.

Anita Desai had an unorthodox upbringing, which in turn helped nurture writing aspiration in her young mind. During her early years, she spent much time learning German, Bengali, Urdu, Hindi and English that compounded her passion for literature. Although graduated from Delhi University in the year 1957, it was only in the early 1960's Desai came out with her first publication *Cry the Peacock* (1963). In the following years, she went on to publish a number of books including *Bye-Bye, Blackbird*, *Where Shall We Go This Summer*, *Fire on the Mountain*, *Games at Twilight*, *Clear Light of Day*, *In Custody* and *The Village by the Sea*. Apart from these, Anita Desai has written scores of short stories that won her great accolades. Most of her plot line

are either a representation or influenced by her personal experience of life. She never patronized a single theme or message, but instead believed in citing the truth as it is.

In most of her works, she emphasized that the lives of Indian middle class women as most of her female characters highlighted on their strained relationships. In her books, Anita Desai has managed to deal with the topics ranging from anti-sentiment to western quintessential ideologies of India and the death of Indian tradition and customs. Anita Desai never restricted or limited herself to writing, but also spent time shaping young minds by teaching at Mount Holyoke College in United States as a professor of humanities at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Baruch and Smith College. She is also a fellow member of the Royal society of literature, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Girton College and the Cambridge University. She continues to make her presence felt among American tabloid by publishing her write up for *The New York Review of Books* every fortnight.

Desai is part of new literary tradition of Indian writing in English which dates back only to the 30's or 40's. She explains that this is because at one time all literature was recited rather than being read and that remains a tradition in India. It is still rather a strange act to buy a book and read it, an unusual thing to do. For these reasons, she says, that she is not widely read in India, mainly in Indian Universities.

Majority of contemporary Indian women writers like Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande have focused on the psychological sufferings, oppressions of the frustrated housewife whose only option was to suppress the storm within, the inevitable existential predicament of women in male dictated society. The neglected women as characters in their novel attempt for a better way of life both at the mental and physical levels. Cultural clash suffered by women swinging between two cultures has also been a prominent theme in the writings of the Indian women writers a state of in-

between which was explored by Kamala Das and Jhumpa Lahiri with utmost care and accuracy. 20th century saw a phenomenal change in women's writing. Shobha De has moved away from the usual regular track and has actually made a serious analysis of the man woman relationship.

Throughout her novels, and her books for children, Desai highlights the problems of contemporary life that her Indian characters must cop up with. She maintains that her primary goal is to discover "the truth that is nine-tenths of the iceberg that lies submerged beneath the one-tenth visible portion we call reality". She portrays the cultural and social changes that India has undergone as she focuses on the incredible power of family and society and the relationship between members, paying close attention to the trails of women suppressed by Indian society.

Kiran Desai, the daughter of Anita Desai has won the Booker prize which her mother could not win though her novels were short listed for the Booker prize thrice. The daughter continued along the contours marked by her mother but she is perhaps more interested in social and political upheavals. She says that her prize novel is, "as much hers as it is mine," while Anita Desai's novel reflect the social reality, and Kiran's novel manages to explore every contemporary international issues. The remarkable thing about Kiran is that she is aware of the Anglo-Indian inheritance in Naipaul and Rushdie but she does something in a pioneering way. The objective of Indian writing in English is twofold to take stock of oneself and to project to the world the Indian ethos. Both the mother and the daughter do not believe that literature ought to be confined within the reality. Their novels explore the ordinary and common-place in all their bewildering complexity. Truthfulness is its motto; realism is its animating principle.

Anita Desai was awarded “Winifred Holtby Memorial Prize” (1978) for *Fire on the Mountain*, Sahitya Academy Award (National Academy of Letters Award-1978) for *Fire on the Mountain*. She was shortlisted for the “Booker Prize for fiction” (1980) for *Clear Light of Day*. On 1983 she received the “Guardians Children’s Fiction Prize” for *The Village by the Sea* an Indian family story. She was also shortlisted for the “Booker Prize for Fiction” for *In Custody* in 1984. In 1993 she got the “Neil Gunn Prize” and again she was shortlisted for the “Booker Prize for fiction” for *Fasting Feasting*. In 2000 she received the “Alberto Moravia Prize for Literature” (Italy) and “Benson Medal of Royal Society of Literature” (2003), Sahitya Academy Fellowship” (2007) and she received the “Padma Bhushan” in 2014.

Anita Desai’s major themes are human relationships, alienation, and loneliness, lack of communication, East West Encounter, violence and death. Her novels unfold the inner realities and psychic reverberations of her characters and depict the harrowing tales of blunted human relationships. The novels are certainly reflective of social realities. Anita Desai concentrates more on the exploration of modern Indian sensibility. She observes the realities from a psychological perspective.

Anita Desai’s novels typically gravitate around women (mostly middle-class South Asian) who come of age in the sweltering clime of India’s outback and within households heavy with patriarchal oppression. In her novel, *Fasting, Feasting*, the protagonist Uma, much like Desai’s earlier characters Nanda Kaul in *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) and Bimla in *Clear Light of Day* (1980), dares to dream of life beyond her estate’s closed gates. Unfortunately, also like her predecessors, Uma finds that her desires – “A career. Leaving home. Living alone” – meet with unscalable walls at every turn.



Anita Desai's tenth novel, *Fasting, Feasting* deals with themes of deprivation, abundance and being trapped in society's claims. It also deals with the male and the female roles in two completely different cultures, Indian and American cultures. The contrast in the novel can be understood from the novel's title. When it comes to needs or wishes without looking to the gender and qualities of gender, almost every character of the novel suffers from deprivation. This is the 'fasting' side of the novel. For instance, Uma is deprived of attention while Arun is deprived of his freedom of choice. Despite the great absence and deprivation in the novel there are plenitudes of various subjects. Excesses and opulence in the American lifestyle to which Arun exposed can be a good example to that and it is the 'feasting' side of the novel.

Two families in the novel seem very different from each other in the first place but until the end of the novel -despite the variety of two cultures- we can see these families are just two sides of a coin. In Uma's family, there is a sharp discrepancy between women and men. Uma says "they have the comfort of each other" for her parents' inseparable unity, society of India divides female and male figures in marriages to different levels. In the novel while Uma mentions her parents she uses 'Mama Papa' phrase and she goes on saying "It was hard to believe they had ever had separate existences, that they had been separate entities and not Mama Papa in one breath." They seem like they don't have individual wishes. Unfortunately, there is great class distinction between the wife and the husband. Mama always tries to make Papa comfortable and she demands that her daughters do the same. Papa is aware of his power on his family and waits from his family to do whatever he demands them to do. He doesn't even need to ask for peeled orange. He just waits in silence when Uma places the fruit bowl in front of him and Mama peels oranges for him. In Indian society service to father or husband makes women proud. Because men work and

focus on their education, women learn how to be proud when they accomplished their tasks which were given by men. On the other hand, American family of the novel seems more liberated. They live in the comfort and richness of America. They have access to freedom and good life. But in the end, Arun realizes Potter family is just a different version of his own family. Just like Papa, Mr Potter ignores his family's needs. He is totally unaware of his wife's or his daughter's condition. Mrs Potter is obsessed with the filling of the refrigerator. This habit became the only goal in her life and it is very similar to Mama's struggle to find a good husband to her daughters. They both try to complete their duties with these goals. The daughters of these two families also have similarities. Melanie's eating disorder can be associated with Uma's jumping to river for salvation.

The treatment that women undergo in the Indian society is brutal and there is big inequity if we compare this with the superior treatment of men. Women grow up with the idea of being housewife and the parents prepare their daughters not to be educated people but to make them suitable wives for men. For example in chapter four, Uma asks their servant Ayah about her daughter Lakshmi. Ayah complains that she had to beat Lakshmi because she ran away to build a life for herself on her own despite accepting the choice of husband by her mother. This behaviour of Ayah's to her own daughter shows that not only men but also women in Indian society accept that women's duty can be only to her home and her family. Uma feels trapped in society's wills. She is the victim of patriarchy. Women cannot go out for pleasure or cannot drink. When Uma and her cousin Rami went out for dinner, her mother's attitude towards her was "You, you disgrace to the family – nothing but disgrace, ever!". With the result of being a woman who lives among people with this ideology Uma's only attempt to a rebellion was just jumping to the river. In chapter 9, when they saved

her from drowning she doesn't think that she is saved. Because she doesn't have any value or freedom. Only significant freedom she has is her 'Christmas-card' collection and the time she spent with Mira-masi. Mira-masi is like a black sheep for Mama Papa. Because she demolished the ideology of 'women belong to her household'. Another escape place for Uma was her school. Despite her joy for school she wasn't a bright student. The convent school meant freedom for her. Because of this reason her fondness for school is not goal-oriented. With her brother, Arun's birth her school life came to an end. Education for women is modern idea and Uma's mother doesn't want to hear modern ideas so she became a suitable woman for her family by staying in the house.

## Chapter Two

### Entrapped Gender and Social Roles

Anita Desai's *Fasting, Feasting*, as implied in the title itself, is a novel of contrast between two cultures, the one, Indian, known for its pious and longstanding customs representing 'fasting,' and the other, American, a country of opulence and sumptuousness epitomizing 'feasting.' The plot unveils through the perceptions of Uma, in India, and of Arun, in America. Both of them are entrapped, irrespective of the culture and enveloping milieu, by oppressive bonds exercised by their own parents, MamaPapa. They are just MamaPapa or PapaMama but remain nameless throughout the novel. Yet, this namelessness does not indicate their anonymity but signifies their universality. They are the prototypical parents found everywhere in the middle-class families of India, who discuss, plan, plot, control, govern the activities of their children, be it marriage or going abroad for studies. And in their over-domineering concern, they tend to ignore the inadvertent possibility of entrapping their own offspring. Thus, they do not give contingency to the fact that perhaps their children too can have a life to call their own. Their own preoccupations, their own priorities, and maybe an agenda for themselves fix their long term plans of what they actually want for their children.

The novel begins with the exposure of MamaPapa in a contemplative mood: "The parents sit, rhythmically swinging, back and forth. They could be asleep, dozing-their eyes are hooded- but sometimes they speak" (100). That is when a sudden deluge of ideas hit them and they order their eldest daughter, Uma, to carry out them without delay. Uma is asked first to inform the cook to prepare sweets for her father, with neglectful impatience that has been already asked to pack a parcel to be sent to her brother Arun in America. While she comes literally running on her toes, she is

entrusted with an additional job of writing a letter to their son. Somewhere in the middle of the novel, the reader understands that it is a usual scene that goes on in the household of MamaPapa. “All morning MamaPapa have found things for Uma to do. It is as if Papa’s retirement is to be spent in this manner- sitting on the red swing in the veranda with Mam, rocking, and finding ways to keep Uma occupied. As long as they can do that, they themselves feel busy and occupied” (133). In this manner, living under the demanding rule of MamaPapa, Uma is repressed, suppressed and is imprisoned at home.

The first part of the novel tells us in a flashback as how Uma became a reluctant victim of entrapment at home. The second part of the novel shows how her brother Arun, who leaves his home for higher studies, feels trapped by the very education that is meant to liberate him. Usually, at home, it would be an oppressive atmosphere even if one of the parents is overpowering. With regard to Uma, both of her parents appear to have merged into a single identity MamaPapa/PapaMama, as if they have a “Siamese twin existence” (6). Hence, whenever MamaPapa say something, and whoever says it, it comes with double the intensity and power that it cannot be defied at all. “Having fused into one, they have gained so much in substance, in stature, in authority, that they loomed large enough as it was; they did not need separate histories and backgrounds to make them even more immense”(6). Despite a slight variation in the roles they have chosen to play, Papa’s of “scowling” and “Mama’s scolding”(10), in terms of opinion, they never differed from each other. Therefore, if one refused there would not be any “point in appealing to the other parent for a different verdict: none was expected, or given” (14).

Furthermore, the women are not allowed for outings usually, but when Papa feels that women laze around the house too much, then they would be taken to the

park for walk. On one such occasion, Uma gets easily distracted and fails to keep pace with her Papa. Though Papa is far away, and she is left in the company of Mama, she would not dare attempt to buy some eatables of her choice though it is highly tempting: “Uma finds saliva gathering at the corners of her mouth at the smell of the spiced, roasted gram but decided to say nothing” (12-13). In the end, Uma is blamed for being “slow” when all the while Uma could not reconcile herself as why they are hurrying just to go back home.

Likewise, the children are not allowed to have any sense of privacy even when they have grown-up. They are not allowed to shut the doors in the household. For this meant secrets, especially nasty secrets, which are impermissible: “It meant authority would come stalking in and make a search to seize upon the nastiness, the unclean bolt” (15). MamaPapa also decide which of their children should have education and how much of it.

As far as Uma is concerned, a pleasant escape from her claustrophobic conditions at home is her school-going. The convent school for her is “streaked with golden promise” (20). Hence, she always goes early to school and later finds some excuse to linger there for longer time. Conversely, she feels deprived during dull weekends when she is left at home: “There were the wretched weekends when she was plucked back into the trivialities of her home, which seemed a denial, a negation of life as it ought to be, somber and splendid, and then the endless summer vacation when the heat reduced even that pointless existence to further vacuity”(21). Regardless of Uma’s verve for convent education, she is forced to stop going to school when Mama gives birth to the third baby, Arun. Even as Uma shows disagreement, she is coaxed, cajoled and finally threatened to accept her Mama’s decision: ‘But ayah can do this- ayah can do that-’ Uma tried to protest when the

orders began to come thick and fast. This made Mama look stern again. ‘You know we can’t leave that baby to the servant,’ she said severely. ‘He needs proper attention.’ When Uma pointed out that ayah had looked after her and Aruna as babies, Mama’s expression made it clear it was quite a different matter now, and she repeated threateningly: ‘Proper attention’(31).

Later, Uma looks forward towards her marriage to give her the much-needed relief, yet, unfortunately, she returns home frustrated after a deceitful marriage and subsequent divorce. Back at home, she gets a rare job offer through Dr. Dutt, but MamaPapa refuse to send her. When Dr. Dutt persists on taking Uma for the job, Mama lies of an illness for which she needs Uma to nurse her. When Uma receives an invitation for a coffee party from Mrs. O’ Henry, MamaPapa refuse to send her to the party because of the apprehension that Mrs. O’ Henry might ensnare her and convert her into a nun. Reduced thus to a baby-sitter at her earlier days and an unpaid servant for her self-centered parents for the rest of her life, Uma finds no escape from her entrapment.

Uma experiences, however, a brief repose of happiness and freedom once when she is allowed to accompany her ailing aunt, Mira-Masi, on her pilgrimage. During her stay at four nights in an ashram, Uma finds a strange link in her life with the barks and howls of the dogs: At night she laid quietly on her mat, listening to the dog’s barking in the ashram. Then other dogs in distant villages, out along the river bed and over in the pampas grass, or in wayside shacks and hovels by the highway- barked back. They howled long message to each other. Their message traveled back and forth through the darkness of the night which was total, absolute. Gradually the barks sank into it and

drowned. Then it was silent. That was what Uma felt her own life to have been-full of barks, howls, message, and now-silence (61).

At this movement, one is reminded of Anita Desai's characteristic way of making her internally turbulent protagonist find expression through the association with the external surroundings. Thus, for instance, in *Cry the Peacock*, Maya's feelings of isolation and longings are coupled with those of the crying peacocks. Still, one locates a kind of sublimity in the agonised inner cry of Maya when it is likened with peacocks. When Uma's pain is related to the barks and howls of dogs, the poetry of Maya's anguish is to be seen in sharp contrast to that of the excruciating poverty of Uma's entrapment. Catering to the whims and fancies of MamaPapa, at one point of the novel, her contrition self-contained, Uma feels utterly friendless and alone, even when she is at home and surrounded by MamaPapa. In desperation, she thinks of writing a letter to a friend to share her grief but it only ends up with the realisation that she has none to confide with:

She couldn't write a letter to a friend- a private message of despair, dissatisfaction, yearning; she has a packet of notepaper, pale violet with a pink rose embossed in the corner- but who is the friend? Mrs. Joshi? But since she lives next door, she would be surprised. Aruna? But Aruna would pay no attention, she is too busy. Cousin Ramu? Where is he? Had his farm swallowed him up? And Anamika had marriage devoured her? (134).

Anyway, it would be wrong to presuppose that Anita Desai shows Uma's unattractiveness, clumsiness and dullness of mind as the causes for her entrapment. Uma's polar opposite, her graceful, beautiful, and brilliant cousin, Anamika's confinement is more poignant. While Uma's failure in her school exams pressurises



her to stay at home, Anamika does so excellently in her final school exams, that she wins a scholarship to Oxford. Yet, Anamika lives in a patriarchal society that considers higher education to be the prerogative of men, and marriage as the major preoccupation of women. The scholarship obtained is used as a means to win her husband who is considered an equal to the family's prestige. Anamika's parents are unperturbed by the fact that he is so much older than her, so grim-faced and conscious of his superiority, and is "totally impervious to Anamika's beauty and grace and distinction" (70). But it is Anamika, who starts another life of entrapment the moment she enters her in-laws' house. Anamika's husband is atypical 'Mama's boy to the extent he could be a silent witness to his mother's beating of his wife regularly. Anamika, who won scholarship to Oxford, spends her entire time in the kitchen cooking for a very large family that eats in shifts—"first the men, then the children, finally the women" (70). After a miscarriage, which followed a brutal beating, and the belief that she could not bear more children, finally, the family ties her up in a nylon saree, pours the kerosene over her, and burns her to death. Here again Desai is not implying that the un-burnt brides and the well-settled ones may live a contented life.

Desai portrays the story of Aruna, Uma's smart and pretty younger sister who makes a discreet choice and marries "the wisest, the handsomest, the richest, the most exciting of the suitors who presented themselves" (101). Aruna's marriage to Arvind who has a job in Bombay and a flat in a housing block in Juhu, facing the beach is just like a dream-come-true. Yet to live that dream-life fully she transforms herself and desperately seeks to introduce change in the lives of others. She cuts her hair, takes her make-up kit wherever she goes, and calls her sister and mother 'villagers' once they refuse to accept her sophisticated and flashy style of life. For that reason, she avoids visiting her parents' home and the rare occasions of her short visits are spent in

blaming the untidiness of the surroundings and the inhabitants. Even she goes to the extent of scolding her husband when he splits tea in his saucer, or wears a shirt, which does not match, with his trousers. In this way, Aruna's entrapment is different from the rest. She has liberated herself from the customs and dominating home rules that bind the rest of the characters like Uma and Anamika. Yet, in negating those codes, she ensnares herself in her mad pursuit towards a vision of perfection. And in order to reach that perfection she needs to constantly uncover and rectify the flaws of her own family as well as of Arvind's.

When Uma sees the entrapment of Aruna, she feels pity for her: Seeing Aruna vexed to the point of tears because the cook's pudding had sunk and spread instead of remaining upright and solid, or because Arvind had come to dinner in his bedroom slippers, or Papa was wearing a t-shirt with a hole under one arm, Uma felt pity for her:

“was this the realm of ease and comfort for which Aruna had always pined and that some may say that she had attained? Certainly it brought her no pleasure there was always a crease of discontent between her eyebrows and an agitation that made her eyelids flutter, disturbing Uma who noticed it”. (109)

While Uma, Anamika, Aruna present the female versions of entrapment in *Fasting, Feasting*, Arun pictures the male version of it. Unlike his sisters, right from his birth, Arun desists eating the food of his family which is symbolic of its values. Much to the dismay of his father, he shows his preference for vegetarian food. Simply because it revolutionised the life-style of his father, Arun cannot be forced to eat non-vegetarian food. This, of course, is a cause of disappointment for Papa:

Papa was always scornful of those of their relatives who came to visit and insisted on clinging to their cereal-and vegetable-eating ways, shying away from the meat dishes Papa insisted on having cooked for dinner. Now his own son, displayed this completely baffling desire to return to the ways of his forefathers, meek and puny men who had got nowhere in life. Papa was deeply vexed. (32-33)

Nonetheless, Arun cannot fully come out of the clutches of Papa, especially, in terms of his education. And ironic enough, it is education, which instead of offering the desired autonomy, paves way for Arun's entrapment. Papa, in order to give "the best, the most, the highest" (119) education for his son, takes charge of Arun's life from his childhood. Although, Arun's school examinations are over, Papa cannot allow him to go to his sister's house in Bombay during holidays, since he has planned that time for taking up entrance examinations and preparation for sending applications to go abroad for higher studies.

However, in the eyes of Aruna, her father's maniac determination to get foreign scholarship for Arun, is actually on account of his unfulfilled dreams, which he tries to impose on his son. That is why, when the letter of acceptance from Massachusetts finally arrives, it stirs no emotions in Arun:

Uma watched Arun too, when he read the fateful letter. She watched and searched for an expression, of relief, of joy, doubt, fear, anything at all. But there as none.... There was nothing else-not the hint of a smile, frown, laugh or anything: these had been ground down till they had disappeared. This blank face now stared at the letter and faced another phase of his existence arranged for him by Papa. (121)

As Ravichandran rightly observes, “With a deft touch, Desai shows us that MamaPapa’s ambition for Arun are as stifling as their lack of ambition for Uma....”From America, Arun’s letters come just to indicate his endurance and survival. His messages are diluted, and are devoid of any emotion and substance. “The most personal note he struck as a poignant, frequently repeated complaint: ‘The food is not very good’” (123). The ties, though invisible, are so overwhelming that even in a country that feasts on individuality, Arun fails to manifest his identity as an individual. Caught in the prison house of his own family’s food habits, he can neither nourish the alien food nor develop a sense of belonging with Patton’s family that shelters him during his vacation. The smell of the raw meat being charred over the fire by Mr. Patton for steak or hamburger is loathsome for Arun. Conversely, Mr. Patton fails to understand why Arun really refuses to eat good piece of meat. While Mrs. Patton sympathises with Arun, and gives him the vegetarian food items, particularly tomato slices and lettuce on bread, Arun finds them detestable too. Because he thinks that “in his time in America he has developed a hearty abhorrence for the raw foods everyone here thinks the natural diet of a vegetarian” (167).

Hence when Mrs. Patton, quite satisfied with her job of a host, watches him eating with pride and complicity, Arun ate with an expression of woe and a sense of mistreatment. How was he to tell Mrs. Patton that these were not the food items that figured in his culture? That his digestive system did not know how to turn them into nourishment? (184-185). Where Mrs. Patton’s daughter, Melanie, bluntly says she finds the food revolting, and refuses to taste it, Arun has to helplessly eat it. Melanie, however, suffers from bulimia, a disorder in which overeating alternates with self-induced vomiting, fasting, etc. Her bulimia, along with her mother’s frenzy for buying food items to fill the freezer, signifies the consumerist society that she hails from,

where excess becomes the malady. This is seen in contrast to Rod, the fitness fanatic, who spends all his time and energy in jogging, baffles Arun who wonders that “one can’t tell what is more dangerous in this country, the pursuit of health or of sickness”(204-205). He apprehends that like Melanie, who eats, vomits and lies on her vomit most of the time, the people of her country too, go through an inexplicable pain and a real hunger. Yet he cannot reconcile his mind to the unanswerable question: “But what hunger a person so sated can feel?”(224).

Anita Desai, in portraying the stories of entrapment in *Fasting, Feasting*, presents one version after another, each contributing together to a master version, and each simultaneously subverting the other towards an open and contingent version. Accordingly, in the story of Uma, we find her unattractiveness leading to her eventual entrapment. Yet, if we pass a final verdict on this account, we would be proved erroneous since Desai presents the versions of Arun and Anamika, Uma’s appealing sister and charming cousin, respectively. Beauty cannot offer them escape from entrapments; in truth, it is rather their good looks that victimize them. Further, if we think again that it is Uma’s lack of education that has led to her entrapment, Desai presents us the subversion of Anamika, where foreign scholarship fetches her an equal match but fails to provide her the required escape, it suffocates and kills her literally. In like manner, Uma thinks, “A Career. Leaving home. Leaving alone”(130) would bring in the necessary freedom from entrapment, Desai presents us the story of Arun, who leaves home, lives alone for a career but feels the pangs of entrapment despite it. Also, in providing a male version through the story of Arun’s entrapment, Desai negates any feministic verdict based on the other female version of entrapment that is likely to put blame on the patriarchal, male-centered society. Thus, Anita Desai, often described as one of the finest writers of this country, has moved from her earlier,

typical way of sympathizing with her characters, females especially, to a different level of sensibility now.

Desai herself speaks out in a recent interview that she has been deliberately shifting her focus from female characters to male characters. She rather feels she needs to address and voice out themes which concerns men too. She says:

Especially in my earlier work I found myself addressing the same things over and over again: very much about the life of women, specially those women who are confined to home and family, also the solitude from which a person can suffer even if living with a big family or surrounded by crowds. But after several years and several books I began to feel suffocated myself by the confinement of these subjects. I felt I was limiting the territory to such an extent that it created a kind of suffocation even for me. So I deliberately opened the doors, to widen the canvas, and started writing more about the male characters and their lives, because I felt they had a wider experience of the world, and I could address a greater variety of experiences" (88).

Finally, if we consider the male version represented by Arun and the female versions constituted by Uma, Anamika and Aruna as Indian version, Desai offers American version to counter them. The story, thus dangling between two countries and cultures shows to prove through the characters of Uma and Arun, and their counterparts Melanie and Rod, that attempts of escape from entrapments can only be temporary, illusory and self-destructively futile since entrapments through familial knots are ubiquitous, all-encompassing and universal. And perhaps the salvation comes when

one accepts entrapment of one kind or another envisioned as an inescapable fact of life.

## Chapter Three

### Patriarchal Mothers and Neglected Daughters

The novel *Fasting, Feasting* seems to be based, as the very title suggests, on the binary opposition, fasting and feasting, which dominate the life of the modern men and women in all sections, groups and societies world over. This dichotomy works in the lives of proletariat and capitalist, servant and master, poor and rich, and above all woman and man. The title itself is ironical, putting the oppressed one before the oppressor. But Anita Desai has invested something very new and peculiar in this novel; that is, how this dichotomy works between female-female relationships. Thus, primarily the story of human hungers, *Fasting, Feasting*, merits appreciation from the feminist point of view.

Anita Desai's novel, *Fasting, Feasting*, seems to have been influenced by the radical phase of feminist movement. Radical feminists essentially demand complete emancipation from the shackles of oppressive patriarchal stereotypes. The basic problem faced by such feminists is how to challenge and subvert the norms of patriarchy while, simultaneously, being parts of the same system itself. Anita Desai is, undoubtedly, one among such radical writers who tends to challenge the stereotypes of motherhood. When we try to decipher the ground reality of mother-daughter relationships in *Fasting, Feasting*. When a daughter does not receive the desired love and affection, and when there is a dearth of understanding between the mother and daughter, it leads to alienation and depression in the psyche of the girl child. This renders the daughter vulnerable to the pressures of the world outside. The mother's negation of her motherhood poses threat to the growth and development of the child, especially of daughter, and results in the oscillation occurring in their relationships.



*Fasting, Feasting*, is not merely a book about woman and her diversified roles as mother, daughter and wife; but it also “recounts human relationships in the language not only of fasting and feasting but of greed, craving, taboo, denial and disgust” (Dasgupta viii). Delineating the human hungers, as its title suggests, the novel is about the starving daughters and prospering mothers who are no more concerned with their motherly duties as made necessary by patriarchy. Though remaining within the threshold of male dominated society, the mother here retains something of her own, a niche for her individual being, divorced from the duties of a traditional mother. In addition to this, “the novel gives an excruciating account of how society can seize control of individuals — especially women — through such practices as eating, and remove them from everything they intended to be” (Dasgupta viii). Here the mother adapts the traditions and values of patriarchy for creating a haven for herself. Aparna and Bhaskar Jyoti Goswami comment,

“Desai's female characters can often be seen as librated even from the emotional responsibility of motherhood. They are conceived of as primal creatures, busy in pursuing their own motivations, desires and thriving for the fulfilment of their selves.” (192) She does not bother, in the way of a traditional woman, for children and family, turning her face away from the responsibilities of a mother. By leaving her children devoid of maternal care and love, she keeps on enjoying her life with her male counterpart.

But the question arises if a woman, in the wake of feminist movement, abandons her domestic sphere completely, what would become of her children? How can freedom be earned at the cost of negating motherhood?. Thus it seems as if in the light of the new millennium, the caring eye of the mother has lost its eyesight, leaving the children in the eternal darkness of abandonment where insanity awaits them. Individual freedom won at the

cost of assassinating one's own children's emotions is worthless. There must be a kind of harmony, some sort of balance between a woman's two distinct roles- of a mother and of an individual. Otherwise what being sown are mere dry bones of neglect, rejection and hatred; it can be imagined what would sprout from them.

The novel, *Fasting, Feasting*, has been divided into two segments, dealing with two diverse cultures Indian and American. The first part tells Uma's story in relation to her mother with the backdrop of her relationships with her sister, Aruna, brother, Arun, and her father. Desai has portrayed these relationships so intricately that it seems almost impossible to understand mother-daughter relationship without approaching them simultaneously. Much like Jane Austen, Anita Desai primarily deals with two or three families as forming the plot of her present novel. Uma's family consists of her parents and their two daughters, one being Uma herself. The parents have merged into each other so intensely that now it appears quite difficult to conceive them as separate beings. "Mama and Papa. MamaPapa. PapaMama. It was hard to believe they had ever had separate existences, that they had been separate entities and not MamaPapa in one breath" (5). The novelist has not felt the need to give them separate names; instead, they are addressed as MamaPapa in the same breath.

In his review of the novel, Andrew Robinson comments, "In Papa and Mama, the Indian parents, she creates two monsters of almost Gothic proportions, locked into inseparable marital disharmony, determined to inflict on their two daughters and only on every ounce of the prejudices and disappointments of their own lives, as a respectable barrister and his wife in an undistinguished town (39). Uma's father had studied under the streetlight and seems to be infatuated with education; whereas her mother is a housewife who has absorbed patriarchal values to such an extent that she cannot even like to think beyond patriarchal horizon. Herself a victim of gender discrimination, she remembers, "In my day,

girls in the family were not given sweets, nuts, good things to eat. If something special had been bought in the market, like sweets or nuts, it was given to the boys in the family.” Thus conditioned by the gender biased attitude of the parents, Uma’s mother embodies all the feminine traits expected from a girl in a patriarchal society. She lives both as an individual and a traditional wife.

At the initial stage “there is seen a special bond between the mother and the two girls, all of them being the victims of Papa” (Choubey 11). But later the mother becomes one with her husband and serving him remains the sole aim of her life. The mother is completely overtaken by patriarchy represented by the father. It is because:

.... his thoughts were one with hers. Their opinion differed so rarely that if Mama refused to let Aruna wear a pearl necklace to the matinee at the Regal cinema or Papa decided Uma could not take music lessons after school, there was no point in appealing to the other parent for a different verdict: none was expected, or given. (14)

Therefore, the daughters of the family, both Uma and Aruna, receive only rejection from their parents. The mother either remains busy with her husband on the swing in the varanda or ingoing for kitty parties and playing cards with her female friends. The daughters are treated as nuisance by their mother. “She swatted at her daughters as if they were a pair of troublesome flies ... her daughters trailing after her, and by the time she arrived at the varanda, her manner had become the familiar one of guarded, restraint, censure and a tired decorum” (7), In doing her duty to serve her husband, Uma’s mother does not pay any heed to her daughters and they are left neglected, bereft of any care and affection.

Alva Mrydal and Viola Klein observe:

'Children First' is the motto written large over all discussions of the merits and demerits of married women. . . . Our children are our stake in the future; hence their well-being is of vital concern to society as well as to us personally. And as we have brought them into this world, it is our responsibility to make them, as best we can, fit to live in it happily and successfully. (116)

But these caring words sound true only in regard to a son. In patriarchy, the upbringing of a daughter remains a half-hearted affair to their parents. The irresponsible behaviour of Uma's parents towards their daughters leaves the girls bewildered. "The girls had learnt not to expect divergences and disagreements, and these occurred so rarely that they might not have recognised them when they did" (14). One day Uma's mother is found to be pregnant. As a result of an aspiring father, the pregnancy is not terminated and a son is born in the family. In the patriarchal system, a mother is made feeling blessed by giving birth to a male heir, Hence the expressions of Uma's mother also change, "They were acutely aware of the wonder of it. Mama's face, still tense from the difficult delivery, began to relax and broaden into long-suffering pride"(16 -17).

Alladi Uma comments:

"A daughter is confident about a mother's love. She knows she is not a second class member of the family; she is no supplement. She is a necessity in her mother's life. At times her mother depends on her. It is an interdependence and a reciprocity we cannot miss." (73)

But there is no such interdependence and reciprocity in Uma's relationship with her mother. A hindrance in her daughter's life, Uma's mother leaves no room for

her daughter to prosper. Asha Choubey observes, “Desai as a true humanist puts the blame not only on men who are suffering with the complex of male-superiority but also on women who oppress their own kind. It is not only the male-chauvinist that acts as the antagonist force but also apathetic female does more harm in terms of the loss of woman soul.”(126) Uma is reduced to the status of a domestic servant. Her mother’s sole aim is to please her husband and she uses Uma to carry it out. Uma is always asked to tell the cook to make this or that for Papa or to take care of her younger brother, Arun. Her mother has risen in status after becoming the mother of a son:

More than ever now, she was Papa’s helpmate, his consort. He had not only made her his wife, he had made her the mother of his son. What honour, what status. Mama’s chin lifted a little into the air, she looked around her to make sure everyone saw and noticed. She might have been wearing a medal. (31)

Therefore, all the love and care is showered on the son and the daughters never even receive their share of attention and, in addition, are treated merely as an obligation by the parents. Uma herself notices, “how Mama and Papa looked upon Arun with an identical expression: a kind of nervous, questioning, somewhat doubtful but determined pride. He was their son, surely an object of pride.”(31)

Uma is burdened with the responsibility of taking care of her kid brother even before she can enjoy her own childhood. The eldest sister is supposed to act as a surrogate mother to her younger brother. The author candidly states, “When Mama came home, weak, exhausted and short-tempered, she tried to teach Uma the correct way of folding nappies, of preparing watered milk, of rocking the screaming infant to sleep when he was covered with prickly heat as with a burn” (18). Thus, Uma's mother

begins to shape her daughter in the traditions of patriarchal society where a girl is moulded in the role of a housewife and a domestic servant. Moreover herself not much educated, Uma's mother pays no attention to her daughter's education. She does not value her daughter's academic career. Once she snaps, "We are not sending you back to school, Uma. You are staying at home to help with Arun." (18)

Uma wants to be educated, but unlike them fails miserably in her attempts. Uma remains, engaged in household chores which consume most of her valuable time. No tuition classes are arranged by her parents, As a result, Uma fails in her exams miserably. The novelist states, "in spite of her raging enthusiasm, she was an object scholar. There was not a thing Uma put her hand to that did not turn to failure" (21). The issue of education has usually remained a battleground for both the mothers and the daughters to fight. The influence of education generally results in developing a questioning attitude in the daughter. But the mother never likes to be questioned by the creature of her own blood. Uma's mother is an insensitive, self-centred mother with myopic view and vision. She tries to convince Uma, "You know you failed your exams again. You're not being moved up. What's the use of going back to school? Stay at home and look after your baby brother" (22). Uma's mother fails to be a caring and trusted mother to her children.

Uma seems to be a mere shadow of her parents, not an individual self "Reduced thus to a baby-sitter at her earlier days and an unpaid servant for her self-centred parents for the rest of her life, Uma finds no escape from her entrapment." (Ravichandran 83) However school is a kind of escape for Uma from her mother's dominance and where she can feel more safe, secure and a mistress of her own. Even weekends are difficult for her to pass at home.

Once Uma takes to the path of rebellion and escapes in the afternoon from the house to school to meet Mother Agnes, so that she can be admitted again in the school. But this attempt of Uma too results in failure. Uma's mother becomes infuriated at such an independent step of her daughter. She retorts, "See what these nuns do . . . What ideas they fill in the girls heads! I always said don't send them to a convent school. Keep them at home, I said- but who listened? And now- !" (29). Such a reaction of her mother renders Uma submissive and docile.

However, the plight of Uma raises a significant question in the reader's mind, that is, in patriarchy the same miserable fate awaits the daughter, no matter she is rebellious or submissive. Uma is a victim of her mother's wrath despite being submissive. It suggests that tension in mother and daughter relationship arises not only because of daughter's rebellious nature but also due to mother's dominating attitude. Asha Choubey comments: "Mothers are such strong influences in the lives of their daughters that they have the power to make or mar their daughter's personality. In a patriarchal world, however mothers instead of protecting the interests of their daughters become instrumental in torturing them." (111)

Uma's school education is curtailed and she is further trained in the duties of a housewife. Uma's mother wants her daughter to accept marriage as her career instead of education. She asks:

"What is the use of going back to school if you keep failing, Uma? . . .

You will be happier at home. You won't need to do any lessons. You are a big girl now. We are trying to arrange a marriage for you. Not now, she added, seeing the panic on Uma's face. But soon. Till then, you can help me look after Arun. And learn to run the house." (22)

She has to serve her father bananas, oranges, apples and lemonade at the right time and with appropriate gestures on her mother's behalf. She is, thus, forced to feel proud at trivialities. Her mother comments, "Girls have to learn these things too, you know . . . she showed Uma how to pour a little oil on her fingertips and then massage it into the baby's limbs" (28-29). Consequently, Uma loses interest in the world around her.

Uma's only comfort lies in the company of her Mira-masi and her cousin Ramu. But both are unwelcomed guests in MamaPapa's home and Uma's mother considers them as bad influences on her daughter. Mira-masi is a widow who has a fascination for pilgrimages and keeps on visiting shrines, temples and distant ashrams throughout the year. Uma's relationship with Mira-Masi is somewhat spiritual in essence. She listens to her ancient myths of Hinduism and tales of various gods and goddesses. Such knowledge of religion and spirituality proves a kind of moral support for Uma. She receives love and care from her Mira-masi which is always denied by her mother. This helps Uma develop again a taste for life that has been lost somewhere. The influence of Mira-masi thus affects Uma's psyche deeply. "Then Uma, with her ears and even her fingertips tingling, felt that here was someone who could pierce through the dreary outer world to an inner world, tantalizing in its colour and romance. If only it could replace this, Uma thought hungrily." (40)

However, Uma's relationship with her cousin, Ramu, is totally different from the one with Mira-masi. To Uma, her Mira-masi represents the world of spirituality and divinity; whereas Ramu represents the material world with an urge for pleasure. Whenever he visits Uma's home, it fills her heart with joy. Once he takes Uma for dinner in some restaurant despite her parent's constant refusal. He makes Uma drink and dance; and she has one of the best times with him. Uma's mother cannot tolerate



such an influence on her daughter. ““Quiet you hussy! Not another word from you, you idiot child!’ Mama’s face glints like a knife in the dark, growing narrower and fiercer as it comes closer. You, you disgrace to the family nothing but disgrace, ever!’”(53). Such behaviour of Uma's mother lacks sensitivity, understanding and even interest in Uma. Her mother does not approve Uma visiting even their neighbours like Mrs. O’Henry and Mrs. Joshi.

In patriarchy, instead of education, it is marriage which is offered to girls as a career. Since their childhood, girls are conditioned to consider marriage as their ultimate destiny. When nothing works for Uma, she is made to plunge into marriage. Now Papa is so desperate that he himself sends letters to all their relatives asking for marriage proposals for Uma. He writes, “Uma is still young but may be considered of marriageable age and we see no reason to continue her studies beyond class eight.”(75) Although Uma was withdrawn from school before she could reach class eight. Proposals arrive and Uma is shown the snaps of eligible bachelors as a sign of family's progressive outlook. Three desperate attempts are made to get Uma married but unfortunately all of them end in fiasco. The first suitor likes Aruna rather than the elder daughter of the family, Second suitor’s family refuses to perform marriage after acquiring a pre-marital dowry from Uma’s family. In a conversation with Uma’s mother, Mrs. .Joshi, their neighbour, comments:

“Yes, that is why the Goyals are able to do such things, because of parents being in too much of a hurry. If parents will not take the time to make proper enquiries, what terrible fates their daughters may have! Be grateful that Uma was not married into a family that could have burnt her to death in order to procure another dowry!” (84)

Even after such warnings, no serious inquiries are made about the third suitor and a hasty marriage is offered. It seems as if Uma is a burden for her parents to be released as soon as possible. And finally when Uma gets married, her husband is found to be already married, having a wife and four children. She is brought back to her parental home where nobody is concerned about her humiliation and her ruin. Her parents merely curse the moment of marriage and moan over the dowry and the wedding expenses. After that Uma remains an outcast from the world of marriage, the world that matters above all in patriarchy. “Having cost her parents two dowries, without a marriage to show in return, Uma was considered ill-fated by all and no more attempts were made to marry her off.” (98)

Uma’s mother thinks that it was her daughter’s bad looks and uneducated status that never enabled her to find a suitable husband. Uma recollects, “How Mamahad always envied Lila Aunty for having a daughter like Anamika, a model of perfection like Anamika. No, that was not for her, she sighed” (77). Uma’s feelings about Anamika have a very strong influence on her relationship with her mother. Uma sometimes tries to justify her mother’s rudeness towards herself by observing the beauty and intelligence of Anamika that she herself unfortunately lacks. Uma thinks that Anamika deserves Lila aunty’s love and care because she is a very intelligent and laborious student. But this is not true patriarchal society where every girl, educated or uneducated, is expected to be a good housewife and an obedient domestic servant. Uma's cousin Anamika presents a sharp contrast to Uma in that she is more pretty and educated than her. She wins a scholarship to Oxford. “To Oxford, where only the most favoured and privileged sons could ever hope to go! Naturally her parents would not countenance her actually going abroad to study—just when she was of an age to marry . . .” (69). They look upon the letter of acceptance as a

trump card which is used to search a husband for her. Anamika never objects or questions her parents decision. She is married to a man much older than her and who is more conscious of his superiority. “Anamika had been beaten, Anamika was beaten regularly by her

mother-in-law while her husband stood by and approved — or, at least, did not object” (71). She has a miscarriage as a result of regular thrashing. And then one day news comes that Anamika has committed suicide.

However, Mama’s relationship with her younger daughter, Aruna, is quite different from her relationship with Uma. Like Uma, a victim of her parents gender based attitude Aruna adopts the idea of ‘femininity’ whole heartedly as a survival device. She considers her mother a model for herself and tends to follow on her footprints. Feeling neglected in the male dominated society, Aruna escapes into the feminine universe. She learns very early the coquettish behaviour of her mother. Aruna adopts quickly all the feminine traits required to become a good housewife. This is just a way for Aruna to assert her individuality. She is not submissive like her sister, Uma. Instead, Aruna has a rebellious nature and she can question her mother. There are a few advantages that Aruna can enjoy. First she is more pretty and cute than Uma; and second, she does not have to look after Arun. That responsibility is left only for Uma to bear. “When Uma was still watching to see that Arun did not crawl off the varanda and break his neck or put knitting needles or naphthalene balls in his mouth, Aruna was already climbing into bicycle rickshaws and going off to the cinema— with girl friends from school, she said”(81). Despite her mother’s careless attitude towards her children, Aruna becomes a full grown woman with all the attributes that a girl must possess to survive in patriarchy. She has, in a way, carved out a space for herself by her feminine qualities in the complex family web.

Since childhood, Aruna presents a contrast to Uma both in matters of looks and education. Though conditioned by the same mother, Uma and Aruna have formed different personalities. One becomes the victim of that conditioning and can never prosper; and other takes that conditioning as a challenge and carves out a space for herself. Alladi Uma points out, If Uma has learnt her mother's docility and submission, Aruna has opted freedom and zest for life from her mother. Aruna uses her attractiveness as a survival device. While Mama searches energetically for a husband for Uma, families are already making enquiries about Aruna. Moreover, when after marriage Aruna comes back to her mother's home with her children, she exactly imitates her mother's behaviour. Most of the time Aruna remains out of the home busy in visiting her old friends and their families as her mother remained in kitty parties and card game. She is as careless and indifferent as her mother with regard to her children. However, Uma's relationship with her sister, Aruna, does no good but intensifies the tensions between Uma and her mother. Uma usually notices her mother favouring Aruna's smartness over her own submissiveness. This further makes their relationship problematic.

Now the question arises why these three daughters — Uma, Aruna and Anamika — have different fates despite being conditioned in the same patriarchal norms and values by their mothers. It is because these daughters respond to their mothers conditioning differently and consequently develop diverse attitudes and individualities. Uma adopts submissiveness at a nearly stage to derive some solace from the hazard of her neglected existence. The path of submission and docility appears to her as the only valid way out from the nudging and tirades of her mother. For Aruna her mother's strictness is a kind of challenge which she accepts and counters in her own way. She develops a predilection for her femininity and makes the family notice her adroitness in

by far adopting feminine traits. As far as Anamika is concerned, her distinctiveness lies in her intelligence and astuteness. She takes to education for creating a separate space for herself in her parents patriarchal home. She performs well in studies and earns a scholarship to Oxford. Thus, these girls have espoused three different modes of survival as a result of their distinct individualities.

Apart from this fact, it is the role of the parents that has contributed in creating distinction in the life of the daughters. Uma is offered a typical arranged marriage by her parents in which she does not have any say. The parents solely take it as their right to decide for her and ultimately, Uma has to pay severely for her submissiveness. Although in Anamika's case it is different. Her education is used as a trap by her parents to ensnare their daughter in a mismatched marriage. It is Anamika's subservient nature and confirmity to her image of the ideal daughter that renders her meek even in her marital home. Consequently, she suffers silently and meets her terrible end. However, Aruna is offered an arranged cum love marriage. Aruna is given the chance to decide for herself by the parents and this results in a successful marriage. Thus, parents unnecessary intervention in the daughter's life is not a healthy affair in that a single wrong decision of the parents can convert the daughter's life into a hell. Parental role in a girl's life is the crucial deciding factor of what kind of life she would lead.

Uma who, a victim of her mother's indifference, can never develop asocial self for herself. No understanding ever exists between Uma and her mother. Even the presence of her mother makes her feel a culprit. For her own comfort, Mama burdens Uma with the responsibility of Arun's upbringing. Uma never receives any encouragement from her mother to study and make a career for herself Even she is made to quit her school by her mother. Education is required not merely to be eligible for job or career, but it also contributes to the mental development of the individual. As a

consequence, Uma lacks independence and confidence even after being a grown up. When a job is offered by Dr. Dutt to Uma, the very idea of it enrages the parents. It is her mother who raises an objection on behalf of Uma's father. "Our daughter does not need to go out to work, Dr. Dutt," she said, "As long as we are here to provide for her, she will never need to go to work" (146).

Her mother never allows Uma to be independent. She is turned into a mere loyal servant to her whom she does not want to lose. When the offer of job is declined, Mama asks Uma, "And so my madcap wanted to run away and leave her Mama? What will my madcap do next?" (148). Uma suffers even within her family. Even a few moments of private life are not allowed to her. She can neither visit her neighbours nor can sit alone in the home. "The biased and rigid attitude of parents, papa always scowling and scolding leave no room for Uma to fulfil any of her desires and dreams (177). Every time her parents keep her busy in one domestic task or another. She is not even permitted to make phone calls. Once she secretly makes a call to Dr. Dutt but forgets to lock the phone after use and is caught. Her father retorts, "Costs money! Costs money! he kept shouting long after. Never earned anything in her life, made me spend and spend, on the dowry and her wedding. Oh, yes, spend till I'm ruined, till I am a pauper" (149). This shows the hypocrisy of parents. On the one hand, they do not allow Uma to do a job outside home, and on the other curse her for not earning anything. Her mother never supports Uma to look for a career even after splitting off her marriage. She never pays any heed to the fact what would become of Uma when they would no longer be in this world. Thus, such a behaviour of her parents, especially of her mother, leaves Uma a baffled child, devoid of any emotional support.

This indifference at the hands of her parents makes Uma feel insignificant and she starts losing confidence. “Parental strictness is often experienced as rejection by children. From these deprivations result many neurotic personalities, insecure, restless, dissatisfied people, both young and old” (Mrydal and Klein 130). Uma’s humiliation and disgust with herself has affected her inner world to such an extent that she begins to have fainting fits. She does not have anybody to unburden her heart to. Such a pathetically isolated self, Uma has no source from where she can gain love and attention. Thus these accumulated frustrations find an outlet through fits. The reader is left with a lump in his throat after viewing Uma’s condition. What type of parents these are who are so unkind even to their own daughter?

The second part of the novel deals with Mrs. Patton’s family and her relationship with her daughter, Melanie. The connecting link between these two families is Arun, brother of Uma, who is sent to study further in America. “The two grave psychological risks which young children normally run are those of ‘rejection’ and ‘over-protection’” (Mrydal and Klein 130). This observation seems quite appropriate in this context. If Uma in India and Melanie in America are victims of their mother's rejection, Arun is the victim of his parents overprotective attitude. Melanie has lost appetite to eat anything else than nuts and candy. But her mother never bothers about her daughter losing appetite. A caged bird in her husband’s home, Mrs. Patton herself does not have any choice to eat. She has to eat, along with other family members, the meat that Mr. Patton cooks himself for dinner. No matter whether its India or America, in the patriarchal society a woman does not have any say even in matters of eating.

Once Mrs. Patton confides in Arun, “I’ve always wanted to be one myself I’ve always hated eating meat — oh, that red, raw stuff, the smell of it! I’ve always, always

disliked it -- but never could never knew how — you know, my family wouldn't have liked it. But I've always liked vegetables best" (183). Later in the company of Arun, Mrs. Patton has become obsessed with shopping. She is not the least concerned about her daughter's health and never cares what Melanie eats and why. Arun does not see in her a real mother but just a plastic copy of the original. He states, "She smiles a bright plastic copy of a mother-smile that Arun remembers from another world and another time, the smile that is tight at the corners with pressure, the pressure to perform a role, to make him eat, make him grow, make him worth all the trouble and effort and expense" (198). Much like Uma's mother, Mrs. Patton has a very detached outlook towards her children. She is concerned only to fill the freezer with food items. She is not involved in the lives of her own children. She is not aware of the fact that her teenage daughter, Melanie is practically starving and has developed a habit of vomiting after consuming her favourite peanuts and candies. She is never shown to be talking with her daughter personally and in an intimate relationship. Melanie is left all by herself to manage. Once Melanie reveals her frustrations to her mother,

Aparna and Bhaskar Jyoti Goswami observe, "Anita Desai, for the first time, brings it to the notice of readers that there are many more dimensions to a woman's personality than just being someone's mother, or for that matter, someone's wife, or mistress" (199). Mrs. Patton represents a modern version of motherhood and enjoys sunbathing without caring for anything else. Neglected by her mother, Melanie becomes a patient of depression. She eats only candies and keeps on vomiting all day.

Desai aptly describes:

Then Arun does see a resemblance to something he knows: a resemblance to the contorted face of an enraged sister who, failing to express her outrage



against neglect, against misunderstanding, against inattention to her unique and singular being and its hungers, merely spits and froths in ineffectual protest. How strange to encounter it here, Arun thinks, where so much is given, where there is both licence and plenty. (217)

Thus daughters neglected by their mothers often become hysterical. Like Uma, Melanie does not have any outlet to relieve her frustrations. Such isolated daughters have nothing in store but only bulimia, anorexia, depression, withdrawal, compulsive behaviour and hysteria.

Anita Desai, through her present novel, tends to show that excessive concerns of mothers in case of Arun and complete disinterestedness in case of Uma and Melanie leave the children completely shattered. *Fasting, Feasting* is both a plea and warning to those mothers who venture into their own individual worlds by rejecting their children's right to be loved and cared. Such negation of motherhood would render the future generations crippled.

## Chapter Four

### Generational Spheres of Oppression and Resistance

Anita Desai's novel *Fasting, Feasting*, deals with the condition of women in India. Desai has presented both the female and the male sensitivity in the novel. Desai's Hindu imagery of sun/fire as patriarchal power and water, which, as the counterpart of the sun and fire, represents recognition of women's condition and a possible way to liberation represent crucial aspects of the novel.

Desai has pictured the metaphorical voyage towards progress of the Indian Hindu girl/woman Uma, the main character of the novel, with respect to sun/fire milestones, as well as those of water, and as related to persons who accompany her. Uma at the end achieves recognition of her condition although not full liberation. Further, a parallel pilgrimage of Arun, also through the countryside of sun, fire, and water, is analysed through Arun's recognition of the suffering of both American women/girls and of his sister Uma. She seems to suggest it is only through the synthesis of both female and male recognition and effort can women be released from the oppressive conditions of patriarchy.

*Fasting, Feasting* is above all a work whose main concern is the condition of women in India and is related to women in general. To deal with the situation of women in India, however, it is impossible to stay simply with what is termed "feminism" in the Western sense. The Indian cultural and social setting is different from the West and Nabar explores the social and historical contexts of Indian cultural tradition, because, what is peculiar to India is "the extent of the insistence on such discrimination the preference given to boys over girls as being historically and traditionally prescribed and therefore indisputable" (68).

*Fasting, Feasting* is a novel which attempts to interconnect its two parts in one work and this aspiration can be conveniently called "through difference to androgyny". The "difference" from which Desai departs is this: the first part is told as perceived by Uma, a female protagonist, and, characteristically, its prevalent setting is a domestic environment. On the contrary, the main hero of the second part, Uma's brother Arun, is put into a "larger world," an emblematically masculine environment. In each part the respective sets of values and sensitivity associated with its main character can be observed. The "difference" is alluded to by Desai already in the title of her book: the words "fasting" and "feasting" can stand for the two parts of the novel respectively: the first is situated in India (the country of "fasting," which refers not only to the religious aspect, but also to an unwilling "fasting" of the many poor of the country') and the second in the United States (the country of "feasting," abundance). However, there is an apparent difference (another one) as concern the nature of perception of the two main personages. The "fasting" and the "feasting" of the individual characters is relative and multiple at the same time as perceived by the main protagonists of each part respectively.

So Uma, an Indian girl and when grown up an unmarried Indian woman who lives in the household of her parents, is as compared to others, the one who is most "fasting" in the novel, mainly with respect to the access to education and the free development of personality. Continuously, as her awareness of her own hunger and suffering grows, she becomes sensitive also to the other characters "feasting" (complete or partial) on power, freedom, and education. Her feelings are not paid any attention to within the family circle, at least not by her parents and "superiors" in the "fasting"

part of the novel. It is only as Arun, the main protagonist of the second part, becomes aware of her suffering, he who himself, contrary to her, is (forced into) "feasting" as to education (and in the first part on the literal level, too), simply because he is a boy and he must receive "the best" in all respects, whether he wants it or not. Arun's understanding is not automatic and immediate and is a result of a long process of perception and observation in relation to his childhood memories. His progress matches that of Uma, which, however, is subjective and therefore much more complex and painful, and will be described in larger detail, and it is in this sense the androgyny.

*Fasting, Feasting*, is above all a genuinely Indian novel. To understand this, the sophisticated pattern of the fabric of the novel, which determines the way the novel is built up around its main protagonists, must be disclosed. For this purpose it is necessary to work with structures which have been formed by the cultural tradition to which the novel belongs. The imageries of sun, fire and water, which constitute important spheres of interest in the Hindu mythology and cosmology are the most significant factors. Understandably so, as she is the one who herself personally must work her way out of the landscape composed of these elements. It is she who suffers by the sun and fire and makes use of the beneficial nature of water. On the other hand, from the point of view of fasting and feasting, Uma's pilgrimage is that of hunger, the items of food are used more significantly as markers of Arun's journey.

The motives of food are favoured and often employed by Indian authors. Food in modern Indian literature is used to stress the importance of what the particular literary work is dealing with and is often associated with social problems. In *Fasting, Feasting* this is particularly apparent when it concerns the introductory passages of each part respectively, which deal with the distribution

of power and its hierarchy. The novel introduces to us an Indian contemporary middle class urban Hindu (most probably Brahman) nuclear (not joint) family. These precisions are important because it is necessary to view each specific context with which we have to deal in its ethnic, social, religious and historical perspective, especially so as it concerns the Indian society with its extremely varied and multiple features.

The opening of the novel brings us into the middle of a domestic scene of the family, an environment that becomes representative of a hierarchy of power. The parents are on a garden swing, thinking over what they should have for tea. Their adult daughter Uma, who is packing a parcel for her brother, a shawl and tea, is summoned by her mother to tell the wish of the father to the cook. The pattern of the scene becomes a paradigm of the family hierarchy: its hardened features come out best in the description of the "orange ceremony." The patriarch on the top of the hierarchy pyramid, the one for whose enjoyment everything has to be arranged, does not even have to utter a word. The mother, a well-trained instrument of his power, reinforces the awareness of this power in the consciousness of the subject member by performing a ritual, which for this purpose, has to be repeated regularly.

.....She picks out the largest orange in the bowl and hands it to Mama. She peels it in strips, then divides it into separate segments. Each segment is then peeled and freed of pips and threads till only the perfect globules of juice are left, and then passed, one by one to the edge of Papa's plate. ... Mama sits back. The ceremony

is over. She has performed it. Everyone is satisfied.

(23, 24)

As shown in the above quoted passage, the mother is represented here as the instrument of the patriarchal power, she is thus a part of the patriarchal structures, nevertheless just as an inferior agent; she is proud that at least pith, pips, and peels rest on her plate (whereas all the juicy parts have been absorbed by the father). Hence the circular structure of the family's patriarchy: PapaMama, MamaPapa. Everything departs from and comes back to Papa. After twenty years of serving her parents, Uma is no longer willing to take part in the ceremony, but her good knowledge of the ritual (based on its habitualness) makes her finally submit to it (she can no longer pretend to be ignorant). The statement that "everyone is satisfied, is the greatest falsity of all.

In a remote part of the world an analogical introductory ritual is going on. This time it is an American patriarch who is presiding over the ceremony. It is a stifling hot American summer and the most important item of the ritual is fire. Here the preparation of a barbeque is described and viewed through Indian eyes. The use of fire, which in terms of the Hindu cosmology symbolises a religious offering, has a complementary function here, and for our purposes it indicates that the exercise of the patriarchal power has violent and deadly effects on the affected individuals. The members of the congregation, Mrs Patton, the minister's wife, and Arun, do not eat the sacrificial meat but they assist at the ceremonial presentation of it; for the time being they both remain safely within the power influence of

patriarchal patterns. So Uma, her American counterpart Melanie, and other girls and women then find themselves in the oppressive environment of sun and fire where it is difficult to survive. Uma, taking care of her parents' household and having sewed them for many years, presents thus almost all the features of the Victorian archetype of angel in the house. Almost, because she is not married and as such she is infact a monster and viewed as such.

Uma's behaviour, comes very close to how a pativrata (the ideal Hindu wife) is supposed to act, almost again, because she stays unmarried. In India, more than in Western cultures, a woman lives for the sake of others, namely for the sake of her husband. Within the huge body of Hindu mythology numerous representations exist of women called by different names as stated by Desai in "A Secret Conivance"

“ in each myth, she plays the role of the loyal wife, unswerving in her devotion to her lord. She is meek, docile, trusting, faithful and forgiving. Even when spirited and brave, she address to the archetype: willing to go through fire and water, dishonour and disgrace for his sake.”

The goal and fulfilment of the woman's life is the marriage and the birth of (male) children. This is deeply rooted in the Hindu socio-religious code as fulfilment of a woman's dharma (duty, law) and has a direct impact on the perception of her future lives representations. An unmarried (and subsequently childless) woman has even a lower status than a widow. An unmarried woman living in the house of her parents can be neither a pativrata

nor an angel, and so she is condemned to be a monstrous outcast. The description is fitting:

Uma, visualised as blinking her myopic eyes behind the thick glasses, is not found attractive either by her family or by any of the possible suitors and husbands-to-be. When still at school she fails almost all the exams, grown up she is often reprimanded for being childish, slow, and always sleeping.

(101)

To understand fully the essence and significance of both Uma's and Arun's pilgrimage(s) we have to complete first the list of elements of which the landscape of their respective journeys is composed. We have already recognised the oppressive nature of sun, fire and their role as the representation of patriarchal order. This arrangement is static because it is convenient for the holders of power that the state of affairs remains as it is. In order to make the protagonists move and proceed, water as an element of transformation, or a change is introduced. Water is pivotal in the conception of the changing Hindu universe and in the perception of the enigma of Existence. Many a Hindu myth presents such efforts of two cosmic pilgrims, the sages Narada and Markandeya. Their respective pilgrimages consist in reaching the understanding of something which under usual circumstances is beyond the horizon of perception. As such they can be regarded as mythical predecessors of Uma and Arun. Through immersion in water, Narada and Markandeya were finally able to experience "a totally different aspect," "the other (or the reversed) side" of what they could not see before; this is mirrored by Arun's pilgrimage. Having been enabled to live the life as different



individuals, they were "initiated into the unconscious side of their own being," recognized their own hidden but still existing desires and attitudes which is, representative of the pilgrimage of Uma.

Uma's pilgrimage, then, begins shortly after the birth of her brother Arun when she is in her early teens. "A son, a son," is heard everywhere in the house. Mama is proud to have fulfilled her life's role by giving birth to a son, Papa is proud to have been able to produce, finally, a male offspring and lets Mama into the realm of patriarchal structures. MamaPapa do not allow Uma, who has previously been sent to a Catholic convent school, to continue her education and she, although not a good student, is an eager one and opposes fervently her parents' decision. Now that there is a son in the family, "there is no need" (a famous phrase of Papa) to waste money and education as such on girls which will be necessary to spend on the boy. Consequently, Uma feels she has to escape but she does not know yet exactly what for. It is the "secret chambers" of the inner world what Uma cherishes, for the outer world is dreary and grey.

Uma is progressively introduced into the inner world of Hindu legends and tales by Mira-masi, an ardent worshipper of Shiva. Mira-masi's stories show the dual character of the woman's fate: one of the heroines is a victim, dies after having been abandoned by her husband; the other is a poetess, independent, struggling for recognition; in the meantime she is considered a madwoman (allusion to Mira-Bai, a legendary sixteenth-century poetess and a devotee of Lord Krishna known for her rebellious attitudes). Further on, in another escapist action she undertakes with Mira-masi when they go to an ashrama as pilgrims; she is free enough to think. While Mira-masi carries on with her duties of worship, Uma wanders around, feeling she is caught between the two forces pulling in different

directions, the power of patriarchal education and tradition, and the urge to get free of it. There is a river that is difficult to approach during the day because the sand is burning from the sun. But towards the evenings Uma can walk along the river and she becomes sure that she cannot turn to Mira-masi anymore for guidance.

Uma stays unmarried but this does not mean that she is spared efforts to be married off, according to the custom of arranged marriages. She has to go a long and painful journey through this suntrap of the valley of marriage arrangements. To look at it more closely it will be useful first to follow how Desai compares Uma with the other two of her girl relatives. If Uma's sister Aruna is dismissed out of the sphere of patriarchal influence soon after the birth of Arun as "having started a lifetime of bridling, of determined self-assertion"(17) and everything then in her life including her marriage she carries on with "a kind of steely determination, a dogged ambitiousness, that seemed to be born of a desperation" (67), cousin Anamika, who manages to please everybody and is beautiful, meek, docile, and brilliant at school, becomes the true pativrata and the angel in the house. Actually, they are Uma's alter-egos or doubles; although in real life we could hardly imagine that Aruna's escape from the bonds of patriarchy would be so smooth and made possible only through her own determination.

The importance which the "business" of marriage is dealt with in traditional Hindu culture makes it emblematic of the patriarchal order as such. Staying unmarried literally makes an outcast of Uma, because "Hindu marriage is a sacrament -- for the husband one among many, but for the wife the only one through which she can acquire spiritual gains. If a grown up woman dies without this sacrament she roams about after her death as an evil spirit" (Masi 50). But does Uma's mother in the novel

act in a similar way for her daughter's sake? If not, who does? Not in the interest of Uma, but because they are not willing to offer a third dowry, PapaMama or MamaPapa, these unified representatives of patriarchal order abandon any further marriage arrangements for Uma. We can clearly distinguish the first of them as her literary mother Anita Desai who speaks up and says "Oh, no!" not only for Uma but for all the women oppressed by the law of patriarchy including the institution of marriage making.

As the climax of Uma's journey is approaching it becomes more and more clear that, what Desai considers in her novel as the worst patriarchal imposition on women is the enclosure in the sense of ignorance of "what is on the other side," the above mentioned kind of purdah. In Uma's case it is emblematic that she is, for one thing, suffering from an eye disease, and, for another, prevented to go and see an ophthalmologist. For the eyes are a primary means of getting to know, reading, studying, getting out of the bonds of ignorance (we also recall that she was prevented from continuing her school education). Uma's voyage towards the realization finally of "what is on the other side," which coincides with the recognition of living desires and attitudes hidden in the secret chambers of her inner person, is enabled by the escapist contacts with people. They are indeed escapist because, always opposed by PapaMama as they are, they take place usually either out of home, or at home (e.g., on the phone) when PapaMama are not present. Nevertheless, after the years of silence, as if in a sleep, Uma finally reaches the secret chambers of her internal world. Having experienced the contact with the nuns in the convent school and with Mira-masi she finds in the chamber of her own room in the patriarchal home which is, however, not a room of her own, scattered verses of her other mother.

The experience of having been invited to assist at minor charity affairs mediated further on by Mrs O'Henry and the nuns is the embodiment of this challenge and builds up the feelings of fulfilment and happiness for Uma. Appreciated and useful, “a member” of a community which works for someone's benefit, free from the patriarchal supervising of her parents, Uma finds this experience comparable to that of the heavenly bliss. And now that same dark corner of Uma's inside, a very remote one, is occupied by the thoughts about a job, “a career.” The offer of a job is finally made and the last necessary relevant explanations are furnished to Uma, but for all her overflowing eagerness to accept she has, nevertheless, to submit to MamaPapa's refusal. Obviously, the choice of the job messenger is not made by chance.

As to Uma herself, in spite of all her hunger or desires, she is not yet capable of grasping the opportunity because she is not allowed to. Participating in the funeral ceremonies of her “married” alter-ego Anamika, she feels as if she too were cold ashes as having gone through fire, sacrificed as Anamika has been for and by the rules of patriarchy. The concluding passage presenting first the salutations and hymns to the sun culminates, however, with Uma pouring out of her jar “the murky water which catches the blaze of the sun and flashes fire”(156). Too much sun and fire remains here for any completely positive solution to be drawn.

The second part of the novel is presented as viewed by Arun and depicts Arun's figurative pilgrimage "to the other side". In a country of abundance, there is feasting, but there is also fasting; from what point of view, and for whom? Feasting is there, but it is superficial, because it is just the two male characters, the father and the son of the American family, who are "feasting" both literally on the “carcasses” of beef (viewed so by the vegetarian Arun) and metaphorically on the “carcasses” to

become of their female family counterparts, exactly because the patriarchal order has deadly effects on women. On the other hand, the female characters are feasting only seemingly; the mother supplies the household with tons of food but she herself does not know what to eat, and nobody cares. Her daughter Melanie suffers from bulimia, the emblematic disease of young women neglected emotionally; seemingly she is feasting on peanuts and candy bars, which, in reality, brings about starvation (fasting). Arun himself, although receiving a first-class education, is starving because he has difficulties to adapt to the American “diet,” both literal and metaphorical, the food and the American culture. Understandably, the account of Melanie's and her mother's condition is not systematic sufficiently to constitute as detailed a journey as is that of Uma because it is conveyed as perceived by Arun.

“Arun makes his way slowly”: it is with an immense sensitivity that Desai concentrates at the beginning of his journey and distinguishes between the acuteness of male perception of the inter-cultural bias and all its differences on the one hand and Arun's dullness of groping his way through the tangle of interpersonal relationships on the other. Arun has to move cautiously because he meets objects about which he “knows nothing” as he makes his way as someone “venturing alone across the border” (160). He finds himself in an unknown area, where he has never been before and he can only find his way to the recognition of the unknown objects or “the other side” of the border by moving through the “masses of water.” So the pilgrim Arun has to make a journey analogical to that of Uma.

Arun's pilgrimage approaches its climax when he finally recognises Melanie's suffering and its cause. It is the recognition of the “other side,” of the “object” so far unknown and as such it becomes almost a kind of enlightenment: “Then Arun does

see a resemblance to something he knows: a resemblance to the contorted face of an enraged sister who, failing to express her outrage against neglect, against misunderstanding, against attention to her unique and singular being and its hungers, merely spits and froths in ineffectual protest. Nevertheless, neither he nor Mrs Patton, herself a victim incapable of resisting the paralysing effects of the beams of patriarchal sun, are capable of doing anything for Melanie until the three of them escape temporarily the oppressive heat of the family's male presence. Then, at the pool, enlightenment and discovery finally start to work for Melanie's benefit. A cooperation of two complementary agents is necessary: Arun, although he is well aware of the real state of affairs and acknowledges the necessity to act, is "paralysed" as to action, he is unable to do anything himself. On the other hand, Arun's presence seems necessary for Mrs Patton to discover finally the destructive consequences of Melanie's condition. As mother she is capable to act, although she ignores the true character of her daughter's suffering. Later, when on the point of Arun's leaving the Patton house, emblems of patriarchal hierarchy from his parents arrive (packed by Uma), a packet of tea and a shawl. Arun's luggage is already packed. He decides not to take the presents with him; has all he needs and he has no space for the additional weight of the "patriarchal baggage."

Finally, the climax of Arun's pilgrimage together with the outcome of the first part of the novel (Uma's pilgrimage) reveals unclearly that the possibilities of escape for a woman from the suffering of the bonds of patriarchy depend essentially both on recognition and action, i.e., the capability of taking an action. First, the recognition of her "inside chamber" is necessary for the woman to understand her condition. Her suffering must then be recognised by those who are around her and especially by those

who would have capability (power) willingness to act for her benefit. Uma, on the other hand, who has gone all the way of her pilgrimage to self-recognition, is an adult and therefore she can act for herself; yet perhaps the traditional bonds of the Indian family are too strong to sever the ties all of a sudden. Arun, who has reached the recognition of the women's condition as "from across the border" from the "other side," can do something helpful, not for Melanie because his position in the American home does not allow him to, but certainly for Uma when he comes back (if he does) to India, exactly because he is a male part of her family. Then the two complementary elements of female self-recognition and male capacity of action may produce finally some desirable effects, in a similar way as the two parts of the novel, the female-centred part and that of the male perception, are complementary to each other.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

Literature records life and society's response to it which is embodied in the author's creation. Indian writing in English is perhaps smaller in volume compared to several regional languages. Woman has inspired literature and herself is a creator of literature and therefore woman's presence in literature is all pervading. It is apt with the novels of Anita Desai and Kiran Desai. Anita Desai was the one novelist who concentrates more on the exploration of modern Indian sensibility. She observes the realities from a psychological perspective. Anita Desai is in many ways a representative of Indian woman novelist in English. Her contribution to fiction in independent India is more significant than the other women novelists such as Ruth Praver, Nayantara Saghal or Kamala Markandaya. She as a woman writer has a belief and concern more with thought, emotion, and sensation than with the action, experience and achievement. She is not only attended to the problems of women in the Indian society but was keen on portraying the social world. Her novels are certainly the reflective of social realities.

The novel *Fasting, Feasting* focuses on a sense of deep-seated paths over the plight of mankind and particularly women all over the globe. Another significant point that emerges is that most of life is unavailing confirming the view that life is a vanity of vanities. Still, higher pursuits are to be undertaken such as that by Mrs. Patton and people like Mr. Patton and his daughter and Arun will explore life through ceaseless adventure and struggle.

The novel is commendable and covers a wide range of life's spectacle and themes in two countries and continents. *Fasting, Feasting*, marks a departure



from all her earlier major works. The first striking feature of the novel is that the plot is laid bare in the most simple and lucid manner without any trace of complexity. It appears a simple long story in a straightforward narrative structure. Desai presents a story of a small family in which Mama and Papa are the central figure around whom their three children revolve unraveling the story of a family that exists in the society like thousands of families with hope and fear, happiness and sorrow, gain and loss which are the integral parts of life on this earth. The novel is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the life of MamaPapa living a life in their quiet house with their three children.

The novel, *Fasting, Feasting* has the plot laid in the simplest mode and the language has clarity and vividness as a result of which words twinkle like the clear and crystal ring of telephone. The entire narrative structure is built in concrete words which are mostly monosyllabic with simple diction and precise description. The narrative becomes all the more clear and excitingly moving when Desai comes to reveal the excitement of the father at the birth of their much desired and much expected son. There is obviously something in the language that goes deep in mind of the readers like a lump of lead into the water. Much like Anita Desai's use of language, Desai's art of characterization is made through the same vivid and lucid structure of her language. What strikes most in her presentation of characters is the fact that each one of the characters appears alive and intimate; they appear full-blooded and living like the figures on the cine screen and this is achieved chiefly through her language.

Apart from the clarity of language, it is the device of contrast of tone, situation and character that adds to the structural organization of the novel.

Uma is a sharp contrast to the character of Aruna in her approach to life, in her thinking and sensibility and in her temperament and understanding of life. But it is chiefly in her contrast of time that Desai appears to achieve great effect particularly when Papa describes his struggle in his early days:

Papa said, “We did not have electricity when we were children. If we wanted to study, we were sent out to sit under the streetlight with our books. During the examinations there would be a circle of students sitting and reciting their lessons aloud. It would be difficult to concentrate on law because others were reciting theorems or Sanskrit slokas or dates from British history. But we did it—we passed our exams.” (6)

Besides the devices of contrast, her use of similitude also discloses her utter simplicity of diction. It shows her sense of preciseness, exact approach and accuracy. Desai’s account of Aruna’s marriage proposals along with her dress, choice of shade and in her deportment, display her excellent use of the similes mainly drawn from nature. Along with this, one may also notice her use of the syntax, the balancing of phrases and the force of narrative texture that add much to the effect that Desai aims at driving in her work. The quarrel scene between the two families and the encounter between Harish and Uma’s father, very well reveal the force of narrative impact in this novel.

It is pertinent to note here that Desai is known for her delineation of women characters who are the victims of society, the depressed lot, who either react to their situations or fall as victims. But this novel does not present such characters

nor does Desai make Uma appear a depressed girl. Uma appears as a victim of her circumstances, her fate and as such she her destiny quietly, ungrudgingly and tries to live like the dumb-driven cattle. But that does not mean that she is completely insensible. There is a sense of agony, a sense of irreparable loss and permanent shock in her which she deliberately hides in order to remain true in her nature. This is to be chiefly noticed in her dream that Desai has very effectively recorded:

In this connection it is significant to note that Uma has been delineated in an altogether different way from all the other heroines of Desai. She is neither a psychic case nor a violent rebel in the society; neither assertive nor demanding and yet she is a thinking, feeling human being. Unlike her sister Aruna, she cannot express nor can she register her thoughts and yet she appears to suffer under the circumstances against which she can make no resistance. Here she becomes the traditional archetypal woman who is born to live and suffer.

Unlike her other novels it may be observed that here an attempt has been made by Desai to present Uma as a girl who has to live in the society accepting the humiliations, injustice, sufferings and miseries without raising any voice or making resistance. Thus, the central meaning of the novel lies in the character of Uma, the woman who becomes the prototype of Sita and Draupadi in their sufferings which they had undergone willy-nilly. Like the traditional Indian woman, Uma suffers quietly only to prove her great sense of endurance and stoic acceptance.

Here in, is revealed the great artistic talent of Anita Desai as a novelist. Her novels are not meant to explain the theories of philosophy and psychology; on the other hand, they reveal her involvement in the deep feelings of her women who are seen as the worst sufferers, highly suppressed by social 'tantalization' or marital discord. Such preoccupation seems quite natural on her part, for she like her characters, is very sensitive that gives her an insight to make a very successful in-depth study of her women.

In all her major works Desai lays added emphasis on the feminine character and takes special interest in projecting the essential features that dominate these characters. Desai's *Fasting, Feasting* is a gripping tale of the patriarchal mothers and neglected daughters. Through the realistic portrayal of the Indian domestic scene where neglected daughters face their destinies courageously, Desai has infused confidence in the women folk not only of India, but also of the world.

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**Andrew Morton's *Diana: Her True Story - In Her Own Words*: A Psychological Study**

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Kalaivani M.**

**(Reg. No. 21APEN13)**



**PG and Research Department of English**

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**



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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Andrew Morton's *Diana: Her True Story - In Her Own Words*: A Psychological 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 Kalaivani M. during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Andrew Morton's *Diana: Her True Story - In Her Own Words*: A Psychological 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**

**April 2023**

*M. Kalaivani*

**Kalaivani M.**

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## Preface

Andrew Morton is an English journalist and writer who has published biographies of royal figures such as Diana, Princess of Wales. The project entitled **Andrew Morton's *Diana: Her True Story - In Her Own Words: A Psychological Study*** records how Diana the central character of the work manages her psychological state and how she finally comes out of her unhappy life.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of British Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It also gives knowledge about how Morton's book became one of the most sensational biographies of that time and showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Freedom in Fetters** deals with the life of Diana during her youth period and her psychological state during her youth in which she had all the pleasures and her touch with real life is deeply analysed.

The third chapter **The Golden Cage** continues with her life after her marriage. The chapter thus portrays the stressful life of Diana as Princess, and the psychological change and pain she underwent during her married life.

The fourth chapter **Quest for Freedom** focuses on Princess Diana's loss of freedom after her married life and her struggles for freedom.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt with in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title by analysing the previous chapters with Sigmund Freud's psychological theories.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature is the artistic form of writing, which includes works such as novels, short stories, biographies, poetry, prose and essays. The term “literature” comes from the Latin word ‘litaritura’ which means “the use of letters” or “writing.” Literature allows a person to step back in time and learn about life on Earth from the ones who walked before. This helps to understand the culture in a better way through manuscripts and records. Throughout the history of English literature, many of the great writers have defined it in their style. Virginia Woolf perfectly defines literature in her essay *A Room of One’s Own* that, “Literature is strewn with the wreckage of those who have minded beyond reason the opinion of others” (85).

The relation of literature with society has a profound effect on the ways and thought pattern of the people of that society. Society is the subject matter of literature. It shapes society and its beliefs. It has an impact on society and it moulds it. According to the definitions of literature by various authors, it literally does the depiction of society and therefore it is also called the ‘reflection of life.’

Later, various literatures developed from various regions and periods. Some of them were British literature, Indian literature, American literature, Australian literature and so on. British literature is a literature from the United Kingdom of Great Britain, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands. The history of English literature consists of eight major periods and several ages. Each period or age is named after the central literary

figure, or the important rulers of England, or certain literary movements. This research paper further deals with the Contemporary period (1945 – Today).

The word contemporary means living, belonging to or occurring in the present. Contemporary literature is defined as literature written after World War II till the current day. Works of contemporary literature reflect a society's social and political viewpoints, shown through realistic characters, connections to current events and socioeconomic messages. The writers of the contemporary period always look for the trends that illuminate social strengths and weaknesses to remind society of lessons they should learn and questions they should ask.

Contemporary literature should be acknowledged with World War II and its surrounding events. The horrors of the war, including bombs, ground wars, and corruption are the pathways to this type of literature. It is from these real-life themes the beginning of the new period of writing was found. However, this does not mean all works will centre around the Holocaust or war narratives. These works aim to speak about the injustices in the world and the search for civil rights, the topics and questions that were raised during this traumatic time in world history. The war served as a catalyst for this shift in mindset, and the authors writing in this period consciously and unconsciously illuminated this shift in thinking through their writing.

During this period, evolved numerous genres, such as dystopian fiction, contemporary horror, New Wave fiction, psychological thriller, romantic comedy, and more. Additionally, within this period, readers could find important novels, short stories, poems, essays, and more. Contemporary literature mainly reflects the current political,

social, and broader personal issues of the time, which deals with very realistic characters of the time and also had the desire to experiment with new genres. The writers of this period often utilize strong, memorable character experiments with the new styles of biographies and autobiographies in this contemporary world. The common themes in contemporary literature include coming of age, redemption, good versus evil, courage, feminism, oppression, and more. Among the new styles in contemporary literature biography is further discussed in this research paper.

A biography is a non-fiction, written history or account of a person's life. Biographies are intended to give an objective portrayal of a person, written in the third person. The biography form has its roots in Ancient Rome and Greece. In 121 CE, Roman historian Suetonius wrote *De vita Caesarum*, a series of 12 biographies detailing the lives of Julius Caesar and the first 11 emperors of the Roman empire. These were among the most widely read biographies of their time. A biography is one of the oldest types of literature. It is an informational narrative and account of the life history of a person, written by someone who is not the subject of the biography. Biographers collect information from the subject, acquaintances of the subject, or in researching other sources such as reference material, experts, records, diaries, interviews, etc.

Biographies can be written about a person at any time, no matter if they are living or dead. These types of works typically include details of significant events that shape the life of the subject as well as information about their childhood, education, career, relationships, deaths etc. Occasionally, a biography is made into another form of art such as a film or dramatic production. It is assumed that the subject of a biography must be a person who is famous in some way. In general, biographical subjects tend to be interesting



people who have pioneered something in their field of expertise or done something extraordinary for humanity. In addition, biographical subjects can be about people who have experienced something unusual or heartbreaking, committed terrible acts, or who are especially gifted or talented. This can be enlightening, inspiring, and meaningful in creating connections. Some of the biographical subjects are political leaders, artists, entrepreneurs, actors, writers, historical figures and so on. Some biographical works become well-known due to either the person's story or the way the work is written. Some famous writers and journals of the contemporary period who excelled in the field of writing biographies are Sarah Bradford, Benjamin John Pimlott, Tina Brown, Andrew Morton and so on.

Sarah Mary Malet Bradford is an English author who is best known for her royal biographies. She began her career as a writer with her first book, *The Englishman's Wine*, written while she lived in Portugal. Some of her well-known works are *Cesare Borgia* (1976), *The Borgias (with John Prebble)* (1981), *Disraeli* (1982), *Princess Grace* (1984), *Portugal and Madeira* (1969) and *Portugal* (1973).

Benjamin John Pimlott known as Ben Pimlott, was a British historian of the post-war period in Britain. He made a substantial contribution to the literary genre of political biography. During 1987–88, he was the Political Editor of the *New Statesman* magazine and took on the post of Professor of Contemporary History at Birkbeck in 1988. For the following two years, Pimlott was responsible, for the short-lived journal *Samizdat*. His other books include *Labour and The Left in The 1930s* (1977), *The Trade Unions in British Politics* (1982), *Fabian Essays in Socialist Thought* (1984), *The Alternative* (1990), *Frustrate Their Knavish Tricks* (1994) and *Governing London* (2002).

Christina Hambley Brown Lady Evans is an English journalist, magazine editor, columnist, talk-show host, and author of *The Diana Chronicles* (2007) a biography of Diana, Princess of Wales, *The Vanity Fair Diaries* (2017) and *The Palace Papers* (2022). As an editor, she has received four George Polk Awards, five Overseas Press Club awards, and ten National Magazine Awards. In 2000, she was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire for her services to Overseas journalism, and in 2007 was inducted into the Magazine Editors' Hall of Fame. She edited *Newsweek* from 2011-2012. In 2010 she founded the live journalism platform, Women in the World, which she ran until 2020.

Andrew David Morton (born 1953) is an English journalist and writer who has published biographies of royal figures such as Diana, Princess of Wales, and celebrity subjects including Tom Cruise, Madonna, Angelina Jolie and Monica Lewinsky; several of his books have been unauthorised and contain contested assertions. After university, Morton became a tabloid journalist and worked for three London tabloids, the Daily Star, News of the World, and Daily Mail, until 1987. On 16 November 2010, Prince William announced his engagement to Catherine Middleton. Morton was commissioned by Michael O'Mara Books to write a book to coincide with the royal wedding on 29 April 2011.

The book, which went on sale on 3 May 2011 in the UK, includes a detailed biography of Prince William, as well as details of his relationship with Catherine Middleton. In April 2018, he published *Meghan: A Hollywood Princess* about Meghan Markle, who married Prince Harry a month later in May 2018. Morton received public attention after Diana's death when he revealed the extent of her collaborations with him.

He achieved greater prominence in the United States after the publication of *Monica's Story*. After *Monica's Story*, Morton investigated a mining disaster, which led to his first non-royal journalistic account, *Nine for Nine: The Pennsylvania Mine Rescue Miracle*. He wrote an authorised biography of Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi. Morton has also written an unauthorized biography of Angelina Jolie.

Morton's *Tom Cruise: An Unauthorized Biography* is an unauthorized biography of actor Tom Cruise. The book was published in the United States in hardcover format on January 15, 2008 by St. Martin's Press, with a first printing of 400,000 copies, and an audio format. The book hit the number one position in the list of top sellers, three days after it was published, and was number one in 'The New York Times.'

*Monica's Story* is one of the best known works of Morton. It is all about the story of a pretty young intern who began an illicit affair with the President of the United States - a liaison that ignited an unprecedented political scandal and found Bill Clinton, the second U.S. president to ever be charged with misconduct. This book of Morton further discusses how a difficult childhood shaped Monica's tumultuous adult romances and her relationship with Bill Clinton.

Andrew Morton's *Diana Her True Story – In Her Own Words* is a biography of Diana, Princess of Wales. Unable to interview Diana in person, he passed along interview questions through her friend, James Colthurst. The book was controversial as it details Diana's suicidal unhappiness within her marriage and her struggles with depression. In 1993 it was made into a television film of the same name, with Serena Scott Thomas as Diana, Princess of Wales.

Following Diana's death in August 1997, Morton issued an edition entitled *Diana: Her True Story in Her Own Words* in October and acknowledged Diana's role as the book's main source of information. This book deals with the biography of Diana, the late Princess of Wales. The story is based on the lengthy, tape-recorded interviews with Diana, supplemented by the testimony of her family and friends.

When *Diana: Her True Story – In Her Own Words* was published in 1992, it forever changed the way the public viewed the British monarchy. Greeted initially with disbelief and ridicule, the *New York* bestselling biography has become a unique literary classic, not just because of its explosive contents but also because of Diana's intimate involvement in the publication. This biography of Morton was highly acclaimed by different journals.

It was also famously called as “A bombshell book” by the *New York Post*. The book went into detail about the royal's life before becoming Princess of Wales and gave a private perspective on Diana's public life, her unhappy marriage, her husband's relationship with Camilla Parker Bowles and her struggles with an eating disorder. In 1997, Morton revealed who, exactly, had been sharing all those details: Diana herself. A revised version, entitled *Diana: Her True Story In Her Own Words*, contained an 18,000-word transcript of the tapes Diana recorded and passed along to Morton.

When the book was published, Morton only admitted to speaking with friends of Diana, although there was little doubt that his sympathies lay with the princess rather than the royal family. While *Diana: Her True Story – In Her Own Story* inspired many people to view Diana in a more positive light, Morton was also criticized for writing the book. The criticism was never about the story, they were about the periphery of the story.

Morton faced further criticism when, in October 1997, just two months after the princess died in a Paris car crash. Morton then published a new edition of the book titled *Diana: Her True Story in Her Own Words*. This time, the author made clear that Diana had been the principal source for the original book and included edited transcripts of the princess' recorded responses to his questions. "The Guardian writer," Mark Lawson called Morton a "moral leper" for publishing the new edition of the book, criticizing the journalist for deciding that promises of confidentiality are not posthumous.

This book was one of the most sensational biographies of the time. It gives the outline of the personal life of Princess Diana, her marriage life, the struggles and disasters she faced in her life, the mental trauma she underwent and also about her disorder. This book very clearly answers the question 'Who is Diana?' and 'What made her an international icon?' Diana, Princess of Wales was a member of the British royal family. She was the first wife of King Charles III and mother of Princes William and Harry. Her activism and glamour made her an international icon and earned her enduring popularity.

Diana was born into the British nobility and grew up close to the royal family on their Sandringham estate. In 1981, while working as a nursery teacher's assistant, she became engaged to Charles, the Prince of Wales, the eldest son of Queen Elizabeth II. Their wedding took place at St Paul's Cathedral in 1981 and made her Princess of Wales, a role in which she was enthusiastically received by the public. The couple had two sons, William and Harry, who were then second and third in the line of succession to the British throne. Diana's marriage to Charles suffered due to their incompatibility and extramarital affairs. They separated in 1992, soon after the breakdown of their relationship.

Their marital difficulties were widely publicised, and the couple divorced in 1996. As Princess of Wales, Diana undertook royal duties on behalf of the Queen and represented her at functions across the Commonwealth realms. She was celebrated in the media for her unconventional approach to charity work. Her patronages initially centred on children and the elderly, but she later became known for her involvement in two particular campaigns: her involvement in the social attitudes towards and the acceptance of AIDS patients, and the removal of landmines, promoted through the International Red Cross.

She was the patroness of charities and organisations that worked with the homeless, youth, drug addicts, and the elderly. From 1989, she was president of Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children. She was the patron of the Natural History Museum and president of the Royal Academy of Music. From 1984 to 1996, she was president of Barnardo's, a charity founded by Dr. Thomas John Barnardo in 1866 to care for vulnerable children and young people. In 1988, she became patron of the British Red Cross and supported its organisations in other countries such as Australia and Canada. Diana made several lengthy visits each week to Royal Brompton Hospital, where she worked to comfort seriously ill or dying patients. In 1994, she helped her friend Julia Samuel launch the charity Child Bereavement UK which supports children "of military families, those of suicide victims, and terminally-ill parents", and became its patron. She also raised awareness and advocated for ways to help people affected by cancer and mental illness.

Diana was initially noted for her shyness, but her charisma and friendliness endeared her to the public and helped her reputation survive the acrimonious collapse of her marriage. Considered photogenic, she was a leader in fashion in the 1980s and 1990s.

In 1987, the Princess was awarded the Honorary Freedom of the City of London, the highest honour which is in the power of the City of London to bestow on someone. She was also considered to be a fashion icon whose style was emulated by women around the world. According to designers and people who worked with Diana, she used fashion and style to endorse her charitable causes, express herself and communicate. The princess' fashion combined classically royal expectations with contemporary fashion trends in Britain.

Diana's death in a car crash in Paris in 1997 led to extensive public mourning and global media attention. An inquest returned a verdict of "unlawful killing" following Operation Paget, an investigation by the Metropolitan Police. Her legacy has had a deep impact on the royal family and British society. The sudden and unexpected death of an extraordinarily popular royal figure brought statements from senior figures worldwide and many tributes from members of the public. Diana remains one of the most popular members of the royal family throughout history, and she continues to influence the younger generations of royals. Before and after her death, Diana has been depicted in contemporary art.

Diana was a major presence on the world stage from her engagement to Prince Charles in 1981 until she died in 1997, and was often described as the 'world's most photographed woman.' She was noted for her compassion, style, charisma, and high-profile charity work, as well as her ill-fated marriage. Also during her marriage to the Prince of Wales, Diana was styled as 'Her Royal Highness The Princess of Wales.' She additionally bore the titles Duchess of Rothesay, Duchess of Cornwall, Countess of Chester, and Baroness of Renfrew.

Diana was widely known for her encounters with sick and dying patients, and the poor and unwanted whom she used to comfort, an action that earned her more popularity. She was mindful of people's thoughts and feelings and later revealed her wish to become a beloved figure among the people. She is often credited with widening the range of charity works carried out by the royal family in a more modern style. Despite being regarded as an iconic figure and a popular member of the royal family, Diana was subject to criticism during her life.

Diana was criticised by philosophy professor Anthony O'Hear who in his notes argued that she was unable to fulfil her duties, her reckless behaviour was damaging the monarchy, and she was "self-indulgent" in her philanthropic efforts. Diana's relationship with the press and the paparazzi has been described as "ambivalent". On different occasions she would complain about the way she was being treated by the media, mentioning that their constant presence in her proximity had made life impossible for her, whereas at other times she would seek their attention and hand information to reporters herself. Diana let the journalists and paparazzi into her life as she knew they were the source of her power; thus, she "overburdened herself with public duties" and destroyed the border between private and public life.

A psychological study about Princess Diana in *Diana: Her True Story - In Her Own Words* examines the psychological state of Princess Diana in different stages of her life, with the comparison of Freud's psychological theory. The psychological element of the id is compared with her childhood days, the ego is compared with her life after marriage and the superego is compared with her life after her marital breakup. The relation of the



psychological elements with her life, its imbalance that cause psychological trauma, and the control of the superego, are further discussed.

The biography *Diana: Her True Story – In Her Own Words* opens with her childhood and proceeds with the battles she faced in her life. This research paper further deals with the psychological study based on the psychological trauma that Princess Diana underwent because of her unfulfilled desires in her childhood days. The major factors that are carried out in the succeeding chapter are her life of freedom, her innocence and her immaturity, her longing for love, and her touch with the real life that is the independent life she longed for.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Freedom in Fetters**

As far as the title is concerned, freedom itself is one of the elements of happiness. But in the life of Diana, even though she enjoyed her freedom, her unhappy childhood and the mental trauma that she underwent during her childhood play a dominant role. Diana a young and charming girl was her parent's favourite child. She was expected to be a boy but it was a girl, which gave the parents a minor disappointment. She's from a normal family background.

Diana has three siblings and she was the youngest among the daughters. Among them, she was very much attached to her brother who always supported her. The other two sisters Sarah and Jane were growing out of her sight as they were doing their schooling in some other place. Diana's childhood was an unhappy one as her parents were not on good terms. Princess Diana's parents were John Spencer and Frances Shand Kydd. The two married in 1954 and divorced 15 years later.

Spencer and Shand Kydd had five children together, three girls and two boys – one of whom died shortly after birth – before going their separate ways. Spencer worked as a royal equerry for both King George VI and the young Queen Elizabeth. The family lived at Park House, where Diana was born in 1961. Spencer and Shand Kydd's relationship began to sour in 1967. They were always busy sorting themselves out. At that time, Shand Kydd had fallen in love with another man. After their divorce, Spencer was awarded sole custody of his children, and while Sarah and Jane, the first two daughters of Spencer, left to attend boarding school, Diana and her younger brother lived at Althorp with their dad. As a result of this unhappy childhood, she always felt detached from everybody else.

Childhood days are the most precious period in which one could enjoy life to the fullest. It is the time when you do not have any stress or problems. A person can simply be themselves and live a carefree life. A child does not have any responsibilities and is thus free to enjoy life. It happens to be a gift sometimes it becomes the bane. It is the time when you do not have any stress or problems. A person can simply be themselves and live a carefree life. A child does not have any responsibilities and is thus free to enjoy life. Similarly, in the life of Diana, her childhood days happen to be the bane in her life. She always longed for the life of a normal child which includes the warmth of her parent's love and affection. But in her life, she undergoes mental traumas which further affected her childhood days as a result of her unfulfilled desires.

Diana always had an instinct that she was completely different from others. She was also a dropout of school. Even though her childhood was unhappy, she also had some moments to cherish. Diana had the freedom of her childhood to the fullest. As a young girl, she had no responsibilities, even those that her younger brother has. He was the heir to the Spencer family. In spite of the trauma caused by her divorced parents, she also enjoyed some of the pleasures of her childhood during her school days with her new friends.

The only thing that bothered Diana was being independent. She always longed to live an independent life like her two sisters. Since she was too young to stay independent, she waited. She believes her instinct strongly that she is different from others. "I always felt very different from everyone else, very detached. I knew I was going somewhere different but had no idea where" (36). Since she is the youngest of all, her parents treated her very liberally. She had a mass of animals as pets such as guinea pigs, rabbits, and hamsters. Diana adored them and that made a complete family.

On the other side, she always heard her mother crying and her brother and herself were worrying about their parents. “I remember seeing my father slap my mother across the face” (38). This was one such bitter instance that was indelibly engraved upon her soul. Also, her brother was affected by their parents. He struggled to sleep every night. The sound of her brother sobbing himself to sleep affected Diana emotionally. Soon their parents decided to part ways. “I remember there being a discussion that a judge was going to come to me at Riddlesworth and say who would I prefer to live with” (38). She was so immature that she did not come up to speak to her parents.

Diana’s brother and herself were brought up under numerous nannies that her father had allotted. Their parents’ divorce helped Diana relate to anyone else who is upset in their family life. Her innocence is portrayed in such a way that she sought for kindness and attention from everyone. “I always got on well with everybody. Whether it be the gardener, or the local police or whoever, I always went over to talk to them. My father always said: ‘Treat everybody as an individual and never throw your weight around’” (39).

After the separation of their parents, both she and her brother Charles Spencer had to stay in both the places of their parents. Two weeks with their mom and another two weeks with their dad, and the trauma of going from one house to another and each parent trying to make it up in their area with material things rather than the actual tactile stuff. The most important factor setting the borderline personality apart from those with other disorders is early paternal loss.

The effects of Diana’s parents’ divorce were certainly traumatic and led to lifelong problems with issues of abandonment, anxiety, and insecurity. Trauma in

childhood is a grave psychological, medical, and public policy problem that has serious consequences for its victims and society. Despite the widespread prevalence of childhood trauma, less is known about trauma's biological effects in children as compared to adults with childhood trauma histories.

In children, motor vehicle accidents, bullying, parental loss, and child maltreatment are some of the major factors that cause this type of trauma. This results in distress, post-traumatic stress disorder and post-traumatic stress symptoms. Childhood traumas, particularly those that are interpersonal and intentional are associated with greater rates of depression and anxiety, antisocial behaviour and a greater risk of disorders. Later her parents started a new life by marrying another. So again she underwent the psychological pressure of accepting her stepfather on the one hand and her stepmother on the other. Diana never liked her stepmother in any situation. "I hate you so much, if only you knew how much we all hated you for what you've done, you've ruined the house, you spend Daddy's money and what for?" (45).

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytical theory can be applied to this part. According to Freud, the human personality is complex and has more than a single component. In his famous psychoanalytical theory, Freud states that personality is composed of three elements known as the id, ego and superego. These elements work together to create complex human behaviours. Each component adds its unique contribution to personality and the three interact in ways that have a powerful influence on an individual.

Each element of personality emerges at different points in life. According to the psychoanalytical theory, certain aspects of personality are more primal and might pressure one to act upon the most basic urges. Other parts of the personality work to

counteract these urges and strive to conform to the demands of reality. This chapter precisely deals with the element of the id.

According to Freud, the id is the source of all psychic energy, making it the primary component of personality. It's where our sexual and aggressive drives are based. The id is the component of personality that is present from birth. This aspect of personality is entirely unconscious and includes instinctive and primitive behaviours. The concept of the unconscious was central to Freud's view of the mind.

The id is the only part of the personality that is present at birth, according to Freud. He also suggested that this primitive component of personality existed wholly within the unconscious. The id acts as the driving force of personality. It not only strives to fulfil the most basic urges that people have, many of which are tied directly to survival, but it also provides all of the energy necessary to drive personality.

Freud believed that the majority of what is experienced day to day takes place in the unconscious and is not viewable in the conscious mind. In particular, he used the concept of repression to demonstrate that although an individual may not remember something traumatic happening to them, this memory is locked away in the unconscious. Yet importantly, these memories remain active in the unconscious and can reappear in consciousness under certain circumstances and can cause problems.

The id is driven by the pleasure principle, which strives for immediate gratification of all desires, wants, and needs. If these needs are not satisfied immediately, the result is a state of anxiety or tension. For example, an increase in hunger or thirst should produce an immediate attempt to eat or drink. The id is very important early in life because it ensures that an infant's needs are met. If the infant is hungry or uncomfortable, they will cry until the demands of the id are satisfied. Young

infants are ruled entirely by the id; there is no reasoning with them when these needs demand satisfaction.

As people grow older, it would be quite problematic if the person acted out to satisfy the needs of the id whenever they felt an urge, need, or desire. The id contains all of the life and death instincts. This aspect of personality does not change as people grow older. It continues to be infantile, instinctive, and primal. It isn't in touch with reality or logic or social norms. It strives only to satisfy an individual's most basic urges and needs.

When people are unable to satisfy their needs immediately, tension results. The id relies on the primary process to temporarily relieve the tension. The primary process involves creating a mental image through daydreaming, fantasizing, hallucinating, or some other process. Freud's conception of the id was that it was a reservoir of instinctual energy driven by the pleasure principle that works toward fulfilling our most basic needs.

There were many supporters of Freud, but he also received some strong criticisms from other people. Krafft-Ebing stated that Freud's theories were "scientific fairy tales," and he projected his personality into his theories. They criticize Freud for telling the patients his thoughts and projecting himself onto the theories he developed. His theories were panned for being "overgeneralized" and providing "excessive and absolute formulations." Jasper characterised Freud's theories as reckless, with every explanation pointing back to sexuality. His explanation of every issue was simple and always caused by sex. Even Freud's disciples followed this simplistic approach. Freud was very repetitive, and according to his critics, Freud was not empathetic.

The concept of the id plays a dominant role in Diana's childhood days. As this element id is the primary component of personality, Diana's childhood days will be best suited to this category. Diana as a small girl underwent many disasters mentally because of her parents. She did not get the love and affection that a normal child could get. She craved cuddles and kisses from her parents.

The divorce made her more empathetic to other's life. She was then able to understand other person's state of mind as she had experienced undergoing such trauma. "The divorce helped me to relate to anyone else who is upset in their family life, whether it be stepfather syndrome or mother or whatever, I understand it. Been there, done it" (39). Even then she loved to be with her parents. Then began her school days which she adored. Diana could remember herself when she was six years old. It was a moment she could picture in her mind's eye and she could still summon up the painful feelings of rejection, breach of trust and isolation that the break-up of her parents' marriage signified to her. It may have happened differently but that was the picture Diana carried with her. There were many other snapshots of her childhood which crowded her memory that includes her father and mother's separation, her brother sobbing to sleep and so on.

In school, Diana was very naughty in the sense of always wanted to laugh and muck about rather than sit tight in the four walls of the schoolroom. She enjoyed her school days and also participated actively in all the events that took place in her school. She was very good at diving and won many prizes as well. "I nearly got expelled because one night somebody said to me: 'Would you like to do a dare?' I thought: 'Why not? Life's so boring'" (41). Through these lines, Diana proved to be the naughtiest girl in her family when compared to her sisters.



The other three of her siblings were perfect and also good in their studies. But she always had fun in her schooling and was a school dropout. Diana mostly adored being outdoors. She visited old people and also went to the local mental asylum once a week. Diana enjoyed the freedom of her childhood during her schooldays when she was with her new friends. “I wasn’t a good child, in the sense that I had horns in my ears. I was always looking for trouble” (43).

Diana was always found mucking about with girls rather than boys. Maybe that was the time she was happy for the final time. Her longing for the love of her parents was immeasurable. During this time, she faced another mental trauma which was caused by the illness of her father. Her father suffered from a brain haemorrhage. After some days he was all right. She realised that he was one person before and he was certainly a different person after. And also he was more loving to Diana than he was before. Diana always used to feel proud and happy about herself that she is the youngest daughter. “Being third in line was a very good position to be in – I got away with murder. I was my father’s favourite, there’s no doubt about that” (46).

After her schooling, she went to a finishing school, which was not liked by her at all. “I know that when I went to finishing school I wrote something like 120 letters in the first month. I was so unhappy there. I felt out of place” (47). She was also not very good to everybody else. It was too claustrophobic. This was also one such unhappy moment, from which she felt mentally sick. Soon she was taken from that place. Diana then worked with a family, taking care of their daughter. Even at that time, she was waiting to move to London to enjoy her freedom of independence. But she was not allowed as she was below 18 years of age. Then comes the freedom of a bachelor life, which she was longing for.

Diana loved being in the flat with her friends. She adored being on her own. “It was nice being in a flat with the girls. I loved that – it was great. I laughed my head off there. I kept myself to myself. I wasn’t interested in having a full diary. I loved being on my own, as I do now – a great treat” (48). Apart from working as a nanny, she also worked in a kindergarten. Diana also went to cookery classes which were one of her favourites. She enjoyed her bachelor life to the fullest. In each and every aspect of Diana’s life, she portrays her innocence and immaturity in all the work she does. Her freedom during her childhood, her innocence and the immaturity that she had during her school days were the only time she lived a life for herself. This was the part of life where she enjoyed the real touch of freedom, apart from her parent’s divorce.

More than the freedom she enjoyed, her childhood was an unhappy one because of her family situation. Her mother’s tears, her father’s loneliness, the numerous nannies she resented, the endless shuttling between parents, and the sound of her brother Charles sobbing himself to sleep, caused her great mental distress. She craved cuddles and kisses. It was her childhood where she wanted nothing materially but everything emotionally.

While Diana was too young to understand, she believed that she was a nuisance and she accepted a load of guilt and a failure for disappointing her parents and family for being born as a girl instead of a boy. Also, the death of her paternal grandmother caused her great mental disturbance. She felt heartbroken. She believed that her grandmother would look after her in the spiritual world, but unfortunately, she lost her grandmother. One of the most touching news about Diana is that once when she went to a party she decided to give one of her presents to a night watchman. She felt that he was just lonely. She and her brother went to see him and he was so touched by her

gesture that he burst into tears. This was one such example to prove her sensitivity to the needs of others and her innocence in her life.

After her school days and unhappy childhood, she groomed herself into a visibly blossomed, becoming jollier, livelier and prettier. Diana was more mature in her bachelor life and was relaxed. She was a girl with great fun, kind and charming. Diana had been the Cinderella of her family for long enough. She had felt her spirit suppressed by her school routine. Now she was ready to spread her wings to London to enjoy her independence, through which her unhappy childhood memories started vanishing.

As a result of her unhappy childhood because of her parents, she faced the consequences of childhood trauma. Childhood trauma tends to have the most complications with long-term effects out of all forms of trauma because it occurs during the most sensitive and critical stages of psychological development. It could lead to violent behaviour in an individual's life. Childhood trauma may serve as a triggering mechanism resulting in an individual's inability to cope with the stress of certain events.

Similarly, Diana underwent all such symptoms during her unhappy childhood. At a particular stage, she avoided her parents and began to spend time with her pets. As the legal machinery for divorce ground into action, the children became pawns in a bitter and acrimonious battle which left them in a hopeless situation. It was not just the adults who were scared by this legal battle. The impact on the children was more profound. Maybe this was the basement for her eating disorder. Increased exposure to life stress was associated with poorer working memory performance. The reality was more traumatic than many have realised. Then after her school days have come to an end, the memory of her unhappy childhood began to pale as she stepped into a new beginning of her life.

According to the psychoanalytical theory, the element of the id was not satisfied in the life of Diana. She longed for the love of her parents, which she did not experience from them. All her desires of childhood were not met. Even the basic desire was not satisfied. She did not get the life of a normal child. Her parents were separated and even after that, she was not happy. She had the frustration of accepting her stepfather and stepmother. All these distractions happened to her at a very early stage of life.

In her school days, she enjoyed within her friends but still, she was lagging in her studies. This may be caused due to the distress of her parents' separation. The concept of unconsciousness is portrayed in this situation of hers. Due to the trauma caused by the separation of her parents, she was not able to concentrate on her studies. This is not known to her directly but it was one of the causes of her lack of concentration.

Diana, in her next step in life, was affected mentally by her father's illness. This also stopped her from getting the mental desires of that age. She was going on worrying after and after. She had very little chance to cherish herself. In school, she was very good at diving and ballet. Even though she excelled in it, she was not appreciated for any of her deeds. She expected all such things from her parents and surroundings.

All the incidents such as her parent's divorce, acceptance of her stepmother, moving from one house to the other, her brother's sobbing at night, and later moving to finishing school without interest, made her feel very much detached from society. She began to grow pets which she considered to be her family. She always spent time with them, appreciated them and loved them. She gave those pets all the things she has not gotten in her life.

When it comes to society, she was always set apart. Diana no longer felt so different because of her parents' divorce but because a voice inside her told her that her life was going to be a winding road. She always felt very detached from everyone else. She knew that she was going somewhere different and that she was in the wrong shell. Thus this chapter holds the fact that Diana at a young age did not even meet her basic desires in her life.

The psychoanalytic element id is not satisfied as the child did not meet her desired wishes. Since the id was not satisfied, she suffered a state of anxiety or tension. Only by the cause of her unsatisfied id, her childhood became an unhappy one and this trauma of hers developed. The succeeding chapter deals with the adulthood of Princess Diana, her marital life and her psychological state after the breakdown of her marriage.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Golden Cage**

Diana as a charming young bachelor wonders about life inside the palace. She thinks that it is always wonderful to be in such positions. This chapter deals with how Diana voluntarily fell into the golden cage and struggled for freedom. She assumes that the people living there do not undergo any trouble and they get all that they wanted in life. Diana's family is very much known to the queen as her father is an official working under the Queen. Diana was fourteen years old when she moved to Althorp, an estate by the Spencer family, built for the royals to stay. There she meets Prince Charles for the first time. Her first impact towards Charles was a pitiful one because he looked somewhat scared. Diana's elder sister Sarah was always with him. Diana being fat, and an unsmart woman did not like to come in front of the Prince. "I remember him coming to Althorp to stay, my husband, and the first impact was 'God, what a sad man'" (50).

As the stay is prolonged in Althorp, Charles and Diana meet each other and began to spend time with one another. Diana was amazed by the interest that Prince Charles had on her. At that time she was sixteen years old. She enjoyed her sweet sixteen in the Althorp estate, by dancing ballet, and spending time with herself and also she began to move along with Charles. This part of her life was a smooth one. That was it for about two years. Charles was all over Diana again and again and it was very strange. Diana thought that this was very odd.

Prince Charles was also a lonely man, who did not get attention from his mother when he was young as his mother, Queen Elizabeth was busy with the kingdom. So he grew up lonely and he is a kind of introvert. He always stayed within his circle. When Diana found him silent and lonely, she went up to him and accompanied him. Gradually

they began to talk about lots of things which was quite different for Diana. Diana always made him feel comfortable by not letting him alone. “It’s wrong, you’re lonely – you should be with someone to look after you” (50). They also began to travel together. Diana enjoyed all this but at the same time, she felt somewhat strange. It was during her sister’s romance that Diana first came into the path of the man considered then to be the world’s most eligible bachelor.

Charles’s first memories of Diana were of ‘a very jolly and amusing and attractive 16-year-old full of fun.’ He enjoyed being with Diana. So he often wished to spend time with her. He takes her with him to the palace and also sometimes to work, which she felt strange. The press also grew more interested in her. Also, Diana notices that Mr and Mrs. Parker Bowles were there at all her visits. Charles often rings up to Diana and spends time with her, which Diana thought was all wonderful.

This period in Diana’s life was one of the happiest moments that was deeply cherished by her. She also enjoyed the birthday party, to which she was invited by Charles. Cinderella was going to the ball. Diana enormously loved being there at the birthday party. Days passed by spending time together. Later, Prince Charles was about to propose to Diana, which she knew beforehand. Also, she was wondering about Camilla and how she comes to know all the matters about Charles that he did privately as well as about what Charles and Diana were doing privately. She did not consider it at that time. Finally, Charles proposed to Diana and they began a new life from then onwards. “. . . he said: ‘Will you marry me?’ and I laughed. I remember thinking: ‘This was a joke’, and I said: ‘Yeah, OK’, and laughed” (52).

Charles was so serious and she couldn’t handle it emotionally as she had no boyfriend before. There were lots of boyfriends but none became lovers. Diana knew

that she had to keep herself tidy for what she lay ahead. She was surrounded by this golden aura which stopped men from going any further; whether they would have liked it or not, it never happened. She was protected somehow by a perfect light. She was totally screwed up and finally, she felt something great. Even at that time, she heard a voice saying that she will never be the queen but will suffer a tough role.

Due to her immaturity, she felt that Prince Charles was so seriously in love with her. For Diana, it was like a call of duty, to go and work with the people. Besides her undoubted love for Prince Charles, her sense of duty and her deep desire to carry out a useful role in life were the factors in her fateful decision. Then they were about to begin their new life together. “We fell in love gradually. It wasn’t really dramatic. One blink and it would have gone” (54).

From this part of the story begins the drama, which was the root cause of Diana’s psychological trauma. As their love life gradually grew up, Charles also gradually lost interest in Diana. When Diana feels this, she thought that he is very busy with his duty. The press began to follow Diana in her every move, and Diana felt very annoyed. They soon picked up her trail and from then on her private life was effectively over. Diana was deeply distressed when the *Sunday Mirror* newspaper ran a front-page story claiming that, on 5 November, Diana drove from London for a secret meeting with Prince Charles.

Even though she was harassed by the press she was constantly polite and civil. Soon her engaging smile, her winsome manner and her impeccable behaviour endeared her to the public. She was never rude and cried like a baby to the four walls. She also got no support from Prince Charles. He was never supportive of her in any situation. Whenever they spoke with each other, he always spoke about Camilla and this made



Diana feel desperate. Prince Charles seemed less concerned about her predicament than that of Camilla Parker Bowles. Diana began to doubt Camilla Parker Bowles. Soon their engagement was announced and Diana was able to recognize an inner determination to survive.

Diana was ready for her so-called engagement. The night before the engagement, a policeman said to her, “I just wanted you to know that this is your last night of freedom ever in the rest of your life, so make the most use of it” (56). She was ready to sacrifice her freedom for the handsome prince she had loved, for the one who does not even deserve her. At this point, Diana developed psychological trauma in her life. The harassment of the press, the unsupportive lover and the new friend Camilla whom she suspected made her feel deeply stressed. From the day she said goodbye to her sweet private life, she underwent a psychic change. Even her grandmother warned her not to get married to the royal family. “Darling, you must understand that their sense of humour and their lifestyle are different and I don’t think it will suit you” (56). All these words from her side were like a sword that went deep into her heart. She felt like a sick parrot that is being trapped in a golden cage.

Diana is now a member of a royal family. The sudden overnight change from a nursery school teacher to the Princess of Wales was something she felt very strange. Even then she had the spirit to carry on the duty of a princess. From the beginning of the engagement itself, she lost her freedom. She was not allowed even to dress as she wish. At the time of her engagement, Diana missed her safe shell life in which she use to spend time with her friends laughing and giggling together. But somehow she managed the situation.

After the engagement, Diana was introduced to the circle of Prince Charles. She was also introduced to Camilla, her husband's mistress. Diana was so immature that she didn't know about jealousy or depression or anything like that. She had such a wonderful existence as a kindergarten teacher and was unaware of such feelings. Finally, Diana married Prince Charles, which was called a fairytale by the people and she entered the royal family. Her quest for the handsome prince was complete. Apart from the animated fairytale series Cinderella, this fairytale series was quite different. The Princess was locked in the high tower, far away from her friends and family. She was unhappy. As the public celebrated the Prince's fortunes, the shades of her tower house were closed around Diana. The innocent young nursery school teacher felt desperate. She underwent many struggles after her marriage. Also, she underwent many tears.

At this stage began her eating disorder Bulimia which affected her both mentally and physically. She had a great drop down in her weight and she was going through a painful process. Diana was uncertain and she locked herself from being exposed to society. Even then she did not leave her spirit of confidence. After her unhappy childhood, now began the phase of tragic adulthood. She began to suppress her wishes and accept reality. Diana accepted everything only for the love of Prince Charles. But she could not accept the fact that Prince Charles was very much fond of another woman Camilla Parker Bowles.

This part of Princess Diana's life can also be compared with the psychological theory of Freud. Among the three elements of the psychological theory, in Princess Diana's adulthood, the ego plays a major role. According to Freud, the ego develops from the id and ensures that the impulses of the id can be expressed in a manner acceptable in the real world. For Freud, the ego is the representative of the outer world

to the id. The ego functions in the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mind. The ego is the personality component responsible for dealing with reality. The term ego is sometimes used to describe the cohesive awareness of personality, but personality and ego are not the same. The ego represents just one component of a full personality. The ego operates based on the reality principle, which strives to satisfy the id's desires in realistic and socially appropriate ways.

In many cases, the id's impulses can be satisfied through a process of delayed gratification. The ego will eventually allow the behaviour, but only at the appropriate time and place. The ego in personality has a positive effect. It is a personality that keeps grounded in reality and prevents the id and superego from pulling too far towards the most basic urges or moralistic values. Having a strong ego means having a strong sense of self-awareness.

Freud compared the id to a horse and the ego to the horse's rider. The horse provides power and motion, while the rider provides direction and guidance. Without its rider, the horse would wander wherever it wished and do whatever it pleased. The rider gives the horse directions and commands to get it where it wants to go. The ego also discharges tension created by unmet impulses through secondary process thinking, in which the ego tries to find an object in the real world that matches the mental image created by the id's primary process.

The ego is associated with reason and sanity and is never able to fully distinguish itself from the id. The ego could also be a defense against the superego and its ability to drive the individual subject towards inaction or suicide as a result of crippling guilt. Freud sometimes represents the ego as continually struggling to defend itself from the external world, from the libido of the id, and from the severity of the

superego. It is said to be the part that remembers, evaluates, plans, and in other ways is responsive to and acts in the surrounding physical and social world.

Sigmund Freud was heavily criticized for his theories that focus on sex and aggression. Several critics stated that Freud was too simplistic and repetitive in his ways and was focused on what could not be seen. He was also regarded as not being empathetic and projecting his feelings into the theories he conceptualized. His theories were regarded as mythical with no scientific basis. On the other hand, using case studies and developing theories on defense mechanisms, his theories of the ego and the expansion of his theories are still very valid. According to other critics the ego constantly has to battle the id and its selfish demands and the superego flies and tries hard to aid the id in calming down and strengthening the ego.

The ego comprises the executive functions of personality by serving as the integrator of the outer and inner world as well as the id and the superego. It gives continuity and consistency to behaviour by providing a personal point of reference which relates the events of the past with actions of the present and the future. The ego, once developed, is capable of change throughout life, particularly under conditions of threat, illness, and significant changes in life circumstances. As the individual continues to develop the personality, the ego is further differentiated and the superego develops. The superego represents the inhibitions of instinct and the control of impulses through the incorporation of parental and societal standards. Thus, moral standards as perceived by the ego become part of the personality.

Diana found the palace to be a place of 'Dead Energy.' She began to wander within the palace and started to have conversations with her staff. This depicts her feeling of being isolated by the royal family and by her husband. The main cause of

Diana's mental trauma after her marriage was the breakdown of her married life. It was caused by the mistress of Prince Charles. Diana confirmed their relationship, once when she received a parcel at the Palace office. It was a gold chain bracelet with a blue enamel disc and the initials 'F' and 'G' entwined. The initials stand for 'Fred' and 'Gladys', the nicknames used by Camilla and Charles which Diana had been made aware of by friends. Despite Diana's tears and anger, he did not stop the relationship with Camilla. Diana was confused, upset and bewildered by the train of events. At that moment, she considered calling off the wedding, after which her sisters and friends made her fear the disaster which lay ahead.

As Princess of Wales, only for the sake of Prince Charles, she began to accept everything that happened around her. She also tried to stop Charles from going to see Camilla, which he refused. She was always left lonely and was not allowed to get along. She did not get anything that her age girl could get. Then she was told that she was pregnant. It was a fine and great excitement for everyone in the palace. But Princess Diana felt terribly sick, carrying this child and hadn't told the world that she was pregnant but was looking grey and gaunt and still sick. She was always trying to make him proud of her. That was a very, very difficult pregnancy for her.

Diana was feeling sick the whole time. Bulimia and morning sickness because of pregnancy made her feel down completely. All she wanted at that time was some rest and more support from her husband. She always fainted or was sick. All the people in the palace registered Diana as a problem. This made her feel so embarrassed. She was very much upset with herself and threw herself down the stairs. "I felt so desperate and I was crying my eyes out and he said: "I'm not going to listen. You're always doing this to me. I'm going riding now.' So I threw myself down the stairs" (71).

The relationship that she anticipated and the life she wished to live were everything now in vain. The suppression of her desires and her isolation everything led her to the path of destruction. All psychological traumas originate from stress, a physiological response to an unpleasant stimulus. Long-term stress increases the risk of poor mental health and mental disorders, which can be attributed to the suppression of the immune system and an increase in blood pressure. Similarly, in Princess Diana's life, she underwent a major level of stress which was led by her husband. She was not treated properly and was not considered by anyone in the royal family. This paved the way for adultery trauma to Princess Diana.

Adultery trauma can be caused when someone is being cheated on in a relationship. It may take a long time to heal. Also, it can cause chronic anxiety, post-traumatic stress, depression and mistrust of others for a long time after the event. Rejection in a relationship can cause several changes in the brain pathways. This also causes long and short-term consequences. This may lead to betrayal trauma, a type of trauma that may affect self-esteem, emotional health and relationships with others.

Betrayal trauma was first introduced as a concept by psychologist Jennifer Freyd in 1991. She described it as a specific trauma that happens in key social relationships where the betrayed person needs to maintain a relationship with the betrayer for support or protection. Likewise, in the life of Diana, even though she knew that she was betrayed, she stayed with Prince Charles for emotional support and protection. This type of trauma is termed infidelity.

The partnerships are characterized by dissatisfaction, and high conflict is at higher risk for infidelity. Also, the more dissimilar partners in terms of personality, educational level and other factors are more likely to experience infidelity. Being

cheated on by a loved one can be emotionally devastating. It can traumatize the person and make it difficult to survive. So that the experience can be similar to having a post-traumatic disorder. Some of the symptoms of infidelity are numbness, avoidance, anxiety, depression, isolation and withdrawal, and trust issues. This infidelity lowers the response of the immune system and can cause significant weight gain over time.

Taking all these symptoms into consideration, Princess Diana also suffered the symptoms of post-infidelity stress disorder. When Diana encounters the relationship of Charles with Camilla, she is filled with anger and hurt upon her partner's betrayal and she becomes numb and emotionless. She also felt avoided by her family members of the royal family which created an isolated feeling. Being isolated, she began to have conversations with her palace staff and she kept herself locked inside the palace. Also, she always had the feeling of anxiety, that is she was always worrying about her husband and her future in their relationship. Diana also experienced the symptoms of depression such as a persistent feeling of sadness or emptiness and frequent bouts of crying.

Diana developed trust issues which developed unnecessary fights between them and also made it difficult for her to sustain her future relationship with Prince Charles. From day one Diana suspected Charles and Camilla's relationship, Diana was affected by an eating disorder known as bulimia, which affected her both mentally and physically. This disorder was caused only because of stress. During her childhood, she experienced the stress of parental loss and in her adulthood, she experienced the stress of betrayal. This triggered her bulimia and she suffered a lot.

Freud's psychoanalytic concept of the ego plays a dominant role in the part of Princess Diana's marital life. She did not get any pleasures of married life that a normal

girl could get. She always suppressed her feelings and accepted the bitter reality of the world and the life she was forced to live. As a young girl from a normal background, she had many expectations about her adulthood. And also after seeing the broken married life of her parents she decided not to live a life of that sort which affected her so much.

When Diana accepted the proposal of Prince Charles, she expected that he will always adore her, nurture her and support her whenever she feels down. All these expectations only went in vain after her marriage. Everything happened in reverse. Even then she did not want to ruin her married life and wished to continue a good and happy relationship with Prince Charles. But after the confirmation of her husband's relationship with another woman, she totally collapsed and after that, she was not able to accept the reality.

At this point, the concept of the ego was not balanced which further led to the maladaptive reality. She was mentally sick and attempted a number of suicides. She was terribly alone and dreadfully exposed. Her thoughts turned to suicide, not because she wanted to die but because she desperately wanted help. She knew in her heart that she did not need drugs, she needed rest, patience and understanding from those around her, which she did not get till the end.

Later, when she was pregnant, she was suffering dreadfully from morning sickness, she was haunted by Camilla Parker Bowles and she was desperately trying to accommodate herself to her new position and new family. She also struggled very hard to win the Prince's assistance, which ended up in vain. The frustration she underwent this time made her throw herself down the stairs without considering the baby in her womb.



In the beginning of their married life, Princess Diana made several suicide attempts. They were not serious attempts to take her life but her cries for help. She threw herself against a glass display cabinet at Kensington Palace while on the other she cut herself with a lemon slicer; on yet another occasion, during a heated argument, she picked up a penknife lying on his dressing table and cut her chest and her thighs. These were some of the instances where the concept of ego was imbalanced, which resulted in her several suicidal thoughts and a state of hopelessness and depression.

Thus the chapter concludes by flashing the light on Princess Diana's adulthood which was fully led by destruction and desperation. The psychoanalytic concept of the ego was not well balanced in the phase of Diana's adulthood, where she was not able to deal with the reality of life. She was not able to live her desired life and was not able to accept reality, which led her to the maladaptive reality of life. The following chapter deals with Diana's quest for freedom, in which she overcomes her traumas and comes out of her golden cage.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Quest for Freedom**

After the great disasters in Diana's life, she underwent many traumas which led to the destruction of her normal life. This chapter continues with her struggles for freedom, and letting the superego take control over her. In this stage of her life, she began to hold internalized moral standards. In the early stage, Princess Diana led a life which was quite simple. But after getting married to Prince Charles she was like a sick parrot longing for love and attention from her husband. She was portrayed to the people as someone who was mentally sick, which was an image she does not like.

Many times she has also tried to escape from the palace because of her unsupportive husband and loneliness. Charles's attitude towards Diana was very desperate. He always considered her selfish, which also made her sicker and more depressed. "The one thing I've always prided myself on – if I may be so bold – is that I've never been a selfish person. But Charles was always telling me I was being selfish, and I sort of believed it" (84).

At this point in her life, she also experienced some psychological trauma which was a result of her unsupported married life. This was the period she felt like walking on the sharp edge of a knife, not knowing whether to move away from this caged life or stay as prey till the end in the name of love. Being a normal young woman she was not able to tolerate the sudden burden that fell upon her. Only expecting love from her husband she was ready to risk her life. But unfortunately, her very common feeling was not satisfied and resulted in trauma.

Psychological trauma often leads to physical complaints such as problems with eating and difficulty falling or staying asleep, which Diana underwent on a daily basis.

Experiencing such kind of illness, her relationship breakup and her sudden life-changing events led to cognitive symptoms such as confusion and difficulty in concentrating and connecting with reality.

Throughout Diana's life, there were hardly some moments to cherish other than that it was filled with struggles and depression. Gradually she became silent and was ready to face anything that she crossed on her path. After she became silent, Diana began to patiently observe the reality around her and decided to make judgements that will bring some hope for her future. Moving further, Diana's life can be connected with one of the psychological elements, that is the superego.

The very last component of personality is the superego. According to Freud, the superego begins to emerge at around age five. It holds the internalized moral standards and ideals that are acquired from parents or society, whereas in Diana's life, she was deeply inspired by the service of her grandmother in her childhood days. Diana's paternal grandmother, the late Countess Spencer, was very sweet and wonderful and special. She was so divine that she took care of Diana in the moral world. This can also be considered as one of the reasons for Diana's life of service to the needy.

The superego provides guidelines for making judgements in life through which an individual can take better decisions for life. Likewise, in the life of Diana, this element of the psychological theory suits her perfectly after her marital breakup as she was able to make her moral judgements and this was a fuel for her to lead an ethical life. She made up her mind and decided to leave her married life and spend more time doing service to the people.

Diana finally made the right judgement of moving away from the royal family in which the fairytale of the British empire came to an end. The superego has two parts.

The conscience includes information about things that are viewed as bad by society. These behaviours are often forbidden and lead to bad consequences, punishments or feelings of guilt and remorse. This element includes the rules and standards for behaviours that the ego aspires to. The superego tries to perfect and civilize behaviour. It suppresses all id's unacceptable urges and struggles to make the ego act upon idealistic standards rather than on realistic principles. Similarly, Diana in the later part of her life began to accept the idealistic life instead of striving hard for the betterment of realistic life.

Diana knew that she was going to take a different path in the future. She had an instinct before her divorce that she will go out and help the man on the streets. When seeing her other friends enjoying their normal life she felt different, someone who is always out of track. This made her very special which was not recognized by the royal family. She began to stay silent and made herself feel more comfortable. She was able to cope with the people around her and did not feel trapped. In this way, she was able to start her journey for the needy. "I don't like glamorous occasions any more – I feel uncomfortable with them. It would much rather be doing something with the sick people" (116).

Thus, instead of tolerating her struggles within the family she began to work for the people and decided to be a humanitarian figure. The superego is present in the three states of mind that is the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious. The superego helps to feel good about the behaviour when the most primal urges of an individual are suppressed. This was also experienced by Diana when she began her services for the poor and sick. She was very much satisfied with her service life and had the feeling of gratification to the fullest rather than staying as a caged parrot in between the royals. Her suicide attempts can also be taken into consideration. Because these suicidal

attempts made her feel very desperate which caused guilt, and so she decided to live her upcoming life for the people by making it more moral and spiritual.

When Diana first began investigating the possibilities of the spiritual world, she was very open, to belief. She developed her confidence level and started to see these methods of self-analysis as tools and guides rather than as a lifeline to grab onto. She further began to concentrate on her inner self. Also, she started a new life which was a new beginning for the people of Britain. As her friend once said, ““Learning about the inner growth in ourselves is the most important part of life. This is her next journey”” (250). This interest of Diana was a very important stepping stone on her road to self-knowledge. Her open-minded approach to the outside world made her closer to the people. Just as the Prince and the other members of the royal family have allied themselves with alternative methods of approaching the world. For most of her adult life, Diana had allowed herself to be governed by others, particularly her husband.

Consequently, her true nature was submerged for so long that it took time for it to resurface. Her voyage of self-discovery was by no means a smooth passage. For every day she felt at peace with herself there were weeks of depression, anxiety and self-doubt. During these periods she underwent many counselling treatments which link the mind and body in pursuit of well-being. In these treatments, she learnt a complete philosophy of life which is challenging and helps to find the own of life.

These treatments made her feel so confident and relaxed and also this gave her a new lease on life. She was always to the point that one of her therapists told her: ““People like Diana show us all that it doesn’t matter how much you have or what benefits you are born with, your world can be still restricted by unhappiness and ill

health. It still takes courage to recognize these limitations, to confront them and change your life” (251).

Before she served the people, she decided to stay healthier to continue her new journey. So she underwent many psychological and physiological treatments. She experimented with other techniques, including hypnotherapy and aromatherapy, an ancient art which involves the use of aromatic oils to reduce stress, promote physical health and serenity of mind. Diana always combined aromatherapy with a session of acupuncture, a Chinese healing art in which needles are used to puncture the skin at certain defined points in order to restore the balance of ‘chi energy’ which is essential to good health.

During this period Diana was physically fit with a daily swim in the palace as well as exercise classes and the occasional workout with the London City Ballet of which she was very much interested. Her movements were graceful and flowing and they followed a set pattern, enabling an individual to harmonize mind, body and spirit. This physical activity was matched by the inner peace she found through quiet meditation and prayer.

These methods such as counselling, friendships and the holistic therapies that she embraced during this period enabled her to win back her personality, a character which had been smothered by her husband, the royal system, and the public’s expectations towards their fairytale princess. She became a quieter person, introverted and more private person than the people thought about her. One of her friends also says that: ““She has never liked the media although they’ve been friends to her. Actually she has always been shy of them” (253 - 254).

Diana, like an eagle that hides on the top of the mountain after coming to the end of its life and undergoes a painful transition to live majestically for the next few years, also underwent many transformations both psychologically and physically and gave a new and tremendous comeback. She has matured enormously since that time. She also had a purpose in life and is no longer the lost soul of that first meeting. At this point in her life, she was willing to take on challenging tasks for society. This transformation of Diana not only humanized the British monarchy but captured the world's attention. Diana was known as a fundraiser and at one point was linked to more than a hundred charities.

One of the most notable incidents was Diana's visit to the landmines. In 1988, as Soviet troops withdrew, they left behind a humanitarian crisis caused by landmines. Thousands of civilians were killed or injured, ten thousand and more refugees were prevented from returning and aid could not be delivered because of the dangerous debris littering roads, towns, villages and fields. Deciding to resolve the problem The HALO Trust (Hazardous Area Life-support Organization) was founded in Kabul.

The trust continued to clear landmines and explosives left behind by the war. They also kept people safe and helped communities to rebuild by destroying weapons, managing stockpiles and teaching families how to stay safe until the dangerous debris of war was removed. The landmine issue shot to international prominence in 1997 when Princess Diana walked through one of HALO's minefields in Angola. Shortly after her visit, the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty was signed, calling for all the countries to unite to rid the world of landmines. This was one of the major events that took place in British history.

As her interests moved into the world of health, following the landmines, Princess Diana opened the first Aids ward in London in 1987. The world was terrified by the Aids epidemic in the mid-80s. Fed by ignorance and misinformation, people did not touch sufferers due to the mistaken belief that HIV could be transmitted through contact. Diana's first Aids ward, which only cared for patients with the virus. It was there that she shook hands with an Aids patient without gloves. She became the first high-profile celebrity to do so to challenge the stigma that the virus could be passed by touch. She also endured a sticky meeting with executives from a ballet company who made it clear that they would like her to devote time to their cause. She said to them afterwards: ““There are more important things in life than ballet, there are people dying in the streets”” (255).

During the winter of 1991 and 1992, she made seven private visits to hostels for the homeless. Despite there being aggressive people and drunk and drug problems, she felt very comfortable on these occasions, more than when she mixed with the royal family and their courtiers. Diana was an advocate of Centrepoin, a charity that helped young and homeless people off the streets, by becoming its patron in 1992.

Her work at the charity involved helping the youth to find shelter, food and a job. She also took her sons to charity shelters and proved to be the best mother to her children. The charity says that they have helped 125,000 homeless young people with the help of Princess Diana. It is also said that as a humanitarian figure, Diana showed just how many young people needed help, and also she has brought out the seriousness of homelessness and youth unemployment in society. Diana then visited many hospitals and spent much time with other patients, particularly in the intensive care unit. After this new journey, Princess Diana was adored by people from various countries. One of her friends said:



‘When she went to Pakistan last year she was amazed that five million people turned out just to see her. Diana has this extraordinary battle going on in her mind. “How can all these people want to see me?” and then I get home in the evening and lead this mouse-like existence. Nobody says: “Well done.” She has this incredible dichotomy in her mind. She has this adulation out there and this extraordinary vacant life at home. There is nobody and nothing there in the sense that nobody is saying nice things to her— apart of course from children. She feels she is in an alien world.’ (257, 259)

Diana also remained a patron of the Leprosy Mission England and Wales till her death in 1997. In a bid to dispel the myth that the illness could be spread by touch, she was filmed shaking hands and touching the wounds of leprosy patients on her first visit to Indonesia, according to the Leprosy Mission. Diana also continued to raise awareness about this disease that causes lumps and sores to form on the skin, and if left untreated, can cause limb deformities and nerve damage. She says that she is always concerned to touch people with leprosy.

Little things meant so much to Diana. She did not seek praise for her deeds. Serving people has turned out to be her routine. In the early years she did not recognize the love from the people but later after realizing the true hearts of the people she became more comfortable and began to accept friendly gestures from the society. This kind of incident made her day and all the love and presence of the people made a great difference in Princess Diana’s life. She visited various countries and met many leaders of different countries and has also won the humanitarian award. One of her famous sayings is: ““Anywhere I see suffering, that is where I want to be, doing what I can”” (259).

This psychoanalytical element superego develops during the first five years of life in response to parental punishment and approval. This development occurs as a result of the child's internalization of parents or society's moral standards, a process greatly aided by a tendency to identify with society. Diana during her childhood, did not receive complete love from her parents which resulted in the failure of her parents' internalization. Affected by this, she decided to spread love in her surroundings and to take off the needy, through which the superego element in Diana was reflected. The superego continues to develop into young adulthood as a person encounters other admired role models and copes with the rules and regulations of society.

The superego's function is to control the id's impulses, especially those that society forbids, such as sex and aggression. For instance, Diana's aggression which resulted in her suicidal attempts can be taken into consideration. Such kind of behaviour which falls short of the ideal self may be punished by the superego through guilt. The superego can also reward the ideal self when the behaviour makes an individual feel proud. It also has the function of persuading the ego to turn to moralistic goals rather than simply realistic ones and to strive for perfection. Freud believed that the superego acts as the conscience that encourages the individual to meet society's moral demands.

The superego, according to Freud is formed during the Oedipus complex after a boy learns to identify his father. This concept of Freud has been heavily criticized because of its obvious sexism. More recent psychoanalysts argue that the superego is not just the identification of gender; it is a product of the child's identification with his or her parents and their ideals. Freud, however, argued that women's superegos are never fully independent and are heavily influenced by emotion.

Many critics argued that one can hardly understand Freud's conception of the superego without taking the individual's social-anthropological perspective into account. Some of the authors argue that not only have the psychoanalytic concepts of the superego contributed to the understanding of social developments, but also the reverse can be observed: recent trends in post-modern society such as optimisation, digitisation and virtual communication have also had an effect on the internal world and provides new challenges as well as new models for understanding superego functioning.

Diana, contributing and practising her whole mind to the concept of the superego, embraced the personal and social issues generated by society. While her involvement with Aids counselling initially met with some hostility, which was a part of her desire to help the forgotten victims in society. Her work with leprosy, drug addiction, the homeless and sexually abused children brought her into contact with problems and issues to which there are no easy solutions. In accordance with this, Diana's friend once said: "“She took Aids because she saw this group of people for whom nothing was being done to help. It is a mistake to think that she is only interested in Aids and the Aids question. She cares about sickness and illness”" (260).

Diana often visited specialist hospitals for sick children which she considered as not a chore but something that is deeply satisfying and that triggered her internalized moral standards and ethical values. When she began to move for society, she experienced an inner peace which was incomparable to any royal respect. She also trained her boys in the path of services by taking them to the charity shelters, which resulted in the development of the psychoanalytical element superego in her sons.

A reflection of Diana firmly held belief that her role as mother was to bring them up in a way that equipped them for every aspect of life and death. As a parent, Diana played her role perfectly in developing the concept of the superego among her sons, which they carry out even in the present. She was very careful that her sons' childhood should not be like that of hers. So she gave them all the support and attention and gave them all the comfort they needed in their childhood. She was very calculative in bringing up her children in a moral and ethical way.

Diana's sons, William and Harry also enjoyed the life of their mother. Once when Diana's friend was on his deathbed William asked his mother: "If Adrian starts to die when I'm at school will you tell me so that I can be there?" (264). Through these lines, it is accepted that her sons hold the internalized moral standards that ought to be acquired from the parents, and Princess Diana has fulfilled them in a very satisfying manner.

Coming back to the life of Diana, because of the development of the superego she was able to make the correct and moral judgements which gave her a feeling of complete satisfaction. It was all more satisfying because for once she had not bowed to the royal family's pressure. The family felt that a token visit would have sufficed and seemed uneasy about her display of loyalty and devotion which clearly went far beyond the traditional call of duty. Through her calls of duty and her service-oriented life, Princess Diana no longer felt that she had to disguise her true feelings from the world. She could be herself rather than to hide behind a mask. All the qualities of the superego that she adopted in her life made her to act morally and ethically, which made a revolutionary change and a key to accept her idealistic life.

As a result of the superego taking control over her life of Diana, she had learnt to reorder her priorities in her life and to know herself better from within. Diana says: ““I reached a depth inside which I never imagined was possible. My outlook on life has changed its course and become more positive and balanced”” (267). The upcoming chapter deals with the summation that deeply analyses the comparison of Freud’s psychological theory with the life of Princess Diana.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summation**

The beautiful fairytale of Princess Diana was one of the most important events that took place in the history of the British kingdom. Leading such a life that was filled with struggles and disasters, and her courage and strong mental ability to tackle any kind of situation, she was considered to be an international icon during her period. This research paper concludes by analyzing the psychology of Princess Diana during her three stages of life and also flashes clear light on all the mental traumas she underwent after her marriage and betrayal of her husband. The life of Princess Diana is compared with the three psychoanalytical elements of the Id, Ego and Superego.

One of the most important psychological approaches to understanding personality is based on the theorizing of the Austrian physician and psychologist Sigmund Freud, who founded what today is known as the psychodynamic approach, an approach to understanding human behaviour that focuses on the role of unconscious thoughts, feelings, and memories. Freud because his work has had a huge impact on everyday thinking about psychology, and his psychodynamic approach is one of the most important approaches to psychological therapy. Freud is probably the best known of all psychologists, because of his impressive observation and analyses of personality.

Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis, a clinical method for evaluating and treating pathologies, and the distinctive theory of mind and human agency derived from it. Soon after his graduation, he set up a private practice and began treating patients with psychological disorders. By 1896 he introduced the term “psychoanalysis” to refer to his new clinical method and the theories on which it was based. Freud’s development of new theories took place during a period in which he experienced heart irregularities,

disturbing dreams and periods of depression, a “neurasthenia,” which he linked to the death of his father, and which prompted a “self-analysis” of his dreams and memories of childhood. His explorations of his feelings of hostility toward his father and rivalrous jealousy over his mother’s affections led him to fundamentally revise his theory of the origin of the neuroses. As of all the theories are concerned, many of Freud’s ingenious ideas have turned out to be at least partially incorrect, and yet other aspects of his theories are still influencing psychology.

Freud, combined with other theorists used many observations to develop this theory regarding the sources of personality and behaviour, and his insights are central to the fundamental themes of psychology. Freud did not believe that an individual can control his or her behaviours. Rather, he believed that all behaviours are predetermined by motivations that lie outside a person’s awareness, in the unconscious. He proposed that the mind is divided into three components: id, ego and superego and that the interactions and conflicts among the components create personality.

The conscious state is where our current thoughts, feelings and focus live. The second state is the state of preconsciousness, which is the home of everything that can be recalled from our memory. The third one is the unconscious state, at which the deepest level of our minds resides a repository of the processes that drive our behaviour, including primitive and instinctual desires. When there is any absence of the elements or if there is any imbalance then the person is in danger of mental traumas which may cause even severe physical disorders.

Trauma can happen to anyone. A tragic accident, serious illness, or abuse can lead to feelings of fear and anxiety. There are three main types of trauma. Acute trauma results from a single incident, chronic trauma occurs because of repeated and prolonged

domestic violation or abuse and complex trauma occurs when exposed to multiple varied and multiple traumatic events, often of an invasive and interpersonal nature. Dealing with trauma can be especially difficult for children, who may not always be able to articulate their feelings.

Trauma is not the same as mental distress or suffering, both of which are universal human experiences. Some people will experience post-traumatic stress disorder after being exposed to a major traumatic event. Upsetting memories such as images, thoughts, or flashbacks may haunt the person, and nightmares may be frequent. Insomnia may occur as lurking fears and insecurity keep the person vigilant and on the next generation, thus making genetics one of the components of psychological trauma. However, some people are born with or later develop protective factors such as genetics that help lower their risk of psychological trauma.

When exposed to trauma, it can lead to mental health disorders like acute stress and anxiety disorder, brief psychotic disorder, personality disorder and adjustment disorder. Also, the emotional exhaustion of an individual may result in, leading to distraction, and clear thinking may be difficult or impossible. Emotional detachment, as well as dissociation or “numbing out” can frequently occur. Dissociating from the painful emotion includes numbing all emotions, and the person may seem emotionally flat, preoccupied, distant or cold. Some traumatized people may feel permanently damaged when trauma symptoms do not go away and they do not believe their situation will improve. This can lead to feelings of despair, loss of self-esteem, profound emptiness, suicidality frequent depression which can be compared to that of Diana’s suicide attempts and her eating disorders.



The psychological study of Princess Diana's life is composed of Freud's three psychological components. Her childhood days dealt with the id, an element that is driven by the pleasure principle. During her childhood, Diana is not able to get even her basic desires which results in her childhood trauma. The very first element which is the source of all psychic energy is not balanced in her life.

Diana as a young girl did not get the normal life of a child. She underwent many frustrations and depression when she was with her parents. She longed for the love of her parents and also faced many problems mentally because of her parent's divorce. During this part of her life, she was also affected mentally by her father's illness. These incidents made her feel completely detached from society which always made her stay apart. The days of her childhood were not properly balanced as she did not meet the basic desires of a child. From this age of Diana, mental illness was triggered.

The paper further deals with the next element of the psychological theory which is the ego. The ego plays a dominant role in the marital life of Princess Diana. As a normal woman, she did not meet her basic desires like that of her childhood. She did not get the love and attention which she longed for from her husband. She had many expectations regarding her adulthood that only ended in vain. She was deeply depressed with her husband, Prince Charles, who had an illicit relationship with another woman. By this incident, she was deeply affected mentally and underwent many psychological disasters that resulted only in her destruction.

These incidents make clear that in her life, Freud's psychological element of the ego was not satisfied. Due to this, she has attempted several suicides which was the result of the imbalance of the ego. She was not able to accept the reality that was happening in her life because she had a different expectation of married life. When all

her expectations are ruined she comes to the conclusion of emotional outbursts resulting in the suicides. Also, apart from her husband, she was in morning sickness during the time of her pregnancy.

Diana was always sick and was hopelessly trying to get into new positions in the royal family. All that a normal woman wants is some words of appreciation for her deeds and love towards her. Diana as a princess, did not get anything that she desires. In accordance with the ego, Diana's life was also imbalanced with the element of the ego. She was not able to face and accept the real world, and that resulted in her maladaptive reality of life.

The final part of Princess Diana's life is further discussed with the component of the superego. It holds the internalized moral standards of an individual, that can help to take the right judgements in life. Similarly, in the life of Princess Diana, she finally focused on the superego which made her take correct judgements about her marital life. Only because of the dominance of the superego, she was able to accept the idealistic life, rather than that of the realistic life.

During this time she began her life of service to the needy, which made her feel more comfortable and find inner peace. She has organized many camps, medical visits, and landmine protests and also employed the unemployed and so on. The qualities of the superego that she adopted in her life made her understand herself from within that led her to act morally and ethically and also it was a revolutionary change and a key to accepting her idealistic life. The three elements of Freud's psychoanalytical theory are not three separate entities with clearly defined boundaries. These aspects are dynamic and always interact to influence an individual's overall personality and behaviour. With many competing forces, it is easy to see how conflict might arise between the id, ego

and superego. Freud uses the term ego strength to refer to the ego's ability to function despite these duelling forces. A person who has good ego strength can effectively manage these pressures, while a person with too much or too little ego strength can be unyielding and disruptive.

According to Freud, the key to a healthy personality is a balance between the id, the ego, and the superego. If the ego is able to adequately moderate between the demands of reality, the id, and the superego, a healthy and well-adjusted personality emerges. Freud believed that an imbalance between these elements would lead to a maladaptive personality. When an individual with an overly dominant id, might become impulsive, uncontrollable, or even criminal. Such as individual acts upon their most basic urges with no concern for whether their behaviour is appropriate, acceptable or legal.

On the other hand, an overly dominant superego might lead to a personality that is extremely moralistic and judgemental. A person ruled by the superego might not be able to accept anything or anyone that they perceive to be "bad" or "immortal." While the ego has a tough job to do, it does not have to act alone. Anxiety also plays a role in helping the ego mediate between the demands of basic urges, moral values, and the real world. When an individual experience different types of anxiety, a defense mechanism comes out to help defend the ego and reduce the anxiety. Freud's theory provides one conceptualization of how personality is structured and how the elements of personality function. In Freud's view, a balance in the dynamic interaction of the id, ego, and superego is necessary for a healthy personality. When considering the life of Princess Diana there is an imbalance in the components of the psychoanalytical theory. This

imbalance was the root cause of all the mental traumas that she faced in her life and her maladaptive reality.

The personality of Diana was not developed in a healthy manner. She had struggles with herself to build out a healthy personality and herself better for society. The mental stress and the traumas she underwent were the result of her unhealthy personality. If she would have been exposed to the over-dominance of id or ego that may be resulting in impulsive, uncontrollable and criminal behaviour which did not exist in her life. Since she adopted the concept of the superego, which is an ethical component, she was not much exposed to that cruel and bad behaviour. She became an international icon and was also adored by all the people of the world. She is one of the most important characters in the history of British.

Princess Diana has spent most of her days grieving over a failed relationship, lost hopes and broken ambitions, always been the one hoping for a better future. Her days were filled with only betrayal, anguish and hurt. Only after her realisation of her inner conscience and her acceptance of the superego gave her new energy to build her healthy personality more morally and ethically. Opportunities beckoned and only then she began to enjoy her real freedom which gave her more satisfaction and inner peace.

The Princess also admitted: “‘I have learned much over the last years. From now on I am going to own myself and be true to myself. I no longer want to live with someone else’s idea of what and who I should be. ‘I am going to be me’” (377). Then began a revolutionary change in her lifestyle and in all the decisions she took. The princess felt that if she could change the style of her public life she could enhance the

substance of her contribution to the nation. She aspired towards a more informal, relaxed and approachable royal style.

Diana's view was that so many issues and problems in a male-dominated world would derive from the aggressive, secretive and often insensitive masculine ego. She felt that problems could be more effectively addressed when female qualities of intuition, compassion, compromise and harmony were added to the equation. Her thinking was influenced by the New Age advisers, which were also rooted in her jaded view of the monarchy as a male-dominated institution, and in her doubted cynicism towards the opposite sex following the failure of her marriage, also many views were reinforced by her frequent private visits to the refuges for battered women.

Diana's interest in women's issues was matched by her growing awareness that she could play a genuine solo role on her own on the world stage. Her work for Aids and leprosy proved that she could cut across national boundaries while her courage in admitting her eating disorders prompted thousands of sufferers around the world to seek help. Many from all over the world, sent her letters of gratitude for helping them face problems in their own lives, a response which she found as embarrassing as it was pleasing.

When coming to her personal life, it was an unhealthy situation compounded by Diana's emotional nature. The Princess was a tactile, affectionate and needy woman who craved the warmth and companionship that a loving relationship could bring but which she had been so long denied. Locked into a cool and distant relationship she had the urge for the new affections in her adult life. Her image of sophisticated glamour and unapproachable sexuality merely masked her innermost need for a man to cherish her,

nurture her and to love her. Unwanted as a baby, and unloved as a wife, she simply desired a man whom she could rely on, and also a companion she could trust. Despite the betrayal and hurt, the Princess, retained a romantic vision of her future, dreaming of a knight in shining armour who would take her away to the new world. For a few short days, she enjoyed that state of grace and stormy existence of her new love.

When she was about to begin a new life, she was called by the Gods of heaven. Thus the angel in the society was inspired by the Gods and was taken to heaven. She was at peace now, almost angelic. Only days before, the public enjoyed seeing her pictures of her relaxing on her Mediterranean holiday with the new man in her life, Dodi Fayed. She seemed at ease with herself, the public fascinated to see that a woman who had suffered too much seemed to have achieved a measure of personal happiness and contentment at least for some time. Her enthusiastic focus on her humanitarian causes, notably her campaign against landmines, and the sense that she had resolved many of the difficulties that had assailed her since her departure from the royal family were some of the sources she found at peace with herself.

Before initiating a new life with Dodi-Fayed, she met with an accident which was caused by the harassing behaviour of the paparazzi. She was brutally killed. This was a great loss to the British kingdom and was not able to be tolerated by the people. It was one of the savage ironies in her life suffused with tragedy. The people of British mourned the fact that her adult life ended as it had begun and even in the city of dreams she could escape her past. As the nation groped to understand the enormity of the loss, the need to apportion blame was the inevitable handmaiden of its grief.

In her life, Diana was a complex web of contradictions; fearless yet frail, unloved but adored, needy but generous, self-obsessed yet selfless, inspirational yet despairing, demanding of advice but disliking criticism, honest yet disingenuous, intuitive yet unworldly, supremely sophisticated yet constantly uncertain and manipulative but naïve. She was a wilful, exasperating, flawed perfectionist who would disarm with self-deprecating witticism.

In her work, Diana embraced those who were on the margins of society – lepers, Aids victims and others. Hers was an appeal to the emotional rather than intellectual intelligence, our intuitive and nurturing nature, as well as to the way she had been used and exploited by the men in her life. At heart, she was a woman who championed feminine values rather than simply craving acceptance in a male-dominated world. Her importance lies not just in what she did during her lifetime but in the meaning of her life, the inspiration she gave to others, in search for their own truth. Thus, the great fairytale of the British finally came to an end.





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**Resisting Patriarchal Oppression in Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Malini Devi. S**

**(REG. NO. 21APEN14)**



**PG and Research Department of English**

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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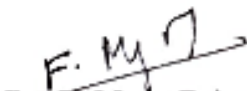
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## Certificate

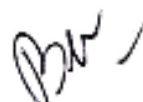
This is to certify that the project entitled **Resisting Patriarchal Oppression in Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man*** submitted to St. Mary's College (Autonomous), Thoothukudi, affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Literature is a work done by Malini Devi. S during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Resisting Patriarchal Oppression in Etarum's *A Woman Is No Man*** 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**

  
**Malini Devi. S**

**April 2023**

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## Preface

The project entitled **Resisting Patriarchal Oppression in Etaf Rum's *A Woman Is No Man*** analyses the struggles undergone by the protagonist, Isra. She desires to lead a life without any restrictions. She expects to lead a liberated life in America. Isra tries to free herself from patriarchal constraints but Adam kills her. This incident forces her daughter, Deya to fight for her rights and finally she gets it. This project also focuses on how each of the female characters are oppressed by their family.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of American Literature. It showcases the author's childhood and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Confluence of Cultures** depicts the banishment of Palestinians, how they are treated as refugees in their native land and their experience in host country, America. It also deals with how they try to preserve their native culture.

The third chapter **Patriarchal Oppression** records the different forms of oppression that are faced by the female characters and how they are forced to accept all in patiently.

The fourth chapter **Discovering the Self** throws light on how Sarah, Isra, Deya attain their freedom through resistance. The results of their acts are varied. Sarah runs away and lives happily. Isra finds courage to free herself and Deya enters University.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature is a mirror. In the true sense, when a poet or writer is composing his literary work, he is often inspired and influenced by some of his own experience and social surroundings. The term 'literature' is mostly used for the creative imagination, including works of poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction. It also encompasses oral literature. It represents the life of its age. It is a universally accepted fact that "literature is a reflection of life".

Literature has the most comprehensive meaning which includes all the activities of the human soul in general within a particular sphere, period, country or language. It is the form of writing that arouses our feelings of the beautiful whether through the perfection of form, the excellence of ideas or both. It can be best understood in the context of what Leo Tolstoy said about literature. He said that "literature fails if it cannot answer to fundamental questions, who we are and how shall we live?". If literature does not teach us how to live and does not tell us our identity as human beings, then it is something else and not literature in its true sense.

Literature is a kind of document that contains the social as well as the political history of its time. Studying literature of any particular age makes people know about the culture, tradition, habits and customs of the people at that specific age. It not only provides pleasure and enjoyment but also factual information. It introduces us to ourselves, it is a kind of self discovery. The study of literature makes a man sober and gentle. It teaches us the art of living. It helps people understand the purpose of our lives in this world.



American literature is a pretty young literature when compared to British literature. It is a work of literature which is written or produced in the United States of America. Generally, American literature reflects beliefs and traditions that come from the nation's frontier days. The pioneers dealings with self reliance and independence appear frequently in American writings. Mostly, American authors have great respect for the values and importance of the individual. They often celebrate the nature and sense of boundless space.

During 1660, Puritans were banished from England. They travelled from England to New England, which is, indeed, America. They view it as the holy place, the promised land for them so they call it Jerusalem. The birth of American literature emerged just because of the Puritans. However, it is rooted in the end of the fifteenth century. The most influential writers of the colonial period include John Winthrop, Cotton Mather, Benjamin Franklin and Anna Bradstreet. Literary works done after World War II are contemporary American literature. It has a subversive, progressive writing style. Contemporary American literature deals with immigrants or decedents of them, women's issues, technological matters and how they are woven into the American culture. Moreover, this literature focuses on identity, history, memory, technology and intertextuality.

Writing is an important tool for women to voice their experiences of identity, sexuality, marriage, love, family and life. Women's literature presents a unique glimpse into the female American experience. In the aftermath of the Civil War, the country was in a period of transformation that included political, economic, social, and literary shifts. The feminist movement called into question the role of women in society, and female authors responded by creating works presenting strong, self-reliant, intelligent women. It strongly shaped the feminist writings. Colleen Hoover, Louise Erdrich and

Zadie Smith are the few writers who have established a permanent place in the canon of contemporary women writers in America.

Palestine is a holy land consisting of three of the world's major religions: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Palestinian literature refers to the Arabic language novels, short stories and poems produced by Palestinians. It reflects the dignity. The story of Palestinian literature resembles the story of its people. It is the story of an entire nation-in-exile: refugees, forced displacement, uprooting, fragmentation, statelessness, loss, trauma, tragedy, ruins, and silence. Contemporary Palestinian literature is often characterised by its heightened sense of irony and the exploration of existential themes and issues of identity. The subjects of resistance to occupation, exile, loss, and love and longing for one's homeland are very common.

America is home to various diaspora communities that enrich and enhance American literature and culture. Diaspora is a psychological journey, a dilemma between homeland and new settlement nations, basically the politics of dislocation; the person is leaving their home country and going to the host country because of economic compulsions. They do not fit properly in the host country and there is a sense of yearning. The epicenter of diasporic writing is obviously an enormous sense of pain and suffering both physical and mental. Especially they wanted to keep the tradition alive. In short, the diaspora is a minority community living in exile. It primarily focuses on the theme of identity. In *Imaginary Homelands* Salman Rushdie says, "sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, that we fall between two stools" (15).

Diasporic literature acts as a bridge between two different cultures as it commonly deals with the memories of home and the experiences of immigrants in the

host country with their culture. It has various causes, and American diaspora communities come from around the globe. While diaspora can result from voluntary migration, it is often caused by outside forces including natural disasters, war, often man made circumstances such as slavery and colonialism. Anita Desai, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Ibtisam Barakat, Etan Rum, Ayad Akhtar and Alice Munro are the famous writers in diasporic American literature.

Susan Choi is an American novelist, born in South Bend, Indiana, to a Korean father and a Jewish mother. After receiving her graduate degree, she worked for *The New Yorker* as a fact checker. At this job she met her husband, Pete Wells, now *The New York Times* restaurant critic. They reside in Brooklyn. Choi published her first novel, *The Foreign Student* (1998). It won the Asian American Literary Award for Fiction and was a finalist for the Discover Great New Writers Award at Barnes & Noble. *Trust Exercise* (2019) is a coming-of-age novel by the American author Susan Choi, published by Henry Holt and Company. In this novel, Sarah and David are two performing arts students coming from different socio-economic backgrounds: Sarah lives with her mother in a working-class milieu; while David's family is financially comfortable. The two fall in love despite their contrasting circumstances, but their relationship ends in a bitter breakup.

Elizabeth Strout is an American novelist and author. She is widely known for her works in literary fiction and her descriptive characterization. Strout's first novel, *Amy and Isabelle* (1998), met with widespread critical acclaim, became a national bestseller, and was adapted into a movie starring "Elisabeth Shue". She published *The Burgess Boys* (2013), which became a national bestseller. *My Name Is Lucy Barton* (2016) was met with international acclaim and topped the New York Times bestseller list. Lucy Barton later became the main character in Strout's *Anything is Possible*. A

sequel to *Olive Kitteridge*, titled *Olive, Again*, was published in 2019. *Oh, William!* Was published in October 2021.

Susan Abulhawa is a Palestinian American writer and human rights activist. She is the author of several books, and the founder of a non-governmental organisation, Playgrounds for Palestine. She lives in Pennsylvania. Prior to writing her first book, she had a successful career in biomedical science, where she worked as a researcher for a pharmaceutical company. Her first novel, *Mornings in Jenin*, was translated into thirty-two languages and sold over a million copies. Her second novel, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, was sold in nineteen languages before its release, and was published in English in 2015. *Against the Loveless World*, her third novel, was released in August 2020, also to critical acclaim. As a political analyst and activist, she has written numerous op-eds for print and online media and given a multitude of lectures and talks around the world.

Hala Alyan is a Palestinian-American novelist. She is a poet and clinical psychologist specialising in trauma and substance abuse issues. She has experience working with immigrants and survivors of violence, in outpatient, university counselling, and forensic settings. She served as an adjunct professor at NYU and CCNY, teaching cross-cultural therapy and applied psychology. She is the author of several collections of poetry and a debut novel entitled *Salt Houses* (2017). Her writing covers aspects of identity and the effects of displacement, particularly within the Palestinian diaspora. She is also known for acting in the short films *I Say Dust and Tallahassee* (2015).

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an Indian-born American author, poet, and the Betty and Gene McDavid Professor of Writing at the University of Houston Creative

Writing Program. Her short story collection, *Arranged Marriage* (1995), won an American Book Award in 1996. Divakaruni's works are largely set in India and the United States, and often focus on the experiences of South Asian immigrants. She writes for children as well as adults, and has published novels in multiple genres, including realistic fiction, historical fiction, magical realism, myth and fantasy.

The *Forest of Enchantments* was originally published in 2019. 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, reflecting on the idea of female autonomy in a patriarchal community. *Forest of Enchantments* is a far cry from the feminist reshaping it is paraded as. While the story is told from the perspective of a woman, it actually caters to male narratives. The book takes on the ambitious project of outlining the contours of several shadowy female figures in the myth through Sita's interactions with Kaikei, Ahalya, Surpanakha and Mandodari.

Generally, the role of women in literature crosses many broad spectrums in works of the past and present. Women are often portrayed as weak and feeble individuals that submit to the situations around them, but in many cases women are shown to be strong, independent individuals. This is a common theme that has appeared many times in literature. Across all literature, there is a common element that causes the suffering and pain of women. This catalyst, the thing that initiates the suffering of women, is essentially always in the form of a man.

Etaf Rum is a budding Palestinian American novelist. She grew up as one of nine siblings in a conservative Palestinian-American, Muslim family in Brooklyn, New York to Palestinian parents. Her parents grew up in a refugee camp in Palestine before immigrating to the United States. She was raised in a traditional family. Her family

expected her life to revolve around marriage and childrearing but she had other plans. Rum was determined to pursue her education but she didn't want to disappoint her parents. So at nineteen, she entered into an arranged marriage. Armed with an unwavering sense of determination, she had one condition for her new arranged relationship: she'd be allowed to attend college. At the age of nineteen, she was doing what she was supposed to do in terms of following the path that her parents and the people in our community were on. At that time, she didn't have any plan to get married at nineteen. She thought it was a perfectly normal thing to do.

In the back of her mind she had fear about women's place in her community based on what she had seen growing up and the limits placed on women are opposed to men within her own family. She was very young, and she felt that she could break the cycle. She didn't allow herself to be subjugated, oppressed or treated unfairly based on her gender. She enrolled in North Carolina State University while she was pregnant with her first child. She was forced to juggle motherhood and her school work. She pushed through hell-bent on breaking the cycle she saw her own mother go through. She had this idea that if she didn't go to college, she was going to end up her life like her mother. She remembers that her mother had to fight with her husband and her family members in order to attend college. Unfortunately, she didn't go. She stayed at home.

Rejecting that dictum, Rum pursued her education. As she told NPR's Scott Simon interview: "I maintained my education despite the pressures around me to stay home and take care of my kids, and slowly, as I educated myself... I began to realize my place in the community and the cycle of trauma and oppression that I [would] be giving my daughter—if I don't speak up for what I want to accomplish with my life, if I don't stand up for myself". It was from the very notion of whether or not women like Rum could experience the true independence when *A Woman Is No Man* was born.

Centering on Palestinian-American women from three generations — Deya, Isra and Fareeda — the novel dives into the roles and expectations of women in the Arab community. Set in Brooklyn, it gives readers a sense of how traditional ideas and modern feminism intertwine, illuminating the challenges many first- and second-generation immigrants go through today.

Rum is renowned for her debut novel *A Woman Is No Man* which was published in 2019. In an interview, she acknowledged that this novel draws from her own experience of arranged marriage and early motherhood in the close knit of Palestine American community where she grew up and which she eventually left. She adds that she did not want to write a memoir since many of the issues were so sensitive. She is also known as a brave writer who uncovered the dark side of Palestine culture. In the same interview with Simon, Rum remarks that she has inspired from her grandmother's phrase "you can't do this, because you're not a man" and so titled her novel as *A Woman Is No Man*. She realised that women are also no equal to men in that they are responsible for maintaining family relationships, enlightening their children and instilling in them values. She feels that they are more resilient and stronger than men, indeed.

*A Woman Is No Man* gradually focuses on the major themes of rootlessness, loneliness, oppression, domestic abuse, male chauvinism, freedom, taboos, mystery, love, betrayal, trauma, self-love, forgiveness and culture.

When she was writing this novel, she faced a lot of criticism. She expressed in an interview "No matter where I went, I was condemned and shamed for writing this book and speaking about these very real issues, whereas a man who did the exact same thing as me was praised". She was working on her second novel *Evil Eye* which explores the idea of supernatural beliefs in the curse brought up by a malevolent glare.

It is the most anticipated novel in 2023. She fascinates people through her writings and holds the title of ‘New York Times Best Seller’.

*A Woman Is No Man* is Etaf Rum’s stunningly written tale about the lives of a conservative Arab family living in America. Especially the confinement of women. This novel revolves around three generations of women: Fareeda, Isra and Deya. The setting shifts from Palestine to Brooklyn, New York. The novel opens with seventeen year old Isra who prefers to read books which is forbidden, she is a naïve and dreamy girl, finds herself quickly betrothed and married. She resides in Brooklyn and expects to attain her liberty in America. But unfortunately she struggles to adapt to the expectations of her oppressive mother-in-law, Fareeda and strange new husband Adam, a pressure that intensifies as she begins to have four daughters consecutively instead of sons.

In Brooklyn, eighteen year old Deya, Isra and Adam’s oldest daughter, must meet with potential husbands at her grandmother’s Fareeda’s insistence, even though her only desire is to attend college. But her grandmother is very firm that the only way to secure a worthy future for Deya is through marriage to the right man. But fate has a will of its own and soon Deya will find herself on an unexpected path that leads her to shocking truths about her own family. In this novel Rum uses the power of books to show how women can gain a voice and how she struggles to carve her own path in life. She strongly affirms that “A real choice doesn’t have condition. A real choice is free” (163).

Beejay Silcox, an American writer and the critic based in Cairo States in *New York Times*, states that “*A Woman Is No Man* is ‘A love letter to storytelling’”. Diana Abu – Jaber, an American Author, in *Washington Post* states that this novel is ‘A tale



as rich and varied as American itself'. *Cosmopolitan Magazine* states this novel as "A refreshing, albeit heartbreaking debut". *Booklist Magazine* praised it as 'A celebration of "the strength and power of our woman"'.

Shilpi Somaya Gowda, a *New York Times* bestselling author, states that "Sometimes heroism is loud and dramatic. Other times, it is daring to listen to that quiet voice within and having the courage to follow it . . . Etaf Rum has done a great service by sharing these voices with us". Frances de Pontes Peebles, French novelist states this novel as "A gripping portrait of three generations of Palestinian women whose narratives are heartfelt and unsettling. Rum gives these women what they most desire and deserve: a voice". *Kirkus Magazine* reviewed this novel as "A richly detailed and emotionally charged debut".

In Arab American News, Nick Meyer states *A Woman Is No Man* is "Explores themes of cultural expectations and taboos, family tragedy and the immigrants' story, all from the perspective of an author whose life experience bears many similarities. [Also] how women who are limited by societal norms can make their own unique contributions to society and be 'equal if not greater than men'". Hashini, pediatrician, novelist who has written a tender and beautiful family story applauded Rum's debut novel as, "A work of literary bravery". Hala Alyan, Palestine-American writer, poet and psychologist glorifies Rum and her novel as, "A spectacular debut".

The project has five chapters. The first chapter focuses on the history of American English literature, its origins and development. It presents a brief introduction to Etaf Rum and her novels. The second chapter deals with confluence of cultures. It also focuses on rootlessness. The third chapter deals with the patriarchal oppression. The fourth chapter deals with discovering the self. In this novel, Deya, one

of the protagonists, searches for her own freedom. The project concludes with summation.

The second chapter brings out the Palestine culture and the reason for exile. It also focus on how the family doesn't have any roots in their motherland, Palestine.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Confluence of Cultures**

Palestine is often associated with conflict and political unrest. However, it is also a beautiful and fascinating region, vibrant culture, ancient history and spectacular landscape. The origins of Palestinians are complex and diverse. It is not easy to live in this country. The people are referred to as Palestinian Arabs. This is an area important to the three main monotheistic religions such as Jews, Muslims and Christians but today known as Israel and Palestine. Palestine is rich in olives; the country covers sixty percent of the land covered with olive trees. It aims to show the human side of this beautiful country full of wonderful people and breath-taking sites.

One of the biggest myths about the Israel-Palestine conflict is that it's been going on for centuries. It's all about ancient religious hatreds. In fact, while religion is involved, the conflict is mostly between two groups of people who claim the same land. In the late 1800s, Jews living around the world began to feel that no country accepted them as their own. If they wanted to live peacefully, they would need to create their country. There was an Austro-Hungarian journalist named Theoder Herzl. He started a new political movement in 1896 with a pamphlet called Zionism. He said that the Jews should get their own country.

In 1881, the first large scale migration of Jews was seen in the Palestine area. The Jews built many permanent settlements in the area and started living there. They chose Palestine because it was a very holy area. Jerusalem is the holy place for the Jews. At the time, there were no Israel, Gaza or the West Bank. The whole area of Palestine fell under the Ottoman Empire: Christian, Muslims and Jews lived together peacefully.

There was no conflict; one reason is that most of the land was empty. There are very few settlements on the land.

In 1915, the World War I began, the British, French, and Arab revolutionaries were fighting with the Ottoman Empire. The British tell the Arab revolutionaries that in return for their support in defeating the Ottoman Empire, they will give them the Palestine area. The Arab revolutionaries were fighting to create a unified Arab country. They wanted one Arab country for Syria and Yemen. The British promises the same thing to Jews, so that they will create their own country near Palestine. As soon as the Ottoman Empire fell after World War I, Britain and France divided the Middle East.

During 1918–1948, the entire Palestine area was under the control of the British Government. At that time, Hitler gains political power in Germany and Jews were massacred in million. So the Jews moved to Palestine. At the end, the British allowed Jewish immigration. As more Jews arrived, they began to limit them. An Israeli National Movement started in Palestine around the 1940s. The Palestine National Movement also began. The Palestinians were only demanding their own country.

In 1948, the British released the Jews to form a Jewish country and the Palestinians to form their own country. The United Nations came up with a partition plan for the area to be allotted for creating a Jewish and Palestinian country. In this plan, the UN keeps 57% of the area for the Jewish people and 43% for the Arab-Palestinian country. Jerusalem is a historically important area for the three regions. So the UN decides that Jerusalem will be under international control. Jews accepted the plan and named their country Israel. This plan was not accepted by Palestine. They believed in the British way of continuing their colonialism. So they waged war against Israel.

Palestine named it The First Arab-Israel War of 1948. Surprisingly, Israel won the war in 1947. The area was supposed to be Palestine, according to the UN plan. Israel occupied several areas. The Gaza Strip area went to Egypt and the West Bank area went to Jordan. The Palestinians did not have the country any longer. More than seven million Palestinians had to leave their homes and become refugees in Arab countries. This is known as the Palestine Exodus of 1948.

Displaced into tents at first, those families are now settled down in the camps, where they have constructed houses and expanded into large families. This evolution, however, took place under the limitations of the same piece of land that was offered to the refugees at that time. Housing in refugee camps is thus now characterised by high population density, a lack of adequate setback lines in all directions, small homes, inadequate ventilation and sunlight entering the houses. This situation is assumed to be coupled with poverty, unemployment or unskilled labour work among the people living in the camp.

This chapter is about Rum's writing which expresses the aftermath of exile in Palestine and their sufferings and endurance in the refugee camp, al-Am'ari. This is the best novel that exposes the issues of rootlessness and culture.

Khalid's family had owned a beautiful home in Ramla.... One day when he was twelve years old, Israeli soldiers had invaded their land and relocate them to a refugee camp at gunpoint. Khaled told them how his father had been force to his knees with a rifle dug into his back, how more than 700,000 Palestinian Arab had been expelled from their homes and forced to flee. It was the *Nakba*, he told with the somber eyes. The day of catastrophe. (63, 64)

Seven million Arabs were banished from their homes. They relocated to the al-Am'ari refugee camp. It is the smallest camp in the West Bank. It is considered a hotspot. There wasn't water or electricity. It was so hard to live. Later, Khaled married Fareeda who lives in the same camp. Unemployment in the camp was high, especially among young men. They decided to move to America after saving some money.

Khaled wept too much when he waved hands to his friends and family. "The loss of his home had broken his spirit" (262). He promised Fareeda that "it was only a temporary situation, that once they made enough money they would gather their children and return home to die on the holy land" (137). "Most immigrants in this country work like dogs, especially the men" (77). His daughter-in-law, Isra missed Palestine when she needed it the most. It also affected his grandchildren because their "entire life straddled between two cultures. She was neither Arab nor American. She belongs nowhere. She didn't know who she was" (28).

"Fifteen years in this country, and Fareeda still didn't feel safe. But it's better than living in a refugee camp" (118). "The wounds of Fareeda's childhood—poverty, hunger, abuse—had taught her that the trauma of the world" (116). The longingness of Khaled was exposed when he said "Maybe someday we'll have the courage to return" (323). They left their native country with bitter feelings and suffered from the sense of alienation. They "displaced from their homes, torn between two cultures and struggling to start anew" (58). This is all about the feeling of not belonging anywhere.

Exile can be defined as a harmful process. The original meaning of exile is banishment, the political action that forces a person to depart from their country. The theme of exile is central to Edward Said's critical work. He shows the painful and unjust position of the Palestinian people whom he described as being in the terrible position

of being exiles even while living in their own homeland and, ironically, turned into exiles by their proverbial people of exile, the Jews. He says that exile is compelling to think about but terrible to experience.

A refugee camp becomes a symbolic representation of refugees' places of origin such that the act of its inhabitation allows residents to retain the link with pre-exilic communities and locations. As victims of forced displacement, camp refugees find themselves in a particular kind of social limbo: they wait for their return and the ability to resume their ordinary lives, while they remind "outside of the place and outside of the time of a common, ordinary, predictable world" of the host country. In addition to that, living in exile will traumatise a person that leads to isolation, lack of self-esteem, apathy, numbness, depression and guilt.

Displacement gives birth to the feeling of rootlessness. Displacement and rootlessness are related terms that are experienced by diasporas. It is one of the methods by which the repressed returns in hidden ways. For example, in dreams that affect (emotions) associated with threatening impulses are often transferred elsewhere (displaced), so that, for example, apparently trivial elements in the manifest dream seem to cause extraordinary distress. Sigmund Freud in *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* states that,

The matter under consideration relates in essence to the results of displacement, which you have become acquainted with as the most powerful instrument of the dream-censorship. With the help of displacement the dream-censorship creates substitutive structures which we have described as allusions. But they are allusions which are not easily recognizable as such, from which the path back to the genuine

thing is not easily traced, and which are connected with the genuine thing by the strangest, most unusual, external associations. (260)

For Freud, displacement is the principle means used in the dream-distortion to which the dream-thoughts must submit under the influence of the censorship. In this novel, after marriage “Khaled was an alcoholic” (141) during his stay in a refugee camp. In many ways he hurt and disappointed Fareeda, “his sudden and immense anger, the violence” (140). Likewise, his son Adam Ra’ad was also an alcoholic. To an extent, Isra was unaware that her husband is an alcoholic and thought the smell of alcohol was “just the smell of the city on him” (192). He was unable to handle the pressure at home as well as at work. Because Fareeda forced him by saying “you’re the eldest son. It’s your responsibility” (140). Even he sacrificed his dream of being an imam and started taking care of his father’s deli. He goes to work when the sun rises and returns very late. Sleeplessness and pressure from not having a boy baby, make him attack his wife.

As Etaf Rum wrote in a story on her Instagram handle,

This trauma has defined the lives of an entire people, generations who have been living in a war zone for the past seventy years, in exile or under occupation, displaced from their ancestral land and left stateless. We need to understand and encourage the discussion of the collective intergenerational trauma experienced by Palestinians: humiliation, powerlessness, oppression, traumatic threats that are ongoing and enduring. This trauma is still unfolding. It is a daily, lived experience for the Palestinians and it cannot be addressed until the rest of the world recognizes its validity and importance.



When Khaled's family moved to New York in 1976, they lived in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, because "many of the Arabs in New York live in this neighborhood" (49). So that they can feel right at home. They are trying their best to fix their mind as if they were living in Palestine. "Drinking sharaab was forbidden in Islam" (131). But both characters are alcoholics and engaged in domestic violence. To some extent, Adam kills his wife. In order to survive in the host country, they have to "work day and night like a donkey" (146). Generally, Arabs were treated as terrorists. They were unable to socialise with the host country people. Alienation is also related to displacement. The painful thing is they were unable to follow their own culture as well as they were not willing to accept the host country's culture. This refers to the ethnic death.

Culture is defined as all the ways of life including arts, beliefs and institutions of a population that are passed down from generation to generation. Culture has been called the way of life for an entire society. As such, it includes codes of manners, dress, language, religion, rituals, and art. Norms of behaviour, such as law and morality, and systems of belief. Thomas Wolfe states culture is the arts elevated to a set of beliefs.

Palestine is rich in cultural heritage. The Palestinian people have lived through enormous upheaval over the course of the last century. Many Palestinians have been dispersed and displaced from their family homes, villages and cities, making Palestinian culture and traditions even more important for holding this community together. Whether in ancestral towns, in refugee camps or in communities of Palestinian immigrants in countries throughout the world, Palestinians enjoy a shared heritage and culture that allows them to carry a sense of home with them wherever they are.

Palestinians are diverse in appearance and rich in history. They share a common cultural identity with the wider Arab world. Islam is a largest religion in Palestine. They

speak Arabic and pray five times per day. Families play a major part in arranging most marriages. Historically, marrying cousins was common. Polygamous marriages are rare among Muslim Palestinians. Marriage law follows the religious faith of the couple. According to Palestinian tradition, once a couple agrees to marry, the prospective groom offers the bride a maher, a symbolic amount of money and valuables that can be compared to the practise of giving a dowry or a diamond ring in other cultures. Weddings are grand affairs in Palestinian culture.

Palestine has distinctive arts and crafts for which it is well known. Olive-wood carving, for instance, is closely associated with Bethlehem, where artisans can sell to the religious tourists the area has long attracted. Nablus, is famous for its soap and cheese production, and Hebron is renowned for glass blowing and ceramics. Gaza City is known for the production of pottery and rugs. For Palestinian artists living in an occupied land, the powerful use of symbols is not only a way for them to express meaning and traditional heritage in their work by creating provocative, revolutionary, and even illegal messages with their art. The religious symbols and beautiful imagery of the past. In their place were barbed wire, keys, prison bars, doves, watermelons, and more.

Both women's and men's traditional clothing in Palestine is usually made of cotton or linen. Traditional male clothing such as tunics and Ottoman-influenced styles. Women's clothing became more conservative in the late 1980s, after the beginning of the First Intifada, when more women started covering their hair and wearing long and loose-fitting clothing. Henna's popularity in the Arab world grew. The henna night before a wedding is an old tradition that brings together the bride and groom's families to bond, celebrate, and take care of any last arrangements for the big day.

Music has long played a central role in Palestinian life, particularly during celebrations and festivals. Musical instruments like the oud and the qanun are beloved traditional instruments in Palestine. The Palestinians are a people with a long history and deep roots in their land and traditions. For thousands of years, Palestine has been the focal point of major historical events. Palestine belongs to the famed Fertile Crescent of human antiquity and was home to some of the first agricultural communities in the world.

Traditional cuisine is a major part of Palestinian culture. Both the cooking and eating of delicious, signature dishes bring people together and connect Palestinians to their heritage. The women of the house traditionally prepared the food. Palestinian cuisine isn't just about hummus and falafel. There are other beloved traditions, like vine leaves and mashed vegetables stuffed with rice and minced meat. Another favourite is maqlouba, made from layers of meat, rice, and fried vegetables such as cauliflower, eggplant, potatoes, and carrots. They opt for chicken or more potatoes instead of meats like beef and lamb.

Palestinians start their day after having a rich breakfast that usually includes pita bread, labneh (close to sour cream), sliced tomatoes and cucumbers, olive oil with Za'atar (a mixture of dried herbs) as well as fried or boiled eggs, and in some cities Hallum cheese or yellow cheese and full (fava bean stew). Tea is always there to accompany any meal. Lunch in Palestine has more options than breakfast. For instance, Palestine is literally full of restaurants that sell different types of sandwiches. The most preferable type of sandwich is falafel (a deep-fried ball or patty made from ground chickpeas, fava beans, or both) or Shawarma, which is stuffed with meat and salad.

In this novel, Khaled's family was forcibly displaced from their own home in Palestine, is forced to seek a better life in a land far away. This means having to give up everything that is familiar to them: their way of life, their language, and their culture. A family that is displaced is also holding on to the last dregs of its culture: especially if it comes from a community that is constantly subject to apartheid, occupation, and ethnic erasure. As Fareeda herself says, "It doesn't matter where we live. Preserving our culture is what's most important" (26).

Palestinian men marry Palestinian girls and pass down the tradition to their own children. If they didn't preserve their culture and their identity, then they would lose them. Even though there was no shortage of Muslim Palestinian girls in Brooklyn, Fareeda refused to marry her son considering the "girls raised in America blatantly disregard their upbringings. Some of them walked around in tight clothes and with a face full of makeups. Some dated and some weren't even virgins!" (137). So she searches for a Palestinian girl in Palestine in order to marry her son.

Music and dance elevate the mood of the wedding. Adam and Isra shake their legs upon hearing darbuka drums. As per their tradition, "Palestine flag wrapped around his neck and a red velvet *tarboosh* on his head" (20). Isra was wrapped in gold. Fasting during Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. In America during the Ramadan fast, Fareeda couldn't fast because of her diabetics, and Nandine was pregnant. Sara and Adam just pretended to fast. Isra was the only one who fasted every year, but later she felt that "she fasted purely for the habits, a soothing familiarity in performing ritual for ritual's sake alone" (212).

Being Arab, they have to pray five times per day. Fareeda never prayed, even if she did, it was just a quick prayer, "God, please help shame and disgrace from my

family” (74). The most important part of being a Muslim girl was wearing the hijab because “modesty was a women’s great virtue” (56). Adam forbids Isra not to wear a hijab because “all they’ll see it as an outcast, someone who doesn’t belong” (56). So they felt wearing the hijab might disgrace them in the host country. Because of this, they were unable to wear their ethnic dress too.

According to Deya, religion wasn’t something she had learned at home, they weren’t a devout Muslim family. Even she had “contemplated wearing the hijab permanently” (83). In this novel, “Arabs are only allowed to listen to Arabic music” (84). Even if they watch movies such as *Aladdin*, *The Story of Ali Baba and Forty Thieves* or *the Seven Voyages of Sinbad, the Sailor*, these movies are preferred over *Cinderella*, *Snow White*, *Seeping Beauty* and *Ariel*. But she was so highly influenced by the American rapper, Eminem and listened to his music obsessively.

Deya spoke Arabic with her grandparents after her parents died. She spoke English with her sister, at school, and all her books were in English. On top of this, when Khaled expressed his grief about going into exile, she struggled to find the right words to console him. Language is a vital part of culture because it is what people used to communicate aspects of culture. Lacking in language, especially native language, is generally caused by both the isolation of speakers of the first language, Arabic and the acquisition and the use of second language, English. And people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.

The cuisines of Palestine has its own unique identity which stands out within the area. The women of the house traditionally prepared the food, likewise Isra spends more time cooking food such as ibrik of chai, Hammus with ground beef and pine nuts, Fried halloumi cheese, Scrambled eggs, Falafel sandwich, Green and black olives,

*Labne* and *za'atar*, Fresh Pita bread, Manaf stew, Spinach and meat pies, Rice with chicken and homemade Ma'amool cookies. Even now they have a specialised way of greeting people with "mint chai and Turkish coffee last. It was an insult to invert the order" (5), Mackintosh's chocolate on the table always. They were so particular and conscious about their food habits in America. But at Isra's wedding they served Pepsi, as a soft drink instead of their traditional drink. So they've had some impact from their host country, America on their food habits.

Jinn (often al-jinn or djinn) is a shape-shifting spirit made of fire and air with origins in pre-Islamic Arabia. They are the inspiration for Aladdin's genie, and have held space in Arab culture for almost as long as Arab culture itself. El-Zein in *Islam Arab and the Intelligent World of the Jinn* states that, "as spiritual entities, the jinn are considered dual dimensional with ability to live and operate in both manifest individual domains" (1). Jinn are believed to both interact with humans in our reality and lead their own lives in a separate realm.

You know," Fareeda said after a moment, "Arabs use the term majnoon to mean madness, but if you break the word apart, what do you see?"

Deya only looked at her. "The word jinn," Fareeda said, settling back in her seat. "Madness is derived from the jinn, an evil spirit inside you.

Therapy and medicine can't fix that. (268)

Fareeda says that the Arabs associated the word 'madness' with jinn and points out that his son and Isra were possessed by jinn. Adam kills Isra. According to her, "No man in his right mind would kill the mother of her children and then kill himself" (266). In order to hide Isra's murder from their daughters, she used the word 'possessed' believing that her twin daughters haunted them. It shows her superstitious beliefs. It

also shows her escapism to face reality. On top of this, when someone asks questions against their social norms they will brand them as possessed.

Adichie quoted in *We Should all Be Feminist* that “culture doesn’t make people. People make culture” (46). This novel also focuses on how people create culture. “Pregnancy was far more important than money” (90). In Islam, “children are the pleasure of life” (90). Even the *Quran* says girls are a blessing and a gift. “Daughters are a means to salvation and a path to Paradise” (128). Paradoxically, in reality, giving birth to girl children in Palestine is considered a shame. To an extent, they will kill the newborn children, just as Fareeda killed her first set of twins considering it a shame. Sometimes they buried their female infants alive. They all love their daughters but nothing compares to having a son, believing that boys will carry their family name.

The three generation gap is exposed in their perspective towards books. Fareeda says, “Books are the bad influence” (29). They believed that books put foolish ideas into people’s heads. “All a woman needed to learn was patience and no book could teach” (94). Isra believed in books blindly and landed up in a place where one couldn’t compare their life with fiction. But in the case of Sarah and Deya: books were their only reliable source of comfort, their only hope. It is like their company, when they felt alone. “It is the loneliest people who love books the most” (176). It represents their loneliness in the host country.

The loss of one's social structure and culture can cause a grief reaction. Migration involves the loss of the familiar, including language (especially colloquial and dialect), attitudes, values, social structures and support networks. Grieving for this loss can be viewed as a healthy reaction and a natural consequence of migration; however, if the symptoms cause significant distress or impairment and last for a

specified period of time, psychiatric intervention may be warranted. Eisenbruch defined cultural loss as,

The experience of the uprooted person – or group – resulting from loss of social structures, cultural values and self-identity: the person – or group – continues to live in the past, is visited by supernatural forces from the past while asleep or awake, suffers feelings of guilt over abandoning culture and homeland, feels pain if memories of the past begin to fade, but finds constant images of the past (including traumatic images) intruding into daily life, yearns to complete obligations to the dead, and feels stricken by anxieties, morbid thoughts, and anger that mar the ability to get on with daily life. (2)

The expression of such bereavement is influenced by many factors, among which are social, cultural and economic. Cultural changes in identity can be stressful and result in problems with self-esteem and mental health. Contact between the immigrant, or minority, community and the dominant or host community may lead to assimilation, rejection, integration or deculturation. Rejection, in which the individual or minority group withdraws from the majority group, can lead to apartheid or segregation in extreme cases. Deculturation, in which an individual or minority group experiences a loss of cultural identity, alienation and acculturative stress, can lead to ethnocide.

Post-migration stresses include culture shock and conflict, both of which may lead to a sense of cultural confusion, feelings of alienation and isolation, and depression. Host societies' attitudes, including racism, compounded by the stresses of unemployment, a discrepancy between achievement and expectations, financial



hardships, legal concerns, poor housing and a general lack of opportunities for advancement within the host society, can lead to mental health problems in vulnerable individuals.

Fareeda states, “you need to make sure our culture survives” (139), “cultural could not be escaped. Even if it is meant tragedy. Even if it meant death. At last she was able to recognise her role in their culture” (311). She points out that one’s culture should survive and she was able to know her role in their culture. Instead of following their culture and tradition they started to create a new culture which goes parallel with the host country, America. So that the Americans will not disgrace them. It also exposes their fears. They don’t want to be banished from the host country. On the whole, they were unable to express their culture. As Mahatma Gandhi has noted a nation’s culture resides in the hearts and souls of its people.

The third chapter brings out the patriarchal oppression. It focuses on the dominance of men over women which causes violence and oppression against women.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Patriarchal Oppression**

Oppression is a social act of the dominant group that controls the others and limits the suppressed group by devaluing, exploiting, and depriving it of privileges. Patriarchy has been one of the major causes of women's oppression and exploitation. Male power is exerted directly or indirectly in domestic and social life to constrain the female. The social role assigned to women is that of serving the image of man.

Women are required to shoulder all the domestic responsibilities, and they are kept busy with cleaning, cooking, washing and child-bearing roles. She continues to face injustice, humiliation, torture, harassment, suppression, oppression, subjugation and exploitation in the name of gender distinction and patriarchy. Women's oppression occurs within the gendered unfairness of treatment between women and men that is further managed by patriarchy to justify that men are more respected than women.

Women are likely to be dependent on men as they do not have economic and social freedom. Women's dependency on men has made them a part of men's property so their voices remain silent. The powerlessness of women in owning life has given men full authority to beat women as objects and possessions, resulting in violence against women becoming a common feature of society.

Based on recent data from the World Health Organisation in 2017, as many as 35% of women worldwide had experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. This kind of violence exists throughout the world, including Palestine. Statistics from Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics show that Palestinian women commonly experience domestic violence caused by their husbands. And they preferred to keep

silent regarding the violence they experience. This shows that women's oppression starts at home, where domestic abuse is commonly experienced.

Women in Palestinian society are oppressed through the limitations of economic freedom and cultural practices. Women are prohibited from accessing public activities outside their community and are discouraged from developing economic independence. Hence, it is inevitable that women tend to be dependent on the stability and security of men. As Palestinian society has adopted a high-context culture that is highly affected by family, community and institutions within its surroundings. Women are facing oppression both from their families and from area which includes their migrated area. Arab immigrants live closely in one neighbourhood and rely on each other to seek social needs, economic support and cultural and religious maintenance.

In the U.S, Palestinian immigrants tend to preserve their cultural practices which force women to fulfill their gender expectations. Arab-American women are burdened with their family's reputation so their actions and attitude should reflect Arab culture as family's image is essential within the society. Women's resistance in the U.S. is categorised into three different waves which indicate the goals of each wave of resistance as a representation of the flow of the feminist movement. It is acts towards the system of patriarchy is realised by maintaining the self-definition. Women's constructed knowledge of self is an essential power in conquering oppression as it is a basic resistance of woman's struggle to challenge oppression.

The issue of Arab-American women oppression and their resistance towards the patriarchal system is reflected in the 2019 domestic fiction which is entitled as *A Woman Is No Man* by Etan R. This novel narrates a story of three generations of Arab-American women who are oppressed by the cultural hegemony of the male

dominated society that justifies women's subordination. Women are expelled from public spaces, including schools, as women are taught their lives should revolve around marriage, family and childbearing.

Arab women are encouraged to follow their hegemonic commonsense of women's roles, which limits their ability to choose a life path and own their voice. The traditional Arabic household practices maintain women under men's authority and restrict them from finding their liberation. Rum spoke on behalf of herself and other women in her community who have the same experience of being oppressed. By developing Sylvia Walby's *Theorizing Patriarchy*, the main characters in the novel are experiencing patriarchal oppressions through the patriarchal mode of production, male violence, patriarchal state and patriarchal culture.

A patriarchal mode of production occurs in a family environment. The family is considered the center of women's lives, the center of determining gender relations in production and the structure in which female workers are employed in the household. In this mode, a woman as a housewife has to work for free. Her labour is not paid by a man as a husband, instead husbands even exploits wives. Man can exploit women's labour because man has control over women's labour-power. Ntoimo and Isiugo-Abanihe in "Patriarchy and Singlehood Among Women in Lagos, Nigeria" states that "women's labor is expropriated by their husbands and in some cases, by their fathers, within marriage and household relationship" (4).

It occurs to Isra, one of the female main characters in the novel. Before she married, she as a daughter has a dream to venture into the world. However, her mother always reminds her that "a woman belongs at home" (5). "A woman will always be a woman", "Marriage, motherhood—that is a women's only worth" (11). As Walby

states in *Theorizing Patriarchy* that, “the family conventionally considered to be the central to women’s lives” (61). It reflects that the family is considered as the center of women’s life. Indirectly, gender inequality emerges because the family has implemented stereotype that woman’s place is at home, and man’s duties are outside the home. “She was tired. Every morning she woke up to the sound of three children wailing. After sending Adam off to work, she made the beds, swept the basement floor, folded a load of laundry. Then she entered the kitchen, sleeves rolled up to the elbows, to find Fareeda hovering over the stove, the teakettle whistling as she announced the day’s chores” (167).

Some domestic chores such as cooking, cleaning, child care and serving husband must be done by Isra. She feel tired because everyday she has to do all the homework, such a sweeping the basement floor, fold a loads of laundry, etc. “She had been burdened with duty ever since she was child. That she had never really lived. She felt empty; she felt full. She needed people; she need to be alone” (248). Walby states “the household as central to women’s subordination” (65). It shows that production is the basic of women’s subordination by those in power. According to Fareeda, women are expected to do cooking and cleaning at home. She thinks it is normal for women.

Isra “always wanted to fall in love” (10). Her mama states that “there’s no room for love in a woman’s life” (10). She believe that love was something a man could give but she leads a life without love, a life of loneliness. Like her “Mama and Fareeda had come to suffer the same lonely fate, to have both lived a life without love” (76). Women does not get love from her husband. It proves that the household is the centre of women’s subordination by man. Firestone argues in *Theorizing Patriarchy* that “the biological hazards surrounding reproduction, such as pregnancy, mensuration,

childbirth, breastfeeding and child-rearing, make women vulnerable and dependent on men” (66).

In the house, they are dependent on men. Adam asks Isra’s husband to fulfill their economic obligations of the family. Fareeda boasts about her son, Adam, because he has helped to fulfill their family economy. Even though women have done all the domestic chores, her labour is not valued. Besides, a woman is not allowed to leave the house and woman’s labour doubtful. Therefore, she depends on men. A man has power in the house than a woman. Especially, Fareeda has been made to believe that only man can help family, because man can do anything than woman. Moreover, a woman does not get love from her husband although she has served him.

However, the emotional development of man is hampered and uncontrolled by their upbringing in the patriarchal family. Therefore, their “love experience is corrupted by power play” (66). It shows the evidence of patriarchal mode of production. It can be concluded that family is a root to create the patriarchal system and family also plays a role to create gender discrimination. Even women are doubly oppressed in her society. Furthermore, it can be said as a private patriarchy, because women are oppressed in the household and are excluded from the social life outside the home.

Male violence is another structure of patriarchy. It is a form of male power to regulate or treat woman as they desire. Therefore, woman is under the control of a man. It has various forms, such as rape, wife-beating, father/daughter incest, flashing and sexual assault. In this novel, Etaf Rum describes male violence. When Isra lives with her parents. Yacob had beaten her twice and punished for her defiance. Because she had spent the afternoon reading. “Reading was one of the many things Mama had forbidden” (7). So “he’d called her a sharmouta” (7).

Yacob shoves against the wall and whips her with his belt. From the words “he’d show her what happened to disobedient” (7), explains that man wants to show that they have full power on woman, one of them is by committing violence. It is as said by some radical feminist, Brownmiller in *Theorizing Patriarchy* that “male violence is the basis of men’s control over women” (134). Therefore, Yacob, being the head of the household, feels that he could make up all the rules, one of them is to give a punishment when his family members do not obey his words.

Not only Isra suffers due to male violence. Fareeda also suffers due to her husband, Khaled. She often gets a beating. Many nights end with beating and her ribs become sore and her arms hurt badly. Even her husband always hurts and disappoints her with his sudden immense anger. It shows that all fatigue and anger of men are vented on women. While making marriage arrangements, if the woman is too young to get married and is not ready to face marriage life, she has to endure domestic abuse.

The many ways he had hurt and disappointed her, his sudden and immense anger, the violence. She had been so young, less than half his age, and in the first days of their marriage she had always reminded herself of her subordinate role, submitting to his temperament for fear of being beaten. But no matter how quiet she was, how hard she tried to please, many nights ended with a beating. (140, 141)

Fareeda doesn’t have the power to oppose her husband because she feels her husband is the oldest, she plays the subordinate role. Therefore, it is common for wife to become a victim of violence of her husband.

Even, domestic violence also occurs to Isra. Her suffering has not stopped. After she marries Adam, she always becomes a victim to him. Adam’s character is not

different from his father, Khaled who always made his wife as a victim of violence. The violence is done when she gave birth to four daughters consecutively. “He slapped her” (172). Later, when Isra worries about their daughters and says Adam that their daughters still need to get an education but Adam beats his wife, indeed.

“How dare you question me?” Adam said, his jaw quivering. “Never speak of this again.” Then he left, disappearing into the bathroom.

On her knees on the floor, she could barely breathe. Blood leaked from her nose down her chin. But she wiped her face and told herself she would take a beating every night if it meant standing up for her girls.  
(331)

Adam shoves Isra against the wall and slammed his fists against her. Even he also slaps her. Adam is furious because she tries to tell him what to do to her daughters. In this case, Walby in *Theorizing Patriarchy* argues that “men are brought up to be macho and are accustomed to using violence to settle disputes” (134). It is reflected in Adam’s behaviour. He vents his anger on his wife. He solves problem with violence.

Male violence cause the effect of trauma on women. Isra is in trauma. She is always oppressed after marriage. She is not happy. Frequently, she gets slapped and beaten by her husband. She tries to run away from home because of the oppression that she experienced. She doesn’t want to go back home. She could imagine how Adam gets angry at her, and she can still feel his beating in her body. Isra’s trauma is also proven in her letter that she has written to her mother.

I feel very depressed today. I don’t know what’s happening to me. Every morning I wake up with a strange sensation. I lie beneath the sheets and I don’t want to get up. I don’t want to see anyone. All I think of is dying.



I know God doesn't approve of taking a life, be it mine or someone else's, but I can't get the thought out of my mind. My brain is spinning on its own, out of my control. What's happening to me, Mama? I'm so scared of what's happening inside me. (66)

From the letter Isra says that she feels very depressed with the condition at home. Even she doesn't want to get up every morning, because she doesn't want to see anyone. Her brain spins and she can't control it.

Moreover, one day Adam beats his wife until death. The incident was revealed by Deya when she finds a newspaper that contains a news of her parent's death.

### **MOTHER OF FOUR MURDERED IN BROOKLYN BASEMENT**

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**Brooklyn, NY. October 17, 1997**—Isra Ra'ad, twenty-five-year-old mother of four, was found beaten to death in Bay Ridge late Wednesday night. The victim appeared to have been beaten by her husband, thirty-eight-year-old Adam Ra'ad, who fled the scene of the crime. Police found his body in the East River Thursday morning after witnesses saw him jump off the Brooklyn Bridge. (243)

The newspaper was found by Deya when she attempts to find out why her parents died. Men have the power to control all the things in the household. By his power, he can hurt his family, even his own wife. Isra was not only a psychological victim but also a physical one. On the other hand, it includes private patriarchy because "it is a man in his position as husband or father who is the direct oppressor and beneficiary, individually and directly, of the subordination of women" (178). The violence against

women occurs in the household and family, which is a central place of women's oppression.

Male violence is caused by society's perception that the family controller is a husband. In *Theorizing Patriarchy* Walby said that "male the violence as the basic of other forms of men's control over women" (143). In the previous study of Fatmawati it is stated that the member of the family is under the control of the head of the family because he has the main power. Early marriage or marriage arrangement also causes household problems, especially if a women are too young to get married. Walby states that "women who experience male violence have often been called 'victims'" (146).

Women are kept away from access to resources and state power as part of the patriarchal system. Therefore, in the field of law and politics, the presence of women or the role of women is minimal. It is depicted in the novel *Isra* is beaten by her husband. However, she cannot resist it because she is voiceless and powerless. Besides, women have been taught that silence would save them. Even she has been hurt because of her husband. This problem is also stated in Walby's *Theorizing Patriarchy* that there are two levels of state injustice to the protection of women. First, the government does not provide the resources needed for women to remain independent, and second, the government does not want to interfere in many cases, except for the most extreme. These two things happen in *Isra's* life. There is no government in Palestine, even if there is police, the woman will return back to her husband, and he will beat his wife whenever he wants. The woman is powerless in her country. Therefore, the woman is marginalised because they do not gain any freedom. She cannot move freely, and she cannot control man because man has superpower than woman.

The patriarchal state is closely related to patriarchal violence. Isra, as a wife is aware that she would suffer due to her husband, but she cannot escape from her husband because she knows that she cannot depend on police protection. It is said by Hanmer in *Theorizing Patriarchy*, that “men’s violence against the women is seen as an important basis of men’s control over women” (157). Men are not restricted in perpetrating violence against women, and women cannot escape because they are economically dependent on them.

Culture distinguishes levels of experience based on gender. Patriarchal culture considers women different from men. Even, culture regulates and separates all behaviours accepted by men and women as in religion, education, family. In the novel, it is depicted how culture, traditions and rules in Palestine are mostly aimed at women.

Palestinian people maintain their culture well, even though they do not live in Palestine. At the same time, the culture also did not provide an opportunity to get their right in education, in making their own decision, in getting freedom. Therefore, it gives a negative impact on Palestinian women. Patriarchal culture makes Isra’s mother remind her daughter that woman is no man, she cannot move freely like a man, and she cannot forget her tradition. She has to accept her naseeb, whether it is good or bad.

Isra asks her mother whether marriage in America is like her parents’ marriage, where man is the most powerful in family. It seems that behaviour training in gender differences has been applied from birth in every aspect of Palestinian life. Walby states in *Theorizing Patriarchy* that “there is an ambiguity as to whether femininity and masculinity are merely mirror opposites” (93).

The difference starts with the tone of the voice, and women are more likely to be told to be quiet or speak softly than men who are identical with loud voices.

Therefore, Isra's mother says that "a woman will always be a woman" (11). Although she goes away from Palestine, it does not change her Naseeb. If Isra married, she has to obey her husband, and she must serve her husband well, even though she is under pressure. Therefore, woman has to accept her fate, even though she is far away from her country.

Moreover, Palestinian culture, a woman has to marry at a young age, and she cannot choose her own partner. She must marry a man chosen by her parents.

A few months before, the week she turned seventeen, Isra had returned from school to find Yacob sitting in the sala with a young man and his parents. Each time she thought of that day, the first time she'd been proposed to, what stood out most was Yacob, yelling at Mama after the guests left, furious that she hadn't served the chai in the antique set of teacups they saved for special occasions. (5)

At a young age, Isra has to stop her school, she cannot continue her education and she must marry a man chosen by her father. It not only happened to Isra, but it happened for Fareeda and Deya also. They got pressure to get married at a young age. For Deya as Isra's daughter, she was oppressed by her grandmother, Fareeda. She asks Deya to get married, even though she does not want to get married because she wants to pursue her education at College.

A woman's right to get an education has been deprived. In the patriarchal culture, society believe that woman's duty is limited in marriage, children and family. In Fareeda's mind, education is not important for a woman. She thinks that marrying her daughter or her granddaughter at a young age is the best decision. Even though she has known, getting married at a young age would only give suffering to the woman.

Just because the tradition in her country has to be maintained, Fareeda forced her daughter and granddaughter to marry at a young age.

Fareeda says that just because they live in America, they does not change the tradition in their country. Thus, it is shown that Fareeda's family is preserving their culture. She wants her family, especially Deya, to always follow tradition wherever she lives. She lives carefully and she does not want Deya to live in shame because she had refused to get married. The woman's place is at home. If she has to go out, she cannot go out alone, a family member or her husband has to accompany her. "Khaled sighed. "She shouldn't have left the house like that." He met Isra's eyes in the rearview mirror. "A woman's place is her home. Do you understand?" Isra didn't reply. "Do you understand?" he said more loudly" (278).

The incident has occurred when Isra tries to run away from home because she gets oppressed at home. Then, her father-in-law scolds her and says that a woman's place is at home. This incident depicts that a culture distinguishes the habit based on gender, where women are known for passivity, tenderness and emotions. However, men are required to be assertive, active, enthusiastic, and quick to take the initiative.

Another patriarchal culture which is depicted in the novel is that married couple are more proud and respected when they have a son. It is experienced by Isra when she is forced by Fareeda and her husband to give birth to a son. She thinks that a boy could take care os her when he is older, and a boy carries on the family name. Fareeda thinks that a boy is twice as needed, and a girl is twice as hard to raise. It is seen that woman is inferior, and man is superior.

The existence of gender comparisons such as a boy is more expected in the family because a boy can carry the good name of the family than girls has reflected that

there is patriarchal system within the family. It is due to the stereotype implanted by society from an early age. It is like an illustration described by Walby in *Theorizing Patriarchy* that “the toys and games of childhood are also gendered” (92).

Girls are expected to iron dad’s handkerchiefs, while boys are worth playing with the army. In this case, the girl will be described as helping the mother in domestic chores, while the boy is helping the father in manly ones or adventure. It relates to Fareeda’s statement that “a boy is twice as needed and a girl is twice as hard to raise” (120), because men are expected to be able to look after and lighten the burden on the family.

Daly in *Theorizing Patriarchy* states that “patriarchal beliefs and practices are at the core of all the world religion” (101), causes much torture for women, many women are victims because of the dominance from the owner of power. He “explores how the dominant belief system justifies these acts as necessary and good within its own terms” (101).

Yacob, Adam and Khaled’s character show the typical representation of male in a patriarchal society. They are the ordinary male who treat female as sexual objects and a domestic servant. Their patriarchal mentalities do not accept the fact that women can perform other jobs except domestic courses. They are in view of keeping woman limited to private sphere of home. They do not support their daughters dreams of going to school, not getting married yet and marrying of person of own choice.

Therefore, it can be concluded that women are forced to accept all patiently. Women are marginalised and powerless. They have been taught that silence would save them. They believe that silence is the only way. Therefore, women have no voice because they are terrified.

Ntoimo and Isiugo-Abanihe in *Patriarchy And Singlehood Among Women in Lagos*, Nigeria article, states that “in private patriarchy, women are excluded from social life outside the home” (7). Women’s movement is marginalised in the house. Hence, it shows that women are considered weak. Even, they do not have voice to speak their mind, to speak their wish, and to speak their suffering. They have gotten stereotype that they are worthless in life, and they are placed lower than men. The following chapter deals with Deya’s struggle in decision making and focuses on how she attains her freedom.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Discovering the Self**

Generally, freedom is a unique power of human being. It is the absence of fear or force in a person when he is engaged in choosing, deciding and acting regarding any matter that concerns his life. It is that capacity of a person: to choose from two or more alternatives, to decide on certain aspects of life or a course of action and to act on the course of action decides upon. It is because of the gift of freedom that people are able to probe the mysteries of life, explore the secrets of nature, invent new things, search for alternative shapes, life and history. Freedom is vision-oriented, for it raises our minds and hearts to dream of the kind of society that people want to have in future and to explore the ways and means of giving shape to the future society. It helps people to progress in life.

Women are victim of patriarchy. They wanted to get freedom and rights in all aspects of their life. In this novel, Palestinian women want to get free from the patriarchal mode of production, male violence, patriarchal state and patriarchal culture. Therefore, women characters have made some efforts to gain their rights. Before the struggle against the patriarchal oppression, they have to build self-consciousness from the negative impact of patriarchal culture. They struggle to get an education and participate in decision making.

Getting rights to pursuing education is hard for Palestinian women. Although women may go to school, they do not study in Public School, but they study in school for women only. It is because Palestine guards women strictly, they cannot go out alone from the home, they cannot meet any one. The society thinks that the priority for women



is marriage and education is not important. However, Isra and Deya struggle to get an education even in a difficult situation.

She wished she could open her mouth and tell her parents, *No! This isn't the life I want.* But Isra had learned from a very young age that obedience was the single path to love. So she only defied in secret, mostly with her books. Every evening after returning from school, after she'd soaked a pot of rice and hung her brothers' clothes and set the *sufra* and washed the dishes following dinner, Isra would retreat quietly to her room and read under the open window, the pale moonlight illuminating the pages. Reading was one of the many things Mama had forbidden, but Isra had never listened. (6-7)

This explains that actually Isra does not want to get married. Her age is too young to marry. Due to a marriage arrangement, she cannot go to school anymore. Her parents forbid her to study, and even to read a book. Nevertheless, Isra still reads books after helping her mother. But she did it secretly. Moreover, when she gets married, she continues her hobby of reading books, although she knew her parents-in-law and her husband would forbid her to read books.

Isra's intense love for reading is exposed because, she does everything so that she can gain knowledge. She knows, if she gets caught by her husband and her parents-in-law, she would get punishment. She is very careful in storing her books. She does not want all of her books to be thrown away by her husband. Isra chooses to suffer to get more knowledge, because she knows, by reading, her mind would be opened to the world around her and she also feels alive.

Deyais a strong woman. She refuses all her grandmother wish to get her married. She wants to continue her study at college. She does not care about marriage. She does not need protection from any men because she does not want to get injustice in a marriage arrangement like her mother. She reminds her grandmother that they do not live in Palestine, but they live in America, which gives freedom to women. She ignored all of her grandmother's advices. She only cares about how she can continues her study at College. Deya says to her grandmother "men only want a fool to boss around" (26).

Women struggle to get their rights and make their own decision. Making own decision in life is the right of all humans. People around could not force and oppress people who are weaker than them to do what they want. Therefore, female characters in the novel want to decide what is best for them by their own.

In the novel, it describes how women struggle to get their rights. In a difficult situation, all families strongly preserve and establish Palestinian culture. Education is very important to female characters, but it is not so for their family. To struggle with getting education, female characters especially Isra and Deya have to do things like debating, rejecting all men who propose and reading books secretly.

Women's resistance is an essential point of the struggle to oppose domination that had oppressed women and turned them into submissive individuals. Therefore, the awareness of women's individual power to resist oppression is an important aspect of resistance. A brand-new consciousness of self is realised by acknowledging women's self-definition that brings their awareness of self-value and self-worth. Furthermore, maintaining self-definition is realised through women's ability to be aware of their self-valuation and respect, self-reliance and independence, and personal empowerment that are beneficial for women to find the courage in opposing domination.

The first aspect of helping women in realising their self-worth is through women's self-valuation and respect. This aspect is the key factor of women's self-definition as self-valuation has risen women's self-esteem. In the novel, Sarah is discriminated by her gender that does not allow her to have the same rights as men. Consequently, gender discrimination has weakened her self-esteem, makes her to think that she is treated differently from her brothers and her American friends. To gain her self-esteem, she tries to find her value of being a worthy individual through her self-worth's evaluation. Then, she finds the strength to overcome gender discrimination through her ability to recognise her worth as a woman.

Women's awareness of self-value has also occurred through the media of literature. Literature provides various stories of women's life experiences and their strategies in opposing oppressive domination. By reading women's writings, women are inspired to gather the self-power that leads them to their liberation.

For so many years she had believed that if a woman was good enough, obedient enough, she might be worthy of a man's love. But now, reading her books, she was beginning to find a different kind of love. A love that came from inside her, one she felt when she was all alone, reading by the window. And through this love, she was beginning to believe, for the first time in her life, that maybe she was worthy after all. (211, 212)

Isra used to think that a way to be loved is by being obedient to her husband. However, literature has changed her perspective that love comes from her self. Self-love is needed to get the sense of being worthy that brings impact on her self-esteem.

Besides recognising self-valuation, women's ability to respect and be respected by others works to boost self-worth valuation. As society has disregarded their

existence, women maintain their relationship by supporting each other for having self-respect and respect for others. Therefore, the sisterhood bound among women unites their forces to survive in the oppressive domination. As Sarah has already recognised her self power, she tries to convince Deya to find her own self-value.

Through Sarah's advice, Deya is convinced that self-respect leads her to a realisation of her self-worth which makes her to rethink her life path while changing to her fate. Women's self-valuation and respect is the core concept of women's self-definition as it addresses the actual content to the awareness of self-love. Through this concept, women are able to boost their self-esteem and learn to love and appreciate themselves. Thus, women's self-love and sisterhood bound among women is essential in rising new consciousness of self-worth.

The second aspect of gathering women's self-definition is through self-reliance and independence. The strength to oppose oppression is not merely taken from women's power of self-valuation, but also the power to be independent and rely on themselves. Sarah, who is aware of her value as an individual, finds the courage to resist oppression by voicing her will in declining arranged marriage. She challenges women's normative femininity image for being docile by being brave in speaking up her mind, although it means being beaten. Her power in defining self-reliance has taken her to independence, which brings her the power to handle everything on herself.

Sarah spoke slowly, a half smile on her lips. "I haven't been in Palestine this entire time, or at all, in fact. I never got married" (135). Therefore, she runs away from home to reject arranged marriage and lives on her own ever since then. Sarah's spirit of self-reliance and independence leads her to get in touch with Deya and encourages her to speak up. Women's strength in resisting oppression is gathered through

sisterhood bound as the way women talk to one another, and the relationship among women is vital to their growth and well-being. Through Sarah's experience of resistance, she is fully independent regarding her choice of life, and she does not let others control her. In addition, she reaches out to Deya to change her vision on marriage and womanhood, which shows the spirit of independence as she can encourage other women's liberation.

Women's power in maintaining self-reliance and independence brings a new consciousness of a free mind necessary for their sphere of freedom. In resisting oppression, women gather the strength to find their self-worth and be dependent on themselves. Therefore, women's power of independence enables them to empower others for their liberation as their strength in maintaining self-definition has justified their capability to oppose domination.

The third aspect of women's self-definition is women's personal empowerment. It is an essential aspect of self-definition as the power in resisting oppression lies within each individual's power. As women's lives have been controlled, a change in opposing domination could be realised through personal space in changing the consciousness of freedom. Rising women's consciousness of freedom is vital in bringing a new life vision, leading them to recognise awareness, sisterhood, and vision of womanhood for both women as individuals and groups.

A new consciousness of self-worth could help women to empower themselves to make a change in their lives. As the first character who finds the power in recognising her self-worth, Sarah encourages herself to make a change by acting according to her will. "It wasn't easy," Sarah said. "But I managed. I stayed with a friend for the first year until I could afford to live on my own. Then I rented a small apartment in Staten

Island. I worked two jobs to pay for community college and changed my last name so no one could find me” (149-150). The power to step out of the oppressive domination that controls her life has brought her to the state of being independent. Therefore, she maintains her personal empowerment by living on her own and creating a new life. As Sarah’s personal empowerment has helped her to find her freedom, a similar attempt is followed by Isra.

Isra looked at her silver wristwatch—3:29 p.m. She didn’t have much time. Fareeda was visiting Umm Ahmed, and Nadine was in the shower. They had to hurry. She gathered her daughters’ birth documents, as well as all the money from Adam’s drawer.... I should’ve left with Sarah, she thought for the hundredth time as she secured Layla and Amal in the stroller. She took a deep breath and opened the front door. (335)

After Isra gets oppression, marginalisation, violence from her husband and her parents-in-law, she is hurt and she feels that she could not stay at home anymore. At the end of her life, she decided to run away from home with her four children. Before she runs away, she prepares everything she needs to carry, such as her daughters’ birth documents and money. Then, they have to swiftly run away before people in their home know.

Isra runs away from home to save herself and her children from oppressive domination that could taken their lives away. Living under oppression since she was in Palestine, she does not want her daughters to experience the same things she endured. The realisation of personal empowerment has taken her to be brave to step up out of fate in being a docile woman.

Then there was a light shining at her, and a dull whistling. Slowly, very slowly, the light moved closer and the whistle blew louder until Isra could see the train emerging from the darkness, sweeping her hair as it neared. When it stopped in front of them and metal doors opened wide, a pulse of victory swooned through her chest. They would finally be free. (337)

When Isra takes her daughters to a train station, the open door of the train shows a metaphorical meaning of freedom. She knows that if Adam finds them, he will beat her. In Walby's *Theorizing Patriarchy*, in second-wave of feminism, "feminists have organized to provide support services for women who have suffered male violence, especially in establishing refuges for battered women to escape" (147). She believes that it is the best decision to get freedom from oppression.

The next woman who struggles to get freedom in making a decision is Deya. She makes her grandmother understand that she wants to study at college. She said to Fareeda that "marriage can wait" (333). Then, she wants to go from home and moves to Manhatta with her sisters. She makes her understand that her destiny is in her hands, Fareeda could not stop what she believes.

Deya decides to reject all the pressures or desires of her grandmother. According to Walby, there are various forms of female resistance; verbal and physical resistance, sometimes arguing and resisting, sometimes sideways and deflecting, sometimes only holding on to life itself. In this case, the attitude shown by Deya towards her grandmother is verbal resistance, arguing and she sticks to her own life's decisions. She has declared to control her own life. She believes that she should handle her own life by herself.

Besides Sarah and Isra, Deya also finds her personal empowerment to make a change in her life. By learning the stories of her parents and Sarah's experience, she decides to oppose Fareeda's idea of getting married after high school and continuing her study. Instead, her resistance is seen through her courage in speaking up her mind. She dares to apply for college in Manhattan and refuses Nasser's proposal.

In the end, Sarah, Isra, and Deya find their own liberation through their individual action. As women's resistances take a different kind of forms, the results of their act of freedom are varied. Sarah runs away from home and lives happily on her own, Isra finds the courage to free herself and Deya enters university and is brave in refusing arranged marriage.

Etaf Rum's *A Woman is No Man* portrays women's oppression and their resistance to opposing domination. By deploying Sylvia Walby's *Theorizing Patriarchy*, it is found that women are oppressed through the four intersecting domains of power: Patriarchal mode of production, male violence, patriarchal state and patriarchal culture. In challenging oppression, women try to maintain their power of self-definition to be free from domination.

Women's ability to acknowledge their self-worth is a core factor in opposing oppression as women's path of freedom lies within individuals' power. Women's self-definition helped them to maintain their self-valuation and respect, self-reliance and independence, and personal empowerment are considered as key factors to the act of resistance. As women are suppressed, a resistance towards oppression is developed to fight for their rights. Besides, resistance is not merely opposed to challenging domination, but also it enhances women's sense of empowerment to seek freedom.



## Chapter Five

### Summation

Etaf Rum is a Palestine-American novelist. She belongs to a conservative Palestinian-American Muslim family in Brooklyn, New York. Before immigrating to the United States, her parents and her grandparents both resided in refugee camp in Palestine. She married at the age of nineteen. She was annoyed by the limitations of her life, thinking about why she can't do things a man could. Her grandmother told her that she couldn't do it because she was a woman. Ignoring this she pursued her education. She didn't allow herself to be subjugated, oppressed or treated unfairly based on her gender. While raising her children, she educated herself at North California State University.

Rum is renowned for her debut novel *A Woman Is No Man* which was published in 2019. On writing this novel she faced lot of criticism. This novel is based largely on her upbringing. It is purely semi-autobiography which draws her own experience of arrange marriage and early motherhood. It uncovers the dark sides of Palestine. By writing this novel, she has gained strength and allowed her to stand up for herself and rewrite her own life. She wanted to write about the lives and struggles of many Arab-American women, especially the inadequately represented voices in literature. Hence, as an Arab American woman, she wanted to express this issue in her novel. She just wanted to show the reality of some Arab-American women based on her experiences.

This novel contains the story of honour, love, culture, mysteries, crime and violence. It tells about how women are traumatised and passed down this trauma to the next generation. *A Woman Is No Man* explores how three generations of Palestinian American women in contemporary Brooklyn who find it difficult to choose between

two possibilities of individual desires and the strict norms of the community in which they live. In the novel, they are struggling to convey their voices within the enclosed culture of the Arab community with conservative and sometimes abusive restrictions.

Fareeda, Isra and Deya, are the three main characters in the story. Each character suffers individually. This project briefly analysed about the history of Palestinian banishment, their lives in refugee camp, their displacement to the host country, how a woman is oppressed by the oppressor who is none other than her family and her husband, and how that oppression is developed to fight for their rights.

Palestine is frequently linked to war and political upheaval. Israel and Palestine have been at war with one another for centuries. Ancient religious hate is the main factor. The battle is actually mostly between two groups of people who are claiming the same land, despite the fact that religion is involved. Millions of Jews were assassinated in Germany when Hitler was in power. They then relocated to Palestine. The British initially allowed Jews to immigrate, but as more arrived, they started to restrict them.

In 1948, British released Jews and Palestine to form their own country. United Nation planned partition about the area allotted to create Jews and Palestine country. Jews accepted this plan and named their country as Israel and this plan was not accepted by Palestine. So they waged the war against Israel. Palestine named this as first Arab-Israel war of 1948. Surprisingly Israel won the war. So they occupied several areas in Palestine. Because of this, more than seven million Palestine had to leave their home and became refugee in Arab countries. This is named as Palestine Exodus of 1948.

Exile is defined as banishment. It is a harmful process, indeed. In this particular novel, Khalid owned beautiful house in Ramla, Palestine. When he was twelve years

old, Israel soldiers invaded their land and relocate them into a refugee camp at gun point. Seven million Arab peoples were banished from their homes and force to flee. So they relocated to al-Am'ari refugee camp. The pathetic condition is that they were living as refugee in their own country.

Al-Am'ari, is the smallest camp in the West Bank. There wasn't a proper water supply or electricity facility. It was so hard to live in refugee camp. Though they work hard, their salary wasn't enough to support their family. The UNRWA provides food parcels and financial support. They have to stand in a long line for the monthly provision.

Unemployment raised in the camp, so they decided to move to America. He wept too much when he left his country. Even though they left their country, he affirms that they should return back to die on the holy land. He compares his native land with the holy land, it shows his respect and love towards his motherland. They settled in Brooklyn because it was filled with Palestine immigrants. So that they can feel right at home. This shows that their trying their level best to fix their mind as if they were living in Palestine.

Being an immigrant in America is not that easy. They have to work hard. His daughter-in-law, Isra missed Palestine the most when she needs. It also affects his granddaughter, Deya because her entire life straddle between two cultures. Even though they lived fifteen years in the host country, Fareeda still didn't feel safe. At one point of time, Khaled's longingness towards his motherland is exposed when he states that he doesn't have any courage to visit back. They left their native country with bitter feelings and suffer from the sense of alienation.

Alienation is related to displacement. Displacement gives birth to feeling of rootlessness. They are displaced from their home, torn between two cultures and struggle to start anew. This is all about the feeling of belonging nowhere. Because of this displacement Khaled became alcoholic during his stay in refugee camp. In many ways, he disappointed his wife Fareeda because of his sudden and immense anger. He doesn't know how to express his grief and work pressure.

Likewise, in America his son Adam became alcoholic. He was unable to handle both a pressure in home as well as in his work. Fareeda forces him to take up the responsibilities of his family, since he is eldest of all. This leads him to sacrifice long term desire to be an imam and started taking care of his father's deli. He goes to work when the sun rises and returns very late. He is exhausted, sleeplessness and the pressure of not having boy baby made him to attack his wife.

The Palestinian and Palestine refugee experience is defined by the dynamic of war, crisis and unfulfilled expectations. 'Palestine' is a metaphor for dispossession, the struggle for statehood and the quest for freedom from imposition on Palestinian rights, their physical and economic space and their dignity. The war between the Arabs and Israel deepened the wounds of exile in the Arab psyche. It left Arab in a state of shock and they become skeptical about the validity of their socio-political system.

Although drinking was forbidden in Islam both the characters addicted to alcohol and engage themselves in domestic violence. To an extent, Adam kills his wife. In order to live in the host country like America, they have to work day and night to manage their expenses. Generally Arabs were treated as terrorist. They were unable to socialise with the host country people. The most painful thing is they were unable to follow their own culture in America and this leads to ethnic death.

Palestine is rich in cultural heritage. Palestinians enjoy sharing their heritage and culture that allows them to carry a sense of home with them wherever they are. They are diverse in appearance and rich in history and they share a common cultural identity with the wider Arab world. They speak Arabic and pray five times per day. In this novel, Khaled's family was forcibly displaced from their home and this means having given up on way of life, your language and their culture. Though they lived in America, Fareeda wants to preserve their culture. She feels that if she didn't preserve it then they would lose them. So she searched for a Palestinian girl in Palestine in order to marry her son. In America during Ramadan fast Sara and Adam just pretend to fast and that makes Isra to feel like performing ritual for ritual's sake.

Being an Arab they've to pray five times the day but Fareeda never prayed, if so it's just a quick prayer. Wearing hijab, being a Muslim girl shows a woman's great virtue but in America they contemplated wearing hijab permanently. They felt that it will disgrace them from the host country. According to Deya, her family weren't a devoted Muslim family since they contemplated wearing the hijab.

In this novel, Arabs were only allowed to listen Arabic music. To an extent, they are strictly forbidden to watch Disney movies. Deya was highly influenced by the American rapper and listen to his music obsessively. She spoke English more fluently rather than her mother tongue Arabic. She struggled to find right words to console his grandfather Khaled. Lacking in language especially native language is generally caused by the isolation. People without knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.

Either America or Palestine, the women of the house traditionally prepared the food. Likewise, the protagonist Isra spends more time in cooking food. They are so

particular and conscious about they are food habits in America. But in Isra's wedding which was held in Palestine, they served Pepsi as a soft drink instead of the traditional drink. So this shows they have some impact of their host country, America in their food habits too.

Arabs strongly believed in Jinn. According to them, Jinns are associated with the evilness. Fareeda termed the word 'madness' which is associated with Jinn. She points out that Adam and Isra was possessed by Jinn. In order to hide Isra's murder from her daughters she used the word 'possessed' believing that her twin daughters hunted them. It shows her superstitious beliefs and her escapism to face the reality.

To an extent, they started to create their own culture. In Islam, children are the pleasure, girls are considered as blessing. But paradoxically, giving birth to a girl children in Palestine is considered as shame. They'll kill their newborn children as Fareeda killed her twin babies. Sometimes they buried their female infants believing that boys will carry their family name. The three generation gap is exposed in their perspective towards books. Fareeda believe books are bad influence but when it comes to Sarah and Deya, it is their only reliable source of comfort, their only hope.

Fareeda points out that their culture should survive and still she was unable to know her role in their culture. Instead of following their culture and tradition they began to create a new culture which goes parallel with host country. So that the Americans will not disgrace them. It exposes their fear within them. They doesn't want themselves to be banished from the host country, America. On the whole they were unable to express their culture, at the same time they are not willing to accept American culture. But their culture resides in their hearts and souls of its people.

Whether it is Palestine or America, the domination of men over women which causes violence and oppression against women. The social role assigned to women is that of serving the image of man. Women's oppression occurs within the gender and unfairness treatment between man and women. The powerlessness of women has given men full authority to beat women and this kind of violence exists throughout the world, including Palestine.

Women prefer to keep silent regarding the violence they experience. This shows the women's oppression started at home, where domestic abuses are commonly experienced. Rum spoke on behalf of herself and women in her community that they have the same experience of being oppressed.

Patriarchal mode of production occurs in a family environment. The family is considered as a center of women's life. A woman as a housewife has to work for free. Before Isra gets married her mother always remind her that a woman belongs at home. A woman will always be a woman, marriage is important for women, it was the beginning and the end of her life purpose. This reflects that the family is considered as the center of women's life. She did her domestic works to the core. She feels exhausted because everyday she has to do all the works repeatedly. She was burdened with the duty everyday. This shows that she never really lived her life for herself.

According to Fareeda, women are expected to do cooking, cleaning and other house work. She thinks it is normal for women. This directly shows that how a woman is doubly oppressed. In the house, they dependent on men. Being an elder son Adam fulfills their economic needs and Fareeda boasts her son. Even though women have done all the domestic course labour, it is not valued. Woman does not get love from her husband although she has served him.

It is such common thing for Arab women to be treated badly by their men. Adam smashes Isra's head into the headboard and takes her into their children room. The harsh treatment of Adam shows his power as a man. He wants his children to know that men are always superior in every aspect of their lives. The one who controls their lives is man, and woman's voice is not considered as an important thing.

Women's powerless is depicted. They are kept away from the access to resources and state power. The presence of women or the role of women is minimal. When Isra has been beaten by her husband she cannot resist it. Because she is voiceless and powerless. Women had been taught that silence would save them. These made Isra to feel that a woman is the most worthless creature on the earth. She was ashamed to be a woman. She feels life is a dark melody, playing repeatedly.

In Palestinian culture, a woman has to marry at the young age. She cannot choose their own instead she must marry a man chosen by her parents. So Isra discontinued her schooling. As like her mother Isra, Deya was also forced by her grandmother to get married. A woman's right to get an education has been deprived. The women's place is at home, if she has to go out, she cannot go out alone, a family member or her husband has to accompany them.

Yacob, Adam, Khaled are typical representation of male in the patriarchal society. They are the ordinary male who treat women as a sexual objects and domestic servants. Women's movement is marginalised in the house. It shows the women are considered as weak. They are placed lower than men and makes them to feel their life is worthless.

The critical point of women's resistance towards patriarchy is to counter men's domination in taking the power of women's lives. Besides, resistance is not merely



opposed to challenging domination, but also it enhances women's sense of empowerment to seek freedom. Freedom is a unique power. The society thinks the priority of women in marriage and education is not important. However, Isra and Deya struggle to get an education even though in a difficult times. Due to her marriage, she was forbidden to go to school so she read secretly. Her intense love for reading is exposed.

The next form of women's struggle is to get their rights is making their own decision. Making own decision in life is the basic right of all human. Sarah motivates Deya that she should have control over own life that she should decide her own future for a change. She says whatever a person believes about the future has become true. Life is a mirror of our thought patterns and belief. She asks Deya to be brave to speak up for what she wants. She says a beautiful line that the real choice doesn't have any condition, a real choice is free. Through Sarah's advice, Deya is convinced that self respect leads her to a realisation of a self worth which makes her to rethink her life path.

Sarah and Isra also finds personal empowerment to make a change in their life. In the end Sarah, Isra and Deya find their own liberation through their individual action. As women's resistance takes a different forms, the results of their freedom are varied. Sarah runs away from home and lives happily, Isra finds courage to free herself and Deya enters University. She is brave in refusing arrange marriage.

A woman is suppressed in the Palestinians society. When a girl is born in a family, they are treating her as temporary guest. She is imposed by the ideology that women will always be a woman and her place is at home. She should not read books or talk to boys, even if they do so people brand them as sharmouta, which is prostitute,

indeed. She expects love from her husband but she is disappointed at the end. She has to do all household work. She has to bear the beating of her husband.

A woman is expected to be patient. She has to bear as many children as she can. It is women's job to raise children. People blindly believed that man's job is to work outside and women's job is to take care of home and children. In the novel, she expects America would be better than Palestine but in Palestine or in America, women will always be alone and remains at home.

A woman should not compare herself with her brother because she is not a man. Her entire life revolves around pleasing her family and her husband. Sadness became an inescapable part of women's life. This make a woman to feel ashamed. So Isra decides to move out of her family for the sake of her children. But she was killed by her husband, Adam. Atleast she tried to taste the fruit of freedom.

Islam is all about peace, purifying and kindness, standing up to injustice and oppression. *Quran* states heaven lies under a mother's feet. She is considered as a backbone of the family. It insists that they should treat women with more respect. In reality people who follow Islam fail to acknowledge it. They treat women as a robot who obeys their comment and serves people without questioning them. A man should treat women equally. She is also a human being who has same feelings and emotions just like a man.

A man should respect woman and motivate her to pursue her dream. Marriage is all about companionship, it is not a single person responsibility. A husband is supposed to be the one who takes care of her wife. He should treat her wife like a friend. He should bring joy to her life. At the same time a woman should not depend on a man.

She should try to create her own world, it is possible only with the education. It would pave a new way for family's upliftment in the society.

Rum's novel is a page-turner, brimming with generations of lovelessness and trauma that is repeated to preserve a culture that is slowly fading due to exile and immigration. All characters are victims within their own right, all three generations make decisions out of fear, not love. In an exploration of relationships, Rum dives deep into patriarchal society where women have no voice. However, there is a resilience to her voiceless characters, like the women who move to new countries with no one but their husbands and their families, to give their children some semblance of life.

The generational misunderstandings can hurt the very same people it empowers. Reality is harsh in Rum's novel, and dreams are distant, but fate can be changed with courage. She molds Deya's character in a more empowering way. She suffers and straddles between two cultures as Rum. She married at the age of nineteen and is divorced. She decides that her fictional character Deya doesn't want to do the same. So she concludes that education is more important for women. Rum's *A Woman is No Man* conveys the idea that women should get equal rights as men.

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**Transgenerational Traumas and Dislocation in Hala Alyan's *Salt Houses***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

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**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Transgenerational Traumas and Dislocation in Hala Alyan's *Salt Houses*** 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 Margaret Merlin J during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Transgenerational Traumas and Dislocation in Hala Alyan's *Salt Houses*** 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

April 2023

  
J. Margaret Merlin

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## Preface

Salt Houses is a novel that eventually comes full circle. Alia is a child of war barely three years old when they had to flee from Nablus. The project entitled **Transgenerational Traumas and Dislocation in Hala Alyan's *Salt Houses*** is divided into five chapters. The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the struggle for women's rights embedded within the struggle for human rights.

The second chapter **The Impact of War in the life of Alia** tells about the ongoing violence from 1952 to 1967. It includes attack on civilian in Israel carried out by Jordanian army. Alia functions to establish antithesis between forgiving and remembering which not only magnifies the rift between the present and the past.

The third chapter **Displacement and Loss of Identity** deals with the Palestinian family. Their constant search for somewhere called home is something that rings throughout the chapter.

The fourth chapter **Traumatic Experiences of Alia** deals with psychological injury of the Yacob's family. The Trauma is a challenge to the capacities of the narrative knowledge. Alia employs all these narratives movements in various degrees and all contribute to the repression of traumatic events.

The fifth chapter **Summation** deals with different approaches to the importance of the homeland in the creation of belonging.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature is any collection of written work, but it is also used more narrowly for writings specifically considered to be an art form, especially prose, fiction, drama and poetry. Literature is a method of recording, preserving and transmitting knowledge and entertainment and also have a social, psychological, spiritual or political role. Literature can be seen as returning to older, more inclusive notions, so that cultural studies include the canonical works, popular and minority genres. Oral literature is an ancient human tradition found in all corners of the world. The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary considers literature to be Writings having excellence of form or expression and expressing ideas of permanent or universal interest. The 19<sup>th</sup> century critic Walter Pater referred to the matter of imaginative or artistic literature as a transcript not of mere fact, but of fact in its infinitely varied forms.

Palestinian Literature is one of numerous Arabic Literature. Palestinian Literature was also territory bound. Since the 1948 Palestinian exodus it has become a literature written by Palestinians. Forming part of the broader genre of Arabic Literature, contemporary Palestinian Literature is often characterized by its heightened sense of irony and exploration of existential themes and issues of identity references to the subject of resistance of occupation, exile, loss and love and longing for homeland are also common.

The story of Palestinian literature resembles the story of its people. It is a story of an entire nation-in-exile : refugees, forced displacement, uprooting, fragmentation, statelessness, loss, trauma, tragedy, ruins, and silence. The figure of the refugee has

become the most defining feature of this age, posing significant challenges to the logic of the nation-state as the default framework for thinking about the world. The Palestinian-American literary critic Edward Said in *Reflections on Exile* (2001) called our contemporary era the “age of the refugee” in reference to the extraordinary and unprecedented number of the global population now living as displaced and stateless people. The shifting makeup of the contemporary global population, and the reality that the Palestinian refugee issue, according to Peter Gatrell in *The Making of the Modern Refugee* (2013), “remains the most intractable of all episodes of twentieth-century population displacement,” has serious implications for the study of literature in general, and Palestinian literature in particular.

The evolution of Palestinian literature is an anomaly in the broader context of an Arab world that was, in the first half of the 20th century, embarking with great optimism towards the formation of newly liberated nation-states and the building of national and cultural institutions. In contrast, Palestinian literature emerged from within a majority refugee population, without a sealed geographic territory, national institutions, or a nation-state to house, support, or nurture its development. Now, especially after the so-called Arab Spring, the Palestinian experience, coming up to more than seventy years of forced displacement, is being recalled and more forcefully called upon as a reference for trying to understand today’s war-torn Arab world with its failing and faltering nation-states and massive numbers of refugees. The literary and cultural articulations of Palestinian dispossession have also seen increased international resonance in a world trying to find ways to understand the extraordinary number of refugees. The figure of the refugee allows us to acknowledge the fragmentary and scattered nature of this literature, and on that basis, encourages us to seriously engage with its lived history of transnational and exilic literary production.

Palestinian-American literature emerges from the context of personal and political displacement that has characterized Palestinian experience over the last half century. A relatively recent body of literature, offering an unprecedented charting of Palestinian experience in a language and diction accessible to U.S. readers, Palestinian-American writing is informed by the longing to return to the original Palestinian homeland, and by the historical, political, and military events that have made such return impossible. It is also informed by other layers of displacement and exile, whether cultural, personal, or gendered. Because Palestinian-Americans, like other Palestinians, are forbidden to return except, at best, as tourists to their historical homeland, and hence to their own history, their literature in many ways charts an attempt to "return," as it were, through writing .

Palestinian –American women who like all women must negotiate the constraints of gender along with other his tropical, cultural, and personal exigencies. For those negotiation multiple identities and experiences as perhaps all exile must return to Palestine becomes on some level a metaphor for the return to the self a return that for writers most often occurs through language.

As Palestinian-American women writers make evident, to write as a Palestinian woman is to write not only from an understanding of the personal as political that tried-and-true dictum of feminism but also from an understanding of the political as personal. It is to write out of a recognition of the ways in which the multiple layers of history and politics, exile and displacement situate and shape individual lives. And it is to write from an awareness of the ways in which personal and gendered issues are integrally related to, rather than separate from, the struggles for freedom, justice, and peace. The struggle for women's rights is embedded within the struggle for human rights: one struggle does not occlude the other.

A simple definition of diaspora literature, then, would be works that are written by authors who live outside their native land. The term identifies a work's distinctive geographic origins. But diaspora literature may also be defined by its contents, regardless of where it was written. The chief characteristic features of the diasporic writings are the quest for identity, uprooting and re-rooting, insider and outsider syndrome, nostalgia, nagging sense of guilt etc. The diasporic writers turn to their homeland for various reasons.

This literature works as a channel to strengthen the bonds between the different states of a nation and of a nation in relation with the other countries at large. Diasporic opinion helps to break through the past alienation and isolation which caused much injustice and abuse of human rights. Robin Cohen classifies Diaspora as: 1. Victim Diasporas 2. Labour Diasporas 3. Imperial Diasporas 4. Trade Diasporas 5. Homeland Diasporas 6. Cultural Diasporas .The author finds a common element in all forms of Diaspora; these are people who live outside their 'natal territories' and recognize that their traditional homelands are reflected deeply in the languages they speak, religion they adopt, and cultures they produce. Each of the categories of Diasporas underline a particular cause of migration usually associated with particular groups of people. The diasporic Palestinian writers are: Mahmoud Darwish , Mourid Barghouti, Sahar kalifeh, Susan Abulhawa, Adania Shibli.

Susan Abulhawa a Palestinian American writer and human rights activist. She is the author of several books, and the founder of a non-governmental organization, Playgrounds for Palestine. She lives in Pennsylvania. Her first novel, *Mornings in Jenin*, was translated into 32 languages and sold more than a million copies. Her second novel, *The Blue Between Sky and Water*, was sold in 19 languages before its release, and was published in English in 2015. *Against the Loveless World*, her third



novel, was released in August 2020, also to critical acclaim. *Against the Loveless World* a sweeping and lyrical novel that follows a young Palestinian refugee as she slowly becomes radicalized while searching for a better life for her family throughout the Middle East, for readers of international literary bestsellers including *Washington Black*, *My Sister*, *The Serial Killer*, and *Her Body and Other Parties*. Born in Kuwait in the 70s to Palestinian refugees, she dreamed of falling in love with the perfect man, raising children, and possibly opening her own beauty salon. Instead, the man she thinks she loves jilts her after a brief marriage, her family teeters on the brink of poverty, she's forced to prostitute herself, and the US invasion of Iraq makes her a refugee, as her parents had been. After trekking through another temporary home in Jordan, she lands in Palestine, where she finally makes a home, falls in love, and her destiny unfolds under Israeli occupation.

Sahar Khalifeh (born 1941) is a Palestinian writer. She has written eleven novels, which have been translated into English, French, Hebrew, German, Spanish, and many other languages. One of her best-known works is the novel *Wild Thorns* (1976). She has won numerous international prizes, including the 2006 Naguib Mahfouz literature medal for the image, the icon, and the covenant. In *Wild Thorns*, Khalifeh illustrates the varying responses to Israeli occupation sustained by Palestinians: "surviving" complacently under colonial constraints is contrasted with and informs the insistence on militancy as a necessary venue of resistance. The condition of diaspora is never a totalizing structure for Khalifeh, who crafts each character as a subjective prism. The individual as historical agent is always legible in *Wild Thorns*. Whether in the example of the underground, militant high schoolers, the shopkeeper who sells groceries to Israeli soldiers, or the village mothers who ululate in solidarity and protest while occupiers bulldoze their homes, Khalifeh allows

the reader to hear a chorus of voices in the cacaphony of occupation. Her own biography proves her a powerful agent in the trajectory of Palestinian history, bridging the individual with the collective, and the subjective with the historical .

Hala Alyan is a Palestinian American writer, poet and clinical psychologist who specializes in trauma, addiction and cross cultural behaviour. Her writing convers aspects of identity and the effect of displacement, particularly within the Palestinian diaspora. She was awarded Dayton Literary Peace Prize, Arab American Book Award, Chautauqua Prize. Her works *Atrium*(2012), *Four Cities*(2015), *Hijra*(2015), *Salt Houses*(2017), *The Twenty-Ninth year*(2019), *The Arsonist's City*(2021).

Hala Alyan's *Atrium* an award winning poem that traces lines of global issues in personal spaces, with fervently original imagery and a fierce passion and intense intimacy that echoes long after initial reading. The book received the Arab American National Musesum award in 2013. In 2018 , she won the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, an award given to writers whose writing is believed to promote peace.

In *The Twenty –Ninth Year* , Alyan looks back at her life up to that point , writing her memoirs in the form of a poetry collection. She remembers family, partners and struggles with loneliness, an eating disorder and alcoholism. Her second novel *The Arsonists' City* was published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt on March 9, 2021 to critical acclaim. The novel is about the Nasr family, which reunites in Beirut to discuss the family patriarch's will, revealing family secrets and the impact of war and violence on the family.

The novel *Salt Houses* illuminates the heartache and permanent unsettledness experienced by refugees all over the world by highlighting one devastating truth: you can't go home again. Salma reads her daughter Alia's future in the dregs of a coffee

cup on the eve of her wedding. Salma's predictions soon come true when Alia's brother disappears during the Six-Day War of 1967, and she and her family are forced to move to Kuwait City from Nabulus, where they reluctantly build a new life together. Through Alia, Alyan highlights the inner turmoil faced by refugees as they are torn between the need to remember and learning to forget. Alia's children later scatter to Beirut, Paris and Boston, layering this heartfelt, powerful and lyrical portrait of Palestinian diaspora with multiple voices. Alyan also grappled with issues of diasporic identity. Her idea of home has, over the years, veered away from the idea of it being related to one specific plot of land, or a specific house etc., because these things keep changing. she now define home as the place where the people she love are, where she can speak the languages she want to speak, and where she can cook and eat what she wants to eat.

*Salt Houses* is a sophisticated one with an interesting plot and well-developed characters. It deals with one of the world's most complicated and continuing problems, namely, that of the Palestinians suffering from the loss of most of their country to Israel and attempting, as refugees, to reconstitute their lives elsewhere. It is written in a lyrical style by an award-winning author of three poetry collections, Hala Alyan, a teacher at New York University and a practicing clinical psychologist. Dr. Alyan is also an impressive performer with several talks and appearances to her credit.

*Salt Houses* tells the story of four generations of a Palestinian family, the Yacoub, who originally lived in a villa in Jaffa on the Mediterranean seashore until the year 1967. Six-Day War forced them inland to Nablus as refugees. When in 1963 mother Salma reads the future in the dregs of her daughter, Alia's, coffee cup on the

eve of the latter's wedding, she sees her forthcoming uprooted life and her children's; she does not tell her of that, but it comes to pass in the 1967 war.

Alia and her husband, Atef, who moved to Kuwait and had three children, are uprooted in 1990 when Saddam Hussein invades. They lose their home again and scatter to Boston, Paris, and Beirut, where they and the grown-up married children start new lives in foreign cities, mostly apart from one another, with painful problems of assimilation, though with some occasions of better opportunity. And in the next chapter the impact of war in life of Alia is seen. In this chapter Alia's brother Mustafa was killed in the six days war. His death created a great trauma in her life. The novel *Salt Houses* has been taken for research and the detail analysis has been done. The next chapter deals with The Impact of War in the Life of Alia. The devastating effect and the impact of war in the life protagonist in Alia.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Impact of War in the Life of Alia**

Wars are wide, it can be a long term war and a short term war. Soldiers experience war differently than civilians. Particularly Women and Children suffer due to the atrocities of war. In the past decade, two million children were killed during the time of conflict. Trauma caused by these atrocities and the suffering of these conflicts creates extensive emotional and psychological stress. The effects of war include mass destruction of cities and long lasting effects on a country's economy. Armed conflict has important indirect negative consequences on infrastructure, public health provision and social order. During war, people can be exposed to many different traumatic events.

The war causes the chance of developing mental health problems like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and depression. The violent and conflicts separate the children from their families and communities by the armed groups 'Child Soldiers'. The group witness and participate in killing and experience other traumatic events. The psychological trauma and physical injuries, many form child soldiers face rejection from family and community after the war. Wars are likely to continue and cause emotional distress. Additional empirical studies that focus on healing, promoting resilience, and incorporating cultural capacity builders are needed in order to provide appropriate and effective mental health services to future victims of war.

Violence was ongoing during almost the entire period from 1950 through 1967. It includes attacks on civilians in Israel carried out by the Jordanian Army, such as the Ramat Rachel archaeologists shooting attack, mass-casualty attacks on Israeli civilians carried out by Palestinian militants then usually called fedayeen, include

the Yehud attack, the Ma'ale Akkrabim massacre, the Beit Oved attack, the Shafir shooting attack, the 1956 Eilat bus ambush, the Ein Ofarim killings, and the Negev desert road ambush; major Israeli attacks include the Beit Jalla, the Qibya massacre, the Nahalin reprisal raid, and the Rantis and Falameh reprisal raids. The Lavon Affair led to a deeper distrust of Jews in Egypt, from whose community key agents in the operation had been recruited, and as a result Egypt retaliated against its Jewish community. After Israel's raid on an Egyptian military outpost in Gaza in February 1955 killed 37 Egyptian soldiers the Egyptian government began to actively sponsor, train, and arm the Palestinian volunteers from Gaza as fedayeen units which committed raids into Israel.

In 1967, after years of Egyptian-aided Palestinian fedayeen attacks stemming from the Gaza Strip, the Egyptian expulsion of UNEF, Egypt's amassing of an increased number of troops in the Sinai Peninsula, and several other threatening gestures from other neighboring Arab nations, Israel launched a preemptive strike against Egypt. The strike and the operations that followed became known as the Six-Day War. At the end of the Six-Day War, Israel had captured, among other territories, the Gaza Strip from Egypt and the West Bank from Jordan including East Jerusalem. Shortly after Israel seized control over Jerusalem, Israel asserted sovereignty over the entire city of Jerusalem and the Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem were given a permanent resident status in Israel. The status of the city as Israel's capital and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip created a new set of contentious issues in the conflict. This meant that Israel controlled the entire former British mandate of Palestine that under the Balfour Declaration was supposed to allow a Jewish state within its borders. Following the Six-Day War, the United Nations Security Council issued a resolution with a clause affirming the necessity for

achieving a just settlement of the refugee problem, referring to the Palestinian refugee problem. At the end of August 1967, Arab leaders met in Khartoum in response to the war, to discuss the Arab position toward Israel. They reached consensus that there should be no recognition, no peace, and no negotiations with the State of Israel, the so-called "three no's".

Following years of attacks by the Palestinian fedayeen, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established in 1964. Its goal was the liberation of Palestine through armed struggle. The original PLO Charter stated the desire for a Palestinian state established within the entirety of the borders of the British mandate prior to the 1948 war the current boundaries of the State of Israel and said it is a national duty to purge the Zionist presence from Palestine. It also called for a right of return and self-determination for Palestinians.

In *Salt Houses*, Alyan writes in such a manner that nearly all the characters that feature in the novel, narrate the chapters from their point of view. This gives an impression that the entire novel is a collection of short stories featuring the same characters. This connects the text in one single whole. Additionally, even the chapters are not numbered, rather, they are named after the characters in the text itself. One of the reasons Alia can be perceived as the protagonist is that aside from two chapters that are narrated from her point of view, the epilogue is also told from Alia's perspective. The varying stages of displacement that Alia goes through can be traced through the analysis of her narrative.

All her children are prized; they are the glow of her. It is more that Salma has always felt drawn to her, a magnetism delicate and stubborn as cobweb thread. Alia is a child of war. She was barely three when the Israeli army rolled through Jaffa's streets, the tanks smashing the

marketplace, the soldiers dragging half sleeping men from their homes  
 .(5)

‘Alia is a child of war’ as stated above is the line that Salma uses to describe Alia. This line is significant as Alia for Salma serves as a symbol of the past she was forced to sacrifice. She is a living reminder of the life that Salma and the others had before the atrocities of war. Salma implies through her words that Alia is her favourite child. The reason for such preference lies in the fact that Alia always reminded Salma of the beauty of her long-lost home. The lines "Salma missed her home with a tenacity that never quiet abated" (6). Alia fuelled this yearning of Salma through the unblemished naivety which she possessed as a child. Traumatizing images haunt Salma of the war she experienced, of her home and orange groves being attacked

"Within days the groves were mangled, soil impaled with wooden stakes, oranges scattered, pulp leaking from the battered flesh" (5-6).

Alia reminds Salma of the beauty of her home as, for which Salma feels forever grateful to her. The use of the word mythologist by Alyan is significant as it can be seen as implying the fact that the home that Salma and her family left has indeed become a myth, a place of trauma and ashes, a place whose stories akin to myths just exist in their memories. Alia serves as a double connection for Salma as she not only bonds Salma to Jaffa the principal place of her trauma but also through Nablus the place where they were forced to dislocate as a result of the war. The wedding of Alia which was supposed to be a momentous occasion is marred with the advent of the oncoming trauma that Salma sees in her future. Thus trauma is transferred from Salma to Alia, in a cultural context which is the norm of cup reading at wedding ceremonies.



All the events following up to Alia's wedding have been discussed signifying the analysis of Alia as a protagonist against the backdrop of cultural traditions. The cup reading ritual, henna ceremony, the food which is being a Kanafeh a cultural Palestinian dessert, the women in the garden discussing Egyptian soaps, and men arguing over the failed politics of the country all highlight the societal practices which are followed in a cultural Palestinian wedding ceremony. The presence of trauma is in turn embedded in this cultural context. The trauma manifests itself through the cup reading custom as outwardly Salma is content to wed her daughter but the dark pallor of disruption and displacement in her future cannot be overlooked. This in actuality foreshadows the turmoil that will rear its head and terrorize the generations to come. As a member of the first generation of the Yacoub family that experiences trauma, Salma's character goes through a series of alterations with the most prominent being the way she tends to avoid the presence of trauma by shying away from it. This wariness results in the incomplete truth which she tells Alia about what she has observed closing her eyes to the unsettling details of her future.

Furthermore, the relationship between Alia and the two pre-dominant men of her life, Mustafa and Atef can be deemed as potentially intricate in nature. In the novel, Mustafa once alludes to the relationship that all three of them share as:

His casual lifestyle is underpinned by Alia and Atef, residing several streets over, their lives spilling into one another's. They all check in daily, usually gathering at Salma's house... Mustafa loves the permeability of their days, the way he and the two people he loves most revolve around each other like planets .(29)

The above lines are greatly suggestive as the use of the phrase spilling into each other's lives denotes the extent to which their lives were convoluted together to the point that if one suffers from a trauma the other is also embroiled in the same pain and torment. Similarly, the other line in which Mustafa refers to their lives revolving around each other indicates the overpowering sense of trauma that follows his death in the lives of Alia and Atef as a result. The relationship shared by the three of them can be distinctly recognized as a comradeship, a staunch companionship that forms as a consequence of their collective trauma. All three of them lost their childhood homes and fathers to the invasion of Jaffa. Mustafa and Atef have similar ideas regarding a revolution to take back their land, Palestine from the Israeli forces and are members of the brotherhood in the mosque. Moreover, Alia spends most of her time with them during her childhood and adulthood as she is unlike other girls of her age. She is sturdy and resilient as Mustafa refers to her. Their alliance becomes final with her marriage to Atef. This unshakable alliance sorrowfully snaps with the death of Mustafa with which neither Alia nor Atef can reconcile with.

For Alia, Mustafa's presence in her life can be seen having vast magnitude as he can be perceived as someone who symbolized a father figure for her in the absence of her real father. Mustafa can be noted as someone who fills the void left behind by the father that Alia barely remembers as a result of the invasion of Jaffa. They share an inseparable bond as Mustafa is not just her brother but can also be regarded as the man who truly understood her, a bond she is unable to establish with Atef even after their marriage and something which becomes unfathomable after Mustafa's death. The extent of the understanding that both Alia and Mustafa have about each other can be witnessed from a deeply significant fact regarding Mustafa's personality. She is the only one in whom Mustafa confides his darkest secret which is his hatred for his

absent father. This dark confession of Mustafa only to Alia signifies the strength of their bond as for Mustafa this secret is of great magnitude as he blames his father for not leaving behind any legacy to follow in his footsteps. The trauma which Mustafa suffers due to this results in not only hatred but blossoms into a sense of shame he feels for having such a pathetic father who died defeated and broken.

From Alia's perspective, the childhood memory which invades unremittingly during the period of uncertainty, when there is no news of either Mustafa or Atef from Nablus can be witnessed to understand the place of Mustafa in Alia's life. When Alia was a child, Mustafa came across a chick soaked in rain which he took home with him and nursed back to health, even letting Alia touch the creature. This memory intrudes on Alia's senses over and over again during the Six-day war which illuminates the significance of Mustafa in Alia's life as she is not reminded of Atef her husband but rather of Mustafa repeatedly. For Alia, this memory holds import as it focuses on how she viewed Mustafa as a hero, a savior of lost and pitiful things. He in actuality saved her as well as he filled the gap left behind by her father which can be observed from

Alia sat by her brother's side, both of them silent as he worked. Every few minutes she bent over the shoe, peering at the quivering bird...It felt like an honor, sitting by her brave, handsome brother while wind battered the windows with rain .(62)

With Mustafa, which further indicates the influence of him on her. Alia is thus traumatized by Mustafa's death and to add to her psychological scars, the last memory she has of Mustafa is when she leaves for Kuwait in anger without even saying farewell to him. It can be assumed that the guilt of such pettiness on Alia further pierce the wounds of her mental state giving her no sense of appeasement.

Additionally, the trauma of losing her homeland and home also takes a heavy toll on Alia and Atef. Mustafa can be seen as playing the part of a binding force, someone who was beloved to both of them as even both Alia and Atef got married due to him being Atef's dearest friend. Mustafa can be regarded as the sole reason for their union and after his death, Alia and Atef drift apart. Aside from Mustafa, Alia also goes through the loss of her husband after the invasion. Physically Atef returns to his wife after his imprisonment and torture by the Israeli forces during the six-day war, but mentally Atef is subjected to extreme trauma and it alters his personality. Being the protagonist of the novel, Alia can be appreciated as a representative of the collective experience of trauma. She lost her father, her brother and her husband if not physically then mentally to the disruption and chaos that the loss of their home due to Israeli forces is waged upon them. The heavy scarring that Atef procures as a result of his time in prison can be perceived as signaling towards the re-traumatization of the prior loss of Hussam, Alia's father. Through the wounds on Atef's body, it can be discerned that Alia goes through a re-experiencing of the slow and painful death of her father whose body was ravaged by lung cancer. Even though she is a child at the time of his death, Alia still says "Baba is not hurt anymore?"(5).which demonstrates the deep effect of trauma on her as a child which later resurfaces through her husband as even though she provides him with comfort, the scars on his body frighten her as they can be regarded as an agonizing reminder of her childhood. Furthermore, Atef pleads with desperation to Alia about his desire to resettle in Kuwait instead of Amman but for Alia ,

AMMAN. To her mother, her aunts, to the cousins and childhood friends who moved there from Nablus after the war. The idea had struck her like rainfall, simple and clear: They should move to

Amman. Instead of staying in Kuwait's wasteland, the endless afternoons of television and heat, let them go to Amman. (59)

When Atef disagrees and Alia loses her composure and rushes out to find Ajit, the chauffeur and he drives her to the sea. This incident can be envisaged as a portentous event for Alia as it reconfigures her future self. The trauma of permanently settling in Kuwait influences Alia psychologically. The entire act of desperately rushing out of the party to find Ajit can be gauged as Alia's way of trying to escape her fate in some manner. She wants to escape from her trauma but it is inevitable due to her pregnancy as well as her mother's words. After the death of Mustafa, Salma impresses upon Alia not to forget her husband in her sorrow. This suggests how Alia feels bound to her duties as a wife providing a view of trauma in a cultural context. As a wife and soon to-be mother, she feels captive of these cultural constructs which restrain her from mourning the sorrow of the loss of Mustafa and her home in her way which she wanted to do by going to Amman to be around her mother and relatives. Instead, she is denied this means of healing by her husband. Throughout this incident, Alia oscillates with trying to reconcile herself to this disruptive transformation in her life as well as the traumatically haunting memories of Nablus that plague her mind.

On the one hand, Alia is reminded of Nablus and Mustafa, which the writer portrays through small but significant details as Alia longs for her bedroom in Nablus, her photographs, jewelry, and even adventure in her mind given the air of lightheartedness that Ajit and Alia both feel with each other and which the sea provides them. It can be contemplated as a trip where Alia loses her vivacious dress she brought before this cursed trip but never got to wear. Along with this trip "So this is the beginning" (76). This trip is something which Alia refers to her painful

memories, the words of her mother echo in the deep recesses of her mind and the constraints they pose for her triumph in the end as she stays in Kuwait by resignedly saying at the end of and becomes dispirited as can be observed through a remark that Linah, her granddaughter makes later on in the novel which aptly represents how abject she has become due to her traumatic experiences. "Linah likes her grandmother but is slightly afraid of her, her razor-sharp nails and the way she glances over whatever room she is in, like she is bored"(242).

Aside from the trauma that Alia suffers, of having to follow the norms of her culture ibrik her mother gave to her at her wedding which also vanishes along with Nablus, symbolizing the painful loss of their cultural tradition of giving an ibrik to the daughters at their wedding. The permanent removal of such a loving tradition from their lives due to the trauma of the invasion can be evidenced in the rest of the novel as Alia does not gift an ibrik to either through her role as a wife and a mother, she is also subjected to mental strain and tension through the cultural context in another manner. The invasion not only seizes her home and brother from her but she is also afflicted by the loss of her cultural traditions. Alia is reminded of the silver one of her daughters highlighting the transmission of trauma to the future generations. Furthermore, another accurate example of this is illuminated through the story of the Bedouin, told to her by Widad which Alia feels strongly connected.

According to Widad, the Bedouin who first came to Kuwait lived simple and uncomplicated lives before the onslaught of villa compounds and other buildings sprawled over the city heralding the younger generation. Alia contrasts the Bedouin to her elders in Nablus who also lived with the memories of Palestine, the ensuing war, and exodus. For Alia, both the Palestinians and the Bedouin indicate the trauma of losing their cultural traditions, sometimes due to the transforming society as in the

case of the Bedouin and at other times it is wrested from them due to war and strife. Her Palestinian cultural roots are lost forever leading to Alia feeling a certain kinship to this past generation. She can be considered as standing on the very cusp of transformation as well. Her life after the war and the traumatic losses it underscores for her is forever transformed. She undergoes this alteration, the tortured yearning for her home and brother which she passes on to her future generation. As Maria Trumarkin states that, “for places across the world marked by traumatic legacies of violence, suffering, and loss, the past is never quite over”.

For Alia, Kuwait existed as a temporary sojourn. The use of the word sojourn by the writer is greatly explicit. Sojourn refers to a temporary resting place and this is what Alia always believed Kuwait to be for her. Atef's refusal to move to Amman and to permanently reside in Kuwait psychologically traumatizes Alia as her husband refuses to understand her anxiety. Rather she is stuck in Kuwait, a limbo-like place forever. Alia even throws a big New Year's celebration party to distract herself from the horrific trauma of the previous year and to tell Atef about her idea to move to Amman but this can be construed as a futile resolve on her part as her worst fears sharpen into clarity as the realization dawns her through the haunting lines "All is lost. There will be no Amman. He believes Kuwait will save him, she realizes " .(70)

All inevitably is lost as Alia and Atef's relationship gets fractured beyond repair after this disruptively traumatic decision. Through Alia's narrative, it is implied that when she is unaware of the fate of both her husband and brother she prays that if she could save one of them it would be her brother. This fact is not penned in the novel but can be gleaned from Alia's train of thought. This sordid truth about herself is also a cause of Alia's psychological trauma. It shames her to such an extent that it can be argued that this is why she gives in to her husband's frenzied pleas without any flight for

Amman. Souad, Alia's youngest daughter, can be envisaged as such a major cause of Alia's psychological trauma when she holds up a mirror in the shape of herself. She forces Alia to confront all the secret yearnings, frustrations, and shame she associates with Amman which can be observed from her tearful conversations of wanting to stay forever in Amman to her cousin by leaving Atef, her need to stay in a place akin to her prior home ran so deep that it even blinded her to her children as it can be implied from the lines "So it would go, the silent argument, back and forth in her mind until she loathed the sight of herself in the mirror. What kind of a mother, or wife, would consider such a fate—living apart from her children, moving to Amman" (145).

These lines point out the fact that Alia is forced to face the demon inside her which she despises so much due to ironically her daughter which shatters her psychologically. In addition to this, Souad for Alia can also be discussed as a prominent source of cultural shock. As Alia waits angrily for Souad to come home after she storms out earlier, Alia flips through the channels on the TV, and through this action of Alia, the changing times and culture are depicted in the novel. Alia makes comparisons between the style and fashion of the actresses she was used to seeing while growing up and the fashion trends that are now popular, leading her to think of Souad again as her daughter also dresses in the new manner which she dislikes. The life she led before the war and the loss of her home, Mustafa, and her mother are held in high esteem by Alia. The cultural shock that results from such a transforming society is an inherent cause of frustration and mental torment for Alia and as her daughter is a part of this changing culture Alia feels further alienated and isolated from her. Even though Alia refers to both her daughters as in jest, but these nicknames can be noted as not carrying any warmth and are not terms of endearment from a mother to her children. Rather they emphasize the dissatisfaction and



discontent that Alia endures psychologically. Alia's mental trauma is signified that her very own children are unaware of their particular roots and culture and her frustration at not being able to do anything about this.

Due to the physical and mental trauma that Alia endures, it can be distinguished that she is unable to relate to the psychological and social construct of motherhood. She is detached and estranged from them emotionally as well as physically which can be evidenced by the way she would sometimes be completely oblivious to her surroundings see from Atef. Moreover, she even asks her maid Priya if could guide her by saying "Souad...she never listens. I talk, I yell. Nothing works. Do you know how she-why she...does the things she does?" (149).

All such instances emphasize the depth of estrangement that she feels towards her children due to her trauma. The children especially Souad sensing this restlessness from their mother, mirror her in the same way through their personalities as later discussed in more detail displaying the transgenerational transference of trauma. Thus the physical and emotional isolation that she feels towards her children suggests the archetype of motherhood being negated by Alia.

After she argues with Souad, Alia feels deeply restless and unsettled even the next morning, unable to forget what had transpired last night and wants to lie back on her bed and goes to sleep just as she did as a child on rainy days. This can be regarded as a testimony of the notion that Alia is still in many ways like a child who has been forced to grow up due to the traumatic experiences of her life. She still wants the childhood of her pre-displacement era that is Nablus. Salma once remarked about her daughter when she was naught but a child that "It would become the girl's most endearing and exasperating quality, how she could become enamored of things already gone" (7).

This description can be contemplated as the very crux of her character, the driving force behind her psychological and physical turmoil. The same morning after she goes into the kitchen she is suddenly assaulted by the memory of her mother's kitchen back home in Nablus and she feels agonized by the image. As Alia is predisposed to being so enamored of her past experiences, she is unable to become accustomed to anything in her life post her displacement and resettlement. The memories of the past persistently pervade her consciousness leading to her devastating psychological trauma.

Alia as a traumatized protagonist also depicts another form of mental anguish that can be collected related to people who belong to her generation. This trauma stems from a cultural construct that is the language barrier that erupts between Alia and her grandchildren. She constantly scolds Karam and Souad by saying “You've raised these children as Americans. They barely understand what their grandmother is saying to them” (242).

Due to the difference of language spoken between them, Alia who mostly converses in Arabic, and her grandchildren in English, the barrier created by this predicament stands as a rift between them. Alia condemns the upbringing of Manar and Zain children of Souad as well as Karam's daughter Linah, referring to them as spoiled *ajnabi* children. These grievances of Alia represent the chaos of her psychological state. Not being able to even talk to your grandchildren as they are ignorant of their cultural traditions and especially their specific cultural language which is Arabic, can be discerned as something which traumatically agitates Alia. The American mannerisms and the language which her grandchildren have readily adopted agonizes Alia not only due to the sense of alienation she goes through but it can be observed as

something which wounds her because this style of life which her children and now grandchildren adhere to, is in opposition to cultural roots and heritage which she represents.

According to Balaev, delineating the response to the experience of trauma in literary works emphasizes the diversity of representation. She signifies that people do not respond to trauma in a universally indistinguishable manner and without considering the cultural and individual factors involved in the incident and which essentially shatter the identity as is asserted by the traditional paradigm. Balaev substantiates her argument by pointing out that there are numerous examples of the approaches through which trauma is portrayed which include causing a mental illness which is relevant to *Salt Houses* (2017), as Alia is diagnosed with Alzheimer's. As Balaev states that irrespective of the change that occurs due to the experience of trauma and its memory, it propels the reformulation of self. She further adds that "The new knowledge may create a perspective of the world that views the self and/or world as sick, diseased, balanced, redeemed, resilient, transcendent, or mystical" (37).

Considering Alia, from the time she is diagnosed with Alzheimer's she increasingly becomes distant and detached from the rest of her family. Her disease can be taken as a symbol of her outer disruption manifests and becomes a part of her psychological deterioration as she is permanently scarred by trauma now both pathologically and mentally. This results in the changed way the protagonist of this novel reorients her sense of self as Alia carries the burden of her traumatic experiences repeatedly as she goes through her memories of the past. This illness of Alia functions to establish an antithesis between forgetting and remembering, which not only magnifies the rift between the past and the present. It also accentuates how

the past consistently invades her present. Regardless of this situation the following lines,

The words are familiar as water, as Alia's own hands, which lift now to her face, against her cheeks...The song alights within Alia, a remembering akin to joy. Her mother's garden, a courtyard somewhere in Kuwait, as she sang to a baby at her own breast. She sits in the dark, listening to the ancient, salvaged music.(310)

suggest that she does feel some sense of belonging and home towards the end of the text when she sees her granddaughter Manar feeding her infant daughter and singing her a lullaby in Arabic; the language of her home which can be seen as an indication of providing her with a sense of resilience to move forward.

### Chapter Three

#### Displacement and Loss of Identity

Identity in diaspora is something that always concerns the displaced, especially those who were reluctantly forced out of their homelands. Such is the concern of the Palestinian-American writer and poet Hala Alyan in her debut novel *Salt Houses*. The book is a chronology of a Palestinian family, the Yacoub family, and the wandering life imposed on them by the Six-Day War of 1967 and subsequently Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The story opens in 1963 in the West Bank city of Nablus and continues until 2014 as the family's lives stretch through five host countries: Lebanon, France, Jordan, Kuwait, and the United States.

*Salt Houses* is like a dramatic poem in which the characters and actions develop through significant scenes. The characters dramatise recollections of experiences, past memories, multiple generations, conscious revelations and psychological lives. *Salt Houses* appeared in 2017 and the story spans around fifty-two years. The trajectory of the novel stretches through space from Jaffa to Jordan, Kuwait, Beirut, Paris and Boston, and back to Palestine. The narrative is divided into twelve parts and is followed by an epilogue in Beirut. It is not dated. Alyan has defamiliarised the narrative technique by using flashbacks, parallel parts and subsequent and simultaneous narrative. In addition, she has constructed the voices and paratactic juxtaposition of spaces in a series of concentric circles in which the order of sequence is demonstrated by the dates in the parts headings and the simultaneous development. By experimental innovation, Alyan creates spaces that are interconnected between widely separated regions of space-time, which are of her own imagination. Spaces that play a crucial role in an individual's inward self-

consciousness, they are intended to express the inner world of emotions, memories, thoughts and subjectivity. The object is the transcendence of the inner space. The power of her novel arises from its experiment with narrative limits, that of the relationship between human perception and narrative. Moreover, it traces the portrayal of characters in finding a stable space in the narrative discourse away from their home in the diaspora.

Consequently, Alyan's novel tries to achieve self-determination, self-awareness and self-realisation within the dimensions of multiple voices and spaces and fixed identity. *Salt Houses* tries to construct a stable subjectivity and brings to the surface panoramas of Palestinian diaspora with various voices. Alyan employs different narrative techniques to convey the outlets of interior and exterior conflicted zones in hybrid and intercultural dislocations. The narrative discourse of her novel orchestrates a fractured and non-linear diatonic representation. It is constructed in a plethora of kaleidoscopic techniques that reflect social, cultural, familial and psychological dislocations.

The novel begins in 1963; fifteen years after Salma and Hussam left their home in Jaffa with their three children Widad, Mustafa and Alia, during the Israeli War of Independence to rebuild a new life in Nablus. The sense of loss is reflected through each character vividly from the very beginning of the novel. Salma recounts the loss of their home and belongings while walking through the marketplace 'in an unfamiliar city',

It was a silver tray that gave Salma pause, the triangular pattern so familiar to the one her own mother gave her when she first wed. But it was gone, the old tray and coffee set, along with so many of their belongings, the dresses and walnut furniture and Hussam's books. All

left behind in that villa, painted the colour of peach flesh, that had been their home (1)

In the case of Hussam the trauma was more internal in nature and intense as well, he cried more than once in the night, “They took my home, they my lungs. Kill me, kill me” (3).

For the children their father was a changed man in Nablus, no more the smiling and loving person they had in Jaffa, their father in Nablus was a transformed creature, cheerless and short tempered. No longer made growling sounds when he was hungry, mimicking a lion or bear until they giggled now when he spoke with Widad or Mustafa he seemed to be unfocused. Every evening he listened to the radio raptly. Their eldest daughter, Widad, was sixteen years old, when they left Jaffa. But never been the same again in their new home. Salma says, “She walked around their new house in Nablus wanly, sat through meals without speaking. She never mentioned Jaffa, even when her father, already ailing, told her it was time to marry, she didn't protest”(4).

The man who was chosen for Widad by her parents was someone from Kuwait. And one who can take Widad far from the blazing country split in two to keep her safe. But Salma was not able to protect her younger daughter from the same displacement that she had experienced in her life. When her second daughter, Alia requests her mother to read the cup and predict the future before her wedding, Salma sees displacement and travel in the form of a crumbling edifice a sign of houses that will be lost and the form of a zebra, the harbinger of an unsettled life. But to protect her daughter from that she tells Alia that her fiancé loves her and that she will soon be pregnant. But as her mother could foresee there are multiple displacements that Alia has to experience in her life.

The whole idea of living a life with a sense of displacement, the implications and the entirety is presented in detail in this novel through different chapters. In the first chapter “Salma missed her home with a tenacity that never quite abated. She spent the first years in Nablus daydreaming of returning. . . a miracle, everything as she’d left it, even the damp laundry she’d never gotten to hang up”(6) .The second chapter depicts Israeli invasion of Nablus and soldiers driving people out of their homeland is described in Alyan’s words as “They have even taken our deaths. They have robbed us even of dignity”(44).

Each chapter is like a transition and presented through a specific character. The third chapter starts in 1967 in Kuwait. Salma’s older daughter, Widad, has already moved to Kuwait after marriage. When the Six-Day War breaks out in 1967, Alia happens to be visiting Widad in Kuwait City. But her husband, Atef, and beloved brother, Mustafa remain trapped in Palestine along with other activists. Only Atef survives the war but the trauma of the war haunts him for years affecting his family life. Unlike her sister, the independent minded Alia has married Atef, a professor whom she loves. Their difficult marriage becomes one of the novel’s most discussed elements. They create a life in Kuwait with their three children Riham, Karam, and Souad until the 1990 Iraq-Kuwait war forces them to flee to Amman. The subsequent chapters are set in Amman, Kuwait, Beirut, Boston, and Jaffa and reflected by a character’s shift in identity. After the Gulf War, Riham, Alia’s elder daughter, went to Amman. Riham was more religious than her other siblings but spiritually exhausted and at one point we can find her unstable; she had a fractured identity, her memories and experiences of refugees at the backside of her house, where her husband used to treat refugees free of cost. Alia’s son, Karam is sent to attend college in Boston and becomes an American. He spends summers with his kids in an inherited apartment in



Beirut. Souad, the younger daughter of Alia and Atef also tries in her attempt to create a life Paris, studied there during the Gulf War, she married her boyfriend, moved to Boston with her brother Karam but never feels at home in America. After her divorce, she moves to Beirut, where she re-builds a life with her children Manar and Zain. When asked by her children about the reason for moving to Beirut Souad, says “Home as in somewhere familiar, somewhere people look like us, talk like us, where you guys can learn Arabic and be near your grandparents and never came home asking what raghead means”(207).Souad’s struggle for her identity and to feel a sense of belongingness is evident when she finds herself thinking of saying when asked about her origin,“Yes she’d lived in Kuwait, but no, she wasn’t Kuwaiti, and no she had never been to Palestine, but, yes, she was Palestinian” (129).

Souad concept of identity was associated with the homeland of her father, she sees as rampant assimilation, everyone, no matter their family's place of origin, responds with here when asked where they're from. But for Palestinians, she thinks even if a person's heritage was flimsy, unused for years,you were where your father was from. Alia's children and their children adapt Western influences, dressing like Americans and never quit learning Arabic. Such cultural differences cause a gap between the generations, but their shared history keeps them connected.

The common element between these characters is the concept of home. They always try to create a home and feel the comfort and sense of security there. The plot of the novel runs through Nablus to Kuwait to the USA and then to Lebanon. But despite their affluence and being privileged in so many ways, each of the character lack the sense of belongingness. Constant search of ‘home’ is what each character is indulged in the novel. There is no permanence when it comes to the concept of home. The family has been uprooted time and again for generations together due to

circumstances which are beyond their control. The central idea that runs through the plot is the sense of displacement, lost identity and a longing towards 'home'. We can find the characters dwell in two space time dimensions; one is always in the past and the memories from the past and the other in the present.

Atef recalls the past and shares stories from their past homes with his grandchildren, Zain and Linah about their grand house in Palestine as "Your grandmother used to stay in a house with a garden. In Palestine with her brother...A good house. There was a table under the trees. In summer, we'd sit out there for hours" (273).

Both Alia and Atef think of Palestine with love and longing here is Palestine. Here are the streets we'd walk in Nablus, the neighborhood we grew up in. Here is everything we loved '. Alia makes it clear with her words "Nostalgia is an affliction. Someone said that once in front of Alia and the words reach her now, years later. Like a fever or cancer, the longing for what had vanished wasting a person away. Not just the unbearable losses, but the small things as well. Alia thinks of her bedroom in Nablus. The seashells she filled with bobby pins. The tangerine dress she'd bought right before her trip to Kuwait and never worn.

Photographs, necklaces, the glasses and silver ibrik her mother had given her . Being treated and felt like refugees for decades in foreign lands is unthinkable for most of us but this is what they have to experience again and again after their lives being disrupted from one place to another. This shift of home is presented neatly through different characters living in different places of the world, Saud is living in Beirut, Budur in Boston, Abdullah in London, Manar in Manhattan and Linah and Zain in Vermont. And also Atef's recount of different houses as his mother's hut in Nablus, the house he shared with Alia in Nablus, the house in Kuwait, the house in

Beirut and the house in Amman is another example of homelessness as well as building and rebuilding 'home' once it is taken by the war.

The title *Salt Houses* justifies the significance of a 'home' in a war stricken zone. The homes are never permanent and perishable like salts in water. Alyan put it more clearly through Atef's words, "They glitter whitely in his mind like structures of salt, before a tidal wave comes and sweeps them away (273)". The author has brilliantly delineated the experience of people who have lost everything to war. Her own family had the similar kind of experience and keeping that in mind Hala Alyan in one of her interviews has said, when she wanted to get married, one of the things that she didn't really have the luxury of was asking her mother if she could wear her wedding dress, or asking her grandmother if she could wear her wedding dress. Her grandmother had lost hers when she moved to Kuwait.

Her mother lost hers in Kuwait after the invasion. They have lost in the rubble of time and movement and displacement. We don't have heirlooms. Through her novel Alyan portrays how Palestinians not just lost their home and homeland but also their nationality and identity with it. The main thing that is discussed in the novel is not just the depiction of the wars but the horrible conditions and dreadful consequences of the wars that the innocent refugees endure. They become the victim of forced banishment from their homeland. Almost all the characters in the novel are found running away from wars to secure themselves from the death and destruction of the wars. As the consequences of the war, they are forced to leave one state to another state. All the characters of the *Salt Houses* remain without any definite identity throughout the novel. Alyan describes that the war of 1948 in Palestine caused the crisis of identity of Yacoub's family for the first time, and after that one after another their identity is snatched time and again with different wars in different times. This

paper highlights how the four generations suffer the homelessness and how the clash of cultures shape and reshape the identity of characters in the novel.

*Salt Houses* is not just about the trauma and displacement of the Yacoub family but also about the struggles of millions in war-ravaged lands. But more precisely, it's about the significance of "home"; what it means to build a home, to lose it, and again rebuild it, and to go home when nothing looks or feels the same. Each generation of Alia's family remembers their birthplaces with fondness, even as their parents, forced from their own places of birth, resent the cities they move to. Wars play a very crucial role in shaping and reshaping the identity of almost the whole Palestinians inside and outside the national border. Alyan represents the struggle of refugees beyond the refugee camps. The family discussed here is without any experience of camps and deprivation yet despite being privileged they feel the emptiness and lack of belongingness for generations together.

## Chapter Four

### Traumatic experience of Alia

The word trauma is derived from the Greek word. It was initially used to refer to a physical injury, but throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the second half, the word has increasingly become associated with psychological trauma rather than physical. Especially after the world wars, the returning soldiers called for a diagnosis for the mental trauma that they carried with them after the war. After the First World War, the common diagnosis for traumatised soldiers was ‘shell shock’, which was ‘typically marked by an obsessive return in waking thoughts and nightmares, to the pain and terror of traumatic battle scenes’. It was not until the 1980s, following the war in Vietnam, that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) became the common diagnosis for people struggling with the after-effects of traumatic events.

*Salt Houses* is narrated from the perspective of various focal characters, and thus the reader is given access to numerous perspectives on home, and to several experiences of the trauma of war and displacement. On the one hand, however, the narrative form of *Salt Houses* may be seen as embodying a form of restraint. In each chapter, the reader is given access to only one specific day in the life of the focalised character, and the time that passes between chapters spans from two years to a decade. We are given access to summaries of what has happened in between, yet these summaries are conditioned by the thoughts of one specific character during a limited slot of one specific day. In other words, the narrative form reflects the way in which memory works – it is conditioned by the present situation of the character. Considering that the narrative does not aim to relate fully what is fictionally true or what actually happened, but rather focus on the individual experience of particular events, it is not really relevant to question the reliability of the narrators. However, it

is worth keeping the partiality of the focaliser in mind, as we assign credence to a particular version of events. Also, the focaliser give access to historical events only through one set of eyes at a time. For example, the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 is experienced only from the perspective of eighteen-year-old .

Souad, who is not even in Kuwait at the time. Likewise, the 2006 Lebanon war is narrated from the perspective of nine-year old Linah, whose primary concern at the time is to sneak out and buy cigarettes. This one-sidedness ostensibly limits our understanding of, and access to, the historical facts and the traumatic impact of these wars. This stands in strong contrast to Hala Alyan's novel, which includes news reports, historical facts and witness accounts to validate its historical backdrop.

On the other hand, these narrative specificities are what guide our understanding of the content. It might help to start by defining that which *Salt Houses* is apparently not: a trauma narrative. Trauma is 'a challenge to the capacities of narrative knowledge' because trauma, in its shock impact, 'is anti-narrative'. Luckhurst writes that 'the relationship between trauma as a devastating disruption and the subsequent attempts to translate or assimilate this disturbance is a fundamental tension between interruption and flow, blockage and movement'. Due to the inherent qualities of trauma – that it is sudden, a shock, and 'outside the range of normal human experience'.

In *Salt Houses*, Alyan employs all these narrative movements to various degrees, and all contribute to the repression of traumatic events. Neither the actual wars nor the forced removal of the Yacoub family from their homes in 1948, 1967 and 1990, are recalled in the scenes, and these traumatic events are also avoided in the summaries. This is an example of how Alyan uses ellipsis to show that traumatic events have occurred, even though they are rarely mentioned by the narrator.

Whenever it is mentioned in the novel, trauma is recalled retrospectively or from a physical distance, or, as with the war in 2006, from a developmental distance, that is from the perspective of the child who does not have the capacity to truly understand the complexity of that which is going on. Through exploiting the capacities of narrative, and by placing the trauma outside of the narrated instance, Alyan appears to recognise that trauma is in and of itself anti-narrative. It follows that from this perspective, *Salt Houses* might be said to not be a trauma narrative, but rather about the implicit effects of war on everyday life and the aftermath of traumatic events.

*Salt Houses* should be considered a trauma narrative *exactly because* of its formal consistency and temporal distance from the trauma. The use of a detached narrator, who enforces a disciplined and consistent form, reflects how trauma victims typically have a need for exterior order in their lives, when their interior selves are disrupted and their memories fragmented by the trauma. Thus the distance between the narrator and the narrative may be reflective of the distance between a trauma victim and his or her trauma. *Salt Houses* then becomes a trauma narrative because of the narrator's refusal to address the character's repression of trauma.

In a letter to Mustafa, Atef writes:

I wake up and it feels like my lungs are dropped in ice and I have to count, one two, three, four, listen to myself taking in air. Sometimes I wonder if this is really the waking world: coffee in a red mug, three children sleeping in three rooms, the television blaring in the background. (82)

Atef reflects on how, at times, the trauma that he relives in his dream appears more real to him than his waking world. As becomes apparent later in the novel, Atef is dealing with a lot of guilt in connection with Mustafa's fate, and this extract manifests Atef's difficulty with accepting his current state of normalcy and safety – of having

coffee, children and a blaring television. Indeed, there is a disconnection between Atef's present and repressed selves, but as Freud recognises in his theories of the subconscious, the repressed memories are still there, as if they were a shadow, which may resurface at any time – or particularly in moments when the mind is resting, for example when sleeping.

Corresponding to the above notion, *Salt Houses*, pursues four generations of the Yacoub family beginning in chronological order with the first generation whose only living member is Salma, the matriarch of the family. The trauma that Salma endures as the victim of the loss of her home and country at the hands of the Israeli assault on Palestine is deeply palpable through her narrative. Salma is not only the sole character featuring in the novel that heralds from the first generation of Yacoub refugees, in fact, *Salt Houses*, initiates with her narrative of her youngest daughter Alia's wedding. Right from the start, the presence of trauma is discernible even at a social event such as a wedding ceremony. Trauma magnifies itself through the cultural tradition of the cup-reading ritual which is shown as a common occurrence at a wedding in Palestinian families. Such a tradition previously bonded the varying generations of a family but now it can be seen that Alyan sets the stage of the novel through such traumatic foreboding in the context of a cultural tradition that will now taint the future generations with trauma. The instant Salma reads the dregs at the end of the coffee cup of her daughter, she decides to lie about her predictions. She lies to cover the constant dislocation and uprootedness that shocks her from the remnants left behind after drinking the coffee. Such turmoil and travel not only reside in the fate of Alia but also in her descendants as well.

Additionally, the coffee cups and the tray in which they are served feature as a powerful symbol in the novel they remind Salma of bygone days an era before the



war. It reminds Salma of the trauma of leaving her home and her prized possessions in the wake of war.

But it was gone, the old tray and coffee set...Salma cried out when she saw the tray, pointed it out to the vendor. He refused to sell it without the coffee set and so she'd taken it all, walking home with the large, newspaper-swathed bundle. It was her first satisfaction in Nablus (1)

The lines indicate her desire to resettle in Nablus her new house after she lost everything in Jaffa. Another thing that has been illuminated is that the tray of the coffee set has not lost its original shine over time even though the cups have become shabbier. The tray can be regarded as a symbol of their culture that remains untarnished, the only possession that Salma and her family could take away with them with the fall of Palestine when they left all material possessions behind. Whereas the cups that have worn out with the years designate the people of Palestine, the victims who were forced out of their homes and are living with the burden of trauma in their hearts. The writer uses the following words to describe the cups "monumental little things, heavy and hollow at once, with the contradictory weight of eggs" (8-9). Such a profound description of the cups is significant regarding the present analysis as cups can be seen as a symbol for the people of Palestine as they are indeed carrying the oppressive load of trauma in their hearts which weighs them down mentally and emotionally and which they transmit to future generations. This trauma does not make them physically powerful as superficially they are still human beings who have the same frailties and weaknesses.

Thus, the tradition of cup-reading is passed down from one generation to the next and previously existed as one of the patterns of the lives of Palestinian families.

Now, this cultural norm can be analyzed as a transgenerational transmission of trauma that previously may have existed just as a ritual to be done at marriages but now holds a more profound significance. This notion stems from the fact that with the advent of displacement, amid crisis and trauma, it is only the abstract traditional practices that they can carry to an unfamiliar place to adjust to somewhere new. For Salma the trauma of losing her home and husband never fully abates and now even the security of her practices betray her as the future she sees for Alia is the forbearer of a new chain of traumatic events.

Furthermore, Salma organizes Alia's wedding on a grand scale which can be analyzed how earnestly she wants to avoid passing her trauma to Alia. In addition to this, such an overt action of Salma can also be interpreted by what Bina Nir in her approach to study intergenerational trauma through the medium of familial relationships regards as "guilt and material compensation". This symptom of transgenerational trauma posits that due to the guilt experienced by survivors over the demise of their close ones, they are unable to develop familial bonds after the experience of trauma consequentially leading to providing for the children to such an extent that it becomes a kind of compensation for the lack of emotional support. This can be examined from the description of the wedding venue is nothing short of extravagant with "tea-light candles set in arcs around the plates" and as Salma says that this effect will look akin to a constellation when lights will be dimmed. This is in contrast to the wedding ceremony of Salma's eldest daughter Widad's as she was wed plainly in a mosque "the smell of incense potent around them" following the death of her father and Salma's husband Hussam. As Salma was unable to compensate Widad due to her trauma, her guilt pushes her to do everything lavishly at Alia's wedding.

The use of olfactory imagery as indicated above highlights the effect of trauma on the senses of the victim. In this case, Salma wants to rid herself of all the potent smells that she relates to Widad's wedding which take her back to a time of chaos and disorder and so with Alia's wedding she wants her senses to be in a state of relaxation. Widad's wedding can be analyzed in the light of the initial post-displacement phase in Nablus when the wounds of the pre-war stage that is the memories of Jaffa were lurking visibly in the background. With Alia's wedding, Salma is of the assumption that she has put her traumatic experiences behind her but this is not the case as this pain is a part of her existence and catches up to her through the ritual of cup reading when Salma's cultural practice betrays her by becoming the direct cause of her trauma.

In addition, Salma's husband Hussam also belongs to the first generation of the Yacoub family. He does not appear physically in the novel and can only be observed through Salma's memory of him. For Salma, Hussam can be interpreted as both a link to the life before the war as well as a traumatic connection to the war experiences and the time of displacement that followed as a result of it. Salma was born into poverty and after her marriage to the affluent Hussam, she became the mistress of a villa and fragrant orange groves. Their life of ease and comfort is plucked from them leading to a series of never-ending pain and suffering. First Salma loses her home to the war and then her husband also becomes a victim of this suffering and dies of lung cancer. "More than once he cried out into the night, "They took my home, they took my lungs. Kill me, kill me." Hassam fiercely believed his illness was tied to the occupation of Jaffa, the city with the peach-colored house they'd left behind" (3).

The above lines are significant as they highlight again the significance of olfactory senses when it comes to the connection between trauma and memory. The

burning air from Jaffa as the tanks rolled in as well as the smell of burnt oranges as they are razed to the ground signifies the memory of that primary place of trauma that haunted Hussam and manifested itself in the form of his lung cancer which refused to let him breathe with ease away from his home and homeland. In this way, Salma's last link to her past is traumatically wrenched away from her with Hussam's death.

A person is bound to the duty of protection of these spirits of the past and also for the ancestors to attain perpetual life and regeneration . The myth further details the story of two brothers and a woman who leaves and perish next to a river. This resonates with Salma's husband Hussam who leaves the home of his ancestors, his beloved Palestine, and dies from lung cancer. Symbolically Hussam's cancer can be regarded as a curse that condemns him for leaving his ancestral land.

Additionally, Mustafa, Salma's son, and one of the second generational members of this family through whom a prominent display of the burden of trauma and how it is passed down from one generation to the next can be explored. The effect of trauma on Mustafa can be seen both physically and mentally. His relationship to the two people in his life who dominate his thoughts provides evidence of this. Mustafa's response to Imam Bakri, the young and charismatic Imam of his mosque, and Ayah, the girl whom he loves, the refugee who lives in a hut on the outskirts of Nablus highlight the extent of his psychological trauma. For Mustafa the principal place of his trauma can be regarded as Palestine whose loss is transmitted to him from his dead father , Mustafa feels closer to Palestine. The trauma of his losing his home is especially palpable in the character of Mustafa as he desperately wants to do whatever he can to get back to his homeland are symbols of Palestine.

For Mustafa, can be regarded as a potent symbol of Palestine, one of the sources of his trauma. For him, the Imam is someone whom he aspires to become. He

is someone who can somehow lead him to his forgotten legacy which is his birthright. The mosque portray trauma in a cultural context. Mustafa feels like he is accomplishing something concrete due to the communal sense of brotherhood that he experiences in the mosque with his Shabab. These lines can be seen as a testimony of his psyche

he thrills at thought of the gathering...the kinship he feels in the mosque; the churning of something ancestral and looming... He leaves the meetings feeling moored, centered, as though someone has finally found the matchstick of his faith and torched fire to it (30-31)

Mustafa's identity is a product of reformulation due to the combined trauma of the death of his father and loss of homeland which can be examined as manifesting itself as the lack of faith that he has in his religion, a crucial part of his culture. The absence of his homeland, his roots have steered him away from his culture, his religion as he does not feel any bond to his religion but feels an affiliation towards the mosque only for the sense of brotherhood that it gives him. The line "Mustafa's spine tingles at only one word: Palestine" is profound as it signifies Palestine as not just his home, but also the center of his existence, his religion, his only faith. He wants to fill the abyss left behind by the death of his father by taking back his home aptly representing the uninterrupted flow of transgenerational trauma.

Additionally, Mustafa's narrative begins with his practice for the speech that Imam Bakri wants him to give at the mosque to rouse the people of Nablus, to awaken them to the need to strive to get back to their homeland –Palestine. At the end of his narrative, Mustafa begins his speech in the mosque but the actual speech that he gives, the actual incident is not portrayed in the novel. This is deeply significant as it mirrors

another event which is that of Alia's wedding which is not shown in the novel. Only the events leading up to both occasions are highlighted in detail which illuminates the nonlinearity of the plot echoing the distortion caused by trauma. The characters exist as if they are all living at the edge of a precipice. They are unaware where their life will take them next which is there is a sense of disruption not only in their lives due to the lack of home but also a general instability in the plot as well.

Furthermore, another factor that Bina Nir proclaims is the "high degree of codependence in the child-parent relationship" . which reflects the fact that parents deal with issues of separation in the past due to traumatic experiences. This hampers their ability to separate from their children and depend on them and the children on the other hand also feel this intense reliance, which prevents them from developing individual lives. This can be recognized from several instances of the novel. After Mustafa's death, Alia is left traumatically shattered but going to Amman every summer to her mother Salma's house consoles her physically and mentally as can be evidenced from her carefree and relaxed attitude as well type of clothing she wears during her visits. Salma can thus be regarded as Alia's anchor, the roots which she relies upon to keep her grounded to her past self and her life before the invasion. But after Salma's death, Alia becomes traumatically adrift. Salma's death for Alia can be assumed as signifying the burden that comes upon Alia as the first generation of the Yacoub family has now died and the trauma of being the oldest surviving member of the family is now transferred to her and Atef. The burden of such trauma results in Alia's anxiety and anxiousness. It can be contemplated that her fear of losing people and homes to death and destruction has tormented her psychologically to such lengths that she has become angry about her life and the people around her. She shields herself from her traumatic nightmares behind a cloak of bitterness. This can be

observed from the fight that Alia has with Souad her youngest daughter over her careless attitude to not use any plate while eating sandwiches covered in sugar which in turn attract swarms of ants.

Another significant character of the second generation who displays transgenerational trauma can be observed as Mustafa. He can be regarded as the recipient of intergenerational trauma as he can be seen as the representative of a lost generation of Arab men who are perpetually traumatized due to a lack of their home country. Mustafa's character is shaped due to his trauma as he thinks of himself as a crusader, an avenger who is destined to do something epic for the sake of his lost county. His memories of his life before the war are not depicted but the childhood memories of post-displacement and resettlement in Nablus have been mentioned which highlight the demise of his father. Mustafa hates his father, a thing which he has only confessed to Alia which signifies not only the trauma he felt at the death of his father but can also be analyzed as the betrayal that he feels after his death. The betrayal that not only Mustafa identifies with but this is symbolic of how the entire younger generation feels about their previous generation. The trauma they suffer from at the inherent betrayal of having fled from their rightful homeland during the invasion. Additionally, his trauma has imparted a sense of delusion in his mind that through the use of his oratory skills he can somehow unite the lost generation of Palestine and lead them to a glorious victory.

Mustafa's conversation with his mosque's Shabab Omar is important as it signifies their rootless condition. The Israeli forces not only took their homes when they invaded but also their right to progress in their lives. As Omar poignantly displays his frustration that the building they are constructing

Starts and stops. Bastards are stingy with permits...And if not that, we get hassled on zoning. If we're not getting fucked from one side, it's coming from the other...light them and smoke, facing the valley. For a couple of moments they are silent, each lost in thought(25)

This highlights a sense of mental anguish of the younger generation and their existence in a state of limbo which starts but continuously comes to a halt as they are reminded of the lack of control that they possess on their own lives. This emotional trauma shapes the identity of Mustafa and all his mosque's Shabab. Moreover, The writer's use of the word "Shabab" is also meaningful in the novel as it not only means the youth or the young men of Palestine but it also signifies something of far greater magnitude than this young generation of Palestine are wholly ignorant of the reality of fighting in a war that their older generation had witnessed. They are naïve of the atrocities of war and only gather in the mosque to give speeches and have discussions completely unaware of what happens in a war. The mosque and the communal sense of brotherhood that Mustafa, Atef, and the other Shabab feel provides a cultural context for their experience of trauma. Though they have not gone through the brutality of war the mental torment of not only losing their home but their father figures due to the occupation by Israeli forces has traumatized them.

Another aspect of Mustafa's personality that has been shaped by his experiences of trauma is his reluctance to marry and start a family of his own. Even after the drastic step that his mother takes of leaving the house due to his hesitancy to marry, he remains in an unmarriageable state. Mustafa's disinclination towards settling down can indicate his emotional state which yearns only for Palestine. The call of home hinders him from following his mother's wishes and putting his roots down in



Nablus which for him can be taken as a symbol of a fleeting sojourn. Whereas another characteristic of Mustafa's trauma that highlights his delusional tendency is the language that he employs. The language he uses while he practices his speech "They want us to yield" (26) and similarly the language that he utilizes to think and speak about is quite suggestive in nature. He uses deeply romanticized language to display his admiration for Imam Bakri as well as his need to prove himself as the savior of his homeland.

The absence of a father figure in his life has led to Mustafa having a desperate need to be recognized by a similar substitute which in this case proves to be Imam Bakri. Furthermore, the turmoil and trauma that Mustafa goes through psychologically, manifests itself in a physical form through the disarray of his house. After Salma's departure, he rarely cleans, and as can be observed from the lines

Mustafa walks around the kitchen scratching his head. He does his familiar dance, opening the drawers, eyeing the detritus in the refrigerator... But the truth is the disarray doesn't bother him; most of the time he barely sees the mess. Only after speaking with his mother does the unkempt state of the house come into relief (27- 28)

These lines are indicative of the chaos and disruption that is inherently rampant in his mind. They can be recognized as the physical symbols of Mustafa's rootlessness. As a consequence of trauma, disorderliness pervades his personality.

Intergenerational trauma which passes from the second to the third generation can be aptly considered from the tactile tension that exists between Alia and her youngest daughter Souad. As Atef, Alia's husband once remarks to Widad, "I've never seen two people more alike", which suggests that Alia transferred the turmoil raging within her to Souad which has subsequently led them to become mirror images

of each other. Moreover, Alia's trauma is further incensed as Souad does not only mirror her, but she is also similar to Mustafa, Alia's beloved brother both in her mannerisms and physical features. She sees "Mustafa in the twitch of her mouth, the lips downward when she is impatient or afraid" , and as Salma remarks when Souad curses at news report "Allah have mercy, she has your brother's blood in her". Thus, Souad can be regarded as a physical manifestation of Alia's traumatic past which continues to haunt her in the present as well due to its overwhelming presence in her daughter.

Moreover, Souad's and Alia's relationship indicates the presence of another symptom of transgenerational trauma which Nir proclaims is "parental overprotectiveness", according to which the children of survivors flourish in such an environment that incorporates unrestrained anxiety and rigidity regarding exposure to the external environment . This can be investigated from a heated confrontation that occurs between Alia and Souad can also be perceived as brutally traumatizing Alia. When Souad returns late at night Alia begins to shout and yell at her due to her suffocating over protectiveness for her child. Moreover, it also gives her a sense of relief. This also signals towards the similarity in both Alia and Mustafa mentioned previously as both rage and fight to convey their emotions. Mustafa used to love when he could fight passionately to prove his point and Alia is like him in this manner as well further displaying the staunch connection between the two. It is the way their personalities have been shaped due to the trauma they have suffered throughout their lives.

In addition, this fight between Alia and Souad is significant as Alia is stripped from the shelter of her last defense causing her psychological agony. Souad sees

through her mother as she hurls the very last thing Alia expected anyone to know is how unhappy she is in Kuwait and Souad says

Oh, oh, this again? It's like living in a theater. You want everyone to be unhappy so we can be like one of your American films... Souad's disappointment with the family has been a keen, a living thing... Souad smiles like someone about to sweep a poker table... been pining over Amman like some jilted lover (143)

For Alia, Amman can be gauged as a substitute for Nablus and Mustafa, a secret which she guards closely to her heart, and Souad knowing this precious secret induces a pressuring sense of depression and anxiety within her. Furthermore, Alia sees the ghost of Mustafa lurking in Souad not only physically but psychologically as well which instigates the gulf of trauma and restlessness which exists between the mother and daughter. Alia is unable to come to terms with the loss of her home and the deaths of her mother and brother which wound her psychologically. Moreover, the emotional damage that Alia goes through following the hasty marriages of her children can be considered from a cultural context. During the initial time of invasion following Souad's whirlwind marriage to Elie, she heartily disapproves of Souad's choices. Subsequently, Souad's status as a divorcee is also a point of contention between them.

Additional minute details illustrated by the author can be examined as indications of the transference of past upheavals. The avid use of sugar by all four generations of the Yacoub family can be recognized as a small but vivid detail that Alyan employs to connect the members of the family irrevocably. Even though sugar mostly symbolizes positivity and optimism, but in this novel, it does not herald anything peaceful. In the first generation, Salma used to drown her Kanafeh in syrup and so does her daughter Alia which is further brought to the limelight when the

relatives at her wedding tease her to not take so much and leave some for the rest. In the second generation, the titular point of contention between Alia and Souad is the topic of bread that she eats covered in sugar which attracts swarms of ants due to her carelessness. Finally, in the fourth generation, Manar, Souad's daughter, eats cereal which she "smothers in sugar". In every scene that Alyan uses sugar signals towards the strife and trauma that plagues the lives of the characters. The sweetness of sugar is vividly juxtaposed to psychological tension that rules the lives of the characters. Manar supremely blames her mother for the divorce of her parents and the ensuing chaos of dislocation that erupts in their lives as a cause of this.

The strain that perpetually exists in the life of Souad as it is passed on from Alia due to their psychological unrest, prevents them from having a healthy relationship. The history of such traumatic turbulence in their lives can be traced back to Salma who begins this chain of cataclysmic events by lying about what she sees in Alia's future. Even the language that Alyan associates with sugar, utilizing words such as drown, smother, spill, etc. is in deep opposition to the positivity and happiness that sugar exudes and is tainted by the overwhelming aura of trauma that pervades the life of the characters. For the characters, sugar does not provide them with a sense of happiness but it, in turn, functions as a potent and dangerous drug which smothers the harsh realities of their lives. Thus the juxtaposition which the writer creates through her use of a positive symbol such as sugar in the above circumstances results in foregrounding the accursed presence of intergenerational trauma and tension in the lives of the members of the Yacoub to an even more glaring extent.

Souad's narrative, Alia and Atef's daughter, marking the third generation of the Yacoub family continues well into her adulthood, even after the birth of her two children-Manar and Zain. Elie and Souad go through a divorce after some years of

marriage. Souad continuously shifts with her family first from Paris, then to Boston, and finally coming to Beirut. The initial trauma that Souad goes through, as a consequence of the complete erasure of her life before the war, affects her in a magnitude of ways. Souad's relationship with Elie as well as her children is strained and disrupted due to the turmoil that roils her mind and affects her psychologically. Souad's immediate family can be recognized as an exact mirror image of her own dysfunctional family underscoring the transmission of trauma to another generation of the Yacoub family. Even when Souad finally comes to Beirut, Alia comes to aid them in settling. The gap of strife that exists between them further illustrates the trauma that has been passed from one generation to another. It is accentuated through their interactions with each other.

Through the course of Souad's narrative, Alia appears as someone in the background but still a prominent influence in the life of her daughter. All such instances suggest the extent to which past traumatic experiences indubitably prick and harass the present mental state of Alia leading to her caustic attitude towards her family. On the other hand, the scene in which Souad sits down wearily in the store with Alia while unpacking boxes and Alia tries to console her to a certain degree is significant in analyzing their relationship as it emphasizes the helplessness that both suffer from in the face of adversity. The trauma which both of them have undergone in their lives has made it arduous to the point of impossible to have conventional relations between the mother and daughter. This is illustrated through Souad's own words "With her mother, Souad is her prickliest self, a cat stroked the wrong way" (161).

Similarly, when they both do try to overcome their prickliness for each other, it seems strained and detached in nature as is evocatively described by the writer as

Souad thinks of her mother's absence at her wedding...The air is stiff between them. Alia looks intently at her lap...They'll get used to it...Souad feels tears spring. Without looking up, her mother reaches out, fast as a rattlesnake, and takes her hand. She squeezes it, once, hard (222)

Alyan likens this ordinary act of affection to that of a rattlesnake. Snakes are typically associated with fertility, immortality, transformation, etc. But in Alyan's case, she makes use of the particular simile of a rattlesnake which is venomous and not just any snake, to emphasize the magnitude to which Alia has been afflicted by the disruption and distortion she has experienced in her life. Her actions are governed by urgency and potency that is consequential of the trauma she has suffered as she varies to show even her daughter some heartfelt affection. This can also be understood as Alia's desire to shield herself from trauma by keeping her family members isolated from her.

Moreover, Alia's favorite child Karam is a cause of pain for her as he also marries against her wishes to a girl Alia does not approve of. Looking at it from a cultural context, for Alia, the marriages of her children can be understood as alliances that scatter and displace her children all over the globe. The children, after their marriages, become detached and distanced from their parents. Marriage for Alia can be seen as a symbol of union and happiness but this cultural norm becomes a point of traumatic disruption for her. The marriages of her children can be considered in profound contrast to Alia's marriage ceremony which was a momentous and joyous occasion for her. On the other hand, she completely refuses to attend the marriage ceremony of Souad "saying she wouldn't show her face to such an abomination" (180). A further source of Alia's trauma can be regarded as her children. The

estrangement that she feels towards them can be seen through "how infrequently her other two children visit, the rare times she gets to see her grandchildren" (181).

Thus, the difference in the lifestyle of her children from her own, isolated from their roots and cultural practices, and the subsequent gulf this creates can be recognized as one of the major sources of Alia's psychological distress.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

It is evident from the novel *Salt Houses* that it is a traumatic experience to be displaced from one's home. To the characters of *Salt Houses*, homes are fragile and temporary and throughout generations, the families of the is repeatedly forced to flee from their homes. In this uprooted and uncertain way of life, it is difficult to create a sense of belonging, anywhere. Although the characters create substitutes for home in relationships, and temporary consolation is achieved through reading poetry or writing letters, traumatic memories of war, occupation and displacement impede the characters' ability to find a home away from home.

*Salt Houses*, in contrast, challenges the notion of nostalgia for the homeland. Throughout the narrative, its various characters repress not just the traumatic memories of the wars and the displacement from Palestine, but also any connection to Palestine. Alia believes that “‘nostalgia is an affliction’ and ‘longing for what had vanished’ merely serves to ‘waste a person away’” (74-75).

This is, contrasted in the epilogue of *Salt Houses*, in which Alia tries to remember, and therefore wastes away. Alia's narrative ,and Atef's, clearly emphasise the importance of remembering and not repressing the past yet this is not to suggest that one ought to be nostalgic, or sentimental about their past. When Atef realises that his grandchildren have found his letters, he appears content with finally letting those letters – and the past that they represent go. Likewise, when Manar is back in Palestine and decides to leave, she is accepting the part of her that is connected to Palestine, but she is not set on retrieving a Palestine that used to be. In this context, Alzheimer's ambiguous function in the epilogue may serve not only as an allegory for the importance of remembering, but also for the inevitability of forgetting, and the



uselessness of clinging to the past. Without diminishing the Palestinian right to return, this dialogue between remembering and letting go which *Salt Houses* depicts, may encourage a nudge towards the future to find possible solutions, rather than dwelling in the past.

In spite of the different approaches to the importance of the homeland in the creation of belonging, Alyan's novels are similar in many aspects. The transgenerational address displacements following the Six-Day war, and both are set across the Middle East as well as in the United States. Alia lose a brother during the Six-Day war, and Manar is the members of 'Justice for Palestine' groups at their universities. In an interview by Carrie Mullins for Alyan admits to having read and enjoyed Abulhawa's work, Alyan's novel depicts an economically privileged Palestinian family, whose moves are often voluntary and whose traumatic experiences are understated and implicit. By depicting an economically privileged family rather than a refugee restricted by lack of economical means, Alyan expands the fictional representation of Palestinians to include also those who move voluntarily. Another noteworthy difference between the novels is the use of narrative strategies. By not conforming to the strategies of the stereotypical trauma narrative, Alyan's third-person, and somewhat detached, narration echoes the characteristics of the realist novel, and challenges the future form of the trauma novel.

The traumatic experiences disrupt attachments between individual self and others by analyzing the place of trauma. Place as a symbol signifies the value of trauma as it encompasses the physical location, cultural and social contextual elements, and the history of the traumatic incident for the characters involved. The textual analysis shows the multitudinous ways in which trauma displaces and are forced to endure the weight of the trauma which eventually transforms them through

the course of their travels. The novel chosen for the study represent varying traumatic incidents and the place of such experiences is interpreted as a dominant aspect of the analysis. The research depicts the way the characters experience trauma regarding a particular place as well as how the cultural, social and physical conditions influence them.

The present research observes that in *Salt Houses* several members of the Yacoub family suffer from the effects of the trauma passed down from the older to the younger generation through the conceptual approach of transgenerational trauma. The thesis portrays the transmission of trauma passing unremittingly from predecessors to descendants. The textual analysis yields from the exposition that Salma, the matriarch of the family observes the future of her daughter, Alia, on the eve of her wedding in the remnants of her coffee cup. There she sees signs of displacement and dislocation which span the course of the entire text as she and her children and grandchildren are doomed to this unsettled life. Numerous major traumatic incidents come to pass through the course of numerous generations through the Six-Day War of 1967, invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussein, 9/11 throughout which the family suffers and scatters continuously marking this novel as a traumatic saga of an unfortunate family. This research presents a study of the multiple generations of this family as they endure repeated, contagious and timeless trauma as a result of all the places they are displaced to throughout their lives.

The textual interpretation conducted also shows the characters in the novel as witnesses to the shattering influence of trauma in a domesticized setting. Alyan has analyzed as the chroniclers of the nightmarish experiences that their respective people were and are still forced to endure, reducing them to an unsettled and traumatized existence that reconfigures their personality. Even though the writer is Palestinian-

American having mostly lived in America their whole lives, their novels are a testimony of the trauma of their respective homelands. This is observed from the minute and simple details, the use of certain words from their respective languages, the respectful understanding of the traditions renders the depiction of trauma uniquely authentic. It is observed in the analysis that from the very beginning of *Salt Houses*, Salma the matriarch, attempts to eschew the traumatic destiny of her family when she deceives herself as well as her favorite daughter Alia. By falsifying her narrative through the sacred and traditional act of cup reading which Salma holds in high esteem as cup readers must never lie about what they see, highlights a sense of foreboding about the forthcoming trauma in their lives. The analysis of a disruptive series of episodes as the characters are relentlessly shuffled from one place to another is portrayed. In the introductory chapter, trauma is alluded to as an abnormal type of wound. It can be referred to here as the investigation of the text portrays the narratives as wounds that proclaim the harsh intensity of the trauma through a fictional medium. The destruction of Palestine caused by war and occupation vividly features in the works which result in burdening the habitual lives of the people.

Due to the limitations of time and the field of inquiry, it is impervious to grasp an understanding of any topic from all known perspectives. This study is also delimited to a particular aspect and other researchable venues of investigation for academic scholars can include the study of these particular texts from a formalist point of study. The formalist approach may be considered a preliminary form of study but coupling it with concurrent texts such as *Salt Houses* can aid in sparking an interest in the area of Arabic literature.

Secondly, another interpretative approach that presents possibilities for further study is the feminist field of exploration. The novel predominantly deal with the lives

of female characters and the male characters are mostly overshadowed by them. The current study deals with this aspect about how it signifies the trauma suffered by the characters, but a more meticulous examination can be conducted engaging with certain queries such as the kind of roles that women have, the stereotypical portrayal of females, the treatment of the author towards both men and women featuring in the novel. Such prospects of research can open areas for further opportunities of inquiry for academic scholars.

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**A Psycho-social Analysis of Githa Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel* As a Quest Narrative**

A project submitted to

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **A Psycho-social Analysis of Githa Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel As a Quest Narrative*** 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 Merlin. A during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Psycho-social Analysis of Githa Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel* As a Quest Narrative** 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**

**April 2023**

*A. Merlin*  
**Merlin. A**

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## Preface

The project entitled **A Psycho-social Analysis of Githa Hariharan's *When Dream Travel As a Quest Narrative*** weaves round Scheherazade or Shahrzad of the thousand and one nights a vibrant, inventive story about the old game that's never played out: the quest for love and power. Githa Hariharan multi voiced narrative assumes the significance of modern myth.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of Indian Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter, **Psychological Motivations** depicts the psyche of sultan who wants a virgin every night. There is his brother, who makes an enemy of darkness and tries to banish it and there are their ambitions bride, the sisters Shahrzad and Dunyazad aspiring to be heroines and martyrs.

The third chapter, **From Enslavement to Emancipation** reveals the concerns of women from own perspective. Githa Hariharan does it with the help of recreating myth and dreamy environment.

The fourth chapter, **Art of Pastiche** deals with the postmodern technique which means to combine, or paste together, multiple elements. Pastiche is employed by Githa Hariharan as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic aspects of modern concept.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and validates the title.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Indian literature - one of the most ancient of literature has been exemplary for rest of the world. The term refers to the literary work that had been produced in various Indian languages, since ages. In ancient times, literary works used to be imparted orally. Literary work used to be transmitted orally in earlier times. Indian English literature is an honest enterprise to demonstrate the ever-rare gems of Indian writing in English. From being a singular and exceptional, rather gradual native flare-up of geniuses, Indian writing has turned out to be a new form of Indian culture and voice in which India converses regularly. Indian poets, novelists, essayists, and dramatists have been making momentous and considerable contributions to world literature since pre-independence era, the past few years have witnessed a gigantic prospering and thriving of Indian English writing in the global market.

In the context of international literature, Indian English literature has gained an independent position. The topics covered in Indian writing in English convert a wide range. Recent Indian English fiction has been attempting to represent the Indian experience of the modern problem, even while this literature continues to reflect Indian Culture, custom, social values, and even Indian history through the depiction of life in India and Indians living abroad. There are English and American pundits and critics who enjoy reading Indian English novels. One of the most notable gifts of English education to India, according to prof. M. N. Naik, is prose fiction. Although storytelling originated in India, the novel as it today was an import from the west.

India's substantial contribution to 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 and the like. This literary movement being fortified by the overwhelming output by novelists and distinguished itself as a remarkable force in world fiction. This has been achieved by novelists who sought to prove their inner creative urges in English language, which is indeed an alien tongue for them. It is to the credit of these novelists that they have overcome the hurdles of writing in a foreign language and have been evolved a distinctive style for themselves by mastering the intricacies of the language and assimilating in it the hues and flavors of the Indian- subcontinent. Raja Rao famously argued in 1938, in the preface to his novel *Kanthapura*, for using English, but English adapted to Indian conditions.

The struggle for independence was a mighty and momentous movement sweeping the entire nation and exerting tremendous impact on the sense of national consciousness among the literary fraternity. Thus the lucid description of the freedom struggle showcased images of the awakened Indians who sought to regain their freedom from the grueling and torturous regime of the Britishers. Apart from these reflections, the writers were able to propagate their point of view, which ultimately helped to motivate and guide the masses. Thus the fixation on religious aestheticism was replaced by concerns on socio – political issues. The joy of accomplishing the grandiose feat of obtaining Independence was abruptly marred by the horrendous and traumatic partition of 1947. East – west conflict, multiculturalism, social realism, gender issues, comic aspect of human nature, ecological concerns, magic realism, diasporic writings and the like became the themes of the post – Independent writers.

English has acquired a rare privilege and popularity in India especially among the elite and the middle classes. It is increasingly being used by writers to give shape to the

conflicting dilemmas and issues that confront the human psyche. It has become a convenient medium to express the intrinsic talents of the writers. Moreover, the Indian English writers use it with enviable ease and gaining mastery of a foreign tongue to articulate the vagaries and vicissitudes of an individual's consciousness in a realm of its own aptly substantiable the expansiveness and verve of the Indian English writer.

Indian writing in English has commanded unstinted admiration in both home and abroad, is now in its full swing. It has carved out a new track, a new vision – a vision that is replete with an un answering faith and hope, myths and traditions, customs, and rites. If one dives into the works of the Indian stalwarts of English fiction, it is revealed that their works are not an imitation of English literary pattern, but highly original and intensely Indian in both theme and spirit. Indian English literature is two hundred years old. Sri Aurobindo stands like a huge oak spreading its branches over these two centuries. The contribution of Sri Aurobindo as a perfect writer and craftsman myths. Sri Aurobindo envisages spiritual humanism. Aurobindo's famous works "The Human Cycle and The Ideal of Human Society" taken together to give a complete picture of Aurobindo's version of the future possibilities of man shows the humanistic tend in his thought.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) is a celebrated writer in the sphere of English literature. His creative genius is so much accounting and his literary output is so rich and varied that the phrase 'myriad-minded', which Mathew Arnold had used for Shakespeare, can aptly be used for him also. He was awarded the Nobel prize in literature in 1913 for his immortal poetic composition *Gitanjali* (1913). The genius Tagore, in addition to being a great worldwide poet, is also a novelist, playwright, short-story writer, musician, philosopher, painter, educationalist, reformer, and critic in every discipline, and he has established a place for himself. He also makes and effort, through his work, to draw

attention to some of the harsh realities of life. His books are witty, puzzling, and full of genuine literary delights. Nine of Tagore's thirteen works have been translated into English. *Gora*, *The House and the World* (1910), *The Wreck* (1921), *Binodini* (1964), and many other works have been translated.

Post – Independence India has been making quick strides in the field of science and technology. There has been an admirable economic growth in India in recent times. So, the novel proved to be an effective medium for the reflection of the spirit of the age, encompassing the bitter and sweet realities of the period. The great proliferation of the Indian English novel also owes its credit to the sudden increase of interest in the new literature of post-colonial nations by the west.

A host of contemporary post-colonial writers like Rushdie, Arundati Roy, Meena Alexander, Anita Nair and Jhumpa Lahiri have initiated the process of decolonizing the 'Colonial English' and using it as a medium to express Indian thoughts and sensibilities with a distinctive Indian style. Post – Independence India also produced several novels involving the causes and aftermaths of the freedom movement. The novels that belong to this category include Nayantara Sahgal's *A Time to be Happy* (1952), Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, *Inquilab* (1955), R. K. Narayanan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) etc. The triumvirs Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R. K. Narayan were the novelists who stabilized and fortified the Indian English Fiction with their ample works and unique literary style. The majority of Mulk Raj Anand's (1905-2004) novels bring to the limelight the inequalities of society and trials and tribulations of the less fortunate. *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936), *The Village* (1939), and *The private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953) addresses the evils existing in the society in the Marxist terms. His novels also give a graphic description of the daily existence of his characters, their tale of woe, sweat and misery. R. K. Narayan (1906 – 2001)

is another celebrity author who enjoys a unique position in the crowded literary scene of Indian Fiction. The greatest merit of his language and styles lives in its simplicity. His famous novels are *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The Painter of signs* (1933), *Swami and Friend* (1935), *The English Teacher* (1945), *The Guide* (1958). His writing has stretched across seven decades and occupies a remarkable position in the history of Indian English Fiction. Narayan has gained mastery of the art of portraying characters and nuances of the English language.

Raja Rao's (1908-2006) reputation as a novelist of metaphysics and philosophy is amply justified by his substantial contribution in upholding these themes in his novels. Women in Raja Rao's novels suffers from domestic injustice and tyrannical tradition, but the writer suggests no way out of their dilemma. His women characters, who are a little ambitious end up playing the devoted role of a wife like Savitri in *The Serpent and Rope* (1960). *Kanthapura* (1938) by Raja Rao emphasizes the influence of the Gandhian movement by highlighting the 1920's and the Gandhi-Irwin pact of 1931. He focuses on a small village through which he explores the impact of the freedom movement on the villagers and also captures their roles in the struggle for Independence. Rao used his novels to spread the Gandhian message and as propaganda against social evils.

Women novelists have played a crucial and momentous role in enhancing the quality and quantity of the Indian English Fiction. They have further added the women's perspective and feministic dimensions to the novels. In the past, the work by the Indian women authors has always been undervalued because of some patriarchal assumptions. Indian society gave priorities to the work of male experiences. Several elements contributed to the demise of Indian women writers throughout the eighteenth century. The creation of women's literature also decreased as a result of all these causes. More and more women took an active role in



Indian's reformist movement against British rule in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, women's writing was considered as a powerful medium of modernism and feminist statements. Today is the generation of those women writers who have money and western education.

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 get expression to the Indian experience of the modern predicaments. Indian's substantial contribution to world literature is largely due to the profusely creative literary works generated by Indian novelists in English.

Indian novelists contemplated and deliberated on multifarious range of issues like nationalism, freedom struggle, social realism, individual consciousness and the like. This literary movement fortified by the overwhelming output by novelists distinguished itself as a remarkable force in world fiction. This has been achieved by novelists who sought to prove their inner creative urges in English language, which is indeed an alien tongue for them. It is to the credit of these novelists that they have overcome the hurdles of writing in a foreign language and have evolved a distinctive style for themselves by mastering the intricacies of the language and assimilating in it the hues and flavors of the Indian – subcontinent. Moreover, the Indian English writers use it with enviable ease gaining mastery of a foreign language to articulate the vagaries and vicissitudes of an individual's consciousness in a realm of its own aptly substantiate the expansiveness and verve of the Indian English writer.

Paro Anand is an Indian author of children books, young adults and adults including novels short stories and plays. She won the Sahitya Akademi Bal Sahitya Puruskar in 2017 for her anthology *Wild Child* and other stories. She speaks about and wrote extensively on children's literature in India. She headed the National Book Trust India, the apex body for children's literature in India. She also runs a podcast on HubHopper called 'Literature in Action' and was an invite to the India Conference at the Harvard of Business School in 2018. Jyoti Aror is an Indian tech blogger – turned – writer. She is best known for her books *You Came Like Hope* (2017) and *Lemon Girl* (2014). Her works have been recognized by the former Chief Minister of Delhi, Shiela Dikshit and Union Minister Maneka Gandhi. Her other books include *Dream's Sake* (2011), *Fred by Love* (2016), and *Just Romance* (2019).

Sculptor Sonal Ambani began her creative journey three decades ago, sculpting across various mediums and styles. Her work bridges the gap between nature and urbanization, seeking to create a delicate balance between these two diverse ecosystems. Sonal sculpts with the intention of challenging the viewer to create their own meaning by reflecting upon their own life experiences. She believes that are needs to find that balance between visual elegance and intrinsic contemplation. Her inspiration can be linked to a variety of artistic endeavors from a young age. Growing up in the heart of New York City, she was surrounded by the rich heritage and culture of the museums and art galleries that were pushing the boundaries of art she is a recipient of the prestigious Prefer Peace Prize given to her in New York in 2010, women of Excellence Award from FICCI-FLO in Ahmedabad in 2018 and the Times of India Women Power Award for Art and sculpture in 2019. Her sculptures have been covered in many publications, most recently in *Architectural Digest* in February 2020, and in Arianna Huffington's *Thrive Global* in 2021 and 2022. Among these contemporary writers, Githa Hariharan's writings stands interesting.

Githa Hariharan was born in Coimbatore, India, and grew up in Bombay and Manila. She was educated in these two cities and later in the United States. She got Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature and Psychology from Bombay University, 1974; and a Master of Arts in Communication, Fairfield University, Connecticut, 1977. She worked as a staff writer as an editor in the Mumbai, Chennai and New Delhi offices of Orient Longman, where she was responsible for the social science, fiction and women's studies lists. From 1985 to 2005, she worked as a freelance professional editor for a range of academic institutions and foundation. She is, at present, a writer based in New Delhi.

In 1992, Hariharan challenged the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act as discriminatory against women. Gita Hariharan's published work includes novels, short stories, essays, newspaper articles and columns. Her first novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* (1992) won the commonwealth writer's prize for best first book in 1993. Her other novels include *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* (1994), *When Dreams Travel* (1999), *In Times of Siege* (2003), *Fugitive Histories* (2009) and *I Have Become the Tide* (2019). A collection of highly acclaimed short stories, *The Art of Dying*, was published in 1993, and a book of stories for children, *The Winning Team*, in 2004. Her collection of essays, *Almost Home: Cities and Other places*, was published in 2014. She has also edited a volume of stories in English translation from four major South Indian Language, *A Southern Harvest* (1993), co-edited a collection of essays entitled *From India to palestine: Essays in Solidarity* (2014), and co-edited *Battling for India: A Citizen's Reader* (2019)

Hariharan's fiction is translated into a number of languages including French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, Greek, Urdu, and Vietnamese; her essays and fiction have been included in anthologies such as Salman Rushdie's *Mirrorwork: 50 years of Indian writing 1947-1997*. She wrote a monthly column for many years on different aspects of culture and

their political and social underpinnings, in *The Telegraph*, Kolkata. She has been visiting Professor or writer-in-Residence in several university, including Dartmouth College and George Washington University in the United States, the University of Canterbury at Kent in the UK, Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, and in India, Jamia Millis Islamia and Goa University. Githa Hariharan is the winner of commonwealth writers prized for her best first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*. In all her novels, she deals with the theme of social and political issues. Githa Hariharan's novels focus on feminist components and the *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* is not different from this. Nevertheless, Githa Hariharan Portrays the Marginalized female in Indian society.

Hariharan's novels are quite driven, as her acknowledgement recommend, as she thanks the writers of works which have affected her every person from Ivan Illich and R.D.Laing to Susan Sontag as well as Oliver Sacks and she likewise mentions the effect of works like the Panchatantra. Hariharan manages to make use of them effectively in the story of her, as well as the novel does not work nicely simply as well story as well. Vasu Master and the pupil of his development as well as find out as well as come to terms with the world around them as well as the locations of their in it, as well as Hariharan relate this procedure quite well.

Githa Hariharan has made feminism through various symbols. She is mentioned that the concept of life of females must be made up of 'live and let live'. Enjoy life by sharing just caring for each other. In *The Ghost of Vasu Master*, Githa Hariharan also shows feminism with the characters of Mangala, Jameela, Eliamma. Here the significance of Eliamma is actually the earth mother reveals that she uses the title in a symbolic fashion. Its been viewed that the novel is made on teacher student relationship. The method is quite well utilized by the writer. The novel may be viewed as an experimental beginning.

Women are identified not by the struggling improvement of the mind of theirs or maybe there will or maybe the spirit of theirs but by the kid bearing qualities of theirs as well as the status of theirs as compared to males that make and do as well as rule the planet. It is very little wonder that when females come to the process of rendering the knowledge of theirs they feature a deep sense of their distance as well as marginality from creating a significant impact, or maybe self-defined job of the globe.

In her article ‘Discrete Thoughts’, Hariharan has succinctly pointed out that she was a dissatisfied teenager, full of emotions and undefined yearning. She acknowledges that she was also a passionate reader, and her reading was wide and eclectic. So, writing came to her the as the natural way to express what she felt, whether it was doubt, curiosity or bewilderment. According to Hariharan the early stage of writing is a point at which writers, and she emphasizes her own case as a proof, have a developing world view. That is why it took her a while to publish her first novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*. She also explains the difficulty of being a woman and a writer at one and the same time.

*When Dreams Travel* seems to be her most forceful statement on two of the issues that are perennially relevant to humans, “gender politics” and the “abuse of power.” Coady and Miller in “Literature, Power and the Recovery of Philosophical Ethics,” observe that “Literary texts, traditionally viewed as repositories of moral and aesthetic insight or challenge, tend now to be seen as predominantly ideological constructions, or sites of power struggles between social forces of various kinds”. *When Dreams Travel*, which is Hariharan’s recasting of the famous *One Thousand and One Nights* or *The Arabian Nights Entertainment* as it came to be known and celebrated in the West, via the first French translation by Antonie Galland, deconstructs and in the process re-examines some deeply embedded misogynist ideologies in cherished patriarchal texts.

*When Dreams Travels* flows smoothly and tosses between “dreams” with a narrative and recalling memories. The novel includes the theme of desire, death, and other negativities. The author has woven the story quite well, so much so that the readers can easily grasp and understand the plot. Poetry and magic play too integral roles in the entire story. The story of “When Dreams Travel” focuses on typical desires, and death.

As the three women, Shahrzad, who is the storyteller too; Dunyazad and Dilshad wait on Sultan Shahryar’s endless obsessions for numerous things like sex, stories, power, love, death and memory, the author lets herself indulge in a free fall of the narrative, which is rich and of multiple colours. Their women characters stories are simple and similar to those women’s stories, who are seen in the day-to-day life. The pre-existing sharp-edged patriarchal power is felt while reading the story. Dunyazad is a middle-aged woman, who is wedded to Sultan Shahryar’s brother, Shahzaman. She has lived with him in Samarkand for many years. But now she is a widow. To find out the real story and the reasons behind Shahrzad’s death, which was unexpected and sudden, she reaches the palace of Shahryar and, Shahryar had recently become a widower then.

The story is set in the fictional city of Shahabad, where Dunyazad assists Prince Umar the Sultan’s son in the taking over the throne-mentioned as “a new order of things”. Her story goes into the forest and a fairy-tale scenario. As soon as she says these words, she sees a way out of the forest. She is in the search for adventure, and desires for an “unmapped territory”, which lands her there. She puts forth this question as she realizes that she is living a script. While in the forest, she meets two men, one after the other; the first man deceives her into marrying him with a promise that he will help her find her way; and the second man,

who was a strange yet graceful deer-man, was seduced by her, in her words, it was like “the king seizes a virgin boy”. It is this importunate firmness of pre-existing stories- of magical fairy tales; of myths and fictions; fictions about women and their lives that are well-explored by the author in the retelling of *The Arabian Night* through this story. The second chapter focuses on the psychological motivation in *When Dreams Travel* by Githa Hariharan.

## Chapter Two

### Psychological Motivations

*When Dreams Travel* is an intense work of psychology by Githa Hariharan. The subject of the novel is taken from *The Arabian Nights* or *Thousand and One Nights*. There are many facets in the novel which may lead to its rich psychoanalytic reading. The novel has its own psychology which remains at the backdrop of each word as well as the leaf of the novel. The novel tells the story of a king in the lands of India and China, who before dying divides his kingdoms into his two sons; Shahabad to the elder son Shahryar and Samarkand to the younger one, Shahzaman. Both brothers get engrossed in their kingly duties and with the passage of time get married. The two brothers are described in the novel as:

We know nothing of Shahzaman but his cleverness with a horse, and his rather ambitious name, Shan-zaman, shan of time, ruler of age. But the principal heir, Shahryar (shahr-yar, friend of the city, master of the city), is also reputed to govern his kingdom with such justice that all his subjects love him, such as the love of a subject is. (9)

After twenty years, Shahryar longs to see his brother and sends Wazir to invite Shahzaman. On meeting his elder brother Shahzaman greets him with a broken heart as he has recently discovered the infidelity of his wife, who, in her husband's absence, has been making out with a slave and whom Shahzaman having caught red-handed kills on the spot. The instance of him killing his wife is depicted in a loaded language: "who knows what unfathomable, magic tainted visions he must sit through, what terrors of the night he must strike down before they unman him?" (5). Shahzaman sees his wife making love with a slave. So here it would be suggested that he kill them both before people can accuse him of impotence.



One day in his twilight wanderings, Shahzaman sees his brother Shahryar's wife enjoying and indulging in sensual activity in the garden with her slaves. That incident where Shahzaman watches his brother's wife make love to her slave, shows both his voyeuristic tendencies and his dishonesty towards his brother. Voyeurism can be defined as getting pleasure from secretly watching other people have sex. As it is depicted in the novel,

He can see her undressing, then stretching out naked on the grass. All around her clothes pile up in satiny bushes, the whole world is shedding trousers, robes, veils. A naked circus cavorts before zaman's eyes, its hungry, panting contortionists twisting themselves into impossible shapes. Zaman watches. His face has turned bloodless, as if all their hands are round his neck, squeezing. (12)

Shahzaman tells his brother about it, but Shahryar, being the righteous king he is, refuses to believe his brother without seeing it. Shahzaman proves his point by making Shahryar discover the truth about his wife. Confused, Shahryar also kills his wife. The events that depict Shahryar and Shahzaman killing their wives are the result of the impulsive and instinctive nature of both brothers. The novel also conveys the hypocrisy of brothers as they found, "what comfort to discover a shame larger than one's own! (15). A veiled motive of the language of the novel is also to evince the frailty of women, as it is evident in the episode when Shahryar plays a trick to spy on his own wife. It is suggested by the narrator as "The two brothers will then confirm together, inevitably, that women, even their wives, their noble queens, are tainted with untrustworthy desire: (13). The novel is replete with instances of female sexualities which are extremely volatile irrespective of social constraints. Similar volatility is also seen in some minor subjects such as Jinni's sex maid, merchant's wife, and the young woman.

Shahryar's trust on women is afflicted in such a way that instead of marrying again, he decides to "find a fresh virgin everyday; marry her for the night; in the morning, there are eunuchs, wazirs and executioners who will see to the dangerous woman whose desire has just be awakened" (15). Shahryar therefore becomes a libidinous king in Freudian terminology. Libido is the source of energy associated with sexual desire. The novel also describes his philandering nature as "women (or wives, or queens) are necessary; celibacy never occurs to him" (15). Shahryar is driven by two prominent wills – libido and revenge. Drive as Homer says, "is something that originates within the body and seeks expression in the psyche as representation" (75). In the case of Shahryar, the pressure of his desire and, therefore, his desire for revenge. His goal is to satisfy both drives. Women are the objects of both his desires because he takes revenge on all virgins after his wife cheats on him. The sources of his desire are again libido and anger. As depicted in the novel- "His breath of vision was royal. His battles and buildings were on an epic scale; so was his anger" (158).

Three years pass, but there is no end to Shahryar's hatred and lust, and then one day, the Wazir's daughter Shahrzad (shahr-zad, born from the city) volunteers to be the king's bride to save the people from that. Crisis Shahrzad's "death run" becomes a visible martyr in Shahryar's choice of a bride. Death drives leads to as Thurschwell says, "the ultimate release of tension; it promises the ultimate experience of stasis and complete calm". Moreover, it is self-destructive, not destructive of others. Through martyrdom, Shahrzad frees her people from the clutches of fear and anxiety. Shahryar and Shahrzad are also embodiments of what Lacan calls 'Jouissance'. Jouissance in Homer's terms "involves a combination of pleasure and pain, or, more accurately, pleasure in pain" (89). Having sex with virgins, Shahryar suffers the pain of cheating on his wife, but at the same time enjoys the fulfillment of his sexual desire. Shahrzad, on the other hand, endures the pain of fear of being killed by telling

stories to her husband, but enjoys the happiness of martyrdom. Shahrzad is also an epitome of Joan Riviere's model of an "intellectual woman". According to Homer, "women who aspire to 'masculine' or intellectual pursuits arouse fear and anxiety in the very men they wish to be colleagues and collaborators with". The very fear and anxiety is visible in Shahryar as well.

With the help of his sister Dunyazad, he realizes his calling, keeping Shahryar busy with his stories of the *Thousand and One Nights*. He can psychologically heal Shahryar with his stories; becomes the savior of the city; and is admired for his intelligence and wisdom. "Shahryar saw what a heroine Shahrzad was to their people. She could bask in her redeemer's glow for a lifetime. And Shahryar, out of his own admiration, and seeing the crowds and adulation she could draw, had conferred the title of sultana on her" (159). Dunyazad (dunya-zad, born of the world) gets married to Shahzaman and both couples are happy in their respective lives again. But their happiness does not last long as a power struggle erupts between Shahryar and Shahrzad. The narrator talks about Shahrzad that:

She slowly changed; or her real, usurping nature came to the surface. Though she called it her empathy for the people's needs, her ambitious were visible once too often for the comfort of royal advisers. The thought came to Shahryar one day that this most chaste of women, Wise Shahrzad, was turning into Wily Shahrzad. One of them had to win. (159)

Shahrzad suddenly disappears and Shahryar pretends to be in deep mourning for his wife. He builds a monument on Shahrzad's grave and writes his story in golden words, which are actually examples of his otherwise jealous feelings for her. Sublimation is the promotion of repressed material to a greater degree or its disguise as something noble. His

false love for Shahrzad is also openly expressed in Dilshad's words when, upon Dunyazad's questioning, he reveals the truth about the coffin that belongs to Shahrzad but is now with Dilshad:

I didn't steal the chest,' she says sulkily. The sultan said I could have it. Dunyazad is silent and disbelieving. All right if you must know he lets me take out things from the chest whenever I want. The costume box, we call it. She's gone, and he doesn't need his junk box to remember her by, does he? He's got her embalmed and entombed in marble and gold and all the precious stones possible. (75)

On the other hand, Dunyazad seems to suffer from hysteria, one of Freud's early theories, because her symptoms such as amnesia, loss of speech, and hallucinations appear in the novel: "She senses a shadowy figure come up to her and turn her around. She can feel a cautious, regular breath on her face, the she is lifted off the floor and carried into a marble enclosure" (70). "She is impatient now, no longer willing to float and drift about on marble floors. Her feet are shod for a more rough terrain and they move briskly to one end of the hall, her footsteps loud, clear and regular. The passage is not unlike the tunnel she travelled so recently except this is quiet, ominously quiet" (47).

All these symbols correspond to the sexuality of a woman. She also wakes up from her dream and calls Shahryar's name, indicating that in her dream, her desires are directed towards her mother-in-law, so they are not vascular in nature. Their sense of blood feud is also reflected in the episode where they try to comfort each other after their grief over Shahrzad's death. As in the novel "He sees Dunyazad's face grow wet with tears. He takes her arm. They move closer. She can feel the weight of his head on her shoulders, his beard lying by her neck like a furry tail" (63). Further Dunyazad's melancholia for her sister is

most visible in her becoming a storyteller as Thurschwell writes, “melancholics identify with the lost object and may even appear to become that other person by taking their traits”. The incident that reveals the physical intimacy between Dunyazad and the maid Dilshad mainly reveals their lesbianism. As it is given in the novel “Dilshad is seated by Dunyazad’s low bed, her legs tucked comfortably under herself. Uninvited, she leans forward. Her clever fingers bury themselves deep in Dunyazad’s hair. They stroke and part the hair, strand by strand, grey and black. Dunyazad’s scalp tingles. She looks up into the face bending over hers” (89). Like Shahrzad, Shahzaman also disappears suddenly. Both Shahryar and Dunyazad lose their husbands. The disappearance of Shahrzad and Shahzaman remain unsolved mysteries in the novel. Dunyazad arrives in Shahabad after hearing about her sister’s death, she is helped by Dilshad, with whom she becomes close.

Lacan’s distinction between need and desire applies precisely to Shahryar’s search for love and Dunyazad’s search for the reason for her sister’s sudden death. Homer avers, “A need such as hunger or thirst can be satisfied. Desire on the other hand refers to something beyond basic human needs that cannot be satisfied” (72). While Shahryar’s need for women sex is fulfilled, his desire for love is not. On the other hand, Dunyazad’s search for the reason for her sister’s death is also presented as a wish. Has it been her need it might have got accomplished somewhere in the story but it does not. As it is suggested in the novel “Her task is done, Dunyaza tells herself. But if it is, why does she feel so unfulfilled? In time she will learn to resign herself to her sisters’ death, to her afterlife only in memory (103-104).

During her stay in the palace, Dunyazad also supports Umar, Shahrzad’s son, in his mission to redeem Shahryar by accompanying him to the grave she intended for Shahrzad. Prince Umar is an excellent paradigm of the Oedipus complex, where the male child wants to lose the father figure and become the sexual partner of the mother figure. The novel

portrays his oedipal instincts towards his sister Sabiha through a story in Duniyazad palace in which he describes – “many nights his searching little hands would slip into her robe and snuggle in the deep valley between her breasts” (216). Indeed, Umar’s parent’s detachment towards him leads him into an intimate relation with Sabiha.

Ambivalence is also visible in both Shahryar and Umar. According to Thurschwell “Ambivalence is the simultaneous co-existence in the mind of opposite emotions, particularly love and hate”. Shahryar loves Shahrzad for his virtue and loyalty, but at the same time hates him out of envy because he is more intelligent than Shahryar and is praised by his subjects. This can be traced back to Shahryar’s own words,

Two royal heads, writes Shahryar, may sleep on the same pillow, but two rules cannot live in the same kingdom. It is not clear at first whether the second head belongs to Umar to Shahrzad. But Shahryar seems to have almost forgotten about Umar, so muted are his complaints about his imprisonment. It is the past that is vulnerable to a string of shrill questions. How could I not rule over her? (104)

On the other hand, Umar may love his father but loathes him for being an autocrat. “It is a time, it could be said in Sultan Umar’s ringing voice, for the old sinner to take stock” (153). Umar becomes the king, and Duniyazad and Dilshad leave Shahabad. The novel describes their departure as,

Two women, Duniyazad and Dilshad, are midway between Shahabad and Samarkand. What next? Two women, having escaped a palace, roam free for seven days and nights. Or wait these measures of story time, seven days, a

thousand nights are pretty conveniences but their rule must be wily rather than absolute. (116)

In this short time, they tell each other seven stories. These stories present parallelism, complement to the main plot of the novel. For example, the feminist parallel between the story of Dunyazad Shahrzad and the story of Dilshad Satyasama; Shahryar's story is similar to the later story of Azhar and Mazhar in their endless power of might; and the story of Wazir is also similar to that of Rupwat based on Philide. There are also significant transformations in Shahryar, Shahrzad, and Dunyazad. The astonishing metamorphoses of Shahryar from a just king to a cruel one; Shahrzad's conversion from a savior to a usurper; and Dunyazad transmuting from a story seeker to a story teller are the most discernible transformations of the novel.

There are many psychological motives libido, voyeurism, hysteria, death wish, Oedipus complex, sublimation and enjoyment. They are characterized by temporal and spatial changes in the events leading to its complexity. Apart from these elements, the novel is further complicated by the weaving of myths, an integral part of psychology itself. The most important myths in the novel are the fertility myth, the hero myth and the murder myth. In fact, the novel is the journey of myths, or more specifically, how myths pass from one generation or place to another generation or place, with or without variations. Above all, the surreal design of the novel makes the reader feel as if he or she is living a dream. The Third Chapter focuses on From Enslavement to Emancipation in *When Dreams Travel*.

## Chapter Three

### From Enslavement to Emancipation

Postcolonial critics are concerned with identifying, interrogating and undermining hegemonic structures and to explore the possibilities of constructing alternative versions of truth. The normal 'truth' has been created by speaking from within Centric perspective only. Its interrogation as Drieson says "stresses the acknowledgment of the need of speaking from a different cultural perspective no less than from that othered landscape". Writers and critics have underscored the need for speaking from a different cultural perspective in which space is spared for the experience of the other, as far as possible within a text situated in the mesmerizing dominance of the centre. This is where the counter-discourse comes into play as a mode of displacing the continuing cultural hegemony of the dominant. Edward Said insists that writers should compile their own versions of history of their culture. This 'compiling one's own inventory of traces' is a necessary first step to negotiate the discursive hegemonic terrain (90). The act of compiling one's 'own' would mean to have an alternative version of the reality beyond that of the center, to make the subaltern aware of the discursive forms working on them, whereby seeking to exploit them.

Feminists have been working now since long to document their experiences and compiling their inventory of their own traces of life experiences with women's perspective. It works against those hegemonic forms and processes of 'disidentification' which have been silencing her for centuries. It is a process of weakening the power of the dominant ideologies, and a confession of the possibility of transformation. The selected text, *When Dreams Travel* reveals the concerns of women from a feministic point of view. Githa



Hariharan does it with the help of recreating myth and dreamy environment. It is aimed precisely on a quest of women for their identity. However, it is dealt with a unique approach and manner. In this connection, Rama Kandu observes: “*When Dreams Travel*” is also about a woman’s search for “her” story. But what seems to have undergone a sea change is the author’s treatment of the subject. Here the author attempts to write a meta-fiction through an elaborate inter-text that is made to foreground the feminist issue from a fresh perspective” (179). The crux of the novel appears to be the power of storytelling, dreams, enriching mythical atmosphere, miseries assertion of female characters. Therefore, the novel can be studied at any level. Rama Kandu says:

Seen from the angle of modern fiction theory this double fiction appears to be a about storytelling. With the purpose to suggest the ulterior triumph of art over life, of imagination over mundane and cruel reality, or the ennobling effect of art even on an story insensitive in sensitized mind, and of course the possibility of art as a liberating for a woman imprisoned in the “dungeon” of patriarchal norms (180).

In his article “Home”, A Saga or Pastiche of Every Household”, Goru Writes: “The emergence of women writers in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century carried with it a double significance. It bore testimony to the birth of a new era of emancipation for the Indian women, an era of increased opportunities and a more dynamic participation in the social intellectual life of a country ushered in by the great social reorientations which came at the turn of the century” ( 213).

The novel *When Dreams Travel* exhibits the suffering in a mythical background. It demonstrates how women are exploited in a society which is patriarchy based, it further

elaborates the repercussions of their exploitation. It is a retelling of the *Arabian Nights* or *Thousand and One Nights*. This novel powerfully appeals the reader to contemplate on the male depiction in the famous medieval Arab anthology. Githa Hariharan uses this novel as a rejoinder to answer back predominantly male literary tradition. She further criticizes and erodes the sexual influence of the original text. The novel *When Dreams Travel* reflects the self-assertive tone. It also establishes the storytelling of women passed from one progeny to another. In the novel, it is the woman who creates a story while the man can heed and repeat them.

It can be said that there is a strong manifesto of second-wave feminism in *When Dreams Travel*. Githa Hariharan through this work brings to notice the marginalized to the limelight or centre in varied ways by underlying the colonial and devouring patriarchal power structure. It is worth to note that *Thousand and One Nights* is one of the few texts that made its way from east to west and is included in the annals of world literature too. It was quite inspiring for many authors and its impact was noticeable on various forms and genres of western literature. *When Dreams Travel* is divided into two parts, the first part is titled as “Travellers”. This part is a rewriting of the original story *Thousand and One Nights*. The plot unfolds in the first section of this part entitled “In the Embrace of Darkness”. There is the recasting of the myths of Shahryar and Shahrazad in the first part of the novel. While the second part of the novel is titled as “Virgins, Martyrs and Others”. This section carries a brief introduction, which is sub-headed as, A Dream, A Mirror. This is further followed by seven pairs of tales narrated alternatively by Dunyazad - Shahrazad’s sister and Dilshad, - Dunyazad’s lover.

Githa Hariharan with a deliberate attempt shifts the narrative scheme to unknot the power struggle in which women are entangled. This is one of the primary differences

between Githa Hariharan and the original one. The second section is loaded with some new stories or tales told by Dunyazad and Dilshad from a feministic agenda as well as moral substance. These are completely different from the content of Arab tale collection. The original story goes with two brothers Shahryar and Shahzaman. They are Sultans of two different cities, who discover their wives are adulterous. The two brothers make up for the wrong of adultery by killing, wives, lovers, and slaves who attend the harem. Shahryar has made up his mind that no woman is chaste, so he decides to marry a virgin every night and finally executing her in the morning. There is Wazir in the city where this entire course takes place; he has two daughters namely Shahrzad and Dunyazad. However, Shahrzad is considered to be the wittiest, intelligent of the two. She is gifted with an extraordinary memory and has a hold on Philosophy, Physics, History, and other disciplines too. She deliberately asked her father to propose her to the king as she wanted to put an end to the barbarity of the king, especially the killing of the brides every morning. To support her in this endeavour, she is accompanied by her sister Dunyazad.

Hence, Shahrzad starts to narrate a tale every night at the time of dawn, these tales are filled with suspense and magic. The tales fascinate the Sultan so much that he postpones the killing until he does not listen to the end of the story. She stretches one tale in such a way that it leads to others, having some connection. This is done intentionally by Shahrzad to save others and herself from being killed. There is an unending thread of stories until one thousand and one nights. This makes the Sultan realize that Shahrzad is the saviour of many unfortunate events that may have resulted because of the resentment of the Sultan. Therefore, he renounces his barbarous act.

The first section entitled “In the Embrace of Darkness” depicts the scene of the two men and women Sultan Shahryar is shown listening to tale and laying on the bed. The tale

narrator is his wife Shahrzad, while Dunyazad sister of Shahrzad is shown sitting on the floor near the bed of the Sultan. Dunyazad occasionally speaks a few words or sentences that help her to continue the process of storytelling. The person present there is Zaman, brother of Shahryar. In such a static move, Shahryar is the only character to have the choice to choose life or death at any time. She works as an assistant for her sister, while Zaman leaves no stone unturned to provoke hatred of Shahryar against women. Here, Shahrzad is seen only talking while the rest of the three characters Shahryar, Zaman, and Dunyazad are silent.

The reader gets an idea of the cruel intention of Sultan about the suppression of female identity in the very first section of the novel. Sultan Shahryar Shahbaad and his brother Zaman Samarkand are happy with their respective kingdoms. Zaman is invited by Shahryar and he is delighted at this proposal. Therefore, he starts preparation and sets for Shahabad along with his men. While he was relaxing all of a sudden it came to his mind that he forgot an important gift from his palace. But, is shattered after watching his wife in the embrace of a dark slave. He is shaken and this scene blurs his vision. He murders his unfaithful wife along with the slave and then orders his fellow army men to march forward. He is received in Shahabad with great zeal by his brother. There is also a hunting expedition ready for him but he refuses since he is hurt and in a state of shock, therefore, he withdraws the idea of going for a hunt.

Apart from this, at the time of Shahryar's departure, Zaman also saw his sister-in-law naked and involved with adulterous act with black slaves. This is another horrible sight that shook Zaman to a great extent. The only solace to him was now that he is not the only one to be betrayed and cheated; his brother is also a victim of this cheating adultery. However, he also senses within himself that it is not greater than his brother Shahryar. These

thoughts revitalize him of the serious mental state; when Shahryar comes back and Zaman spills the beans. This turns Shahryar restless and he starts to spy his wife to get confirmation.

When he finally discovers the truth, he murders his wife and states; he will renounce the world until he finds a person who has met the same fate. To check it out both brothers decide to travel far and wide, they reach to the seashore in the course of their travel. They find a Jinni with a chest; Jinni unfolds the chest and takes out a box. From the box comes a beautiful girl. Jinni, her master lays on her knees and quickly falls asleep. The girl manages to lure both brothers and provokes them for sexual pleasure, they enjoy, once they are done. The beautiful girl takes one ring from each of them, adds them to her collection of rings in a string. She discloses her own story to them, how she was taken away during her bridal night. Therefore, to revenge, she has deceived her master a hundred times in his presence without being caught. This gives a sense of comfort to the two brothers that someone shares a large portion of shame than them. They return to Shahabad and announce a unique law in the Harem that is finding a virgin everyday marry her at night and then strangulate her in the morning if she fails to entertain him with stories.

The orders are implemented, brides enter the harm for a night and in the morning they meet their unfortunate fate. Sultan Shahryar gratifies his sexual urge this way only. This continues for three years and resulting in the dearth of virgins. Only at this point does Wazir of Shahabad send his daughter (Shahrazad) to Harem. She is sent to save the city from this barbarity along with her younger sister Dunyazad, to cope with the situation through her knowledge resources. Her sole aim is to save the girls from being murdered, to get them rid of from the cruel hands of Sultan, she initiates the process of narrating stories for one thousand and one nights and connecting each story to yet another one. The king is highly

impressed by the powerful mode of storytelling of Shahrzad, so he decides to marry her and make her as his queen. Afterwards, Zaman also marries Dunyazad and lives happily.

Githa Hariharan defines the conservative belief of patriarchy as discussed by the first- wave feminists. She states it is very difficult to live happily for a woman when you have people like Shahryar around you. Githa Hariharan exhibits the physical suffering of women, it is shown as deeply rooted in the psyche of the conduct of women believed to follow the code of conduct as per *Manusmriti*, “A virtuous wife should constantly serve her husband as a god, even if he behaves badly, freely indulges his lust, and is devoid of any good qualities it is because of wife obeys her husband that she is exalted in heaven” (88). It is like patriarchy uses and abuses her as Gori explains:

Patriarchy literally means the ‘rule of the father’. It has been adopted by the majority of feminist theorists to refer to the way, in which societies are structured through male-domination over, and oppression of, women. Patriarchy, therefore, refers to the ways in which material and symbolic resources are unequally distributed between men and women, family, sexuality, the state, the economy, culture and language. The ‘silence’ of woman in the postcolonial world is broadly explained by Gyatri Spivak in her essay ‘Can the Subaltern Speak? She documents how, Daniel Defoe’s heroine, Moll Flanders uses her physical appetite to maintain grip over patriarchal society. In order to escape from the recompense, a female is seen rising like Lazarus, albeit some fall and perish. Samuel Richardson’s Clarissa is such a victim who is mercilessly cajoled to die because she tries to guard her body from the lustful Richard Lovelance. (213).

In this story, misuse of power is evident by the brothers and only this power defines their male identity. Patriarchy intensively trusts in their aptitude to rule womenfolk. Without

their power show, they presume that their lives have no meaning. Shahryar is projected as a person who takes pleasure in the suffering of women, while his brother Zaman equally shares the magnitude of this guilt. Shahzaman means shah of time, ruler of the age, Shahryar means friend of the city, master of the city. However, they are contrary to what their names mean, they violate everything, and they are not proponents of justice but perpetrators of barbarity. Sultan Shahryar builds a dungeon in the palace to secure himself from the wrath of Avengers.

Githa Hariharan's work *When Dreams Travel* is based on ethical debate that is the battle between sexuality and power. The same argument is found in the Helen Cixous theory of gender where man is at the center and woman is marginalized. This link between the sexuality of men and violence is frequently repeated in *When Dreams Travel*. In the very beginning of the novel both brothers Shahryar and Zaman are shown holding a sword. Shahryar holding "mere the ornament a grant showy thing of gem-encrusted gold" while the latter holds another "He holds a plaything in his hand, an ancient, blood-dripping sword" (5). It seems that masculinity and violence go hand in hand in this male-dominated society. This is very obvious in the first part when the two brothers underscore the plan of violence."It is she who holds the scene together. If she stops, if she collapses, if she loses Shahryar's interest or attention, the roof could cave in, and with it, all hope of the city's deliverance, or its sultan's redemption" (7). Shahrzad does not feel scary by the violence she is surrounded by. She delves in danger and emerges as a model of the feminist heroine. The readers notice that, "she throws back her neck, holds her goblet high and drinks deeply, eyes shut. What she does not swallow she holds for a moment or two, rolling the liquid in her mouth as if she is tasting it for the last time. Then she wets her lips with her tongue and begins again" (6).

Shahrazad emerges as a glorifying fighter, she not only saves herself but the lives of many other women of the Harem. She can achieve her identity. Moreover, her identity is concerned with the issues related to people around her. She is very rightly re-named as “born of the city, clever, ambitious, and quick-tongued”. Shahrazad makes Sultan to understand that all women need not be killed. She confronts the king and displays her great concern for the welfare of the people and the city. She has borne witness to the cruel patterns of patriarchy that used and suppressed women, however, she wins over all obstacles and difficulties. Rama Kandu states about the writing of Githa Hariharan:

With remarkable skill she evokes the grim “faces” of the thousand (plus one) nights; at the same time she uses it deconstructively to bring out the terror, the terrible oppression and injustice, the inherent chauvinism of the comfortable patriarchal assumptions often blunt- insensitive- irrational that she reads between the lines of the world famous legend. (180)

In his *Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud elaborates that dreams are a cognizant expression of unconscious desire or wish. These dreams are not reachable to individuals in the waking life. He presents a direct connection between dreams and unconscious assumptions by virtue of his “Theory of Mind”. Shahrazad emerges as an example of a moratorium woman who daydreams and expresses a desire to be right. She is keenly interested to display her victory through dreams. Her own story makes it clear that dreams and imagination can make women survive. It is worth to note that tales of Shahrazad are actually tales of survivors, like the myths they transport across culture, space and are able to access women of today. The powerless who must have a dream or two, dreams that break walls, dreams that go through walls as if they are powerless. In this way, Githa Hariharan reclaims, explicitly, a tradition of women’s wisdom in storytelling, “is connecting the



connection in the original text to its Western colonization, as “women, dreams and stories are transported from India to Persia to Arabia to France to England and then back to India” (25). Now no one is at risk and the process of narrating stories is over, Shahryar can rule city while Shahrzad can disappear into Harem.

Githa Hariharan contemplates what happened to Shahrzad after such grandeur. She is surprised to see Shahrzad being such an extreme lover of risk game satisfied with the role of mother and wife of domestic life. She is able to survive in such a caged atmosphere and locked room. The question how is crucial for the comprehension of feministic standpoint and in recasting this tale by Hariharan. Duniyazad is very conscious of Shahrzad’s power to defy the process of killing. She is obsessed with playing with danger games. If she loses the battle of manipulating the Sultan even for a night, her game will be over. Hariharan sees gender as an important aspect, how women perceive themselves is important. Her role as a feminist or a traditional woman affects her image from a large perspective.

The story starts with Duniyazad being informed about the death of her sister Shahrazad. This marks the beginning of a new journey and departure to trace out the mystery behind the entire episode of her sister’s death. Hariharan reproduces the views, perception and lives of the women who were misplaced in the original story. She emphasizes the ignored character of Duniyazad, who travels to Shahabad to trace the mystery behind the disappearance of her sister. She is apprehensive that the murderous Sultan might have done something to her. She wants to take revenge on one who is responsible. This new approach suggests that women are machinists of their fate and cannot be pressurized. Duniyazad finally reaches to Shahabad. Here she confronts with Sabiha, the maid of Shahrzad. Duniyazad tries to investigate from her the cause of the sudden death Shahrzad. Much to her dislike, she does not get a convincing answer despite hard persuasion. Duniyazad

contemplates and anticipates some mystery behind the entire episode of Shahrzad's death. Just before the night of her meeting with Shahryar, she imagines of travelling through tunnels and palaces, presuming looking for something. She dreams visiting her sister's tomb. Here she finds that the grave is wrapped with a sheet of living gems from one end of the room to the other, a sheet that lits with a subtle, rhythmic movement, like a carpet of flowing water. She further reads on the epitaph, "Here lies Shahrzad, beloved consort of Sultan Shahryar, daughter of the chief Wazir to the Sultan of Shahabad, mother of Prince Umar and the departed prince Jaffar" (49).

The intentional omission of her name on the tomb creates unrest in Duniyazad because her claim that she is the sister of Shahrzad will be looked with suspicion. This omission of her name is directly connected to the invisibility and effacement of women from old ages. Githa Hariharan reinstates some silent characters, providing them with the voice. She in addition to this creates some new characters too. This is also a major deviation from the original text. Githa Hariharan mentions characters like Dilshad, Raziya, mother of Shahrzad and Sabiha, they were behind the scenes in the source text. Raziya's role in the original legend is limited to suppressed wife and mother. She is denied the right to take a decision about her daughters which enrages her after being denied the same. Her death in silence is in itself a way to protest against injustice that her daughters were subjected to. Hence the suppressed mother and her voice re conferred visibility and identity.

Again, through the character of Satyasama, Hariharan directly attempts to question the phallogocentric society. It is hard for a male-oriented society to admit or acknowledge that women can do better than them in talent or presentation of their perspectives. Satyasama is a creation of Hariharan, her character is not present in the original *Arabian Nights*. Satyasama is presented uniquely; she is shown as a slave girl with sleek fur all over the body. She is

wanderer poetess of her country. Her poetic treatise disgraced the King of her country; therefore, he ordered that she should be put to death. However, the executioner did not kill her out of mercy, but her neck was ringed and her voice changed altogether forever. She was put into a merchant's boat to throw her away. She immediately won favours in the court of Shahryar, she was able to impress by dint of her poetic amusements; she also developed a relationship with one of the eunuchs of the Harem. It was a serious fault, so she was put into a dark windowless room. Satyasama died in the lap of Dilshad who nursed her. But before her departure, she gives a kiss to Dilshad who carried out the imprints on her face all through her life. She wanted to keep Satyasama alive by carrying her mark. Dunyazad involves herself in risk playing and does not care about her safety. After taking help from Dilshad, she meets Prince Umar, son of Shahryar and Shahrzad. Dunyazad gets motivated with his ardent will and wellbeing of his kingdom. Prince Umar is supported like a pillar by Dunyazad. Prince Umar is helped by Dunyazad in disposing of Shahryar. Prince Umar is not liberator of the city just like his father but wants to compensate for his father's misdoing by doing something fruitful. Similarly, Prince Umar locks Shahryar and takes charge of the city. Shahryar is locked in the same Mausoleum that he intended to build in memory of his wife Shahrzad. Umar is fed up with the unwanted waste of money that his father has done, in all this Dunyazad collaborates with Umar to take Shahryar. There are two possibilities of Shahrzad disappearance, one is that she is growing old in Harem and as a result, she may have expired.

The other version is interesting, this is hinted through the discovery of 'ivory mirror'. Dilshad intentionally takes out the things Shahrzad hinted its connection with the story of Shahrzad. On being asked, where Shahrzad got this mirror, Dilshad replies that it was given by a young merchant to Shahrzad. She further aired a sense of love affair between the two.

This makes Dunyazad believe that her sister might have enjoyed the company of this young merchant. This is the second reason possibly responsible for the disappearance of Shahrzad. She thinks Sultan Shahryar might have come to know about the love affair, therefore, announced her death publically. since nobody finds her body, this increases the apprehension of Dunyazad about the sudden disappearance of Shahrzad.

Finally, all three of them Shahrzad, Dunyazad and Dilshad, secure the identities, and are free to take any decision of their choice. They ensure the they would not be subdued by the male domination again. Shahrzad is able to defer her death and succeeds in changing the misogynist attitude of Shahryar. Dunyazad ignored presence in the original tale of *Arabian Nights* has been presented as an emancipated woman by Hariharan in this version. It is Dunyazad who breaks free with the help of the slave girl Dilshad. Dilshad earns her own identity towards the end of the novel. She deconstructs the old norms and rules and emerges as a free woman. Dilshad is representative sidelined femininity taking over the power of patriarchy. When given a chance she attempts to come up with a story of a liberated woman. Through the respective tales, Hariharan challenges the norms and standards that have been set up by society for women. She presents the voice of the women by giving voice to the voiceless. Hence the three of them Sharzad, Dunyazad and Dilshad exhibit three different routes by virtue of which modern women can recuperate their due identity. These are, overpowering the system of patriarchy through the process of revenge, by duping patriarchy as a survival tactic and above all by writing her story as revolutionary tales instead of being docile and passive. Chapter Four focuses on the Art of Pastiche in *When Dreams Travel*.

## Chapter Four

### Art of Pastiche

Pastiche is a postmodern technique which means to combine, or paste together, multiple elements. Pastiche is employed by Githa Hariharan as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic aspects of postmodern concept. It is also considered as a unique narrative technique that comprises of multiple genres to comment on postmodern situation. The mere limitation of Pastiche from that Parody is that Pastiche has no place for humour or satire but it tends to imitate other texts. Hariharan has included the art of storytelling as an element of Pastiche. Frederic Jameson in a conversation with Anders Stephanson explains the term “difference” in a narrative discourse as:

I tried to put this in the slogan “difference relates.” The very perception of breaks and difference becomes a meaning in itself; yet not a meaning that has content but one that seems to be a meaningful, yet new, form of unity. This kind of view does not pose the problem “How do we relate those things; how do we turn those things back into continuities or similarities?” It simply says “when you register difference, something positive is happening in your mind.” It’s a way to getting rid of content. (6)

Githa Hariharan has used pastiche to show the difference in the status of women. The difference between the representation of women in the literature of the past and in the contemporary literary text is discussed so that the distinct features of social structures would be clearly delineated. The women characters are sorted out and compared in relation to the different cultural and social setup to which they belong. Feminist discourses warrant

majority of postmodern strategies which work as key to displace the dominant element such patriarchy.

Feminist discourse draws within it a configuration of rhetorical and interpretative strategies. The concept of language as fluid and multiple frees it from its closed system. One of the original insights of the women's movement was that the personal is political, that is, the relation between experience and discourse constitutes feminism. The consciousness of self, like class or race consciousness is configuration of subjectivity, produced at the intersection of experience with meaning. This consciousness of self is never absolute or identifiable because it is constantly being reshaped, as it is grounded not only in personal history but also in the horizons of knowledge and meaning dependent on culture specifics at given moments.

Githa Hariharan has applied postmodern concept to Indian context. Postmodern subversion is essential in the Indian context because patriarchy has dominated all spheres of a women's life. Roseneil points out, "where modern feminist politics tend to fix the category of 'woman', by claiming status, recognition and rights for her, a postmodern feminist cultural politics deconstructs and transforms the meaning of 'woman' it rapidly began to open up and destabilize dominant gender and sexual identities" (169). Vincy Kripal, while differentiating Indian postmodernism with Western Postmodernism, avers thus: while the same themes of gender relations and self-identity, history, political and social reform, have been addressed in the Indian English novel since the 1920's, the technique has changed dramatically since the 1980's. Again although the Indian novel has been influenced by the dominant literary trends and theories prevalent in the west, novelists have invariably adapted them or chosen out of them eclectically to suit representations of their society. Thus, the 1980's novelists may have been influenced by current postmodernist writing and post

structuralist modes of thinking but their novel can, by no stretch of the imagination, be described as postmodernist in the Western sense. The postmodern novels of the Euro-American world are a continuation of the modern novel and carry to the extreme its contra traditional experiments particularly those with language.

Myths have been reinterpreted by Githa Hariharan to create more relevant meaning to the myths and to certain new understanding of the myths. Myths are promoted by those in power. The prescriptive myths that may perpetuate divisions based on class, caste or gender. Such myths usually claim sanction by religion or tradition. Githa Hariharan has utilized this great and inclusive storehouse of myths as pastiche, in order to render them a revisionist understanding. Githa Hariharan explores the existential anguish of the mythical women characters who could be compared with the characters of the novel. Bhargava opines,

Indian women writer's texts are 'fencing texts' where not only does the narrator wants to sit on fence that demarcates fields of perception, but more importantly from where she likes to fence to be clad with gauntless and masks, equivalents of irony and subtexts and flick out at the opponent with fast, deft, disguised strength and precise grace. The fencer should love the choreography of the game. Anger is a necessary foil in Indian women's narratives the middle passage between suffering and healing, between passivity and activity, between fear and forgiveness. Rage inspires movements, silence announces death, but anger keeps one alive and thus the question of 'self' trying to find itself is kept alive in our writings. (77)

Githa Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel* is a re-working or rather re-telling of the historical Arabic folklore collections. The *Thousand and One Nights* well known as *Arabian*

*Nights*, which includes the Middle Eastern and south Asian stories as well. These tales were told by Scheherazade or Shahrzad, a woman who had been re-cast as the protagonist in *When Dreams Travel* by Githa Hariharan. The novel brings out an obvious solution for the oppression that was imposed on women in the *Arabian Nights* by deconstructing the whole meaning with a new vision. The major characters of this novel are drawn from the original text of *Arabian Nights*, while keeping the main plot similar Hariharan weaves the women characters Shahrzad and Dunyazad in a different dimension. She employs postmodern themes and techniques to establish a new perspective that she finds lacking in the original text of *Arabian Nights*. She has also added characters similar Indian mythological characters like Dilshad and Satyasama.

Shahrzad was a woman of wisdom and she uses storytelling as a mean of escapism from the merciless king's practice of marrying a virgin every night and killing her the next morning. This insane activity of the King made everyone upset including Jafar, the vizier of the King and father of Shahrzad. At last, it's Jafar's turn to send his daughter but he hopes that his daughter would survive by her intellect. Shahrzad is strong willed and she never yields herself to male domination. Shahrzad's chosen variety of stories includes lessons for the king. She was a fearless warrior who with her intellect uses her stories as a sword and changes Shahryar's perception of women as nonentity. Hariharan voices women's predicament in a patriarchal setup which is evident through Shahrzad who through her stories represented women who were being suppressed by all means from physical to psychological levels. "She who repentant Sultan has crowned with the words chaste the tender, wise and eloquent, replies, "I don't have a sword, so it seems I cannot rule, I cannot travel, I don't care to weep. But I can dream" (20). At the end of this story unlike its original anthology in *The Arabian Nights*, "He never sought forgiveness for those three years of



murder to prove a pointless point. At the end of the thousand and one nights, it was he who granted a magnanimous pardon to Shahrzad, allowed her to live, to love and be loved, to be feted as the saviour of the city the trial of his reign was over, the chapter closed”(158).

Dilshad, who had served Shahrzad until her death, was now at the service of Duniyazad. In return, Shahrzad gifts her the transcript of her stories, written in gold as per Dilshad's desire. Duniyazad revives the status of Shahrzad with her art of storytelling. Duniyazad who is Queen of Samarkand, wife of Shahzaman, travelled a long way and finally reached the land of Shahabad, a fictional city, to see her beloved sister's tomb.

The travelling tale undergoes a change of costume, language and setting at each serai on its way. It adapts itself to local conditions, to this century or that, a permanent fugitive from its way. It adapts itself to local condition, to this century or that, a permanent fugitive from its officious parent, legitimate history. And Shahrzad she too has learnt the lesson of the tales she told. She is now a myth that must be sought in many places, fleshed in different bodies, before her dreams let go of Duniyazad or her descendants (25).

Duniyazad never wished to be her sister's shadow, she wanted to prove herself. It flaunts pretended windows that pay homage to a world outside. But they are really there to screen, to enclose, so that she is forced to turn inward, wallow in the past or in the palace's seductive, anachronistic tales. There is a present, in which she must act if she is to act at all, and surely that is the point of her dusty, hurried flight to Shahabad. Duniyazad being the descendant to Shahrzad travels along many cities to compile her sister's stories which tends

to change its phase gaining varied interpretation and combining with similar stories.

The travelers move towards one of the gates of the legendary city, showpiece of wealth and high culture, pillar of surrounding countryside that works hard to sustain it. The kingdom needs this nucleus and the fantasies it breeds, both beneficent otherwise. Though tens of centuries may go by, though this city be reduced to rubble and a successor, yet another be built in a distant place, its grand design, of honour and chastity and power will never be left behind. (30)

Dunyazad was told of Satyasama for whom Dilshad had been a disciple. There arouses a healthy argument between Dunyazad and Dilshad and both employ themselves in telling stories as answer for the other. Dunyazad the narrator is possessed by Shahrzad and Dilshad by Satyasama they keep on framing stories in order bring their martyr, Shahrzad back to life. Satyasama, who has been a wandering poet in her country and was condemned by authorities.

Once Satyasama was invited to an old woman's house in order to hear her skill of storytelling. The story of Rupavati was told by the old woman, old man and Satyasama in different dimensions. The old woman narrated the story of Rupavati who tore her breast off to feed a beggar woman as she was about to eat her child out of hunger. Her husband was amused and frightened of such deed. He uttered towards the sky in order to bring back her breast if her heroic performance ever had any merit. A pair of breasts flew from the sky and affixed itself to her body. The Hindu God of Heaven, Indra who witnesses this sight and offers Rupavati a position of Goddess in his court. Through the boon of Indra Rupavati fulfilled her wish of becoming a man "Rupvata".

The old woman narrated the story centering the woman as a symbol of sacrifice. The old man stated that Rupvata is a man who gave life to Rupavati, the beggar with a child. According to the old man's description, Rupvata, the man gave food, shelter and the new lease of life to the woman Rupavati. Authors here focuses that the male narratives wished to depict men as the life givers, saviours and women as sufferers eternally in need of men's support. The story of the old man implies that male narratives were designed to keep women always dependent on him.

Satysasma narrated the same story from an entirely different perspective. Rupavati with her intellect tackles the situation. Rupavata fed and sheltered a tired Brahmin whose wife stood in front of their hut with a baby in the hand and was about to eat the baby in hunger. The Brahmin requested Rupavati to take her two breast and feed the beggar. Instead, Rupavati tore the Brahmin's ears and planted in the earth. This heroic deed charmed the sky and the Brahmin was given ears again and the ears planted in the earth grew as corns. Rupavati fed the hungry woman and her baby with those corns. The Brahmin and Rupavata were unable to find a solution for the problem, whereas, Rupavati with her resolute decision solves the problem. The story narrated by Satyasama ensures the power of women over men but unfortunately both the old man and woman opposed the story of Satyasama and drove her out of their home.

Githa Hariharan suggests the status of revolutionary women writers who were condemned for breaking the rules and regulation that male writers had inculcated as an aspect of culture. Men subdued women by portraying them as weak characters and refused to accept the women when they started to write in order to create a unique narrative for themselves. The novel nourishes women empowerment in every aspect. The four women Shahrzad, Dunyazad, Dilshad and Satyasama have undergone several hurdles in their

journey of life, through their wit and presence of mind they rose to the level of successful woman. The women characters are from different land like Shahabad, Samarkand, India, states of Vijaya, they are the representation of women who questions themselves and tend to find the answer of their existential anguish by revisioning the existing and accepted myths.

Githa Hariharan indicates that the dreams of the women traveled through their stories from over centuries beyond geographical boundaries. The novelist employs pastiche by drawing the major characters and the stories they narrate from *The Arabian Nights* as well as Indian mythologies to prove that the women of varied culture suffer from patriarchal domination. To quote Michel Foucault:

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines and the last stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences, it is a node within a network. The book is not simply the object that one holds in one's hands. Its unity is variable and relative. (23)

Thus, Githa Hariharan points out the opposition of patriarchal influence and the enshrinement of feminist power in this novel, by mocking over the misogynistic theory which is oriented in *The Arabian Nights* for its portrays women as symbol of pleasure. Therefore, this novel is a re-rendering of *The Arabian Nights* and it does not replicate the same plot, but proves completely a different view point for the unique characters Duniyazad and Dilshad advocate women's liberation and autonomy by creating their own identity. Githa Hariharan has carved the women characters as symbols of fortitude by combining myths, magic, fantasy, and historical evidence in creating a symbolic representation of postmodern women of this era. *When Dreams Travel* is a parody as well as pastiche to *The*

*Arabian Nights* for it clearly brought to limelight the untold suffering of woman. In an interview with Joel Kuorrti, Githa Hariharan says,

By the time I came to write *When Dreams Travel*, I really wanted to deal with this whole . . . In a sense it is a stylized way to assume, briefly, another identity, to try to understand that identity. There might be a lot of commonality between the identity and your own which is why I identify and sympathise with that character which I cannot be. This is one way to understand what it is like to be you. They you create a story about that person, if you don't have access to a story. (118)

Hariharan's novels are concerned with the problematic delusions and raise women's questions; she formulates solutions to the current complexities of women with guidance of history and myths. Hariharan harbors Pastiche within the story that functions as a post-modern element which collectively imitates the style of various works that had been done previously. Hariharan very effectively relates the mythical stories and folklore to the present-day dilemmas faced by the characters in the novel.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

Githa Hariharan is one of the most prolific woman writers of India. Githa Hariharan is also a social activist known for her care and concern for women. In 1995, she challenged the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act as discriminatory in the Supreme court of India and recorded victory. The works of Githa Hariharan include novels, short stories, articles and columns and also the essays of different topics that interest her. The *Thousand faces of Night* in 1992 and was awarded Commonwealth Writer's Prize in 1993. This novel was followed by *The Ghost of Vasu Master* (1994). Her third novel *When Dreams Travel* appeared in 1999 and it was quickly followed by *In Times of Siege* (2003). Her latest publication is *Fugitive Histories* which appeared in 2009. Besides novels, Githa Hariharan has also authored a collection of short stories *The Art of Dying* (1993), and a book of short stories for children *The Winning Team* which came out in 2004. *A Southern Harvest* (1993) is a collection of short stories from South India translated by her into English and *Sorry Best Friend* (2004) is a collection of short stories for children co-edited by her.

The first chapter "Introduction" traces the Indian writers and fixes the novelist Githa Hariharan's place in the history of Indian English fiction. On one hand she is an integral part of the larger part of the tradition, on the other hand, she is an important cord in the tradition of Indian Women writers. It is clear from a close survey that there are two traditions, that the crisis of identity and the pivotal aspect of the techno-thematic network of the Indian English fiction. The age of Githa Hariharan is undisputedly the most complex phase of the cultural history of India. There are quick transitions and subtle and unpredictable changes that redefined the identity of individual in general and of a woman in

particular. The advent of the television and the consequent expansion of the news channels and entertainment channels is one most outstanding phenomenon that sped up the transitions.

The second chapter “Psychological Motivations” deals with psychological aspects. *When Dreams Travel*, by Githa Hariharan is an intense work of psychology. The subject of the novel has been taken from *The Arabian Nights* or *Thousand and One Nights*. The novel tells the story of a king in the lands of India and China, who before dying divides his kingdoms into his two sons; Shahabad to the elder son Shahryar and Samarkand to the younger one, Shazaman. They engrossed in their kingly duties and their married life is pitiable. Shazaman discovered the infidelity of his wife, who, in his absence, has been making out with a Shazaman has been making out with a slave and he caught her red-handed kills on the spot and killed his wife. Voyeurism can be defined as getting pleasure from secretly watching other people have sex. Shazaman sees his brother Shahryar’s wife enjoying and indulging in a sensual activity with her slaves in the garden. This demonstrates his voyeuristic tendencies as well as his insincerity towards his brother.

The third chapter “From Enslavement to Emancipation” conveys the hypocrisy of brothers as they find comfort in discovering. Shazaman proves his point by making Shahryar detect the truth of his wife. Agonized Shahryar kills his wife too. The incidents depicting Shahryar’s and Shazaman’s killing of their wives are outcomes of both brothers impulsive and instinctive natures. Libido is the energy drive associated with sexual desires. Shahryar becomes a libidinous king. Shahryar is being driven by two prominent drives libidinal and revenge. While having sex with virgins Shahryar suffers from the pain of being deceived by his wife but simultaneously enjoys the fulfillment of his sexual desires. Shahrzad’s sister Duniyazad gets married to Shahzaman and both couples are happy in their respective lives

again. Like Shahrzad, Shazaman also disappears suddenly. Both Shahryar and Duniyazad lose their spouses. The disappearance of Shahrzad and Shazaman remain unsolved mysteries in the novel. Duniyazad comes to Shahabad on hearing the demise of her sister. She hopelessly tries to get to the truth behind her sister's sudden death and is assisted by Dilshad, with whom she gets intimate. Shahryar's search for love and Duniyazad's search for the cause of her sister's sudden death.

The fourth chapter "Art of Pastiche" discusses Githa Hariharan using the old story of *The Arabian Nights* as theme and intertext. Hariharan finds this useful for her metafictional schemata. Seen from the angle of modern fiction theory this double fiction appears to be story telling. *When Dreams Travel* envisions Shahrzad as the helpless woman caught in an orthodox and patriarchal scheme, who must survive, who can survive only by means of her consummate skill as an author. She is not the 'madwoman in the attic'. She is frenzied and compulsive storyteller, imprisoned in the harem during the day, at night in the dungeon of a lecherous, chauvinistic, powerful patriarch. In the grim nuptial bed of the palace dungeon, which reeks of blood-sweat-semen and death of the king line of previous brides raped in the dark and killed at dawn she is forced to create at sword point. It is with reference to this context that one can understand the feminist metafictional suggestion implicit in the symbols of palace mausoleum dungeon, bed-harem, sword-blood as the author uses them elaborately in the novel.

Narrative technique is vastly an aesthetic enterprise. Literally, narrative is a story and it can be conveyed through pictures, songs, poetry, speech, fiction and nonfiction as well. Narrative technique is the method or the style of telling stories. Githa Hariharan has employed various techniques in her novels to convey the theme. She has adopted the stream of consciousness technique, flash back technique, storytelling aspects to picture the theme of



alienation, betrayal and disloyalty to construct her novels with clear morals to the society. Githa Hariharan makes intelligent use of stream of consciousness technique, jumbled up the past, present and future to give the novel a touch of suspense. The author implies the stream of consciousness mainly on the protagonist Devi's psychological trauma. In the narratives of Devi, Sita and Mayamma have the common thematic strand of marital oppression and suffering, whether physical as in the case of Sita and Devi. *The Thousand Faces of Night* clearly pictures the inner crisis of the protagonist Devi and her narrative strand by recalling her past memory. The novelist uses various methods as narrative tools to explore the state of mind, attitude and responses of the characters. Hariharan's simple and straight forward narration helps the reader to get the impression of the characters thoughts and feelings and expressed in words.

Githa Hariharan has employed various techniques in her novels to convey the theme. She has adopted the stream of consciousness technique, flash back technique, storytelling to picture the theme of alienation., betrayal and disloyalty to construct her novels with clear morals to the society. The Stream of Consciousness style of writing is marked by the sudden rise of thoughts and lack of punctuations. She uses this device to confront the readers with the direct mental experience of the characters.

The story is set in the fictional city of Shahabad, where Duniyazad assists Prince Umar (Sultam's son) in taking over the throne mentioned as "a new order of things. Travelling in and out of these lives to spellbinding effect is a range of stories, dark, poetic and witty by turns, spanning medieval to contemporary writers. With its sharp and lively blend of past and present, its skillful reworking of the historical tradition, and its controlled use of evocative language, Githa Hariharan's multiple voiced narrative assumes the significance of modern myth.

Ambivalence is also visible in both Shahryar and Umar. “Ambivalence” is the simultaneous co-existence in the mind of the opposite emotions, particularly love and hate. Shahryar loves Shahrzad for her virtuousness and faithfulness, but at the same time he hates her out of jealousy as she is smarter than Shahryar and is praised by his subjects. Dunyazad and Dilshad tell seven stories each alternatively to each other. These tales depict parallelism, complementing each other as well as rooting in and relating themselves to the main plot of the novel. Through this novel, psychological motivations of libido, voyeurism, hysteria, death-drive, jouissance etc. the subjects and characterized by temporal and spatial shifts the incidents of the novel lead to its complexity. Fertility myth, the Hero myth and the myth of parricide are incorporated as prominent myths in the novel.

*When Dreams Travel* is a metafiction in the sense that it is fiction about fiction, and it knows that is fiction, even if ‘a ragged, porous umbrella of a story, a wandering story, said to haunt travelers on the roads leading to paradise’. Here is a novel which is a commentary on its own antecedent. The literary object itself performs a critical function. The novel could be cited as an illustration of Currie’s definition of metafiction: “The assimilation of critical perspective within fictional within fictional narrative, a self-consciousness of the artificiality of the artificiality of its construction”. The novel assimilates the perspective of criticism into the fictional process itself. Thus, Shahrzad, the womanly fabricator is seen a parallel to her mausoleum building husband, both of whom strip other’s creation of what takes their fancy.

The novel highlights the compulsion of the speakers to tell a story, which is much like the compulsion of a writer. She questions and also accepts the task of telling interesting stories. The only possible redemption for a woman in her situation. One is stuck by a futility and benality of the ‘real’ life of the ‘real’ woman as perceived by Hariharan’s penetrating feminist insight. Shahrzad is eager to seek experience and determined to assert her sanity

and the veracity of her existence in an increasingly unstable world. Fantasy, thus, becomes an effective tool in the hands of Hariharan.

Post-colonial literature is subjugated and subaltern do get their voice to document the life. Githa Hariharan is one who earned by documenting feministic concerns. An ideology entwined itself with the deepest unconscious roots of the subject emerging in historic legends, myths, narratives, ethics. The practices are ritual, symbolic nature. Post-colonial theorist endeavour to resist through some counter discursive measure the counter discourse comes into play as a mode of displacing the cultural hegemony of the dominant feminist have been working and it work against hegemonic forms the process of weakening the power transformation.

The text, *When Dreams Travel* reveals the feminist point of view recreating myth and dream. It aimed on a quest of women for their identity. The first section entitled 'In the Embrace of Darkness'. In such a static move Shahryar is the only character to choose life or death. Zaman's quest leaves and provokes hatred of Shahryar against women the suppression of female identity. Zaman invited by Shahryar is shaken and he murders his unfaithful wife. The only solace is his brother cheating adultery. Both brothers decide to travel, for the girl manages to lure and provokes them for sexual pleasure. This continues and results in the death of virgins. Zaman marries Dunyazad. Hariharan defies the first wave feminist women. In this story misuse of power is evident by the brothers. The last, the system of woman as traditional victim is portrayed and she appears as personification of a feminist and there is no end to women degradation. Hariharan challenges the norms that have been set by society. She raises out the voice of women and their quest, by giving voice to voiceless. The project thus analyses and substantiates the title, "A Psycho-social Analysis of Githa Hariharan's *When Dreams Travel* As a Quest Narrative".

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**Articulating the Agonies of Untouchables in Bama's *Karukku***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Miracline B (REG. NO. 21APEN17)**



**PG and Research**

**Department of**

**English St. Mary's**

**College**

**(Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

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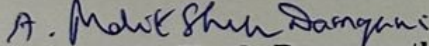
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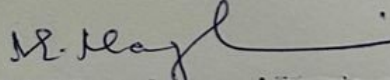
## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Articulating the Agonies of Untouchables in Bama's *Karukku*** 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 Miracline B during the year 20222023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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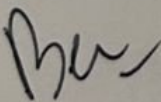
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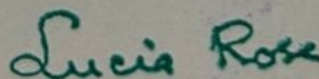
  
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Articulating the Agonies of Untouchables in Bama's *Karukku*** 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

B. Miracleline  
Miraciline B

April 2023



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## Preface

Bama is a Tamil Dalit feminist, committed teacher and novelist. She rose to fame with her autobiographical novel *Karukku* (1992), which chronicles the joys and sorrows experienced by Dalit Christian women in Tamil Nadu. She is a multi-faceted personality and is a woman with extraordinary courage, conviction, and resistance to any form of oppression. She has a keen eye for beauty in nature, profound insight into issues pertaining to caste, religion and women. She has clarity of thoughts and expression.

*Karukku* is about a Christian Dalit woman who realizes that her identity as a Christian is heavily mediated by her identity as a Dalit, and that she must fight the discriminatory practices both within the Church and outside, and that this is all the more tough as a woman.

The project entitled **Articulating the Agonies of Untouchables in Bama's *Karukku*** focuses primarily on a single subject, caste discrimination in the Catholic Church, and the trajectory of her solitary self-exploration. The other dispute between Bama and her community is that she leaves one community (a religious woman) to pursue another (Dalit woman).

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on a brief history of the subalterns and about the Dalit literature. It also discusses the popular writers whose writings are based on the life of Dalit women.

The second chapter begins with **Dalit feminism -an overview** gives a detailed study of feminism and how the Dalit movement helps the Dalit women to raise their voice in this society through their writings.

The third chapter **Marginalisation of Dalit** records how the Dalit people where doubleoppressed.

The fourth chapter **The Struggle for Legitimizing the Experience of Being Dalit** discussed how the upper cast people ill treat Dalit.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters.

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



## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature nourishes the emotional life. Each work of art does not exist for art's sake alone but always carries some kind of message, protest or commitment. This makes it functional. Moreover, one of the functions of literature is to assert the very rich diversified culture and history of a writer's context. Commonwealth literature like most literatures widens our horizon about the world. Through novels, plays and poems and short stories, we come into contact with the experiences of many other people across commonwealth nations.

In exposing the ills of their society, Indian writers satirize the unpopular manifestations in their society in order to educate the populace. In the light of Terry Eagleton in *Literary Theory: An Introduction* concludes that: Literature, by forcing us into a dramatic awareness of language refreshes habitual responses and renders objects more perceptible (41).

The horizons about the world, different cultures, socio-cultural, historical and political, religious and economic realities of various regimes are widened. Literature helps the readers to move beyond boundaries and introduces different people and places other than one's own.

The reciprocal influence between the novel in English and the novel in the regional languages has been rather more intimate and purposeful than such influence in the fields of poetry or drama. This has, of course, been facilitated by the comparative ease with which a novel as distinct from poetry or drama can be translated from one to

another of the many languages current in the country. While a truly comprehensive and reliable literary history of modern India is yet to be undertaken, the main sign-posts seem to be clear enough. It was in Bengal that the 'literary renaissance first manifested itself, but almost immediately afterwards, the sign of new lite were to be seen in Madras, Bombay and other parts of India as well.

The critical analysis of history, culture, literature, and modes of discourse which are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France and other European imperial Asia, the Caribbean islands and South America. Some scholars, however, extend the scope of such analyses also to the discourse and cultural productions of countries as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, which achieved independence much earlier than the Third world countries. Postcolonial studies sometimes encompass the aspects of British literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which are viewed through a perspective of the social and economic life through colonial exploitation.

Post-colonial literary texts eventually represent the culture of a particular land in which the text is produced, which is crushed, deteriorated as time passes and people turn to new fashions, industrial revolution, and science. So the literary texts, regardless of the genre are considered as a typical representation of the culture of the writer's class. The colonial texts have an urge to represent or conceptualize colonialism and its effects and to re-establish the culture of the natives. It is viewed as a cultural determinism. These texts seem to reject the master narratives that are produced under the impact of western influences. M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt

Harpham say, "the major element of post colonial agenda is to disestablish Eurocentric norms of literary and artistic values, and to expand the literary canon to include colonial and post colonial writers" (43).

The early stage postcolonial texts have foregrounded the differences in perception between the colonizer and the colonized and set up a plane of duality such as ruler/the ruled. As Krishnaswamy, Varghese and Mishra say, foregrounding differences and diversity, celebrating hybridity, plurality and 'otherness as potential sources of vitality and in change and rejecting notions like standardization, conformity universalization that are seen as sources of power, hegemony and colonialism-these notions are gaining ground (93).

This stratum is followed by the national or nationalized literature with the national culture as subject. In this perspective the literature of a country like India, with multiple diversities in cultural and traditional values represents hybridization and have given a unique favor to the Literature as "Subalternism". As Abrams and Harpham opine, "The subaltern has done a standard way to designate the colonial subject that has been constructed by European discourse...." (307), it aims at an understanding of the linkage between the structures of knowledge and forms of oppression. The writers tried to portray the differences between the oppressed and the oppressor in their works and to re-establish or regain their identity through their literary texts.

Dalit literature is an expression of the troubles of Dalits, their feelings of negativism and revolt against the establishment and the hopes for their freedom. Dalit

literary movement received its first impetus with the advent of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar in Maharashtra, who brought forth the issues of Dalits through their works and writings. It was they who thought that they should have their own literature to express their feelings as the books written by others could not give genuine expression to their objectives. Dr. Ambedkar entered public life in the second decade of the 19th century. He sensitized the untouchables to protest against Brahminical culture which had been exploiting them. To safeguard the interest of the untouchables or depressed class, he prepared a strategy at various levels of society

Dalit literature or the literature of Dalit arose from the integral parts of the Dalit social movement emerged as a distinctive form of writing in post-independent India. It has its origins in the pain, suffering and exploitations of Dalit doomed to lead a demeaning existence as second class citizens in a highly stratified society. Contemporary Dalit literature exposes the inhuman practice imposed on the Dalit, whose attempts to lead dignified lives are put at stake in a rigorous society run on communal and religious lines. Dalit literary movement which has its origins in Maharashtra is deeply related to Marathi literature, but later spread to other regional languages. Very often Dalit literature is penned by Dalit writers and is an expression of the lives of authors who choose to write autobiographies to record the history of their individual lives subjectively. Dalit autobiographical narratives seek to construct sociological theories of human discrimination on the basis of caste, class and gender. The disease of untouchability plaguing the Hindu society is laid bare in both the

chose text, which are narratives on pained suffering of the poor Dalit in a highly caste and multilayered Indian society.

In the 1960's Dalit literature started flourishing and more and more writings appeared in the form of poems, short stories, and drama. Several autobiographies written by Mahers, new-Buddhists, Chamfers and others appeared in the literary scene of India. Branded, Baby Kemble's Existence, Joseph Macaw's and Bama's Karukku (originally written in Tamil). These works talk about the sufferers of injustice and exploitation of the voiceless people and untouchable people's life in the society.

The second stage of Dalit Literature started in the seventies and it is said to have a period between 1972-1978. In the early seventies there came a change in the approach of Dalit writers due to their familiarity with the black movement and literature in the USA. They realized no sense in promoting and vitiating exclusively provocative poetry against the injustice done to them. Being influenced by the black movement and literature in the USA, they thought to become politically active and lead the movement. As a result the Dalit youths like Arjun Dangle, Namdeo Dhasal, J.V. Panwar, established the Dalit panthers' in Bombay on 9th July 1972. It is worth noting that this time creative writers became politically active and led the movement. Dalit youths taking inspiration from the movement of blacks in the distant land of North America, found answer in the creative display of protest. Resistance and aggression are rather than in the anguish misery pain and exploitation of Dalit. Dalit writers from other states of India were inspired by this liberating spirit,



straight and strong style, and poignant poetic images. They portrayed the life and struggles of the lowest strata, the low caste. During this period, Dalit literature had gained respectability.

Today Dalit literature has been receiving increasingly academic and disciplinary recognition throughout the globe. Dalit literature though mostly remains in regional spheres, is recently being translated in English so that its impact may be felt at the national level and international levels. It has emerged as a distinct literary genre. It forms an important yet distinct part of Indian literature. Its emergence has produced a radical transformation or "paradigm shift in literary and cultural studies it is in the process of acquiring canonical status. Dalit writings have been valued because they are concerned with giving a voice to the suppressed because they are all determined to narrate, and thus put on record their past bequeathed memories, because they espouse social and political ideology: because they intend to offer a theory that explains how politics works in a society and because they intend to provide a profound insight into the forces that shape a new society, its new literature and aesthetics. Though the history of Dalit literature deals with untouchability, discrimination, marginalization, traditional values, economic, civil and political rights. The later stage of Dalit literature gave a way to women's writing. Most of the Dalit women writing took place in the form of autobiography. These women writers mainly speak about how the Dalit women were oppressed by the upper caste people as well as their own men folk. These writings made all the Dalit women to join their hands together and raised their voice against oppression. Basically, Dalit women didn't get an

opportunity to gain education. This is their biggest drawback. Due to this they start to write their works in their own regional language. These kinds of writings were understood only by their regional people. So Dalit women's voices were not raised at the universal level.

British who learnt the native Indian language started to translate the works of Indian authors of English later. This trend was followed by the Indian authors who gained knowledge in English, started to translate the issues of regional language text into English. During twentieth century most the Dalit women's works were translated into English. This made other country people to understand the real situation, oppression, marginalization and pains faced by the Dalit women. At this juncture it is apt to give a short description of a few writers whose writings were based under the theme of feminism. Mukta Salve was the first Dalit woman who openly questioned and criticized the discriminatory of a caste and gender which took place in Indian society in the nineteenth century. Until 1852, she did not get a chance to gain an education. Later Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule started third girls' school at Vital Peth, Pune. These schools were opened to women of all castes and communities. Mukta used this platform to gain education. At the age of fourteen, she wrote an essay under the title "Mang Maharanchya Dukhavisatha". Through this essay she raised a systematic voice for Dalit females. This is the only work of Mukta Salve available today.

Shantabi Krushnaji Kamble was born on 1 March 1923 in Madud, Solapur. She is a Marathi writer and Dalit activist. She belongs to Mahar Dalit community. It is

considered as a lower caste community, so education was prohibited to her community. Kamble's parents admired her for her extraordinary talent. So they decided to send Kamble to school. When Kamble speaks about her school life in a newspaper article she said that she belongs to lower caste community, she was not allowed to enter into the class room. So she sat outside the classroom and gained education. She completed her two years of teacher training and served as an education extension officer at Jat Taluka, Sangli district. She is considered as the first Dalit woman teacher in Solapur district. From 1942, she worked as a teacher in Solapur District Board School

After her retirement she wrote her first Dalit autobiography work under the title *Afuya Jalmachu Charkathrand*. It was published in the year 1983. In this work she speaks about the class, caste and gender discrimination. Umile Pawar is an Indian writer who was born in the year 1945 in, Adgaon village of Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra. She belongs to Dalit community. She used to identify herself as a feminist writer. When she was twelve years old her family was converted to Buddhism. She completed her B.A and M.A (Marathi literature) from Mumbai University. Woman's Organization where she found a 'new vision of women participation'. She has written a number of short stories. From her childhood Pawar faced various kinds of oppression due to her caste. Based on this kind of issues she started to lash and pain in her work. Her famous work was *Aaida* which was written in Marathi language and later it was translated into English and it was titled as *The Weave of my Life: A Dalit Woman's Memoir*. It's her

autobiographical work and this work won the Laxmibai Tilak award. She also wrote the collections of short stories which were translated into English. Each of her stories highlights the sufferings of women and their struggle against societal boundaries and limitations. Her female protagonist often expresses gender identity, gender struggle and gender discrimination. But her female characters were strong in facing their family problems, caste oppressions etc.

Baby Kamala belongs to Mahar community, Maharashtra. She is a Dalit feminist writer and an activist of Ambedkar Movement. Her famous work was Jina and it is probably considered as the first autobiography by a Dalit woman not only in Marathi but in any Indian language. Later it was translated into English under the title *The Prisons We Broke* by Maya Pandit in the year 2009. Through her autobiographical work she speaks about the major problems in the Dalit society. She also highlights the pathetic condition of Dalit women, especially from the Mahar caste, West Maharashtra.

Dr. C.S. Chandrika, a Malayali novelist, Dalit feminist and an academician. She wrote a collection of short stories which were entitled as *Kleptomania* (2012). She also worked as one of the editors in *The Oxford India Anthology of Malayalam Dalit Writing*.

Meena Kandaswamy, Tamil born writer who is often claimed her identity as a Dalit woman is an Indian poet, novelist, translator and activist. At the age of seventeen

she wrote her first poetry and also started to translate the books which was written by Dalit writers and leaders into English. She published two volumes of poetry, *Touch* (2006) and *Ms. Militancy* (2010). Both her collections won accolades in All - India poetry competitions. Some of her novels were *The Gypsy Goddess* (2014), *Where I Hit You* (2017). She also edited *The Dalit*, a bi-monthly English magazine of the Dalit Media Network. Most of her works deals about the caste and gender discriminations.

Bama known as Bama Faustina Soosairaj, is a Tamil Dalit Feminist and novelist. She began through her autobiographical work *Karukku* (1992) which exposes sorrows experienced by Dalit women in Tamil Nadu. Bama's grandfather had converted from Hinduism to Christianity. Bama's ancestors were from the Dalit community and worked as agricultural labourers. Her father served in the Indian Army. Bama had her early education in her village. After graduation, she served as a nun for seven years, and she left the convent. She wrote about her childhood experiences. These experiences formed the basis for her first novel, *Karukku* published in 1992. When the novel was published, Bama was ostracized from her village for portraying the poor life of the Dalit women. So she was not allowed to enter into the village for seven months. *Karukku* was however, nautically acclaimed and won the crossword book Award in 2000. Bama followed it with *Sangati* and *Kusumbukkaran*. Bama got a loan and set up a school for Dalit Children in Uttiramerur. Bama's *Karukku* has been translated into English, *Kusumbukkaran* and *Sangati* into French.

Karukku begins with an introduction of the people and village. Bama traces the geographical details of her village and comments that to the east of the village lays the cemetery. The Dalits live next to that and they are treated as dead. The divide between the upper class and Dalits is thus in a way maintained. They are denied their identity and history. The evil of untouchability is prevalent there and Bama tries to oppose it by asserting identity and it is highly notable. Karukku also portrays how people are identified by their streets name and discusses the life of Dalit Catholic Christian women in retrospect and focus on the caste based atrocities in her village, experiences of untouchability in the Catholic convent and the final breaking away from the nunnery.

Kusumbukkaran is a collection of ten stories, all written between 1993 and 1996. In a departure from both Karukku and Sangati, Bama eschews the autobiographical mode in her short fiction, letting the stories and characters speak for themselves without the framing comment of the author. There is a greater confidence in fictionalizing in the presentation of fiction's characters and their speech and style. It is significant that the title Kusumbukkaran calls attention to its main thrust. For, although the exploitation of the Dalits by wealthy landowning castes, either in the "sandal adimai" relationship, or in its modern version of master mistress and domestic servant, is a theme throughout the collection, there are only two or three stories on the contrary, most of the stories point to a number of positive features of Dalit culture.

Bama's third novel Vanmam is set in a village in Tamil Nadu. It deals with the animosity between two castes within Dalits- Pallars (who identify themselves as

Hindus) and Parayars (mostly Christian) in the novel - and how the landowners of the dominant Naicker caste stroke the lives to preserve their own status. Talking about this novel, in one of the interviews, Bama warns the reader not to exploit the caste-based tensions and violence of the century-old Dalit politics in Tamil Nadu.

The story begins in a deceptively calm note, as the character take the stage and establish their identities. Young Parayar men like Saminathan and Jeyaraj, with the benefit of a college education, are sensitized to the rights that they have been denied for generation, and are resentful of their backward status. The graphic description of the village, the chavady, the fields and orchards, and the streets of the Pallars, Parayars, and Naickers is more than just the topography of the village. It is a cultural map that draws the outline within which the various castes function and interact, reflecting upon the dynamics of multi - caste village. The calm is a strategy and a background to the storm clouds that soon arrive. The amity between the Parayars and the Pallars, which had been helped along by organizing joint sports events and celebrating each other's festivals, being to feel the strain of jealousies and running feuds, culminating in the murder of a Parayar by a Pallar.

The rest of the novel deals with a series of retaliations and counter retaliations, ending in a bloody caste clash. The young men are forced to live in hiding, children cannot go to school, women are widowed, and children are orphaned. The loss of both sides makes them realize the role of dominant castes and the state machinery, especially the police, in perpetuating their animosity. The story ends when yet another killing of an innocent Parayar by the agitated Pallar leads to a serious rethink in

both caste groups. They realize that the dominant castes have been following a divide and rule strategy to keep the fires of vanmam-vendetta – burning between the two castes. The Parayars and Pallars therefore decide to sink their differences, put the past behind them and show a united front at the panchayat from the entrenched dominant - caste leadership

The grip of caste is so powerful that even conversion to a religion that promises equality of all classes cannot annihilate it. Hence, the narrator in Vanmam sees the Christian-converted Parayars as part of the hindu social order.

The upcoming chapter of this dissertation brings into focus the problems faced by the Dalit women in their own community as well as from the upper class community.



## **Chapter Two**

### **DALIT FEMINISM: AN OVERVIEW**

Feminism is no more a monolithic concept. Owing to difference in women's social, political and cultural conditions, there are diverse and distinctive theories to highlight their oppression, their marginalization and for their liberation. Feminist movements have campaigned and continue to fight for women's rights, including the right to vote, to hold public office, to work, to earn fair wages or equal pay, to own property, to education, to have equal rights within marriage, and to have maternity leave. Feminists have also worked to promote bodily autonomy and integrity, and to protect women and girls from rape, sexual harassment, and domestic violence

Although feminist advocacy is and has been mainly focused on women's rights, some feminists, including Bell Hooks, argue for the inclusion of men's liberation within its aims because men are also harmed by traditional gender roles. Feminist theory, which emerged from feminist movements, it has developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues such as the social construction of gender

Feminism was divided into two levels: firstly, feminism that works at the theoretical level and secondly, at the organizational level. Feminism has been a theory of understanding which can be operated at very personal level. At organizational level, would like to discuss feminist movement in India and various important ramifications that developed. It is an important study for Dalit feminism to undertake.

Women's movement started in 1960's. There are a number of writers attributed

in the movement like: Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, Fredrich Engels's *The Origin of The Family* (1884), John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of women* (1869) etc. These writers speak out the real woman who struggle with social norms, condition, which are extremely propagated by a patriarchal society Toril Moi explains: The first is a political position the second a matter of biology and the third, a set of culturally defined characteristics" (250). Women's condition was not good in 1960's and 1970's but in 1980's the mood changed.

In the west, feminist movement was begun by a narrow group of white middle class and university educated women who theorized. Rege says, "The category 'women' was conceived as being based on collective state of women being oppressed by the fact of their womanhood"(90). In the context of India too, women who participated in the movement were middle class, upper caste, urban and educated and thus their theorization of patriarchy missed out caste-classes.

Universal sisterhood gained significance in Indian context concerns, feminism tried to bring awareness among women about oppression, domestic violence, rape and patriarchy and so on. It discusses the issues of sexual oppression of women to make them rise in revolt against gender inequalities discrimination against women belonging to other sections of society other than upper-caste that prevails in the family system and in the society.

From ancient Greece to today, there are so many common feature in the

indictments against woman, her condition has remained the same throughout. As Simone De Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* states,

The feminism world is sometimes contrasted with masculine universe, but it must be reiterated that women have never formed autonomous and closely society, they are integrated only in so far as they are similar, they do not share that organic solidarity upon which any unified community is founded, they have always endeavoured - in the period of the Eleusinian mysteries just like today in clubs, salons and recreation rooms to band together to assert a counter universe, but it is still with the masculine universe that they frame it. (653)

The woman herself recognizes that the universe as a whole is masculine it is men who have shaped it, ruled it and who still today states she is inferior and dependent, she has not learned the lessons. She has never emerged as a subject in front of other members of the group. They are regarded as Dalits. These people are suppressed, humiliated, exploited, discriminated and marginalized in every sphere of life. These people are also regarded as untouchables/ Achool Harijan. If the woman belongs to Dalit community they suffered first being a woman, second being in the lowest community.

Dalit feminist theory aimed towards social justice and against all sorts of exploitation and oppression towards Dalit women. The articulation of their experiences came to be known as 'Stri Dalit Sahitya' in Marathi. Generally speaking, Being Dalit, they suffer due to caste discrimination and being a woman, victimized by the

patriarchal social order both in their homes as well as outside. Dalit women believed to be alienated at three levels; caste, class, and gender positions. Thus violence against Dalit women is rampant. Dalit women have been presented in Indian literature and Indian English literature. Most of the male writers are biased towards Dalit women. They are portrayed as if they never rebels against the injustices perpetuated upon them.

Dalit women are considered as the 'other in the society because they belong to the lower, category. So their condition of social, physical, economic, and political was too backward. They used to struggle for basic needs such as food or water and in her submission to sexual and domestic violence, "There is no oirl in our cheri who has not been concerned or raped by the dominant caste men when they go to the fields to fetch water or for work" (Basu, 124). In relation to women, exploitation, and socio-cultural subjugation are the sources of unequal gender relations.

Dalit feminism can be perceived through three major streams: Dalit feminist activism, Dalit women's writing/autobiography and the theoritical formulation of Dalit feminism. Dalit feminism not only addresses the inter-sectionalities of caste and patriarchies but also critiques the position of Dalit women in both the feminist and Dalit organizations various social reform movements to improve the condition of women. Issues such as sati, widow remarriage, child education of women in general were taken up while the marriage and the issues of gendered-caste subalterns were not addressed.

The upper-caste Pertale reformers who protested against the victimization of women in their unity were working strictly, within the tradition. Therefore, their goals

the transformation of upper-caste women in domestic and social spheres. However, there was no attempt to problematize Brahminical patriarchy, which was the dominant model of gender relations and its relationship to social, and economic structures were unexplored.

These social reformers located women's backwardness on certain social evils and obsolete practices, rather than considering them as deeply rooted in social organization. In doing so, they were influenced by the progressive ideas of the west concerning women's rights. E. V. Ramasamy Periyar initiated an anti-caste movement in Tamilnadu. This movement gave importance to the empowerment of women. Anti-caste movement was began in the year 1925. Periyar and his followers also strongly objected to the prevalence of devadasi system. They considered it as an instance of prostitution, sanctified by religion. Their objection was also because of the fact that the devadasis were all from non- Brahmin castes. The devadasis were consecrated as temple dancers in the service not only of God, but also of the Brahmin priests and upper-caste men. In the case of devadasi system, religion, caste and patriarchy co-exist in complex and strategic relationship to exploit the gendered caste subaltern. The System subjects women to the lust of the upper-castes under the cover of religious duty.

Periyar also disapproved of the social restrictions on widow remarriage, because it imposed celibacy on women and exempted men. Periyar strongly criticized the sexual ethics of the Hindus, which legitimized male promiscuity while reproving and rendering illegitimate the female desire.

In order to counter this, Periyar exhorted women to exercise their freedom to take on their lovers based on their desire. In conventional Hindu family system, women had to shoulder the entire responsibilities of sexual reproduction and affective socialization, which imposed serious restrictions on their social mobility.

Ambedkar was far ahead of his times in understanding the relationship between caste system and the position of women into rights and privileges for one gender. The hegemony of caste translates into hegemony of gender through codes of pride, privilege and self-image, the necessity for a son in the continuance of the male line, which is related to caste, call for the less importance of daughters. In this way, Ambedkar had understood the connection between castes, patriarchy and gender. (215-216)

The National Federation of Dalit Women was founded by Ruth Manorama in 1993. The organization raised its voice against violence on Dalit women. Dalit Mahila Sanghatana was formed by Dalit women in Maharashtra in Onference on Racism in 1993 and International Women's Conference 1995 are path breaking events in the history of Dalit women politics.

Sharmila Kege and Rege pointed out that the upper caste women are more vulnerable to violence and other forms of oppression within the family such as domestic violence the threat of rape and violence in public sphere. According to her domestic Violence is upper-caste woman's issue and caste oppression and sexual exploitation are the issue of Dalit woman. Though both the upper-caste and Dalit women's situations are oppressive, the violence that is generated on Dalit women

springs from caste and patriarch system and hierarchy makes Dalits and Dalit women subservient to the manual scavenging, human scavenging, and a huge number of them in land cultivation are dependent on the upper-caste land-owning castes. Thus, Women of upper-caste communities are subservient to the men of the same family, whereas Dalit women experience patriarchal oppression within the family as well as outside the community.

The problems of Dalit women were either not addressed or got only token representation in mainstream feminist discourses. This marginal representation often resulted in misrepresenting the Dalit female. Feminist critics in India have examined the interface between class and gender. According to Uma Chakravarti class, caste and gender are inextricably linked, interact with and shape each other, the structure of marriage, sexuality they see as the fundamental basis of caste system (Gendering Caste, 39).

To preserve the identity of caste it is mandatory to contain women's freedom. Prohibition of inter-caste marriage is intended to safeguard the sexual purity of caste, which makes the caste system rigid and undemocratic. In this regard, Uma Chakravarti observes.

The structure of marriage, sexuality and reproduction is the fundamental basis of caste system. It is also fundamental to the way inequality is sustained, the structure of marriage reproduces both class and caste inequality and thus the entire production system through its tightly controlled system of reproduction. (Gendering Caste, 68)

The struggle of Dalit women against upper-caste atrocities, untouchability, low wages and oppression by Dalit patriarchy were never given due consideration. Following such a perspective, the struggles of Dalit women against untouchability, upper-caste atrocities, land alienation and low wages are not looked upon as being within the purview of feminism. At the same time, they should challenge the determinacy caste in posing the fundamental challenges to the existing power. It is required to develop a Dalit feminist as women are either molested or raped by the upper caste men. By depicting such pictures, writers gained sympathy for the victims.

They have completely ignored the fact that Dalit women can also resist and fight back like any other victim of social oppression to guard their dignity. Thus, in these literatures, a Dalit woman is never a fighter but always a victim.

In order to counter- struggle the misrepresentations of Dalit women in Indian English literature, the first generation of Dalit writers present the female characters in Dalit Literature as dynamic and not static. Most of the autobiographers describe their childhood. Men tend to idealize their lives to cast them into a hero. This is contrary to the self image projected by women's autobiography.

They resort to strategies of understatement, reportage or humour forward in an objective manner about their girlhood and adult experience when they choose to camouflage their feelings of discrimination in their girlhood. Childhood accounts of most women often lack nostalgia. So men's accounts, perhaps because it is more usually the savagery of common girlhood that is most remembered.



In the later twentieth century the autobiographical mode has been undergoing considerable experimentation. Unlike Dalit men, women autobiographers narrate their pain. They write in regional languages and they have hardly been into English. The position of Dalit women is as marginalized in Dalit literature as they are in their community. Education gave confidence to narrate their voices of distress, and sorrows in their autobiographical writings. Dalit feminist discourse not only question the mainstream Indian feminism's hegemony in claiming to speak for all women, but also the hegemony of Dalit men to speak on the behalf of Dalit women. humiliation and subverted centuries of old historical neglect and a stubborn refusal to be considered as a subject.

Bama, a Dalit feminist writer, in her work *Sangati* documents the plight of women of her community, their everyday struggle to earn their live hood, their endurance, resilience, and their hope for a better life. In the concourse of her documentation, Bama records the customs and habits of their community their everyday life, their marriage, child birth, their ceremonies and festivals. The following chapter analyses these facts.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Marginalization of Dalits**

The question of identity and identity crisis plagues modern man in his quest to carve out a niche for himself in this world. But the same question assumes a much crucial and gigantic proportion for an individual for whom identity becomes a struggle to survive with dignity and equality. The marginalized, the subaltern, the duality: call him whatever it may be, one thing remain constant and that is his daily struggle existence as the repressed, downtrodden and exploited section of society.

Mahatma Gandhi called them Harijans (the children of God), the high caste Hindus called them untouchables, while they called them as Dalits. Dalit literally means one who is downtrodden both socially and economically. Dalit's are those who have been forced to do dirty work, on whom the rules of untouchability is forced, who have been deprived of education and free trade. The practice of untouchability was formally outlawed by the constitution of India in 1950 but in practice, the Dalit's are still subjected to extreme forms of social and economic exclusion, discriminated and torture. Their attempts to assert these rights are often met with strong resistance from the higher castes, resulting in inhuman torture and atrocities.

Discriminated on account of various factors the Dalit's are the victims of various structures that constructs society like economic, social, gender based, culture etc. long suppressed into submission and silence that marginalized or Dalit's have since emerged out of the shadows of centuries of subjugation. Inspired by revolutionary social activists they have now given a voice to their identity through a literature of their own.

In fact, Dalit is not a caste, it is a constructed identity which is a comprehensive term comprising of not only the scheduled caste tribes and other backward classes but also takes into its preview and person, group or community that finds itself shoved to the periphery like women for instance.

The term Dalit came into existence in 1930s as the translation of the phrase 'depressed classes' used by the Britishers for the scheduled castes, first used by Jyotiba Phule, the term was later popularized by Dalit leader Dr Ambedkar to reflects the situation of Dalit's within south Asia, who are systematically and institutionally deprived of their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights in every aspect of life. Dr.Ambedkar used the term in his Marathi speeches. Later revised by the Dalit panthers in 1973 to include Neo-Buddhists, working people, landless and poor peasant, women and all those being exploited socially, politically, economically and in the name of religion, the Dalit's are now redefining the word and with their identity.

Literature pertaining this specified group of people in society is referred to as Dalit literature which is in fact an attempt to liberate the suppressed voice of the downtrodden. Dalit literature is basically the literature written by Dalit's-in which they have expressed their pain and anguish. The Non-Dalit writer who writes about Dalit's could not come under the category of Dalit writers because they don't represent the true Dalit consciousness.

Dalit literature is not a novel concept of this modern era but owes a long history. There are numerous theories about the origin of Dalit literature. Buddha (6thc.Bc): the 11th and 12th century writings of vacant, Chennaiah or Kalavve in Kanata: Chokhamela (14thAD), Mahatma Phule (1828-90) and prof.S.M Mate (1886-1957), are hailed as its originators.

There, great men were deeply concerned about the plight of the untouchables and fought against all the unjust divisions in society. A huge mass of literature is created in the light of their teachings and visions.

In *Karukku*, Bama gives the sharp image and the vulnerable condition of Dalit people and show forth causes for their victimization of external forces like poverty, politics and society she investigates other major calamity of the dalit such as untouchability and discrimination in the new religion (Christianity). She sore fully notes that their royal culture is divested and they are forced to lead a life of tribes. In *Sangati*, Bama showcases number of problems the Dalit women have faced in society that is driven on the lines of caste and gender. Black women are suppressed than black men. The Black women were ill-treated by their husbands as well as the upper class white people. Similarly, in India the Dalit women have. Bama's fictional landscape is dealt with victimization of Dalit women such as wife beating; sexual harassment and loneliness. In *Duality Girl Child's Future Bleak* documents that, "Dalit women had a tougher fight to wage than other women and must struggle harder to break away from the system if they are to gain entry into the knowledge society" (Anandakrishnan, 4).

Bama dealt with the problems of Dalit in a different angle. Poverty is the root problem of Dalit people. Bama probes into the problems of her community. She does not fail to reveal the problems that Dalit women struggle to face in their life such as injustice, social inequality, poor economic condition due to the ignorance and subordinate status in their family. The government helps to promote the welfare of Dalit, where as they remain poor.

Bama displayed the Dalit community getting embroiled in the microphysics of politics.

In *Karukku*, Bama's delineation of the Dalit people have to face the problem in the caste ridden society. Most of the Dalit people remain landless because the whole land of the village is possessed by upper castes. So that, they are economically exploited by upper caste landlords. This conditions make the rural Dalit people struggle to live. Even though they are the sons of the soil, they have no hope of owning their share of that soil. They are protested, day after day, innumerable features like despair, poverty, powerless, untouchability put them in to the same position by its iron hand. They struggle to escape from their problem; unfortunately, they are once again put into the same position, no improvement of their social status. "In India Dalits faced constant discrimination. Every hour two are assaulted, every day there Dalit women are raped and two Dalits are murdered-simply because they come from a caste considered 'untouchable' the bottom of the heap" (Mari Marcel Thekackara, 78).

Dalit is wounded in the name of untouchable. For centuries power has been systematically undetermined. Dalit's dig the village graves, dispose of dead animals, and remove human waste by their bare hands. The upper caste people treat them as in human. So that, in tea stall Dalit's are forbidden to use the tumblers, the tumbler is only meant for upper caste, whereas Dalit people fetch the tea in second tumbler. Any attempt to defy this social order is put down with its iron hand. Most of the Dalit people in rural area who dwell in a separate Colony which is away from the upper caste Hindus and caste Christianity. There is no fundamental facility in their colony such as water, electricity and so on. They are forbidden to fetch the water from the public well, to enter the temple, to wear chapels while crossing the upper caste street.

The curse of untouchability continuous even to this day. Dalit people are working as the house hold laborers in the upper caste families, after the Dalit people had finished this work, one of their family members sprinkled holy water in their house in order to purify. This is normally practiced in rural areas. In *Village Quite after Dalit Killing* states, “We thought we could mingle with upper castes in the village, but they always made us to feel that we were not their equal. If we had a function, they would not eat at our place”. (Vivek Dedshpande, 10)

The destiny of the Dalit's is same whether he is a Hindu or Christian or Muslims. Wherever he goes once again chased by untouchability, and gave no way to escape the problem of untouchables. In general, the social and the economic condition of Dalit Christians is no way better than then of Hindu Dalit's. Christians have been co-sharers of the burden of Dalit's. They preach the equality and never to follow. Even the caste Christians do not treat the Dalit Christians as equal to them. The Christianity subjugates the Dalit people for its established and they do not concern their welfare. It is the baffling fact that the church should have been the first to break caste discrimination but it has encouraged. Even in the rectory, while the Dalit's speaking to the priest they stand and express this view, but the caste Christians sit and talk to the priest the Dalit Christians have little choice but to yield to this situation owing to their minority status, economic backwardness and lack of political doubt.

The Dalit community has the culture of their own. Dalit's are the descendants of the soil and their bad luck quest for their identity, through folk arts and classic arts in the oral and the written forms. But their rich cultural heritage is robbed by the upper caste. Their own culture

is divested and foreign culture imposed upon them. The upper caste people always prevent them to create their own culture. It is a grief saga of Dalit history that they have suffered decimal and deprivation in a handed manner. Even the Dalit people want to build their own culture which has been denied by the upper caste. The purpose of the Dalit arts is to create the awareness among them and incite them to produce the new culture of their own and to enhance the value status. But the literature created by the upper caste to enlight Dalit's evils and their uncivilized cultural and never ready to explore their pain and scar.

Dalit women are regularly beaten up by their husbands. It begins with their birth and this cycle of their suffering last till their death. Dalit men treated their wives worse than beast. Bama feels a developing resentment at the injustice-sexual abuses, endless daily harassment and humiliation. These are the problem Dalit women still face. Psychologically Dalit women face inferiority complex, later on they are losing their self-respect. As a consequence many Dalit women do think that they belong in the gutters of the slum. The typical picture of Dalit women presented in *A Call For Action*, "as Dalit women, they have a trouble cross to bear; not only are they exploded outside home by the upper castes, they are also abused by the highly patriarchal men within the community" (Subashree Krishnasamy, 4)

Dalit women are victimization of sexual harassment. Even before the sun rises, the Dalit women prefer to go to the work (field) to co-shares their family burden. When they return home they are the responsible to fill up the bellies of their children as well as their drunkard husbands. Even though they shower their hard work to develop the welfare of their family;

they do not have leisure time to refresh themselves. They are compelled to share their husband's bed, whether they like it or not. The Dalit men treated their wives for their sexual pleasure, to full up their lustful desire. Suppose, the Dalit women refuse to yield it, and they are violently beaten up by their husbands. This sexual harassment is worse than they received from their masters in the field. They are ill-treated within and without their community.

In Dalit community welcome their male child only. They considered female child as a curse to their families where as male child compared with boon and celebrate them. Most of the Dalit women are still remaining caged birds. They always rely on their husbands for their financial status. They think that their freedom is a distant dream. From their birth to death, they obey the instruction of the society as well as their drunkard husbands. They are unaware of their freedom and self-respect because they are restricted to learn.

The Dalit women are often possessed evil spirits is clearly presented in *Sangati*. Bama narrates number of incidents to prove her community women possessed devils. They have the responsibility to share their family's financial status. After the work is finished they clean the vessels and cooks to fulfill the bellies of their begets as well as their husbands. Finally, they gone to sleep, they pushed to fulfill the lustful desire of their husbands. They do not have any relaxation at all. They are not only losing their self-respect but also become insane, ill balanced in their mind because of their mental depression as well as physical tiredness. Bama has wondered whether the evil spirits possessed their women as true or not. Later on she discovered that the reasons are for this in sane active, (evil possessed).



Bama, when she was a girl, had two unsolved questions in her mind; why do devils possess women, especially Dalit women? And why do they spare men? She was incapable to untangle the puzzles, established. She wondered why such an evil sprite hanged or haunted Dalit people only. She was aware of the fact that there is no protection to the Dalit women when they go out single. They can never count on the charity of the upper caste men so in order to protect them a sense of morbid fear is sustained to keep the Dalit women away from the wicked eyes of the upper caste men. The upper caste men embody the devils of the stories to the Dalit women.

The upper caste people's argument is that Dalit's are non-entities, an inferior rare. From their cradle to grave, the atrocities of the racial discrimination chased them. During their livelihood they remain inferior and lead a downtrodden life. Their parents probably taught them that; the books, they read, even their churches and ministers often taught them that; and above all the very concept of segregation teaches them that, in history of Hindu imperialism states that, "The ancient Brahman masters of Hindu India, who had established themselves as a separate nation with all the exclusiveness, arrogance, selfishness and cruelty which we associate with the white imperialists, did exactly what we accuse the later of having done". (Swami Dharma Theertha, 163).

The whole cultural tradition teaches them that Dalit's do not deserve certain things. So, these men are original together of this culture. Dalit's willingly submit themselves to the pathetic situation of collective ignorance and collective submissiveness. Bama focuses the problem of the Dalit community has struggled to fare to maintain their self-respect. The most shocking news is good nutrition's food is alien to the Dalit people. They are incompetent

to enhance the government job and in private sector and in the educational institutions. In village Dalit people are always marginalized from the society. Owing to their social status, they are forced to do menial jobs in upper caste people's families. Suppose they refuse, they are beaten up. They are restricted to enter the temples and prevented them to use public places and hand pumps. untouchability and caste oppression pushed the Dalit people to lead a downtrodden life.

Bama's novels, thus, become the sites of social amelioration where the social cartography for the future is envisaged. She maneuvers her pen towards the process of social and economic empowerment of vulnerable groups. She exposes the official line which claims to have put several schemes for Dalit women. Bama is more interested in knowing how much if such a benefits percolate to the Dalit's. The empowerment of women and elimination of gender discrimination must go beyond the level of overtures. The empowerment as seen by Bama would happen only with the end to the violence against them such as physical, sexual and verbal. That kind of empowerment would usher social justice and create an atmosphere of peace, mutual trust and complete security.

Bama makes a strong case for education. Any steps towards empowerment become meaningful only when the downtrodden are allowed to enjoy the power of education. It is more potent for the liberation of the Dalit's than all the anti-poverty schemes only the self-serving government. Bama wants everyone to see that anti-poverty schemes only free body from physical hunger. But education would enable the Dalit's to break all the social shackles that hold them in perceptual bondage. Education would give the Dalit the eyes to see through the vacuous political diatribes about eradication of caste-evil.

There is a need for Dalit to be emancipated. That emancipation will blossom by the ripeness of education. The education creates the awareness to the Dalit people. Under the circumstances the way open to the Dalit is a fight for self-determination.

The society is not willing to realize the basic right of the outcaste to live. The growing tendency of agitation across the country is mainly because of some factors which are exploitation, artificially depressed wages, inquisitions, socio-political circumstances, inadequate employment opportunities, lack of access to resources, under-developed agriculture geographical isolation lack of reforms. These factors contributed to the growth of protestation movements. There must be a social equality to have a social harmony and prosperity.

Centuries of oppression have been inflicted on Dalit people deep psychological wounds. The trauma of low self-esteem. It would be a threat to the unity and integrity of country. The value of land and houses owned by the under privileged is sharply lower than the other sections in the country. It displays the current social and economic disparities between privileged and underprivileged classes. The upper caste ruling classes preaches one thing and practices something else. But in reality, they are like any other hypocritical politicians, keeping one hand in the till and another for the low class people. Such hypocrites may call themselves friends of the poor, but in fact, they are real enemies to the downtrodden people. It is necessary that the majority community accept the minorities as equals even though they are different. It is salient to accept that they will remain different. What we need in the society is an acceptance of the fact that the good of each group is greater than the sum of its parts.

Pluralism of faith and pluralism of culture are crucial in multi caste societies such as India. Caste discrimination is very emotional and sensitive issue in a federal setup like Indian it should be approached in a realistic fashion and should be solved amicably. This situation has not been as bright and blooming as envisaged by the Dalit people. Suppression throughout the nation continues in isolated forms; and for many centuries people have been fighting against it in scattered areas to structure an international recognition. To save helpless climb dependent race of Dalit is the greatest concern of the time.

The impasse seen from closer quarters as Bama is seen to animate in her novels, is between the loss of the privileges that come from an existing social order that is unjust and the gain of privileges that come from rupturing and dismantling that very social order. For the upper castes the process of consolidation involves the use of force to sniff out any force of mutiny. For the Dalit's the process of emancipation would involve a struggle against hardened systems.

The average Dalit is trapped in a vicious cycle of debt and bondage. For toiling in the fields they are paid a few kilograms of rice for a meager salary a day. Most live on the brink of destitution barely able to feed their families and unable to send their children to school or break away cycles of debt, bondage that are pressed on from generation to generation. Their pathetic situation makes them witness of a horrendous reality. The creditors tighten their noose round the Dalit child who is trapped in financial indebtedness. Under the circumstances, it is the Dalit child who is traded off when it comes to realize from the creditors clutches.

Bama highlights this situation for illuminating the more serious reality of loss.

The Dalit's lose on all fronts. But the most serious loss is that of their selves. Their enforced anonymity makes them non-entities who have no presence in the day-to-day reality of society. On the margins, they are devoid of love and follow feeling. They have no means to articulate their state of social imprisonment. The choice of the Dalit is muted by the fact that their aloneness and anonymity keeps them part from the other communities who have been patient for the agony of the Dalits.

There are two, equally compelling, realities which pull the Dalit's apart. On the one hand, there is the need for survival. On the other, there is the need for an identity. Since both survival and identity for the Dalit, are determined by the relationship they enjoy with the upper castes, it cannot be free of upper caste interests. The relationship forces the Dalits to either choose the tangible reality of a survival or the intangible reality of identity. While survival impacts the physical sphere with immediacy, they prefer to put survival over identity. By making the choice themselves, they play into the hands of the upper castes who sustain the status quo by engineering marginalization.

She pours her heart which beats with compassion and sympathy for their poor Dalit's. She knows the mind of her people. This is her instinct. It comes to her spontaneously. The Dalits are not only innocent but ignorant too. They are ready to believe and accept whatever is said to them. This is mainly because of their poor understanding and inability to pick social subtleties that involve the machinations of the upper class people.

There is no value for human life especially Dalit's life. No sympathy is showered on Dalit's when they suffer. Chellakkizhi's, a Dalit girl, death is illustrative of how upper caste men behave. The owner, who is the cause of her death, does not show any sympathy for her but he

tries to hush the matter providing two thousand rupees to the victim's family. No action is taken at least; even formal enquiry is not initiated by the officials for they are bribed to maintain silence. The amount of money paid as a bribe is a measure of the value of a Dalit life. It takes only a few thousand rupees to silence the justice machinery. It also shows the monetary value that the upper castes attach to the life of a Dalit.

The third chapter highlights the problems of the Dalit people, especially the Dalit women who suffer more in the caste based society. The same amount of problems, if not, more than that is understood to be suffered by the Black people especially Black women, who live in a society that is not free from racism. Having examined the miseries of Dalit people as focused by Bama in her novels.

Life is an inevitable race to the pinnacle of excellence, and, in the race, the strife of the Dalit is endless and the struggle for priceless treasures of harmony. This quest for excellence should be the goal and mission. No conquest and achievement is viable without sacrifices. Bama urges the Dalit to be goal-oriented and to keep moving forward. There should be no room for excuses, procrastination and lack of will. She exhorts the Dalits to develop a wholesome attitude to life and shed all the narrow thoughts such as caste, creed, religion, race and colour. With her unbridled writing, she supplies the potion of confidence to her people and she wants them not to get frightened by any threats from the other communities, especially, the upper caste. She has sown the seed for a promising future to her fellow beings. Her role has changed from an angry nun to an active guide. With a fair amount of clarity, confidence and hope, her mission to articulate her reality she achieves. She hopes that Dalits can play a role of the dominant community in the country provided her people wake up from

the deep slumber of ignorance.

Many changes are indeed sweeping the Dalit community. More and more Dalits are gaining access to education. There is a gradual shift in the status of the community as more and more are becoming conscious of their reality. The culture of violence that sprang from ignorance is undergoing a change. Though this change is not radical it is atleast sufficient to give hope to the community that the future holds promise and it is right to hope for a better life.

Despite the step-motherly treatment of the ruling classes, the Dalit youths have managed to achieve more with a constant support of their people. They function as a cohesive team and work with zealous spirit to meet the challenges forced on them. Their blood is so strong now, but they stay calm despite provocation. Nothing could dampen the spirit of the Dalit people. And the Dalit people can't be kept under subjugation for long. Their fight is not over yet. Their challenges are deeper, larger and bigger.

Bama lays special emphasis on the need to have faith that humanity will survive any crisis. It is the writer's chosen path to instill confidence in the individual who must try to drive out the despair in him. Everyman has his intrinsic capacity to know the greatness of heart and spirit. It is quite obvious to state that no one can arrest or withdraw the spirit of freedom. The spark of free spirit can never be extinguished. Man has the innate strength to conquer his weak self. Bama affirms her faith in a free society, where alone, man can live as a man. Man is capable of breaking his barriers and shackles and his intrinsic ability will help him to emerge from the crisis. Man should have a broad outlook; parochial thinking should give place to a liberal outlook.

Bama, the novelist has discovered that the latent potential in every individual needs to be

kindled and activated. She understands that the strength to withstand and overcome the crisis is buried within individuals who must not be allowed to drift towards despair. As a writer, she believes that her words have the capacity to lift such individuals, teetering on the verge of despair to realize the power within to survive the crisis. And as a writer she has faith that all crisis will yield positive solutions and that order will emerge out of chaos.

Freedom is no gift. To achieve freedom one has to fight. In life, one has to carry the past through the present to seek to find but not to succumb even to the worst trails. The path has to be discovered and new homes rebuilt. When awareness surrounds the community the intensity of agony mellows to perfect understanding. A farmer believes and draws spiritual strength as well as sustenance from the soil. Bama instills hope in the failing mind of her people by reinforcing the idea that in a democracy every individual is a leader. Everyone possesses the potentiality of leadership. The responsibility is felt by one and all. Her leadership never fails; it is a continuous process; every one participates in the game.

Bama infuses confidence in her people. She feels a tremendous change in the attitude of Dalit women too. It is a good sign that they boldly protest and argue for their rights and dignity. They have come from the psychological trauma inflicted by the privileged classes. They are not ready to forget the past. The past bitter experiences make them bold. They have a strong reason to be strong. They wake up from the dormancy and they can see and sense the world with a well-balanced eye. Illusions are dissolved. Consciousness is awoken. Their social and political sensitivities and awareness have also increased. They emerge out of the dust and stand like warriors.

They are able to realize their 'selves' and their hidden potentialities. Consciousness



raising capacity is also increased to understand the society and human mind. In the hour of distress, self in the narrow sense dissolves and is forgotten. It merges with the 'selves' to become the collective aspiration.

It is a universally accepted fact that youth alone can transform a society. Youngblood knows no fear. They have rich reserves of energy and action. A broad outlook is their powerful weapon. They have one goal one direction now. The loss of the past becomes one loss and the golden time in the Dalit colony becomes one dream also. Light of hope is seen in the midst of mighty upheaval. Strange things happen and the barrier breaks down. Dalit identify themselves and in the identity diversity dissolves.

Bama does not allow her people to fall forever. She lifts them up from the fall and places them at a new height. She proves that survival is possible only through negotiating hurdles. Her people finally break away the shackles and establish themselves as dignified people. They stand tall in the midst of many problems.

## CHAPTER- IV

### **The Struggle for Legitimizing the Experience of Being Dalit**

Segregated by the society; They are marginalized by poverty, and oppressed by the poor mongers. Acts of brutality and terror continue to be part of the atrocities perpetuated on Dalits; The more they become the conscious of their rights and begin asserting themselves. They are being tortured so that they do not raise their voice on the existing social norms (Jogdand , 235).

The word Dalit has been derived from the root word Dal which means Crack, open, split etc. Dalit indicates things or persons burst, Split, broken or torn asunder downtrodden, scattered, crushed and destroyed. Dalit were regarded as outcaste, because they were alienated from the four folds graded caste structure of the Indian society. For this debate, Dalits were forced to do menial and dirty job such as crenation of corpses. They always remain under the feet of the upper caste. They danced with upper caste tune, because they were incomplete to full up their stomach. They never bothered about their rich culture and self- respective. Their destiny enforced them as slave for upper caste. The upper Caste not only subjugated Dalits for their welfare but also explained them. Therefore, they reached the state of being a no people (inhuman). If they assert their rights, the upper caste pulled them with their Iron hands. They incapable to protest and overcome from the victimizations of untouchables, Elinor Zelliot in her book from *untouchable to Dalit, Essays on Ambedkar* states, “ Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution” (89).

Dalit have been restricted to learn. The fundamental duties of education is to create

the awareness. Dalits are segregated from education, no one ready to feed educate them. The upper caste considered them, these people (Dalits) as sinned. Therefore, they enhanced lowest grade in the society. And so, no educated upper caste ready to feed education to them. They are subjugated and marginalized by certain forces like economic, society, culture and politics. The whole land of the village is owned by upper castes. Dalits are worked in upper caste fields. They struggle to lead a peaceful life. They are struggling to fill up their stomach. Therefore, they do dirty jobs like cleaning the house, toilets, drainage and low wages or strike food for their bellies. They never condemned upper caste. Suppose, they raise their voice against upper caste. The upper caste use their forces to clutch the neck of Dalit. So that, Dalit unable to break the Hindu social order. Whenever they go, the atrocity of untouchable chased them till their birth to their grave (death). After the death, once again untouchable chased the death people, where this people build. The society also divided the graveyard – graveyard for upper caste, graveyard for Dalit. The atrocity of untouchable only resolved by education, “Dalit writers in Tamil place on enormous emphasis on possibilities of empowerment of Dalit through their education. Education, they argue empowers Dalit to raise above castiest codification of social relation” (Rao, 112)

The society is never accept them as human beings and treated them worse than beast. Being a Dalit suffered a lot, no one is ready to heal their scars. Dalits are considered as object. That is why, the upper caste and the politicians use them as a play ball. They constantly beaten up by the cricket bat (external forces). Education is the main ashitra (weapon) to handle the awareness to them. Through education, Dalit can enhanced the social status equal to upper caste. Unfortunately, Dalit are restricted to learn. The society designed the life for them and put them to lead the life of uncivilized (tribes). One of the most bitter experiences untouchable. According to, the Hindu karma theory, birth provide the human being for their past misdeeds. If a person had done so much of misdeeds he/she birth to the

Dalit community. As the Dalit people considered as sinned. So that, they restricted to wear chapels, fetch the water from the public well as well as the hand pumps. Upper caste never allow Dalit to enter their street. They considered for their physical touch would pollute them (upper caste).

Dalit literature resolves around the themes of shame, frustration, exploitation, degradation, discrimination, quest for their own identity and optimistic hope for their future generation etc. It provides awareness to them. Through the awareness they can evaluate themselves. After that they can get Independence from the grip of upper caste and given the full stop for upper caste's atrocities. Dalit build the unity (brotherhood in scheduled caste) among them. Dalit literature never accept Hindu Puranas, Vedic and Hinduism because, these forces never allow this social status (equal to upper caste).

At present, one of the most serious issue is to debate the caste and class has covered wide – ranging which related to the indicators of status, level of equality and inequality, cultural and structured interactions, occupational mobility etc. The two fold dimensions of stratifications are caste and class. These major issues are interrelated to the fundamental process of social life. Caste is viewed for the sole mode to investigate the Indian society, class is to evaluate the caste and power. At the village level, caste may be a no longer system of productions, but is remaining the set of coded practices.

Caste depends upon the economic background besides, religions and social structures. There are hundreds and hundreds of sub – caste according to their profession, where the job is inherited from their forefathers to their youths. Dr. Ambedkar's stress was not only on equality in religion, society and political power but also education and cultural creativity. He derived to formulate new space for Dalits. He protested against our traditional literature, eastern and western critical theories. Some of the saints expressed their protest against the oppressors but it could not bring tremendous change in the society.

India has been labeled as one of the largest democratic country in the world. It provides progressive and protective constitution, law that prescribed and punished for the act of discrimination. The laws are in written format, no one is ready to practice. This tragedy is happened throughout the world. Dalit drop out to learn and promote their social status. If Dalit learns through their learning enhanced to evaluate themselves. Then, they protest against the upper caste and never try to do the dirty job. For that the upper caste put Dalit in the same position without improvement. Hindu Brahminical society keep Dalit in the lowest rank of four fold caste to system, merely 160 million people of our landscape considered untouchables.

Statistics compiled by India's National Crime Records Bureau signifies that in the year 2000, the last year for which figures are available 25,455 crimes were assaulted, every day three Dalit woman were raped and two Dalits homes burned. That the same year 68,160 complaints were filed against the police for activities ranging from murder, torture and collusion in the acts of atrocity, defiance to file the complaint. 62% of these cases were dismissed as unsubstantiated, some of these crimes even unpunished.

In India, untouchables have been forced to accept the long silenced. Dalit community compelled to live at the bottom of Indian's social pyramid. Even though untouchability was abolished in 1949, Dalit still to face discrimination, economic deprivation, violence and humiliation. It has been observed that passive acceptance of the victimhood which stance by Dalit can be attributed to the rigid caste structure which have fierce these untouchables to believe and accept that the oppression is natural and preordained by their destiny, shame, anger, sorrow, and indomitable hope have become the major part of their life.

Dalit were in all ways completely oppressed and swindled the Dalits in every respect. They were neglected as an unwanted creature. They were constantly in search for freedom,

liberty and self – respect. If Dalits assert their constitutional rights to live as human being, they are humiliated, beaten and marginalized neither the politician nor upper caste not to ready to give their hands to uplift their life. These depressed people are called shudras is only on paper whereas theoretically these caste is a distinct community drop out from four fold graded of our Indian society.

The aim of Dalit literature is to light on the disabilities and difficulties, inhuman treatment that meted out for Dalit. It in cast awareness among the people. “Dalit literature is not only a literature of protest but also the literature of reconstruction of the past” (Jagdev, 37) writers to this literature never write the beauty of nature as well as the romantic tales. The fundamental curve of their writing to examine the struggle for their survival and dignity are the two major subjects. The concept of purity and pollution made their life in living hell for Dalit. They are, “socially oppressed, economically exploited, politically marginalized and a landless agricultural laborers cannot be called as ‘subaltern’, they are sub – subaltern who are yet colonized even after society years of Independence and therefore, these subaltern are waiting for post – colonialism”. (Pramod Ramod, K.Nayar, 109)

Upper caste people hesitated to accept Dalit as equal to them. They scold and abused them in bad ways. Whatever the crisis happened upper caste blame Dalit who had done it. “It must be one of the cheri children who did it” (KARUKKU; 18). The street structure is also pre – planned. All the specialties in favor to their street. But the destiny of Dalit do not have any fundamental specialty in their street. Dalit need their routine work they seek to cross the upper caste street. Upper caste never allow them to enter their street. They think that Dalit are untouchables as well as sinned people. If the upper caste people give the permission to cross their street and gave some restriction to them (Dalit) to wear chapel, to well on their shoulders. On the way back Dalit have done some dirty jobs for upper caste families such as house cleaning, cleaning the toilets as well as cowshed, buy vegetables and some other goods

for them. The upper caste used them as unpaid labourers.

Dalit people are optimum level, merely one third of people of their village is Dalit. Their fate they are inferior to them. All the specialties upper caste people have whereas Dalit are remaining Dalits. Even, the school is also situated in Nadar's street. If any unwanted thing is happened, the upper caste people never ready to wait for a single minute to debate who had done it. They easily blame the Dalit and considered Dalit must had done it.

Everyone looked at Harijan children were contemptible. But they did not use them for cheap labourer like that, carried the water to their teachers' house, watered the plants and did all the dirty work that needed for school. It indicates in what way students were treated in Guru Kula educational system. The students approach the teacher and done the all the filthy chores as well as sacrifice their bliss to them. But the system was devastated. Even though it was devastated, its principle chased the Harijan people nor for others.

Bama had a bitter experience in her seventh standard. Every day, after the school is over all the children along with Bama played the in front of the school. One day, Bama and her playmates were playing on the big Neem tree hanging like the bats. After that they ready to play the game to climb up the coconut tree and touch the ripe coconut. The coconut tree grew in a slantwise at the convenient angle. Groups of her playmates played this game. They climb up one by one on the tree and touched the coconut. When Bama was touched the coconut of fall down. It was not a fully ripened coconut. All the children were frightened and flee away.

The next day, Bama was scold publicly at assembly by the head master. The head master abused Bama, "you have shown us your true nature as Paraya, you climbed the coconut tree after every day else gone and you stole the coconut. We cannot allow you inside this school. Stand outside" (*Karukku*, 19). The school headmaster punished Bama to stand outside of the class for stolen the coconut. Bama was not a responsible for this misdeeds, but

her ignorance. The innocent girl (Bama) got punishment. She was in agony on hearing such a humiliating words. She felt ashamed and insulted in assembly.

By this time, there was the severe conflict between the Chaaliyar and Paraya communities for cemeteries. The headmaster was from Chaaliyar caste. All the children of the school look at Bama in a strange manner. Bama felt guilty conscious even though she did not commit wrong. She do not know what has next to attend the class. One of the Teachers counsel her to seek the help of priest, otherwise Bama impossible to attend the class. Bama met the priest and conveyed everything about the previous day and the headmaster's abusive language upon her. She begged him to give the permission letter to go back to school. The priest also in favour of the upper class people by status, "you are from the Cheri, you might have done it, you must have done it" (*Karukku* ,19). On hearing these her eyes wailing up and shed tears. After the long time, the priest wrote an apology letter to the school Bama to attend the class. Being a Dalit she could not justifies herself because of her birth. Dalit might have justifies herself because of her birth. Dalit might have done it and must have done it either they do it or not. We never try to know Dalit people who have the heart themselves, they are also the human beings. We people considered them as worse than beast. When Bama enter the class all the children of the class the class all the children of the class look at her. She felt humiliation for the sight of her own classmates. She still wearing her the school is over. The school teach the victims of caste at the same time they practiced.

Bama was in hostel, the warden sister scold Dalit as, "these people get nothing to eat at home; they come here and they grow fat. When we returned to the school after the holidays, look at the cheri children! When they stay here, they eat their fill and look at round as potatoes. But look at the state in which they come back from home – just skin and bone!

(*Karukku*, 20)



Bama states that Dalit people paid the amount for food and resident in the hostel like others. But they only humiliate publicly. The warden sister think that being a Dalit, they hard to fill their stomach. It is different to the educators Dalit. Their parents sacrifice themselves and fill their stomach in half. They save the amount and spend that money to enrich the life of their sons and daughters. They are live in the life of poverty and struggle. They concentrate such a hard think never affect their descendants. Through the education, they attained equal status to upper caste. At school, they are humiliated but they concentrate to breathe education. Bama's brothers offers the counsel to her as education only enrich their society.

The government offer Dalit to develop their society through education, so that, they offer scholarship and provides special tuition for Dalit students. This is a wonderful art but every action it had a two folds like head and tail in the coin. Even though government help Dalit in a positive way psychologically Dalit depressed. They never tried to reflect their identity to others. But the government offers displayed their identity. The fit teacher interrupt the class and asked the student. They write it down and asked them to sit. Being a Dalit felt humiliating, among the students community the scholarship and the special tuition separate Dalit students from other students. So that, she states the manner they stand among the other student as, "we'd stand in front of nearly two thousands children, hanging our heads in shame, as if we had done something wrong. Yes, it was humiliating" (Karukku, 21)

The Dalit children got the distinction in government Examination, the school authority rewarded them in front of the students. They called their name along with their community. The Harijan got the distinction in the government exam, suppose, the upper caste enhanced the distinction, they called their name and never called out their community. It encouraged the Dalits in one hand, at the same time indirectly segregated Dalits from student community. The government as well as the educational place drops out them from other students. Though the reward provides certain bliss to them. It is the way separate them from others. The

external forces clearly done their duties from childhood itself.

Bama finished her B.Ed education and make her life fruitfulness. At work place, the nun enquired about her community. Bama deliberately explores her community (Paraya) to the nun. Most of the nun were remain Telugu. Tamil nuns were treated inferior to them from the day onward she dwelled in battle. She felt happy to teach the Dalit children, because most of the children in tat school remain Dalit. She is ready to devote her life for the welfare of her people. Being a Dalit, she forced to leave the place.

Bama wanted to sacrifice her youthful bliss for the sake of Dalit people. The sister conveys the order, “they would not accept Harijan women as prospective nun and that there was even a separate order for them” (*Karukku*, 25). Christianity preach the equality and never ready to practice. Wherever they go untouchables chased them whether they are in Christians or Muslims. Dalit women are inferior to Dalit men as stated in the Exploring caste;

We are Dalit for Dalits Burned with Women hood and Dalit identity;  
Struggling with Broken wings; Crushed by Man’s feat; we are Piece of flesh  
only to strive; we are Ill – fated doubly marginalized Dalit women  
(Vaidya,30).

Dalit experience is burning in the fire of sorrows, hatred, humiliation, injustice, inequality and untouchability. Dalit have a specific experience of their life, which non – Dalit do not have. Only Dalit writers can express their experience in an authentic manner but not others. Non – Dalit writers may be sympathetic to Dalits. They may be their well – wishers but their experiences about Dalits are not their experiences. They are the observer of Dalits torture and exploitation, they are not the sufferers. This is the differences of experiences between Dalit and non – Dalit writers. Hence, Dalit literature is the literature of Dalit’s based on their lives and experiences.

The upper caste’s nation, low caste people are degraded in every way. They think that

Dalit has no moral discipline and culture. Being a Dalit, who faced several number of problems in their life. Bama state her suffering on untouchables, being a Dalit as;

If you are born into a low caste, you are forced to live a life of humiliation and degradation. Until your death. Even after death, caste difference does not disappear. Wherever you look however much you study, whatever take up caste discrimination stalks us in every work and corner and drives us into a frenzy. It is because of this that we are unable to find a way to study well and progress like everyone else. And this is why, a wretched life style is all that is left to us. (*Karukku*, 26).

She had some questions regarding the victimization of Dalits, are Dalit not a human being? Do they not have commonsense? Do they not have such an attributes as a sense of honor and self – respect? Are they without any wisdom, beauty and dignity? Through these questions she expressed her agony but no one accepted them as human being.

Dalit have been enslaved generation to generation under the feet of upper caste. Through the upper caste people's atrocity the Dalit accepted themselves as degraded, leaving honor and self worth, untouchables. They appreciate them as the slave for the upper caste people. Dr. Ambedkar was stressed the separation of Indian society and its divisions.

It brings out the dichotomy which always existed between the 'high' and 'low' cultures and attempt to deconstruct the old cultural narrative which it finds highly biased and partial. It stands for a new Ideology which include all sorts of remapping of a social territory which has several lapses before, and needed to be recognized (Ambedkar, 54),

We are live in the democratic country. Our Indian constitution framed the law to protect the poor as well as Dalits from the upper caste oppressors. They, prescribed perished for racial discrimination (untouchables). The laws were in written though he commit crime, it punished the good even he did not commit the crime. Because they socially oppressed,

economically exploited and politically powerless. The power against the powerless. It investigate in *Karukku*, there was the severe conflict between the Parayar and Chaaliyar community for cemetery. There is also the different kind of burial place for the upper caste Christians and the lowest rank Christians. The burial cemetery of Dalit Christians situated near by Chaaliyar's school.

The Chaaliyar community and the Paraya community claims the cemetery for them. The Chaaliyar's claim their rights as the cemetery belonged to them. This is the reason for the battle which devastated the peaceful life of Dalits. They blood thrust with each other. Izhave's husband, a Paraya was pray on this battle by the Chaaliyar. For a few days, both sides were quite, all of a sudden which fuel in a fire. The Paraya young fellows were severely beaten up by Chaaliyar young fellows. The Chaaliyar filed the complaint against Paraya community. They given a statement as the Parayar's men were the responsible to devastated their school, houses and temple. The police men never ready to enquire what had happened?, who are the Victims? Who done the misdeeds. The blindly believe that it must be done by Paraya . Being a Dalit, they may not know to manage the case against for them. Dalit community headman organized their youths to show forth their Valour against the Chaaliyars.

The paraya want to exposes their brave, so that, they ready to attacked the chaaliyar. They have the weapon in their hands. The Paraya enter the chaaliyar's streets. The chaaliyar's street remaining immortal silence. Dalit think that they won the battle. Unfortunately, there is the tragedy waiting for them. Most of the Dalit men were arrested by the police men. The police men mercilessly beaten by Dalit men. The innocent beaten up. The Chaaliyar clutches the Voice of the Dalit. Some of the Paraya were escaped and flee from the hands of the police men. Few men were caught by the police. The police men surrounded Parays's street. The Chaaliyar offers the bribe to the; police men ; Here Bama states

It seems that the Chaaliyar folk invited some people known as 'Reserve Police' all the way from Sivakasi, butchered a sheep for them, and arranged a feast. They have taken an oath to destroy our boys, without counting the lost they are slaughtering sheep at the rate of two a day and feasting the police (*karrukku*, 36).

The Chaaliyar given the bribe to the police men for devastated the Dalit. But being a Dalit, Paraya don't have the property and amount to bribe the police men. They have only ragi and cholem. The police men like a hawk, in one of the poems of Ded Huges 'Hawk Roosting' by states. The hawk sitting on the top of the tree and keenly watched its prey. Suppose, the hawk saw it pray, it never to wait to catch and eat it. It brutally tears the head and body of its prey. Finally, it become the food for the hawk. Hawk (the powerful police men) keenly watched the presence of Dalits (Paraya) and ready to hit (tears and tore the body) to devastate the Paraya and put them into Jail. They in search of Dalit's saw their husband's sons and father's severely beaten up by police. They don't have the chance to save their men, their hand is an empty.

The policemen arrested Paraya men and handover the Madurai high court. Bing a Dalit, they do not do anything in detail. Through St. Antony the Paraya gain Victory. The court confess the Chaaliyar never punished. The Paraya men were released and join with their families. After a while, both community resolve the problem. Life as a Paraya is hard to live from the very child hood. Every one gone to work in order to earn their living by laboring either for in the Naickers or in the fields. Apart from this, they work as the construction lablour by digging wells, carrying loads of earth, gravel and stone and even this work is not available they go to the hill top go gather firewood. They work at the kilns making to the naickers. Earth Paraya poverty and economical background put forth Paraya to work under the feet of Naicker.

Like every other child Bama used to work along with his grandmothers. His grandmother is a real and proper servant to the Naicker. She used to bring workers to work regularly. She supervises them and makes sure they receive their wages. Grandmother has to wake up before the cock crow, gets water and does all the out life work. She showers her toil for the welfare of their masters. She used to return home at dark and cook a little gruel for herself. During school days as soon as lessons were over Bama has to collect them such as palm tree, coconut, palm stems, and fronds for fuel. Bama would also collect cow dung, she pats cow dung into the flat cakes for burning. During the vacation she would go to the fields along with her grandmother and with some other women from her community. Bama mostly used to pull up the groundnuts, clean and sort the pods. To do all these things Bama and other women used to wake up before the sun rise. They take some food in their vessels and go to the work. Being a Dalit, till work to their death. Their vulnerable problem begins with birth to death. Dalit women worked more than men feed their children and managed co-shares the household financial burdens. Through the work wages not to fill up their stomach then how can they develop their status, in what way they escape from the atrocity of the poverty. They hard work and died without improve their social status. So, that, they remaining enslaved for the upper caste who feed the food for them. Therefore, they (Dalit) considered them (upper caste) Maharaja.

The next thing is when there is no field work Bama would collect four annas from her mother. She gives four annas to the gardener. The gardener would allow her collecting firewood. She says that it is not easy to collect the firewood because one has to climb the steep mountain slopes one by one and flicks the dried pieces of wood. She ties them up in bundles. Tying the bundle is very difficult. The thorns would scratch on face and arms. By carrying the bundles, Bama's hair gets locked and pulled the skull apart. Finding the way is very difficult to Bama. She has to go through creepers and turnings climbing down the

mountain slope was not easy walking home would drain the energy to Bama. Bama sells the bundles to Naickers for seven or eight rupees. There are Nadar man who have shops in the Paraya Street, Parayars would exchange the goods which are brought by them and in return Nadar used to give what the Parayars needed. The Parayars were badly swindled during their bartering session. They exchange the harvest grain, cotton pods. Every time, they take the advantage. But, the Dalits are the ones who toil hard all life to make good.

Bama depicts the lower position of Dalits in the catholic church, though they are good numbers in it. She also project the condition of Dalit nuns and priest how they are alienated from the mainstream of the religious order. The following account on the condition of Dalits in the catholic religion can be seen as a reading of Dalit on the catholic religious practices, which is prevalent in religious order. Bama feels

In the churches, Dalit are the most, in numbers also in everything else, they are the least. It is only the upper caste Christians who enjoy the benefits and comforts of the church. Even amongst the priests and nuns, it is the upper caste who hold all the high positions, show off their authority and through their weight about. And if Dalit become priest or nun, they are pushed aside and marginalized first of all, before the even though Dalits like me might wish to take up the path of renunciation, we find there is no place for us (*Karukku*, 69).

Being a Dalit, Bama transferred three times and lastly to another school where most of the children from the rich families. Some poor children have been inhuman manner. They are forced to clean the toilet and the classroom and do all sorts of menial jobs. She used to wonder how those nun proclaim that they work for Gods kingdom were all are equal. Some of the utterances the nuns make about the Dalits are;

How can we allow those people to come into our houses! In any case, even if we were to allow them, they would not enter our homes. They themselves know their place. There is nothing we can do for these creatures. And we should not do anything for them. Because to do so, would be like helping or cobra. These days these people go about reasonably dressed. So you can't even make out who they are? (*karukku*, 99)

Bama is very much ashamed to hear these words. But she could not question this attitude of the nuns. When Bama enters the convent, she learns more of God and the teaching of Jesus but the church seems to be hypocritical. This makes her angry with the priest and nuns. Bama opines;

They, the Dalits, have become aware that they too were created in the likeness of god. There is a new strength within them, urging them to reclaim that likeness which has been so far repressed, ruined, obliterated; and to begin to live again with honour. Self respect and with this alone is true devotion ( *Karukku*, 94).

Priest Preach in the church that God is born in a poor family, lives among the poor and dies for the poor. In the same way, they always concentrate on worldly things not on spiritual things. Bama writes, "Always the discussion was at the level of what to prepare, what to eat; what to celebrate and how to enjoy, what to build and what to break, what to buy and where how to sell it" (*Karukku*, 96). When she sees these things, her thoughts of her own people, living misery, taking in only gruel all the time; so she decides to leave the religious order. There is emptiness in the church. There is no Jesus no peaceful life. They preached one thing and practiced something else. Being a Dalit, she cannot endure all these things and desired to leave the religious order.



The Dalit women are insecure outside, how they are crushed to death. The upper caste people think that Dalit has no sense of moral so that, they put them to full fill their lustful desire.

Women should never come on their own to these path if upper caste fellows claps their eyes on you; that's for sure. If you go on a little further, there will be escaped criminals lurking in the plantations. They keep themselves well hidden. You must never let them, see you either (*Sangati*, 8)

One day, Mariamma gathered firewood as usual, and came home with her bundles. She goes and quenches the water for the thrust. On the way, Kumarasamy, the owner of the field pulled her aside and toyed to devastate her originality. Unfortunately, she escapes from his hand and conveys the matter to her friend in detail about the misbehaviour of Kumarasamy Ayya. Her friend consoles her. Suppose you blame, the society giving the new name for you. So that, it put it into secret and never tell it into other. Mariamma and some of her collect the bundle which Mariamma prepared to firewood.

By this time, Kumarasamy afraid that his reputation would be spoiled, Mariamma explores the misbehaviours of Kumarasamy. So that, he created the scandal to poison the good name of Mariamma. He complains the headman of their community by narrating the story as Mariamma and Manikkam were behaving in a very dirty way; Kumarasamy seen with his eyes on that scene. Therefore, he would complain the head man of their community.

Kumarasamy wanted to secure his reputation, so that, he spoiled the innocents- Mariamma and Manikkam. Kumarasamy narrates to Dalit's head man as; "Just today the girl Mariamma, daughter of Samudirakanni, and that Mukkayi's grandson Manikkam were behaving in a very dirty way; I saw them with my own eyes. And it is a good thing it was I who saw them. I have come straight away to tell you" (*Sangati*, 20). At the moment,

Mariamamma and Manikkam enter the street. Kumarasamy's word makes the head man of Dalit community suspected the innocents. He never questioned and justifies his own people. Because their forefather's to his generation believe the words of the upper caste and never raise the questions against them. In that way, the head man blindly believes the words of Kumarasamy.

The head man of Paraya community and some of the people gathered in the community hall. The head man order the innocents Mariamma and Manikkam to present in front of them. They enquired says he just communicate with Mariamma that's all and never do such a misbehaving on Kumarasamy's field. Though Manikkam justifies himself, the villagers not ready to believe Manikkam. They believed that the misbehaving must be happened. They blinded believed Kumarasamy's words

. The head man never gives the chance to justify Mariamma because woman are twice oppressed – by birth (Dalit) by genders (feminine) some of the women support Mariamma to expressed her thought about the accusation. Mariamma never tried to say anything. Because being a Dalit women, she is incompetent to protest against the upper caste. Suppose she justifies herself no one is ready to believe her. So that she remained deaf. The villagers of her community fixed these two innocents are the convicts the head man asked Mariamma's father Samudrakani to incest his daughter to convey what had happened. On hearing this Mariamma is remaining deaf and dumb. She was humiliating among her own people. Bama status

I could never forget the way Mariamma was humiliated in front

of the entire village. The more I thought about it, the

more I felt sorry for her. And although I was filled with anger on

the other (*Sangati*,28)

Mariamamma has no way to justify herself. Therefore, the villagers ready to punish Mariamma and Manikkam. The punishment is also different to Mariamma and Manikkam. Through the punishment Bama narrates the atrocity of the society. Mariamma asked to pay the fine of Rs 200 and Manikkam Rs 100 .This is the judgment of their village court. They favour on the made frock. Malikarjuna States

She (Dalit) woman is twice oppressed. When it comes to

secular exploitation, even the Dalit made is no exception

As the oppressed becomes the oppressor. It should however be

Noted that these women are not at the mercy of some

Immanent metaphysical force like Thomas Hardy's Tess,

But are victims of materialist forces (Malikarjuna,57).

The villagers give the name to Mariamma whatever they want the narrator becomes furious on these words. The narrator's grandmother advised Mariamma's father Samudrakani to arrange the marriage for Mariamma Samudrakani states there is no one ready to accept Mariamma as wife. He expressed his view on that the marriage of Mariamma, better we give it Mariamma to Manikkam. Manikkam is an evil man. He is a drunkard. He got punished and released from Jail eight or nine times. He always playing the gambling and never ready to promote his welfare Mariamma is married to Manikkam. After her marriage, she is daily beaten up by her drunkard husband. Suppose, she commit the suicide within five minutes she passed away from the world. But it is the lifelong imprisonment in the name of marital institution. The one word of the evil Kumarasamy to make her life is in a melancholic state;

It is as you become a slave from the very day you are married. That is why,  
all the men scold their wives and keep them well under control. Even so, I've  
never seen anyone else beat his wife like this (*Sangati*,43).

The girl child in Dalit community witness the great deal of a domestic violence. The story of Marikani in *sangati* is heart wrenchingly painful. Dalit men are often irresponsible and do not bring wages to home. Marikani is the small girl who is working in factory to co-shares their family burden when her mother was in pregnant, she is forced to manage their family. She is the responsible to feed ho family where her father failed to do. She works sticking on labels in the matchbox factory. She represents the problem of the child labour in India, which affected Dalit suffer more than the other communities. She narrates as incident of how she is lured by a man to pick firewood from the lonely forest. But she understands the evil intentions and run away from the forest. The narrator wonders what life has made of Marikani, "If she was required to work fat harder that her years demanded, she also behaved with a commonsense for beyond her years" (*sangati*,75). Work is only for a women not for a men. She sacrifices her life and toiled for her family. Suppose, she spend some amount to fulfill her desire. She is severely beaten up by her father for spending money. But he spend a money for drinking and gambling.

She did not have the enough to spend leisure or her personal work. There is no toilet in their houses. They make use the public place. In that open spares, they urinated and bathed. The condition of their culture states:

Here the houses did not have the bathroom and toilets. Women bathed openly  
and urinated everywhere.... Cycle rickshaw drivers porters and labourers were  
the main inhabitation of this locality people lived in the smallest possible spaces.

Even one worried about his hunger the stomach was the threshold of their capability  
(Limbale,107).

Add before the sufferings of Mariamma wife beating is regularly happened in Dalit family. Bama investigate the reason about wife beating in her novel *Sangati*. Dalit men are always humiliated and Ill-treated by the upper caste. They treated Dalit as inhuman. Being a Dalit never explains their anger to them. So that, they turns their frustration to their wives. Here Bama states the condition of their women as;

Nowadays, when I reflect on how the men in our street went about drinking and Beating. I wonder whether all the violence was because there was nowhere else for them to exert their male pride or to show off their authority. All that suppressed anger was vented when they came home and beat up their wives to a pulp.(*Sangati*,65)

Dalit women oppressed within the home, by their husband, outside the home (upper caste); “Dalit men are reproducing the same mechanism against their women which their high caste opponents had used to dominate them” (Guru,83).

In *Sangati*, there was a song related to the exploitation of women. The husband beat his wife hard even though she is in pregnant. As women sings her agony;

He came to hit me, the hungry brute

He pounced at me to kill me

He struck me, he struck my child

He almost crushed the baby in my womb

He beat me until my legs buckled

He threshed me until my bangles smashed (*Sangati*,30)

The women were subjugated and exploited by the men from the many long years.

Dalit fiction and its literary movements are rely on the common grounds social oppression. This literature is also come under the category of post-colonial literature. The post-colonial literature focused on the themes of exploitation of their landscapes, scar, and oppression ect... Dalit writing explores the agony, scar, exploitation and oppression. The upper caste people (colonizer), the (colonized). There is the master slave relationship between them. Dalits are colonized by the upper caste and waiting for their fruitful future. The relationship between upper and Dalit explained.

Karukku is an autobiography of Bama. *Sangati* is the autobiography of her community in a smaller level where as *Vanmam* is focused in a larger level. Through *Vanmam* Bama depicts Dalit people suffered a lot by the upper caste people. Being a Dalit, they are subjugated. The upper caste used throw them as dish paper. The usage of the dish paper to clean their hands and throw away. In that way, Dalit people are used by their welfare.

Dalits are enslaved to the upper caste, so that, they do certain revered to this masters at the time of Pongal festival. The educated Dalit hesitates to do such a humiliating duties to the upper caste. The older people of that community welcome the youth. The upper caste became an anger for that action. They add fuel in a fire, in the sense to spoil the brothers hood relationship between Parayar and Pallars. The upper caste kindled one of the Dalits (Pallar) to turn against the Parayar, and given the promise to them to secure the legal problem. Mariaarasu was the first person assaulted by Karuppusamy. Karuppusamy unaware of the upper caste people. He toiled the welfare of his master and murder his own kith and kin Maarasu. Maraasu was the servant of the Ranga Naicker. After the Maraasu's murder he never incest police to enquire about the cause. He used Maraasu as dish paper. After his death

he forget Maraasu. They are in the state of ignorance and innocent. So, the upper caste make use of the innocent for their welfare. Being a Dalit, they are unaware of themselves. They used as object. They not know how to find their future is distanced to them and never to reach by them.

Sesurathnam was the second person to prey on the upper caste's conspiracy. Some of the Pallars murdered sesurathnam. The Parayar also expressed their strength against Pallars. They blood thrust with each other. They are hidden in the field. The Parayars and Pallars were arrested and released. They know their-self and quest for their identify. Huge loss from both side. They can earn money and wealth but good souls, brothers hood relationship never be build up between them. After their released both sides headmen dissolve the problem and frame the new way for their youngsters to escape from the wolf (upper caste) conspired.

Bama's first two novel, *Karukku* and *Sangati* explored Dalits agony, suppress and scar. These two novel Indicate their protest against the upper caste. But in *Vanmam*, Bama formulate the way to escape from the casteism. Without knowing we never gain victory. The last two chapter (chapter 11 and chapter 12) explored the way for their success. Without unity never gain victory. At last the upper caste ready to break their brotherhood relationship. But this time they are aware off. So that, their conspirely is mispired. The two folds (north and south) from the same category (Earth) united and they prove union is strength.

Dalit people are the majority in the Kandanpatti village. No one is ready to defeat the Naicker. No one raised their voice against them. But it is the first time the Dalit got victory against the Naicker caste. The government also provides reservation part in the editorial board and offers government jobs as well as feeding education to them. Through the education, they get awareness, know themselves after that they claim their constitutional laws. Bama's writings to kindle the awareness among Dalit people. Freedom is not a distant

dream or gift. This is in our hand. When we know ourselves we can attained our goal dignity and self-respect.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMATION

Dalit literature is the literature of protest and revolt. Dalit writers never try to depict the imaginary shades of false lives but they show off real life with true colours. Mostly Dalit writers use their own language and culture to depict their own experiences. Bama uses the Dalit Tamil language more consistently than many of his contemporaries for narration, debates and comments. She bridges spoken and the written style consistently. She breaks the rules of grammar and spelling throughout her work, omits words and join them differently, demanding a new and different pattern of reading in Tamil. She has said that the style in which *Karukku* came out was completely spontaneous. This enabled her to realize her own voice and style.

Bama has made a further linguistic leap in reclaiming the language particular to woman of her community. *Karukku* is told in Bama's own voice. She voices the injustice meted to women. Such a language is full of expletives, quite often with explicit sexual references. Most of Dalit writing in Tamil has tended to be fiction or poetry. Bama is among the few who bridge autobiography, fiction, and also call for an action. She has done so deliberately and boldly. Moving easily between these different elements and bringing them together with a vivid and lively pasteurization in an inventive style.

Bama investigate the agonies of untouchables in her fictional word. As depicted in *Karukku*, discrimination frequently takes the form of violence. Caste crimes against Dalits include rampant deaths, mutilations, physical assaults, rapes, public humiliation, attacks on their homes and communities, burning down of houses and crops, social boycotts, poor income in rural regions, acute poverty, and a high

proportion of secondary school dropouts. All of these political and economic discriminations have a psychological impact on them. Dalits, unlike upper castes, were unable to meet their fundamental necessities. They should only work as slave labour for the upper caste, such as driving cattle in pairs, treading out stray grain, and cutting firewood, among other things. They could survive on whatever was the cheapest. Clothing is not supplied for Dalit children. We could see the youngsters used to go barefooted in the fields. Even if a couple lads wore trousers, they would have slid down, barely concealing what they should have covered. This incident exemplifies the pitiful situations of Dalit children who are unable to meet even basic demands.

In the guise of 'Untouchability,' Dalits suffered. They should not touch upper caste people; if they did, they felt the upper caste people had been defiled. The guy handed his Mudalaiyar the package of vada he was carrying by its cord without touching it. In a disturbing event, Naicker women were instructed to pour water from a height of four feet while paati and others received and drank it with their hand cupped to their lips. These kinds of circumstances would make them feel much worse than an animal. The misery and pain endured in the name of untouchability were beyond words to explain. The Dalits were mercilessly mistreated by the upper castes. Scrubbing out the Cowshed, collecting the excrement and muck, and then bringing home leftover rice and curry are horrifying images. The food they are given is undesired and ready to be thrown away. The Naicker woman emerged with her leftovers, reached out from afar, and tipped them into Paatti's vessel before departing. If Pattis' hand or vessel came into contact with her vessel, it would be contaminated.

Dalits have been forced to endure humiliation and torture. Upper castes are constantly promoted, while lower castes are denigrated. Even though they are as good

as upper caste (or) even better in their souls, they are compelled to suffer anguish and humiliation due to a single problem of caste. In Tamil Nadu, Dalits struggle for their human rights with more vigour than in any other state in India. The atrocities committed by the upper caste have a greater impact on Dalit women and children. Within and outside of their community, they are oppressed. Violence has been perpetrated against women. Men treated women in a deplorable manner. They swore at them and said that because their husbands were gone, they should be prepared to entertain the cops at night.

In general, upper-caste women are treated harshly by upper-caste males. However, many times, atrocities against Dalit males have a greater impact on Dalit women's life. Bama remembers a similar occurrence from her youth. It was such a dreadful tragedy that all of the males in her tribe were forced to flee into the woods for many days. Caste distinctions are so pervasive that they have engulfed the village's oldest males. The upper castes are ruthless in their treatment of the Dalits. They sought to murder the Dalits over a little plot of graveyard property. These upper-caste clans own vast swaths of land, yet they, too, tried to wrest a little graveyard from the Dalits.

The Dalits have been relegated to a second-class status by societal restrictions. Governments and organisations also place an unfavourable emphasis on lower castes. The poem depicts police officers, who are referred to as the 'preservers of laws,' as mindlessly following and siding with the upper classes. The whole police force is being fed in order to apprehend the Dalit guys. What could these ladies do in such a hopeless circumstance, where could they turn for support when everything has turned against them? They become deafeningly quiet in the face of the circumstance, praying for a nice day every other day.

From a young girl to an elderly lady, the book *Karukku* depicts the miseries of Dalit women in a variety of ways. Bama tackles the struggles and everyday realities of Dalit women in this work. She imagines herself questioning the oppression of Dalits by different post-colonial and traditional organisations. Women, as described in the book, are wage workers who play an important part in sustaining their families via their daily earnings. They have not, however, been accorded adequate position and respect inside the family. Women are not paid a fair wage for their efforts in the workplace, whereas males are paid far more. Furthermore, the money produced by women is spent properly on home matters in order to govern the family. Men, on the other hand, are free to spend their money as they like, regardless of the family's best interests. Such constraints compelled women to shoulder household obligations while males remained careless in domestic concerns.

Another important topic raised in the texts is sexual harassment. Women are regarded as little more than sexual objects. Bama highlights the sexual exploitation of Dalit women in the workplace and at home. They face sexual harassment from upper-caste guys at work. Kumarasami Ayya misbehaves Mariamma at the pump that she constructed in her seminal work *Sangati*, but when he realises his error, he immediately informs the local headman and manipulates everyone for his own good. Everyone in the conference sought to blame her for her behaviour. Women, on the other hand, are sexually harassed at home by their own spouses. When women arrive home from work, exhausted, and soon after doing all of the household chores, they must offer their tired bodies to their husbands.

Poverty and hunger are the two most heinous sins that may befall any civilization. For centuries, the Dalits have struggled with these difficulties. Dalits are forced to bend in front of upper caste people due to poverty. Furthermore, it is hunger

that drives Dalits to perform the filthiest tasks in the higher castes' houses. In his poem *Starvation*, Namdeo Dhasal describes the hardships of Dalits owing to hunger. It also represents Dalit pleadings and resistance to starvation. The matter of survival takes precedence above anything else. Accepting the upper caste's physical torment or cleaning their houses' squanders are two options.

Bama depicts a sequence of occurrences in the work *Karukku* that show Dalit poverty and hunger. The upper classes deny them land on which to cultivate their own crops. Furthermore, the Dalits are required to use certain roadways designated for them. The lords of the higher castes are fully aware that giving land and possessions to Dalits would be a mistake. They would no longer serve them if they were offered money. Wealth may empower them in ways that the upper castes would find dishonourable. The Dalits are not provided with adequate food or property. Only a little quantity of resources is being supplied in order for them to merely exist in order to serve them. Their communities are densely packed in small rows, as described in the text. As a result, they have little choice but to work in the fields of the upper classes. Because of their reliance on the upper castes, they are viewed as 'different' by society. The Dalits would stay jobless and unpaid if they do not follow the higher castes' orders. It is common for no one to want to respond to the expense of survival. As a result, the Dalits must obey the instructions of the upper castes. The matter of life takes precedence over pain. If there is a way to save them, every form of oppression becomes justifiable. As a result of this cycle, Dalits have been subjugated by higher castes from generation to generation.

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**Food Crisis and Humanistic Concern in Kamala Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Muthulakshmi. N**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Food Crisis and Humanistic Concern in Kamala Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice*** 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 Muthulakshmi. N during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Food Crisis and Humanistic Concern in Kamala Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice*** 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**

**April 2023**

*MuthuLakshmi N*  
**MuthuLakshmi. N**

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## Preface

The project entitled **Food Crisis and Humanistic Concern in Kamala Markandaya's *A Handful of Rice*** analyses the struggles undergone by the protagonist who facing the problems of shortage of food, illness, dwindling customers. The indifferent and harsh street of the city lead him to the underworld of pretty criminals. it is analyses the triumph of the human spirit over poverty's privations and predicaments.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of Indian Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **food Crisis** depicts the urban poverty. It shows the protagonist who came to city and he struggle to a handful of rice. His extreme poverty leads him to join illegal business.

The third chapter **Gender Discrimination** records the causes and the types of gender discrimination. Kamala Markandaya show the picture of Indian women, how women are suffered in the society.

The fourth chapter **Humanistic Concern** depicts the view of Kamala Markandaya that life should be lived within the confines of moral principles and social norms. Ravi, the protagonist who moved to city in order to escape the cycle of famine in his town. The final decision he made to choose not to rob is the best example of humanism at its best.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Indian literature, which is among the oldest forms of literature, has served as a model for other cultures. The phrase alludes to ancient literary works written in several Indian languages. Literary work used to be transmitted orally in earlier times. Indian English literature is an honest enterprise to demonstrate the ever-rare gems of Indian Writing in English. From being a singular and exceptional, rather gradual native flare – up of geniuses, Indian Writing has turned out to be a new form of Indian culture and voice in which India converses regularly. Indian– poets, novelists, essayists, and dramatists have been making momentous and considerable contributions to world literature since pre-independence era, The past few years have witnessed a gigantic prospering and thriving of Indian English Writing in the global market.

In the context of international literature, Indian English literature has gained an independent position. The topics covered in Indian writing in English convert a wide range. Recent Indian English fiction has been attempting to represent the Indian experience of the modern problem, even while this literature continues to reflect Indian culture, custom, social values, and even Indian history through the depiction of life in India and Indians living abroad. There are English and American pundits and critics who enjoy reading Indian English novels. One of the most notable gifts of English education to India, according to prof. M. K. Nalik, is prose fiction. Although storytelling originated in India, the novel as it today was an import from the west. We are not unfamiliar with English. Like Sanskrit or Persian before it, it is the language of our intellectual nature, but not of our emotional nature.

India's substantial contribution to 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 and the like. This literary movement being fortified by the overwhelming output by novelists and distinguished itself as a remarkable force in world fiction. This has been achieved by novelists who sought to prove their inner creative urges in English language, which is indeed an alien tongue for them. It is to the credit of these novelists that they have overcome the hurdles of writing in a foreign language and have been evolved a distinctive style for themselves by mastering the intricacies of the language and assimilating in it the hues and flavors of the Indian – subcontinent. Raja Rao famously argued in 1938, in the preface to his novel *Kanthapura*, for using English, but English adapted to Indian conditions.

The struggle for independence was a mighty and momentous movement sweeping the entire nation and exerting tremendous impact on the sense of national consciousness among the literary fraternity. Thus the lucid description of the freedom struggle showcased images of the awakened Indians who sought to regain their freedom from the grueling and torturous regime of the Britishers. Apart from these reflections, the writers were able to propagate their point of view, which ultimately helped to motivate and guide the masses. Thus the fixation on religious aestheticism was replaced by concerns on socio – political issues. The joy of accomplishing the grandiose feat of obtaining Independence was abruptly marred by the horrendous and traumatic partition of 1947. East – west conflict, multi – culturalism, social realism, gender issues, comic aspect of human nature, ecological concerns, magic realism, diasporic writings and the like became the themes of the post – Independent writers.

English has acquired a rare privilege and popularity in India especially among the elite and the middle classes. It is increasingly being used by writers to give shape to the conflicting dilemmas and issues that confront the human psyche. It has become a

convenient medium to express the intrinsic talents of the writers. Moreover, the Indian English writers use it with enviable ease and gaining mastery of a foreign tongue to articulate the vagaries and vicissitudes of an individual's consciousness in a realm of its own aptly substantiate the expansiveness and verve of the Indian English writer.

Indian writing in English has commended unstinted admiration in both home and abroad, is now in its full swing. It has carved out a new track, a new vision – a vision that is replete with an un answering faith and hope, myths and traditions, customs and rites etc. If we dive deep into the works of the Indian stalwarts of English fictions, it is revealed that their work are not an imitation of English literary pattern but highly original and intensely Indian in both theme and spirit.

Indian English literature is two hundred years old. Sri Aurobindo stands like a huge oak spreading its branches over these two centuries. The contribution of Sri Aurobindo as a perfect writer and craftsman is undoubtedly great. He is the first poet in Indian English writing who has given the reinterpretation of myths. Sri Aurobindo envisages spiritual humanism. Aurobindo's famous works "The Human Cycle and The Ideal of Human Society" taken together to give a complete picture of Aurobindo's version of the future possibilities of man shows the humanistic trend in his thought. In the Human cycle, the poet – philosopher offers us a social philosophy of history illuminated by a splendid spiritual vision of the future. It is self- evident that Indian English drama could not secure a firm foothold and build tradition of its own about which M. K. Nalik says: Early Indian English drama in Bengal, like elsewhere in India, developed sporadically as mostly closet drama due to the absence of a strong dramatic tradition nourished by actual performance in a live theatre. Even later, only Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore, and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya produced a sizable body of dramatic writing.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941) is a celebrated writer in the sphere of English literature. His creative genius is so much accounting and his literary output is so much rich and varied that the phrase ‘myriad - minded’, which Mathew Arnold had used for Shakespeare, can aptly be used for him also. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for his immortal poetic composition *Gitanjali* (1913). The genius Tagore, in addition to being a great worldwide poet, is also a novelist, playwright, short-story writer, musician, philosopher, painter, educationalist, reformer, and critic in every discipline, and he has established a place for himself. He also makes an effort, through his works, to draw attention to some of the harsh realities of life. His books are Wittry, puzzling, and full of genuine literary delights. Nine of Tagore’s thirteen works have been translated into English. *Gora*, *The House and the World* (1910), *The Wreck* (1921), *Binodini* (1964), and many other works have been translated.

Post – Independence India has been making quick strides in the field of science and technology. There has been an admirable economic growth in India in recent times. So, the novel proved to be an effective medium for the reflection of the spirit of the age, encompassing the bitter and sweet realities of the period. The great proliferation of the Indian English novel also owes its credit to the sudden increase of interest in the new literature of post-colonial nations by the west.

A host of contemporary post-colonial writers like Rushdie, Arundati Roy, Meena Alexander, Anita Nair and Jhumpa Lahiri have initiated the process of decolonizing the ‘Colonial English’ and using it as a medium to express Indian thoughts and sensibilities with a distinctive Indian style. Post – independence India also produced a number of novels involving the causes and aftermaths of the freedom movement. The novels that belong to this category include Nayantara Saghal’s *A Time to be Happy* (1952), Khwaja Ahmed Abbas’ *Inquilab* (1955), R.K. Narayan’s *Waiting for the Mahatma* (1955) etc. The

triumvirs Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan were the novelists who stabilized and fortified the Indian English Fiction with their ample works and unique literary style.

The majority of Mulk Raj Anand's (1905-2004) novels bring to the limelight the inequalities of society and trials and tribulations of the less fortunate. *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936), *The Village* (1939), and *The private Life of an Indian Prince* (1953) addresses the evils existing in the society in the Marxist terms. His novels also give a graphic description of the daily existence of his characters, their tale of woe, sweat and misery. R.K. Narayan (1906 –2001) is another celebrity author who enjoys a unique position in the crowded literary scene of Indian Fiction. The greatest merit of his language and style lives in its simplicity. His famous novels are *The Bachelor of Arts and The painter of signs* (1933), *Swami and Friends* (1935), *The English Teacher* (1945), *The Guide* (1958). His writing has stretched across seven decades and occupies a remarkable position in the history of Indian English Fiction. Narayan has gained mastery of the art of portraying characters and nuances of the English language.

Raja Rao's (1908-2006) reputation as a novelist of metaphysics and philosophy is amply justified by his substantial contribution in upholding these themes in his novels. Women in Raja Rao's novels suffer from domestic injustice and tyrannical tradition, but the writer suggests no way out of their dilemma. His women characters, who are a little ambitious, end up playing the devoted role of a wife like Savitri in *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960). *Kanthapura* (1938) by Raja Rao emphasizes the influence of the Gandhian movement by highlighting the 1920's and the Gandhi – Irwin pact of 1931. He focuses on a small village through which he explores the impact of the freedom movement on the villagers and also captures their roles in the struggle for Independence. Rao uses his novels to spread the Gandhian message and as propaganda against social evils.

Women novelists have played a crucial and momentous role in enhancing the quality and quantity of the Indian English Fiction. They have further added the women's perspective and feministic dimensions to the novels. In the past, the work by the Indian women authors has always been undervalued because of some patriarchal assumptions. Indian society gave priorities to the work of male experiences. Several elements contributed to the demise of Indian women writers throughout the eighteenth century. The creation of women's literature also decreased as a result of all these causes. More and more women took an active role in India's reformist movement against British rule in the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, women's writing was considered as a powerful medium of modernism and feminist statements. Today is the generation of those women writers who have money and western education.

Indian women writers like Kamala Markandaya, Bharathi Mukherjee, Anita Desai, Nayantara saghal and many more have played a pioneering role in conveying the readers a wild range of indigenous Indian issues, punctuated by a strong feministic outlook. It is amazing to note that these Writers have climbed the ladder of success in a slow and painful way. Thus, this new voice of emerging modern India succeeded in drawing the attention of the public towards the pressing problems of gender inequality, social evils, and encroachment of land by foreign nationals and exploitation of women in a patriarchal society.

Anita Desai is one of the contemporaries of Kamala Markandaya, she is considered as critical lauded 20<sup>th</sup> century writer, and her novels on the experiences and inner lives of Indian men and women are known for their compassion, eloquence, and lucid prose. When India achieved independence in 1947, Desai weaved politics and gender issues into her works. Desai was born in Mussoorie, India, and spent her childhood in Delhi. Her parents met in Germany when her father was studying there, and



they moved back to his home of India in the 1920s. Desai published her first short story when she was only twenty years old. Her first novels were *Cry, the peacock* (1963), *Voices in the City* (1965), *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* (1971). Desai has received many awards, including the Royal Society of Literature Winifred Holtby Prize (1978), the Sahitya Akademi of India Award (1979).

Mahasweta Devi was a famed Indian novelist and writer of short stories, usually featuring female and subaltern characters. Devi was born on January 14, 1926 now in Bangladesh. Her father was a writer and her mother and aunt educated illiterate girls in Dhaka, which inspired in Devi a life of service. Devi's first novel was *The Queen of Jhansi*, a story based on an actual figure of a prince who fought and lost her life in the mutiny of 1857 against the British. And the other novels include *Mother of 1084* (1974), and *The Occupation of the forest* (1977). Devi wrote more than a hundred books, most of them in her native language of Bengali. Mahasweta Devi's powerful publications on the themes of social realism, caste and most important, Adivasi allows the readers to meander through the complex, often intense, struggle faced by the most defenseless people on the map of nation state.

Arundhati Roy, whose full name is Suzanna Arundhati Roy, was born on November 24, 1961, in Shillong, Meghalaya, India. She is an Indian author, actress, and political activist best known for her work on the environmental and human rights movements as well as for her award-winning novel *The God of Small Things* (1997). It is the semiautobiographical work departed from the conventional plots and light prose that had been typical among best-sellers. Roy was active in various environmental and human rights causes, often putting herself at odds with Indian legal authorities and the country's middle-class establishment. Her works *Power Politics* (2001), *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2002), *War Talk* (2003), *A Ghost Story* (2014). Her first novel *The Ministry of*

*Utmost Happiness*, the work blends personal stories with topical issues as it uses a large cast of characters, including a transgender woman and a resistance fighter in Kashmir, to explore contemporary India.

Kamala Markandaya is one of India's best-known novelists. The fact that her body of work, especially the novel *The Nowhere Man*, foreshadowed the explosion of published works by South Asian writers over the last several decades makes her novels required reading for anyone interested in Indian culture. Markandaya explores several issues in her novels, including urbanization, poverty, sexuality, gender, interracial relationships, India's struggle to maintain its identity in an increasingly Westernized world, and colonialism's impact.

Kamala Marakandaya, who was born in kamala Purnaiya in 1924 in the small Indian town of Chimakurti, grew up learning traditional Hindu culture and beliefs. Her upbringing was Brahmin. Between the years of 1940 to 1947, Markandaya studied history as a student at the University of Madras. she worked as a journalist while she was a student at the university, writing brief works of fiction. Kamala Markandaya was awarded the National Association of Independent School Award (USA) in 1967 and the Asian Prize in 1974. She met her future husband in London, where she pursued her native Briton Bertrand Taylor's husband. Taylor and Markandaya had a daughter named Kim Oliver who is now a resident of England.

Kamala Markandaya wrote ten novels during her lifetime, all of them dealt with post-colonial issues in contemporary India. She achieved her greatest frame with the publication of *Nectar in a Sieve*, which was her third novel written, but the first novel published. In March 1955, *Nectar in a Sieve* became a bestseller, her winnings total nearly one lakh. Her other books *A Handful of Rice*, *Some Inner Fury*, *Possession*, *A Silent of Desire*, *The Nowhere Man*, *Two Virgins*, *Pleasure City*, *Coffer Dams*, and *The*

*Golden Honeycomb*. The complexity of post-colonial and traditional Indian social order, as well as the ramifications present in both systems, are highlighted by Markandaya's works. Her novel *A Silence of Desire*, where she addresses the issues of social classes of India and the controversies surrounding this social hierarchy.

*A Silence of Desire* tells the story of a loving, affluent, middle-class family who live comfortably and take use of numerous privileges. The situation quickly gets worse, though, as Dandekar stops respecting his wife Sarojini after discovering a bizarre photo of a strange who he thinks is her covert lover. The family's deep love and commitment, as well as their willingness to sacrifice, are the main themes of the novel to make their relationship work.

Her novel *A Handful of Rice* is one of the first novels to exemplify the plight of rural peasants to the new urban lifestyle. She traces the path of the antagonist in the novel, Ravi, a rural peasant who moved to the city to escape the vicious cycle of starvation in his village. When he moved to the city he befriend an orphan who grew up in the city. Things change when Ravi falls in love with Nalini, the daughter of the man he robs. Ravi marries Nalini and realizes that even while working, it is very difficult to make a decent living. Markandaya conveys the stress of society's standards through Jayamma, Nalini's mother. Finally, Ravi is forced to choose between his money and his son, a choice that in the end claims his fate. In her novel *A Handful of Rice*, Markandaya wrestles with the issues of social hierarchy. In the novel *Shalimar* she accurately portrays two parallel societies in India. Markandaya demonstrates how the coexistence of both cultures has created a stunning portrait of what is now India. Through depicting *Shalimar's* changes, this story demonstrates the growth and development of Indian society and culture. She already has a large body of work, and this novel is a good addition.

Markandaya's most famous work, *Nectar in a Sieve*, is a heart-wrenching story depicting the hardships and joys of a woman's life in rural India. Ruku marries a man she has never met and moves to a country far away from her family. There she has many children whom she and her husband struggle to feed when drought strikes and many crop cycles are destroyed. Ruku witnesses the impact of post-colonialism on India when Tannery is built in their village, which radically changes their lives. Ruku sees her children struggling to survive on little food and her child eventually starves to death. Her daughter, abandoned by her husband because she could not bear a child, turns to prostitution to help supplement the family. Finally, Ruku and her husband leave the village for the city to find more wickedness and strife.

The majority of Markandaya's creative output is a representation of her own dual identity as an Indian woman who married a British guy. Kamala focuses on traditional India during the early post-colonial period and the fight to forge their own identity apart from the British in *Some Inner Fury*. She tells about a young Indian woman named Mira in this semi-autobiographical story who falls in love with an Englishman, Robert, but ultimately, she decides to put her people before him. Moreover, Markandaya highlights the intrinsic calling attention to the differences between English and Indian culture during the post-colonial era borders in all of her writing about how these two radically different cultures may merge, well as in a different social and political status in particular. She declares:

You belong to one side- if you don't you belong to the other. It is as simple as that; even children understand it. And in between? There is no in between. You have shown your badge, you have taken your stance, you on the left, you on the right, there is no middle standing. You hadn't a badge? But it was there in your face, the colour of your skin, the accents of your

speech, in the clothes on your back. You didn't ask to be there? Ah, but you had no option, whatever you thought, there was no option, for you there was no other place (Markandaya). (195)

In contrast to *Nectar in a Sieve*, where Markandaya only alludes to the necessity for Indians to carve out their own paths in the post-colonial era, Markandaya is considerably more outspoken about this desire in *Some Inner Fury*. In all Kamala Markandaya's works, a common theme of social distinction and the differences between people living in poverty and wealth, as well as the difficulties each class undergoes is prevalent. Markandaya is an evolutionary and a great preceptor of the environment surrounding her as she thinks ahead to environment and societal problems that globalization and development bring.

Kamala Markandaya, whose *Nectar in a Sieve* (1955) was a miniature epic about India's poor, return to the earlier concerns of that novel. In *A Handful of Rice*, Ravi is a protagonist who has left his desolate, destitute home for the promise of the city. There he falls into the company of similarly rootless young men, presided over by the wily city boy, Damodar, who appears fitfully through the novel as a seducer to criminal and get-rich-quick schemes which Damodar is clever enough to survive and thrive by. By a chance misdeed, Ravi becomes acquainted with the tailor Apu and his family; Apu's daughter Nalini wins his heart and brings him from the streets into the already crowded household, first as Apu's apprentice, then his son-in-law. The action recreates the life of the respectable poor with moving fidelity as they face the problems of food, illness, unemployment. When Apu dies, the still rebellious but worn Ravi, now a father of three children and head of the household, cannot keep his customers. After the death of his son, he reverts to the street, but Damodar now discards him as unfit for dangerous enterprises,

and he ends storming the rice supplies with mob. The novel serves as a portrait of poverty, which is part of the history of our times.

The second chapter focuses on urban poverty and hunger and how the protagonist suffers from economic crisis.

## Chapter Two

### Food Crisis

The novel *A Handful of Rice* by Kamala Markandaya, published in 1966, appears to be a continuation of *Nectar in a sieve* by Markandaya, published in 1954. In *Nectar in a sieve* (1954) Murugan, the protagonist Rukmani's son, departs the hamlet for the town to make an improved life. Murugan recurs as Ravi, the main character in "*A Handful of Rice*". The novel "*A Handful of Rice*" discusses urban economics, whereas *Nectar in a Sieve* discusses rural economics. Both, nevertheless, are concerned with exploitation, starvation, and poverty in a brutal society. The title of the novel *A Handful of Rice* alludes to destitution and hunger. Every character of the novel struggles to get a handful of rice. Throughout the novel, the protagonist struggles with poverty and hunger.

The late 1950's during which independent India attempted to achieve economic stability, appears to be the time period of the novel *A Handful of Rice* setting. The plot centers on Ravi, a young man from the countryside who moves to the city to find work. Ravi tries to leave the rural poverty behind. When monetary restrictions hold him by the throat. Poverty and hunger are like shadows behind him. A child who enters the city with the hope of a bright future is unprepared for the harsh reality of urban life. In the city, he is not even given a shelter. When he learns that he cannot go back to the village. He becomes one of the several thousands who throng the city streets for suitable jobs and get ultimately disillusioned. Wherever he goes, he meets unemployment and disappointment. So he joins a gang of aimless vagabonds and criminals such as bootleggers, smugglers and black marketers. Ravi begins to think that he has a bright future.

. . . his passport to a world shot with glitter and excitement: a world that revived the incandescent glow the city had once kindled, and suddenly the terror and the loneliness was gone, lifted from the load whose other

components were hunger, the lassitude of hunger, and the terror of losing his identity in an indifferent city which was akin to death. Of course much of this world, this dazzling world, lay in the future; but very kind of fear and privation became bearable in the light of its bright promise. (28)

who consumes alcohol to drown his morals while living in extreme poverty. Once, while extremely inebriated, he is caught by the cops. He enters a tailor's home covertly to flee. Due to his hunger, Ravi simply enters the home and threatens the elderly tailor, Apu. He states: "I am starving...I am hungry I want a meal. You let me in..." (3). The lower middle-class house in which he stays for the night attracts him. The family which satisfies his hunger arouses Ravi's dream of his own family and delicious meals. Later, his affection for Apu's daughter Nalini and his need to survive in the city prompt him to accept Apu's offer of an apprenticeship in tailoring. He discovers Ravi to be his trade's heir. He accepts the proposal of Ravi's marriage with his daughter Nalini as he sees in him the support of his old age. Apu, a member of the lower middle class and a poor man, has few options. He declares to join the roving, erratic burglar to be his son-in-law. He is rendered powerless, which is the result of his impoverishment. Because of his extreme poverty, Ravi's father must find money to pay for the trip to the city. For the benefit of his kid, he mortgages his farm, his only source of income. Though Ravi gets a house to live in, he is made to pay for his stay by Apu's wife, Jayamma. The marriage offers Ravi a better way of living. For the next few years, he forgets the pangs of hunger, but not of poverty. He keeps on dreaming about a better life.

Apu's economic situation is disturbed by the enormous family's growing family size. The threat to Apu's tailoring company comes from the expansion of the textile industry and machine production. Even a talented worker like Apu faces stiff competition just to stay alive. The garment workers are exploited by the shopkeepers. The small fish



is ingested by the large fish, when Ravi discovers this exploitation made at the hands of the shopkeepers, he gets furious, but the experienced Apu tells him about The law of the survival of the fittest. It is better to live than perish.

As Ravi is on the receiving end of the business sliding through his fingers, the entire horror of this jungle law haunts his life. He is also paralyzed by Apu's paralysis. In the bush, he discovers himself all by himself. The hard buffetings of this jungle law make him aware of the reality. After the twins are born, the financial situation gets worse. That is neither clothing nor food. He cannot even buy milk for the newborn babies. The death of Apu's business, the member of the family humiliate him by commenting on his failure to run the house. Poverty strikes so severely that Ravi collapses. The slackness in the business is followed by the hike in the prices of the essential commodities.

Due to hardship and poverty, which are made worse by rising prices for necessities, Ravi finds it challenging to cope. Day by Day, the amount of debt and arrears piles up. He returns to Damodar in frustration after failing once more. He chooses this time determined to proceed in his direction. Damodar advises him to return to his hometown. Ravi responds "The village... what do you know about it? It's not fit for castle, not even the sort of cattle, you think I am" (252). Damodar makes him realize that urban life is worse than that. "I Know what a city's like, I have been scavenging in it since I was so high, ever since they found me crowing on a garbage heap and throw me right back onto it." (253) Damodar agrees to give him a job. But again, Ravi returns home.

The frustrated Ravi, who lives in abject poverty, grows more frustrated every day. He questions his wife's virginity. When Nalini can no longer stand it, she leaves. He becomes so frustrated by his mother-in-law's repeated humiliation and his inability to eradicate poverty. Meanwhile, Nalini, who went to her sister to contest her husband's

accusation of immorality, realised she couldn't stay at her sister's home because she herself was living in abject poverty and returned home. Ravi makes the decision to use fresh strategies to combat poverty. He gets engrossed in his work to such an extent that he fails to understand the gravity of his son's illness. He disregards his son's fever out of concern over the medical bill. But Raju's situation gets worse. He feels obligated to dial a medical number. When the illness turns out to be meningitis he forgets his earlier obsessions, work, earnings and equations that never worked out. He hopes that his darling will survive. He thinks that to be poor is a sin.

When Ravi's son Raju, who is about to pass away, asks dad, Do you like me? Why are you fond of me? Ravi becomes silent. Ravi truly cares for him and loves him. But he neglects his son in the fight against hunger and poverty. He feels that it is not he but the society in which he lives is responsible for the death of his son. He finds the society guilty for murder. He makes the decision to stop betraying rudimentary codes. He chooses to give children their rights. He begs Damodar to give him some job. Earlier Damodar had offered him a job every time he asked but this time he refuses to give him a job.

Next day, Ravi unwittingly decides to join in a hunger march. A voice, "Rice today, rice. Rice today, rice!" (276) makes him aware of the purpose of the march. Together with the mob, he hurries to the government's rice storage facilities. The sound of the rice being ground and the sight of the rice, he becomes insane from the grain rusting. The blacksmith, Kannan, informs him that it is unlawful to take the innocent people's rice. Ravi, feels entitled to his fair part of the rice. But on the arrival of the police, he runs away without even a handful of rice. He joins another mob of rioters considering it as another march. Throughout the novel Kamala Markandaya compares the

Ravi's mind to a battle ground of honesty versus dishonesty, and observes that finally honesty wins the battle.

As in many of her novels, Markandaya chose the South Indian background. A realistic image of the people is created using South Indian names like Ravishankar, Kumaran, Jayamma, and Puttana as well as references to South Indian customs and traditions. She demonstrates through the portrayal of Ravi that most of the young men who those who go to the city are always torn between going for quick cash and working hard to earn. She throws light on the plight of the youth in rural India through Ravi's unwillingness to accept the craftsmanship like smithy and tailoring. Ravi and his friend Damodar begin a life together in the gutter of the city of Madras. Damodar goes for the darker side of things and becomes wealthy by squeezing people's throats. Ravi is invited to join Damodar many times, but Ravi chooses to stay in poverty and maintains his morals. Markandaya elevates by demonstrating how steadfast Ravi is in his moral principles. Had he taken Damodar's offer, it would have been Ravi's prospective future.

Marrying Apu's daughter, Ravi solves his three basic needs of shelter, food and sex. However, he does not feel happy or satisfied with his lot as he always wishes to be richer. When he goes to the sea beach with his wife, he regrets for not going to a coffee bar, a place where rich people go. He feels unlucky for not getting the life of a carefree rich young man. Because of his incapacity to deal with the economic collapse, Ravi's thoughts alternate between being honest and being dishonest all the time. He is compelled to join Damodar every time he loses the battle against poverty. Ravi considers submitting to Damodar's approach due to his lack of food and poverty. However, his fundamental humanity or moral system constantly forces him to turn to honesty.

As Ravi's son dies, he realizes the futility of moral principles. He makes the decision to forgo morality in favour of material success. Ravi said "No more blocks and

restraints. No more loyalties and responsibilities, for he had none. Neither to the land nor to people not to their society nor to society's be-baying ramshackle codes" (274). Ravi's prolonged poverty and hunger, his economic exploitation by the society make him take the decision of joining Damodar. But this time, Damodar tells him that he is not welcome in his underworld and declines to let him in, unfit for any purpose. . . "I see nothing, said Damodar." "you are empty. No heart, no spleen, no lights, no guts something's been at them." He began to laugh, a high sharp ugly laughter, "What was it, termites?" (274).

The frustration, rage, and humiliation of hunger and poverty drive him to join the "hunger march" near the conclusion of the narrative. Markandaya remarks: marching along six students and workmen, and petty craftsmen like himself with same fires burning their bellies. Ravi informs Kannan about the crime he is about to perform because he is fortunate. Ravi flows with the tide but fails to get even a handful of rice. He refuses to commit an immoral act and accepts the poverty and returns home. The ultimate triumph of conscience shows Markandaya's belief in the essential goodness of man.

Nalini is the symbol of the lower –middle class woman in the urban society. She is emotionally matured. Her sense of values and emotional maturity are enhanced by this, it helps her to control her conscience. She maintains good relations with both society and her husband. She understands the world. She has none of Ravi's childish cravings. She knows "ordinary folk like us can never be like them" (86). That is why she survives the pressures of the deteriorating financial position and the angry outbursts of her proletariat husband. In most of the financial crisis, she remains firm. With sense and sensibility she guides her husband. She is a practical minded woman, but her husband's hyper-ambitious nature frightens her. Markandaya depicts the miseries of the lower middle class in the transitional period in the Indian social history through the portrayal of Apu and his

family. S. John Peter Joseph in his essay “Need for the Coexistence of Spiritualism” rightly says,

The most striking feature of Kamala Markandaya’s fiction is that it reflects the changing ethos of the post-independence India. Her accurate delineation of the social, economical and political changes with special focus on the concept of cultural continuity reveals her extraordinary sense of historicity. (Joseph 123)

Human relationship has been one of the common themes of Markandaya’s novels. She shows disintegration of their relationships in the family due to the economic strain. There is any emotional bond among the members of the family. Apu’s wife jayamma does not respect or love her two sons-in-law. She refers to Pattana as a “good for nothing fellow” and despises Ravi for being a wanderer. Puttanna refers to his mother-in-law as “she devil”. He confronts Verma, a further parasite on the family, and vents his rage: “Do you know she even grudges me a handful of rice?” (109). Her constant scolding for not contributing to the household makes him retaliate. He misappropriates his father-in-law's savings. He must leave the house due to it, although it can’t get out of his poverty.

Markandaya illustrates how the effects of the economic downturn may even influence a couple’s love through the breakdown of Ravi and Nalini’s relationship. Nalini is constantly engaged with thoughts of her family. She is unable to take care of her husband’s physical and emotional needs. The sensation of Ravi punches his wife out of rage over being ignored. Even his wife’s pregnancy does not make him particularly happy. He needs to get supplies necessary for the infant in order to forget about his basic aspirations to purchase mouthorgan, bicycle, bed and clothes for himself.

The impact of poverty is so intolerable that it makes the poor loss their energy and the very instinct live. Ravi believes that he should pass away at the age of thirty. In an

effort to balance his priorities, he neglects his son to the point where the boy develops meningitis and passes away. The question which Raju, his son, asks him in his illness ““Do you still like me?”” makes the declining relationship. Markandaya throws light on the poverty of the lower middle class families in the by giving a number of small incidents. She sheds emphasis on the rich and poor’s disparity by providing thorough details of the large houses and those that go with them, she throws light on the wide gulf between the rich and the poor. She criticises the extreme social inequality that exists in metropolitan society. But she is aware that the chasm is so large that it will be challenging to close. She demonstrates how a wealthy man can spend fifty rupees on a child’s clothing when others cannot afford even daily produce for their dependents.

The tragedy of Ravi is a tragedy for all of the rural, small scale tenant farmers who migrate to urban areas in search of work. Markandaya describes the rural poverty there to illustrate why people leave the areas, to quote: “As far back as he could see they had all lived between bouts of genteel and acute poverty – the kind in which the weakest went to the wall, the old ones and the babies, dying of tuberculosis, dysentery, the falling fever, ‘recurrent fever’ and any other names for what was basically, simply nothing but starvation.” (9) There are many such descriptions of poverty and hunger for which she is criticized by some Indian critics for her oversimplification of village life in India as an absent narrator. She is charged with exaggerating rural Indian's poverty in an effort to increase the amount of work she does to appropriate for western readers

She seems to agree with Uma parameswaran that Markandaya’s separation from their home nation is what causes the novel’s sociological and cultural details to be inaccurate and unauthentic. She claims, “she knows English in India better than she knows peasant clerks of India. The English belongs to the world in which she has lived herself.” (Parameswaran 197)

Some detractors view kamala Markandaya's statue as an expatriate positively. Some detractors contend because she lives abroad, she has the necessary distance and objectivity to handle the situation. She has first-hand experience of both the East and the West because she is an Indian who has resided overseas, she is sometimes the most objective observer. Her work is free of didacticism and propaganda, and it is motivated by a desire to improve human well-being and lessen suffering. She is talented in virtue and ambivalence in her social commentary. Although she seems to be inadequate in her depiction of Indian social reality, a comprehensive examination of her novels reveals that her goal in doing so is not to provide readers with microscopic depictions of the truth but rather to educate them about the causes of that reality, exploitation, starvation, and poverty. She digs deep into societal reality to examine the impacts of economic and social structure on the psyche. She gives description in order to probe into human psyche than to allure the readers with superficial observations. When Ravi leaves his village, Markandaya complains:

The village life sickened him, that life, the misery and the squalor, the ailing babies who cried all night long. The way one was always poor and everyone knew was always poor too, the desire, the constant nibbling desire to have a second helping of food, a cup of coffee every morning, a shirt without holes, a shawl made of pure wool to keep out the cold of the monsoon dawn, and to know that one never would.

They always knew knew that things would never be any better, they were lucky to stand still, for the only other way was downward. It was this knowing the worst, the hopelessness of it, plain the way people accepted their lot and even thanked God it was no worse-thanked God!-that sickened him. Just thinking of it, even now, made him want to spew. (54)

After presenting the grim picture of poverty, hunger and the exploitation in the countryside through *Nectar in a Sieve* Markandaya wrote *A Handful of Rice* to show that the picture is not much different in the urban India. *A Handful of Rice* serves as a warning to young people who heedlessly rush to the cities in order make a life. She demonstrates that if the young males in the group have nothing to give, village and even cities don't have much to offer them. As a result of their those with poor education fall victim to urban vices. People who engage in bad actions such as Damodar's family does not receive recognition, renown or wealth. Contrarily, individuals that uphold honesty, like the main character Ravi, do have an ordinary, albeit unsatisfying, family life, but they do not receive name, recognition, notoriety, or wealth.

In the climax of the novel, Kamala Markandaya leads her protagonist to his most tragic moment. When Ravi eventually returns to his conscience, it is evident that even though his lack of resources causes him to lose his temper at the moment, his conscience still prevails remains whole. Even though the majority of the impoverished lose their grueling fight against poverty, they do not fail in their morality. The exploitation of labourers is brought to the readers' attention by Markandaya, but she goes beyond simple description. She looks closely at the human psyche. A.K. Srinivas Rao in the Novels of Kamala Markandaya comments:

Markandaya is not content with mere fatalistic poetic explanations of human misery: nor is she satisfied with summary of the superficial situations of social injustice and economic inequality that continue to plague our society. She seeks to probe rather deeper into the moral dilemma that an individual is forced to face in a developing country. (Rao 226)



Unlike most of the social novelists who hold the rich largely responsible for the exploitation of the poor which results in poverty and hunger. Markandaya in her novels blames more the vagaries of nature and the entire social structure than merely the rich for the declining conditions of the poor. It is the natural social condition in which her characters are born, that is responsible for their destiny. Although it could seem that she aims to demonstrate that the aspirations of the poor are only fantasies that can never materialise given the current social system, her true goal is to emphasise the importance of morality over wealth. Desire for a better future Ravi symbolises the typical rural youngster with idealistic views of metropolitan life. Yet there is a point. It worth noting that she aims to demonstrate that such aspirations can never become a reality by using unscrupulous means in life; it is not required to be morally corrupt to change one's behaviour and destiny.

The third chapter discusses Kamala Markandaya's novel *A handful of Rice* in the way of humanistic concern. *A Handful of Rice* explores the dilemma of common everyman.

## Chapter Three

### Gender Discrimination

Kamala Markandaya has presented varied tension in her novels viz. east-west confrontation, religious and racial tension, caused on account of maladjustments or marital disharmony, tensions arising out of poverty, hunger, natural as well as man-made calamities. There is a considerable ambiguity about the nature and statue of women in Indian society. Some sacred texts give them an exalted statue by saying, 'where women are worshipped, Gods reside there'. But there is another profile of women. A woman is regarded as the root of all evils. These two images are contradictory. This male dominated society never tries to go into the depth to collect the pearls of virtues but satisfies in picking the straws of vices that float on the surface.

To understand her complex and rich personality is as enigmatic and difficult. She receives different names, viz. Mother, sister, beloved, wife, etc; adapts herself to the changing circumstances and performs the allotted duties efficiently, enthusiastically and above all emotionally. She cannot be caged in one particular image, as she possesses images in infinite variety. While judging her, one should keep in mind that the image of a woman may be different and various but they will be of the same woman. These variations may be different facets of her being. Many Indian English women novelists have analyzed the socio-cultural modes and values that have given Indian women their image and the role towards them and the society. In post-independence era, it is Kamala Markandaya who has taken the initiative of holding the flag for women protagonists and, to some extent, winning the battle in their transformation from 'possession' to 'person'. From her first to last novel, one realizes that the weight and substance for her works have not been properly studied and her contribution to the fictional literature is not suitably evaluated in India. Hence the purpose of this study is to explore the unexplored aspects of

her women, to present the change in the identity from 'possession' to 'person'. To highlight the new image through a voyage in the world of her novel *A Handful of Rice*, and finally, to show her feminist moral concern into sexual and familiar relationship.

A woman's quest for identity and refining herself finds reflection in her novels and shows an important drive of female aspects. She also traces a woman's journey from self-sacrifice to self-realization, from self-denial to self-assertion and from self-negation to self-affirmation. This chapter deals with the awakened women's aspects characterized in the novel *A Handful of Rice*. This chapter also enumerates about the struggles of the women in the male subjugated society and also how the suffered women make themselves as awakened women,

Kamala Markandaya is not a radical feminist. In majority of her works women are the narrators and the story is narrated through feminine consciousness. In most of her novels she presents an account of Indian woman's emotions, and her confrontation with male reality. Her novels are neither written for outright condemnation of patriarchal society nor accounts about the victimization of women in the hands of men. She doesn't create a woman's world. She presents the real world. Her women are earthly, practical and real. They neither blame society nor hold others responsible for their problems. Her women characters outwardly appear to be docile, subservient but on a closer look they are pragmatic, undaunted, unflinching, unflappable and stoical. Markandaya lets her women have the traditional role and makes them face modern predicament.

In *Nectar in a Sieve* Markandaya explores the ordeals of a semi-literate, lower class peasant housewife, Rukmani and her daughter, Irwaddy. The novel is a memoir of Rukmani told in the first person narration. The tale of Rukmani and her husband Nathan, and through them the story of the changing life style of village is told by Rukmani. The old woman starts reminiscing in the evening of her life. In *A Handful of Rice*,

Markandaya has evocatively portrayed the life of a beautiful, gentle, modest, obedient, hardworking, satisfied, loving and lovable woman Nalini, who draws Ravi from a scandalous unlawful Damodar.

On making a deep examination of Kamala Markandaya's novels, one sees her intense awareness of her identity as a woman and her attention to feminine problems. Markandaya's objective is to help women is general to attain identity, dignity and recognition for their contribution of society. Her novels are not propaganda for reforms, but they reflect the ambivalence of change in women & being a conservative feminist, her feminist is implied in her novels. Kamala Markandaya has depicted social problems which are closely related to human life and with moving realism she depicted the tragic plight of Indian society. Marakndaya's women are endowed with certain characteristics like vigor of mind, sensitivity, proficiency and contentment.

Nalini, the central character in the novel *A Handful of Rice*. Her beauty is so fascinating that Ravi, a vagabond, falls in love with her at first sight. Ravi is prepared to suffer any humiliation and discomfort for the sake of Nalini. He is completely enthralled by her beauty and envisions her as his wife:

If I had a wife, he thought as he ate, she would cook for me, it would be like this every day . . . but what had he to offer to get himself a wife? . . . I'll buy her a little house, small but nice, he thought as he finished, and some nice new shiny aluminium cooking vessels, these brass things are too heavy, old-fashioned . . . and with a job one can save say a quarter of one's wage. (8)

The novelist paints a harrowing picture of the economic problems. *A Handful of Rice* deals with the problem of social injustice but here the problem of existence is of paramount importance. Alongside the problem of economic insecurity, there is also the

problem of moral ethics. Through her female protagonists, Kamala reveals the virtues and potentialities of women by providing that a woman is not inferior to man in any way. Her women protagonists have given a ray of hope and a goal to the countless women by infusing a crusading spirit into them for the welfare of humanity and the alleviation of human suffering.

In *A Handful of Rice*, Nalini has been shown as an ideal victim. The strength of Nalini lies in her sacrifice for others. Love and compassion are the inborn qualities in her and are not blunted by social oppression. She shows her awareness of the female consciousness through her characterization. Ideal housewife rises against the social forces confronting her retaining the sacredness of her home. In her against the social forces, she emerges as a positive mature leader. An awakened woman is completely different from the woman who thinks of seeking equality with man and emphasizing on her own rights as a woman whose pet words are self-assertion and dominance and who calls herself emancipated and economically independent.

Nalini, daughter of a skilled tailor, Apu, is the most powerful stimulus that draws Ravi from Damodar who is deeply concerned with his unfair and unlawful quest for wealth. Ravi is very much impressed by her virtue. Nalini is very obedient and docile. She obeys her elders and marries Ravi, a vagabond, who is below her. But Nalini is not ambitious like her husband, Ravi. She is satisfied with what they have. She knows very well that Ravi is very ambitious and dreams of achieving the things which are impossible for him. Ravi likes to show off like rich people. So, often, he goes to the beach and prefers a coffee bar. It gives him a sensation of living in high society. In contrast, Nalini symbolizes the subtle fragrance of life, a clean, healthy and traditional life.

In *A Handful of Rice*, Nalini is an ideal sufferer and nurturer. The tolerance of these women is born out of their faith. Their strength lies essentially in their innate capacity for

sacrifice. Love and compassion are inherent qualities in them and are not blunted by the passage of time or social oppression. Even in most of her novels, where male characters are the protagonists, the women are shown calm and soothing as if to counterbalance the ambitious nature of male characters. She shows her awareness of the female consciousness through her characterization. The ideal housewife rises against the social forces confronting her retaining the sanctity of her home.

A hungry man is an angry man who known no law, commits crimes and debases himself by facing the world through questionable means, Ravi the protagonist of *A Handful of Rice* is no exception to this, and it is he who represents the people who are surmounted by the devil. Ravi, having no control over his hunger, enters forcibly the house of Jayamma who asks him what he wants. “what do you want? Food, I told you, he said impatiently, and be quick” (3).

*A Handful of Rice* begins and ends with the hero’s fight to get food. He tells Apu, the tailor, “I’m hungry. I want a meal. You let me in” (3). Apu’s wife hits him with all her force for breaking in like a ruffian and blood drips from his face. He explains that his hungry. Nalini who brings a drastic change in his life. He falls in love at a fight sight. He longs for marriage that provides solace and mental peace to his agitating mind. He dreams of her and feels elated when he thinks of her. He flourished in marrying her but fortune sends monsters like poverty and hunger to smash his ideas. Poverty and hunger take the life of his dear son Raju and makes him to beat his innocent Nalini. The evil is him comes out which makes him to rape Jayamma, his own mother-in-law. None can deny socio-economic factor that indispensable for existence. In *A Handful of Rice*, Kamala Markandaya has shown that poverty and hunger have psychological effect on human relations. Ravi vistis city with delusion and becomes disappointed. He falls a prey to the underworld activities.

Ravi is tempted by the fascination of modern life in cities. He becomes a prey to various vices and falls in the hands of the underworld King Damodar and his men. Kamala Markandaya's novels deals with full range of feminine experiences. Her female characters rule the situation and are loftier to male part. Her skill of painting the portraits of women with different colours, via. Socio-religious and socio-ecological, is laudable. With the alchemy of her heart, she has transmuted them into bright stars and her male characters into planets that have no light of their own but receive it from the stars that shine brightly with their own light. The Indian arrangement is focused by male-dominated society with a few exception, which recognizes male supremacy and female demotion.

The leading role is in man's share and the woman has to be satisfied with the secondary role, remains in the background. She is expected to change herself in the form of the family into which she is wedding and fused her own personality into that of her husband. She converts her into her husband's shadow and follows him through the course of life. She is expected to support him in all kinds of weather, adding her strength to his. In bedchamber, she loves her husband and calls him with respect, as he is not less than Idol for her; she worships him and offers him flowers. She holds a number of fasts to certify the same husband for generation to generation. She also longs for her husband to avoid the pains of widowhood. The Kitchen principles that she gets from her mother carry politeness, decorum, order and fragrance. She imagines this as her future prospect. This is the mindset a girl adopts in her mind in childhood. She is taught to be obedient, dedicated and lenient so that she may ascertain herself an ideal woman not only for her counterpart but also for her father-in-law and mother-in-law. She is supposed to keep the family tree growing and prospers. She is taught not to copy the male qualities that make her polluted and demonic. A traditional woman, being deeply religious, develops stoicism

that gives mental potency from tension and conflict. Kamala Markandaya ventures her female characters fundamentally outmoded women with all their distinguishing qualities and innate talents. She is aware of the quiet obstacles that are put against women.

Nalini in *A Handful of Rice* is drawn with a masterstroke. Her ability to speak is always mild and low which is admirable value in woman. Ravi falls in love with her at first sight and yearns to be assured in matrimonial bond. Nalini's charm makes Ravi adopt an honest job of tailoring and makes him aware of respectability. She is a flesh and blood personification of his delusion. She gives him a sense of satisfaction, comfort. Nalini has some traces of Apu's uncomplaining temperament, endures poverty, faces other difficulties and puts up with thrashing at the hand of her husband even in the advanced stage of her pregnancy. In fact, she adopts all those traditions and ceremonies, which are following by her father Apu. She is modest and humble on account of this traditional upbringing; she is satisfied with her present condition and does not pine for what is not.

Presenting an ideal of a good sister, she helps her sister Thangam in her need and gives new dresses to her daughters. When her husband Ravi condemns Thangam for the act of stealing puttanna, she opposes him raising her voice. She has compassion for her sister but clutches puttanna answerable for thieving Apu's funds. She is not only a good sister but a good mother also. She takes all troubles to give her children comfort and gets upset when Ravi near the beach. She is shocked when her son dies in the absence of timely medical assistance. Being a true daughter, she looks after Apu in his illness. She spends sleepless nights with her father. She is righteous, virtuous and has child-like virtue on her face. She plays well with her traditional role of a good mother, an affectionate sister, an obedient and dutiful wife and a lovable daughter. Quite contrary to Nalini, a paragon of virtue her sister Thangam betrays not only her father but also truth and



honesty. She is an eccentricity of old-fashioned copy of women simply a tinge on the reasonable sex. She is mean, callous and incurable woman. Jayamma, mother of virtuous daughter like Nalini and also a mean one like Thangam is shown as cruel, selfish and mean. She beats Ravi violently and claims him but hearing that he wants food, she feeds him. She is sympathetic, though she does not look so outwardly. She is a practical women gifted with down to earth common sense. When she realizes that Ravi is mad in love with her daughter Nalini, she exploits him. She makes his income theirs and wishes to get rid of the burden of a daughter's marriage. She virtually manages the household affairs and skillfully celebrates the marriage. She is a greedy woman who looks both for money and sex. She has a redeeming feature. With a strong sense of duty, she cares her husband in his illness, though without love.

A new woman is completely different from the women who thinks of seeking equality with man asserting her own personality and emphasizing on her own rights as a woman. Thus, the new woman, clinging to her basic values modifies herself according to the modifying circumstances. She goes a head the way seeking for her own identity with new depths and getting recognition but never like the aberration type. There is something distinct in the women characters of Kamala Markandaya something in their emotional and spiritual make up that express it in their attitude to persons and events. Kamala Markandaya has realistically presented emotional, moral and spiritual problems of the new woman. Nalini is the only sheet anchor of Ravi's life. She is quite satisfied with what she has. She realizes the conditions and circumstances and makes him dispel his romantic notions. No doubt, she is traditional, but a new woman emerges in her when she takes out her husband from the mud of a moral world. She attracts him from his erratic movements to her own self, cheeks his wild flights of imagination and thus with the passage of time, becomes the voices of realism and sanity. Nalini is emotionally mature.

She has none of Ravi's foolish cravings. She lived not in the dream world but in the world of reality and makes Ravi realize it.

Kamala Markandaya has presented Indian food in western plate. While doing so, sometimes she has crossed the limits and forgets the ethos of Indian culture to please the western readers for whom she was writing. Like Shakespeare who introduced the supernatural elements, she paints the pages of 'her novel with red colour-sex, naked pictures, virginity, first night after marriage etc. She presented the great tradition of women novelists established by Jane Narayan and secured a permanent place in Indian fiction. In her fiction, Kamala Markandaya has shown a women's gradual journey from self-effacement to self-realization, from self-sacrificing Rukmani in her first novel to self-asserting Mohini in her ninth novel, kindling her son Ravi with the flame of revolution.

Kamala Markandaya's novel *A Handful of Rice* is primarily a study of the basic fact of awakening of feminine consciousness. Her female protagonist Nalini has shown that she is not inferior to her male counterpart in any way and makes the male oriented society realize of their integral position and importance. Though, Kamala Markandaya has projected the traditional image of women, it will be injustice to carve her woman in this image as she has rediscovered, redefined and asserted her identity as person, not as possession and welcomes modernity to the best of her sensibility. In her novels, Kamala Markandaya has shown that women are not lesser human beings; rather they are sometimes more dignified than men because of their greater human virtues and qualities. The suppression of the feminist voice may cause in our life. They provide solid foundation to the edifice of family which is impossible without their active participation. She very intelligently keeps pace with the new developments of the world. The light stuff of modernity enters her soul electrifying the moral strength, which expresses itself at the

surface in the form of her equipoise. By making the new carbon copy of woman, Kamala Markandaya has developed her as a link between tradition and modernity.

The fourth chapter focuses the novel *A Handful of Rice* in the way of humanistic concern.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Humanistic Concern**

The basic definition of humanism is to care for human demands, needs, and desires, with the primary goal of giving humans a special place in the universe of their abilities and faculties. For centuries, people have been worried about the cultivation of human capabilities and to investigate human endeavours in arts and literature. There have been numerous philosophers who tried their hardest to explain the very nature of human beings existence. It could begin with a reference to the Protagoras who was a famous Greek philosopher whose dictum was “Man is the measure of all things”, he had said. During his tenure, he sparked controversy. The fundamental tenets of humanistic sociology are investigated in order to determine their applicability for the emerging field of family impact analysis. According to humanistic literature, family impact analysis has the same basic goals as humanistic social in terms of assessing the impact or consequence of social policy on family well-being and family life quality. Family impact analysis and family policy advocate are shown to be similar as humanistic enterprises.

The view of kamala Markandaya that life should be lived within the confines of moral principles and social norms. A rural farmer named Ravi, the main character, relocates to the city in order to escape the cycle of famine in his town. The final decision he made to choose not to rob is the best example of humanism at its best. His struggle with conscience echoes his roots, which are still deeply rooted in Indian values. The main character balances social acceptability and personal dissent on a precarious tightrope. One is always pitted against the conventional ethical ethos in the individualistic and rationalistic modern world. In every person's thoughts, there is a constant fight between right and wrong or moral and immoral. The protagonist of the novel battles, suffers,

develops, and accepts responsibility for his actions before deciding to follow beliefs that uphold faith in life.

Kamala Markandaya's novel *A Handful of Rice* (1999) examines the predicament of the average person. It is about the struggle for survival, a struggle that frequently overwhelms India's impoverished population. The main character Ravi balances between the sense of right and wrong, and his tryst with choosing ideals at the end is the genuine humanistic issue. The conflict facing Ravi Shankar, the protagonist, is one between two sets of values: modern, rational, pragmatic ethics. As stated by Herrick in his book *Humanism*, it (humanism) provides values and meaning into life, the novel *A Handfull of Rice* is genuinely about his journey from the inhumane world of crime to the world of conscience and ethical principles.

As the title of the novel *A Handful of Rice* suggests, poverty is present everywhere and it takes a new turn when the hero's unhappiness and irritation are shown. He struggles to get food throughout the entire novel, which mirrors the themes found in Bhabani Bhattacharya's other works *He Who Rides a Tiger* and *So Many Hungers*. The widespread migration from the countryside to the cities in the 1950s altered the character of the villages because of the increased demand for rice. In search of a better life in Madras, Ravi, the son of a meagre farmer, flees his life of destitution. Due to his little education, he is unable to take on manual labour jobs or train to be a clerk. Humanistic problems that the novelist describes include the transition that the nation experienced following independence and the issue of young people moving from rural to urban areas in quest for jobs.

And yet, somewhere a leaven must have been at work, restlessness, discontent in the towns whose spores had spread even as far as the villagers so that suddenly it was not good enough and first one home and

then another began to lose its sons, young men like him who felt obscurely than it was not right for them and this with conviction-that it would be utterly wrong for their children. (9-10)

In Humanist Manifesto 2000, Paul Kurtz too enumerates the problems of unemployment as “Many governments of the world are facing severe economic problems as cities overflow with immigrants from the countryside; vast numbers of them are employed and barely able to subsist” (18). In the years following independence, because of the impact of industrialization, the peasants bravely decided to leave their native countries to pursue their ambitions since they discovered villages rife with poverty. The narrative describes the deplorable state of the settlements as “had all lived between bouts of genteel and acute poverty. . . the kind in which the weakest went to the wall, the old ones and the babies, dying of tuberculosis, dysentery, the falling fever ‘recurrent fever’ and any other names for what was basically, simply, nothing but starvation” (9).

The young people who move to cities in pursuit of a better life and identify feel that they have lost both in the cold and unforgiving atmosphere of the city. They understand how difficult, cruel, heartless, and unimaginative life is in cities. Ravi joins many thousands of people who flock to the cities in search of a foothold in life but ends up losing hope. Cities and countryside both have nothing to offer underprivileged people like Ravi. Marakandaya observes:

He had left his family, a long time ago-three years was it? -as his brothers had done, as all the young men he knew had done or wanted to do, joining the exodus to the cities because their village had nothing to offer them. The cities had nothing either, although they did not discover this until they were arrived: but it is held out before them like an incandescent carrot the hope that one day, someday, there would be something. (26)

Kamala Markandaya's humanistic concern is to highlight the fact that deaths in villages occur as a result of malnutrition and a lack of healthcare resources. He enters the chaotic world of urban life in an effort to satisfy his hunger and obtain a small amount of rice, but he soon finds himself ensnared in the criminal underworld. Ravi remarks:

A world shot with glitter and excitement: a world that revived the incandescent glow the city had once kindled; and suddenly the terror and the loneliness were gone, lifted from the load whose other components were hunger, the lassitude of hunger, and the terror of losing his identity in an indifferent city which was akin to death. Of course much of this world, this dazzling world, lay in the future: but every kind of fear and privation became bearable in the light of its bright promise. (28)

Ravi drowns his values and gets carried away by the world of smugglers, bootleggers and black marketeers. Though he joins the gang of hooligans and criminals yet on seeing Nalini he feels a desire to have his own house.

If I had a wife, he thought as he ate, she would cook for me, it would be like this everyday... but what had he to offer to get himself a wife?...I'll buy her a little house, small but nice, he thought as he finished, and some nice new shiny aluminium cooking vessels, these brass things are too heavy, old-fashioned. . . and with a job one can save say a quarter of one's wage. (8)

Ravi's desire for a family and a respected existence is a step towards living a virtuous life. Commenting on morality, Jim Herrick in his book *Humanism* says, "morality arises because humans are essentially social animals. . . The social nature of humans creates the need for morality, not from a god but from the nature of human self-responsibility and social inter-relations" (21). Ravi at this point chooses values and the

life of domesticity to material affluence. Meera Panigrahi in *Humanism and Culture* observes that in humanism, “the emphasis is not upon the materials that bring order, comfort, freedom, wealth and general well-being, but upon human values that guide his course in life” (21).

Ravi's sudden entry to Apu's home to steal but his staying there as assistant, marrying the daughter of the house and on the death of the householder to become indispensable master is similar to Malamud's novel *The Assistant*. Every time he chooses to be honest, Ravi is tempted towards his world of easy money. This way he clings not only to his values though tempted time to time. For the first time, Jayamma gives him five rupees for fixing the window bars and if it doesn't cost anything because his friend Kannan fixed them for free. He objects and returns the money to Jayamma.

By the time he reached to blacksmith the money had begun to burn a hole in his pocket. There was a lot he could buy for five rupees, the things that he needed over and above basic props like food which was all that his earnings ever ran to before his energies expired. (18)

This turn in life proves that the rebel in him is not so much against the values. The sense of sacrifice for Nalini is reflected as, “she was worth it, worth anything, even worth giving up the sweet life for. He puts it all on her, forgetting the trinity of hunger, drink and misery that had been intermittent companion to his sweet life” (43). Once he enters the world of morality, he plunges deep and deep into it but he soon finds that the economics of urban life remains beyond his understanding. The increasing number of family members in a large family disturbs Apu's economics. Moreover with the coming of new technology and the growth of the textile mills, machine production starts posing a threat to the tailoring business of the skilled workers like Apu. Ravi's rationalism makes him agitated at this exploitation, but Apu tells him the law of ‘the survival of the fittest’.



Ravi as a young rebel, finds it difficult to reconcile with this disproportion and injustice. He wishes to get all the comforts but is helpless because of limited earnings. To quote:

Ravi would have liked this steady wage to be higher. He wanted to buy a bed, a nice new sari for Nalini, material for some smart new shirts for himself, a safety razor, a mouth organ (all the old gang had had either mouth organs or flutes), and sundry other essentials and luxuries the list of which grew daily long. The longing for them grew too: and from constant denial affected him like a deficiency disease. (75-76)

Ravi develops an urge to fulfill his responsibilities towards his wife and children he wants to rebel but cannot. Again, he gets torn between freedom and social responsibilities. His ability to hold his values makes him a social victim.

But what could he do within the narrow frame of respectability he had sling round his neck like a penance? Rebel and a contract might be lost, the steady wage would come to an end and then what of Nalini? He had to think of her, he had to think of himself for that matter. There seemed to be no answer. (79)

Torn between his commitment to his family as a financial provider and the corrupting socio-economic system, the city grins toothlessly on him and rebooks his conscience. He loses his job in the hospital and to add to this further hike in the prices of essential commodities makes the condition worse. Debts and arrears are increasing day by day and now he wants to be a free man. His vacillation between the right and wrong, just and unjust is described thus:

If thinking of Damodar roused a sour and self-critical fretfulness, Nalini invariably restored his peace. She was so affectionate, so gay, with her soft tender ways that were like a caress, that when she was near he could

even feel a little sorry for Damodar, who had no wife, who could not know what it was like to have someone like Nalini by his side. Sometimes it baffled him, this curious shift in the emphasis what was and what was not important to him, making him wonder who and what he really was under all those feelings and counter feelings. (137)

Ravi with Damodar forgets all his miseries for a shorter period. His struggle was over but he thought, that he too would be sipping the sweet carefree life. He wants to join Damodar but his dilemma to switch to immoral life as compared to moral one is portrayed by the novelist as: What held him back? Had respectability entered his soul, smirched it with the shoddy morality of a hypocritical society? Slough it off, join hands with Damodar. But they were dirty hands, hands, that grew rich by squeezing, people's throats. People like him. People like his wife.

Tortured by his dilemma of conscience, Ravi resorts to violence. He starts suspecting the chastity of Nalini and turns into a wife-beater. It is very pathetic when he loses his son Raju. Raju on the verge of death asks questions him, "Do you still like me?" 'of course, my son. I always have, I always will. Do you have to ask?' No answer, only those hazy eyes, slowly closing. How deeply sunk they were, dark hollows, the face was too young for such deep hollows, too young to take them. why do you like me?" (271). He thinks of providing comforts to his children and Nalini but in his endeavour to achieve this, his son lacks proper treatment and proper food. His son's death is pathetically described as: "Terror was beating at Ravi, paralyzing wings, but he fought it off and gathered his child to him and held him tightly, feeling the kicking muscles and nerves as if they were joined to his own tortured body, not putting him down until that ceased" (271).

Ravi turns speechless when he dies as he feels that it is not he but the society in which he lives is responsible for the death of his beloved son. Tortured by object penury, Nalini quietly leaves her husband after her son's death and goes to her sister's place. Ravi realizes that this society is so inconsiderate that honesty pays nothing. He develops hatred against the society represented by the European memsahibs, the policemen and the rich. Though the death of his son completely shatters him he does not lose hope and takes life as a challenge. Ravi leaves no stone unturned to make his both ends meet but in this world of transition, he lags behind. All his efforts to make his life comfortable shatter like the card's house.

Betrayed by society, Ravi again wants to go to Damodar to fulfil his unfulfilled desires. This time Damodar rejects him and mocks at him saying, "you're empty. No heart, no spleen, no lights, no guts. Something's been at them'. He began to laugh, a high sharp ugly laughter. 'what was it termites?'" (274). He pulls out the gunny bags of rice from the store. The shop where Ravi and Apu once worked was exploited. His conscience is once again jolted by Kannan, the blacksmith who reminds him of the crime he is going to commit, Ravi, keep out! Kannan cried again. The rice is for all, this way is wrong, this way the innocent suffer!. His existential urge makes him think that it is his right to get whatever he desires. He thinks of throwing a stone at the store "but he could not. The strength that had inflamed him, the strength of a suppressed, laminated anger, ebbed as quickly as it has risen. His hands dropped.

Ravi's Conscience again forbids him to steal me rice. Ironically, his start turns out to be his end. Throughout the novel, he is moving between values or no values. Jim Herrick too believes that "Moral instinct and moral values in society are very important" (2). Markandaya's prime humanistic concern is to preserve the native good values. Though she is influenced by the western culture she believes that one must preserve one's

values. Thus, Markandaya in the climax of the novel proves that moral values finally call forth the best in Ravi's mind though temporarily he turns towards other dehumanizing traits but he chooses the values he inherited. The crisis of conscience and values is related to the question of human survival but the novelist seems to be in favour of preserving one's values and what is good for the whole community. Bhabani Bhattacharya in his novel *So Many Hungers* too shows reserve of compassion inherent in human soul in the gathering episode. Markandaya too proves that the poor people preserve the sense of moral values even in the face of hunger whereas hunger dehumanizes the rich who exploit the poor. That is why Ravi prefers to starve saying "I don't feel in the mood today" (280) rather than to submit to an ignoble ignominious way of life. The depiction of the crisis of values and conscience shows Markandaya's sympathy for those who are poor and suffer but still preserve moral decency and responsibility.

The novel *A Handful of Rice* is circular in structure. It begins with Ravi's quest for food and shelter and ends with his struggle for a handful of rice. The novel starts and ends with violence, but violence is defeated in both cases initially by the world outside Ravi and later by his own moral sense. He could have joined Damodar to improve his economic conditions by going against his values but every time he is defeated by his conscience. A realistic picture of hundreds of hungry poor youths is portrayed by the novelist who faces such dilemmas in the post independent India struggling to get economic stability. The novel is the journey of the character Ravi towards understanding his own self. In the beginning he is not sure where he stands but later, he moves from irresponsibility to responsibility, proving that everyone has a large capacity for personal growth.

In the climax of the novel, Markandaya takes her protagonist to the highest point. It is at this time he has to choose between his conscience or immorality proving that the

poor people can suffer but still at the moment of trial preserve their values. The richness of their human spirit truly dazzles us and her real aim in the novel is to value morality more than money, values than individualism, society than self.

The fifth chapter sums up all the chapters and presents the researcher's findings.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summation**

Indian English literature has a virgin field of literature where people have not worked and it needs to be researched, critiqued and re-critiqued. It is an offshoot, a branch of world literature in English, but it does not mean it at all the translated texts will not be considered. Through the contribution of several writers, literature became a product of Indo – English relationships. Indian Literature has commenced from Vedas and spread its rich and pleasant light. Some writers extended the area of friendship, self-respect and admiration. After independence Indian writing in English has achieved a new level. It has been steadily growing since independence. English was recognized as official language for national, international purposes and medium of instruction for higher education, law courts and learned journals.

The renaissance in modern India began with Raja Ram Mohan Roy who was a bridge between India and England. He was not only a great humanitarian but also a great social reformer. Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others became Indian writers and speakers in English. Most of them were influenced by the Romantic writers. The face of English education and other sources came forward to challenge the west. At the time of necessity, Ramakrishna Paramahansa appeared in Bengal to protect Indian culture. He was an ignorant of English, later he became the living embodiment of human unity through the realization of God. After his death, his chief disciple Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Mission. Prabuddha Bharata is the monthly English journal of the Mission. Rajam Iyer's 'Vasudeva Sastri' is an illustration of good Indian prose writing in English. Thus a large number of persons took part in Indian writing in English to protect our culture and heritage by adopting techniques from the west.

Kamala Markandaya who is undoubtedly an outstanding Indian English novelist. She depicts through her novels the awakened feminine sensibility as she tries to project the picture of the changing traditional Indian society. Her novels are reflective of the changing images of man and society and the gradual erosion in the traditional value system. She has been most successful and at her best in analyzing the dynamic of change which is operative in pre and post-Independence Indian society. And this she attempts through a delicate and subtle examination of the nature of the relationship of person inhabiting the world of her fiction. In her early novels she has chosen a limited canvas of a small village or a small town or a small family wherein she dramatizes in simple framework of story the agony and ecstasy of changes, taking place in the cultural milieu of India. However, despite these changes she exhibits her firm faith in the sanctity of the tradition.

The cultural clash of the East and the West is a favourite theme of Kamala Markandaya also like many novelists of Independence India but her approach to this theme is generally in terms of tradition and modernity since she identifies tradition with the East and modernity with the West. In Kamala Markandaya's first novel *Nectar in A Sieve* she has dramatized the tragedy of a peasant family in the traditional Indian village which is ravaged by natural calamities like drought and flood and evils of Zamindari system on the one hand and the assault of industrialization in the shape of tannery on the other. In *A Handful of Rice* the tug of war is between two value systems and the protagonist Ravi vacillates between the two. His wife Nalini, who is well drilled in the conventional ideas of wifely duties, believes in the values of morality.

The theme of tradition and modernity is the central issue in the novels of Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai although their mode of treatment of this theme is different. Most of the characters of Kamala Markandaya are conformists and non-conformists. The

non-conformists of Anita Desai tend to become abnormal or neurotic and their end is generally tragic, but those who in due course realize the futility of the rebellious attitude and accept the path of reconciliation are supposed to be happier than their opposite counterparts.

The second chapter has dealt with hunger and food crisis in the novel *A Handful of Rice*. Kamala Markandaya has explored the theme of poverty, hunger and exploitation in the novel *A Handful of Rice*. Being the novelist of the transition period in the Indian socio-political history, they, through their writings. Kamala Markandaya clearly prove themselves to be the products of the age. Kamala Markandaya shared the same social perspective of highlighting the social evils that led the downtrodden to poverty, hunger and exploitation. She exposes the true picture of the Indian rural society which lives in poverty and hunger and dies of starvation and exploitation. In her portrayal of poverty she covers all the essential features of poverty, hunger and exploitation. She exhibits the very essence of the concept of poverty as she appears to have comprehended poverty to its core. She covers all the minute details of hunger even. In the novels *Nectar in a Sieve* and *A Handful of Rice*, she presents the family life of poor village people. The relationship between conjugal couples and the tension between tradition and modernity is powerfully portrayed in the novel *A Silence of Desire*. The theme of exploitation of man by man is pictured in the novels *Possession and Two Virgins*.

She has dealt with the psychological aspects of poverty, hunger and exploitation in the different stages of the life of the poor. To show the grim reality of poverty, she portrays the two parallel worlds of poverty and luxury as in *A Handful of Rice*. Through the tragic image of the life of the poor, she shows her genuine concern for their miserable lot; and through the luxurious and pompous life of the rich, she makes her readers perceive the wide gulf between the two. Ravi knew better the economics of village life,



knew the superhuman efforts, the begging and the borrowing that went into raising the train fare, the money for the extras demanded by pride and the standards of a city. His had managed it once, where many men like him never managed it at all.

Kamala Markandaya displays her thorough awareness of the gradual shift in the human attitude towards life that had been taking place during two or three decades before independence. She is not very interested in commenting on the political movement. Though she expresses her anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist views through her characters, she does not directly portray the capitalist or colonial exploitation. She does not portray capitalist or colonial exploitation. She does not portray English characters with vengeance but delineates them sympathetically. She does not blame religion for the miseries and exploitation of the poor. She looks at the peasants' faith in fate positively. She herself admits her faith in God and asserts in *Nectar in a Sieve* that faith does not fail to bestow mental strength on the faithful. She expresses her anguish over the people's grudge to feed the poor and fill the bowls of the sadhus. But she does not show contempt to the sadhus. She uses these holy persons and places with a definite purpose. They are used as symbols of eastern spirituality. Hunger eliminates the barriers of religion and caste and brings all the poor on an equal level. The physical hunger is never satisfied but sanctity of spirit can be fully vindicated.

Coming to the city, Ravi is disillusioned that for a poor man there is no difference between a city and village. We find him struggling for a handful of rice. She brings real reforms in the living condition of the poor, untouchables, the poor peasants, the coolies and the oppressed members of the society to restore them to human dignity and inculcate self-awareness. While portraying the causes of the poverty and hunger, she highlights, as in *Nectar in a Sieve*, the natural catastrophes rather than the manmade disasters.

The third chapter has dealt the novel *A Handful of Rice* in a woman's perspective. Markandaya's women characters exhibit a positive and optimistic outlook on life and emerge much stronger than their male counterparts. Markandaya's novels have shown that women are not lesser human beings; rather they are sometimes more dignified than men because of their greater human virtues and qualities. Markandaya has made us hear the pronounced voice of women in her fiction. She has traced a woman's transformation from self-sacrificing in her novels.

Markandaya proves that the plight of the woman in rural India has a meaningful role in the changing scenario of Indian society. She is the first Indian writer who probes into the women's psyche. A woman occupies a conspicuous role in her novels. She portrays the woman who struggles against those forces which are beyond her control as Rukmini in *Nectar in a Sieve*. But it does not mean they rebel. In *A Handful of Rice*, Nalini is shown as an ideal sufferer and nurturer. The tolerance of these women is born out of their faith. Their strength lies essentially in their innate capacity for sacrifice. Love and compassion are inherent qualities in them and are not blunted by the passage of time or social oppression. Even in novels like *A Handful of Rice*, where male characters are the protagonists, the women are shown calm and soothing as if to counterbalance the ambitious nature of male characters. She shows her awareness of the female consciousness through her characterization. But it does not make her a feminist, all the same.

In *A Handful of Rice*, Nalini is the daughter of Apu, a tailor. Ravi begins working as Apu's apprentice, and when he falls in love with Nalini, Apu's daughter, he joins the already crowded household. Apu dies, and Ravi preserves with the respectable life, facing the problems of shortage of food, illness, swindling customers. After the death of his son, he reverts to the life of a petty criminal, and is inexorably drawn towards a

dangerous climax. In this novel, she recreates the life of the poor with compassion and respect. In *A Handful of Rice*, Nalini is good, lovely, beautiful, traditional and cooperative woman who symbolizes domestic happiness, a clean, healthy and traditional life. She becomes the victim of silent suffering caused but economic scarcity, traditional mooring and compulsory choice between morality and success ethics.

The fourth chapter focused on the novel *A Handful of Rice* in humanistic concern. In the novel *A Handful of Rice* is set up with a story of a poor Ravi, a man from a small village who migrates to urban in search of better earning. Ravi is shown as a rebellious and strong-willed youth. He has dreams on a better lifestyle and greater recognition as an educated youth. Ravi shankar, a protagonist appears in the opening scene who is drunken and threatens with forced entry in a house with the following words I'm hungry, I want a meal. You let me in, do you hear? I'll give you one minute. Then he breaks the rusty bars of window and demands food. Here, his violent nature is exposed and the author successfully tries to establish such a main character in the minds of readers. The novel *A Handful of Rice* explores the dilemma of common everyman. It is about the struggle to survive, a struggle that usually overpowers the poverty-stricken masses of India. In the novel, the protagonist walks a tightrope between the sense of right and wrong and finally his tryst ending in choosing values is the real humanistic concern.

The fifth chapter sums up all the chapters. The present study exposes the fact that poverty is a great social crime which paves way for many criminal activities. Poverty in youth is an inhuman experience which needs great concern. This study proves that a discourse analysis can be done on the novel. Also a psychological study can be done to bring about the traumatic experiences of the central character.

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**Metaphysical Exploration of The Self: A Formalistic Study of Frances Hodgson Burnett's**

***The Secret Garden***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**J. Rani Shellocious Rachel**

**(Reg. No. 21APEN19)**



**PG and Research Department of English**

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Metaphysical Exploration of The Self: A Formalistic Study of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*** 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 J .Rani Shellocious Rachel during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Metaphysical Exploration of The Self: A Formalistic Study of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*** 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**

**April 2023**

*J. Rani Shellocious Rachel.*  
**J. Rani Shellocious Rachel**



## **Acknowledgement**

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## Preface

The project entitled **Metaphysical Exploration of The Self: A Formalistic Study of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*** The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the evolution of Children literature in general. A short biography of France Hodgson Burnett's and the general characteristics of her works are discussed.

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

The third chapter **Realm of Magic Realism** deals with the understanding of the religious foundation and examines the nature of Magic related in the novel.

The fourth chapter **Symbolism as Modus Operandi** gives an exemplified view on the literary devices employed in the novel.

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

The researcher has followed the guidelines prescribed in MLA Handbook Ninth edition for the preparation of the project.

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

American literature begins with the age of Colonialism, 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 breadth of its production usually now cause it to be considered a separate path and tradition. The New England colonies were the centre of the early American Literature.

The character of the early American literature is strongly influenced by several factors. It is the era of colonising the continent. The American literature is more or less connected with French, Spanish or Dutch literature as well. The first writers brought mainly English ideas and ways of writing. This means the early American Literature is based on the Literature of England. Religion played an important role 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.

As dissatisfaction with the colonial system and the relation with Britain grew, literature gradually changed its shape. The writers became more politically, anti-British and revolutionary oriented, rationalism and enlightenment prevailed. 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 American, and the writer stressed imagination nature and individualism . 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 with its negatives typical for the period. It was the era of industrialisation and migration, determinism was a major paradigm of the age. Naturalism was an intensified form of realism. Other American writers towards the close of the nineteenth century, moved towards naturalism. Since the dawn of the twentieth 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. Many movements appeared; together they might be called 'modernism'.

Like other national literature, 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 new few hardy souls tentatively ventured westward. After a successful rebellion against the motherland, America became the United States, as a nation. By the end of the nineteenth century this nation extended southward to the Gulf of Mexico, northward to the forty-ninth parallel, and westward to the Pacific. By the end of the nineteenth century, too, it had taken its place among the powers of the world, its fortunes so interrelated with those of other nations that inevitably, it became involved in two World Wars and, following these conflicts, with the

problem of Europe and East Asia. Meanwhile, the rise of science and industry, as well as changes in way of thinking and feeling, brought many modification people's lives. All these factors in the development of the United States, moulded the literature of the country.

Many American writers were influenced by the transcendentalism movement formed by Ralph Waldo Emerson after 1836, focusing their message on the strength and inherent purity present within the individual. Individualism remained a prominent topic to later works of American Literature. American writers expressed disillusionment following World War I. The stories and novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940) captured the mood of the 1920's and John Dos Passos wrote about the war. Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) became notable for *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms* in 1925. According to Hemingway in *Adventure of Huckleberry Finn* he says, "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*" (773). William Faulkner (1897-1962) 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'Neil, who won four Pulitzer Prizes and the Nobel Prize. In the middle of the twentieth century, American drama was dominated by the work of playwrights Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, as well as by the maturation of the American musical.

Depression era writers included John Steinbeck (1902-1968), 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 United States. From the end of the World War II up until, roughly, the late 1960s and the 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's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). John Updike was notable for his novel *Rabbit Run* (1960). Philip Roth explored the Jewish identity in American society. From the early 1970's to the present day the most important literary movement has been postmodernism and the flowering of literature by the ethnic minority writers.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Mencken's major enthusiasms included the fiction of Joseph Conrad and Theodore Dreiser, but he also promoted minor writers for their attacks on gentility, such as James Branch Cabell, or for their revolt against the narrow, frustrated quality of life in rural communities, including Zona Gale and Ruth Suckow. The most distinguished of these writers was Sherwood Anderson. His *Winesburg Ohio* (1919) and *The Triumph of the Egg* (1921) were collection of short stories that showed villagers suffering from all sorts of phobias and suppressions. Anderson in time wrote several novels, the best being *Poor White* (1920).

In 1920 critics noticed that a new school of fiction had risen to prominence with the success of books such as F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* and Sinclair Lewis *Main Street*, fictions that tended to be frankly psychological or modern in their unsparing portrayals of contemporary life. Novels of the 1920s were often only lyrical but also, in the despairing mood that followed World War II, expressed the pervasive disillusionment of the post-war, generation. Novels of the 1930s inclined towards radical social criticism, in response to the miseries of the Great Depression. Some of the best writers such as Fitzgerald, William Faulkner,

Henry Roth, and Nathanael West, continued to explore the Modernist vein of the previous decade.

Frances Eliza Hodgson was born to Eliza Boond and Edwin Hodgson on November 24, 1849, in Manchester, England. Her father was a successful ironmonger originally from Doncaster, and his income was sufficient to enable the family to live a comfortable life. The third of five children, Frances had two older brothers and two younger sisters. Due to the success of his business, Edwin was able to move his family into a large house in 1852. Edwin died of stroke just over a year after the relocation, his wife pregnant with a fifth child and now bereft of an income. Eliza was forced to take over the family business, and Frances was left in the care of her grandmother, who introduced her to the joys of reading. Due to the impecunious situation, Frances's mother was forced to move the family to Seedley Grove, near Pendleton, where they resided with relatives.

During this time, Frances attended a local school run by two women, and it was here that she first encountered a book concerning fairies. The family moved again, but Frances despised her new home in Islington Square, Salford, which was devoid of gardens and severely overcrowded. Her fertile imagination led to a propensity for storytelling, often creating tales and stories that she would commit to her notebooks. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe came to be her favourite novel, and she whiled away a great number of hours rehearsing its scenes. She and her siblings attended The Select Seminary for Young Ladies and Gentlemen, where she remained until the age of fifteen. After the American Civil War ruined the cotton industry that Manchester depended on, the family was thrust into poverty, Eliza decided to sell the business and relocate one more to a smaller residence. Frances uncle was doing well in

America, and invited the family to live with him in Knoxville, Tennessee; an offer which was accepted within a year. In preparation for the move, her mother instructed Frances to destroy her early writings, and in 1865 the family moved to the United States.

Unfortunately, the economy of Knoxville was badly affected when the war ended, and Frances uncle was unable to support the family. They consequently moved into a log cabin not far away in New Market, where Frances was to meet her future husband Swan Burnett. Soon after making his acquaintance, however, Swan left to attend college in Ohio. To help support her family, Frances began writing, publishing her first story in *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1868, shortly followed by regular contributions to *Scribner's Monthly*, *Peterson's Magazine*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. By 1869 she had accrued enough money through her writing to relocate the family to a more spacious home in Knoxville.

In 1870 Frances mother died, and soon afterwards most of her siblings married. In 1872, Burnett visited England. In September of the year, she married Swan Burnett, and in under a year had given birth to her first child, Lionel. It was in 1874 that she embarked on her first novel,

*That Lass o' Lowrie's*, her first full-length novel. The money that she had earned from her writing enabled her and Swan to travel to Paris, where Swan endeavoured to further his medical training. Their stint in Paris was short-lived, however, as the birth of her second child, Vivian, forced them to return to the United States.

In 1877 *That Lass o' Lowrie's* was published. It received critical acclaim, and Frances soon became well-known as an up-and-coming novelist. She continued to write prolifically, publishing *Haworth's* in 1879 and beginning work on a dramatic version of *That Lass o'*



*Lowrie's* after an unauthorised version was performed in London. In the same year Frances met Louisa May Alcott and Mary Mapes Dodge during a trip to Boston, who inspired her to start writing children's fiction. She also wrote and published adult fiction.

Frances's writing showed no sign of slowing down, publishing *Louisiana* in 1880, *A Fair Barbarian* in 1881, and *Through one Administration* in 1883. Her play *Esmerelda* 1881 was nineteenth century's longest running play on Broadway. However, producing such a prodigious amount of work took its toll and resulted in Frances's falling into a deep depression. It was around this time that she became interested in Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Christian Science ideas that would have a profound influence on her later life and work. Burnett's work continued to be very popular, and the publication of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* in 1886 saw the book become a best-seller in both England and the United States. It was Burnett's first children's novel. It was translated into twelve languages, and solidified her reputation as a successful writer. Burnett also wrote a play titled, *The Real Little Lord Fauntleroy* which was staged on Broadway and was as successful as the book. In the winter of 1887, she wrote *The Fortunes of Philippa Fairfax* in Florence, and published *Sara Crew or What Happened at Miss Minchin's* in United States.

*A Little Princess*, an expanded version of *Sara Crew or What Happened at Miss Minchin's* was published in book form from September 1905. A huge success, it is still considered among children's all-time favourite novels. Burnett's oldest son, Lionel, passed away as a result of consumption in 1890, which had a serious impact on both her life and work. Shortly after this Burnett renounced her faith in the Church of England and turned to Christian Science.

Three years later she published her autobiography, *The One I knew Best of All*, which was dedicated to Lionel. Her youngest son, Vivian, finished his studies at Harvard in 1898, and shortly afterwards Burnett divorced Swan on grounds of desertion although in reality the breakup had been planned years in advance. She was living at Great Maytham Hall in England at this point, where she would remain for the next ten years. In 1896, she published *A Lady of Quality*. The first in the series of successful adult historical novels, it was the year's second highest best selling book in United States. It was followed by *In Connection with De Willoughby Claim* in 1899 and *The Making of a Marchioness* and *The Methods of Lady Walderhurst* in 1901.

Burnett married Stephen Townsend in 1900, and the two of them travelled to Pegli for honeymoon. Within month her sister received a letter explaining that the relationship was already problematic. Burnett claimed that she had been blackmailed into marriage by Townsend, that he was only after money, and that he was scarcely 'sane and hysterical'. Not wanting to cohabit with her new husband, she moved to London. Burnett experienced a physical deterioration in 1902 and, after returning to America, spent some time in sanatorium. She expressed to Townsend that she no longer wanted to be with him and ended the marriage. Two years later she went back to Maytham, and it was there amongst its beautiful, walled gardens that she conceived *The Secret Garden*.

In 1906, Burnett published *Queen Silver-Bell* and *Racketty-Packetty House*, and in the following year *The shuttle* was published. She relocated to the United States for one final time in 1907, and had numerous minor works published in *Children's Magazine*. *The Secret Garden* was published in 1911, the inspiration for which she had got from the walled gardens in

Maytham Hall, and it was originally illustrated by M. L. Kirk and then by Charles Robinson in 1914. *The Secret Garden* narrates the story of Mary Lennox, a contrary, aggressive, and unloved ten-year-old who goes to live with her uncle after her parent's death. A classic of children's literature, it became one of her most popular novels. Burnett's other noteworthy works include *The Lost Prince* (1915), *The White People* (1917), *The Head of the House of Coombe* (1922) and its sequel, *Robin* (1922). The final 17 years of her life were spent in Plandome Manor. Burnett died on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1924, at the age of 74. She is buried next to her son Vivian in Roslyn Cemetery. She continues to remain popular for her children's novel.

*The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett is a story of rebirth as a result of the power of love. It opens with Mary Lennox, a 10-year-old girl who lives in India with her English parents. She is terribly neglected by them, causing her to be sickly, unpleasant and demanding. When her parents die in a cholera epidemic, Mary is sent to live with her uncle, Archibald Craven, in Yorkshire, England. Mr. Craven lives in a huge manor house with nearly hundred rooms, most of which are unused since the death of his wife ten years earlier, an event that has left him bereft. When she arrives at the Misselthwaite estate, the servant let her know that her uncle will pay no attention to her and that she is expected to get by on her own.

Soon after her arrival, Mary learns about a secret garden on the east that has been locked away for ten years she becomes enchanted with the idea of the garden and determined to find it, and eventually she locates it and goes inside. It appears to be abandoned, but she finds a few sprigs of new growth and begins tending to them even though she knows nothing about gardening. Mary befriends Ben Weatherstaff, a gardener on the estate, and questions him about

the garden, but he makes it clear that it is not to be discussed. She learns that the garden belonged to the late Mrs. Craven and her husband ordered that it be locked away after her death because it caused him too much pain. Mary also befriends Dickon Sowerby, the brother of her housemaid Martha, who is a great lover of nature and is beloved by every living thing, including every animal he meets, and he begins to help Mary tend to the garden.

After hearing the soft sound of crying from time to time in the house, Mary eventually discovers Colin, the sickly, demanding son of Mr. Craven, who remains secluded in his room and is not expected to live long. Mary and Colin are kindred spirits and when she tells him about the secret garden, he becomes determined to see it for himself. She brings Dickon to meet him and they conspire to take Colin to the garden in his wheel chair, but to keep it a secret from the adults in the house. Just as Mary has grown physically and mentally healthier by spending time in the garden, Colin immediately begins to transform when he enters it and declares that he will now live forever.

As spring comes, the garden begins to thrive along with the health of Colin and Mary. Soon Colin is able to stand and walk, but the children keep it a secret because he wants to surprise his father when he returns from his travels, hoping that his improved health will enable his father to love him. Unbeknownst to the residents of the manor, Mr. Craven has begun a simultaneous transformation as a result of the garden's spiritual power. When he returns to Misselthwaite, he is surprised to find that the garden has been discovered and is now thriving again and thrilled that his son, whom he has come to regret neglecting all these years, has now been made strong and healthy through his connection with nature and the power of love that comes from the secret garden.

*The Secret Garden* is a wonderful of the healing power of nature, laughter and love. It is an affirmation of the existence of magic as well as simply a beautiful story. This unusual story has proved to be the most lasting element of Burnett's literary legacy. In *The Secret Garden*, the orphan Mary's rightful inheritance is ultimately herself and the natural world, the ability to speak truth to others and to have it spoken back to her – to live a full life of both the body and imagination. The next chapter deals with the Omnipotence of Motherhood in the novel.

## Chapter Two

### Omnipotence of Motherhood

A mother is someone who gives birth to a child, so defining a mother often starts with genetics. It is not quite straightforward culturally. The definition merely on biology ignoring the complexities of motherhood's social construction. According to the English Oxford Dictionary, a mother is a female parent of human being, a women in relation to a child or children to whom she has given birth, and a women who assumes the parental responsibilities towards a child.

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

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

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

‘Mrs’ indicating a lack of a definite identity strengthened by the absence of a personal name.

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

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

Mr. Craven even receives a letter from her stating this, and he takes her advice seriously. Mrs. Sowerby demonstrates kindness, curiosity, and respect for Dickon's private world during her conversations with him. She becomes enthralled by Colin and Mary's progress and begins sending baked goods and fresh milk their way. This makes Colin and Mary to act as if they aren't hungry for their meals at the manor, fooling their caregivers into thinking Colin's health

is improving. Mrs. Sowerby is eventually invited to the secret garden by Colin and Mary, where she shows them how a mother would care for them by hugging them, listening intently to what they have to say, and feeding them nutritious meals. Colin's interpretation of Magic appeals to her, and she acknowledges that whatever one calls it, it represents a belief in the divine and thus is good. She then writes to Mr. Craven and asks him to return home.

In “*Domesticating Brontë’s Moors: Motherhood in The Secret Garden*,” Anna Silver connects the dead Lilies Craven with the ideal mother as she mothers both Mary and Colin indirectly through the Magic of the garden. This argument works for Mrs. Craven but is problematic when Mrs. Lennox, is considered as she also dies in the novel. Although upon initial examination Mrs. Craven and Mrs. Lennox appear to be the positive and negative natures of the mother figure - one kind and gentle while the other is selfish and oppressive. Mrs. Lennox represents upper-middle and upperclass Victorian women who saw children as an annoyance that should be kept from interfering with their mothers' pleasures and fascinates. Mrs. Crawford criticizes Mrs. Lennox for being far too concerned about her appearance and social schedule to teach Mary appropriate behaviour. She points to the problem of uninvolved mothers. Where class and absence align Mrs. Craven and Mrs. Lennox, Mrs. Sowerby differs as she is from a lower social class and therefore does perform the work of mothering. Foster and Simmons describe Mrs. Sowerby as an earth mother, who, in contrast to Mrs. Lennox and Mrs. Craven, demonstrates the positive effects of the mothering experience (7).

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



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

...about the names she's going to call her Ayah. Is it so very bad? Oh, is it?

Mary heard her say. "Awfully," the young man answered in a trembling voice.

"Awfully, Mrs. Lennox. You ought to have gone to the hills two weeks ago."

The Mem Sahib wrung her hands, "Oh, I know I ought!" I only stayed to go to that silly dinner party. (9)

As Mary is absorbed in this, Mary's mother comes onto the veranda with a young officer. Mary's mother seems scared and upset. Even though Mary is spoiled, no one tells her what is going on because she is a child, and thus unimportant and undeserving of information in everyone else's eyes. The fact that Mary never thinks to ask either indicates that she does not trust the adults in her life and does not believe they will assist her in learning these skills. Mary is make-believe garden demonstrates that she has the potential to be interested in nature and growing things, but that she is unable to fully embrace this passion in India.

Dickon Sowerby is, in some sense, the spirit of Missel Moor. His eyes are described as looking like pieces of moorland sky, and he smells of heather and grass and leaves as if he were made of them. When the reader first encounters him, he is sitting beneath a tree charming animals with the music of his wooden pipe. This immediately conjures the image of panpipes, and serves to associate Dickon with the god Pan - the Greek god of Nature, Laughter, Passion, and Music.

He therefore is presented as having an uncannily close relationship with the wilderness and with wild things. He is able to whisper flowers out of the earth, and inspires Mary's instant and unquestioning love. The contradiction in terms represented by the phrase Yorkshire angel arises out of the opposition between heaven and earth. Here, of course Yorkshire represents earth, and is evidenced by Dickon's common appearance. He transcends such class distinctions, however, because he is in some sense a heavenly creature. The question of how Dickon can be both absolutely of the earth and absolutely of the heavens (even his eyes are like bits of sky) is easily resolved when the reader recalls that, in the world of *The Secret Garden*, the world of nature is itself divine. Thus, Dickon can be, even in the Christian economy of the novel, the god of nature.

In addition to biological mothers, *The Secret Garden* has a number of characters who display qualities often associated with mothering or provide alternatives to existing mothers. The two characters who act as alternative to the biological mother include Mary's Ayah in India and Martha Sowerby, at Misselthwaite. Thaden reminds that unlike current society, the Victorian upper-middle class and upper-class mother did not attend to the practical needs of the child, but rather this was usually the work of a nanny. From the moment of her birth, Mrs. Lennox delegates her parental responsibilities to the extent that, under Mrs. Lennox's orders, the Ayah goes to great lengths not to involve Mrs. Lennox in Mary's care. While Martha Sowerby cares for Mary, her responsibilities align more closely with those of a servant rather than a mother. Martha does instruct Mary using the sage advice of her own mother, Mrs. Sowerby, as in this example, "but mother says you ought to be learnin' your book by this time an' you ought to have a woman to look after you" (53).

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

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

Dickon knows exactly what the little motherless lamb needs just as he instinctively knows what motherless Mary and Colin need. Finally, much of *The Secret Garden* scholars identifies Mary as a mother figure. Bixler argues that Mary's treatment of Colin places her in a mothering position. As a mother figure, Mary is interesting insofar as she does not possess the traditional image of calm, gentle motherhood, but rather is effective when she confronts Colin

mirroring his boisterous manner. His face looked dreadful, white and red and swollen, and he was gasping and choking; but savage little Mary did not care an atom. Frances writes

If you scream another scream, she said, I'll scream too — and I can scream louder than you can and I'll frighten you, I'll frighten you! He actually had stopped screaming because she had m so. The scream which had been coming almost choked him. The tears were streaming down his face and he shook all over. "I can't stop!" he gasped and sobbed. "I can't — I can't!". "You can!" shouted Mary. "Half that ails you is hysterics and temper — just hysterics — hysterics!" and she stamped each time she said it. (125)

Mary is successful in mothering Colin precisely because she confronts him on his own terms and in a like manner. Finally, even space plays a role in mothering as many scholars note the power of the garden to "mother" or play a role in Mary and Colin's development. Bixler sees the garden as synonymous with motherhood, both as a metaphor for the mother and as a space that falls within the traditional sphere of a woman's agency. Similarly, there was a renewal of the idea of woman as nature and a reinforced identification with Mother Nature.

Bixler, Foster and Simmons, believe that the garden is a manifestation of Lili as Craven's spirit, either as her haunting the garden or as the Magic contained within it, respectively. On a final note, the book has two peripheral associations with the idea of motherhood.

"What an unhappy face he had! His black eyes seemed as if they scarcely saw her, as if they were seeing something else, and he could hardly keep his thoughts upon her" (141). At their first meeting, Mary makes an astute observation of her uncle. Her description of his face reflects the deep sadness he carries, which makes it nearly impossible for him to communicate with other people. Archibald's focus is still mostly in the past, as evidenced by his inability to fully see his niece seated in front of him. The author draws a link between having a healthy

mind and having a healthy body, claiming that people who continually think of themselves as sick or disabled will suffer from poor health. Colin was constantly reminded of his vulnerability as he grew up. He begins to make the connection between mind and matter after meeting Mary and seeing the garden, and by the end of the story, he is healthy and strong.

As a colonial text as well as a book written by Frances. While, the colonial relationship between England and India demonstrated in the book is not a focus, it does highlight the idea of England as a Mother Country. The idea of Queen Victoria as the mother to the colonies was prevalent during the Victorian period. The final connection between motherhood and *The Secret Garden* is Frances Hodgson Burnett herself, as a mother and an author. “Mary had worn her contrary scowl for an hour after that, but it made her think several entirely new things” (65). After Martha points out that Mary is far too old to be dressed by a servant, this happens. Mary has been likened to Martha’s four-year-old sister, Susan Ann, who can already dress herself, according to Martha. This forthright honesty makes Mary irritated at first, but the truth of Martha’s statement cannot be overlooked. As a result, one sees a turning point in Mary’s life, where she is slowly beginning to recognise her flaws and grow as a person.

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

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

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

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

that while Burnett valued motherhood, she challenged the representation of mothering roles in her writing of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *A Little Princess*, and *The Secret Garden*.

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

Burnett's life is a living example of the divide between the ideal of motherhood and the reality of motherhood. As a social and cultural construction, society's idea of motherhood often fails to capture reality and places the ideal outside attainable limits, Thus Thurer writes "the good mother is reinvented as each age or society defines her anew, in its own terms, according to its own mythology" (334). While the concept of family has been in place for centuries, the Victorians sought to iconize its status hoping to stabilize a country transformed by massive change. The next chapter deals with Realm of Magic Realism. It also looks at how the nature of God and eternity is dealt with in the novel.

## Chapter Three

### Realm of Magic Realism

The world of relation arises when life with spiritual begins. *The Secret Garden* is not religious in any conventional sense. It is a deeply spiritual work, which is an aspect of the novel that is often overlooked by critics. In the novel, God becomes present to Mary through her relationship to the robin, the garden, Dickon and Colin. In this sense, “God is not outside the meeting, the meeting is inside God” (59). Moreover, one could argue that the relation the children experience in the spring garden triggers a religious impulse.

As Henry David Thoreau puts in his work: if men “should feel the influence of the spring of springs arousing them, they would feel the necessity rise to a bigger and more ethereal life” (47). Colin tells Mary and Dickon:

Sometimes since I’ve been in the garden I’ve looked up through the trees at the sky and I have had a strange feeling of being happy as if something were pushing and drawing in my chest and making me breath fast. Magic is always pushing and drawing and making things out of nothing. Everything is made out of Magic, leaves and trees, flowers and birds, badgers and foxes and squirrels people. So it must be all around us. (230).

This chapter will be devoted to establishing an understanding of the religious foundation of *The Secret Garden*, from the perspective of dialogic philosophy. It will examine the nature of Magic and how this concept relates to Martin Buber’s concept relation. It will also look at how the nature of God and eternity is dealt with in the novel.

Firstly, there are instances of Magic realism. An example of this is the way in which the robin helps Mary to get into the secret garden. Burnett writes: “Mary Lennox had heard a great deal about Magic in her Ayaha stories, and she had always said that what happened almost at that moment was Magic” (77). It was that magic that sent the robin.



Secondly, there is a magical transformation of nature, which Burnett refers to as a “mysterious and wonderful thing”. Burnett writes: “The garden had reached the time when every day and every night it seemed as if Magicians were passing through it drawing loveliness out of the earth and the boughs with wands” (160). Here, the children construct their own creation of myths when they are inside the garden. Yet, this transformation is also linked, both symbolically and actually, to the transformation the children experience in themselves: Mary felt that the “Magic was working all the afternoon and making Colin look like an entirely different boy” (211).

Thirdly, there is Magic which can be wielded. This is the Magic of Colin, or the magic of the Buberian ego. Colin says:

I am sure there is Magic in everything, only we have not sense enough to get hold of it and make it do things for us – like electricity and horses and stream. This sounded so imposing that Ben Weatherstaff became quite excited and really could not keep still. “Aye, aye, sir,” he said and he began to stand up quite straight. (229-230)

This international notion about Magic suggests, perhaps, that Colin will remain partly person, partly ego. His Magic is the Magic of ‘It’, that is, Magic that Buber says “wants to be effective without entering into any relationship and perform its art in the void” (131). From the following passage, Colin’s Magic is compromised by his desire to experience and use, rather than relates: “Even if it isn’t real Magic, Colin said, ‘we can pretend it is. Something is there – something!’” (227). Yet one should not be too quick in dismissing this Magic, as it is perhaps also the Magic of will-power and positive thinking – two forces that are also integral to the novel.

Fourthly, there is relational Magic that cannot be wielded. This is also the Magic of

Dickon, or the Magic of the Buberian person. Mary is a great believer in Magic and “Secretly she quite believed that Dickon worked Magic, of course good Magic, on everything near him and that was why people liked him so much and wild creatures knew he was their friends” (210). Yet, she tells Colin: “But he does not call it Magic. He says it’s because he lives on the moor so much that he knows their ways. He says he feels sometimes as if he was a bird or a rabbit himself, he likes them so” (142). Colin replies: “I believe Dickon know some Magic, but perhaps he doesn’t know he knows it” (229). The Magic of Dickon is fundamentally different from that of Colin. Dickon does not wield Magic, he participates in it. Burnett argues that naming the magic power, the children are able to wield it. She writes “to recognize, to know, the sacred power is primary. Knowledge of the power is symbolized by the ability to name it. What one can name, one has power over, for naming indicates the knowledge of the essence” (97). Yet although this is a valid point, one could argue that the most magically powerful character, Dickon, does not name his power, nor does he presume to have knowledge of it or even a desire to use it. Hence in *The Secret Garden* the divine elements are also nameless and undefined. Similarly, Buber argues:

Men have addressed their eternal You by many names. When they sang of    what they had thus named they still meant You: the first myths were hymns of    praise. Then the names entered into the It-language; men felt impelled more    and more to think of and to talk about their eternal You as an It. But all names    of God remain hallowed – because they have been used not only to speak of

God but also to him. (123)

This genuine address is presented in *The Secret Garden*, when the children wish to rejoice in and express their gratitude to the Magic by singing the Doxology. Thus, it is not the

name by which the children address God, that is central but the spirit in which they do it. When addressing something as 'You', Buber argues, God listens. Similarly, Susan tells the children:

"Th' Magic listened when tha' sung th' Doxology. It would ha' listened to anything tha'd sung. It was th' joy that mattered" (264). Theologian Paul Tillich, who was largely influenced by Buber, referred to this phenomenon as the "eternal now". Tillich writes:

Whenever we say 'now' or 'today', we stop the flux of time for us. We accept the present and do not care that it is gone in the moment that we accept it. We live in it and it is renewed for us in every new 'present'. This is possible because every moment of time reaches into the eternal. Not everybody, and nobody all the time, is aware of this 'eternal now' in the temporal 'now'. But sometimes it breaks powerfully into our consciousness and gives us the certainty of the eternal. (90)

The eternal now breaks through the pages of *The Secret Garden* as Colin, for the first time, enters the secret garden and "the sun fell warm upon his face like a hand with a lovely touch" (240). Colin then cries out: "Mary! Dickon! I shall get well! And shall live forever and ever!" (204). This passage is also emphasised by Smedman, who writes: "Mary and Colin can know on an experiential level the sacredness of such moments of being, but, as children, they cannot articulate what they feel".

Therefore, she continues, "the author-narrator steps into verbalize for them and us the continuity between chronos and kairos, between profane and sacred time, between time and eternity" (97). Burnett writes:

One of the strange things about living in the world is that it is now and then one is quite sure one is going to live forever and ever and ever. And one knows it sometimes when stands by oneself in a world at sunset and the mysterious deep gold stillness slanting through and under the branches seems to be saying slowly again and again something one

cannot quite hear, however much one tries. Then sometimes the immense quite of the dark blue at night with millions of stars waiting and watching. Makes one sure; and sometimes a sound of far-off music makes it true; and sometimes a look in some one's eyes. (207)

House and garden share a mysteriousness, yet the garden differs strongly from Misselthwaite Manor because “the garden is enclosed, but in contrast to the house it is liberating, wild, and health-indicating and egalitarian” (37). In accordance with Victorian notions, this garden is “seen as largely beneficent, recuperative, Edenic, and pleasurable” (38) or, as Gester and Kearns put it, “Western culture is strongly affected by notions of a healing Mother Nature” (39). Clearly the garden is a therapeutic landscape because entering it for Mary means healing. In contrast to the rather oppressive atmosphere of the house, Mary feels free in the secret garden. “She liked the name, and she liked still more the feeling that when its beautiful old walls about her in no one knew where she was. It seemed almost like being shut out of the world on some fairy place” (91). Strikingly, even the weather conditions improve after her discovery and, accordingly, the narrator opens up a new chapter by stating that “the sun shone down for nearly a week on the secret garden” (91).

It does not come as a surprise, then, that being in the garden has a positive effect on Mary. Its restorative power brings about a change of a physical nature, which is visible to herself after some digging and working in the garden. She is happy to note that, “I’m growing fatter and I’m growing stronger, I used to always be tired. When I dig I’m not tired at all I like to smell the earth when it’s turned up” (106). Elizabeth Lennox Keyser states that Mary is proud because “the sea resigns of her growing strength” (40). The house keeper Mrs. Medlock and Martha also sees Mary’s appearance changing.

When she visits Colin after a day in the garden, here marks “You smell like flower and

—and fresh things. What it is you smell of? It's cool and warm and sweet all at the same time" (180). It seems like the garden is clinging to Mary, even after she has left it. What is even more fundamental is the fact that inside the garden "somehow she did not feel today at all" (82). So Mary is also altered by the garden on an emotional level. Being inside it, turn her into a more empathetic girl who is suddenly interested in other people. This confirms Gesler's notion that "getting well is not limited to a physical cure. The mind has to be put at rest, one's spiritual and emotional need must be met" (41).

And this is what happens to Mary in the garden. In addition, for the first time in her life, she connects with the nature and develops an understanding of the seasons, especially the approaching spring. With the introduction of the garden, a certain inside\outside dichotomy is established. Teresa Bridgeman points out that "whole narratives may be constructed on whether protagonists are inside or outside a container" (42). The container in that case is the garden. Indeed, there is a strong emphasis on being inside the garden at several points in the novel. Firstly, after Mary's discovery the narrator comments, "She was standing inside the secret garden" (78). Later that, "She was inside the wonderful garden and she could come through the door under the ivy and time and she felt as if she had found a world of her own" (82). After a while, the growth of the plants in the garden reflects Mary's emotional and physical growth.

The garden, however, is also a space of paradox. Tracing back its history reveals that it used to belong to Colin's mother, who died there, which is why it had been locked up all the time. Colin's father even went as far as burying the key, so nobody could enter the garden again. Although being locked up is not regarded as negative by Mary, it still gives the impression that the garden is a place one should not be in. This negative side of the garden confirms what has been said earlier about therapeutic landscape not always being entirely positive. As Gesler and Baer point out, "the idea of a complete eradication of all health

problems within a therapeutic landscape can be easily dismissed as utopian” (45). In fact, the garden, more precisely a tree in it, actually caused severe damage and changed Colin’s life forever after his mother’s death. Thus, the garden is not only a restorative, but also a potentially dangerous space.

Only after her life changing discovery of the garden is Mary able to help Colin. The first thing she does is bring the garden into Misselthwaite, by telling Colin stories about her life outside the house and inside the garden. This alone is sufficient to bring about a metamorphosis in Colin – the same transformation that she herself has gone through. Just the thought of the garden alters his appearance notably. The physical impact on him is remarkable: “His whole face brightened and a little colour came into it” (178)

This supports Alison’s above – mentioned hypothesis that hypersensitive people brood unnecessarily and thus fall ill, whereas whenever they are kept busy, their conditions improves. Mary provides Colin with this mental stimulus in the form of the garden. His first day in the garden is reminiscent of Mary’s, and, again, the weather is in tune with the harmonious situation. Despite its dark past, the garden clearly serves as therapeutic, almost utopian, landscape here. What follows is a fairy-tale like transformation of the sad and ill Colin. All of a sudden, he is convinced that he is going to live and not die. What has been said in the case of Mary also holds true for Colin. In two ways, he grows into a healthy human being: on an emotional level and in physical sense. Physically, he grows in a fundamental sense because he learns how to walk.

The moment he goes out of the house and enters the garden, he grows, literally: he first leaves his bed, then leaves his wheelchair and finally appears in full height. This, in turn, has an effect in the children’s perception of the house. With the children changing. Misselthwaite alters to the positive whenever the two of them act as focalisers. Both Mary and Colin are

adventurous now, and they “saw more rooms and made more decorative than Mary had made on her first pilgrimage. They found new corridors and corners and flights of steps and new old pictures they liked and weird old things they is not know the use of” (253). The enumeration and the use of words like ‘discoveries’, ‘pilgrimage’, as well as the repetition of the words ‘more’, and ‘new’ reflect the children’s new adventurousness. In a nutshell, their depiction of the house alters completely and it loses its former dingy character due to the positive wave that comes over it in form of the children, who all this a ‘Magic’ of the garden, which is another rather utopian feature.

The sun is shining – the sun is shining. That is the Magic. The flowers are growing – the roots are stirring. That is the Magic. Being alive is the Magic – being strong is the Magic. The Magic is in me – the Magic is in me. It is in me

– it is in me. It’s in every one on us. (233)

The emphasis on this ‘Magic’ turns the natural environment into a symbolic environment because the positive influence is attested to these mythical healing powers of the garden. Symbolic environment is often connected to myths about health, or can be understood through the meanings attached to geographical settings. In other words, the garden has turned into more than a mere garden; it is a place of magical forces and restorative energies. Finally, this powerful forces transfers even onto Colin’s father, who returns to Misselthwaite after another long absence of running away from sorrow about his wife’s death and Colin’s condition. In accordance with the rules of happy endings, seeing Mary and Colin healthy turns him into a happy man.

In *The Secret Garden*, the children refers to that which is unexplainable as Magic, which leaves room for various interpretations. This shows that Burnett, like Buber, is eager to keep the mystery alive by focusing on the encounter with God, as it is experienced in the moment,

rather than a clearly defined or pre-existing concept of God. Yet, it can be concluded that through the encounter with the nature, men and herself, Mary is able to encounter the eternal God. Despite this, however, the sense that the encounter with God is not the end but only another beginning. God is not a station but a way of travelling.

The next chapter deals with the literary devices in *The Secret Garden* which contains a technique, Burnett uses to produce a special effect in her writing in this novel. Literary elements have an inherent existence in literary piece which is employed by writers to develop a literary piece. For example, the literary elements are plot, setting, narrative structure, characters, mood, theme, moral etc. Literary techniques, on the contrary are structures usually a words or phrases in literary texts that writers employ to achieve not merely artistic ends. Examples are metaphor, simile, alliteration, hyperbolic, allegory and etc. The next chapter deals with the uses of techniques in this novel.



## Chapter Four

### Symbolism as Modus Operandi

Frances Hodgson Burnett in *The Secret Garden* makes use of the literary devices such as imagery, symbolism and personification for better understanding of the story. Imagery has been used by Burnett to make the story work the way it is. The Garden serves as imagery inspiring hope as it comes back to life with the help of the children. The imagery of nature and that of the healthy mind and body vs the dark and depressing imagery of Colin's room. The author vividly describes the entrance door and the hall of Mr. Craven's mansion. All of the details are noted: the material the door is done with, what is situated on the walls of the hall, what the floor is done with there. The author shows the huge size both of the door and the hall and the little, tiny Mary in comparison to them. Thus, she highlights the meaning of the girl in this house at the beginning of the story, her invisibility there. Therewith, the author shows the greyness of these parts of the house, and as they tend to be 'the face' of the house, the reader seems to understand what kind of people live there, what kind of life is there in general.

Sometimes after getting acquainted with Robin, Mary sees the bird in the garden again. She is so happy to see it, that she starts to talk to the redbreast and the bird answers her. The author describes this conversation so brightly, that it seems that this conversation takes place between two class people. Thus, the author shows that the girl begins to 'wake up': to feel nature, have some emotions, even some kind of attachment, to the bird in this case. Martha tells Mary about the moor near the house with the huge love describing it so dearly, saying that "it's none bare. It's covered wi' growin' things as smells sweet. It's fair lovely in spring an' summer when th' gorse an' broom an' heather's in flower. It smells o' honey an' there's such a lot o' fresh air an' th' sky looks so high an' th' bees an; skylarks makes such a nice noise

hummin'an'singin'" (32), saying that she would never live away from there, that the reader understands how huge role that moor plays in Martha's life. Therewith, the storyline shows how close the women are to nature, and how deeply she feels it.

Once, after the rain Mary, looking out of the window, sees the beautiful scenery there. She is so delighted, amazed and impressed with such beauty, because when she had lived in India, there nature was completely different:

The rain-storm had ended and the grey mist and clouds had been swept away in the night by the wind. The wind itself had ceased and a brilliant, deep blue sky arched high over the moorland. Mary never had dreamed of a sky so blue. In India skies were hot and blazing; this was of a deep cool blue which almost seemed to sparkle like the water of some lovely and sweet bottomless lake, and here and there, high in the arched blueness floated small clouds of snow white fleece. (63)

Here, the author shows how huge was the difference between living in India and England for Mary. The Secret Garden becomes a symbol of motherhood, rejuvenation, and healing. Mary and Colin are both motherless and have to mother themselves. The garden keeps them secure, just as a nest keeps the baby bird secure, and they venture out their own peace as they explore the world, and develop their growing selves. In the garden, they learn what a mother would have taught had Mary's mother not neglected her and Colin's mother not died. Mary learns how to like people and be interested in things. Colin learns how to walk, run and not be afraid to live. Both learns how to socialize, how to think of things other than themselves. They are transformed from physically ill, immature, and self-centred children into healthy individuals.

This mothering is provided through the spiritual presence of Mrs. Craven in the garden and the mothering Mrs. Sowerby bestows on Mary and Colin through her caring son, Dickon. Dickon tells Mary and Colin that his mother believes Mrs. Craven is “about Misselthwaite many a time lookin’ after Mester Colin, same as all mothers do when they’re took out o’ th’ world” (210). It is Mrs. Craven’s spirit who “set us to work, an’ told us to bring him here” (210). Mrs. Sowerby reaffirms this when she meets Colin, telling him, “Thy own mother’s in this ‘ere very garden, I do believe. She couldna’ keep out of it” (265). The roses in *The Secret Garden* are symbolic of children. Ben Weatherstaff tells Mary how Mrs. Craven “loved ‘em like they was children” (94) and would kiss them. After she died, the roses “was left to themselves” (95). Like Mary, they were ‘orphaned’. Mary excitedly asks, “Did they quite die? Do roses quite die when they are left to themselves?” (95). Although Mary has recently been orphaned, she never received a mother’s love and. Like the roses, she has been neglected for ten years.

Both Mary and the roses, however, can be tended, so they will become fully alive. The same thing is true for her cousin, Colin, who also has been left to wither away, in his case, because of his father’s grief over his mother’s death. Ben Weatherstaff gets annoyed at Mary’s insistent questions about how to tell if the roses are dead or alive; he asks why she is interested in roses all of a sudden. Mary tells him she wants to play and have a garden of her own because “there is nothing for me to do. I have nothing and no one” (95). She views the roses as fellow children, something she can be with. They become her favourite plant in the garden, and she tends them with a motherly love so they can grow.

Ben Weatherstaff explains, how Mrs. Craven told him before she died, “if ever I’m ill or if I go away you must take care of my roses,” (222) exacting a promise for the continued care of the flowers, as if they were children. When Weatherstaff gives Colin a rose bush to

plant, it represents Colin planting himself in the garden. He becomes a child of the garden to be nurtured by his mother just as she once nurtured her beloved roses. The roses grow like unrestrained children, with the author describing them:

Rising out of the grass, tangled round the sun-dial, wreathing the tree trunks and hanging from their branches, climbing up the walls and spreading over them with long garlands falling in cascades, they came alive day by day, hour by hour. Fair fresh leaves, and buds and buds tiny at first but swelling and working Magic until they burst and uncurled into cups of scent delicately spilling themselves over their brims and filling the garden air. (228)

Mary and Colin also, are all over the garden as they explore every part of it and similarly come alive Burnett's views on raising children are exemplified, which the narrator explains how nurturing produces a healthy child:

Where, you tend a rose, my lad, a thistle cannot grow. While the secret garden was coming alive and two children were coming alive with it, there was a man wandering about certain far-away beautiful places in the Norwegian fiords and the valleys and mountains of Switzerland and he was a man who for ten years had kept his mind filled with dark and heart-broken thinking. He had not been courageous; he had never tried to put any other thoughts in the place of the

dark ones. (268)

Eggs and seeds symbolize the creation of new life, while bulbs symbolize rejuvenation. The most vivid example of this tells the story of the robins and their eggs.

Burnett capitalizes the E in 'eggs' to signify the sanctity of life and birth. The creation of new life is described as "the immense, tender, terrible, heart-breaking beauty and solemnity of Eggs" (249). The love of the parent feels for the unborn child is described by explaining that "if an Egg were taken away or hurt the whole world would whirl round and crash through space

and come to an end". In this poignant description of a parent's love for a child, Burnett's love for and loss of her elder son, Lionel, resonates powerfully: the passage also foreshadows Archibald Craven's awakening to his own love for his son.

The Eggs represent the creation of new life, just like bulbs and perennial plants, which come up every year, represent life's return. Mary asks if bulbs could "live years and years if no one helped them?" (85). Martha reassures her they do, saying,

They're things as helps themselves, That's why poor folks can afford to have 'em. If you don't trouble 'em, most of 'em'll work away underground for a lifetime an' spread out a' have little 'uns. There's a place in th' park woods here where there is snowdrops by thousands. They're the prettiest sight in Yorkshire where th' spring comes. No one knows when they were first planned. Mary looked at the fire and pondered a little. She must be careful if she meant to keep her secret kingdom. She wasn't doing any harm, but if Mr. Craven found out about the open door he would be fearfully angry and get a new key and lock it up forevermore. She really could not bear that. (85)

They do not need the careful tending of roses, showing Mary that not all living things have the same need in order to survive and grow. Bulbs are self-contained entities and need little nourishment in order to grow and reproduce. Seeds also represent the opportunities for new life. Mary explains why she wants to plant seeds, saying, "If I have seeds and can make flowers grow the garden won't be dead at all –it will come alive" (87). After Dickon brings Mary several packets of seeds, he explains what flowers will grow from each. He tells her mignonettes are poppies will "grow wherever you cast it same as poppies will" (98), and giving her, more insight on the variety of conditions in which things come to life and grow. Just as these flowers do not need a specific type of soil or special cultivation, Mary will grow in any environment, as long as she has sunshine and fresh air.

Mary reiterates her interest in planting seeds, when she meets with Mr. Craven, telling him she wants to plant “to make things grow – to see them come alive” (118). She explains how in India, she “sometimes made little beds in the sand and stuck flowers in them. But here it is different” (118). The difference is that in India, she was amusing herself with something to pass the time, while now she wants to create new life. However, the fact that Mary plays at making gardens foreshadows Mary’s instinct to create and nurture life, an instinct that needs only the right circumstance to thrive. This is a simplified recipe of what human babies need to thrive. Dickon explains how to care for seeds, telling his mother,

All a chap’s got to do to make ‘em thrive, mother, ‘is to be friends with ‘em for sure. They’re just like the ‘creatures.’ If they’re thirsty give ‘em drink and if they’re hungry give ‘em a bit o’ food. They want to live same as we do. If they died I should feel as if I’d been a bad lad and somehow treated them

heartless. (238)

The garden is personified as a living being by all characters who come to love it. A personification is a metaphor in which a thing or animal is given human characteristics. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which an inferred comparison is made between two unrelated things or nouns that are usually not brought together or in relationship with each other. There are two elements of *The Secret Garden* that influence the play’s style. The first of these is the realistic element, or the fact that the basic story behind the play could have happened in real life. The second is the element of fantasy. Even though all the places in the play are realistic, the ghostly powers of the Dreamers, the many references in the play to magic, and the power of the children’s imaginations pull the realistic world into the realm of fantasy. There is nothing more powerful than the imagination of a child. The mansion and the garden maze is real, but the Dreamers have the supernatural power to haunt both places.

Dickon has the magic to call forth life from things that seem to be long dead. He also seems to be the one real character in the novel that understands and can consistently see and react to the actions of the Dreamers. It is the power of hope and the imagination of the children that bring the garden back to life and bring Colin and Uncle Archibald back to it. *The Secret Garden's* structure follows the lives of its characters. The thoughts and back stories of the main characters are presented by the Dreamers in the form of vision or flashbacks. As the characters progress and grow, so does the theme and flow of the story. As each character grows that learn new information about them from the Dreamers. Each of the main characters reach a point in the story where they have to make a choice. Colin, after years of fear, finally chooses to leave his bed and return to his mother's garden. Here, the others help him learn that there is more to life than death.

Mary is the character in the play with the biggest problems. Somewhat neglected by her family, when her parents die she is forced to leave all she has known. Her whole life has been nothing but disappointment, and because of this she has closed her heart, making it cold, small and dark. She is the personification for the metaphor of the garden. She finds that all she needs is to learn to care for something. Once she realise this, she can then choose to let others into her heart and to let them care for her. *The Secret Garden* is a tale of redemption, rich with biblical symbolism and mythical associations. In Mr. Craven, his stern brother, and Mary's parents, readers have found evidence of a fallen adult world. Consequently, Mary and Colin are physically and spiritually malnourished, and in the words of Burnett, down-right rude. Mr. Craven's redemption at the hands of Colin and his niece ensures the return of good rule to the ancient, gloomy house and of health to the children.

Dickon is constantly surrounded by fox, lamb, and bird. His mother, Mrs. Sowerby, a plain-speaking Yorkshire woman, resembles the archetypal earth mother and embodies an

ancient folk wisdom seen neither in Craven nor in Mary's deceased parents. Invoking traditional nature myths, Burnett aligns the spiritual growth of Mary and Colin with the seasons. Mary arrives at Misselthwaite in winter. She is a stubborn and unhealthy child. She begins her gardening in the spring, and as crocuses and daffodils push up through the warming earth, her body begins to bloom and her manners too soft. Summer sees the complete regeneration of both Mary and Colin, and by the time Craven returns to Misselthwaite in autumn, the children harvest the fruits of their labour – health and happiness.

According to Burnett's autobiography, her imagination was stimulated by stories of adventure and romance, such as ballads, biblical tales, and Roman histories. She was also influenced by the works of William Shakespeare, the Romantic poets, and novelists. Nature in Burnett's work like the English poet William Wordsworth, depicts nature as the great teacher of children, nurturing spiritual and emotional health. She describes her own bliss in the garden of her childhood and her feelings of entrapment in the crowded and lifeless environment of a large manufacturing city. In contrast, she recounts the flowering of her emotions and the liberation of her spirit in the wilderness of rural Tennessee.

If the house is a place of masculine rule, the garden is a place of maternal fertility and rebirth. The strong symbolic structures of *The Secret Garden* account for much of its emotional power as a narrative. The pattern of fall and redemption is associated with the biblical fall of human-kind. The locked garden is a version of the Garden of Eden, representing the lost paradise of love and idyllic happiness. In the tradition of medieval romance, the walled garden symbolized love, female sexuality, and fertility. *The Secret Garden* was initially a garden of love, and it symbolically remains a feminine place, the place of the maternal spirit, to which females bring males to find healing.



Finally, the overarching symbol of the books in *The Secret Garden*, a lost paradise of love and happiness – a version, perhaps, of the Garden of Eden. Throughout *The Secret Garden*, Burnett seamlessly intertwines the elements of her craft moving easily between the teasing narrative and dialogue that speaks to a child and the stands of dramatic development, complex characters, theme and symbolism. The next chapter summarises all the preceding chapters. It consists of general introduction of the tradition of children's literature, and about the novel *The Secret Garden*. It deals with the relationship between life and nature and also about the healing power of nature, and how Burnett has used the figurative language to employ it.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

The tradition of children's literature continues through voices in every genre, from traditional folk and fairy tales, to historical fiction, realism, fantasy picture books, and young adolescent fiction. The early twentieth century saw an expansion of the market for children's literature, with books published more cheaply than before and therefore, more accessible to children of the lower or lower-middle classes. Women writers employ fantasy in their retelling of traditional fairy tales, folk tales, and myths. Realistic fiction which present opportunities for the author to grapple with social and moral issues, has been particularly fertile ground for female writers who wish to address issues of gender.

The first chapter "Introduction" presents the historical context of *The Secret Garden*, set in the Edwardian Era, showing the importance of the British Colony of the time, "I didn't know about them in India" (118). Commonly highly regarded in this period, Burnett reinforces the importance of the British Empire. Mary Lennox had recently moved back from India after the death of her parents. India was a part of the British Empire and as Kutzer says "was woven into the fabric of British life, and hence into the fabric of British children's fiction". Like Mary Lennox had moved from India to England, the author had moved to America when she was just fourteen years old.

From another perspective the author pushes the reader to see India as a negative place for children to grow up in. This can be seen with Mary's innocent tone of not knowing about flowers in India – something Burnett believes childhood should contain. The author's ideology as expressed in *The Secret Garden* shows a life close to her own experience. Colin says "When you see a bit of earth you want", with something like a smile, 'take it, child, and make it come alive'" (119).

The second chapter “Omnipotence of Motherhood” tells about the various concepts of motherhood that are presented – the perfect mother, mother earth and the evil and unaffectionate mother, giving an overall understanding of family concepts around the turn of the century. Furthermore, a series of melodramatic mysteries including the sealed garden, empty rooms, and noises in the night make *The Secret Garden* a mirror of Edwardian ideas and ideals about childhood.

The third chapter “Realm of Magic Realism” deals through the magic of the garden, the children finally begin to see the value in their own lives and in the lives of the people around him. Burnett writes: “The garden had reached the time when every day and every night is seemed as if magicians are passing through its drawing loveliness out of the earth” (160).

Colin’s magic is compromised by his desire to experience and use rather than to relate. *The Secret Garden* reminds that all children need love, protection and exposure to mysterious miracle of life to help them understand that every life is a gift from our Loving creator. The stylistic device of the metaphor of the garden is tremendously important within *The Secret Garden*.

A bit of earth, ‘he said to himself, and Mary thought that somehow, she must have reminded him of something. When he stopped and spoke to her his dark eyes liked almost soft and kind. “You can have as much earth as you want” he said. “You remind me of someone else who loved the earth and things that grow. When you see bit of earth you want” with something like a smile, “take it, child, and make it come alive”. (118)

The fourth chapter, “Symbolism as Modus Operandi” explains about the garden metaphorically, so much more for both Mary and Mrs. Craven. For Mary the garden is something that will nurture her mind and allow her to grow with the same ingredients as the

garden needs. For Mr. Craven it is a connection to his late wife, a memory. The memory that grows throughout the story will be nurtured by Mary who brings the garden back to its former glory. A link to the historical context is seen by the emerging psychological connection of one's conscious and unconscious mind, Mary has an environmental connection to the garden as she takes the first steps towards proper girlhood and womanhood. She trades her sickliness for health, her yellow skin for white and her Indian nature for an English one as she develops alongside the garden.

Colin's childhood was a struggle from being a wealthy middle-class family, to a poorer family after the death of her father. Mr. Craven's ideology of bringing the Earth back to life, closely links to author's ideology, alike to many of her stories which represented the theme of "rage to riches, and so did her real life" (Carpenter and Shirley 10). The slight pauses within the sentence reinforce the solidity of making something flourish again. Mary Lennox's personality echoes the author's desire to explore nature and earth. The author's explicit concepts of childhood are represented through Mary Lennox. Mr. Craven reinforces how a childhood should be. "She must be less delicate before she begins lessons. Give her simple, healthy food. Let her run wild in the garden. Don't look after her too much. She needs liberty and fresh air romping about". (119)

Burnett's effective use of word 'delicate' shows children of the time, especially Mary, are becoming sensitive to the environment. It is evident that she believes children should be enriched outdoors with simple, healthy food to allow them to enjoy the wonders of nature. Mr. Craven is to the point with short sharp sentences, allowing Mrs. Medlock to understand Mary should not need looking after every second of the day. Burnett believes that Mary should be 'free' with 'fresh air' and exploring. This is how she sees that a good childhood should be. Implicit concepts of childhood are expressed through the portrayed of a disagreeable child and

the nature a child needs to flourish in life. ‘She had felt her a tiresome charge and had indeed seen as little of her as she dared’ (119). Keyser describes Mary Lennox as an “unattractive, unlikable and disagreeable”. Hence Mrs. Medlock made no attempt to spend time with Mary. Instead of presenting Mrs. Medlock as a compassionate woman who spent time with Mary to encourage her to flourish as a child, the author reinforces the fact that Mary does not belong to anyone. She can be seen as showing the representation of parents at the time; and that however ‘unattractive’ Mary may be, a parent should be able to nurture their child through childhood. This may also be the reason Burnett uses the metaphor of the garden as the parent Mary needed to encourage her growth and exploration through life.

Indeed, nature has a healing power for anyone’s soul, and Burnett felt that power. After the death of her son Lionel, she was affected by depression and that persisted until she discovered a dead garden and planted it and brought it back to life. The same thing is applied in the novel *The Secret Garden*. As soon as Mary and Colin began to spend most of their time in the garden, their bad manners changed into good ones, and their soul began to heal, and so their ailment was gone. The theme of nature’s power suggests an importance of being outdoor, the concept of getting out of the house and playing in the fresh air and being healthy runs throughout the novel.

*The Secret Garden* has charmed readers for over a hundred years with the story of three children who discover the magic, wonder and the healing power of the great outdoors. In *The Secret Garden*, the three children Mary, Colin, and Dickon encounters the miracle of life in the growing plants and animals which helps the children see that all life is a gift from God – a gift from which they need to be thankful. Like many other early twentieth century children’s books, *The Secret Garden* reveals in the gentle beauty of nature emphasizing the wonder and awe that children feel as they discover the beauty of God’s world for the first time. Throughout the

novel, the children refer to their sense of wonder as 'The Magic'. For them, the beauty of thriving life is so powerful that 'magical' is the only way they can describe it.

Working in the garden gives the children appreciation for the gift of life. Seeing the miracle of life taking place in the spring time garden – roses and crocuses springing forth to life from seemingly dead plants – the children become aware of their selfishness and need for change. Before he met Mary, the only thing Colin could think about was death and dying. Colin believes that his father hates him and wishes that he had never been born. This thought drives Colin to despair and hopelessness. As Mrs. Sowerby observes, there is nothing worse for a child than for him to think he is not wanted. Unwanted children, she says rarely flourish. Instead of embracing his suffering – his weakness and inability to walk, and possible crooked back – Colin just throws himself more and more into despair. His tantrum disrupt the whole house.

When Ben Weatherstaff, the estate gardener, accuses Colin of having crooked legs, Colin's pride and anger motivate him to use Dickon's help and stand. Dickon, the boy who has grown up on the moor, embodies the spirit of his interaction with the animals. Dickon's mild manner and charming Yorkshire humour tame all the creatures he comes in contact with, including Mary and the sulky Colin. Before the garden, both Mary and Colin took life for granted. It is only when they see the garden coming to life and meet Dickon's misfit animals, they begin to understand that is a valuable gift from their Creator. After his first experience with the plant and animals in the garden, Colin is no longer content to sit in his wheelchair waiting to die. The growth of the once-death plants and flowers in the garden inspires him to have dreams and plans for the future, uninhabited by his disabilities. With therapy and practice, her absence by her death. At the end of the novel, Colin voices his new-found respect for life as a gift from God when he declares that he would like to live forever.

*The Secret Garden* uses a third-person omniscient narrative voice throughout, although as a reader the opinions of Burnett are shown.

Mrs. Medlock looked pleased. She was relieved to hear that she need not ‘look after’ Mary too much. She had felt her a tiresome charge and had indeed seen as little of her as she dared. In addition to this she was fond of Martha’s mother. “Thank you, sir,” she said. “Susan Sowerby and me went to school together and she’s as sensible and good-hearted a women as you’d find in a day’s walk. I never had any children myself and she’s had twelve, and there never was healthier or better ones. Miss Mary can get no harm from them. I’d always taken Susan Sowerby’s advice about children myself. She’s what you might call healthy-minded – if you understand me”. (119)

Although the story is based around the secret garden and Mary’s view of this, the narrator remains as third person and follows the rules of using ‘she’ as the narrator talks about Mrs. Medlock as another person not the person attempting to tell the story. The omniscient narrator shows they know ‘everything’ including Mrs. Medlock’s feelings of ‘relief’ Mr.

Craven’s dismissive tone is used to convey his mood and character. “‘Anywhere, he answered. There! You must go now, I am tired’. He touched the bell to call Mrs. Medlock. ‘Good-bye. I shall be away all summer’” (119).

Mr. Craven’s character shows a lack of emotion towards Mary and is reinforced by his dismissive tone. Mary has just reminded him of his late wife’s passion for the garden – although the reader has yet to find this information until later in the story. Mr. Craven’s depressive state of mind is portrayed through his sort sentences towards Mary and the use of punctuation such as an exclamation mark; showing he dislikes talking to Mary. Again, Burnett cleverly uses the theme illness, Mr. Craven is ‘tired’ or perhaps does not have anything more to say to Mary.

The dismissive tone shows no remorse for the sharp language pointing out he ‘shall be away all summer’. There is no sense of fatherhood towards Mary.

There is the re-occurring theme of children being unhealthy and illness represented in Mary Lennox. The consistent notion of Christian Science is portrayed using the character Susan Sowerby’s and the ‘healthy mind’. Burnett uses every opportunity to remind the reader about being healthier and the Christian Science belief that no disease is corporeal, therefore ‘no harm’ can come from Mary spending time with them. Also shown is the necessity for her to have the human companionship, clearly previously lacking in Mary’s life.

This scene moves the story forward as the reader is able to learn more about Mary’s interest in the garden and now, she has asked permission from Mr. Craven, she can achieve her goal of opening The Secret Garden. The reader also learns a great deal about the author’s idea of a childhood, one where Mary should experience ‘fresh air’. Also, the theme of Christian Science is first revealed through Susan Sowerby’s ideology and healthy-mind. The idea of magic is frequently mentioned in reference to the garden. Burnett’s interest in Christian Science may have been in her mind as she described Colin’s recovery. Christian scientists believe in God and the importance of the Bible. They also believe that sickness can be healed by prayer alone. Once Colin has begun his daily visits to the garden, he talks about the magic involved in his healing. The children use the word to refer to a mystical force and not to magician’s trick. Colin says that he is going to conduct a scientific experiment in the garden. In this experiment, Colin is going to try to observe the garden’s Magic in order to heal himself. The children, an elderly gardener who has discovered their presence, and the animals around Dickon form a circle to call on Magic. Afterwards, Colin finds that he can walk around the garden, although he needs help at times and frequently needs to rest.



The 'mystical circle' is held every day in the garden, and every day Colin's health and strength improve. On one occasion the group sing a Christian hymn as they work in their circle.

Burnett eventually says that Colin's recovery is due to his determination and to the fact that positive thoughts have great power. This relatively mundane explanation sounds a little strange after all of the references to Magic. Frances may have a greater belief in the power of thought. The incident that causes Archibald Craven to interrupt his trip abroad and go home early could be described as mystical. It may well reflect of the Burnett's interest in spiritualism and theosophy. She explored both topics before she became a Christian Scientist.

Spiritualism is both religion and a philosophy. In either case, it involves a belief that the spirits can communicate with the living via people who act as mediums. Theosophy is a complex philosophy. The readers believe in a spiritual reality that can be contacted through meditation. This idea of living forever is brought up several times in the second half of the book as the magical atmosphere becomes more intense. A noticeable aspect of *The Secret Garden* is that the distinction between different classes is always maintained, even as the plot progresses. Comments by some characters show that they feel that they are superior to people in the class below them even as they offer them some respect.

Despite the apparent friendship between Martha and Mary, Martha is still a servant who must wait on Mary and obey Colin. Colin maintains his imperious attitude towards servants. There is one touching incident near the end of the book which indicates that Colin may be changing his attitude. He tells Susan Sowerby that he wishes that she was his mother. *The Secret Garden* can be described as a good example on how the changing social circumstances at the beginning of the twentieth century came to be represented in literature. Books for children had a lesser didactic purpose, carrying fewer morals and religious messages. Stories became more complex and the adult writers tried to incorporate the children's perspective into their novels.

The pervasive mood of anti-Victorianism did also play a part in the more liberal outlook on childhood in general and on children's literature, although there is no single or simple explanation why so much independence was being granted at this time to fictional children. In addition to its links with anthropology and sociology, the change can be related to the greater independence being given to children by legislation.

In *The Secret Garden* Burnett has incorporated all those ideas and devised a complex plot with themes of sickness, health, and - paralleled by the garden - regeneration, as the children grow out of repression of various kinds. What makes the story a wholesome book for children are its romantic anti-class attitudes, coming to display when Dickon joins Mary and Colin and somehow works as their master in gaining strength and health. *The Secret Garden* thus appeals to both young and old alike. It has wonderful elements of mystery, spirituality, charming characters and an authentic reading of childhood emotions and experiences. Common sense, truth and kindness, compassion, and a belief in the essential goodness of human beings lie at the heart of this unforgettable story. It is the best known of Frances Hodgson Burnett's works. The analysis thus validates the title "Metaphysical Exploration of the Self: A Formalistic Study of Frances Hodgson's *The Secret Garden*".

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**Diaspora and Cultural Hybridity: A Study of the First and Second Generation**

**Immigrants in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Sahaya Princy. R**

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

**Thoothukudi**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Diaspora and Cultural Hybridity: A Study of the First and Second Generation Immigrants in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*** 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 Sahaya Princy. R during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Diaspora and Cultural Hybridity: A Study of the First and Second Generation Immigrants in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*** 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**

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## Preface

The project entitled **Diaspora and Cultural Hybridity: A Study of the First and Second Generation Immigrants in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*** analyses the complexity of the concept of home. The diasporic experience is one of the central themes in *The Namesake*. In the novel, the first-generation immigrants represented by Ashima and Ashoke, and the second generation, by their children Gogol and his sister Sonia, have different perspectives of the concept of home.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of American Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Cultural Conflicts** focuses on cross cultural Conflicts, trauma and aspirations of the two generations of expatriates, Ashoke and Ashima who are not inclined towards getting Americanised, while Gogol and Sonia, the second generation immigrants face the intense pressure to be loyal to the old world and fluent to the new.

The third chapter **Alienation and Assimilation** records the psychological displacement of the diasporas to create awareness about their efforts for psychological and physical survival.

The fourth chapter **Identity Crisis** depicts how Gogol engages in a constant struggle to remind loyal to both worlds.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature is the artistic expression of thought, which is replete with feelings and imagination. It is expressed in such a non-technical form as to make it intelligible and give aesthetic pleasure and relief to the mind of the common man. Literature consists of all the books where moral truth and human passion are touched with a certain largeness, sanity and attraction of forms. It interprets with charm of language the experiences and spiritual intuitions of man. In nutshell, thought, feelings, imagination and beauty of style and form are equally essential to literature.

Literature has close connection with life. In fact, literature is the study of life. The subject matter of literature is the presentation of life. Life provides the raw material by which literature interfaces an artistic pleasure, pattern and form. Literature is the communication of the writer's novel and unique, experience of life. Literature involves the objective and subjective outlook of the writer. An individual observes humanity and makes the subjective approach to it. Literature plays a vital part in the life of man. It is the greatest of the secondary sources of sensation. Literature is the representation of social life as well. The quality of literature is intimately connected with the quality of the life that it reflects. Literature is always a reflection of life, which presupposes a social background.

Literature is a social phenomenon, using as its medium, language, a social creation. The poet or the novelist is himself a member of society. He possesses a specific social status. He receives some degree of social recognition and reward. He addresses an audience however hypothetical. It is an admitted fact that literature has arisen in close connection with particular social institutions. So literature and society are interwoven both internally as well as externally.

Chaucer is the representative poet of the fourteenth century. His masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*, reveals the political, economic and social conditions of the time. This poem has the true colour and aroma of the fourteenth century. He was a spectator, sympathizing with but not sharing the interest of his country. He holds the mirror up to the life of his time.

Spenser is considered as the child of the Renaissance and the Reformation. Born in the lap of Renaissance, Spenser's mental makeup was infused with the new spirit. Because of the influence of the new learning, he draws quite freely upon the treatment of classical poets such as Homer, Virgil, Claudius, and Avid. Being the product of his age, Spenser was not lacking in the defects of Renaissance. This age has certain drawbacks such as exaggeration, differences and prolixity, which are the common literary flaws.

If Shakespeare is an undoubted genius, he was undoubtedly an Elizabethan hack also. He wrote for the stage. The drama at that time was in its infancy, the stage at its crudest, the audience heterogeneous, comprising the nobility and the gentry, the traders and artisans, the students of the Inn Court, the apprentices, the peddlers, carriers and porters. Shakespeare knew how to cater to every taste and that in the same play, and yet it would be the end not a curious medley of hotchpotch, but an excellent work of art.

Similarly the works of Milton, Pope, Tennyson and T. S. Eliot mirror human life in general. Shakespeare crossed the boundaries of his age, Milton revolted against his age, Pope, though product of his age, gave new morals to the king, queens, nobles and the gentry. They were the romantics of 19<sup>th</sup> century and were highly imaginative. Thus, the relation of the society and literature is inseparable.

American literature refers to the body of written or literary works shaped in the history of the United States and its former colonies. Tracing back America's history, America was once under the rule of Britain as part of the latter's colonies therefore its literary institution is associated to the expansive tradition of English literature. However, American literature is now considered a separate course and institution because of its unique kind of American characteristics and the production of its literature.

When the Americas was colonised by different empires namely the Spanish, French, Portuguese, Dutch, German and English Kingdoms, the primary role of writing was to pressure policy makers at these overseas colonies' home base to rationalise actions taken without their precise consent, or bearing witness to the straight and unintentional cost of European invasion of the Americas. From 1696 to 1700, the state of American literature consisted only of about 250 published works. These works were mostly about religious, security and cultural concerns of colonial life. The war of 1812 which was a quarrel between the United States of America and the British empire because of trade restrictions, forced recruitment of American merchant sailors into the Royal Navy, British support to American expansion and uphold national honour in the face of British insults, paved way to the American's growing aspiration to create a unique American literature and culture separate from that of the English.

The pioneers wrote humorous works about the American frontiers while some wrote romantic and nature inspired poetry which developed away from the early English Origins. Native American autobiographical works were also developed and minority authors begun to publish fictions. Allegories and dark psychology became the focus of literary romances sated with philosophical assumptions. Dark

Romanticism became popular in American writings presenting the characters as prone to sin and self destruction, Thompson states that “the dark anthropomorphized evil in the form of Satan, devils, ghosts, werewolves, vampires, and ghouls” (6).

Initially American literature was composed of reports and documentations of complaints and status quo of the people in the New World. Writing and literature served as a means of influencing policy makers in developing the civilization, exploring the natural resources and understanding the traditions and cultures of the Native Americans. Over time American literature evolved into various forms with fiction and non-fiction categories illustrating writer’s sentiments on matters concerning politics, economy, culture, social statuses using artistic imagery or factual resources. American literature further developed into its own form, growing away from its initial sphere of influence, English literature, during the seventh century creating a unique American characteristic and promoting individualism.

American literature pushed the boundaries of human imagination and creativity with their constant experimentation of emotions and thoughts which can be attributed to the contemporary writers’ attitude of artistic expression and freedom. The United States, which emerged from World War II confident and economically strong, entered the Cold War in the late 1940s. This conflict with the Soviet Union shaped global politics for more than four decades, and the proxy wars and threat of nuclear annihilation that came to define it were just some of the influences shaping American literature during the second half of the twentieth century. The 1950s and 1960s brought significant cultural shifts within the United States driven by the civil rights movement and the women’s movement.

Prior to the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American literature was largely the story of dead white men who had created Art and of living white men doing the

same. By the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, American literature had become a much more complex and inclusive story grounded on a wide-ranging body of past writing produced in the United States by people of different backgrounds and open to more Americans in the present day. Literature written by African American during the contemporary period was shaped in many ways by Richard Wright, whose autobiography *Black Boy* was published in 1945. He left the United States for France after World War II, repulsed by the injustice and discrimination he faced as a Black man in America; other Black writers working from the 1950s through the 1970s also wrestled with the desires to escape an unjust society and to change it.

Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man* (1952) tells the story of an unnamed Black man adrift in, and ignored by, America. James Baldwin wrote essays, novels, and plays on race and sexuality throughout his life, but his first novel, *Go Tell It On The Mountain* (1952) was his most accomplished and influential. Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play about the effects of racism in Chicago, was first performed in 1959.

Gwendolyn Brooks became, in 1950, the first African American poet to win a Pulitzer Prize. Black Arts movement was grounded in the tenets of Black Nationalism and sought to generate a uniquely Black consciousness. The Autobiographical of *Malcolm X* and *Alex Haley*, is among its most-lasting literary expressions.

Toni Morrison's first novel, *The Blues tEye* (1970), launched a writing career that would put the lives of Black women at its centre. She received a Nobel Prize in 1993. In the 1960s Alice Walker began writing novels, poetry, and short stories that reflected her involvement in the civil rights movement. The American novel took on a dizzying number of forms after World War II. Realist, metafictional, postmodern, absurdist, autobiographical, short, long, fragmentary, feminist, stream of



consciousness, these and dozens more labels can be applied to the vast output of American novelists. Little holds them together beyond their chronological proximity and engagement with contemporary American society.

Throughout history, there have been many American woman writers who have made significant contribution to the field. The list includes many familiar and great American female writers such as Portia de Rossi, Katherine Schwarzenegger, Jamie Lee Curtis, Helen Keller, Mary-Kate Olsen. Sylvia Plath was an American short-story writer, novelist, and poet. Plath is credited with popularizing confessional poetry and won a posthumous Pulitzer Prize in poetry. Sylvia Plath achieved popularity and critical acclaim despite suffering from clinical depression for the most part of her adult life. Her story inspired the 2003 film *Sylvia* in which she was portrayed by Gwyneth Paltrow.

A prolific author, having written twelve published books and several articles, Helen Keller was the first deaf-blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. Her autobiography, *The Story of My Life* (1902), made Keller famous and was adapted for film and stage. She was also an activist and campaigned for women's suffrage, labour rights, socialism and other such causes. Poet, author, and civil rights activist Maya Angelou was a champion for black feminism and is best remembered for her autobiography, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sing" (1969). The recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom and over fifty honorary degree was also a child sex abuse survivor. Novelist and short story writer Louisa May Alcott is best remembered as the author of the 1868 novel *Little Women and its Sequels, Little Men and Jo's Boys*. She initially wrote using the pseudonym 'A. M. Barnard.' She never married and remained a life long feminist and abolitionist.

Jhumpa Lahiri is a prominent American author who is acknowledged for her genre of writing in short stories, novels, and essays in English and Italian. In her literary works, Lahiri explored and narrated her personal experiences as an Indian immigrant in America. Lahiri, in her writings, uses simple language with ordinary characters. Her focus of writing has been related to the Indian immigrants to America, who struggle between the cultural and ritual values of their original homeland and their adopted country.

Lahiri, in her scripts, often penned her own experiences along with her parents and friends. She considered the Bengali communities of India in almost her every script. Her fictions are autobiographical. In her writings, she absorbed the struggles, biases, and anxieties encountered by the characters of her stories along with the psychological behaviour of the immigrants. Her stories connected the endeavours made by the immigrant parents to keep their children familiar with the Indian culture, rituals, and tradition. She says in an interview that, “I salute the city of Chicago for promoting and celebrating the act of reading and the importance of literature on such a grand, civic scale. In a world where so many senseless and destructive events are constantly taking place, it is especially consoling, and commendable.”

Jhumpa Lahiri was born as Nilanjana Sudeshna on Sunday, 11 July 1967 in London, England, and raised in Rhode Island, United States. In 1997, Jhumpa Lahiri completed her dissertation, titled ‘Accursed Palace: The Italian Palazzo on the Jacobean stage (1603-1625).’ At Provincetown’s Fine Arts Work Centre, she earned a fellowship of two years from 1997 to 1998. Lahiri is the daughter of Indian immigrants from the Indian state of West Bengal. However, she was born in London, England. When Lahiri was three, her family moved to the United States of America and left England.

Lahiri once said in an interview, “I wasn’t born here, but I might as well have been,” and she considered herself as an American. In an interview in 2017, Lahiri stated that her parents were not religious and even they did not preach her any religious education; however, her parents taught her to respect and read great authors including Rabindranath Tagore. She mentions in an interview that “My parents aren’t religious people, so they didn’t give us a religious education, but they certainly taught us to respect the great visionaries, and Tagore is one of those, right? And the fact that he happens to be Bengali and won the Nobel Prize, well, details.”

In 1999, she won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the PEN/Hemingway Award for her short stories- *Interpreter of Maladies*. It was her debut collection of short stories. In 2003, her first novel, *The Namesake*, and its story was adopted for filming a movie with the same name, which was a 2006 English language drama film directed by Indian director Mira Nair and was articulated and written by Sooni Taraporevala. In 2008, Lahiri’s second short story collection *Unaccustomed Earth*, won the Frank O’ Connor International Short Story Award.

In 2013, her second novel, *The Lowland*, was a finalist for both the Man Booker Prize and the National Book Award for Fiction. Lahiri moved to Rome, Italy, in 2011, and two books of essays were published by her since then. In 2018, she published her first novel in Italian and named it *Dove mi Trovo*. In Italy, she compiled, edited, and translated 40 different Italian writers under Penguin Book, a British publishing house. Apparently, some of her own writings and those of other authors were also translated by her from Italian into English. Since 2015, Lahiri has been working as a professor of creative writing at the University of Princeton in the Lewis Center for the Arts.

In 1999, marking her writing debut, Lahiri's short story collection, *Interpreter of Maladies*, was released. These short stories were written while focusing on the lives of Indian immigrants in the United States of America and including the issues related to marital difficulties, the disconnection between first and second generation immigrants, and the deprivation of a stillborn child. *Interpreter of Maladies* won the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, which was only the seventh time a story collection had won the award and sold nearly 600,000 copies after its launch.

In April 2008, *Unaccustomed Earth* was released, which was the second collection of short stories by Lahiri. Her novel, *Unaccustomed Earth*, was on the number one on The New York Times bestseller list upon its publication that was the rare debuting distinction. On this achievement of her novel, Dwight Garner, editor of the *New York Times* Book Review said that, "It's hard to remember the last genuinely serious, well-written work of fiction particularly a book of stories, that leaped straight to No.1; it's a powerful demonstration of Lahiri's newfound commercial clout."

Lahiri's novel, *The Lowland* was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in September 2013. The Luminaries by Eleanor Catton also considered this novel. In the month of October, *The Lowland* was listed for the National Book Award for Fiction. On 16 October 2013, *The Lowland* went to the final round. However, on 20 November 2013, James McBride, and his novel *The Good Lord Bird* won this award. In 2015, at the Zee Jaipur Literature Festival, Lahiri was considered the winner of the DSC Prize for South Asian Literature for her book, *The Lowland*, and soon, she was named in the Limca Book of Records.

Lahiri released a non-fiction essay in December 2015 named "Teach Yourself Italian." The essay was related to her own personal experiences in learning Italian. Later, this essay was translated from Italian to English which she declared that she

was writing in Italian only. Around the same year, the book *In Altre Parole* was published by her in Italian. In 2016, its English translation was released by Ann Goldstein and titled it “In Other Words.”

The short story “The Boundary” was published by Lahiri in 2018. This story narrated the lives and contrasting features of two families. *The Namesake* (2003) is the debut novel by American author Jhumpa Lahiri. It was originally published in *The New Yorker* and was later expanded to a full-length novel. It explores many of the same emotional cultural themes as Lahiri’s Pulitzer Prize-winning short story collection *Interpreter of Maladies*. The novel moves between events in Calcutta, Boston, and New York City, and examines the nuances involved with being caught between two conflicting cultures with distinct religious, social, and ideological differences.

Diaspora has been a favourite topic in the transnational world of literature for innovative literary outputs in recent years. People who have flown and tried to settle over the distant territories of the world for various reasons have always found themselves in dual conditions in the process of settling down. They do not get away from the settled assurance of home and they cannot allow their roots being blown over into fragments of uncertain insecurities on a foreign land. The intellectuals and authors have tried to represent these feelings in diverse ways in diverse writings all over the world. Due to communication technologies and willed migration of people from their place of origin in search of better life.

Diaspora has not been a new phenomenon now just as exile or expatriate in our globalizing world. Diasporas are a deracinated population leaving cultural and ethnic origin in a motherland other than where they currently reside. Their economic, social and political affiliations cross borders of nations. Diaspora studies presume the

existence of displaced groups of people who retain a collective sense of identity. The writers of Indian Diaspora practice a variety of literary forms and represent an extraordinary diversity of ethnicities, language, and religious traditions.

Nelson writes in the “Writers of the Indian Diaspora: A Bio-Bibliographical Critical Sourcebook” that writers of the Indian Diaspora share a Diaspora consciousness generated by a complex network of historical connection, spiritual affinities, and unifying racial memories, and that this shared sensibility is manifested in the cultural productions of the Indian Diaspora communities around the world. The element of homesickness, longing and a quest for identity or roots mark the Diaspora fiction. In postcolonial diaspora literature, the notion of home is unhomeliness, the feeling that one has no cultural home or sense of cultural belonging. The diasporic people perceive nostalgic links and memories of their original home or homeland. In this regard, Stuart Hall points out in *The Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, “The link between these communities and their ‘homeland’ or the possibility of a return to the past are much more precarious than usually thought” (355).

Due to modernization and globalization the diasporas themselves are deeply affected by their position, so they do not return home. The postcolonial critic Avtar Brah defines the home of diasporas in this way: “What is home? On the one hand, ‘home’ is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of ‘origin’. On the other hand, home is also a lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, somber grey skies in the middle of the day, all this, as mediated by the historically specific of everyday social relations. Unhomely is not homelessness. It means to feel not at home even if one is in one’s own home” (57).

In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha states that “For the diasporic people, the sense of belonging to the family and the nation is ruptured. They leave the space called home or homeland and reconstruct home by moving beyond boundaries, and the “home” is no longer just one place. It is locations” (57). This position is echoed in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake* in which she constructs home in the liminal space between the two countries and two cultures because the Ganguli children in the novel are transnational. Transnationalism postulates multiple allegiances, affinities, emotional attachment, solidarities, obligations, identities and sense of belonging which span international borders.

Mrs Ganguli in *The Namesake* is appropriately named Ashima which means without borders, “True to the meaning of her name, she will be without borders, without home of her own, a resident everywhere and nowhere” (276). It means that she is a transnational citizen who does not have a fixed home. As a postcolonial novel, Lahiri’s *The Namesake* spins the story of a Bengali couple and their Ward’s voyage between two continents cultures. The novel depicts a postcolonial world where the story covers the events from 1968-2000.

The following chapter deals with cultural conflicts in Jhumpa Lahiri’s novel, *The Namesake*. This novel is a documentary of such experiences, a glowing miniature of a tiny family making the voyage between two worlds.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Cultural Conflict**

Culture is an essential part of conflict and conflict resolution. Cultures are like underground rivers that run through our lives and relationships, giving us messages that shape our perceptions, attributions, judgments, and ideas of self and other. Though cultures are powerful, they are often unconscious, influencing conflict and attempts to resolve conflict in imperceptible ways.

Cultures are more than language, dress, and food customs. Cultural groups may share race, ethnicity, or nationality, but they also arise from cleavages of generation, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, ability and disability, political and religious affiliation, language, and gender to name only a few. Two things are essential to remember about cultures: they are always changing, and they relate to the symbolic dimension of life.

Cultural messages shape our understandings of relationships, and of how to deal with the conflict and harmony that are always present whenever two or more people come together. Culture is constantly in flux as conditions change, cultural groups adapt in dynamic and sometimes unpredictable ways. Culture is elastic, knowing the cultural norms of a given group does not predict the behaviour of a member of that group, who may not conform to norms for individual or contextual reasons.

Cultural influences and identities become important depending on context. When an aspect of cultural identity is threatened or misunderstood, it may become relatively more important than other cultural identities and this fixed, narrow identity may become the focus of stereotypes, negative projection, and conflict. This is a very common situation in intractable conflicts.



Cultures are embedded in every conflict because conflicts arise in human relationships. Conflicts between teenagers and parents are shaped by generational culture, and conflicts between spouses or partners are influenced by gender culture. In organisations, conflicts arising from different disciplinary cultures escalate tensions between co-workers, creating strained or inaccurate communication and stressed relationship.

Culture permeates conflict no matter what, sometimes pushing forth with intensity, other times quietly snaking along, hardly announcing its presence until surprised people nearly stumble on it. Culture is inextricable from conflict, though it does not cause it. When differences surface in families, organisations, or communities, culture is always present, shaping perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, and outcomes.

In the novel *The Namesake*, Jhumpa Lahiri said that the greatest journeys are the ones that bring you home. The clash of cultures takes place when people belonging to one nation move to another in search of greener pastures. This cultural blending, intermingling, leading to identity crisis has given birth to several best sellers. In a way to connect and come closer to that place, the closeness to the culture, the native language and the rules evoke a psychological oppression resulting to dilemma of cultural clash and identity.

All around the world people struggle with a sense of self-individualization, which is the internal battle each person has to face in order to discover one's true identity. The quest to find one self is a difficult and lengthy endeavour that can take a lifetime to accomplish. In the novel *The Namesake* by Lahiri, identity is illustrated by intensely examining the importance of one's background, name and culture. The main characters in the story try to uncover the reasoning behind their lineage.

Lahiri, a daughter of an immigrant is one of the postcolonial writers who faced clashes between the Indian and American cultures. In the novel, Lahiri presents the character of Ashoke and Ashima where they feel nostalgia as they migrate to a new land and through the feeling of diaspora, they recollect the memories back at home especially in the character of Ashima. It also deals with the cultural identity crisis which is faced by both the generations of the immigrants.

In the case of the first generation, the immigrants face dilemma, consciousness of being an outsider and cultural identity crisis due to the language, dressing sense and food habits. But the second generation immigrants mainly face the crisis in relation to the personality, identity and adjustment in an alien land. First generation Indian American are actually aware of readily apparent cultural differences. The family becomes a battlefield where modernity clashes with tradition, where Indian culture clashes with American, and where theory clashes with practice.

American culture becomes the basis for interactions outside the home. Inside the home, first-generation Indian-Americans attempt to preserve their cultural and religious heritage and expect to live according to Indian cultural values. For second generation Indian Americans, the sensation of being the in-betweens is particularly accentuated. Like their parents, the second-generation Indian American also compartmentalizes his life.

At home and within the local community component, they are governed by the compromised Indian lifestyle developed by their parents and the broader community. Conflicts typically arise from the cultural clash of American Individualism vs. Indian communitarianism. The American and Indian cultures have very vast differentiation between them. While the cultural of America is a mixture of different cultures, the Indian culture is unique and has its own values.

One of the major differences that can be seen between American and Indian culture is in family relations. While the Indians are very much family oriented, the Americans are individual oriented. In Indian culture, the family values are given more prominence than the individual values. Indians respect family values. On the other hand, in American culture the individual values gets prominence than the family values. Indians are more committed to their family whereas the Americans are more committed to themselves only.

In another sense, it can be said that the American culture is more goal oriented and the Indian culture is more people or family oriented. Indians may even forsake their individual wishes and also happiness for the sake of families. But in American culture, this trend cannot be seen. Unlike the Indians, the Americans plan things ahead. The Americans believe in dominating nature and controlling the environment around them. On the contrary, Indians believe in the harmony with nature.

To Indians, relationship building is important. Having an established relationship helps to put the other person in context and smooth the path to clearer communication. In the US, business is much more task-focused. Small talk is considered a waste of time, which Indians may find rude. Failure to understand cultural differences between the US and India creates a risk of misunderstanding; Indians may find Americans dismissive, or curt, while Americans consider Indian colleagues to be time-wasters or poor communications.

In this novel, *The Namesake*, Lahiri has explored the psychic condition of the first-generation immigrants, Ashima and Ashoke and the second-generation immigrants, Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi. The novel critically demonstrates how the concept of homeland creates an atmosphere to construct home and identity of proximity. In this age of transmigration, 'home' signifies its impermanence,

displacement, and dispossession. For many critics, the idea of home is more conveyed as a sense of being between the two places instead of rooted one.

In the novel Ashima's sense of being at home is connected with the original homeland, India. And the selves of Gogol, Sonia and Moushumi are supposed to be attached with the USA, their birth place. In an unknown City of Massachusetts, Ashima's pang for abandoning the home country is emphasized through imagining the picture of the family in Calcutta. And the feeling of nostalgia seems to mitigate the pang and anguish of Ashima.

The first generation allows a partial intrusion of the culture of the host country at home. As a defence Ashima and Ashoke search people of their origin in the USA. They develop contact with them, organize get together and observe native rituals. They know Maya and Dilip Nandi, Mitras, Banerjee's and the young Bengali bachelors in the market who return from Calcutta with wives. Their common origin is the reason of their friendship. Besides Ashima tries to observe Indian ritual like naming ceremonies of children, marriage, death rituals and Bengali festivals like Navratras and Pujas.

Ashima's preoccupation with the native culture manifests in food, dress, and her relation with her husband. She cooks Indian food as "combining Rice Crispies and Planters peanuts and chopped red onion in a bowl; she adds salt, lemon juice, thin slices of green chilli pepper, wishing there were mustard oil to pour into the mix" (6). Moreover, she prefers to read a tattered copy of Bengali magazine *Desh*. As a typical Indian wife, she does not even say her husband's name. In the same way she continues to wear the Indian dress such as sari, a typical dress of South Asian female and bindi, an adornment on the forehead by South Asian woman. She tries to maintain

her cultural identity by following such practices in the foreign land. Adherence to the native culture reflects in their dress, food, social life and manner of growing children.

When Ashima is about to give birth a child, her Indian ethnicity reminds her of the conventional social code and customs of the Indian ethnicity reminds her of the conventional social code and customs of the Indian Bengali culture: “In India, she thinks to herself, women go home to their parents to give birth, away from husbands and in-laws and household cares, retreating briefly to childhood when the baby arrives” (4). Again the solitary atmosphere in the hospital makes her recapture the particular moment of the domestic life of the Calcutta.

In Lahiri’s novel, the first-generation immigrants, both male and female, who share one history and culture, also share the similarity of experience in adjusting to life in a foreign land. They are aware of, what Hall calls, their ‘being’. They allow the host culture only partially to intrude at home. The Gangulis maintained their ties with the Indian culture through the perpetuation of traditions and rituals alongside gatherings with their Bengali friends and occasional visits to India. Food constitutes one of the many factors that help to establish the link between Ashoke, Ashima and their desh.

Whenever Ashoke and Ashima have to make an important decision, they consult the members of their community: “Each step, each acquisition, no matter how small, involves deliberation, consultation with Bengali friends” (20). In an attempt to preserve their identity, they hold on to their group and culture. Like all first-generation settlers, they want their children to learn American English, get good education and pretty jobs; at the same time they insist them to practice the Indian moral and cultural code at home. They go to the Kathakali dance performance or a Sitar recital at memorial hall. When Gogol is in third grade, they send him to Bengali

language and culture lessons every other Saturday, held in the home of one of their friends.

The first-generation migrants try a negotiation with their cultural dilemmas and sense of displacement by a juxtaposition of received idea from their home culture and host culture and assume new 'hybrid identities.' In Lahiri's novel, *The Namesake*, the idea of 'hybridity' exhibits a belief in assimilation of cultural components without downplaying the diversity of culture.

For the second generation the question of identity is a conflicted one. At home Indian culture and value system are adhered to, while in public the American code of conduct is followed. It is through the eyes of the first generation and sometimes through the unwilling occasional visits to India with parents that the second generation learns about the homeland. They are not attached to their cultural past and find it easier to accept America's culture. The children's 'Americanization' is evident from Gogol and Sonia's preference for burgers, tuna sandwiches and Christmas over Indian food and festivals.

Generational differences are thus projected through juxtaposition of the two social spaces. For the first-generation immigrants like Ashoke and Ashima the change of geographical location is the first shock. Ashima, for instance, encounters, after her arrival in the USA the differences in the landscape – "heaps of broken snow", "the frigid New England chill", and "leafless trees with ice-covered branches" and "not a soul on the street" (30) but more than that she realises the intensity of the loss of the family and community support.

Secondly, travails of the birth metaphorically represent the travails she undergoes for process of the birth of a self that can cope with the new American space absorbing the shocks in her journey for acculturation that will at one a process

involving new knowledge formation against the overwhelming backdrop of memory of the recent past, of the old culture and families and community. This knowledge includes the trivial like “Americans eat their chicken in its skin” (5) to the vital like how to raise children in a lonely country without the help of family members.

Thirdly, Ashima associates the pregnancy with her own condition of being a ‘foreigner’ (49). Nikhil Gogol is a second-generation immigrant who is fascinated by the language and culture of the Americans. The English language seems to have a fascination for him and the American culture allures him so much that he has scant respect for Indian culture. His relationship with Maxine makes him feel at home with American life. The Kenyan novelist Ngugi Wa Thiong observes in the beginning of the post colonialism:

Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through cultural and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place In the world and how people perceive themselves affects how they look at their culture, at their politics and at the Social production of wealth, at their entire relationship to Nature and to other human beings. (18)

The sense of “self-preservation and identity crisis may also be seen in the second generation but in a different manner and degree” (Patel, 7). They are brought up by diametrically different cultures. At home, their parents force them to adopt Indian food, dress, festivals and rituals. Outside their home, they are exposed to the American lifestyle and values in schools and among peers. They start imbibing American culture and values. Moreover, they do not experience distinct past and present like their parents.

The second generation have only one home, America, the host country of their parents. So they easily assimilate with American culture. However, they usually exhibit a dual cultural affiliation and identity because they are sandwiched between two different cultures. The second generation's attempt of escaping their parent's culture are evident in the manner of Gogol. He likes more American foods like burgers, tuna sandwiches and festivals like Christmas than Indian food and festivals.

Similarly, Gogol opts architecture than subject like chemistry, engineering or biology which are generally selected by immigrants. Tripathy remarks, "such actions not only neglect the wishes of his parents, but also imply that Gogol is uncomfortable with his 'being' (77). He gets fascinated by free lifestyle of his girlfriend Maxine and her parents. He spends, "his nights with Maxine, sleeping under the same roof as her parents, a thing Ashima refuses to admit to her Bengali friends" (6). Thus, in the process of adopting American culture, he tries to disconnect himself from his parents.

The attempts of parents in indoctrinating their native culture do not get success as their children grow older. Despite their parents' resistance, Gogol and Sonia grow up under the influence of their peers and the surrounding culture. The children perceive themselves as Americans. They do not enjoy the time that they are forced to spend in India. Recalling the family's trips to Calcutta, Gogol admits that he has no sense of: "He feels no nostalgia for the vacations he's spent with Family, and he realizes now that they were never really True vacation at all. Instead they were overwhelming, Disorienting expeditions, either going to Calcutta, or Sightseeing in places they did not belong to and intended Never to see again" (155). Unable to associate with their parents' inheritance and their native country, Gogol and Sonia feel happy when they finally got back in Boston. They are, thus, distance themselves with the native culture of their parents. They feel themselves as part of the host culture.



Nikhil's problem is precisely this. He begins to perceive his Indian culture from the point of view of American culture which he has imbibed and to a certain extent assimilated also. The conflict within the family is due to the mixed perceptions of Indian and American cultures. Gogol is confused about his name, because his name is neither Indian nor American. "He hates that his name is both absurd and obscure, that it has nothing to do with who he is, that it is neither Indian nor American but of all things Russian" (76).

The identity crisis of the second generation surfaces in a panel discussion about Indian novels written in English, which goes in this way, "When the sociologist on the panel talks about ABCD Gogol learns that it stands for 'American-born confused Desh'. He thinks the word 'confused' could be replaced by 'conflicted'. He knows that Deshi, a generic word for 'countryman', means 'Indian'" (118). Gogol wants to be seen as an American. He does not show any concern and affiliation with the condition of Indian immigrants.

Despite the second generation's adoption of American culture, they are questioned by natives because of their biological inheritance. Gogol experiences such a situation on his twenty-seventh birthday at his girlfriend Maxine's lake house. Despite Gogol's claim of being an American, a white woman Pamela insists on his Indian origin. She remarks that Gogol is adjusted to Indian climate and never gets sick when he visits there.

When Gogol rejects it, she stresses that "but you're Indian, I'd think the climate wouldn't affect you, given your heritage" (157). But asserting Gogol's American identity, Maxine's mother opposes Pamela. However, she questions herself whether he was actually born in America. His sense of belonging to America is threatened by such remarks.

The second generation immigrants are torn between two divergent cultures. Plurality, in cultural values and practices is their reality. They cannot identify with their parents' native country. So they try to keep their distance with their parents' native cultural practices. They display more natural and stronger bond with the culture of the host country, America. Moreover, they believe America as their own country. But the American society perceives them "as foreigners and sometimes discriminates with them, which lead them to a hyphenated identity" (7). So they feel great difficulty in keeping balance between their inherited and adopted identity.

The next chapter deals with Alienation and Assimilation. Lahiri emphasizes the psychological displacement of the alienated diaspora to create awareness about their efforts for psychological and physical survival.

## Chapter Three

### Alienation and Assimilation

Alienation is a term which has been used in theological, philosophical, sociological, and psychological writings for a long time. For Marx, “Alienation meant man’s dehumanization and his estrangement from other fellowmen, even from the product of his own labour” (27). Alienation happens mostly and obviously, largely for people who migrate from one country to other. People who migrate to other places need to adjust themselves to many situations expectedly or unexpectedly.

Movement of living beings from one place to another is called as migration. Migration can be divided into two categories: Emigration and Immigration. Emigration can be defined as the act of leaving one’s country or place to settle permanently in another. It is same as immigration but from perspective of the country of origin. Immigration is the movement of people into another country or region to which they are not native in order to settle there. Jhumpa Lahiri depicts the facets of Alienation very convincingly in her novel, *The Namesake*.

Alienation is an unavoidable aspect of modern life. Nevertheless, it is as old as human beings themselves. The analysis of the interaction between the two sides sheds lights on the emergence of alienation and the ways it exists. The authors most of whom have experienced the feelings of alienation in the consequence of their culture having been colonized try to explain this relationship through novels and short stories.

A daughter of an immigrant couple, Jhumpa Lahiri is one of these postcolonial writers who have been torn between the two cultures. *The Namesake*, her first novel, skillfully reflects the situation of the diaspora and the feeling of alienation through its Bengali immigrant couple and their son, Gogol. Lahiri lays down certain types of alienation through her characters’ lives adventures. Characters from *The Namesake*

show some certain symptoms of having experienced the feeling of alienation in various form.

According to Arnold Kaufman, “To claim that a person is alienated is to claim that his relation something else has certain features which result in avoidable discontent or loss of satisfaction” (3). In Jhumpa Lahiri’s works alienation is the recurring theme. Her first novel, *The Namesake* is a portrayal of the lives of two generations of the Gangulis in America. Ashima immigrates to America after getting married to Ashoke. Here she is not comfortable, she finds the social milieu and geographical land very different from those of India. Her feelings of being a stranger take her towards alienation. Ashima’s alienation is clearly visible throughout the novel. At every occasion, she misses her native land, Calcutta. At the time of her delivery, she laments that she is all alone here and nobody is here to take care of her newly born child. Had it been India, she would have been surrounded by relatives.

In India, the birth of a child is a matter of celebrations. Here, the birth of a child has less significance and the meaning of the birth is half justifiable.

Without a single grandparent or parent or uncle or aunt at her side, the baby’s birth, like most everything else in America, feels somehow haphazard, only half true. As she strokes and suckles and studies her son, she can’t help but pity him. She has never known of a person entering the world so alone, so deprived. (24)

In American Medical System, it is mandatory for the couple to have the name of the child on the birth certificate. The mother and child are allowed to leave hospital when the birth certificate of the child has the name on it. It also gives a shock to Ashima, as the name of the child is supposed to be given by her grandmother. A letter containing the names will reach to them in a month. So with mutual consent Ashoke

names the child Gogol, a name based on the famous Russian author Nikolai Gogol whom he adores. After getting discharged from the hospital, Ashima reaches home and shows her resentment, “I don’t want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It’s not right. I want to go back” (33). This entire incident enhances the feeling of alienation in the couple, especially in Ashima.

The rules and the culture of America make Ashima lonely. Ashoke and Ashima are twice alienated; first, they are alienated for being away from the homeland. Secondly, they are alienated due to different culture. Next, when Ashima shifts to suburbs, she again feels alienated and then she compares this alienation to “a sort of lifelong pregnancy” (49). Later their son named Gogol suffers from alienation because of his name, particularly when he realises that nobody takes this name now in the world. There is no clear basis or clarification of his name at least for namesake.

Gogol is a second generation of immigrants. His ties with the home land are not as strong as those of his parents. So, the nature of his alienation is different from that of his parents. Jhumpa Lahiri’s first generation Indian-Americans cherish their past and its memories and an indispensable and integral part of their roots and their beings, her second generation Indian-Americans reflect both proximities and distancing from it; they seem to perceive and adopt new angles at which to enter this reality. More particularly, they took forward to the concerns and modes of their hybridization and cross-cultural fertilization in the increasingly multicultural space of USA and not more absorption in the dominant culture. This becomes the main reason for Gogol’s alienation.

Gogol’s feeling of isolation further deepens when he tries to avoid his parents and keeps his friends away from them. In an attempt to assimilate with American culture, he tries to adopt American lifestyle. He feels embarrassed because his parents

are different from the natives of America. He tries to avoid his parents and keeps his friends away from them. He tries to immerse in American culture. In this attempt he changes his name from Gogol to Nikhil and befriends with Kim and has fun with her. Next Gogol tries to mix up with Maxine's family. He drinks expensive wine at her parents' cottage in the country. His conscience pricks him. "At times, as the laughter at Gerald and Lydia's table swells and another bottle of wine is opened and Gogol raises his glass to be filled yet again, he is conscious of the fact that his immersion in Maxine's family is a betrayal of his own" (141).

Sidney Finkelstein defines alienation as "a psychological phenomenon, an internal conflict, a hostility felt towards something seemingly outside oneself, a barrier erected which is actually no defence but an impoverishment of oneself" (75). After Ashima husband's death while living all alone in her house, located on Pemberton Road, she hates darkness that permeates her house and her soul. Her obsession to live in a lonely house signifies her loneliness and alienation. Moushumi whom Ashima wants to be wife of his son, Gogol also experiences a type of existentialistic alienation. Sartre writes about this type of alienation in his book *Being and Nothingness*, "In the shock that seizes me when apprehend the other's look, I experience a subtle alienation of all my possibilities which are associated with the object of the world far for me, in the midst of world" (18).

Moushumi shares her past with Gogol. She has rejected all prospective grooms, selected by her parents. After the breakup with her fiancé, she decides that she will not accept anyone in her life. Moushumi's stresses on freedom and her connection with France can be considered as an existentialist alienation. In Calcutta after the party, Ashima realises her ever-lasting loneliness. "She turns away from the mirror and sobs for her husband, she feels both impatience and indifference for all the

days she still must live” (278). She loses interest in her family in Calcutta as well as children in America. She feels the pangs of separation for her husband. This accentuates her feeling of alienation.

Cultural assimilation is the process by which a person who immigrates to another country learns to adapt to and accept the culture and customs that are dominant in that country. This process is not easy to undertake, and many immigrants often struggle with assimilation. This struggle is one of the central storylines in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*. In this novel, Bengali couple Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli move from Calcutta to America to make a life for themselves and raise a family. Over the course of their thirty-year journey in America, they experience many difficulties and obstacles as they try to raise their children to be successful Bengali-American citizens. For Ashima, her primary struggle concerns her assimilation to American culture. In Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*, the character of Ashima Ganguli struggles to assimilate to American culture but manages to do so successfully by the end of the novel.

When Ashima’s first moves to America with her husband, Ashima initially resists assimilation to American culture. One example of this can be seen during the naming of Ashima’s first child. Per Bengali tradition, Ashima wants to let her grandmother formally name her child and is therefore content to settle on a private Bengali pet name for her son until her grandmother’s letter arrives. However, Ashima’s attempt to interpolate some of her old culture into the strange new world to which she has moved is halted when she comes into conflict with the American customs that reign supreme.

The effect that this conflict has upon Ashima is extremely negative. Jhumpa

Lahiri writes, “The bad news is that they are told by Mr. Wilcox, compiler of hospital birth certificate that they must choose a name for their son. For they learn that in America, a baby cannot be released from the hospital without a birth certificate. And that a birth certificate needs a name” (27). Upon being told this information, Ashima experiences distress and disbelief as she is forced to reluctantly name her child by his pet name of Gogol. Rather than accept that this is the way things are in America, Ashima instead resolves to change her son’s name once her grandmother’s letter arrives, thus showing her resistance to American culture.

Shortly after Gogol’s birth, Ashima again demonstrates her resistance to American culture. Upon returning home from the hospital with Gogol, Ashima becomes overwhelmed at the knowledge that she cannot rely on her family or the conveniences she enjoyed back in Calcutta to help her with her new responsibilities as a mother. As a result, Ashima becomes angry with American life and expresses her desire to return to India. Ashima tells her husband, “I’m saying hurry up and finish your degree and then, impulsively, admitting it for the first time: I’m saying I don’t want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It’s not right. I want to go back” (33). Through this statement, Ashima demonstrates how much she dislikes living in America.

With Ashima’s family now living thousands of miles away from her, Ashima feels isolated and alienated from American culture and views life in this strange country as arduous and inconvenient. Consequently, Ashima only wishes to remain in America as long as is necessary for her husband to complete his degree, fully intending upon moving with her husband and new born son back to India as soon as they are able. In this way, Ashima’s stubborn resistance to America and its way of life becomes clear.



In addition to wanting to return to India, Ashima further demonstrates her resistance to assimilation by severely limiting her contact with natural-born Americans. In order to help recreate a sense of home and Bengali culture in America, Ashima and her husband create a close circle of friends that consists exclusively of other Bengali immigrants. While this endeavour helps Ashima to feel more at home in America, it inadvertently keeps her from fully integrating into American society.

Lahiri writes, “Every weekend, it seems, there is a new home to go to, a new couple or young family to meet. They all come from Calcutta, and for this reason alone they are friends” (38). This example shows how Ashima has no desire to make any non Bengali friends. Rather than learn how to mix herself into the great melting pot that is America, Ashima instead wants to create her own private piece of Calcutta where she can feel secure. As a result, Ashima makes a concerted effort to surround herself with other Bengali individuals while simultaneously keeping any and all Americans as far away from her as possible. By doing so, Ashima demonstrates her fear of Americans and her desire to limit her interaction with them. Along with these outward actions, Ashima’s resistance to American culture can also be seen in how she views herself and her placement in American society.

Despite having lived in America for several years at this point, Ashima does not feel any closer to Americans than she did when she first moved away from Calcutta. Lahiri writes, “For being a foreigner, Ashima is beginning to realize, is a sort of lifelong pregnancy, a perpetual wait, a constant burden, a continuous feeling out of sorts” (49). This demonstrates how disassociated Ashima feels in America and her deep-seated belief that she will never adapt to its customs and style of living. Rather than acknowledging that assimilation to a different culture is a slow and steady process that takes many years, Ashima instead chooses to give up on assimilation and

resigns herself to her own pessimistic belief that she will always remain an outsider in America. In this way, Ashima shows a complete lack of faith in her own ability to adapt and accommodate to American culture.

As time goes on, however, Ashima begins to overcome her fear of American culture and assimilate to it. This transformation is slow, but steady, as Ashima learns to accommodate new American ideals in with her old Bengali customs. This process can first be seen during the naming of Ashima's second child. Jhumpa Lahiri writes, "The only way to avoid such confusion, they have concluded, is to do away with the pet name altogether, as many of their Bengali friends have already done. For their daughter, good name and pet name are one and the same" (61).

This example shows Ashima's assimilation to American culture. Rather than repeating the same experience she had with Gogol to maintain a tradition that is nonexistent in America, Ashima instead chooses to learn from it. As a result, Ashima not only chooses her daughter's name herself, but she also adapts to the American custom of using only one name for formal and informal use instead of continuing to practice the Bengali tradition of using a separate name for each use. In so doing, Ashima shows that she is beginning to accept American culture and acknowledge the conveniences that some of its customs allow.

In addition to this, Ashima shows her assimilation through her willingness to accept and celebrate American holidays for the sake of her family. Even though Ashima still makes her children celebrate traditional Bengali holidays in an effort to keep their culture alive, she does not object to them celebrating the holidays that are the social norm in America. Lahiri writes, "For the sake of Gogol and Sonia they celebrate, with progressively increasing fanfare, the birth of Christ, an event the children look forward to far more than the worship of Durga and Saraswati"

(64).Through this example, it is clear that Ashima is growing comfortable with life in America.

Due to her Bengali heritage, Ashima is under no obligation to celebrate or let her children celebrate American holidays such as Thanksgiving or Christmas. However, because she wants her children to prosper in America and become happy and successful, Ashima nobly swallows any distaste or indifference for these holidays that she has and acquiesces to celebrate them. By making this quiet self-sacrifice, Ashima demonstrates her willingness to adapt to the American way of life for the benefit of her family.

As the story progresses, Ashima's assimilation to American culture grows exponentially, as is shown after her children have grown up and moved away and her husband has taken a teaching job in Cleveland, Ohio. Left alone for one of the first times in her life, Ashima shows how much she has grown by getting a part-time job at a library and making friends with the American women who work there. Lahiri writes, "She is friendly with the other women who work at the library, most of them also with grown children. They are the first American friends she has made in her life. On occasion she has her library friends over to the house for lunch, goes shopping with them on weekends to outlet stores in Maine" (162). Through this example, it is clear that Ashima is not only assimilating to American culture but also thriving inside of it.

In addition to stepping outside from her Bengali circle of friends, Ashima enjoys spending time with these new people and makes room for them in her life, even letting them into the sanctuary of her home. In this way, Ashima shows that she has not only made great strides in her assimilation to American culture but is also welcoming it into her life.

In addition to this, Ashima also demonstrates her acceptance of American culture through her treatment of her son Gogol's American girlfriend, Maxine. Ashima has a very negative opinion of Maxine, viewing her as strange and disrespectful, yet she does not interfere with Gogol's attachment to this girl. Lahiri writes, "Ashima doesn't want her for a daughter-in-law. And yet Gogol has been dating her for over a year now. She knows the relationship is something she must be willing to accept. Sonia has told her this, and so have her American friends at the library" (166).

Through this example, Ashima demonstrates that she has gained the ability to accept an American custom that goes against her own personal wishes. Though Ashima wants Gogol to date a Bengali girl instead of an American one, she knows that American parents allow their child to do whatever makes him or her happy, even if doing so will clash with what the parents want. As a result, Ashima keeps her personal feelings about Gogol's relationship to herself, thus showing her continued assimilation to American culture.

By the end of the novel, Ashima demonstrates that she has fully assimilated to American culture and embraced its customs. One example of this can be seen through Ashima's actions after the death of her husband. With nothing else to keep her tethered to one location any longer, Ashima decides to sell her home in Boston and live abroad. Lahiri writes,

Ashima has decided to spend six months of her life in India, six months in the States. It is a solitary, somewhat premature version of the future she and her husband had planned when he was alive. In Calcutta, Ashima will live with her younger brother, Rana, and his wife, and their two grown, as yet unmarried daughters, in a spacious

flat in Salt Lake. There she will have a room, the first in her life intended for her exclusive use. In spring and summer she will return to the Northeast, dividing her time among her son, her daughter, and her close Bengali friends (275).

Through this example, Ashima's complete assimilation to American culture is made clear. By dividing her attention between Calcutta and America, Ashima shows that she has grown to accept the fact that she has become not only Indian, but American as well. Also, by resolving to return to the States regularly rather than stay completely in Calcutta, Ashima shows that she has come to enjoy life in America and is unwilling to abandon it for the old familiarity and customs that await her in Calcutta. This not only demonstrates Ashima's assimilation to American culture but also depicts the fondness that she has developed for America itself.

In addition to this, Ashima's complete assimilation can be seen through her changed perspective on divorce. Initially, Ashima held to the Bengali belief that a marriage should not be ended under any circumstances. Faced with her son's unhappy marriage to his unfaithful wife, however, Ashima's view of divorce changes dramatically. Lahiri writes,

Fortunately they have not considered it their duty to stay married, as the Bengalis of Ashoke and Ashima's generation do. They are not willing to accept, to adjust, to settle for something less than their ideal of happiness. That pressure has given way, in the case of the subsequent generation, to American common sense. (276)

Through this example, Ashima shows her assimilation to American culture by expressing gratefulness towards the American custom of divorce. Ashima acknowledges that it is sensible and beneficial for a person to have the freedom to

separate from his or her spouse if he or she is unhappy. As a result, Ashima approves of her son's divorce, knowing that it will set him free from his miserable marriage. By holding her son's happiness over her own traditional Bengali beliefs, Ashima demonstrates her complete assimilation to American culture.

One final example of Ashima's successful assimilation can be seen through her acknowledgement of her own personal growth since moving to America. As she prepares to leave her Boston home, Ashima reflects on how living in America has changed her into a strong, independent, and fearless woman. Lahiri writes, "The prospect no longer terrifies her. She has learned to do things on her own, and though she still wears saris, still puts her long hair in a bun, she is not the same Ashima who had once lived in Calcutta" (276). Through this example, it is clear just how much Ashima has changed since the beginning of the novel.

Initially, Ashima was afraid of every little thing that America had to offer and did everything within her power to shut out any and all American customs and aspects of life. Now, however, Ashima has become a tower of strength, and she acknowledges that this significant change is due solely to her appreciation of American life and her acceptance of its culture. In this way, Ashima's assimilation to American culture is successfully completed.

In Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, Ashima Ganguli struggles to assimilate to American culture but eventually succeeds in doing so by the end of the novel. While Ashima initially resists assimilation, she gradually comes to accept American culture until she has successfully assimilated to it, which in turn helps her to improve as an individual. Through the example set by Ashima Ganguli, one can learn that assimilating to a different culture can be scary and oftentimes difficult but is overall beneficial to one's own character and worth it in the end.

The following chapter deals with identity crisis. The major conflict in the novel is identity. As Ashoke and Ashima struggle to maintain a balance between their Indian roots and their American life, their son Gogol rejects his Indian heritage and seeks American instead.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Identity Crisis**

An identity crisis is a developmental event that involves a person questioning their sense of self or place in the world. The concept originates in the work of developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, who believed that the formation of identity was one of the most important conflicts that people face. According to Erikson, an identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself. Erikson noted that developing a sense of identity is important during the teenage years, though the formation and growth of identity is not confined to adolescence.

Instead identity shifts and changes throughout life as people confront new challenges and tackle different experiences. Thus, an identity crisis can occur at any age. Identity involves the experiences, relationships, beliefs, values, and memories that make up a person's subjective sense of self. This helps create a continuous self-image that remains fairly constant even as new aspects of the self are developed or strengthened over time. Erikson believed that identity was formed by experimenting with different behaviours and roles, as well as through social interactions.

Researcher James Marcia expanded upon Erikson's theory by suggesting that the balance between identity and confusion lies in making a commitment to an identity. Marcia developed an interview method to measure identity. It looks at three different areas of functioning: occupational role, beliefs and values, and sexuality. He also identified four different identity statuses that people move through as they develop their identity: Foreclosure is when a person has made a commitment without attempting identity exploration. Achievement occurs when an individual has gone through an exploration of different identities and made a commitment to one.



Diffusion occurs when there is neither an identity crisis nor commitment. Those with a status of identity diffusion tend to feel out of place in the world and don't pursue a sense of identity. Moratorium is the status of a person who is actively involved in exploring different identities but has not made a commitment.

Marcia argued that identity crises help people move from one status to another; however, people don't necessarily experience each of the statuses above. Etymologically the word 'identity' is derived from the Latin root *idem*, means the same. According to Oxford Dictionary, crisis is a personal difficulty or situation that immobilizes people and prevents them from consciously controlling their lives. It's also refers to a person's feeling of fear, shock and distress about the disruption itself. Identity crisis is a psychological condition of disorientation and the act of confusion occurring especially in adolescents as a result of conflicting internal and external experiences, pressures, and expectations and often producing acute anxiety.

Lahiri in her novel portrays the identity crisis that she herself has faced acutely. She does and goes opposite of what people usually says or the idiom comes from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: "what's in a name?" (40) instead she expresses her ideas with the thought that it is everything that matters in a name, in her novel name signifies are the symbols of the whole identity, names play an important role in one's life in identifying themselves and help people in communicating among themselves. The names become more significant, as the identity of a person becomes the core issue. Literature that deals with the conflicts and clash of cultures, countries and races, the name emerges as a symbol of identity.

The immigrants lost their originality because of the adaptation of new culture in alien nations. The immigrants have suffered a lot and also longing for their original life style. So, the novel, *The Namesake* shows that how a Bengali family adapts the

foreign culture. The problem of identity is writ large all over diasporic fiction. The title of the novel shows the importance that she attaches to the identity of her protagonist.

Changing the identity in a particular person's life is continuous because of the efforts of economical, social and biological factors. From an early age, the implementation of social and moral norms for the child associated with the pressure of forbidden impulses and simultaneous imitation or identification with the parents, with their moral norms and attitudes, within parents and society in general. The children's habits and activities also based on their parents and their circumstances.

The loss of the identity, or the imposition of new identities in new land that people travels or immigrated to has become a fundamental issue, it cause many problems for and between the first and second generation. There is a difference between first and second generation of people who migrated to different places leaving their life and all other aspects behind. Immigrants struggle in an alien land and try to develop a sense of self and society, balancing the mixture of two identities that they carry.

The first generation emigrants Ashoke and Ashima practice their tradition and rituals in place in hope of building a new home in a foreign land. They try to connect and compare most of their daily life with the one they had in their homeland. The love they have for their loved ones and homeland keep them connect to their past and gives them a feeling of nostalgia, they have difficult time letting go of her Bengali culture, they tries to hold on to it as much as possible.

"For the past eighteen months, ever since she's arrived in Cambridge, nothing has felt normal at all. It's not so much the pain, which she knows, somehow she will survive. It's the consequence: motherhood in a foreign land" (5). After giving birth to

a baby boy, Ashima returns home from hospital, and for the first time she realise that she is sitting all alone in her home with the new born. “She is terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one, where she knows so little, where life seems so tentative and spare” (6). She feels very fearful of her child. She can’t imagine about the raise of her child; she thought about the child’s future, it could be brighter one or else could be as a normal American person’s life. She can feel about the Indian culture; she knows very well as, their own culture and identity are destroying. They named their child as Gogol; it is a famous Russian author’s name.

According to Gogol’s school principles, he has to done a project. Ashima resists Gogol’s art project because the rubbings made in cemetery-out of the belief that such art opposed to a basic Bengali principle. She insists the honor and respect for the dead people. “What type of field trip was this? It was enough that they applied lipstick to their corpses and buried them in silk-lined boxes. Only in America, only in America are children taken to cemeteries in the name of art” (70). Ashima scolds him for it. But Gogol still keeps those things in his room, not disobeying his mother rules, but refusing to accept totally the Bengali values of life and death to which his mother demands. In that situation, he felt the identity dilemma of those Indian and American cultures.

The second generation, the children of first generation, Gogol and Sonia who tries to build a connection with their parents homeland but finds it different and difficult from the place they are born. “Gogol and Sonia must remember to say, not aunt this uncle that but terms far more specific: mashi and pishi, mama and maima, kaku and jethu, to signify whether they are related on their mother’s or their father’s side, by marriage or by blood” (81). They adore and adhere the culture in which they are born American culture and their national identity become hybrid. They are more

concerned with their rootlessness and mixed biography. Gogol wanted to change his name himself so that he get accommodated in the host culture American culture.

Mixing of two cultures for Ganguli family become very complex as they lose aspects or even their entire heritage in order to cope up with the new aspects and culture of different nation. They keep on accepting and adding new customs, life styles and traditions from the host culture and during this process loss the vital aspects of their own culture. The Ganguli's for a period of time maintained a balance between two cultures. The younger generation acts as a link between two widely cultures, but could not locate their own identity in both of the cultures. Even their daily life become complex as two of them are Indians (Ashoke and Ashima) and two are Americans (Gogol and Sonia), and the second generation find it difficult and couldn't understand the two cultures.

The mixing of the different nationalities creates many tensions in and for the family. Though they live together in a same house and share much, they still have many differences in their life experiences and their orientations with their identities that is mostly related to their Indian-American lives. During his entire life Gogol try to search and find out who he is and where he belongs. Even he frequently visits India with his parents on vacations and other occasions, he could never consider himself an Indian as he was born as well as brought up in America. But at the same time the name, rituals and the family values never let him to be completely American. In sudden vacation, their family moves on to Calcutta for eight months.

Gogol and Sonia felt upset; because they both have missed their school and missed America. They do not know how to call their relatives in Bengali; they call them as uncle and aunty. Their relatives become stranger to them. He can sense the struggles to survive in new culture. For his name changing process, finally his father

accepts it and conveyed him that, “In America, anything is possible. Do as your wish” (100). His father asserts regarding the American society and its principles. His efforts to change his name shows the trauma and frustration that he went through between multiply cultural identities that immigrants often feels or went through.

After changed Gogol’s name as Nikhil, he gets a fake ID and he begins drinking, smoking, goes to parties, addicted to drugs and finally lost his virginity. The changes of his activities expresses the American culture changed his own identity. He is always searching for the identity. Later, he started his love with a beautiful girl named Maxine. His relationship with Maxine suffered when she was unable to understand that why he needed to talk to his mother and sister every evening after the death of his father and she says, “You guys can’t stay with your mother forever” (182) and further when she asks him to come for a holiday “To get away from all this” (182) and he replies “I don’t want to get away” (182). He later on adopts a culture that Eliot describes is somehow alike and different from the parent culture. The story begins with a migration in the first-generation and follows with its specific concern, problems and difficulties that the second generation faces in their life.

*The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri portrays character of people that are psychologically, socially and culturally alienated. It is a story about the hardship, struggles and difficulties of a couple who immigrate from Bengal to United States leaving everything behind for a better life or according to them a life they dreamed about. Yearnings of the exile and the emotional bewilderment, Lahiri herself is the offspring of the first generation immigrants so that belongs to immigrants of the second generation, the difficulties, struggles and problems that are faced by her and the rootlessness and of cultural displacement are depicted in the novel through Gogol Ganguli and reflect the complex cultural and identity crisis.

The novel also presents the different struggles for identity faced by the first generation and second generation throughout their lives. The mixing of two different cultures makes the people unable to cope up with the situation that they face while living lives in an alien nation. The first generation Ashima and Ashoke, a newly wedded couple, who after marriage migrated to a new place in hopes of finding their dream life or a life that they desire. They are sandwiched between their country the place of their birth and the different ideologies of an alien country. Ashima and Ashoke tries their best to adopt the new culture and ideologies but find it difficult as they keep comparing their homeland and the alien land, the feeling of nostalgia keep on returning to them. Ashima refers to period as a period of confusion.

The love they have for their loved ones and homeland keep them connect to their past and gives them a feeling of nostalgia, they have difficult time letting go of her Bengali culture, they tries to hold on to it as much as possible. There are many instances that shows that Ashima and Ashoke tries to keep their native culture intact, for instance when Ashima was pregnant and her water breaks she calls out for Ashoke, without using his name as using one's husband name in Indian culture is something that is not spoken and intimate. Later when she gave birth to baby boy they do not want to name him on their own and wanted their family elder to name the new born, although when the name did not arrive they give him a name Gogol which carries a special meaning to Ashoke. The use of different rituals, foods, clothes and traditions by Jhumpa Lahiri is to show cultural transitions.

In the beginning of novel Ashima was trying to make a spicy Indian snack that is Jhal Muri from the American ingredients like rice krispies and planters peanuts but as usual she felt that there is something missing, the mustard oil, which reminds her of what she have left behind in Calcutta. Ashima also stick up to her Indian culture of

wearing sari that the nurse in the hospital finds difficult to fold and put that in her suitcase. Being an Indian, Ashima is also reluctant to eat beef but for Gogol's sake she makes sandwiches with beef and have an American dinner once a weekend.

Ashima even tried to indulge in home activities as well as tries to interact with the people around her, with this she somehow finds a job as a librarian which results in her coming in more contact with the outside world and becomes friends with her American colleagues and eventually she starts doing her husband's duties like buying tickets, paying the bills and driving the car to wherever she wanted. Ashima's approval of Sonia's marriage with Ben again is her acceptance of multiculturalism. They are caught up between the cultural clash, thought they are excited about their new life in a new land but they still feels that they are somehow losing their original culture, they tries very hard to go hand in hand with both the cultures.

Second generation immigrants Gogol and Sonia are forced to have dual identity and have to struggle between two cultures, they constantly tries to make adjustment with for both American culture in order to mix with the majority and rest of their peers and friends that they grow up with, as well as Indian culture as their parents insist them that they should follow their original culture, tradition and rituals that they used to follow so that they won't forget their roots. They have to cope up with two culture that has nothing in common raises the internal conflicts in the young minds, which keeps on growing as they grow up. They are tore between the puzzlement, pressure and confusion of mix culture or bicultural world that they live in. Gogol and Sonia who tries to build a connection with their parents' homeland but finds it different and difficult from the place they are born. They adore and adhere the culture in which they are born American culture and their national identity become hybrid.

They are more concerned with their rootlessness and mixed biography. Even their daily life become complex as the family is divided into two, two are Indians (Ashoke and Ashima) and the other two are Americans (Gogol and Sonia) and Gogol and Sonia being born and growing up in America find it difficult and couldn't understand the two cultures. These two acts as a link between two widely cultures, but could not locate their own identity in both of the cultures. This mixing of two polar apart cultures causes tension and problems in and for the family. They try to build their cultural history in the host culture or the culture that they are familiar with, unlike their parents who show extreme longing and love for their homeland. Gogol the name given to the boy around whom the story revolves around. His name became the main cause of his alienation.

His name Gogol was given to him by his father when his true or real name sent by his grandmother didn't arrives and the hospital refuses to discharge Ashima without a birth certificate so Ashoke decide to man his boy Gogol after a Russian writer as the author's name held a very vivid experience and means a lot to Ashoke. The novel is dominated by the effect of his name on his relationships to family, friends and lover sand it revolves around him and his struggle that he went through because of his name. The interesting thing or rather ironic part this is that he hates his name Gogol that is neither Indian nor American but Russian adding more confusion and conflict in Gogol's mind about his identity. The name became a burden to him as he cannot fell connected with and it gives him a symbol of identity that he cannot relate himself to.

Gogol's name become a mockery for him in the class. His sister, classmates and all of his friends used to tease him calling him names like googol or giggle, his name was mispronounced by his teachers, and Gogol started feeling uneasy from the



uniqueness of his name. He hated his name so much that when his mother force him to join different classes to make him feel connected to his Bengali culture, he used to make drawing but do not write his name at the bottoms of his drawings just because he felt ashamed by writing this Russian name given to him on his art work. He used to think that his name is both absurd and obscure, and that it does not symbolize his identity or has nothing to do with who he is.

Gogol's uncommon name made him realise that he it does not resembles his American identity, he started feeling insecure and loses his confidence about himself, about his relations with other and even about the country that he was born and brought up in, and the fact that he never met another Gogol made him upset and desperate that he wanted to meet another Gogol, another person who is as conflicted as him. Gogol tries his best to disconnect himself as much as he can from his Indian culture as he was growing up seeing and accepting the American culture, which he thinks that he cannot be fully apart or detach himself of if he accepts his Bengali heritage. The problem with Gogol is that he lives in two different world, and have so much stress that he can't even cope up with that, he is lost and couldn't point out where he is and went far-far away from his parents, culture, tradition and values.

Gogol just wants to be a simple and normal American living in America, rather than an Indian living in America. He feels insecure and that he is an outsider in his own nation, in the place he grew up the place he think was his home, he was not sure who he is and where he belongs and his name Gogol doesn't fit or make him feel connected to either of his Indian or American side. He despises his name to such extent that he think that his name is the reason he was not able to have good relation with people and make new friends, and it sounds weird, absurd, shapeless, and weightless. On his fourteenth birthday he got a book of short stories by Nikola Gogol

as a gift from his, he simply tossed it away showing no interest in knowing or reading about the man upon whom he got his name, and later when he was in his senior year at Yale, his father finally decided to reveal him the story of his name to which he did not pay much attention. He renamed himself from Gogol to Nikhil so that he can be easily accommodated with the host or American culture. “He wonders if this is how it feels for an obese person to become thin, for a prisoner to walk free. ‘I am Nikhil’, he wants to tell the people who are walking their dog, pushing children in their strollers, throwing bread to the ducks” (102).

Gogol’s hard work and efforts in changing his name from Gogol to Nikhil shows the trauma and frustration that he went through between multiple cultural identities that he has. “I am Nikhil, he says for the first time in his life” (96). Gogol started ignoring his Bengali culture and started practicing American values and culture in order to call himself a complete American. He moved out of his parents’ home like others at his age do to show that he is independent, and even started having affairs with different girls and introduces himself as Nikhil only and started living his life like a normal American boy.

Later, his parents made him marry Moushumi, who was another girl whose parents migrated to America from Bengal. Though Moushumi cheated on him and did not remain loyal. When Gogol’s father passed away and had already divorced Moushumi, he decided to stay with his widow mother before she returned back to India. In his old room he finds the book of short stories by Nikolai Gogol given by his father and decided to read the book. “The man who gave you his name, from the man who gave you your name is written within quotation mark” (288). He then understands the significance of his name that carries not only his identity but a deeper meaning for his father and even though his father is no more he feels more connected to him.

In this novel, Gogol has an identity dilemma. The duality of culture threatens his identity as is reflected in his personal relationships. He experiences an emotional turbulence, torn by mixed feelings of love hatred for India, tumult inside him, a growing bewilderment and he is somewhere unable to fully catch up with the western culture. In spite of his westernization, Gogol is not completely cut off from his roots and identity. Gogol tries to reject past and serves all ties with Indian values. His refusal to recognize his relations and continuity with the past and the gaps and fissures of his present condition make him a stranger to himself. In the death of his father, he finds a beginning and understanding of community and of the place of the individual within family in society.

The hour of personal grief unites him to his family and makes him accept their ways. The ambivalence of his in between state causes to vex him anymore. Responding to the binary opposition as complementary rather than oppositional, he eventually discovers and resuscitates his Indian roots and familial ties. Finally, the author comes to an end with getting uprooted from the native culture traditions and values, the loss of indigenous language, man's position as a mere outcast or an unaccommodated alien, together with multiple injuries and lacerations of the psyche, all account of the theme of identity atrophy.

Ashima and Ashoke tries their best to keep up with their traditional values in a foreign land and wanted to give and teach the same to their kids so that they know about their parents and their roots. Gogol does everything to stay away from his roots and wanted to mix up with the culture that he is grown and brought up in but couldn't as he finds himself drifting to his root. Though he faces many identity problems in his teen years he realises that he could not stay away from his roots.

Multiculturalism made him a victim of alienation to its core, only after going through cultural imbalance and facing many difficulties in order to find himself and his identity he is able to stand on his feet without any regret or confusion and is no longer ashamed of himself, nor of the way he has lived his life till then, and no matter how much he tries to be away or leave behind he find himself coming back to his root. After going through all this his identity is strengthened and he feels much confidence in him, and that he is proud of his name Gogol Ganguly.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summation**

Jhumpa Lahiri belongs to the second generation diaspora community. The writings of the diaspora writers reflect the tension of living in between two cultures. Rushdie in his essay “The Indian writer in England”, states that “our physical alienation from Indian almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, India’s of the mind” (76).

Lahiri was born in London in 1967. She was named Nilanjana Sudeshna. She along with her parents moved to Rhode Island when she was two because of her father’s job as a librarian in the University Town. Lahiri didn’t experience life in London much even though it is her birth place and especially when England and India have had a relationship that goes deep into history which America has never had and that brings its own complications and presumption to the mix. Lahiri thinks that U.S. is a unique country for the immigrant experience and her general impression is that America, at least for her and the families, is a more welcoming place.

Lahiri talks about displacements and deracination of the immigrants and thinks that almost any American can connect some level to a family background of having come across some ocean. As D. Sujaritha argues in her essay that not all the diaspora writers are interested in writing the same features of the concept but there are two different kinds. The first kinds want to locate their writing in their home country and the second who locate themselves in the host country and talks about the changes they gone through and sometimes the developments or dissatisfactions in lives are portrayed through the characters.

Lahiri in her writing mostly talks about the cultural clash and the question of identity. Lahiri also tries her best to describe some proper native characters living in India through her own perspective and as readers they can tell she did wonderful job and it shows that even though she was born and brought up in foreign land she is never rooted from her nativeness and that's is something very significant about diaspora writing. Lahiri has created her space importantly in the diaspora writings and her fictions tells us a lot about the experiences of the migrant families where they have both the first generation and second generation telling their story separately. Each of them has got that the plight of living in a foreign land and for those of the second generation they have got their own difficulties of blending in with the culture of their ancestors and the culture of their own.

Lahiri has travelled extensively to India and has experienced the effects of colonialism there as well as experienced the issues of the diaspora as it exists. She feels strong ties to her parents' homeland as well as the United States and England. Growing up with ties to all three countries created in Lahiri a sense of homelessness and an inability to feel accepted. Her familial ties to India were not enough to make India "home" for Lahiri, "I didn't grow up there; I wasn't a part of things. We visited often but we didn't have a home. We were clutching at a world that was never fully with us" (Interview with Vibhuti Patel in Newsweek International, 9-20-99).

Lahiri writes about people whose existence has been shaped by unsettlement and she says that her sister's roots were almost hydroponic because it had nowhere to cling and for this reason she couldn't consider her childhood happy. Her experiences differed from her parents because they had originally come from a land somewhere, firm ground. The living away from their own land was the source of pain and frustrations but at least there was a land they thought of as home which Lahiri didn't

have had until her own family life started and she got married, settle down with her husband and two children she now can feel the belongingness after living thirty eight years in the US. Lahiri married a Greek Guatemalan -American journalist and they can see that she chose a partner who also has a mixed ethnicity and which gives her sense of diversity in her nature.

In Jhumpa Lahiri's writing the two worlds of the East and West have been brought together. Her themes such as assimilation, broken relationships, home, exile, dual identity, rootlessness, hybridity gives us better understanding of Lahiri as a diaspora writer. The stories she tells us says more of her intercontinental journey during which she gets herself accustomed to both Indian and American culture. Her writings are filled with details of traditional Indian names, food descriptions, recipes, Indian dressing styles and rituals.

Lahiri here plays as an ambassador of the Indian diaspora. Lahiri's view on the immigrant fiction is very different. And she actually questions the system and things that why one would get marginalised for writing about a specific theme. Lahiri thinks that writers have always tended to write about the worlds they come from and it is just so happens that many writers originates from different parts of the world than they end up living in to another, either by choice or for necessity of the circumstances and therefore write about their experiences. The term diaspora, exile, alienation belongingness, expatriation are mostly similar to each other in the meaning in the world of diaspora writers and they contain some kind of ambiguity in nature and tells about being both a refugee and ambassador in the foreign land.

Here diaspora became a mode of cultural protection or it can be called a social form where it talks about merging in a different culture creating hybrid identities. Lahiri wanted to construct a different kind of picture of the diaspora life for her

readers the fictions. The diasporic space has a unique nature. Lahiri's characters show both the negativity and positivity to their diasporic adventure. She portrays the positive consequences of a flexibility and changing lifestyle in immigrant's life. The characters in *The Namesake* experience pain because they live in a marginal position between two cultures. They keep themselves in both the sides of culture, two traditions and two ideologies which cause identity crisis, rootlessness and conflicts. The way they look at their past and their own nature culture determine their future. Lahiri shows such problems that prove that the old definitions of home as a place of safety and peace has changed in the diasporic world.

Diaspora not only led to the crossing of borders. It denotes the journey across the less visible boundaries of time, space, ethnicity, traditional values, language etc. The diasporic subjects relocate into a new landscape and creates something afresh. They cannot simply abandon their old lifestyle and traditions and gradually get shifted to the host land also the interplay between the good and bad should be acknowledged in the diasporic space.

In *The Namesake*, Lahiri enriches the themes that made her collection an international bestseller: the immigrant experience, the clash of cultures, the conflicts of assimilation, and, most poignantly, the tangled ties between generations. Here again Lahiri displays her deft touch for the perfect detail - the fleeting moment, the turn of phrase - that opens whole worlds of emotion.

*The Namesake* takes the Ganguli family from their tradition-bound life in Calcutta through their fraught transformation into Americans. On the heels of their arranged wedding, Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli settle together in Cambridge, Massachusetts. An engineer by training, Ashoke adapts far less warily than his wife, who resists all things American and pines for her family. When their son is born, the



task of naming him betrays the vexed results of bringing old ways to the new world. Named for a Russian writer by his Indian parents in memory of a catastrophe years before, Gogol Ganguli knows only that he suffers the burden of his heritage as well as his odd, antic name.

Lahiri brings great empathy to Gogol as he stumbles along the first-generation path, strewn with conflicting loyalties, comic detours, and wrenching love affairs. With penetrating insight, she reveals not only the defining power of the names and expectations bestowed upon us by our parents, but also the means by which we slowly, sometimes painfully, come to define ourselves.

The novel *The Namesake* is not just a relatable read for immigrants, it is also an elegantly told family saga with universal themes; of love, of the profound relationship between a father and a son, of teenage angst, of feeling pulled by different worlds yet not completely belonging to either, of the unpredictability of life and relationships and of endings which are real and not always happily ever after.

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**Ethics of Alterity: A Psychological Reading of Paula Hawkins'**

***The Girl on the Train***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Sakthi Bhavani. S**

**(Reg. No. 21APEN21)**



**PG and Research Department of English**

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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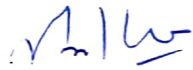
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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Ethics of Alterity: A Psychological Reading of Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train*** 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 Sakthi Bhavani.S during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Ethics of Alterity: A Psychological Reading of Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train*** 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**

**April 2023**

  
**Sakthi Bhavani. S**



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## Preface

The twenty first century British novelist Paula Hawkins is best known for her thriller novels. She began writing romantic anti comedies under the pen name Amy Silver before she could gain a reputation for her best psychological thriller *The Girl on the Train*.

Paula Hawkins in *The Girl on the Train* exhibits life by exposing the lives of different people through their stories from their vicarious experiences. It is written from the poem experience of the writer. It is one strong tale of survival and grit that delves for and against the confusing central character in a dynamic landscape that keeps on shifting perspectives.

The project entitled **Ethics of Alterity: A Psychological Reading of Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train*** analyses how the society's expectations of women often push them to the breaking point, leading them to seek out or fall victim to dangerous situations.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the writer and characteristic features of the twenty first century novels with special reference to her best psychological thriller novel *The Girl on the Train*.

The second chapter **Paradigm of Recession Women** features how the middle-class women Rachel, Megan, and Anna each struggle with the societal expectations that have placed upon them even though their personal lives grow increasingly unstable and dangerous due to their disastrous relationships with abusive men

The third chapter **Psychodynamics of Women** exhibits through the important characters Rachel and Megan how psychic disorders were common during the Recession period due to over work, stress, betrayal, alcoholism, neglect, and the consequent disturbances in their lives and relationships.

The fourth chapter **Vulnerability** shows how society fails its most vulnerable

women by constraining them into visions of femininity defined by propriety and benevolence only to disenfranchise them when they do not conform to such stifling standard.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters.

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

## Chapter one

### Introduction

The British novelist Paula Hawkins is one of the famous twenty first century writers, who reflect on the psyche of the people in the modern era. She began writing romantic anti comedies under the pen name Amy Silver before she could gain a reputation for her best psychological thriller *The Girl on the Train*.

Paula Hawkins's best known twenty century novel *The Girl on the Train* exhibits life by exposing the lives of different people through their stories from their vicarious experiences. It is written from the poem experience of the writer. It is one strong tale of survival and grit that delves for and against the confusing central character in a dynamic landscape that keeps on shifting perspectives.

The 21st century writers often consciously draw inspiration and ideas from the writers who have come before them. As a result, many works of 21<sup>st</sup> century literature grapple with the events, movements and literature of the past in order to make sense of the present. Additionally, the technological advancements of the 21st century have led other writers to hypothetically write about the future, usually to comment on the present and evoke introspection.

With increasing globalization, intersections of cultures and more vocal discussions of women's rights and LGBT rights, identity has become a common theme in 21st century literature. In a world that is now able to exchange ideas more quickly than ever before via the Internet and other technological advancements, people have relatively more freedom to draw from multiple cultures and philosophies and question the concept of the self and its relation to the body, brain and soul. Evidences could be seen from novels like *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay* by Michael Chabon where the hero Sam Clay struggles to

come to terms with his homosexuality. The novel which won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 2001 is about the young comic book collaborators during the World War II era. With her 2008 book *Infidel*, Ayaan Hirsi Ali became a feminist voice for the rights of abused Muslim women and religious freedom.

History and memory have become themes in 21st century literature as contemporary readers are able to look back on history and see how history has been depicted differently for different audiences. Often contemporary literature explores the notion of multiplicities of truth and acknowledges that history is filtered through human perspective and experience. *The March* by E.L. Doctorow depicts the realities of General Sherman's famous march during the U.S. Civil War, and how people of the South were slaughtered, giving a slightly different perspective of how the North is usually depicted.

Technology today is more integrated into people's lives than ever before. Dreams of what technology could potentially help people become and anxieties regarding the demise of humanity as a result of technology, can be seen in 21st century literature. There are books about biotechnology helping people with disabilities, such as *Machine Man* by Max Barry. Additionally, many 21st century works of literature explore what it means when all of humanity's experiences are filtered through technology. *Ready Player One* by Ernest Cline depicts a futuristic world where everyone escapes reality by plugging into a virtual utopia.

In postmodern style, many contemporary writers recognize a piece of work as being one among many throughout history. As such, many writers purposely include acknowledgements, references or parallels to other works of fiction, recognizing their place in a larger, broader conversation, context and body of work. Some inter textual themes go as far as to poke fun at a work's own lack of originality or the clichés that it seemingly cannot escape.

Betrayal, loneliness, and stress have also become some of the important themes in 21st century. Infertility was a very common condition among women and they were stressed due to that. Infertility was one of the main reasons for women being often neglected. Even though people were busy with their own lives they were envious of others as well. Since women concentrated more on their profession than on their family and domestic works, they started to appoint nannies and maids to look after their family. Due to over work and stress people started to drink alcohol in a wide range. Consequently, many were depressed and had experienced traumatic pain that had disturbed their lives and relationships.

Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train* is a novel which reflects one such theme of 21st century trauma that affects families. The heroine Rachel is one such social victim, who has been portrayed as one gone through betrayal, alcoholism, stress, neglect, trauma and so on. But she satisfies herself through gazing and watching perfect couples.

The novel tells the story of Rachel, a woman in her early 30s who drinks too much, obsessed with her ex-boyfriend and thinks she witnesses a crime from the train. It's an outline that doesn't do justice to Hawkins's storytelling. Anyone who has travelled on those suburban trains into London – drunk or otherwise would have recognised the writer's skill at evoking not only the fugue state one enters staring through the window, but the oddness of looking across the embankments into people's lives. Blackout drinking was a good subject, too.

Paula Hawkins was born on August 26, 1972, in Harare, Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia). She grew up among intellectuals, diplomats, and artists in Zimbabwe before her family moved to England in 1989. She graduated from Oxford University with a degree in philosophy, politics, and economics. Before moving to London in 1989 at 17, Hawkins attended Arundel School, Harare, Zimbabwe then studied for her A-Levels at Collingham

College, an independent college in Kensington, West London. When the family moved to London in 1989, she was in her mid-teens, and the experience is dimly present in her preoccupations as a novelist. Suburban Harare in the 80s, she says, was provincial, parochial and, in the years after the war and independence from Britain, still incredibly reactionary. As her father was an academician and journalist, and her mother a South African both lived in Zimbabwe for most of their lives. As a place to grow up, it was simultaneously very privileged and stiflingly narrow, “almost like 50s America. Everyone was sexist and everyone smoked.

When she came to England, she had very romantic ideas about how liberal and tolerant and right everyone was going to be. And they were, relatively speaking just not as much as she thought. Hawkins read philosophy, politics and economics at Keble College, University of Oxford. She worked as a journalist for *The Times*, reporting on business. She then worked for a number of publications on a freelance basis, and wrote a financial-advice book for women, *The Money Goddess*. It wasn't an easy landing. An interest in economics and finance ran in the family her father was an economics professor, and she worked at the financial desk for *The Times* and various other places.

Hawkins's parents eventually moved back, and now live in South Africa. Pre-pandemic, she saw them roughly once a year, a scarcity of contact that spared them a lot of anxiety when she was in her late 30s and floundering. After graduating from Oxford, she worked for years in London as a freelance financial journalist, and was spotted by Lizzy Kremer, an extremely enterprising agent who invited her to write a book. This was *The Money Goddess*, a nonfiction guide to personal finance published in 2007. From there, Kremer came up with the idea of Hawkins writing a novel under a pseudonym, a piece of romantic fiction based loosely around a recession-era theme. *Confessions of a Reluctant Recessionista* was the first in a series of four novels written by Hawkins as Amy Silver,

which did solid business but never broke through. And it is partly aesthetic; lingering on pain is not her style.

There is a briskness to her, both in person and on the page, that perhaps is due to her upbringing in Zimbabwe. She worked and had her publications until the market crash in 2008–09. In 2009 Paula Hawkins turned to fiction, publishing four romantic comedies under the pen name Amy Silver with little success. In what she calls a last effort to establish herself as a fiction writer, Hawkins borrowed money from her father and holed up in her apartment for six months to write a thriller. Desperate for a contract so she could put food on the table, Hawkins had her agent send the manuscript to publishers before it was finished, creating a bidding war. The rest, as they say, is history.

Hawkins's novels are concerned with outsiders the face at the window looking in and, emotionally at least, she writes from experience. London was a relief, in some ways. In Harare, one could never get anywhere without a car. In London, suddenly one could go out on the tube, do things; there was a freedom. But it was also scary and discombobulating and she didn't truly settle for years. The first thing she did was ditch her accent for everybody assumed her a South African and nobody liked white South Africans in 1989 but it was years until she made any good English friends. Not until she went to university. She made friends with foreigners. She felt an outsider in UK, but then she increasingly felt an outsider when she went back to Zimbabwe. That leaves her in no man's land, to some degree.

She is the author of two bestseller novels. The novel *All I Want for Christmas*, was published in 2010; *One Minute to Midnight*, published in 2011; *A Slow Fire Burning* was published in 2012; *The Reunion*, in 2013; *Confessions of a Reluctant Recessionist*, is a romantic comedy fiction all under her pen name Amy Silver. She wrote the first of those



novels, she says then from a pre-existing idea, which made for a tremendously useful writing experience.

*The Girl on the Train* was Hawkins's last hope; the final Silver novel hadn't sold; her freelance career was stuttering. The turn to more dramatic material felt truer to what she wanted to write at a point when she had nothing to lose. In the weeks and months that followed the publication of the novel, there was no single moment when Hawkins understood what it would become. The momentum built, US sales started to go through the roof, the movie went into production and it was genuinely thrilling and mostly very happy.

The movie, which was released the following year, disappointed a lot of fans of the book. The London setting was replaced to odd effect with a train travelling through the upscale suburbs of New York. Hawkins remarks, and although she thought the film worked pretty well, she understood the complaints. *The Girl on the Train* has sold 23 million copies worldwide and it has been adapted into a major motion picture. And this novel is published in over fifty languages. The novel was adapted into a film starring Emily Blunt in 2016.

Hawkins second thriller novel was *Into the water* which was performed well and became a Sunday Times best sellers of 2017. It started, for Paula Hawkins, with the memory of a story and a walk along the canal near her London flat. It was in 2018 she was wandering around trying to think of idea for *Into the Water* her second novel to be published under her own name and she was still experiencing aftershocks from the extraordinary success of her first, *The Girl on the Train* which had sold a staggering 20million copies and been made into a film. Hawkins was mulling new options while she walked peering into people's houseboats – lovely, pretty ones with flower pots on the roof and solar panels, and also the ones that are sinking into the water and look as if nobody has touched them for years. The thought she had was: “There could be anything in there.” Hawkins's life changed, but she didn't lose her

head. She knuckled down, per her training, and wrote another novel. The biggest benefit of having a hit that huge is that it buys freedom to experiment with the next one. The drawback is that lots of readers and critics would prefer it if one simply repeated the first. This was her experience of publishing *Into the Water*, a murder mystery set in Northumberland, which was deemed by some critics a poor follow-up (it still sold 4m copies).

Hawkins while speaking via video from Edinburgh says that the result of her walk three years ago was *A Slow Fire Burning*, set on and around the canal in north London and featuring a cast of characters all of whom, to one degree or another, are satisfyingly bent out of shape. There is Theo, a self-pitying middle-aged novelist, still involved with his snooty ex-wife, Carla. There is Miriam, occupant of one of the houseboats and bearer of the kind of malevolent energy that inclines people to cross the towpath to avoid her. There is poor Angela, wraith-like and destroyed by some event in her past. And there is Laura, the central character of the book, who grew out of a dim memory Hawkins had of reading about a girl with a traumatic brain injury. Most of her themes being someone who'd been in an accident that led to personality changes and challenges in life, a dead body shows up, and off it goes and yet she would present to the world quite normally.

*A Slow Fire Burning* is a treat: utterly readable, moving in parts and saturated with the kind of localized detail that made *The Girl on the Train* so compelling. It's also delivered unsentimentally and with an eye on the clichés of the genre; there is violence in her novels, but the female characters aren't graphically tortured. Some of this is moral; Hawkins grew up watching horror movies she didn't like them, but her best friend did and she was always cognisant of that fetishisation of fear; that enjoyment of women being terrified that seems to go on and on and on. *Blind Spot*, published in April 2022; *The Money Goddess*, published in 2007 and *Punt CEC*, published in 2022.

Psychoanalysis, one of the modern theories, that are employed in English literature to interpret the hidden meaning of a literary text helps to examine the innate conglomerate of the writer's personality. It also helps to understand the factors that contribute to his experience from birth to the period of writing a book. Paula Hawkins represented the toxic effects of personality disorders in *The Girl on the Train* through Megan. Megan experienced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Histrionic Personality disorder and antisocial personality disorder. Thus, Paula Hawkins had expressed it through an ambiguous style of narration in the novel *The Girl on the Train*.

Paula Hawkins was influenced by Donna Tartt's novel *The secret History*. It was very important in her 20s as it inspired in her a desire to write a certain sort of crime fiction. Being inspired by Donna Tartt she wrote *The Girl on the Train* as a psychological thriller novel gives narratives from three different women about relationship troubles caused by coercive or controlling men. The novel debuted in the number one spot on The New York Times Fiction Best Sellers of 2015 list both in the form of printed version and e-book version, dated 1<sup>st</sup> February 2015, and remained in the top position for 13 consecutive weeks, until April 2015. In January 2016 it became the first best-seller again for two weeks. Many reviews referred to the book as *The Next Gone Girl*, referring to a popular 2012 psychological mystery, by Gillian Flynn, with similar themes that used unreliable narrators. The idea for the story struck Paula Hawkins years ago on her morning commute, when she often found herself staring into the yards and windows of homes she passed. She wondered what she would do if she saw something sinister. She influenced by non-fiction than fiction; by the precise, taut, restrained tone of books like *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote or *The Red Parts* by Maggie Nelson. The book which changed her mind is Steve Biko's *I Write What I Like*, which she read when she was about 13 or 14, was quite an eye-opener for a white child growing up in Southern Africa.

Paula Hawkins tells her novel *The Girl on the Train* in the first-person limited-omniscient perspective from the points of view of the three primary female characters – Rachel, Anna, and Megan.

It is set in contemporary London, and it features middle-class characters who are striving to realize outdated ideals of financial success, familial togetherness, and home ownership in the midst of a rapidly-changing social environment and global economy. The story is told in the first person from the perspective of three female characters: Rachel, Anna and Megan. It becomes apparent, that each of the three narrators is unreliable and each reveals significant personal character flaws throughout the telling of the story. It is via these three accounts that the reader is gradually able to piece together the exact nature of events.

Anna represents the ideal modern woman who has it all: a home, a family, and a husband who supports her. Rachel and Megan, however, represent existential challenges to Anna's perfect embodiment of maternal instinct and femininity. Rachel, an alcoholic who has long struggled with infertility, represents the struggles of what happens when one tries yet fails to be a complete, perfect modern woman. Megan, a wild woman who cannot or will not stay still and adapt to the pressures of domesticity, represents resistance to an unattainable paradigm of contemporary womanhood.

The divorcee Rachel Watson commutes every day to New York by train and watches the old house where she lived with her husband Tom Watson through the window. Rachel is an alcoholic and infertile woman that frequently has blackouts and shares an apartment with her friend Cathy. Tom is married with Anna Boyd with the baby Evie. Their babysitter is Megan Hipwell that lives with her husband Scott in the same neighbourhood in the suburb. Rachel admires Megan and Scott since she believes they are the perfect couple. However,

Megan is a promiscuous woman that has affairs with many men including her psychiatrist Dr Kamal Abdic.

When Rachel sees Megan kissing another man on the balcony of her house, she decides to have a conversation with Megan after drinking in a bar. However, she has a blackout and awakens with bruises in her apartment. Soon she learns that Megan is missing and Detective Riley is in charge of the investigation and she visits Rachel to interrogate her since the neighbours had seen an alcoholic woman wandering in the area. However, Rachel does not recall what she did that night. Rachel decides to investigate the case and has dreadful discoveries about her life and Tom.

Paula Hawkins has written the novel *The Girl on the Train* in the perspective of both gender, male as well as female. Even though the Antagonist of the novel is a male character (Tom), she brings out the positive male character called Scott. And she projects Rachel as a positive character to the audience who considered herself as a negative, alcoholic character. Rachel considered Anna as a villain of her life but at the end of the novel, Anna is the one who helps Rachel to escape from Tom's murder case. In the first part of the novel Rachel imagines herself as a perfect wife who is leading a perfect marriage life with her husband, but at the second half she comes to know that Megan is having lots of illegal affairs.

The title of the novel is inspired by Paula's experience. As stated in writing.ie when Paula was interviewed as special guest, she said:

A book for me is a confluence of ideas and emotions, and this one started when I first moved to London, where I felt uprooted and lonely, and I loved, on my daily commute, to look into other people's houses. I loved to imagine their lives, or to wish myself into their situation, to wonder, who would I be if I lived there?

*The Girl on the Train* tries to provide a meditation on many things – alcoholism, the difference between idea and action, anything but the state of modern public transport really - but its chief goal is the same. Except, instead of probing into the complex psychology of breakups Rachel discovers that, despite her rampant drunkenness, Tom was a man who has lots of affairs, which seems to exonerate her of all guilt for all the genuinely bad things she did while under the influence. There's no balancing act or attempt at nuance, just a reinforcement of black-and-white breakups.

Janet Maslin reviewed Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train* for the New York Times in 2015, and compared it to Gillian Flynn's 2012 runaway best-seller *Gone Girl*. Most reviewers followed suit. *The Girl on the Train* soon became the fastest-selling adult novel in history. *The Girl on the Train* has to be appreciated for it presents the idea that women are faced with numerous challenges and events that can lead them to do certain things that may affect their lives in very positive or negative ways. Either way, this book provides excitement while addressing the real issues that women are facing in today's world, through the use of a few unpredictable narrators.

## Chapter Two

### Paradigm of Recession Women

Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train* is a novel about how society's expectations of women often push them to the breaking point, leading them to seek out or fall victim to dangerous situations. The novel is framed on the several themes of memory, deception, alcoholism, betrayal, domestic violence, freedom, drug abuse, relationship troubles, abandonment, harassment, loneliness, stress, trauma, freedom, jealousy, innocence, unreliable narratives, and an obsession with the dark and macabre happenings. It thematically explores the impact of trauma and subsequent disorders on memory and the desire for a different life in a suburban dystopia. The complex mystery creates suspense by slowly releasing and re-contextualizing information.

Set in contemporary London, *The Girl on the Train* as a recession period novel featured middle-class characters who strives to realize outdated ideals of financial success, familial togetherness, and home ownership in the midst of a rapidly-changing social environment and global economy. As women are faced with numerous challenges and events that lead them to do certain things that may affect their lives in very positive or negative ways the narrator addresses the real issues that women face in today's world, through the use of a few unpredictable narrators. Hawkins suggests that society is structured to overwhelm, overburden, and then ultimately abandon women in their greatest moments of need.

The story is a first-person narrative told from the point of view of three women: Rachel Watson, Anna Boyd, and Megan Hipwell. Rachel's narration begins in 2013 as she commutes on the train into London from the suburbs. Rachel Watson is the main character of *The Girl on the Train* who worked in a public relation firm. She was married

to Tom and had a blissfully happy life. Tom's coming made a difference in her life. He saved Rachel from sorrow, when her dad passed away. Their marriage gave her much happiness. Then they moved to their own house in number twenty-three. They also were making plans of the decoration of the house. "...he went to get the papers and I made scrambled eggs; we sat in the kitchen drinking tea, we went to the pub for a late lunch, we fell asleep, tangled up together in front of the TV." (44). She recollects:

Not when I met Tom, who saved me from grief, after Dad died. Not when we married, carefree, drenched in bliss, on an oddly wintry may day seven years ago. I was happy, solvent, successful. Not when we moved into number twenty-three, a roomier, lovelier house than I'd imagined I'd live in at the tender age of twenty-six. (57-58)

Their marriage did not last long. From their marriage, they did not have any child. They divorced because Rachel was unstable and Tom was having affair. Since they divorced, Rachel's life became messed. Rachel lives with her university friend, Cathy, after she broke up with her husband and had nowhere to live. She has no job but hides it from Cathy. She drinks to overcome the stress, separation of her husband, and infertility:

When I drink, I hardly sleep at all. I pass out cold for an hour or two, then I wake, sick with fear, sick with myself. If I have a day when I don't drink, that night. I fall into the heaviest of slumbers, a deep unconsciousness, and in the morning, I cannot wake properly, I cannot shake sleep, it stays with me for hours, sometimes all day long. (36)

Tom left her and married Anna, and has a daughter with her. Tom's daughter Evie fuels Rachel's self-destructive tendencies, as it was her inability to conceive a child that began her turn to alcoholism. "My friends were having children, friends of friends were



having children, pregnancy and birth and first birthday parties were everywhere. I was asked about it all the time.” (84)

Rachel follows her old routine of taking the train to and from London every day, one at 8:04 in the morning and the other at 5:56 in the evening. Her train slowly passes her old house on Blenheim Road, where Tom, Anna, and Evie now live. She also begins watching from the train an attractive couple who live a few houses away from Tom. She idealises their life christening them "Jason" and "Jess". It elevated problems in the existence of Rachel Wilson. As she attempts not to focus on her pain, she starts watching a couple who live a few houses down, Megan and Scott Hipwell.

Every day, she takes the same morning and evening trains, observing the same suburban houses by the tracks. However, there is one house that she cannot wait to see each day. She loves this house because it reminds her of her past, perfect life, before she and Tom divorced. Though she has no idea that their life is far from perfect Rachel gave such name to the “impeccable” spouses, whose life she watches day after day from the train window. They seem to have everything that Rachel herself recently lost-love, happiness, and well-being. Even though Rachel finds the way of their living attractive, the relationship between Megan and Scott was on the verge of deterioration.

Despite having lost her job in public relations due to her alcohol use disorder, Rachel continues to take the trains she used to ride and fantasizes about the neighbours of her ex-husband, Tom Watson. Tom, his new wife Anna, and their baby live near Megan and Scott Hipwell. After fantasizing about their happy life, Rachel is upset when she sees Megan kiss a man other than Scott who turns out to be her therapist, Dr. Kamal Abdic on her terrace that faces the train. Rachel drinks heavily and blacks out that night.

Rachel spends much of the time trying to recall the events of the night Megan was murdered. This quest is interrupted by many moments of recalling her marriage with Tom. When they learned she was infertile, Rachel began abusing alcohol. Tom exploited this weakness and planted false memories about the times Rachel blacked out from drinking. He manipulated her into believing she was violent and cruel. Only at the end of the novel, through a long process involving free writing, therapy, attempting to be addiction-free, visiting locations she was at while drunk, and talking to other people who witnessed her actions while drunk, does Rachel recover her memories. Memories of Tom abusing her during their marriage are uncovered alongside memories of Tom hitting her before getting into a car with Megan the night of her murder.

During Megan's murder investigation, Rachel visits Scott to tell him about seeing Megan kiss Kamal. One night, they get drunk together and had sex. When Scott learns that Rachel lied about knowing Megan from her old art gallery, he becomes aggressive and locks her in a room. After releasing her, Scott doesn't speak to Rachel again, even when she tries to apologize.

Meanwhile, Anna offers a different perspective of the same time periods as Rachel. She thinks about her past as Tom's mistress and how she stole him away from Rachel. However, motherhood is not what Anna expected, and Rachel's continued presence in Tom's life upsets Anna. She initially believes Rachel might have killed Megan and thinks Tom cheats on her with Rachel. However, she discovers Megan's phone in Tom's gym bag, which reveals their affair.

When Rachel tells Anna that Tom has killed Megan, Anna sides with Tom, as he then is holding their baby. Tom nearly kills Rachel, and Anna does not try to stop him. However, once he gives her the baby back, Anna prepares to call the police. Rachel, in

self-defence, stabs Tom in the neck with a corkscrew. Anna ensures that the corkscrew goes in deep enough for him to die and then tells the authorities that Rachel killed Tom in self-defence. The police, after suspecting both Kamal and Scott in Megan's murder, accept that Tom is the murderer and Rachel is free to go. The novel ends with Rachel, sober, taking a trip to the beach, as Megan had dreamed of doing, and travelling north on a train.

Hawkins uses the first of her three protagonists and narrators, Rachel, to demonstrate how society overburdens women with expectations of traditional femininity and maternal duty yet fails to support them at their most vulnerable. Rachel is a lonely, unemployed woman with a drinking problem and few attachments. Her former husband, Tom, left her a little over a year ago for another woman, and Rachel regularly overhears the people in her life describe her as a "desperate" and overweight alcoholic. Rachel does not conform to a traditional image of femininity: she is single, childless, and withdrawn. Her drinking problem- which often leaves her with gaps in her memory and contributes to her slovenly appearance-means that she's unable to take care of herself. Although Rachel's behaviour concerns those around her, these people judge her rather than doing anything to help her.

As Hawkins delves into Rachel's back story, she reveals that Rachel and her ex-husband Tom struggled for years to conceive a child. Unable to fulfil society's expectation that she become a mother, Rachel drank to console herself-often to the point of blacking out. And unfortunately, these blackouts made her more vulnerable to her husband's verbal and physical rages. Tom's abuse speaks to the way that society shames rather than helps women who struggle with infertility, abuse, self-hatred, and addiction and who fail to live up to societal expectations.

Hawkins uses Megan, the second narrator and protagonist, to showcase how society fails to secure justice for women who cannot obtain it for themselves. Like Rachel, Megan Hipwell also doesn't conform to society's vision of maternity and femininity. At first glance, she seems like a confident, self-assured woman-but her past is riddled with trauma, loss, and dark secrets. She has had to fend for herself since she was only 16 years old, and society has never protected her. She doesn't feel she fits in with the posh, athleisure-clad women who live in her small suburban town-and yet Megan works to keep up appearances. Because of the façade Megan creates, she slips through the cracks of society when she most needs help. The experiences and abuses she hides in order to conform complicate the investigation of her disappearance in unforeseen ways.

As investigators look into Megan's life and find more and more evidence of her departure from the feminine mainstream, they begin to actively demonize her for her choices. As Megan's dark past comes to light over the course of the investigation into her disappearance, the detectives working the case ultimately fail to prioritize Megan and suggest that her murder may have been her own fault-that is, her rebellious, promiscuous choices in life brought about her tragic end. With this, Hawkins shows how society fails to give Megan justice, both in life and in death.

Megan's perspective, started about a year before Rachel's into 2012, also juxtaposes the past and the present. While working as a nanny for Tom and Anna, Megan begins having an affair with Tom. After a year of sleeping together, Megan becomes pregnant with his child. Megan's emotionally abusive husband, Scott, becomes physically abusive when she tells him about the affair.

Before Tom murders Megan, she works with a therapist, Kamal. In her sessions with Kamal, as well as in moments of private reverie, Megan recalls the death of her

brother, the incidents that made her a teenage mother, and killing her first child, and the consequent abandonment, and her discussion to become a mother again. While Megan attempts to have an affair with Kamal, he only kisses her. When Tom tells Megan to go for abortion, she becomes angry and aggressive and he responds by killing her.

Anna, Tom's new wife and the novel's third narrator, demonstrates how society pits women against one another, forcing them to value male approval and companionship over female friendships. Such a situation can put women in danger and leave them with little support. Anna recalls how being "the other woman" felt exciting in the early days of her affair with Tom. Even though she knew he was married, she found his attention thrilling and came to see Rachel as an enemy. Indeed, when Tom left Rachel for Anna, Anna felt like she had won-and this feeling of victory blinded her to his pattern of emotional abuse. When Rachel confronts Tom about Megan's disappearance, Rachel is uncertain if Anna will defend her against Tom's increasingly dangerous blows or remain complicit in his cruelty and violence.

The women of the novel are conditioned to prioritise men's approval-and Rachel thus believes that Anna will side with Tom, in order to retain his love and confidence, rather than challenging his violent behaviour. It's at this point that Anna witnesses Tom's abuse toward Rachel and discovers his affair with Megan, but she finds herself unable to accept the truth about her husband. She continues to see Rachel and Megan as promiscuous, threatening, or insane. This further isolates Anna with Tom, a dangerous man who has committed at least one murder.

Anna's character shows how women often internalise a hatred and distrust of other women whom they view as competitors or rivals, and how this phenomenon can further women's isolation, vulnerability, and proximity to danger. Because society so often pits

women against one another, women become even more vulnerable. They often fail to ask for help even when they desperately need it out of a desire to hide from their perceived “competitors” the very vulnerabilities that the world around them has created.

Throughout *The Girl on the Train*, Hawkins shows how society fails its most vulnerable women by constraining them into visions of femininity defined by propriety and benevolence only to disenfranchise them when they do not conform to such stifling standards. Rachel, Megan, and Anna each struggle with the societal expectations that have been placed upon them-even as their personal lives grow increasingly unstable and dangerous.

One of the ways Hawkins controls information is through Rachel’s memory. Because Rachel is a heavy drinker prone to collapse she can’t remember the events of an important night and has been misremembering the events of other nights. This functions as a red herring. The reader thinks they know what is happening, then Rachel remembers another piece and what the reader (and Rachel) suspected becomes wrong. This works because Rachel is only desperately trying to remember one night. If she had been drunk so often, she couldn’t remember any night, readers would become frustrated and annoyed by the lack of reliable information and possibly stop reading.

Another way Hawkins controls information for plot twists is by using multiple points of view. By showing parts of the story through Rachel, Megan, and Anna, the reader knows more than any single character. This creates tension and suspense. For example, the reader knows Megan is murdered, so when she is alone at night or shouting at her husband, the reader worries this is the scene she dies in.

One great aspect of the plot twists in *The Girl on the Train* is how they shift the way the reader views the characters. Megan does not appear to be an unreliable narrator in her

first couple of chapters because the reader doesn't know about her past, her indiscretions, or her wishy-washy desires. Almost every character changes as the reader learns more about them and they interact with each other. I can't really say more about this without giving something away.

One of the themes Hawkins used best was the train itself. Each character has a different yet strong feeling about the train. Rachel loves it, Anna hates it, and Megan wishes to travel like it. The train is both a literal and practical form of transportation and a symbolic one. It is also an interruption and a witness.

While the image and setting are used well in the story, they were used expertly in marketing the novel. People on a train is an evocative image because it implies they are going somewhere, they are in transition, and trains provide an opportunity for travelers to move around and interact in a way other forms of transportation do not. This makes people curious. There are more possibilities, so potential readers want to know what happens. Trains were also used as a part of the book's release party when various supporters rode trains while reading the novel.

In *The Girl on the Train*, women are defined by rather traditional roles: the sexy lover, the loyal and submissive wife, and the devoted mother. Rachel, Megan, and Anna define themselves not as independent women, but in relation to a husband or lover or as part of a family unit. In fact, although all three women are professionals, they either gave up working once they got married or longed to do so. Anna, a former real estate agent, is now a stay-at-home mother. Megan, who used to run an art gallery, stays at home because Scott does not want her to work. And Rachel, the only one who kept working in her marriage, only did so to facilitate the expensive infertility treatments that were supposed to make her the stay-at-home mother she longed to be.

The financial dependence that comes with being a stay-at-home wife or mother finds expression in emotional dependence. Megan feels inextricably bound to Mac, who in her mind rescued her after her brother's death, only to abandon her when she was most vulnerable. He left her alone to care for a newborn baby when she was just a teenager and deserted her after the baby accidentally drowned. Instead of realizing that Mac carries some of the responsibility for the tragic death of their child, Megan is drowned in guilt, not only over the baby's death but also over the breakup of their relationship.

Similarly, Rachel blames herself for her divorce. She can't have children and, as a result, cannot fulfill the role of the perfect wife and mother. Self-medicating the depression over her sense of loss with alcohol, she let herself go physically and emotionally, and in her mind became so unattractive to her husband that only she is to blame for the affair that broke up their relationship.

The idea of the perfect woman seems closely connected to physical appearance and sexual power. As much as Rachel chastises herself for having become unattractive to Tom, both Megan and Anna show pride in their looks and the sexual power they hold over men. Megan uses her sexuality to appease Scott whenever he seems jealous, and her sexual power over Tom keeps their affair alive although it threatens their respective marriages. Similarly, Anna mourns the time when she and Tom had a sexually fulfilling affair and complains that as a mother, she has little time to care for her physical appearance.

Motherhood at the same time seems to supersede the notion of lover and wife. Rachel's desire to become a mother is so strong that her infertility destroys her self-image and makes her feel worthless. Megan's pregnancy empowers her to confront both Scott and Tom, accepting that she may end up caring for the baby on her own. And Anna's protective instinct first drives her to side with Tom even though she knows he is a



murderer, yet when he takes the baby from her, thereby threatening it, her motherly instinct drives her to finish the job Rachel started and kill him.

The novel is full of lies: the characters don't tell the truth, not to each other and not to the reader. Rachel lies to her friend Cathy about commuting to work to keep up appearances and to avoid Cathy's well-meaning meddling. Rachel lies to Scott about her (nonexistent) friendship with Megan, so he will take her more seriously. For the same reason she keeps her drinking and unemployment from the police. But most of all, she lies to herself, hanging on to the idea that she lost the perfect life with the perfect man, when really, she was in a disastrous relationship with an abusive man. Tom's utter disregard for Rachel's depression because of her infertility and his systematic lies aimed at destroying her self-image are expressions of his controlling personality.

Deceit and betrayal loom large in the relationships portrayed in the novel. Tom betrays Rachel with Anna and Anna with Megan, and Megan betrays Scott with Tom. While Megan shows remorse, Tom refuses to accept any responsibility for his wrong doing, instead blaming Anna for his sleeping with Megan the way he blamed Rachel for his sleeping with Anna. His refusal to accept responsibility and his manipulative bending of the truth is typical of abusive relationships as well. When Anna realizes that her relationship with Tom is a mirror image of his relationship with Rachel in the making, she finally turns against him, and twists the corkscrew Rachel placed deeper to ensure her husband's death.

In fact, all three women were in disastrous relationships with abusive men. Scott's fits of jealous rage are as dangerous to Megan and the baby as they are to Rachel. While Scott shows remorse over fighting with Megan the night she disappeared, he cannot

control his fury, as is shown when he attacks Rachel and locks her in a bedroom. In fact, his cycle of physical violence and remorse is typical in abusive relationships.

In the end, all three women free themselves of their disastrous relationships. Megan confronts Scott and leaves him when his violent outburst threatens her and her baby, and she pushes Tom away when he discards her legitimate request to take responsibility for their affair. While this tragically leads to her death, she does not die as a submissive wife or lover, but as an independent woman willing to face the truth. Rachel and Anna kill the man who lied and cheated them. The ways Rachel, Megan, and Anna reclaim their freedom which should not be emulated, their call for independence is loud and clear.

Thus, throughout *The Girl on the Train*, Hawkins shows how society fails its most vulnerable women by constraining them into visions of femininity defined by propriety and benevolence only to disenfranchise them when they do not conform to such stifling standards. Rachel, Megan, and Anna each struggle with the societal expectations that have been placed upon them-even as their personal lives grow increasingly unstable and dangerous.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Psychodynamics of women**

Psychodynamics, also known as psychodynamic psychology, in its broadest sense, is an approach to psychology that emphasizes systematic study of the psychological forces underlying human behaviour, feelings, and emotions and their relations to their earlier experiences. It is especially related to the dynamic relations between conscious motivation and unconscious motivation.

The term psychodynamics is also used to refer specifically to the psychoanalytical approach developed by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) and his followers. Freud was inspired by the theory of thermodynamics and used the term psychodynamics to describe the processes of the mind as flows of psychological energy (libido or psi) in an organically complex brain.

The novels which exhibit psychic disorders were common during the Recession period. The Great Recession which started in December 2007 was a global economic down turn that destroyed the world financial market, banking and real estate industries. It led to the loss of people's life savings, jobs and homes. It is considered to be the longest period of economic decline since the Great Depression of the 1930s. It arose in the United States of America and Western Europe as a result of the subprime mortgage crisis. Because of the over stress, men begin to exhibit aggressive behaviour to their family members. Moreover, the domestic violence, relationships breakdown and financial problems begin to increase.

Poverty arose in suburbs. Murder rate increased up to 15 per cent over the prior year. A large number of incarcerated individuals are released into economically distressed

communities. In families, the stress and delays in marriages increased. In educational institutions, the graduation rates and employment of teachers got affected.

The life is conducted by many symptoms that shape individuals to live their lives in any kind of various problems. Each individual has its own ability to maintain their existence. They maintained an unusual existence like what they found it easier. without understanding the life situations, they must face. Therefore, they are able to handle these psychological problems during the socialization process. Life cannot be separated from its internal condition where substances are directly shaped by the surroundings. It can be assumed that psychology and mortal life are tightly tied. The human is controlled by their mind, to act and reply from circumstances befallen on them.

Paula Hawkins might have experienced personality disorders because of the social change during Recession period. Therefore, she was able to represent the toxic effects of personality disorders in her novel *The Girl on the Train* in a better way through her characters. She had expressed it through an ambiguous style of narration in the novel *The Girl on the Train*. The plot and characters in the novel represent the psyche of the writer.

*The Girl on the Train* is narrated through the stories of Rachel Wilson, Megan and Anna about the troubles in their relationship caused by drinking and by unfaithfulness. The novel begins with the narration of Rachel Wilson, the wife of Tom about her deformed married life. When Rachel could understand that she is incapable to become a mother and out of despair, she started drinking. Tom left her and married Anna. It elevated problems in the existence of Rachel Wilson. She continued drinking and wandering. Hence, she lost her job. While travelling on a train, she begins to observe two attractive couple who live a few houses away from Tom. She named them Jess and Jason. But the real name of the couple whom Rachel idolizes was Megan and Scott.

Even though Rachel finds the way of their living attractive, the relationship between Megan and Scott was on the verge of deterioration. Megan experienced Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Histrionic Personality disorder and antisocial personality disorder. Before the marriage to Scott, Megan had a relationship with a person named Mac. They had a child. But out of the carelessness of Megan, the child passed away. This incident created a tremendous impact on Megan's mind. When Scott witnesses his wife Megan suffering from emotional disturbances, he sends her as a nanny to look after Anna's baby. But Megan started a relationship with Anna's husband, Tom and becomes pregnant. When Megan informed him that she is pregnant, Tom killed Megan to preserve his existing reputation in the society. When Rachel and Anna understand how much Tom was destroying their life through his amorous pursuits, they killed him. Megan and Rachel experience personality disorders because of their mental unrest, they faced several problems in their life.

As Megan and Rachel experience personality disorders because of their mental unrest, they contemplate the incident frequently and it finally leads to emotional unrest, fear and anger. They feel detached from society and their companions. They constantly tried to avoid situations or people that remind them of the traumatic event. They show violence and negative reactions to loud noise or an accidental touch. Megan says in one such event:

Sometimes I don't even watch the trains go past. I just listen. Sitting here in the morning, eyes closed and the hot sun orange on my eyelids, it could be anywhere. I could be in the south of Spain, at the beach; I could be in Italy, the Cinque Terre, all those pretty coloured houses and the trains ferrying the tourists back and forth. (25)

Megan had several traumatic experiences in her life; these problematic situations arise from her subconscious mind when she hears the sound of a train. Hence, she tells the ghost train is passing. “She flinches every time a train passes jumps when the phone rings. They're just so fragile, aren't they? she says, and I can't disagree with that” (28). The sound of the phone ringing and the train passing is normal to ordinary people. But for Megan, it is connected to her past life memories. When those past thoughts come to her mind, she feels an extraordinary tension. In the novel, Megan contends:

I've been up for hours; I can't sleep. I haven't slept in days. I hate this, hate Insomnia more than anything, just lying there, brain going round, tick, tick, tick, tick. I itch all over I want to shave my head. I want to run. I want to take a road trip, in a convertible, with the top down. I want to drive to the coast – any coast. I want to walk on a beach. (30)

Sleep difficulty or insomnia is another symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder. Because of her past traumatic memories, she feels a need to shave her head. It seems as if she is experiencing an unusual weight in her head. This condition occurs because of her excessive cross examination of past life incidents. Obsessive compulsive disorder is another form of personality disorder in which the person gives much importance to rules and orderliness. They would show distress if they could not achieve the perfection that they had expected. They would show extreme commitment to work or project by neglecting friends and enjoying activities. They are inflexible about values, ethics and morality. They control their budget and spend money in unwanted situations. “I'll wait until the summer is over, then I'll look for work. It seems like a shame to waste these long summer days.” (27)

Excessive commitment to work is a symptom of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Even though Dr Kamal had told Megan to take rest, she keeps on thinking about doing work. She is not ready to waste time. Health is mandatory for human beings while they are suffering from mental unrest, but Megan is not ready to do so. The person suffering from Dependent Personality Disorder shows clingy and submissive behaviour towards others. They show the lack of self-confidence, the requirement of excessive advice and reassurance from others to make small decisions. They constantly fear disapproval. In the novel, Megan says:

I miss him every day. More than anyone, I think. He's the big hole in my life, in the middle of my soul. Or maybe he was just the beginning of it. I don't know. I don't even know whether all this is really about Ben, or whether it's about everything that happened after that, and everything that's happened since. (30)

Megan was greatly affected by her brother's death. She was deeply connected to him. She constantly gets advices from him according to her needs. But when Ben dies, she cannot tolerate it. She feels if there is no one to help her. She used to believe that Ben's death is the trigger that creates problems in her life. Excessive dependence on others and the feeling of the need to be taken care of is a symptom of the Dependence personality disorder. This quote represents Megan's extreme emotional attachment to Ben. Megan says:

We were going to ride motorbikes from Paris to the Coto d'Azur, or all the way down the Pacific coast of the USA, From Seattle to Los Angeles; we were going to follow in Che Guevara's tracks from Buenos Aires to

Caracas. Maybe if I'd done all that, I wouldn't have ended up here, not knowing what to do next. (30)

According to social norms, death is a natural process. Usually, when a person's relative dies, they will mourn for a certain period of time and they will attain emotional stability after that. But the death of Ben is still torturing her even though the accident had happened years before. To Megan, the days with Ben were a sweet memory. They planned to spend time on a road trip and beach. As one of the last sisters that he has, Ben had given Megan attention and protection, especially from the men. But unfortunately, Ben died in a motor accident. Megan had deep sadness because she never expected that her brother will meet such a tragic death. Moreover, she saw by herself how the tragic accident happened. From what she experienced, she gets the trauma and stress disorder from the accident. The person with Schizoid personality disorder has a lack of interest in social or personal relationships. They always prefer to be alone. They appear cold or indifferent towards others. They may encounter an inability to pick up normal social cues. Megan shows a desire to remain safe in her house and not to set foot outside the house again. This feeling arises in Megan because of Schizoid personality disorder. In the novel, Megan says;

Sometimes, I don't want to go anywhere, I think I'll be happy if I never had to set foot outside the house again. I don't even miss working. I just want to remain safe and warm in my haven with Scott, undisturbed It help that it's dark and cold and the weather is filthy. It helps that it hasn't stopped raining for weeks – freezing, driving, bitter rain accompanied by gales howling through the trees. (62)



Megan retreats from the activities and responsibilities in which she had once taken pleasure due to disturbed state of mind. Megan confronts a limited range of care towards her responsibilities. Moreover, she experienced an inability to take pleasures in activities like going outside to spend some time. Another character in the novel is Rachel Wilson, who experiences the same. Similarly, Rachel faces many such instances. In the beginning of the novel, Rachel says:

The train lurches and sways around the bend, slowing as it approaches a red signal. I try not to look up, I try to read the free newspaper I was handed on my way into the station, but the words blur in front of my eyes, nothing holds my interest. In my head I can still see that little pile of clothes lying at the edge of the track, abandoned. (12)

Rachel had a habit of reading newspapers. She holds it in her hand as her daily routine. But now she lost interest because of depression caused by an unsatisfied married relationship. Depression reduces the hedonic capacity of the body. This can be tracked from her voice. The person with Histrionic Personality Disorder is excessively dramatic, emotional and sexually provocative. They speak dramatically the strong opinions. Because of their rapid changing emotions, they demonstrate the unpredictable behaviour. Megan had desired to get the attention of men. She sought care and love from them. But unfortunately, she didn't get what she expected from them. Mac was the boyfriend of Megan before she got married to Scott. Scott goes to work leaving Megan. Scott does so, she feels that he is avoiding him. Scott isn't home when I get back, so I get my laptop out and google him, for the First Time ever. For first time in a decade, I look for Mac (65).

Mac was the boyfriend of Megan. The accidental death of Megan's child with Mac by her carelessness destroyed the relationship between them. Mac deserted her for this

reason. They had drifted apart years before. But when Megan encounters the lack of attention from Scott, she tried to contact Mac. From this, it is evident that Megan has no emotional stability to face rejection or criticism. The fear of disapproval, rejection and ridicule are the symptoms of Histrionic personality disorder, which concludes that Megan had a Histrionic personality disorder. The person with antisocial personality behaviour disregarded for others needs or feeling. They would create a recurrent problem with the law. The main characteristic feature of them is the consistent irresponsibility. Even though these kinds of people know they are not giving importance to others feelings, they lack remorse. Megan drifted apart from laws and orders in society. She feels as if she is trapped in a flawed society. Hence, she was consistently irresponsible as a daughter and wife. She violated civil law by committing theft. She disappointed her parents and transgressed the ordinary family. "She ran away from home three days after his funeral. She was arrested twice-once for theft and once for splitting" (92).

Megan destroyed the sacred relationship with her parents because of her emotional instability. The death of Ben was so hard for her to tolerate. In order to avoid memories of Ben from her life, she desired to be alone. Megan's detachment from her parents pricked their mind. The parents of Megan died without reconciliation with their daughter. It means that Megan had never tried to contact them after she left from her house. Megan shows a lack of interest in social or personal relationships, it shows antisocial personality disorder in her. "I lay there and I thought of what that teacher said, and of all the things I'd been: child, rebellious teenager, runaway, whore, lover, bad mother, bad wife" (282).

When Megan thinks about her past life, she feels as if she destroyed her life by reckless living style. Self-loathing can be traced in her words. This condition is the trace of avoidance personality disorder. The person with this personality disorder has an inferiority complex. They always believe that they are doing everything in the wrong

direction. "He grabbed hold of my shoulder, his thumbs digging into the flesh at the top of my arms, and told me to calm down, to stop behaving like a child" (137). Megan's impulsive behaviour can be observed through this statement. When Dr Kamal told her that he cannot continue the relationship with her. She becomes angry and kissed him violently. It motivated Dr Kamal to push her away. From these circumstances, it is evident that Megan had an unreasonable expectation of affection from him. Dr Kamal had shown love and care to Megan as a part of treatment. But Megan misrecognized it as romantic love. Even though Kamal says that if she continues to try to have a relationship, it would affect his career and reputation bitterly. But Megan was not ready to accept the fact. The failure to recognize others need and feelings, fantasies about power, success, attractiveness and expectation of constant affection praise and admiration from others are the symptoms of a narcissistic personality disorder. It traces this disorder in Megan. In the novel, Megan says:

I'd just walk around those dark rooms and I'd hear her crying. I'd smell her skin. I saw things. I'd wake in the night and be sure that there was someone else- something else - in the house with me. I thought I was going mad. I thought I was going to die. I thought that maybe I would just stay there, and that one day someone would find me. At least that way I wouldn't have left her. (210)

After the death of her child, Mac left her. The memories of her child haunted her. She feels the presence of Libby there. Her child was buried near the house, but yet she senses Libby in her room. She feels as if hearing the cry of her child. She experiences extreme tension. The odd perceptual experiences such as hearing a voice are the symptoms of Schizotypal personality disorder. Megan hears the sound of Libby in her

room. Even though she is buried in the grave. When Mac left her during that problematic situation, her condition becomes worse. In the novel, Megan says:

I can't hate her, but she scares me. I'm afraid of what she'll do to me, or what I'll do to her. It's that fear that woke me just after five this morning, soaked in sweat despite the open windows and the fact that I'm alone. Scott at a conference, somewhere in Hertfordshire or Essex or somewhere. He's back tonight. (279)

This is another instance in which Megan gets frustrated by her dead child. A constant guilty feeling haunted her. Because of fear, she wakes up at five in the morning. In the novel, Megan says:

I go after him, walking quickly at first and then running, and when I get close enough, I shove him in the back. I'm yelling at him, screaming, trying to scratch his fucking smug face and he's laughing, fending me off with ease. I start saying the worst things I can think of. I insult his manhood, his boring wife, his ugly child. (299)

Tom abused Megan and makes her pregnant. He opts for an abortion. But Megan was not ready to do so. She pleaded before him. But Tom dismissed her brutally. It caused her to tell him. Out of rage, she tells him that she is not going away and makes him pay for this. Hearing these words, Tom attacked Megan and killed her. When Tom rejected her, it was too much for her to bear, she continued to plead before a cruel man. She feels that without him, she cannot exist anymore. Because of her dependent personality disorder, Megan's life ends up in the hands of Tom.

The effect of alcohol is central to this mystery novel and set up the major conflict. Rachel has witnessed key information about Megan's murder but cannot and may not ever

access these memories due to her blackout. In general, drinking is presented as both the cause and the effect of negative circumstances; beyond Rachel's drinking Anna and Megan choose to drink when they feel upset. Often leading to dangerous decisions such as Anna Snooping on Tom's Computer and Megan kissing Kamal Abdic what really makes *The Girl on the Train* such a gripping novel is Hawkins' remarkable understanding of the limits of human knowledge and the degree to which memory and imagination can become confused.

Rachel who's been always dead, disappeared in drunken blackouts. Buried in self-hate Rachel tries to wake up to the reality that the wonderful life and marriage she thought she had wrecked, was actually a sham. She discovers Megan's losses, a dead baby, and a Megan who tried to keep herself as numb with sex as Rachel does with drink—Rachel finds the truth about her own life. That Tom's perverse games made her believe she did terrible things to him and is responsible for their divorce. Slowly, she remembers – he abused her. And, she realizes it's not her fault. The truth is frightening and disturbing but begins to set her free. No one is freed, though, from the bondage of doubt, self-loathing, or obsession without feeling anger. That's an important part of any good therapy. Rachel does.

*The Girl on the Train* thus evokes excitement and suspense. The reader gets wonder struck at the instance of reading the violent ending of the novel. Even the most cleverly plotted thrillers don't work without compelling characters, but the people in *The Girl on the Train* are drawn beautifully. The most important thing is that one must not stop questioning. Life is essentially mysterious and *The Girl on the Train* attempts to unravel this mystery gradually.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Psychological Vulnerability**

Vulnerability has been defined as the degree to which a system, or part of it, may react adversely during the occurrence of a hazardous event. The Oxford English Dictionary defines “vulnerability” as “the quality or state of being exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally. In one sense, vulnerability is characteristic of the human conditioned; however, definition and applications of this concept in health care are diverse.

The notion of vulnerability has been applied to diverse areas of knowledge, particularly in the last years. However, its denotation has been traditionally attached to negative ideas, such as weakness, passivity or susceptibility to abuse, which results in the victimisation of vulnerable subjects. It reorients the notion of vulnerability, understanding it as a permeable and dynamic term that facilitates the ethical encounter among individuals and that helps vulnerable subjects to regain agency. This novel introduces what could be considered as “vulnerable women” as main characters, but a close reading of this novel will allow to conclude that the concept of vulnerability can be seen not only as a weakness but as a tool for agency and ethical connection with the other in today’s societies. Emmanuel Levinas’s ethical encounter, the female leading characters of the novel are analysed. In this way, a reflection on the current ways of exploiting women’s vulnerability in contemporary west societies is provided. This leads to conclude that vulnerability can be used as a tool of resistance against patriarchal customs.

The concept of vulnerability has been broadly used as an umbrella term to refer to multiple characteristics of human and non-human conditions. However, in the eighties, Emmanuel Levinas already mentioned the notion in his path-breaking study of the ethical

connection with alterity when describing the unveiling of the other's face. The combination of the dynamics of alterity that Levinas proposed and the permeable meaning that the notion of vulnerability entails offer a rich ground for the analysis of literary texts that regarding the vulnerable characters in *The Girl on the Train* novel.

Nevertheless, the connection that Paula Hawkins creates between vulnerability and women in this novel has not been exempt from criticism. Despite their popularity, *The Girl on the Train* novel has encountered mixed reviews by specialists, particularly referring to the representation of women characters in the novels. For instance, Suzi Feay praises Hawkins's "bold move to create such a flawed female lead" in *The Girl on the Train* with whom, she later adds, it is easy to empathise.

The novelist depicts modern British society in the text to make her claims regarding the fall of standard moral values in their society. The female characters live a very difficult life in which they face problems. It is about the events and the behaviour of the characters who are guided by the repressed libidinal contents in the id. This study has taken Freudian model of psychoanalysis to study the novel. Freud has divided human personality into three elements Id, Ego and Superego. Ego plays a role of mediator to create balance between these two id primitive drives and superego moral and social drives. It draws on the morality of the characters that fails to adjust the subject in society *The Girl on the Train* written in British context by showing the failure of the superego, presenting the woman having lots of suffering in her life, having burning desire of sex.

In *The Girl on the Train*, the narrative cleverly develops around three middle-aged women struggling with their lives. The first one is Rachel, the leading character, a woman who after discovering she cannot have children, falls into alcoholism and depression. She loses her house, job, and husband, Tom, who marries another woman, Anna, with whom

he has a baby. Anna tries to fit into the traditional role of wife and mother, but fails to do so in a balanced way, feeling that she needs to hate and compete against other women. The third woman is Megan, an unhappy wife who exploits her sexuality and her attractiveness to avoid overcoming her real problems. Megan is also Anna's neighbour and babysitter and the woman Rachel always observes from the train she takes every day.

As Fray states, Hawkins succeeds at combining multiple perspectives and different timescales that provoke suspense and empathy. Such effects intensify even more when all the characters' lives further intertwine, when after one of her alcoholic blackouts, Rachel discovers Megan has disappeared. Being the protagonist, Rachel's vulnerability is the most obvious one to the reader, as it is more explored both physically and psychologically. At the most superficial level, Rachel is physically unpleasant to others. Her depression and alcoholism have made her lose interest in her body. Her physical appearance keeps her distant from people who might approach her. She is aware of this in several occasions in the novel. For instance, when she observes how a man looks at her in the train: "his glance travels over me ... He looks away. There's something about the set of his mouth which suggests distaste. He finds me distasteful" (27), or at another point in the novel she notes: "two girls sitting across the carriage look at me and then at each other, with a sly exchange of smiles. I don't know what they think of me, but I know it isn't good" (32). As a result of this physical rejection, she cannot remember when the last time she had physical contact with someone was: "a hug, or a heartfelt squeeze of my hand ... my heart twitches (21)

This lack of physical connection with anyone along with the sense of being left aside consolidates her feeling of vulnerability as someone who is to be rejected or marginalised:



I am not the girl I used to be. I am no longer desirable, I'm off-putting in some way. It's not just that I've put on weight, or that my face is puffy from the drinking and the lack of sleep; it's as if people can see the damage written all over me, they can see it in my face (27).

A statement that immediately reminds us of Levinas's description of the other's face. At this level, an ethical encounter is difficult to take place, as people can only feel sorry for her, but they cannot empathise or be ethically moved towards her, this lack of contact does not help to her own self-consideration. She assumes her own sense of self in these new terms, referring to the happy, sober, and attractive woman she used to be as an entirely different individual: "when I was still myself" (60); which contrasts with her current feeling: "I'm the outsider" (94), as she later claims. Rachel's psychological vulnerability is more complex if we analyse her process of decay, which is a succession of unlucky events that situates her in a vulnerable position.

She was devastated by her father's death just before she met Tom, who seemed to be the ideal husband. After they got married, she realises she cannot not have children, which leads her to depression and then to alcoholism. It is not until the end of the novel but it is that, Tom takes advantage of her moments of inebriation to threaten and abuse her, both physically and psychologically. After her alcoholic blackouts, he makes her believe that she was the one being violent and dangerous to him and to others. In other words, Tom exploits Rachel's vulnerability in a way that prevents her from having control over her own life. This situation only stops because Rachel discovers that Tom is having an affair with Anna and that results in the ending of their marriage. However, Rachel feels she has been the problem all along, particularly when she discovers that only she was infertile "I was wrong to suggest that we should share the blame; it was all down to me" (111). All these events leave a traumatic imprint in Rachel's personality, since these

psychological issues are never resolved. Instead, she assumes she must apologise for things she has not even done, or that she does not remember: “I had to beg him to tell me what it was that I’d done ... if you can’t remember what you’ve done, your mind just fills in all the blanks and you think the worst possible things ...” (297).

It could be said that Rachel’s vulnerability, as Jules’s in *Into the Water*, is closely attached to trauma. This association is not new to Gateau, who argues that vulnerability is a crucial element in the current understanding of the subject in trauma studies; in his words: “it seems as though vulnerability, in the wake of or alongside trauma, has become a paradigm of the contemporary condition and of contemporary culture, and a template for the wounded contemporary subject” (The Ethics 4). All the events involved in her downfall contribute to identify her as a wounded subject, but Tom’s exploitation of her alcoholic blackouts is particularly critical, as it determines Rachel’s sense of identity as othered.

Rachel’s process of healing begins when she starts seeing a therapist and realises that some of her memories are distorted and reshaped by her ex-husband’s comments and deeds. Later, when she suffers physical violence at the hands of Scott, Megan’s husband, she clearly remembers that she had undergone domestic abuse before with Tom. This fits with Van der Kolk’s explanation of subjects suffering from partial amnesia: emotions and sensations seem to be the critical cues for the retrieval of information the motions attached to any particular experience play a major role in determining what cognitive schemes will be activated many people with trauma histories, such as rape, spouse battering and child abuse, seem to function relatively well as long as feelings related to traumatic memories are not stirred up. It seems that part of the traumatic memory that Rachel had repressed is reactivated when she goes through similar emotions. Rachel’s psychological vulnerability combines with her physical dimension in her inability to have children, but that it is key

for understanding Rachel as a vulnerable character in the novel. Although motherhood is inevitably linked to her body, what can be inferred from her discourse has deeper implications that also shape Rachel's sense of self. When the protagonist discovers she is barren, she feels that nobody can truly comprehend her sorrow, not even her husband at the moment: "he never understood that it's possible to miss what you've never had, to mourn for it" (112). This grief is explained by Paula Hawkins in an interview in which she tells how some women live their infertility as "a bereavement ... which is not treated by anyone else in this way". People tend to act in a way that does not help these women, as Rachel describes in a very powerful part of the novel:

My friends were having children, friends of friends were having children, pregnancy and birth and first birthday parties were everywhere... My mother, our friends, colleagues at work. When was it going to be my turn? ... Sunday-lunch conversation, not just between Tom and me, but more generally ... failure cloaked me like a mantle, it overwhelmed me, dragged me under and I gave up hope. (111)

This passage clearly shows the result of the exploitation of an epistemological frame that has been so well ingrained within the social understanding of women as mothers that when couples reach some stability or a woman turns a certain age, maternity seems to move from a private topic to a public one. The pressure that is imposed as a result can have negative effects on the involved subjects when they cannot fulfil those expectations, as Rachel's case shows. Her inability to meet social standards for a woman of her age leads her to conclude: "I 'm not beautiful and I can't have kids, so what does that make me? Worthless" (112). However, it is worth mentioning that motherhood is a common element in the three characters, essential to their development as vulnerable subjects in different ways.

Anna becomes vulnerable through her strong attachment to her only daughter, and an uncontrollable need to protect her at all times due to the threat that Rachel means to her. This takes her to the point of losing part of her own identity in favour of her child. She feels constantly judged by others on her choices and abilities as a mother—particularly by other mothers, which suggests that it is probably a shared concern. Megan, for her part despite her temporal job as babysitter, dislikes children in general and cannot answer to the traditional role of perfect wife and mother that her husband—quite insistently—expects from her. It is that the rejection comes from an unresolved traumatic motherhood in her teenage years that resulted in her daughter's death. But again, her impossibility to match a woman's socially expected role leads her to construct a whole different self to elude disapproval. She exploits her sexuality to avoid feeling vulnerable, until she gets pregnant and the problem arises again. Thus, it can be observed how the exploitation of the same epistemological frame motherhood in this case can affect subjects in varied ways, leading to equally negative results.

In spite of suffering such a strong vulnerability, Rachel's state can also be understood as potential and dynamic, given that she goes through a positive process turning her vulnerable position into agency. In Hawkins's own words in an interview with Linda Morris: "the character Rachel, over the course of the book, fighting her demons and becoming stronger". What is significant is that she does become stronger, but it is through her encounter with others. Turning to the other's face and trying to act ethically. In the process, she recovers her old sense of self: "I feel like myself—the myself I used to be" (134). When she realises that Tom exploited her physical and psychological vulnerability during her marriage, instead of looking for revenge, she tries to approach and help the person who in her view, is now in the most vulnerable position: Anna.

Throughout the novel, both characters Anna and Rachel, work as antagonists. They are very distant and they express their enmity and differences several times. However, at the end, both of them are able to have an ethical encounter and see that they are, in reality, very similar. They can finally see each other's face and understand they are more powerful when they work together against the real cause of their pain. This resonates with Carruth's argument of connection between traumatised victims: "one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another, the way in which trauma may lead, therefore, to the encounter with another, through the very possibility and surprise of listening to another's wound". These encounters can also occur among vulnerable subjects; whose own vulnerability predispose them to look for the other's face and act ethically. At the end, Anna and Rachel together are able to commit the brutal act of agency against the exploitation of their vulnerability. Only an understanding of vulnerability as a dynamic characteristic enables this encounter, because it creates a change: vulnerability is understood as openness towards the other, agency and connection. At the end, they even make a pact constructed around what remains unsaid: "We are tied together, forever bound by the stories we told" (309). The secret they keep make them close and powerful.

The idea of the notion of vulnerability as not fixed, but dynamic, permeable to different situations and individuals is enriching. It is not restricted to just one valid reading. It also endorses its possible negative connotations, but it acknowledges and underlines its positive quality and its potential to the relational and ethical subject. In this way, the concept is not completely changed, just reoriented, wider in its definition. Apart from its traditional attachment to weakness or susceptibility to harm, now the notion can also be linked to agency, endurance, power, or ethical connection. In this way, the term shows its potential when applied to fiction: it works as a call for readers to break our

assumed epistemological frames so that it turns to the other's face and look at alterity in a more ethical way.

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## Chapter Five

### Summation

The twenty first century British novelist Paula Hawkins is best known for her thriller novels which reflect on the psyche of the people of the modern era. She began writing romantic anti comedies under the pen name Amy Silver before she could gain a reputation for her best psychological thriller *The Girl on the Train*.

Paula Hawkins in *The Girl on the Train* exhibits life by exposing the lives of different people through their stories from their vicarious experiences. It is written from the poem experience of the writer. It is one strong tale of survival and grit that delves for and against the confusing central character in a dynamic landscape that keeps on shifting perspectives.

In *The Girl on the Train* Paula Hawkins, reflect the recession society and the expectations of a society on a woman in a perfect way. She brings to the fore the society which is set up to overpower, overburden, and finally leave women in their most desperate moments through one of her characters Rachel Watson who struggles to comprehend her part in the disappearance of Megan Hipwell, a young and beautiful lady from a London neighbourhood.

*The Girl on the Train's* narrative structure was one of its defining characteristics: the story is told by three women namely Rachel, Anna and Megan, each of whom reveals and conceals details in her respective account. Hawkins uses the first of her three protagonists and narrators, Rachel, to demonstrate how society overburdens women with expectations of traditional femininity and maternal duty yet fails to support them at their most vulnerable. Rachel is a lonely, unemployed woman with a drinking problem and few attachments. Her former husband, Tom, left her a little over a year ago for another woman,

and Rachel regularly overhears the people in her life describe her as a desperate and overweight alcoholic. Rachel does not conform to a traditional image of femininity. She is single, childless, and withdrawn.

Rachel's drinking problem which often leaves her with gaps in her memory and contributes to her slovenly appearance means that she's unable to take care of herself. Although Rachel's behaviour concerns those around her, these people judge her rather than doing anything to help her. As Hawkins delves into Rachel's back story, she reveals that Rachel and her ex-husband Tom struggled for years to conceive a child. Unable to fulfil society's expectation that she become a mother; Rachel drank to console herself often to the point of blacking out. And unfortunately, these blackouts made her more vulnerable to her husband's verbal and physical rages. Tom's abuse speaks to the way that society shames rather than helps women who struggle with infertility, abuse, self-hatred, and addiction and who fail to live up to societal expectations.

Hawkins uses Megan, the second narrator and protagonist, to showcase how society fails to secure justice for women who cannot obtain it for themselves. Like Rachel, Megan Hipwell also doesn't conform to society's vision of maternity and femininity. At first glance, she seems like a confident, self-assured woman but her past is riddled with trauma, loss, and dark secrets. She has had to fend for herself since she was only 16 years old, and society has never protected her. She doesn't feel she fits in with the posh, at leisure-clad women who live in her small suburban town and yet Megan works to keep up appearances. Because of the facade Megan creates, she slips through the cracks of society when she most needs help. The experiences and abuses she hides in order to conform complicate the investigation of her disappearance in unforeseen ways.



As investigators look into Megan's life and find more and more evidence of her departure from the feminine mainstream, they begin to actively demonize her for her choices. As Megan's dark past comes to light over the course of the investigation into her disappearance, the detectives working the case ultimately fail to prioritize Megan and suggest that her murder may have been her own fault that is, her rebellious, promiscuous choices in life brought about her tragic end. With this, Hawkins shows how society fails to give Megan justice, both in life and in death.

Anna, Tom's new wife and the novel's third narrator, demonstrates how society pits women against one another, forcing them to value male approval and companionship over female friendships. Such a situation can put women in danger and leave them with little support. Anna recalls how being the other woman felt exciting in the early days of her affair with Tom. Even though she knew he was married, she found his attention thrilling and came to see Rachel as an enemy. Indeed, when Tom left Rachel for Anna, Anna felt like she had won and this feeling of victory blinded her to his pattern of emotional abuse. When Rachel confronts Tom about Megan's disappearance, Rachel is uncertain if Anna will defend her against Tom's increasingly dangerous blows or remain complicit in his cruelty and violence.

The women of the novel are conditioned to prioritize men's approval and Rachel thus believes that Anna will side with Tom, in order to retain his love and confidence, rather than challenging his violent behaviour. It's at this point that Anna witnesses Tom's abuse toward Rachel and discovers his affair with Megan, but she finds herself unable to accept the truth about her husband. She continues to see Rachel and Megan as promiscuous, threatening, or insane. This further isolates Anna with Tom, a dangerous man who has committed at least one murder.

Anna's character shows how women often internalize a hatred and distrust of other women whom they view as competitors or rivals, and how this phenomenon can further women's isolation, vulnerability, and proximity to danger. Because society so often pits women against one another, women become even more vulnerable. They often fail to ask for help even when they desperately need it out of a desire to hide from their perceived competitors the very vulnerabilities that the world around them has created.

Throughout *The Girl on the Train*, Hawkins shows how society fails its most vulnerable women by constraining them into visions of femininity defined by propriety and benevolence only to disenfranchise them when they do not conform to such stifling standards. Rachel, Megan, and Anna each struggle with the societal expectations that have been placed upon them even as everyone's personal lives grow increasingly unstable and dangerous.

The modern writers have portrayed the women characters as individuals who fight against suppression and oppression of women by the patriarchal society. They portray women as rebelling against the traditional role, breaking the shackles of exploitation and oppression, awakening with search for identity, to assert their individuality. The novel clearly depicts how women were used by men only for their conveniences. The central character and the antagonist of the novel, Tom cheats three female characters Rachel, Megan and Anna. Tom rejects Rachel after she loses her virginity. The novel in several prospects substantiates Tom as a male dominant. He was cunning and tricky in all his acts which make the women fall for him.

Self-defence is the need of womanhood in the modern scenario. Though Rachel senses nostalgic about her preceding life, she overcomes the troubles as a single woman in the male-dominant society. She tries to cope up with society without disturbing her ex-

husband. Even though she feels lonely, she doesn't want to interfere with Tom's family because she was aware of the family bonding.

Trains are powerful symbols for motion. Ever since the Industrial Revolution, trains have been moving people and cargo across the world. In contrast Rachel in the novel, *The Girl on the Train*, tries to change her life in a diverse track in all her problematic conditions. She turns into a murderer only because of Tom, his cruel behaviour and male dominant nature. A solitary woman wins in society.

There are several major instances in which information is obscured from the characters in order to suggest that secrets, lies, and falsehoods create an unstable, uncertain world. Early on in the book, Hawkins creates an environment full of secrets and lies, which mirrors the intricate deceptions, small and large, that define real life. The book features several unreliable narrators like Rachel, Megan, and Anna who are too busy focusing on the lies they tell themselves to get at the heart of the secrets and lies all around them. With this, Hawkins suggests that failing to confront the secrets in day-to-day life contributes to a larger and deeper network of secrets and lies in wider society.

The novel is full of characters who cannot be trusted. For instance, Rachel is reluctant to discuss her infertility or unemployment with her roommate, Cathy. Megan fails to divulge the truth about the infant daughter, Libby, whom she unwittingly killed years ago. And Tom pathologically deceives and abuses the women in his life. By creating an environment in which her readers must question every piece of information a character divulges or seems to divulge Hawkins argues that the world as her readers know it is structured around complex webs of secrets, lies, and half-truths. Society, Hawkins suggests, cannot function any other way and yet a society built on untruths and secrecy is a dangerous place which may very well consume itself.

Through Rachel's character, Hawkins delves deeper into the secrets which have ruled the world of the novel and which, she suggests, rule the real world as well. "I feel so horribly vulnerable now that I've seen what he is; now that there are no secrets between us." (250-251) Rachel says after uncovering the terrible truth about the role of her ex-husband Tom in the murder of Megan Hipwell. Achieving a state in a relationship in which there are "no secrets" is a state in which vulnerability, repulsion, danger, and fear flourish. Knowing the whole truth about a person, Hawkins suggests, is a liability. This, she argues, contributes to the ongoing web of secrets, lies, false narratives, and half-truths which govern the world. By creating a narrative in which the climactic energy of the story comes from a series of startling, disturbing revelations Rachel makes about the private lives of those around her those closest to her, even Hawkins suggests that an economy of secrets and lies is, in many ways, integral not just to a suspenseful narrative but indeed to a functioning society. Knowing the truth, Hawkins suggests, isn't easy or pleasant and sometimes, it could even be dangerous.

Towards the end of the novel, as Rachel reckons with all that has happened to her, she describes sending an email to Megan's husband Scott apologizing for all the lies. She wonders if she will ever be able to know peace given the web of lies that have come to define not only her life but the lives of those around her. In this short yet revealing passage, Hawkins dissects how secrets and lies spread through a community and poison everything they touch even as unwitting individuals continue to spread and proliferate them. Rachel didn't know the whole truth about Tom's deceptions and deviances and thus, she feels that she became complicit in allowing them to continue. Hawkins uses Rachel's profound guilt to suggest that just as Rachel wonders to how many lies, she's been a part of and how people tend to live according to what they can see and what they know. One might not realize how many profoundly deep-seated lies make up the fabric of their

everyday lives and this, Hawkins suggests, perpetuates a pervasive atmosphere of secrets, lies, and false narratives.

Throughout *The Girl on the Train*, Hawkins uses a plot constructed around a dense web of secrets and lies in order to mirror the convoluted, unreliable structure of the world itself. As the characters in the novel struggle to uncover one another's secrets and get to the root of the lies and deceptions all around them, Hawkins suggests that relationships and connections based in secrecy and dishonesty will only create a wider societal environment predicated on the constant, poisonous spread of lies and uncertainty. By creating a narrative in which no one can be trusted, Hawkins shows just how frustrating, confusing, and hopeless it feels to live in a world based on secrets and lies.

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**Breaking the Barriers: A Reading of Gita Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night***

A project submitted to  
**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**  
(Re-accredited with A+ Grade by NAAC)  
**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  
**Saral Leon A.**  
(Reg. No. 21APEN22)



**PG and Research Department of English**  
**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**  
(Re-accredited with A+ Grade by NAAC)  
**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**



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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Breaking the Barriers: A Reading of Githa Hariharn's *The Thousand Faces of Night*** 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 Saral Leon A. during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

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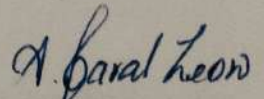
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Breaking the Barriers: A Reading of Githa Hariharn's *The Thousand Faces of Night*** 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

April 2023

  
Saral Leon A.

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## Preface

Gita Hariharan is one of the modern feminist writers in India. Her literary career began with her winning the common wealth writers prize for her first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*. In the book, she weaves together the lives of three women belonging to three generations and how they are torn between tradition and modernity. This project entitled **Breaking the Barriers: A Reading of Githa Hariharn's *The Thousand Faces of Night*** analyses the status of women in Indian Mythology.

The first chapter **Introduction** deals with the background of Indian literature in the twentieth century, the contemporary authors and their works. It deals with the author's biographical details, her influences and gives a short summary of the novel.

The second chapter **A 'Story' of 'Storytelling'** is the linear realistic story of an Indian girl, which opens out to embrace a magic realistic tale of storytellers and storytelling. The hidden patterns of women's oppression across time and space.

The third chapter **Socio Cultural Issues** highlights the existential anguish of a woman in the society after her marital life.

The fourth chapter **Mythological Allusions** deals with the usage of myths in the lives of women and focuses on certain features of the Hindu culture.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up the arguments discussed in the preceding chapters and claims for perfect freedom in every field.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature can be defined as ‘pieces of writing that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays and poems’. Literature in English involves the reading and analysis of written materials of different kinds including fiction and non-fiction written works in English. It was a form of entertainment for the people. It attained the purpose of reform as well. The writers started highlighting the social issues in their writing. Thus, it became a medium to draw the audience 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 insight into the issues and trends prevailing at that time. Literature also provides escape from the ‘grim realities’ of life.

The greatest gift of the British Raj to the Indian Subcontinent was probably the English language and its rich, varied literature. Indian English literature precisely conforming to its gradual evolution had begun in 1608 when Emperor Jahangir, in the court of the Mughals, had welcomed Captain William Hawkins, Commander of British Naval Expedition Hector, in a gallant manner. Though India was under the British rule, English was adopted by the Indians as a language of understanding and awareness, education and literary expression with an important means of communication amongst various people of dissimilar religions. During the British regime, Indians learned the language for the purpose of education as well as to earn their livelihood by securing a government job. The Indian Literature describing their environs and social milieu in a strange language that belonged to a faraway land. As part of the Indians' interactions with the

Europeans, and British, individuals from the affluent classes went abroad for their mother tongues, lived in and toured the continent, several times. Their progeny enjoyed tremendous advantage both in terms of exposure and language skills.

Recent 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 its 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 frame work. 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. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora, especially people like Salman Rushdie who was born in India. It is frequently referred to as Indo-Anglian literature. As a category, this production comes under the broader realm of postcolonial literature, the production from previously colonised countries such as India.

R.K. Narayan who contributed over many decades and who continued to write till his death recently. He was discovered by Graham Greene in that latter, helped him find a publisher in England. Similar to Thomas Hardy's Wessex, Narayan created the fictitious town of Malgudi where he set his novels. Simultaneous with Narayan's pastoral idylls, a very different writer, Mulk Raj Anand, was similarly gaining recognition for his writing sets a rural India; but his stories were harsher, and engaged, sometimes brutally, with divisions of caste, class and religion.

Indian Women novelists have given a new dimension to Indian literature. Indian English literature has developed over a period of time and writing in English did not start in a day. It took many years and several studies to bring the present status and distinction to Indian English literature. In the mid nineteenth century, more women started to write in English. English literature has witnessed several changes in the writing patterns. Women novelists have incorporated female experiences in their writings and it has affected the cultural and language patterns of Indian literature.

The works of the nineteenth century were mostly vague instructions of some British novelists like Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding and Walter Scott. An interesting development was a few attempts by some women writers, Toru Dutt's unfinished novel, *Beanca or The Young Spanish Maiden* (1878); Krupabai Sattkianadhan's *Kamala: A story of Hindu life* (1895) and Shevantibai M.Nikambi's *Ratanbai: A Sketch of a Bombay High Caste Hindu Young Wife* (1895). Some notable writers between 1804 and 1900 were Ramkrishna Pant who wrote *The Bay of Bengal* (1866). Tarachand Mookerjee, the author of *The Scorpions or Easterns Thoughts* (1868) and Shashe Chunder Dutt who wrote *The Young Zamindar* (1883).

In the nineteenth century more and more women actively participated in Indian's reformist movement against the British rule. At that time, their write-ups mainly concentrated on the country's freedom struggle. Over the years the world of feminist ideologies began to influence English Literature of India. In the twentieth century Women's Writing was considered as a powerful of modernism and feminist statements. The last two decades have witnessed phenomenal success in feminist writing of Indian English Literature. Indian women writers



explore the feminine subjectivity and apply themes that range from childhood to complete womanhood. Through their novel they spread the message of what actually feminism is, which actually is very broad. Indian English Writing started with authors like Sarojini Naidu. This great poetess charmed the readers with her writings. Kamala Markandaya, Shashi Deshpande and Anita Desai have chosen the problems and issues faced by the women. In Kamala Markandaya's novels, the stress is as much on central character as on diverse cotemporary problems like economic, political, cultural and social.

Anita Desai is one of the youngest and most promising creative writers of modern life in all its complicated aspects. Her interest on exploration of the world, plunging into the limitless depths of the mind, and bringing into relief the hidden contours of the human psyche. Anita Desai's fiction inextricably fuses the tension between tradition and modernity, individualism and social unity, convention and innovation and determines the dimension and direction of the themes.

Mulk Raj Anand, like Prem Chand in Hindi and Sarat Chandra in Bengali, was passionately concerned with the hardship of the life of villagers, their poverty, squalor and backwardness coupled with gross ignorance and the cruelties of caste, takes upon himself to the task of attacking social snobbery and prejudice. The Indian life that he depicts in his novels is that of the waifs, the disinherited, the lowly and the lost. In the 'motley crowd' who had hitherto been largely ignored by other contemporary Indian Writers.

Bhabani Bhattacharya is an outstanding Indo-Anglian novelist of the present times. He has attained world-wide renown and his books have appeared in

twenty six languages, sixteen of which are European. All the novels of Bhattacharya present a true picture of India and its teaching millions surging with substance. He does not believe in the dictum of arts for art's sake. All writing for him has a social purpose. His outlook is highly constructive and purposeful.

Indian born *Amitav Ghosh* (1956) demonstrates the blend and interstitial nature of diverse cultures, in his writings. Ghosh has already bagged several prestigious awards for his works. Some of these awards are Prix Medics Etranger for *The Circle of Reason* (1986), the Sahitya Akademi Award for science fiction for *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996), the Pushcart Prize for his essay, *The March of the Novel through History: My Father's Bookcase*. Kiran Desai (1971), currently based in the UK is the daughter of the celebrated mother, author Anita Desai. Her first novel "*Hullabaloo on the Guava Orchard*", was published in 1998 and won appreciation from renowned literary figures including the Betty Trask Award, presented by the Society of Authors. Her second book *The Inheritance of Loss* published in 2006 has already won wide acclaim throughout Asia, Europe and the United States and won the 2006 Booker Prize.

Among these Indian writers, Githa Hariharan is one of the most prolific woman writers of India. She was born in Coimbatore in 1954. She was brought up in Bombay and Manila and got education in these two places besides the USA. In Mumbai, Chennai and Delhi she has been working as an editor first in a publishing house and then in as a freelancer. Hariharan is also a social activist known for her care and concern for women. In 1995, she challenged the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act as discriminatory in the Supreme Court of India and recorded victory. The works of Hariharan include novels, short stories

articles and columns and also the essays of different topics that interest her. She published her first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* in 1992 and was awarded Commonwealth Writer's Prize in 1993. This novel was followed by *The Ghost of Vasu Master* (1994). Her third novel *When Dreams Travel* appeared in 1999 and it was quickly followed by *In Times of Siege* (2003). Her latest publication is *Fugitive Histories* which appeared in 2009. Besides novels, Hariharan has also authored a collection of short stories *The Art of Dying* (1993) and a book of short stories for children, *The Winning Team* which came out in 2004. *A Southern Harvest* (1993) is a collection of short stories from South India translated by her into English and *Sorry Best Friend!* (2004) is a collection of short stories for children co-edited by her.

The nineties were the natural extension of the thematic boldness and technical innovativeness. It is also the decade which marks the flowering of Hariharan as novelist. She, along with Anita Desai, shares the diadem with another prominent figure of Indian English fiction. Arundhati Roy who surprised the world with *The God of Small Things* published in 1995 was awarded Booker prize in 1996. It is also knit around the complex idea of the crisis of identity realized at the level of human relationship. Hariharan thus enjoys a crucial place in the history of Indian English fiction. On one hand she is an integral part of the larger part of the tradition, on the other hand, she is an important cord in the tradition of Indian women writers. The age of Hariharan is undisputedly the most complex phase of the cultural history of India. There were quick transitions and subtle and unpredictable changes that redefined the identity of individual in general and of a woman in particular.

The novel *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* by Hariharan is told in short chapters, alternating between events in the present. In this book having spent most of his life teaching at the private P. G. Boys' School, in the Indian town of Elipettai, Vasu Master feels quite uneasy after retirement. His farewell present from his students was a notebook, and the other things related to jotting down observations, memories, and thoughts about teaching. He also continues to teach a bit, becoming a tutor. He doesn't have many students, however, and eventually he is only left with one that is the most complicated and intractable case, Mani. The boy is twelve when he comes to Vasu Master, but he was not up to the mark. He doesn't speak, either, and has been through numerous schools and doctors, without anyone being able to draw him out. Vasu Master tries to change Mani and eventually finds at least one thing that seems to keep him entertained and interested. And this thing was stories. Vasu Master himself wasn't brought up on proper stories but he tries a lot with his childhood experience and finds them useful for himself too. Vasu master also tries to live in present and bring the past back in his life. His wife who dies in earlier years, he brings back her in memory and thus tries to understand the present. *The Ghosts of Vasu Master* is concerned with well-being on all levels like the soul, the mind, and the body. Vasu Master's physical ailments get some attention, while some want him to follow the path to enlightenment. There is one more character and he is Vasu Master's father, a doctor of the very wise and understanding sort, who shows a variety of ways of healing. Vasu Master's efforts to teach Mani take the broadest meaning of tech. He tries to teach him in all aspect like as psychologist and also as educator.

Gita Hariharan's next novel is *When Dreams Travel* (1996) is a retelling of the old story of Shahrzad and her sister Dunyasad. They are married to two

brothers, the sultan Shaharyar and Shahzaman, both of whom were earlier cuckolded by their wives. To prevent this from happening again, the sultan marries a virgin each night, and then beheads her in the morning. This grisly practice continues until Shahrzad, the Wazir's daughter, manages to keep death at bay by telling him stories for a thousand and one nights. There are only two other characters who count: Dilshad, an insolvent and wily slave girl who betrays the sultan by helping his son Umar to Usurp the throne, and Satyasama, a freak from the sultan's Harem, whose body is covered with sleek, lightweight fur. All these characters have a dream-like quality as though they exist in a trance. Early in the story Shahrzad dies mysteriously and much of the book concerns Duniyazad's efforts to find out how and why. The truth is revealed only in the last chapter's surprise ending. The deaths of Shahrzad and Shahzaman and the wazir by no means preclude their frequent reappearances, either in dream sequences or in incidents from the past.

In the *Art of Dying*, Hariharan offers twenty stories depicting the predicament of the average man and woman. In these stories, she deals with death, pain and loss of self. She debates and analyses the complex socio-psychological problems of the day. The choice of details in the stories like *Gajar Halwa*, *Halfway Animals* and *Untitled Poem* are taken from day to day life and are very realistic and captivating. In these stories Hariharan weaves the very grain and texture of life with infinitesimal details. She suggests a situation and leaves the conclusion to be drawn by the readers. The stories in the collection are compelling because of their juxtaposition of middle-class life gradually falling into the grip of nothingness.

Hariharan's fourth and most recent novel, *In Times of Siege*, has a real, personal background. In 1995 she tried to open an account at the Indian Reverse Bank for her son, eleven years old, but was told that she could do so only with her husband's signature. The decision was based on the Hindu law, which at the time was still in force, that a mother has a right of guardianship over her children only when the father is dead. Together with her husband she decided to take it to court and she won the case. The fact that the Indian court changed the constitution in favour of women in 1999, saying that a mother is undoubtedly a child's natural guardian, now counts as a milestone in the history of women's liberation in India. *In Times of Siege*, Hariharan turns to oppression and repression in another form. The novel is set in the academic and literary circles of Delhi, a world with which Hariharan is personally familiar. The book's main person is Shiv Murthy, a professor of history at Delhi University, who has prepared a lecture about Basavanna, a 12th century poet and social reformer critical of the caste system. Hariharan's choice of Basavanna as a victim of censorship was due to the fact that an attempt had just been made to ban a play by the author H.S. Shiva Prakash for similar reasons.

*The Thousand Faces of Night* describes the setup of a central south Indian Brahmin family. Devi, central character returns to Madras from America, to live with her mother, Sita. Initially, she confronts by some difficulties in making adjustments with day-to-day realities: It was difficult to change the old order her radical ideas, though she came from a brave new world. Her dream – like visit to America ends as soon as she is in India. Devi prepares to live for her widowed mother and is soon sucked back into the maternal love. Sita was always and is still Devi's anchor rock, never wrong, never to be questioned, a self-evident fact

of her existence. She believed most in the power of her own magic. Sita made discrete inquiries and made through investigations of all candidates before Devi's marriage. What Sita thought to be a suitable marriage for her daughter, failed on various levels, Devi had some expectations from her husband Mahesh to support and understand her on emotional grounds, but her expectations were never realized. She finds a good friend in Mayamma, the old family retainer in the house. Devi listens to her life experiences with all attention and care: she tries to draw some useful essence from them in order to make her life a little better than what Mayamma had allowed occurring in hers. She blamed all and everything on herself, never complaining because she felt that the success of life for woman depended on her ability to endure and move on in this male dominated society. Devi's father-in-law, through his discovery, equips her with a philosophy to live with, "Devi, he chided. Whatever is misery, whatever rests on oneself is happiness;" (68). Mayamma consoles and comforts her. Devi contemplates that loneliness is a good teacher almost as efficient as Mayamma's penance.

*The Thousand Faces of Night* a novel of three women named Sita, Devi and Mayamma who walked on tight rope and struggled for some balance, for some means of survival they could fashion for themselves. They represent three different generations and more than thousand faces of women in India who still have no better existence at night. Mayamma, an illiterate and unaware was the greatest sufferer. Many like her have an idea as to what they really want to be. Sita is a middle-aged woman whose lot is better than Mayamma, since she dominates the family because of her knowledge of her surrounding and awareness of herself. In her desire to become a good wife and perfect daughter, as a result of which she faces a sense of discomfiture and futility. Devi is representative of the

present day intellectual woman, but she too fails and confronts loneliness and alienation. Unable to understand imponderable man-woman relationship, She feels that she has an ephemeral existence. The novel ends convincingly as Devi returns home after experiencing the world which she realizes is filled with sound and fury, gifting nothing. Thus makes the book an interesting reading and also thought Provoking. The most appealing thing about her is her own language style. Weaving her themes in the threads of diligent craftsmanship. The kind of writing that engages most is best expressed in conventional definition of literature writing that presents a permanent or universal idea of the human condition.

In India people are aware of their culture, though they live in a busy world. This research analyses how Gita Hariharan the Indo-Anglican fiction writer uses the genre fiction as a medium to transmit the culture to learners exhibiting the Indian myths in detailed manner to correlate the contemporary life of our people. In the story, Indian myths are intermingled with the lives of the Indian women. Hariharan brought out the glory of India. In simple words, the fiction, *The Thousand Faces of Night* is the commemoration of Indian Mythology.

The following chapter 'A Story of Story Telling' is about the stories from which the protagonist analyses the reality of women, differing in all three generations. The life of Indian women, opens out through the embrace a magic realistic tale of storytellers.



## Chapter Two

### A 'Story' of 'Storytelling'

Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* is about love and death, about women and men, story and myth, passion and loneliness. Three women: Devi, Sita, Mayamma span three generations. Their names evoke goddesses and demi goddesses in the Hindu pantheon. It is a patchwork novel which pieces together the lives of these three women to uncover the hidden patterns of women's oppression across time and space. In this novel 'fact' and 'fantasy' are often mixed; the continuity and cohesiveness of female experience are emphasized through the appropriation and reworking of myth and folklore.

Each of the three women has her own story to tell: Devi, the daughter educated in America, married to Mahesh; Sita, the mother, sacrificing herself to the cause of reason, order and progress, and Mayamma, the old servant, married when still a girl to a drunken lout and abused by husband, mother-in-law and son. Each story, though separate, is yet inter-linked, one replicating, intersecting and embracing the other. The novel explicates the dichotomy between the yearning for a patterned story and the reality of the life which defies any pattern giving rise to irresolvable questions in prelude: "I have always liked the story that comes whole and well rounded, complete with annotation. But mostly I have come across the sharp, jagged, tip-of-the- iceberg variety, and I have always been foolish enough to ask a question."

The novel revolves around a number of stories, some real, story mythical, and also a number of storytellers. Through this maze of maturation of Devi is enabling her to reconstruct the 'fables of her childhood' with her own experiences

and shake off the fetters of others stories and attempt a story of her own. Devi's initial acceptance of the marriage arranged by her mother, her disillusionment and alienation lead her to opt out another confinement in her liaison with Gopal. Finally she disentangled herself from the restrictive associations and discourses in a bid to find her 'own story'. This is indicative of the daughter's initial obedience of the mother though fraught with undercurrents of resentment. Despite her desperate attempts to free herself from the influence of the mother, she arrives at a conciliation and affirmative acceptance of the 'mother' as essential to the daughter's quest for identity.

*The Thousand Faces of Night* anticipates Hariharan's later novel *When Dreams Travel* in the use of the device or 'stories within a story'. *The Thousand Faces of Night* is the linear realistic story of an Indian girl, which opens out to embrace a magic realistic tale of storyteller and storytelling. On the surface of the story Devi- a young, educated girl battling with a failed marriage and a failed relationship, striving to find her from the maze of identities and roles imposed on her is variegated amalgam of multi-layered discourses. It is made up of 'stories' from old mythical and scriptural, the interlocutor of all the stories however remaining constant. Devi is the listener of all the stories, narrated, hinted, invented by the various narrators of the novel. Her grandmother's tales abound in gods and goddesses, dazzling heroes and beautiful heroines and happy-hers are "stories of golden splendour" (27). Grandmother's tales were meant for "conditioning the child's mind for the role of a woman, which has to be borne with fortitude and perseverance. Devi's father-in-law's stories were elaborations of the codes laid down by *Manusmriti* and full of examples of virtuous and chaste women, inspiring their husbands along the path of 'Dharma' by their self-

abnegation and subservience. The stories of Mayamma, the old servant, are explication of lived reality, the expression of a mind that has already been “conditioned” by the strictures imposed by the societal framework.

It is interesting to note that Sita, the mother, again significantly has no stories to offer to her child. Devi is not an inheritor to her mother’s stories but a legatee to her silence. Sita’s dogged efforts to manipulate and organize the life of her husband and her daughter is perhaps a way to escape from the silence that she had imposed upon herself. *Thousand Faces of Night* is not only about the confrontation of tradition and modernity, the conflict between the ‘old’ stories and “new” that need to be articulated; it is also about the search for identity that Devi embarks upon with a corresponding change in her mother’s attitude that hints at an affirmative relationship being established between mother and daughter, where storytelling emerges to be a significant trope.

Hariharan exposes the confining limits of the marital relationship that stifle Devi, through the working of several parallel discourses and relationships. She is the daughter of a widowed mother who strongly upholds social norms. Her husband Mahesh expects from her merely the ‘service’ of a wife who will look after him, obey him, wait for him, bear children, be merely a puppet with strings to be drawn and controlled by him. The other male authority in the family is Devi’s father-in-law who narrates to her stories from the *Puranas* and the *Vedas* and exposes her to the classical writes tradition. Devi’s grandmother on the other hand relies upon her memory and tales passed on to her through the oral tradition. Myths, legends, folktales, stories of common belief permeate Devi’s existence. The novel traces her maturation through the assimilation, subversion and

abrogation of the received stories, and shows how she transfigures them to search for a 'story' of her own.

Devi's grandmother's stories evoked the ideal mould', which held the answers to all questionings. Her stories were meant to prepare the child's mind for the norms, customs and traditions which she must comply with as a woman; her stories presented Devi with patterns which she was expected to emulate. Grandmother's stories present an idyllic world, the story of Nala and Damayanti that Devi heard from her grandmother in her childhood, proves to be a lie when she is faced with a 'Swayamvara' of another kind.

In grandmother's tale, the 'Swayamvara' of Nala and Damayanthi, is imbued with a dream-like quality in its perfection- "The morning of the 'Swayamvara' the sun shone more brightly than usual" (18). Grandmother's tales were resplendent with princesses waiting to be joined in love with a noble prince in a happy ending. Grandmother's tales conjure an exclusive world of flawlessness, where doubts, fears, questionings the intrusions of the real world are attenuated. The romantic love story of Nala and Dhamayanthi, heard in her childhood, resurfaces in Devi's consciousness when she grows up to realise that 'the princess robe' that her grandmother had so lovingly stitched for her is frayed round the edge and two sizes too large.

Devi's myth-laden childhood is far removed from the banal and prosaic choice she makes: "If I was going to play out travesty of the myths that had filled my childhood, would tear aside all pretence, I thought, I would be as matter-of-fact as Mahesh" (23). Love and romance are superseded by expediency, the

concern for security and stability playing out the struggle between the stories 'told' and the reality embraced.

Grandmother's stories drawn from the *Ramayana and Mahabharata* focused on her narration about Gandhari, Amba, Ambika, as prelude to womanhood, an initiation into subterranean possibilities. Grandmother's stories seek to establish a link with lived experiences; myths for her were possible resolutions of a perplexing reality. In her imagination Gandhari is joined together with Sita, Devi's mother, in their fate and their acceptance of it. Gandhari, wedded into magnificence and opulence but with a blind man, chose to embrace darkness voluntarily by blindfolding herself. Such a sacrifice can also be interpreted as an act of defiance the patriarchal injustice imposed on her. Gandhari's blind folded is a mute protest against the tyrannical authority that had extinguished radiance from her life. Sita, as a young daughter-in-law had protested in Gandhari's fashion. She was a gifted veena player, her sublime rendition on veena drew tears from the listeners. She had also been trained to be docile and a useful daughter-in-law, until one day, when she was so engrossed in her veena playing that she could not listen to the call of her father-in-law. This inflamed him and he ordered Sita to put her veena away. As a mark of protest she pulled the string off the instrument, silencing it forever. She sacrificed her soul's music to don the role of ideal wife, mother and daughter-in-law. For both Gandhari and Sita, protest takes the form of self-denial, a sacrifice of their identity and acceptance of the identities that bare thrust upon them. Sita breaks her veena and moulds herself into a super-efficient household's machine working for her husband's advancement. However, by strangling her talent, she also develops into a person who stifles all creativity, whether in her husband or in her only child.

Devi's cousin Uma had an unfortunate marriage. Married into a wealthy family, to an alcoholic husband, she had to suffer the lecherous advances of her father-in-law. Devi had to return home. Grandmother consoled her that disaster befall even the goddess and princess and few could emerge triumphant like courage Amba. Grandmother narrates the story of Amba of *Mahabharata*, in answer to Devi's probing's about Uma's marriage-Amba's story is about abject humiliation of the feminine principle, and the vengeance that is wreaked through penance. Beneath the surface of a story of retribution for a wrong done, lie the undercurrents of and Ambalika, the princess of Kashi, entered their 'swayamvara' to choose their husband. Amba had already chosen her soul mate in king Salwa; what remained was, accepting him before the world. The discordant note in this perfect setting was struck by the intrusion of Bheesma, who himself vowed to celibacy, kidnaps the three princess for his brother who was incapable to win a woman on his own strength. Amba, unlike her sisters refuses to comply with the plan, is permitted to return to her lover Salwa, is eventually spurned by him, offers herself to her 'victor' Bheesma, is again refused, and takes refuge in penance and vows to avenge herself on her original captor Bheesma. She is reborn as Dhruvad's daughter raised as a son, to become Bheesma's nemesis.

The story of Amba exposes the injury that women had been exposed to and underscores the continuity of injustice against them. The epic as recounted by grandmother's tales sounds a note of warning: power for woman comes with a heavy price, degenderizing and a muddle of woman's sexual identity. Devi is the interlocutor of many stories. Baba, her father-in-law, like her grandmother, is also a storyteller but unlike the old tabulator, Baba's stories, dominantly project images which render women secondary and which depict them in restricted role

models, reinforce inequalities and discriminations. His stories epitomize the idea of 'Womanhood' or 'femininity' as perceived by societal norms, and define the gender specific roles of a mother, daughter, wife and daughter-in-law. In role-definitions, neglect, disposal and loneliness are recurring features. Women are disposed of, discarded, rejected and subordinated. They are able to redeem themselves mainly through devotion, sacrifice and sublimation. In Baba's accounts women's lives are defined by male control, depriving them of the element of choice. His stories invoke traditional taboos on the moral behaviour and conduct of women, in relation to their various social and familial roles and establish the patriarchal structure, which defines all social discourse. Devi is subjected to various discourses-her grandmother's which acted as an initiation into the separateness of being a woman. His is the voice of 'authority' that ordains the codes by which a woman should live within the various roles assigned to her by the patriarchal structure in society.

Baba's is the voice of "magisterial Manu". His stories uncover the functions decided upon by society for women and the ways by which they can spur men on the path of "Dharma". Baba's stories are replete with legends and anecdotes about womanly sacrifice and fortitude how the wives of great saints by their self-effacement had spurred them along the path of 'Dharma'. Jayadeva's wife Padmavati was blessed with the visitations of Lord Krishna who had restored the immortal lines 'Dehi Padapallava Mudaram' in the manuscript of Gita Govinda, initially struck off by Jayadeva believing it to be sacrilegious. Purandara Das, a saintly composer was a wealthy tradesman before he was converted to a life of devotion because of a selfless act of his wife. In Baba's mythology, a virtuous wife dies before her husband, a 'sumangala', 'the mark of vermilion illumining

her forehead. The wives of Shymushastri, Thyagaraja, are emblematic of this tradition. Baba appears to be a good man by standards- his stories are instruments of oppressive socialization and conditioning imposed on women. Devi is exposed to the taboos and conventions of a traditional society, especially of a Brahminical order, through her father-in-law's stories "His (stories) define the limits. His stories are for women who has already reached the goal that will determine the guise her will wear" (51).

*The Thousand Faces Night* moves through a number of voices, predominantly that of women and evolves through a concentric framework of storytelling, containing stories embedded within stories, the real and the mythical colliding and colluding, reflecting, replicating and intersecting with each other. The story of Parvatamma, Devi's mother-in-law is revealed to her in flashes from perfunctory comments made by Baba and Mahesh and insights provided by Maymma's account. Devi's story of her 'mother unseen' from the conflicting version received about her. Parvati, named yet after another goddess had been a self-effecting dedicated homemaker, a perfect wife and mother. Parvati had been chosen above 'Hema' and 'Mother' as a suitable bride since her name did not conjure the image of "black-chatting, tantrum throwing modern girls." Parvati the name itself is evocative of chastity and virtue capable of penance for being united with her ideal mate. Her husband's stories of saints and their dutiful wives had however evinced a different response from her -instead of abiding by the dictums and roles laid down by society, she chooses to move out and beyond the oppressive sphere of the familiar and known to the unknown and inexplicable. She had left the domestic, quotidian, domain sorbed to her, renouncing the worldly in search of her god. By making a definitive move towards finding her



‘own’ story, repudiating the restricting space allotted to her as a woman, she is in her quest of her identity and selfhood. Parvatiamma is Devi’s ‘guardian angel,’ her ‘mother unseen’. Devi duplicates the pattern when she leaves Mahesh and the security in pursuit of a story of (her) own.

Devi’s is the frame story that holds within it myriad other tales. She relives in her memory the days of her childhood spent in her grandmother’s house, the stories heard on the past and their relevance in her present, she listens to Mayamma’s story of suffering and experiences traces of it in her own life, reconstructs the lives of her mother Sita and mother-in-law, whom she had never seen. Myths, folklore, epic narrative, crisis-cross to form scaffolding to Devi’s story. Devi is influenced by her grandmother who narrates to her the tales of mythical heroines making subtle connection between the profound and awe-inspiring of the mythological women around her. Hariharan writes in a clean and straight-forward manner all her characters are suitably dealt, they talk and communicate effectively which keeps the novel flowing stories from Indian epics, provides scaffolding to the main story line. She relates the relevant of epic stories in contemporary society.

The only diversion to break the monotony of her cloistered, enclosed life was Baba’s stories-stories from the scriptures, of saints and their virtuous wives, insisting upon the sanctity and supremacy of the Brahminical order. Devi is faced with emptiness and meaningless of existence in her marital life- Mahesh’s callousness grips her with loneliness. The story of Ganga heard by Devi in her adolescence from her grandmother surfaces in her consciousness. When Ganga in *Mahabharata* kills her children one after the other forbidding her husband from

asking her any question, she asserts her right to her decision and to motherhood. And when she leaves the king, she established that their marriage was a contract the violation of which has set her free. Her grandmother had been silent regarding the interpretation of Ganga's Story but Devi knows what she would have said: "to be good mother, to be a mother at all you have to earn the title, just as you have to renew your wifely vows everyday" (89).

Devi rejects one confinement to move into another, perhaps an equally futile one, shifting her relational needs from her husband to lover. The yawning emptiness that pervaded Devi's existence as a wife and daughter-in-law had driven him to Gopal. She tries to shake off Amma's preaching, Amma's memories and the stories heard from grandmother, Baba and Mayamma, to "soar high on the crest of Gopal's wave of rages," (95) to learn to be a 'woman at last' and seek 'a goddess not yet born' Devi decides break out from the roles that been so far assigned to her and choose for herself her space but his aspiration belies her, her identity becomes an "array of masks and costumes, memories of her various, and discrete, lives" (129). Accepting yet another confinement, she attempts to appropriate Gopal's personal this the earth-bound demands of passion. Devi "drifts between worlds, a floating island detached from the solidity of the mainland" (138). Devi decides to move out from her isolated corner, from the fringes of her ambivalent identity to the centre- stage, to strike out on her own. Devi leaves the silk sari behind, the sari, which was the colour of the peacock's neck, suggesting her decision to seek her own identity, constructing her selfhood.

To seek out a story of her own Devi returns to her mother's house, she walks into her mother's garden which had grown wild and lush, no longer pruned under Sita's surveillance, sound of veena that had been silenced by Sita's surveillance, sound of veena that had been silenced by Sita to 'walk the straight path to a single goal, wifehood' meets her ears. The novel remains open-ended with an affirmation of the mother-daughter relationship, both elements of the dyad poised for finding stories of their own.

The following chapter analyses the portrayal of culture in the Indian society and struggle of women to emerge as individual, breaking archetypal social conventions. It also deals with the cultural and social issues which an Indian woman undergoes after her marital life.

## Chapter Three

### Socio Cultural Issues

Literature has always been a means of reinforcing cultural and social values. Hariharan portrayed the changing scenario in the Indian society. Her concern is to bring out the irrationalities and injustices of domestic and social life. Women were ready to accept their archetypal female role in the past. Modern women have started to rebel against the age-old social conventions. *The Thousand Faces of Night* deals with the sanction of space for woman in the Indian society and her struggle to emerge as an individual expressing her existential anguish.

The novel presents the effects of patriarchy on women of different ages and particularly the varied responses to the restrictive institute of marriage. Women were confined to their homes, they were oppressed and their opportunities for self-fulfilment were bleak. Even in the modern changed ambience, their position is still debatable as they stand on the threshold of social change.

Since she has spent her formative years in India, she astutely observes the human condition prevalent in the country. According to Hariharan, nowhere else in the world, there exists such an exaggerated and chaotic spectrum of classes and conflicts, amid which against all reason, life pulls on. She feels that India is a writer's paradise, given its myriad sources of tension, but it has been inadequately expressed which compels her to contribute her mite in atoning for that injustice. In the changed ambience of contemporary times, there is sea-change even in writings by women. No more do women suffer from that Jane Austen or Virginia Woolf suffered. Freedom within the cultural framework is made available to them

even in the Indian context, but when compared with USA and UK, there is not much sunshine.

Literature has always been a means of reinforcing cultural and social values. The women writers around 1970's brought in a big change by transforming their own experiences as women, as well as their femininity into literary impression. Hariharan belongs to this class of "new woman" replacing the suffering and suppressive models as Seshadri writes: "The new woman is self-willed and her assertive searching to discover her true self. In these years, a class oriented fiction emerged: the woman, who still suffers, but not in silence as she used to do" (12).

Hariharan is a feminist, whose voice revolve largely around claim for perfect freedom in every field, personal or professional. It appears perfectly natural that she has tried to elevate her voice against the established order and affirms her distinct identity by breaking all the traditional taboos which is the outcome of male-dominated society. She is quite of her responsibility towards her vision and is undoubtedly a feminist voice articulating the hopes, the oppressions, the concerns and the tensions of womankind. She has significantly contributed to the vitality, variety, humanity and artistic integrity that embellish the contemporary fictional canvas in India. She uses her novels as her vehicle of protest against male dominance over woman.

In the novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* she denounces subservience of Indian women and advocates their emancipation from the bondage of male domination. She depicts the tragedy of women, who inwardly react to subjection and persecution by man. Devi is the central character in the novel. She likes

Ammu in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* has to endure persecution in her social life. The novel presents a vivid picture of patriarchal dominance in social life, besides striking a note of feminist approach on the theme of women psychology. In fact, globally, the psychological suffering of the women is not so intense and heart-touching like that of Indian women because of the liberty they enjoy.

As they can break any kind of bondage to revolt against any kind of persecution, they have no such cultural concept of subordination of woman to man. The pictures of the predicament of the women of Britain and America are entirely different. Hence it is hard to come across in their fictions, the portrayal of extreme misery of women in their social life. For example, the well known novelist Jane Austen, in her novels centres on the affairs of love. Engagement, festivities, frustrations and disappointments in marital life. Her characters even in their state of disappointment never undergo deep psychological agony, which the Indian women experience in their male-dominated societies.

Hariharan is passionately engaged in the world she lives in, wanting at the same time to change all the inequities it breeds, tolerates and promotes. She certainly has a lot of questions about the society she lives in, as well as about the world, this society is part of. She is a skillful literary artist who does not fashion her thoughts to accommodate her incidents, but having conceived, with care, a certain unique to be wrought out, she invents and then combines such events as may best aid her in establishing this pre-conceived effect. In her works, she shows her characters travel along way from subjugation to independence through the assertion of their will and a will to the urge of freedom and to rub shoulders

with their male counterparts can materialize only when women struggle with a will to win and establish their identity rather than falling a victim, to the same forces against which they wage their battle. Their own empowerment will put an end to all her dichotomies, so she says in her article *New Voices, New Challenges: Concerns of the Contemporary Writer* that, “We are constantly being informed that our individual and national lives occupy a larger space, a global space in which we must think and work and compete, we also find, in the day to day real world we occupy, that our spaces as writers, artists, citizens are shrinking all the time” (30).

Hariharan’s debut novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* is the tormenting saga of women struggling to survive in a world shattered dreams. The greatest degree of chaos is in the development of the characters of the protagonist Devi, her mother Sita and the servant Mayamma. All of them struggle to survive in a world shattered dreams. Though the characters protest, it is mostly silent and subtle and is only expressed after subjection to torture and neglect, only after a long period of patience and endurance. Apart from this, if she does anything substantial, it is not mentioned. Though the relationship was a temporary one, justification is given for this relationship: “Dan was Devi’s answer to the white claustrophobia of an all clear, all American campus!” (6).

Devi returns to India, but is totally different from the one before her visit to the USA. She has now no initiative, no urges to do anything, and waits passively for others to arrange her life. Hariharan tries to point out that Devi’s character developed as a consequence of many mythological stories told to her by her grandmother in her childhood. Her grandmother is the oldest character created by

Hariharan, though she is not present in the novel's main actions and events all the time, her presence is felt through the different mythological stories which she tells Devi. The grandmother belongs to that generation of women who were confined to their household and expected to be virtuous. But even though belonging to an era of superstitions, the grandmother is very optimistic, individualistic and modern.

Her interpretations of the traditional myths and legends are surprisingly quite modern, asserting the individuality of women as human beings and endorsing them to resist oppression. It is believed that Gandhari, in *Mahabharata* blind folded herself because she wanted to be her husband's equal partner in marriage. But the grandmother sees the blindfolding of Gandhari as a sign of protest and rage. According to her, Gandhari became aware of her husband's blindness only after marriage, when she meets him for the first time and sees "his pupils glazed and ruthless" she reacts thus: "In her pride, her anger, Gandhri said nothing, lips straight and thin with fury. Gandhri was just another wilful proud woman – she embraced her destiny – a blind husband with a self sacrifice worthy of her royal blood" (29).

Gandhari's protest is silent, almost like surrender. Devi's grandmother is modern in her approach by making it very clear that though a woman needs to be respected, loved and looked after by her husband and family, at the same time, she has every reason to protest against the atrocities meted out to her. With all her mythological stories, she makes Devi grow up with a sense of individuality and strives to maintain it. When Devi finally marries Mahesh, she realises that there is nothing to sustain the marriage as neither of them have any interest in making the



marriage work. Devi lives like a stranger in her own home, amongst her own people – a stranger whom she had married, a father-in-law who quotes for her sayings from various Sanskrit books and above all Mayamma, a servant, the female retainer, of the house.

Mayamma's story has been portrayed as pathetic right from the beginning of the book when her innocence was nipped in the bud at the tender age of twelve, when she was married, as she herself says: "I put away the shells, the smooth round pebbles I had played within my parent's house. I took into my hands the iron skillet and blew the fire into the stone even before my mother-in-law woke up" (116). It was tormenting and unfortunate that Mayamma did not bear a child for ten years after her marriage and was accused of being a 'barren'. For this, she "Dipped herself again and again in pure coldness – starved every other day gave up salt and tamarind meditated, fed cows and curds to snakes, worshipped various gods and goddesses" (80).

Her miseries come to a halt when finally a son was born to her, but that too, only momentarily. She was deserted by her husband, who hit her with iron pad and took away her diamond earrings. Mayamma is broken, both mentally and physically and she protests sullenly and silently, and even though she takes care of her ill son, there is hardly any tenderness left in her and he finally dies. As a mark of final protest, "she burns her horoscope with her son." (129). Her life becomes worth living only when she finally enters as a servant to Parvati Amma, Mahesh's mother. She makes a comfortable living as a retainer of the household. Here too, she finds Parvati, Devi's mother-in-law crushed within the cultural

bindings of her time. Mayamma says thus: “Her face reminded me of a gentle humming bird with a broken wing. Her eyes wet with unshed tears” (124).

Mayamma is in fact a representative of a modern woman, who approves of Devi’s decision to walk out of Mahesh’s life blessing and wishing her hell. Hariharan sums up her life thus:

Mayamma had been thrown into the waters of womanhood well before she had learnt to swim. She had learnt about lust, the potential of unhidden bestial cruelty, first hand. She had no choices really. She had coveted birth, endured life, and nursed death. And she had won some small victory – if you could call it by such a grand name. She had no bitterness. She could live again through Parvati amma, even through Devi. (128)

The main character of the novel is Sita, Devi’s mother. She is educated, talented, knows how to play the veena, for which she is accepted for marriage with a grim resolve to be the perfect wife and daughter-in-law. She often played the veena and on one such occasion, she is accosted by her father-in-law: “put that veena away. Are you a wife, a daughter-in-law?” (30). She protests like Gandhari: “She hung her head over the veena for minute that seemed to stretch for ages then she reached for the strings of her precious veena and pulled them out of the wooden base. They came apart with a discordant twang of protest” (30).

As a girl, her ambition was to become a great veena player. Though she achieves, but silences her craving for music forever, when she pulls the strings of her instruments, when the instrument comes in the way of being accepted as a

good wife and daughter-in-law. But Sita is a woman who knows her mind, has clear views about her goals and achievements. Like the stray branches of the jasmine plant she prunes in her garden, she prunes the stray branches, thoughts and actions in her life to achieve what she wants to. Though she changes herself and never gives opportunity to anyone for complaints within herself, in protest, she dually becomes very strange and takes up that comes in her life. Devi realizes: “In her ruthless attempts to keep her emotions and ambitions at bay. Sita had built a wall of reticence around herself. It distanced her from the ambiguous, and anchored her firmly to the wordly indices she had adopted in place of her veena” (136).

There is bitterness in Sita’s life, due to the cultural pattern of life in her psyche and there is not much tenderness left. She resembles a bonsai, which sprouted only buds. No flowers. Devi the protagonist, is a modern woman who goes for her education abroad, meets a black student, Dan and a relationship is forged between them: “Promises had been half made in the dark shadows of the parking lot outside the grimy, friendly dinner they met at” (9).

Devi is intelligent enough to understand that there can be no permanent relationship between them and can be catastrophic. At the backdrop of her mind, she has a picture of a perfect marriage, painted to her by her grandmother. She is not aggressive enough to retaliate against the existing social customs and thus drifts into a marriage with Mahesh, skilfully arranged by her mother, Sita. But Devi soon realises that she had strayed herself into an empty, hollow relationship. She craves for equality in matrimonial relationship and tries hard to check the decay in their lives. As long as her father-in-law keeps her spirits high by telling

her inspiring stories about ideal womanhood, she endures the void in her marriage.

She is not at all satisfied with the typical, traditional role of a wife, having material comforts and social status. On the contrary, though not a hard core feminist, she belongs to the band wagon of awakened woman who craves for more and more. Her concern about their relations is genuine, but Mahesh ignores her, frustrating her more when he refuses to consider her problems seriously. There is monotony and moroseness in their relationship to the extent that there is anger and hatred for each other more than love and feeling. Devi wants dialogue in her relationship, not dictatorship and ultimately decides to protest and assert her individuality. Her decisions are pre-meditated, unlike her relationship with Dan, when she was afraid to take risks. Now she is bold enough and when Gopal comes into her life, her suppressed dreams leap into flames and she walks out of wedlock courageously: "I will gather together the fragments which pass for my life, however laughable, empty and insignificant and embark on my first journey. I would like to do better than to sneak out, a common little adulteress" (95).

She is happy with Gopal, because her happiness is her concern. He takes her along on his concert tours, shares his professional plans with her. But again, despite all this, she feels alienated for she realizes that she does not belong to his world. He is like a dancing peacock, too engrossed with him. Moreover, the illegitimacy of their relationship makes matters worse, and she becomes extremely touchy: "She could feel the appraisal of a straying eye, cool and dismissive on her face. She knows she was being labelled" (138).

There is lack of mental and emotional incompatibility in both her relationships, which disrupts the bonding tie. Once again, she protests and decides to return to her mother and start her life fresh. She is confident enough to survive on her own as well and be a pillar of strength for mother as well. She realizes: “To stay and fight, to make sense of it all, she would have to start from the very beginning” (139).

Sita and Devi of the novel are different from their mythological characters. Sita in the novel is a very firm character and Devi is a spineless person, yet becomes firm slowly when she gets out of senseless relationships both with Dan and Gopal. Hariharan tries to give relevant answers to the dilemma which her heroines face. Her next novel, the most widely read, *In Times of Siege* is a political statement, where Hariharan is very unpretentious, very straight forward and assured about her work and objectives. The novel is written in real, personal background, set in academic, literary circles of Delhi, to which she is associated with.

She writes about the lack of integrity amongst Indian academic circles, discusses the ruling parties and is a mirror to Indian academic circles which is increasingly marked by fundamentalism, mistrust, hate and censorship. Hariharan nicely allows the political dispute to unfold by raising questions on sensitive issues like religion, politics, fundamentalism and liberalism. She treads into dangerous territories and comes out with flying colours. The fundamentalists hardly realize that, it is beyond their powers to protect a culture as vast and deep as India. They do not believe that Indian culture will always survive for centuries.

The creative side of Hindu religion with its sensitivity and vulnerability is actually its strength and the fundamentalists themselves are the biggest threat to the spirit of religion and culture. Hariharan explores all the related issues in a slow manner, lingering over the buzzing of a fly or the itch of human flesh imprisoned in a plaster cast. The result is revealing that India has travelled a long way from subjugation and servitude to preserving protest and finally arriving at assertion, all along the gusty path on its rich cultural background.

The following chapter focuses on the image of superstitious believes through Puranas which yokes together the various vicissitudes faced by women in Indian society. It also deals with different faces of women through mythical representation with the life of Goddess and Demi goddess.

## Chapter Four

### Mythological Allusion

India is the cradle of civilization with great tradition and heritage. The ethnicity of this country is prolific with a lot of myths. The great Saints and Rishis in India taught their people the art of living. India has a rich heritage of literary tradition. It has contributed great epics to the world, i.e. *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* which invariably preach the principles of life to the people. The tradition continued in imparting the culture and interpreting the myths of the country.

The women writers concentrated on the portrayal of different faces of women. The writers are highly educated and experienced enough to focus the status of women in Indian society. They talk about the contemporary women's problems in love, sex and marriage with greater confidence. Hariharan articulates these themes with the help of Indian Mythology. She presents the Indian myths taken from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and relates them to the women characters of her first and award winning novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*. Through this mythological representation, she has won an outstanding place in Indian writing in English.

The term 'Myth', is derived from the Greek word 'Mythos' means 'Word' or 'Speech'. It is a system of "hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group and which served to explain why the world is as it is and things happen as they do to provide a rationale for social customs and observances" (170).

In the Indian traditional family system, these myths have a unique importance as they are verbally and orally transmitted from one generation to another generation in order to establish the sanctions for the rules by which people conduct their lives. Indian Mythology is connected with the stories about goddesses and even the legendary heroes mentioned in the epics like the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. The myth collections are called *Puranas*. Hariharan, being brought up in a traditional Hindu family might have been acquainted with all these myths and she perfectly blended the myth and reality in the modern Indian life. Hariharan deftly explores the prescription of the gender relations by means of Indian Mythology.

Hariharan's debut novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night* articulates the problems of women with the help of Indian Mythology. She links the plight of her women characters with the Indian myths as *Mahabaratha*, Sanskrit stories etc; to the Gods, Goddesses, legendary heroines in the epics of India. These stories were instrumental in supporting the insidious patriarchal concepts. The lives of the three women Devi, Sita and Mayamma in the novel, expose the different dimensions of women's oppression. The reworking, previsioning and retelling of the myths as allusions of the character's story is the highlight of the novel.

For any Indian women, institution of marriage ensures protection, love, compatibility and happiness. Marriage makes a woman expect a lot of happy events, compassion, empathy, mutual understanding and a protective atmosphere to live life in peace and harmony. Marital life in India, on the contrary lays a lot of restrictions and constraints which constrict them from a life of freedom. They



suffer disappointment and disillusionment in the face of reality. *The Thousand Faces of Night* is the portrayal of different faces of women suffering and depicts the status of women in Indian society. It yokes together the various vicissitudes faced by women of the puranas.

Devi, a young educated girl with ‘the American experience’ struggles to cope with her husband Mahesh, who is most of the time on business tour. She feels alienated in her own home. She searches for an identity and tries to free her from the bondage of marriage and the various roles levied on her. Grandmother’s tales heard in her childhood days inspire her and she tries to replicate them with her own life. The stories which she heard every summer from her grandmother is a kind of preparation for her future life. The child’s mind is prepared to accept her role of woman. The grandmother’s stories prepare the child towards her marriage where fortitude, patience, endurance and perseverance are inevitable. Grandmother’s stories are allusions to Gods, Goddesses, superhuman warriors, brave princes, beautiful and virtuous princesses, men and women destined to lead heroic lives. For each character’s problems, the grandmother indirectly narrates a story. The stories are solutions to their problems but they “were not simple: they had to be decoded.” (27). They were no ordinary bedtime stories.

The stories were told for particular occasion to a particular character as Gauri’s domestic problems is yoked with a story of the “beautiful girl who married a snake”. Uma’s disastrous marriage was linked with how even Amba, a high born prince becomes ‘victim of disaster’. Amma’s stories are yoked together with Gandhari’s story. Gandhari with all her fury “embraces her destiny a blind husband with self-sacrifice worthy of her royal blood” (29). In the same way

Amma is a wilful, proud woman. Grandmother gives us an anecdote about how the father-in-law scolded her for not sweeping the floor of the pooja room. When she lost herself in playing the veena, the uproar of the father-in-law to put her veena away. Amma with furiousness “reached for the strings of her precious veena and pulled them out of the wooden base. They came apart with a discordant twang of protest” (30). The heart-rending music was never heard again.

Gandhari might have blindfolded herself as a subservient wife just because her husband was blind or she might have blindfolded herself to rebel against the injustice urged on her to marry a blind husband Dhritrashtra. Gandhari wants to punish people who have imposed on her the marital life with a blind man. It might also be interpreted that she refrains to see what her husband is not let to see because of his blindness. As a subservient wife, she completely shuns the scenes which the husband cannot see. Gandhari is the very enigma of women of protest. She is a wilful, proud woman who denies, sacrifices “sight” as an answer to the injustice done to her. In the self-same way, Sita also discards the Veena as an act of denial and sacrifice to retaliate to the father-in-law’s curt remarks, “Are you a wife, a daughter-in-law?” (30). Hariharan’s novel is a dexterous conglomeration of numerous stories besides the story of the protagonist Devi. The technique is “Passing-on” narration from one character to the other. The narration passes from Grandmother’s stories, the Baba’s stories and to Mayamma.

In the novel, Sita as a young daughter-in-law also equivalently protests in Gandhari’s fashion. When the grandmother cannot find a precise mythological equivalent for the experiences women had, she uses to correlate them with stories of “the beautiful girl who married a snake.” Indian families have a plethora of

relationships to save guard the system of marriage. But when there is a familial problem, nobody supports her. She fights her battles alone with men. “A woman fights her battles alone.” Devi, who lives a lonely life, not able to hear the litary life frees herself from the bond and rejoins her mother. She fights her battle alone. Devi’s father-in-law, Baba is a typical illustration of a male-dominated patriarchal world. His character is revealed through the stories which he elaborates to Devi. They are elucidation of the codes laid down by Manu which unravels the virtuous and chaste women who inspire their husbands along the path of Dharma by their sacrificial nature, self-abnegation and subservience.

Baba’s stories are different from grandmother’s stories. Baba’s stories were not ambiguous and its centre-point “an exacting touchstone for a woman, a wife” (51). Baba’s stories always reflect that women should be devoted to their husbands. He explains the means of reaching Heaven by serving their husband with devotion and care. Baba sets the criteria for a good housewife and even after he left his hypnotic voice quavers, “The housewife should always be joyous, adept at domestic work, neat in her domestic wares and restrained in expenses. Controlled in mind, word, and body, she who does not transgress her lord, attains heaven even as her lord does” (70).

Muthuswamy Dikshitar’s story, Purandara Dasa, Syaama Sastri, Thygaraja’s second wife story are Baba’s illustrative stories. Baba gives out philosophical note from Manu, All men are enjoined to cherish women, and look after them as their most precious wards. Fathers, brothers, husbands and brother-in-law should honour brides, if they desire welfare. Where women are honoured,

there the gods delight; where they are not honoured, there all acts become fruitless.

Baba says that women had always been instruments of the saint's initiation to 'bhakthi'. He recites the story of Jeyadeva who sang Gita Govinda, to say how great man can see the spiritual greatness of his wife. Baba eludes the story of Purandara Dasa, who became miserly as his fortune grew. One day when a Brahmin asked for agy to conduct upanayanam, he kept putting him off. So the Brahmin went to Sarasvati Bai, who without thought gave her nose-ring. But when Purandara Das came to know this, he sent a messenger to bring her ring. Not knowing what to do, when she was about to drink the poisonous potion, she saw the exact replica of nose-ring. After this incident, Purandara was humbled and he leads an austere life.

Baba's another story of Narayana Tirtha, talks about how a virtuous wife devoted to her husband dies before him, a sumangali, and her forehead widowed and whole with vermillion, her arms and neck still ornamented with bangles and gold chains. He narrates how Syama Sastri's wife died five days before he did and how Thyagaraja's second wife died after performing the sumangali prarthana. Baba summed up his illustrative stories: "By public confession, repentance, penance, repetition of holy mantras, and by gifts, the sinner is released from sin. That which is hard to get over, hard to get, hard to reach, hard to do, all that can be accomplished by penance: it is difficult to overcome penance" (67).

Githa Hariharan's Devi, in spite of the continuous exposure to the mythical stories told by her grandmother from childhood, and then after marriage the stories she hears from the father-in-law and the real stories of Sita, Uma, Gauri

and Mayamma does not help her to be a submissive wife to Mahesh. Like how her mother-in-law revolted by leaving the family in search of God, Devi's elopement with Gopal, is also a revolt against her husband Mahesh, who merely wants her to keep waiting for his arrival as a submissive wife. His long tours, her father-in-law's departure to York deprive her companionship. Her longing to bear children to break the monotony, the loneliness and the meaninglessness of life is not fulfilled. Finally, in a fit to give vent to her lone life, to put an end to the "yawning emptiness?" (68), she chooses to elope with Gopal. She hopes to find solace with the company of Gopal but in vain. So, the hankering for love ends and she goes alone in search of her identity.

Her life long search for an identity ends when she reaches her mother. Her search for identity, her quest for identity, gets fulfilled only when she reaches her home. All the grandmother's stories which were told to condition her mind towards the womanhood she would attain had not helped her to live a life of subjection to her husband. She even dismisses the very thought of conception and leaves Mahesh. Her acquaintance with Dan and the whole course of stay in America fails to give her an identity in an alien country. Her fear to accept Dan's marriage proposal is part of the "American Dream" Her fear to reject the proposal for arranged marriage after she comes to India refuses her an identity. Her acceptance to marry of Mahesh and later to be his wife does not satisfy her. She tries to bear children and would have satisfied herself as a mother, but refuses.

When she probes into the lives of women in the myth of her grandmother, she recalls all of them: Gandhari's anger to blindfold herself in protest against people who caused injustice, Sita who vows not to touch the most coveted Veena

in protest against her father-in-law's accusation, Amba who gloriously triumphed against Bheeshma who wronged her, Devi's grandmother who accepts her destiny as a widow, Parvati who revolts by leaving her family to God and Devi's protest is self-assertion. Devi's marriage with Mahesh is absolutely meaningless, with his constant tours and his "purposeful love-making" (74). Mahesh finds fault with her upbringing and He says, "This is what comes out of educating a woman" (74). His remarks of the other women who are not well educated but happy, active, enthusiastic and confident, for example, he cites Mrs. Thara. She revolts against Mahesh by refusing his craving desire for a child. Her revenge against Mahesh is fulfilled when she elopes with Gopal making him a cuckold.

Hariharan is a feminist writer. Her protagonist tries to free herself from the so called notions, taboos of the society, and expectations of the scriptures. She tries to break the bond a woman has with the society and she never wants to oblige to the expectations of the patriarchal world. She wants to free herself and takes the rebels of the myth as examples to find her identity. In reality too, she takes examples of women who had revolted and rebelled against the social pattern of the chauvinistic society. The characters in the novel are enigmatic to Devi and she judges herself against them.

Hariharan selected the less prominent figures from the Indian epics and Puranas. She talks about Gandhari, Amba who are less known to the contemporary learners instead of talking about Sita and Savithri. She talks about Indian myths which are forgotten by many of us in the era of globalization and liberalization. Our sophisticated lives made us renounce our heritage. On the whole, this novel is the retelling of the past. Thus she turns into act of restoration

of lost Indian tradition. Hariharan not only indianised the incidents but also the use of language. She abundantly used the Indian words like *agraharam*, *ashtapdi*, *nadaswaram*, *nagaligapushpa* and so on. She takes the culture to the English speaking countries through the chosen Indian vocabulary.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

Githa Hariharan has occupied a permanent place in the realm of world literature, obtaining tremendous applause by receiving international awards. She has won the Commonwealth's Best First Book Award in 1993 for *The Thousand Faces of Night*. The most appealing thing about her is her own language style, weaving her themes in the threads of diligent craftsmanship.

Literature has always been a means of reinforcing cultural and social values, and the women writers around 1970's brought in a big change by transforming their own experiences as women as well as their femininity into literary impression Hariharan belongs to this class of 'new woman', replacing the suffering and suppressive models as Seshadri writes: "The new woman is self-willed and assertive, searching to discover her true self. In these years, a class-oriented fiction emerged: the woman, who still suffers but not in silence as she used to do." (12).

Hariharan is a feminist whose voice revolve largely around claim for perfect freedom in every field, personal or professional. It appears perfectly natural that she has tried to elevate her voice against the established order and affirms her distinct identity by breaking all the traditional taboos which is the outcome of male- dominated society. She is quite conscious of her responsibility towards her vision and is undoubtedly a feminist voice articulating the hopes, the oppressions, and the concerns. And the tensions of womankind. She has significantly contributed to the 'vitality, variety, humanity and artistic integrity' that embellish the contemporary fictional canvas in India. She uses her novels as the vehicle of



protest against male dominance over woman. The works of Hariharan, a writer particularly concerned with women's issues, are no exception. Though Hariharan labelled herself as a feminist, reformist, revisionist, human rights activist, postmodern writer, she has given all issues related to religion, culture, and tradition of this land in detail. It is a manifestation of her study made in depth. The novel is very much helpful not only to western people but also some people who are not aware of their culture and feel that theirs is inferior to that of others.

Anita Desai and Githa Hariharan, often explore the conflict experience of their protagonist who suffers between tradition and modernity. Mainly they examine the marriage bond through their works and deal with the chaos in the mind of their characters because of the total transformation of socio-cultural terms. These writers have represented the impact of modernization, the feminine psyche and behaviour, and its oppression in the traditional set-up of the Indian society. Their women protagonists grapple with the painkilling influence of orthodoxy as the liberation forces of modernity tempt them to a more personally fulfilling way of life. The characters of Anita Desai and Hariharan picture the wide view of the social life, political events and the boring aspects of character's inner sensibility which make them an existentialist novelist. Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer* and Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* represent the reality for a considerable section of Indian Womanhood. In these novels they expose the theme of alienation and in communication, experienced by the protagonists Sita and Devi. According to the Indian concept, marriage is a lifelong companionship based on mutual love, sharing of each other's happiness and sorrow.

Hariharan's female characters show how woman survives in male dominated society. The female character faces all the problems in her life and even survives with her inner strength, female bonding and this makes Hariharan's feminism, typically Indian. She evolves a feminist understanding of the woman's problem out of a purely Indian climate. The central experience in her fiction is authenticated by autobiographical overtones. Her feminism is not a copy the western feminism. It is very much rooted in the Indian soil. She is quite down to earth in her feminist approach to the woman's problem.

*The Thousand Faces of Night* can aptly be defined as the several faces of thought presented by Githa Hariharan about the central theme of struggle and predicaments of women in Indian society. The central theme is categorized as the quest for identity, penance, female bonding, marriage, chaos and dilemma by the rebellious protagonist Devi. *The Thousand Faces of Night* represents a variety of female characters, with varied wishes and frustrations, desires and agony, searching for self-identity or self-liberation. Hariharan's female characters revolt against considering marriage and motherhood as ultimate goals of an 'ideal woman'. Here, they stand with the third wave of feminism strongly advocating individual liberation. Through the study of women characters, Githa provides us a peek into the Indian tradition and culture and the position of women in the Indian society.

*The Thousand Faces of Night* is about the journey of Indian women through tradition to modernity in search of self-identity. It also discusses the ways out. It tells us how the characters, and modern cope with passive victimhood. Issues raised by Hariharan are social, cultural and ethical. The vision Hariharan has for

womankind is of empowerment. However, the attainment of the end of the narrative as depicted by the novelist is suggestive. One assumes that Devi will also find herself by going back to her roots. Devi finally realizes her mistake that she was looking at herself from the opposite end. All she was doing till now was to be “an obedient puppet” (137) to please others. Devi is at a juncture where she has to decide whether she wants to remain frustrated throughout her life or she wants to be free and liberated. She decides to be bold and face the world with conviction. She recalls that she has never taken her own decisions, “I have made very few choices, but once or twice, when a hand wavered, when a string was cut loose, I have stumbled on- stage alone, greedy for a story of my own” (137). She again leaves Gopal finally to return to her mother or her roots to rediscover her true identity. Like the mythological Sita, Devi finally returns back to her mother as, “she rehearsed in her mind the words, the unflinching look she had to meet Sita with to offer her love. To stay and fight, to make sense of it all; she would have to start from the very beginning” (139).

India is a country with rich and varied cultural heritage, where Hindu Dharma is given pride of place. Sanatan Dhrama or Hindu Dharma is not a religion but a way of life. Any piece of literature which has been produced on this sacred land will certainly have some influence of the Vedas, the Puranas, the Epics, and the Upanishads. In her first novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* she has not only used myths to understand the lives of women but also focused on certain features of Hindu culture which predominantly influence the life of a common man. The paper aims to highlight how the Hindu way of life has been depicted by Hariharan through mythical characters, holy personalities and the concepts of culture and tradition in the novel. Hariharan, in her award winning

novel, *The Thousand Faces of Night*, eloquently presents the Hindu way of life through characters in the novel like the grandmother of Devi and Devi's father-in-law, a Sanskrit Professor. They are two mouth pieces of the author to make Devi aware of certain oriental concepts which are part of life for Hindus or so-called Indians for ages.

Hariharan has not counted whether there are really thousand thought here, but there are certainly quite a few thoughts, and it is not easy to recognize any kind of order amongst them. The novel interweaves the fabled myths and legends of India with a young woman's search for self, exploring such universal themes as freedom, independence and desire. According to the novel *The Thousand Faces of Night* is about the elemental things of life: about love and death about women and men, story and myth, passion and loneliness and dashes of cultures and of continents. The story focuses on the three women as they are subordinate to men in the family and society. *The Thousand Faces of Night* celebrates the female bond and attempts to create new identity for women. The novel brings alive the World of Indian Women's lives, where most dreams are scattered and the only common force is the fight for survival. Hariharan succeeded in presenting world of women, their pangs, thirsts and disillusionments.

At one juncture of the novel, Hariharan employs Baba to explain the greatness of women. She quotes Manusmrithi, and puts the translation of the following sloka: 'Yatra naryanthu pujyanthe, ramanthe tatra devatah- Yatra itastu na pujyante sarvakstatre aphalah kriyah. "Fathers, brothers, husbands, and brother-in-laws should honour brides if they desire welfare. Where women are not honoured; there all acts become fruitless"(65). This is an exquisite occasion

which proves that ultimate importance is given to women in ancient days in this country. This also leads to some hypothesis that prior to ever-criticized Patriarchal society; one had a matriarchal society where women are given more prominence than men. She strongly believes that women have always been the instruments of the saints' initiation into Bhakti. Githa Hariharan takes examples from the lives of Jaya Deva, Purandara Dasa, Narayana Teerdha, Syama Sastry and Thyagaraja.

The story of the three women tells about the society's patriarchal pattern. The society's expectations and the taboos laid by men of the world are vividly portrayed. 'Story within a story' is the narrative technique which Hariharan employs in the novel. To substantiate her stories, she uses mythological allusions from the great epics of India. The grandmother tells stories from Hindu epics -the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, etc. in which the characters have all time significance; whereas the Professor of Sanskrit derives and tells anecdotes and tales from all Sanskrit, Vedic literature to educate his daughter-in-law in tradition, culture and customs.

The novel is not only about the confrontation of tradition and modernity, the conflict between the 'old' stories and 'new' ones that need to be articulated, it is also about the search for identity that Devi embarks upon with a corresponding change in her mother's attitude that hints at an affirmative relationship being established between mother and daughter, where storytelling emerges to be a significant trope.

Devi in *The Thousand Faces of Night* is both a victim of the patriarchal family and its product, her mother. Hariharan presents him as a dreamer and an

idealist who allows him to be moulded. Sita's life is illustrative of the life style of many an Indian woman who give priority to the family over the self in a society where men are convinced that after marriage the woman's services are for the husband, in-laws and children. Sita cannot expect a better situation than what she herself has had. Sita sacrifices her musical talent on account of her father-in-law's imitation at the neglect of her household duties. She gives up her first love, the veena, and passively surrenders to the dictates of male authority. Suppressing her artistic desires, she becomes an embodiment of self-denial. She cuts herself off from the link with the past in order to be a perfect housekeeper and a blameless wife. In such situations Mahadevan fails to intervene and support his wife. His silence and lack of support and her traditional upbringing drive her to the extent of pulling out the strings from her veena to lead the path of wifhood. Though he lacks courage to confront his father, Mahadevan is not blind to his wife's toil behind his achievements. He is overwhelmed at the enormous sacrifices that Sita made for the upliftment of the family. He acknowledges that she is a woman who did not complain, a woman who knew how to make sacrifices without fanfare. Sita was such a woman, he thought and she had earned his unswerving loyalty. What he did not quite grasp, and when he did it was too late was that a pattern set early in a relationship congeals into a trap. You can't get out of it without causing pain either to yourself or the other person.

Sita became "an expert at managing things, and even more important, at moulding the most moist and fragile of clay into the most effective shapes" (102). Thus, once sworn to fulfil her duties as daughter-in-law, wife and mother, Sita grows from determination and dedication to perfection in these duties. Sita has set a role model in her own devotion to her husband and family. In the chain of

actions and reactions, one can see how the family first distorts and represses women's desire and then co-opts or browbeats them into submission to its structure.

In the novel *The Thousand Faces of Night*, the mother- daughter relationship is explored from yet another dimension. Sita poses to be a strict disciplinarian and Devi craves motherly touch. The only memory impinged on her mind of her tender touch is of when she once fell sick and her mother caressed her while Devi had pretended to “feign deep asleep” (85). On close reading, we discover that Sita has covert love and sympathy for her daughter. She wants Devi to be perfect in every way. Sita considers Devi as her Veena.

The novel also discusses about what a woman is generally considered to be in India. In the novel, one comes across the insignificant status of women and the resumption of their submissive condition. *The Thousand Faces of Night*, the very title of this novel clearly and also strongly shows with evidence the lives of different female characters where self- abnegation is involved. Commenting on the theme and structure of this novel, C.Vijayshree writes: “a remarkable rendering of the collective struggle of women for self-liberation through the author’s play with narrative structures- framing texts within texts, with texts overlapping in curious ways, her carnivalesque accumulation of inter texts ranging from The Mahabharata to folk stories and her deft interweaving of these with the lives of real women” (177). In the story of the novel one can find not only Devi, but her mother Sita also experiencing a spiritual change thoroughly. They are fully aware that a woman is mainly not a wife or a mother but an individual in her own right.

*The Thousand Faces of Night* portrays women as vulnerable individuals, craving for love and understanding, while all the time being victims of their own gender. In this novel, the filial relationship and the marital situation play major roles in moulding Devi's identity. Sita, Devi's mother, comes under the category of strong and domineering mothers. When her husband dies in alien climate, she does not lose heart but she takes everything as it comes. She brings up Devi well and gives her the education she needed. Devi's stay and study abroad leave her with experiences and memories totally unsuited to the life that greets her on return to India. Leaving behind the freedom that the US offered her, she comes back for the sake of her mother. Amma's letters brought with them an unspoken message of loneliness, poignant in its quiet dignity; the image of her alone by the sea teased me like a magnet; she might need me; my hesitant, self-doubting presence was intoxicating.

In the title of the novel, the word, 'night' signifies the manner of life that cannot be judged in advance and in which the source of Devi's thought develops. The gestures of Devi are influenced by sudden urge of actions and judgement that originates from the authoritative force of a subterranean state of existence. All the three women in the novel tried from their utmost level to brave the strong oppositions and design a room for their own.

Githa Hariharan makes ingenious use of Indian myths for plot-development and characterization in the novel. Myth is a traditional or legendary story, usually concerned with deities or demi-gods, sacred beings or great heroes. Myths as an integral part of literature have always had a privileged place. A myth is defined in various ways. Roland Barthes states:



A myth is a type of speech, so that everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed by a discourse... Myths are stories drawn from a society's history that have acquired through persistent usage the power of symbolizing that society's ideology and of dramatizing its moral consciousness- with all the complexities and contradictions that consciousness may contain. (177)

The myths of Amba, Gandhari, Ganga and others are built up and repeated to promote the traditional image of woman that leads to selfless behaviour and in turn insensitivity to injustice. Even today, these stories become dictums for women and lay down a chalked path to be adhered to. Devi's grandmother narrates such tales. Devi's grandmother is a feminist in her own way asserting her individuality and sheltering women who are victims of patriarchal society.

For an Indian woman, her role is circumscribed within the emotive immersion of herself, which results in the negation of self and often leads to exploitation and conflict. In the gallery of women characters portrayed in the novel, one encounter two sets of women, one which submits to the dominant discourse for validation and the second which favours the inner validation in search of a free self. The first set adopts the community's charted path. Thus they are safer because they live in a fearful survival strategy. In the second case, it is because of the lack of social support and the resultant humiliation. Mayamma falls victim to the patriarchal pressures to survive. On the other hand, there are other women, like Devi, Sita who reject the hegemonic structure in their quest to be more than a mere housewife.



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**Deconstructing Holocaust Consciousness:  
Re-reading Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)  
(Re-accredited with A+ Grade by NAAC)**

**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

**Seles.S**

**(Reg. No. 21APEN23)**



**PG and Research Department of English**

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)  
(Re-accredited with A+ Grade by NAAC)**

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Deconstructing Holocaust Consciousness: Re-reading Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*** 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 Seles.S during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Deconstructing Holocaust Consciousness: Re-reading Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*** 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**  
**April 2023**



**Seles.S**



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## Preface

The project entitled **Deconstructing Holocaust Consciousness: Re-reading Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird*** analyses the struggles undergone by the protagonist to survive through New Historicism, crisis of immigration, alienation, identity, and the psychological understanding of both man and nature.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of American Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Traumas of the Holocaust** depicts the multifaceted mass brutality that took place both inside and outside of the concentration camps.

The third chapter **Meraphysical Awarness** throws light on how the interconnection of violence and religion, and how they effectively mirror each other.

The fourth chapter **Narrative Art as Technique** records the literary method used by the author to narrate the events in *The Painted Bird*

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

Literature reflects humankind and life itself. Literature is a term used to describe written and sometimes spoken material. It is nothing but any oral or written body of work which consists of particular use of language which gives pleasure and reflects human life in it. The word Literature is derived from Latin word *littera* meaning 'letter of the alphabet'. The genres of literature are epic, poetry, novel, short story, Drama, Essay, Biography, and autobiography. The major type of literature across the world are English, Greek, Latin, French, Irish, Spain, Chinese, Italian, Japanese, Persian, Sanskrit, Nepali, Russian, Canadian, and American literature.

American literature, like American history, although short, however, still full of glories and shining masterpieces and writers. From its first counterfeit activities to progressive attempts nowadays, American literature is part of world's literature however; it always has its rare flavour that cannot be freely ignored. First, 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 refuse authority and to maintain democracy and the equality of people. They often celebrate nature and a sense of limitless space. Secondly, American writers have always had a strong impulse to break with literary tradition and to initiate individual direction. Writers of other countries seem to tale in their national traditions. But many authors have abandoned the old in order to discover something new.

Literature has remained in the Americas for as long as the people who lived there have been telling stories. Indigenous American cultures have a rich history of oral Literature. This tale of American literature begins in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century with the advent of English speaking Europeans in what would become the United States. At first American literature was generally colonial literature, by authors who were Englishmen and who thought and wrote that way. Both the content and form of the literature of the first century in America were thus markedly English.

In the Eighteenth century, there were writers who still followed the tradition. But due to The Great Awakening, a new trend for Philosophy and Religion started to flourish. The bend of the American Revolution, accentuated variations between the American and the British political pamphlets and journals started to bloom. In the years toward the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, both dramas and novels of historical importance were produced. Competition between provincial printers and London publishers arose. The major themes that dominated early American writing are wilderness, community and individualism.

Interdisciplinary in its origins, early American literature fosters close ties with other departments, including history, religious studies, and romance languages, in order to find the best methodological approaches for grappling with writings that often sit uneasily in any particular genre. Thus, it slowly began its journey and acclaimed its place in today's literature which cannot be neglected. Kosinski's biography is speculative at best. The presence of many conflicting stories and details about his life results in little more than informed conjecture about his actual life.

Jerzy Kosinski was born on June 14, 1933 in Lodz, Poland, a Jewish, German, and Polish city. His father changed the family name from Lewinkopf to Kosinski in order

to attain a certain degree of anonymity. The change from an overtly foreign and Jewish-sounding name to a common Polish name marked the family's desire to remain unnoticed by the world at large. Due to his father's wealth, connections, and wit, the family survived with Gentile papers in a peasant village of Eastern Poland. They adopted an entirely new identity as a Polish Catholic family that lived comfortably but not completely devoid of the fear of being exposed. Other critics outline a number of events in Kosinski's childhood during the Holocaust that mirror the experiences of the boy in *The Painted Bird*. But, ultimately, they do not prove a strong enough connection to justify claims of the boy and Kosinski being one and the same. Regardless of what Kosinski directly experienced, his time spent in Poland during and after the war certainly indicates a familiarity of Polish peasant life.

Kosinski's family survived the Holocaust, and he remained in Poland until immigrating to the United States in 1957. Kosinski wrote books on other subjects both before and after the publication of *The Painted Bird* in 1965. Neither he nor his publisher overtly stated the nature of the book that he purposefully left out that very type of introduction so that the story would stand on its own. Sue Vice describes how 'authority' appears to be conferred on a writer if they can be shown to have a connection with the events they are describing; this obviously means that the writer's biography must be transparently available for all to know. Kosinski both wins and losses. He fulfils this distinctive requirement by being a survivor and thus an authority on the subject. Kosinski's controversy centers on the fact that he provided conflicting biographical details about his Holocaust experiences to various sources. In some accounts, he says he did not wish for the novel to be connected to his life. However, critics cite several

anecdotes in Kosinski's personal life and interactions that state the contrary. Many scholars have discussed whether Kosinski was Jewish or a non-Jewish Pole. This debate stems from Kosinski's reported denial of his Jewishness to fellow survivor Elie Wiesel. Harry James Cargas relates this story in the following passage: There were several reasons why I wanted to see Kosinski again, in particular to see if I could find out why he had denied being Jewish. Elie Wiesel, with whom I had co authored a book, once told me that Kosinski had absolutely denied being a Jew to him. When I asked the Polish exile if he had denied his Jewishness, he denied his denials

It is evident that Kosinski may have invoked his story-telling tendencies depending upon his audience. Other critics will attest to this contradiction as a result from posing as a Catholic Pole during the Holocaust and his continued struggle with identity. He would later affirm his Jewish identity in response to provocations that he was not "Jewish enough." Kosinski responded to these mild attacks by saying, my past experience is sufficient to define me as a Jew. If pressed, I think it would be easy to find ambiguity even in this assertion.

Other critics also relates another biographical controversy in which Kosinski repeatedly negated an audience with tales of his childhood that exactly mirrored the events in *The Painted Bird*. In one instance, Kosinski appeared on the Dick Cavett show in February 1979 and told how the inability to speak came upon him through a physical accident and disappeared one day when he was in the hospital; a phone rang and he merely picked it up and began speaking. His depiction not only references the ending of the novel and the experience of the boy protagonist, but also does not match up with his other accounts. Sloan describes in other versions, it was not a hospital, but a reform

school, a special school for the handicapped, or a school for the deaf. It seems clear that details of Kosinski's biography changed based on the situation. This also appears to be symptomatic of a storyteller's life. The instances outlined here illustrate the nature of the inconsistencies in Kosinski's statements that fueled the controversy. This is why critics do not treat the novel as a text that should be evaluated on its own.

A wide range of critics has analyzed *The Painted Bird* as literature, whether as autobiography, fiction, autobiographical fiction, or many other nuanced categories. The novel illuminates issues of perspective, authenticity, language, and the use of the Holocaust in art and Literature. These issues are problematic in the general canon of Holocaust writing. The novel also challenges fundamental categories of literature, which critics have borrowed as the focus of their analyses of the novel.

Questions of authenticity and perspective have plagued reception of the novel since its first printing. This stems from the lack of any acknowledgement of the novel's genre as well as a foreword by the author. Without any official, overt information to go by, many initial reviewers described the book as an autobiography. As such, *The Painted Bird* was catapulted to "cult classic" status, while Kosinski was regarded as one of the "most promising writers on the American scene". Once critics began investigating Kosinski's background, though, they identified biographical elements that were inconsistent with the boy protagonist's story. Critics accused Kosinski of passing off the story of the young boy as the true story of his own experience during the Holocaust. Many who interacted with Kosinski until his suicide in 1991 testify to Kosinski's assertions that he was the narrator-protagonist of *The Painted Bird*, yet at other times he denied such an absolute identification. Ultimately, the initial lack of an authentic

testament and Kosinski's opposing stories led to the novel being dismissed by most reviewers as a fraudulent memoir. Critics have drawn numerous inadequate conclusions about the novel based on either an acceptance or rejection of the novel as purely autobiographical, often resulting from an incorrect understanding of Kosinski's biography.

By way of example, scholars once asserted as fact that Kosinski wandered as a child through rural Poland during the Second World War. Yet, Byron L. Sherwin determines that Kosinski's novels are works of fiction and not autobiographical memoirs. While this conflicting statement is somewhat redeemed by the qualification that the classification of fiction does not preclude them from being accurate and true.

Some earlier critics did focus on the literary value of the novel without dwelling on the biographical controversies. However, their reasoning for categorizing *The Painted Bird* as fiction differs. Norman Lavers felt that the novel is too finely crafted, too economically structured, to be a record of actual and untidy life. At the same time, he asserts that "Kosinski may indeed have personally experienced the horrors of the novel, a fact that simply lends "power and authority" to the text itself. Lavers seeks to identify the text as a "picaresque novel" and bases his textual analysis on this idea. His analysis of the novel's themes of freedom, revenge, and education are excerpt-heavy with little unquoted material. From the outset, Lavers claims to review the book as fiction, yet concludes to a greater or lesser degree, the novel *The Painted Bird* follows actual events in Kosinski's life. These types of analyses confuse the reader's understanding of the novel as well as the methodology of one's study.



Kosinski wrote an introduction to the second edition of the novel in 1976. With more than ten years of negative criticism under his belt, Kosinski addressed several of the pertinent issues, including the novel's genre. He lamented the post-war era and his inability to connect with others from his generation on the effects of the Holocaust. He also reflected on his post-war identity as a child survivor who did not see himself as "a vendor of personal guilt" or as a chronicler of the disaster. Rather, Kosinski identified himself as a "storyteller." As such, he chose to write through a medium that allowed him to deal with actual events and characters without the restrictions which the writing of history imposes. Because of his position as a storyteller not a testifier, Kosinski omitted information about himself and refused to give any interviews upon the book's release. It is this omission that led critics and reporters to investigate Kosinski's background in order to label the story as not only an autobiography, but also a Holocaust memoir. The important factor here, which will discuss later, is that the subject of the Holocaust in writing carries an immeasurable weight and responsibility. However, the reason for Kosinski's omission, as he states in the introduction, was based on his opinion that his biography should not be used to test the book's authenticity. In the same way, he advocated that his identity as a survivor should not persuade people to read his book. The point, then, is to read and evaluate literature on its own, without regard to who wrote it and why. Kosinski pointedly addresses the genre of the novel when he says that he wanted to write fiction which would reflect, and perhaps exorcise the horrors that they had found so inexpressible. Here, Kosinski refers to his parents wartime lamentations about the constant worry for his safety every time they witnessed children being forced into trains bound for the ovens. Kosinski addressed accusations that he exaggerated

violence and slandered his native country of Poland through his unflattering portrayal of the peasantry with an anecdote about the novel's reception by his Polish friends: Perhaps the best proof that I was not overstating the brutality and cruelty that characterized the war years in Eastern Europe is the fact that some of my old school friends, who succeeded in obtaining contraband copies of *The Painted Bird*, wrote that the novel was a pastoral tale compared with the experiences so many of them and their relatives had endured during the war. They blamed me for watering down historical truth.

This unequivocal statement renders the critical focus on the text as fraudulent autobiography incorrect and misappropriated. Yet because of his conflicting, personal comments about the story and his life, Kosinski's foreword to the second edition of the novel has often been regarded as inconsequential.

In addition to the foreword and information supplied by Kosinski in the novel itself, there also exists Notes of the Author that were written in English to be translated as an appendix for the German-language edition of *The Painted Bird*. In these notes, Kosinski makes several important statements about the novel and the nature of the relationship between author and text. First, Kosinski observes that the categorization of the novel as "non-fiction" is not easily justified. To justify this statement, he comments on the nature of memory and recollecting events of the past that inherently lack the hard edge of total fact. He elaborates on this idea in for we fit experiences into molds which simplify, shape and give them an acceptable emotional clarity. The remembered event becomes a fiction, a structure made to accommodate certain feelings. If there were not these structures, art would be too personal for the artist to create, much less for the audience to grasp.

Kosinski comments on the nature of representation in art, more specifically in literature. It is necessary for an author to process life events and rework them for literary representation. The representation lead to the very heart of the novel's accomplishments. In delivering a narrative about the Holocaust, there are limits as to what one author can represent, but it is the very configuration of *The Painted Bird* as a fictional accounting of many Holocaust experiences that surpasses these accepted understandings of the limits of representation.

Kosinski posited that the boy protagonist of the novel could be the author's vision of himself as a child, where vision is emphasized as a metaphorical journey. It is not a revisitation of childhood but rather symbols of feelings and events. He remarked that the locale and the setting are likewise metaphorical, while the characters become archetypes. These remarks clarify Kosinski's position as a storyteller, not a historian or voice for the Holocaust survivor. *The Painted Bird* is a culmination of personal and communal experience, suffering, and emotion. Kosinski's unparalleled skill in meshing these layers of perspective and experience justifies his position alongside other lauded works of the Holocaust.

The fixation on Kosinski's biography and personal commentary continued after the release of the second edition in spite of Kosinski's commentary. The pursuit of these two issues as a method to discredit the book culminated in the Village Voice's 1982 expose of Kosinski as a fraud, liar, and generally despicable human being. While the article addressed a number of Kosinski's works, it accused *The Painted Bird* of being translated and edited by outside contributors. In spite of the scathing article, scholars attest that the charge of plagiarism made against Jerzy Kosinski has not been

substantiated, and seems to represent fallout from critical unease about his own autobiographical fictions, which made it easy to misread his novel as a testimony. This is an important point, since it distinguishes Kosinski's actual work from his biography. It represents an acknowledgement in the literary field of Kosinski's contributions independent from any controversial personal statements.

Sloan's biography of Kosinski simultaneously vindicates and condemns these facets of controversy surrounding Kosinski and the novel. While tying a number of the novel's events to actual events that Kosinski either experienced or witnessed, Sloan recognizes that they did not occur with the same level of violence as portrayed in the novel. For example, Sloan notes that Kosinski would have been well aware of the Kalmuks and their rampages of rape and destruction, though it is documented that the men never reached the small village where his family resided. He would have seen one or two of the men perhaps and only heard of the horrifying tales from other people. This is one of many examples that support the categorization of *The Painted Bird* as autobiographical fiction. Although Kosinski himself did not experience the grotesquely violent scene described in the novel, the story is representative of the climate of this time.

It is important to note that since its publication *The Painted Bird* has received acclaim, especially from Holocaust survivors and authors like Elie Wiesel. In Wiesel's October 31, 1965 *New York Times Book Review* of the novel, he notes the story's shattering eloquence and unusual power in achieving the ultimate task of the chronicler of the Holocaust to bear witness in behalf of himself and of those whose voices can no longer be heard. In the same review, he labels the novel as a "memoir," though it was

never officially stated to be one. Critics later attributed this categorization based on Kosinski's own statements to Wiesel, asserting that it was his autobiography.

Ultimately, the abundance of Kosinski commentary used to formulate understandings of the novel is misguided. Even critics in the aftermath of his scandals and death recognize it is surprising how Kosinski's commentary has shaped criticism of the novel. Accordingly, it is contended that the negative views of *The Painted Bird* and attending allegations against its author stem from the problem of genre identification and the failure to evaluate literature on its own. *The Painted Bird* should be read and evaluated as autobiographical fiction in the canon of Holocaust literature. Thus, it is necessary at this point to evaluate the issues of perspective, authenticity, genre, and thematic problems inherent in Holocaust literature in order to justifiably situate *The Painted Bird* in its rightful place.

## Chapter Two

### Traumas of the Holocaust

Holocaust literature is a complex field of study that challenges our accepted notions of what literature is. The assumed conventions of literature become unraveled when writing about the Holocaust. Literature about the Holocaust stands apart from other kinds of literature, such as war or horror literature, in the same way, the Holocaust itself stands apart from other horrific events in history. Many scholars, such as Alvin H. Rosenfeld, have argued that Holocaust literature as a genre occupies a distinct position outside of “topical” literature. By understanding the Holocaust as a unique occurrence that has no parallel or precedence in history, one can begin to examine its subsequent subversion of the very nature of literature, its devices, and its criticisms.

Holocaust literature has been understood as a chronicle of the human spirit’s most turbulent strivings with an immense historical and metaphysical weight. With this enormous burden both in a scholarly and creative sense, Holocaust literature finds itself delicately balanced between two poles. On the one hand, it must remain true to history. On the other, it tries to find a creative outlet in order to describe the indescribable. As a result, one discovers the impossibility of reading Holocaust literature from a merely aesthetic perspective. A sense of historical weight and the reality of these events is always present. However, there also exists a strain of reality that runs through Holocaust literature and continually undermines it. This is true for *The Painted Bird* in a different way than with most Holocaust literature. Commonly, the “irreality” lies in the horror of the memoir and the inability to identify with the concentration camp universe. Quite the contrary, *The Painted Bird* is very accessible given the violent episodes are told matter-

of-factly from a child's perspective. The novel is not cluttered with emotionally charged adjectives that leave the reader in a state of "appreciating" the trauma from the outside. Rather, Kosinski forces the reader to participate and observe directly the episodes through the plain depictions and perspective of the child. Given the lack of any comparable literature before the Holocaust, readers have little, if any, basis to prepare themselves for the kinds of imagery and testimony that saturate Holocaust literature. They are also unprepared for the vehicles or methods by which these stories are delivered.

Although I had made sure that the name of people and places, I used could not be associated exclusively with any national group, my critics accused *The Painted Bird* of being a libelous documentary of life in identifiable communities during World War. Some detractors even insisted that my references to folklore and native customs, so brazenly detailed, were caricatures of their particular home provinces. Still others attacked the novel lore, for defaming the peasant character, and for reinforcing the propaganda weapons of the region's enemies.(xv)

How to read, respond to, and evaluate Holocaust literature are issues that concern the canon overall as well as the present study. Problems regarding historical accuracy, authenticity, perspective and an ever-growing concern for the potential exploitation of the Holocaust dominate popular and scholarly concern. As it is already seen, the biographical issue of the author remains a key issue in the status of *The Painted Bird*, "the boy's struggle, and saw *The Painted Bird* as a reflection of their own struggle for intellectual, emotional, or physical survival" (xxv).

Memoirs, diaries, notebooks, and other materials either left behind by victims or written in the post-Holocaust years by survivors come under close scrutiny for their

authenticity and historical accuracy. Given the diverse nature of Holocaust experience, it is a sensitive endeavour to verify a survivor's testimony that comes forth in the form of literature. It is in the space of this literature that testimony [functions]...as a figure and literary device. As such, one must read testimony in a variety of ways. It is common that a diary of a victim and a memoir of a survivor are written and reviewed in different ways. Diaries present a singular vision of experience and cannot be expected to represent the Holocaust "experience" in a wider sense.

Kosinski felt that "autobiography emphasizes a single life" (xiv). As a survivor and a storyteller in the 1960s, Kosinski was unique in his endeavour to write fiction rather than a memoir. His fiction emphasizes many lives, many experiences, and many voices through the single life of his narrator-protagonist. Though he chose fiction, given the broader demands of Holocaust literature, it remains that Kosinski was not freed of the pressures of verifying his authority to write on the Holocaust. On the contrary, the importance of historical accuracy extends to fiction writers, both survivors and non-survivors. What is more, they have this need to place documentary or expository prose in apposition to works of fiction. The autobiographical prefaces to many works of literature and particularly fiction would seem to indicate an awareness that imaginative literature on this subject does not carry a sufficient authority in its own right and needs support from without. Author of Holocaust literature tend to exhibit apprehension about putting forth work on the subject without confirming its historical accuracy, lest it be judged as undermining the horror or invalidating a testimony.

"The boy's foster mother died within two months of his arrival, and the child was left alone to wander from one village to another, sometimes sheltered and



sometimes chased away. The villages in which he was to spend the next four years differed ethnically from the region of his birth. The local peasants, isolated and inbred, were fair skinned with blond hair and blue or gray eyes. (3)

By way of example, Harold Bloom's edited collection of essays addressing Literature of the Holocaust includes an introduction that qualifies Bloom's intentions. He informs the reader that his parents' families were murdered in the Holocaust, which itself says several things about Bloom and his audience without him even having to say much more. Even as an editor, Bloom felt the need to present his qualifications that are not academically related to his ability to write, edit, or criticize literature in general. This qualification not only functions to lend a certain amount of authority to his endeavor but also acknowledges this pervasive need for an exceptional legitimizing of scholars writing on the Holocaust. He also ensures that the reader is aware of the fact that he is uncertain about "what is or is not possible to represent in imaginative literature," "In sending their child away the parents believed that it was the best means of assuring his survival through the war." (3) The first edition of *The Painted Bird* did not offer readers any affirmation of authenticity since, Kosinski purposefully left out an introduction in order to distance himself from the story. As a result, Kosinski and his work were increasingly viewed with suspicion. By the time he delivered a foreword to his second edition, prevailing lines of critical reaction to him and his book had been forged. Adding to the negative reception were the inconsistencies in his printed and verbal remarks. Thus, where Bloom's acknowledgment of authority exonerated him from critical inquiry as to his ability to write on the subject, Kosinski's foreword seems to have fuelled continued accounts of his inconsistent testimonies. If critics had accepted Kosinski's published

description of the novel, then it should have been classified as fiction at the very least. at that point, challenges to the historical accuracy of the events in the novel would have been irrelevant. James E. Young asserts that by mixing actual events with completely fictional characters, a writer simultaneously relieves himself of an obligation to historical accuracy invoking poetic license, even as he imbues his fiction with the historical authority of real events. All Holocaust kinds of literature, the fictional novel is one of the clearest and most threatening challenges to the constructs of literature and imagination.

The literary devices used to articulate themes in any other genre of literature do not hold up within Holocaust fiction. When writing about experience, characters, and their relation to the world, one must inherently address some type of understanding of the “topic” at hand. In the case of the Holocaust, scholars assert that no understanding exists. There are no analogies to draw between Auschwitz and something else in order to achieve an understanding of the camp. There is nothing to compare to the mutilation, torture, and devastating conditions in the Jewish ghettos of Warsaw, Budapest, and Krakow or the death camps of Treblinka, Sobibor, or Chelmno. Thus, drawing parallels and utilizing analogies in the writing of Holocaust literature time and time again fall short and are introduced only to reveal their inadequacy. The elimination of the analogy in this writing demands a Revaluation of the standards of literature, imagination, and representation

The device of myth lends itself to illustrating the other-worldliness of the Holocaust world when analogy falls short. Sincefiction can manifest itself in a category of Holocaust literature that is not necessarily required to uphold historical authenticity, then the Holocaust is transmuted into more abstract visions of agony, absurdity, or mythic suffering. The ways in which understanding can be achieved fall into the hands of

the absurd, the mythic, and the subversive, rather than the real, the approachable, or the relatable. Truth translates into literary myth rather than a clear comparison of relatable things, experiences, or places. Rosenfeld emphasizes that this is true of most Holocaust fictions. *The Painted Bird* is the exception. The very aspect that sparks both criticism and acclaim is the story's accessibility and its stark, matter-of-fact descriptions of suffering. They are not mythic or otherworldly. Unlike most fictions that fall into mythic dimensions for lack of analogy and understanding, Kosinski portrays suffering that is accessible without drawing analogy. *The Painted Bird* surpasses the mythic because of Kosinski's exceptional literary techniques that will be further discussed in the coming chapters.

Other critics claim that Holocaust fiction is seen by many readers as – at best – a weaker, softer kind of testimony when compared to the rigors of history, or – at worst – a misleading, dangerous confusion of verisimilitude with reality. Interestingly, *The Painted Bird* is more the latter and certainly not the former. The negative criticisms of it outside of autobiographical controversies are that it is too graphic, violent, and exaggerated. In this case, then, Kosinski gives fiction that some claim is well beyond history, but not weaker or softer.

One of the most applicable understandings of fiction for this study comes from Sue Vice. In her *Holocaust Fiction*, Vice stresses on out many critical issues of fiction including an interpretation of how fiction uses time. Vice relates that fiction utilizes the treatment of time, or the relation between story and plot, to use the Russian formalist ii distinction between chronological events the story and their fictional patterning (the plot). Here, the story is the events of the Holocaust, while the plot is the fictional

rearrangement of that chronology. In Holocaust fiction, the reader already knows the story, i.e., the historical events of the Holocaust in the chronologically accurate way they unfolded. This part is essentially unchanging. Fiction does not fabricate or change the story, the actual events, but rather the plot is its fictional reconfiguration of the story. This clarifies the notion that whether or not certain people, places, or events in a Holocaust novel are historically accurate, this does not result in a rewriting of the original story. On the contrary, Vice's treatment of fiction informs that it is simply the pattern of the story that changes. When this is executed with appropriate literary care, the plot does not fundamentally change the story. It is a reorganization of those events through either wholly or partially fictionalized people and places.

It is also in these literary spaces that authors like Wiesel laud the sheer flexibility and opportunity that this understanding of fiction provides the writer. In fiction, veracity does not depend . . . on any exact fidelity to history so much as it does on the writer's ability to absorb history into myth or legend. His comment on the nature of Holocaust fiction suits *The Painted Bird* to the extent that it draws attention to the fact that veracity and historical accuracy are not one and the same. In fact, this is evident among other critics who also find that strategies of narration and transmission a novelistic structure do not impinge on the truthfulness of testimony. If these notions are to *The Painted Bird*, then a completely different way should be followed the story and understand its role. If fiction functions as the vehicle for delivering a testimony, then it does not alter it, just as a deliveryman has no influence on the contents of the package he delivers.

The final major aspect of Holocaust fiction is the problem of perspective. A new reading highlights the novel's perspective as its most redeeming quality and the very

aspect secures *The Painted Bird* its rightful place as an important work of Holocaust Literature. The main question regarding perspective in Holocaust literature is from which point of view can a story of the Holocaust be told that is appropriate, accurate, and effective? Whether an author is or is not a survivor in some sense plays a large role in not only how the audience reads the text, but also how critics evaluate the work. When a survivor writes a work of fiction, it is nearly impossible to avoid investigation and speculation that the work is linked to the personal experiences of the writer. In the case of Holocaust fiction written by a survivor, this notion come into play for survivor writing, a literature of testimony develops that encompasses not autobiography but fictional autobiography and imaginative literature, as well as poetry. The actual experiences of the writer, whether represented or transfigured in the work itself, anchor and validate the writing.

At first glance, Horowitz' analysis may lead back to the issue of biography. However, the broad category of "survivor" spans many different experiences at all levels of Nazi-inflicted suffering. The exact nature of one's suffering does not come into play in this understanding. Rather, Horowitz reiterates the idea that survivor testimony does not conflict with historical accuracy regardless of the form it takes. Testimony is testimony whether it manifests itself in writing, art, or film. Horowitz asserts that it does not have to take the form of a memoir or an overtly Holocaust text. Alvin H. Rosenfeld echoes this sentiment when he emphasizes how all novels about Jewish suffering written in the post-Holocaust period must implicate the Holocaust, whether it is expressly named as such or not. This claim rings especially true for *The Painted Bird*, since the novel focuses on the multifaceted mass brutality that took place outside of the concentration camps. The reader

has a series of allusions, contextual indicators, and only a few overt references to the Holocaust.

Having reviewed issues pertaining to the perspective of the author now let the focus be on the perspective of the text itself. With Holocaust fiction, one must decide from which perspective to tell the story. This is an exceptionally critical endeavor due to the many issues. To find a suitable and appropriate viewpoint from which to tell a Holocaust narrative must be approached with caution. In the case of *The Painted Bird*, the protagonist and narrator is a young, unnamed, and unidentifiable boy from Eastern Europe. It can be guessed that he may be Jewish or Gypsy, but neither is confirmed in the novel. The decision to deliver episodic tales of suffering through the eyes of child serves several purposes.

First, Kosinski explains the basis of the novel as a “confrontation between the defenceless individual and overpowering society” (xii). Where “man would be portrayed in his most vulnerable State, as a child, and society in its most deadly form, in a state of war” (xii). This opposition creates a narrative climate that is highly charged and susceptible to the worst examples of suffering and oppression. The child’s experiences are inevitably going to affect the reader more strongly than if the protagonist was an adult. The child does not have the same strength for survival that an adult does. The reader unavoidably feels more sympathy for the weaker victim.

In addition, the child’s perspective invokes “imaginative involvement” on part of the reader. Since most people do not have clear, direct access to their childhood, Kosinski believes the reader must participate in exploring the child’s consciousness, emotions, and perspective. Recalling childhood memories is an act of recreation and a retrospective

journey. This unique perspective allows for many levels of perception and understanding inherent in the act of recalling childhood as an adult. The narrator simultaneously produces memory, testimony, and an account of events, while imposing an adult retrospection on those recollections. This is the most sensitive part of the novel, which demands a new reading in order to recognize its true contribution.

*The Painted Bird* the short discussion is centres on the work as the first major Holocaust hoax. The issue should be obvious: how can it be a Holocaust hoax if it is not specifically about the Holocaust? it is a book on indictment of the Nazi era, as, Neither is the book specifically about Nazism nor. It seems a rather obvious current that there was great energy being spent in labelling *The Painted Bird* as a Holocaust book, a substantially amount of energy in turning it into an indictment of Nazism; and that those energies came not from Kosinski but from other persons, like Wiesel. *The Painted Bird* cannot be a Holocaust hoax if it was never claimed to be about the Holocaust, if, indeed, the Holocaust is but a trivial part of the book

Kosinski's false claims as to his experiences during the war come in. Yes, Kosinski made claims that the book was based on actual experiences. No, Kosinski was not turned into a wandering orphan during the war. However, the ethnographic detail in the book does speak some familiarity with old world belief. As well, the war itself – as a historical event – plays a minor role in the book: it is but backdrop to the mythic realm through which boy wanders. Again, the far majority of the violence and perversity in the book is perpetrated and worked by peasants. If you removed all the peasant oriented violence from the book – and it would be hard to keep the violence of the German soldiers since the distinction made between the soldiers and the officers establishes the soldiers

On the simplest level, *The Painted Bird* cannot even be said to be specifically about anti-Semitism, as the boy is far more often painted as being gypsy than he is as being a Jew, the former carrying a far greater magical threat than the latter. The book never permits the boy to identify himself or be solidly identified as being either Gypsy or Jew. Indeed, the closest the novel comes to giving a source to the boy's looks lies in that the boy sees his own biological traits in the picture of Stalin, who is identified as being Georgian, coupled with that when the boy finds his parents, his father – from whom he gets his darker tones, his mother being the lighter colour of the local population – speaks Russian, “He spoke to me in Russian and I noted that his speech was as fluent and beautiful as Gavril’s” (225).

Indeed, it might be argued, though it is a soft argument at best, the reason the boy and his parents seem to quickly find financial and domestic stability may be that his father is indeed Russian in origin and thus has privileges of heritage over other Poles. This is the opening to the final chapter:

I was too thin and not growing. The doctors advised mountain air and a lot of exercise. The teachers said that the city was not a good place for me. In the fall my father took a job in the hills, in the western part of the country, and we left the city was not a good place for me. In the fall my father took a job in the hills, in the western part of the country, and we left the city. (233)

Again, it is at best a hinting within the text, and it might be said that the family was able to re-establish itself remarkably quickly, relatively speaking, in a war-decimated country.

Narrative techniques used by Kosinski in *The Painted Bird*.



## Chapter Three

### Metaphysical Awareness

*The Painted Bird* is a literature on its own that is separate from its author's controversies. Kosinski produces a literature rich in multiple levels of perception and vivid imagery that must not only be acknowledged as representing and conveying truth, but also as doing so in an unsurpassed way. It is pertinent to review some of the literary criticisms of the novel to pave the way for a close reading of the text. These evaluations speak of the novel on its own, without attaching biographical assessments to the literature.

One of the most common reviews of the novel as literature describes it as essentially surrealistic, an initiatory experience grounded in an imagined world. Holocaust fiction often falls into the realm of the surreal, imagined, and otherworldly for numerous reasons. The novel's matter-of-fact tone and consistent relationship with historical events grounds the story in reality. *The Painted Bird* haunts with its graphic depictions of cruelty precisely because its descriptions of the text as a parable of demonic totalitarianism can undermine the fictional realism of the novel that makes it so successful as Holocaust literature. Additionally, Kosinski achieves an exceptional balance between real, horrifying events and his fictional presentation of them resulting in a frightening artistic reality.

Another widespread assessment of the story acknowledges the sheer, unspeakable terror embedded in each episode, yet fails to accurately align them within the realm of the Holocaust. By saying the novel is a masterpiece of horror or a wildly fictionalized account of his own childhood in Poland, scholars allow it to fall into the category of horror

literature. This sentiment resonates in an accolade of the novel as one of the best works of literature to come out of the European horror. Even if the review strikes a compromise with the issues of realism, the notion that the novel is comprised of horror stories for the ugliest kind of realism still falls short of accurate classification. It is imperative that, *The Painted Bird* is recognized as Holocaust fiction, which is set apart from other categories of literature.

Literary scholars tend to associate *The Painted Bird* with fairy tales. Interestingly, the whimsical nature of a fairy-tale becomes juxtaposed with the violence. This is evident in the evaluation of the novel as an extraordinary work of combined fantasy and realism, a fairy tale Horror story. Other critics are even more specific to include a reference to Hansel and Gretel, which exist as a contrast to the “folk-tale” and comments on the “anti-fairy-tale” nature of the text. The story’s child narrator is likely the reason for this association, but the narrative is noticeably devoid of the colourful, carefree descriptions found in the fairy tale. Finally, it is again through these simple associations that the unparalleled nature of this Holocaust fiction tends to be downplayed to a series of fanciful variations on the basic themes of Nazi inhumanity. Kosinski intentionally positions the narrative outside of the realm of Nazi inhumanity and brings forth the universal inhumanity of who perhaps did not wear a uniform.

The episodic structure of the novel is one of the critical aspects to the novel that contributes to its overall impact. Clearly, Kosinski is not interested in conventional narrative technique. However, the story is only possible in snapshots for two reasons: effect and authenticity. The brief, yet powerful glimpses function as a constant stimulus for the reader. Kosinski never allows his reader to get comfortable, to become indifferent

to the suffering. The novel's events are flashes of lightning designed to jolt the reader to attention and involvement

Additionally, a sequence of seemingly disjointed events reflects the child's realistic perception as well as the adult's retrospective memory. In the novel, events are not coherently connected because for him time exists only in the present. A child's perception is in the here and now. Events occur sporadically without a causal connection. Kosinski explains that events to the child are immediate: discoveries are one-dimensional. This to the child is immediate: discoveries are one-dimensional. This kills, that maims, this one Cuff that one caresses. But to the adult the vision of these memories is multi-dimensional. This understanding of the complexity of narration brings us to the intertwining of perspective. Not only does the boy's adolescent perception carry the narrative, but also the boy's presumably adult self actively participates in the act of remembrance. The adult's presence in the narrative is clear when the reader intermittently sees that the events have lost their isolation, have merged and fluxed, ebbed and flowed through the author's mind like tides. Kosinski meshes the two perspectives frequently resulting in a more complex, intricate story. This results in not simply an adult's catalogue of tidy facts, but spills out the involved, pain-wracked, fear-heightened memories, impressions and feelings of the child. While the reader follows the simplistic telling of events the boy witnesses and experiences, the mature, retrospective voice fills gaps of understanding with information the boy would be unable to know.

In Barbara Tepas-Lupack's introduction to her compilation of essays on Kosinski, she echoes the sentiment that the only true gauge of his Kosinski literary reputation is in his writing. In this collection, a review of *The Painted Bird* by "noted psychiatrist"

Robert Coles provides a glimmer of what will be expounded upon throughout this study. He comments how the author Kosinski rather obviously sees him the boy protagonist as a representative of all refugees, all outcasts, all suffering and debased people. Coles contributes one more hint to this idea in the subsequent paragraph when he describes the novel as this story that tells a million stories. This 1967 review is unique among understandings of *The Painted Bird* for several reasons. Coles does not fixate on Kosinski's biography in this short review, but rather analyses the novel's literary qualities. Additionally, he presents a reading of the novel in which the boy represents communal suffering instead of Kosinski's autobiographical experiences. However, Coles does not expand upon these offhand comments or provide any substantive basis for them. He also omits the significant link between the novel's violent episodes and the Holocaust, thus presents a more generalist reading of suffering in all society.

*The Painted Bird* excels as literature due to Kosinski's exceptional literary technique. He primarily manipulates perspective and language in order to achieve a chillingly stark narration of violence and torture. The many levels of perspective present in the novel are accomplished by his subversion of traditional standards of fiction. Some critics feel the novel, presumably told from some point after the fact, is a catalogue of horrors rendered in a flat, descriptive monotone. It is not a victory of language over experience, but a way of using language to keep the experience at a safe emotional distance. However, the chapter involving the infamous missal-dropping scene demonstrates the complexity in Kosinski's writing that certainly does not render a feeling of monotony.

Kosinski presents an impossible narrative from perspectives that would otherwise be lost. In addition, the boy protagonist's perspective as a culmination of testimonies is also infused with the retrospection of the boy in adulthood. Many strictly literary reviews of the novel focus on the pervasiveness of violence. This is a critical aspect, one that informs the boy's understanding of the world around him. It also supplements the boy's evolving relationship with religion.

The climax of the novel explores the intricacies of these themes. In a single episode, Kosinski exhibits the significance of multiple layers of perspective, religion, language (both in narration and muteness in the boy), otherness, and of course, brutal violence carried out against the boy protagonist. The very center of the novel sits on the most religiously infused chapter. Kosinski purposefully juxtaposes religion with the most lasting and brutal suffering the boy experiences. The extremes of both themes are not present by coincidence of course, but offer poignant examples of Kosinski's deliberate and effective technique.

The chapter begins as a priest saves the boy's life from the hands of a Nazi soldier and delivers him to a farmer who sees him as "an unbaptized Gypsy bastard" (115). The boy narrates this perception of himself to the reader, though he cannot actually understand the farmer's language and mannerism indicators. Ultimately, this classification of the boy is an insinuation and indicative of the boy's developing awareness of how he might be perceived depending on the situation. Given his unpleasant experiences thus far and negative reception amongst other peasants, the boy seems to understand how he is viewed in spite of the language barrier.

In a community centered on church activity in which the priest is a respected and powerful figure able to bargain with Nazi soldiers, it is clear from the outset the importance of religious practices such as baptism. The boy's new caretaker, Garbos, has a reputation that precedes him. The boy learns of Garbos' past by overhearing interactions between him and his neighbours. We learn that Garbos had bored an orphaned Jewish girl for whom he received money. Since an orphaned girl would logically have no person paying for her board, it might be plausible to assume Garbos received assistance from the church given the priest has brought another child to him. In spite of the monetary compensation, the neighbours assault Garbos with the accusation that he would "beat her daily, rape her, and force her to commit depravities until she finally vanished" (116). The decision to use the word "vanished" instead of 'died' or 'murdered' is a deliberate one. It echoes a child-like understanding of death, where the tone is immediate and the victim is simply gone. This word choice also underscores the nature of suffering at the hands of Garbos, a total and complete destruction of the body, mind, and soul. This destruction is evident in the constant and increasing brutality he inflicts on the boy.

As the days passed, Garbos beats the boy for no obvious reason. The beatings are also inventive, which suggests Garbos' penchant for brutalizing the powerless on all levels. By way of example, Garbos sneaks into the boy's sleeping quarters at night to wake him "by yelling into (his) ear" for entertainment (122). Garbos also beats the boy where the marks cannot be seen and threatens him with promises of his demise should he confide in the priest about his treatment. It is obvious that Garbos' brutality is not limited to physical beatings but extends to psychological warfare by way of continual intimidation.

It is during this time that the boy begins a journey of self-awareness and a critical relationship with organized religion that initially functions as a realistic hope for redemption. Upon arrival to the village, the boy realizes, “his total ignorance of religion and church. Observances,” so the priest instructs him in “the meaning of liturgical objects (119). The boy’s religious education begins as a reprieve from Garbos’ relentless physical and psychological torture. At first, he relates the liturgical objects to things he knows. Up until this point, the boy’s metaphysical education has centered on magic and the mythological. From a child’s perspective then, the holy water “looked far less impressive than, for example, ground horse bones, (120). To him, the priest and the Mass are magic. It is the altar, however, that inspires an awareness of the organized religion’s superiority over the magic he has known so far. He compares “Olga’s Hut...full of its evil-smelling frogs, rotting pus from human wounds, and cockroaches” to the “majestic tabernacle in which the divine spirit dwelled” (120). The boy presents a clear comparison between magic and religion with an obvious preference for the refined nature and status of the church. The boy tells us how the priest explained the symbolism of colours and fabric in the church. The priest also speaks a different language than Olga. These comparisons between the magical world and his newfound exposure to the church demonstrate his progression toward organized religion as a foundation for understanding the world around him. The more appealing and legitimate religion becomes, the more he relies on it for answers and guidance.

As the torture intensifies with Garbos, the boy’s religious education with the priest reaches new levels of self- and metaphysical awareness. Simultaneously when Garbos “invented new ways of persecuting” the boy by hanging him “by the arms on a

branch of the oak tree, leaving Judas loose underneath,” the boy eavesdrops on a life-altering conversation between the priest and a peasant (125). It is in this conversation that the boy learns of the concept of indulgences, which is the most relevant aspect of the church to his present condition. He “understood that those who say more prayers earn more days of indulgence, and that this was also supposed to have an immediate influence on their lives” (125). This revelation orients him to a new understanding of himself and the world around him. He determines it is not because of his appearance or “otherness” that he is persecuted, but rather his unfortunate ignorance of religious practice and lack of access to the church that has forced him into a life plagued with brutality. The boy reasons that those who do not suffer “had simply been the first to see the need for prayer and for collecting the maximum number of days of indulgence” (125). As a result, the boy accepts responsibility for his lot in life and seeks to free himself from Garbos’ cruelty by praying and acquiring indulgences.

This literal and simplistic understanding of the relationship between God and man reflects the boy’s present-centered perspective. Everything is immediate, existing in the here and now. However, an evolution has taken place in that the boy makes causal connections to his past, present, and future. Before, his tragedies were void of understanding and reason. Now, he develops a worldview beyond the understanding of child. This infusion of a higher understanding suggests the intervention of the adult perspective. In retrospect, the narrator can articulate a reward and punishment system in the world connected to a higher power. Moreover, his assertion that he “was ready to start a new life” (126) echoes a more mature and reflective understanding of his situation that seems to exceed his other rudimentary assessments. (126). At this point, the boy’s “new



life” is “spent alternately praying and being beaten” (164). Kosinski reiterates the undeniable effectiveness of positioning one extreme against another. By placing religious belief next to undeserved torture, Kosinski appears to comment on the church and the product it is selling.

This concept of an active, immediate relationship with God begins to unravel for the boy. He arrives at the church to find the priest ill. The notion that “bad things happen to good people” confronts the boy, and he formulates this familiar idea: “I was astonished. The priest must have accumulated an extraordinary number of days of indulgence during his pious life, and yet here he was lying sick like anybody else” (129). A wrench is thrown into his logical mapping of the world, which signals the beginning of the end for his faith in the church. Subsequently, Kosinski duplicates the boy’s spiritual unrest in the physical realm when Garbos introduces the boy to his homemade torture device. The boy is made to hang by his arms from the ceiling, holding onto “leather straps” attached to “two large hooks” (130). Garbos proceeds to lock Judas in the room, leaving him to destroy the boy should he let go. The image this scene produces appears to mirror the position one would be in during a crucifixion. It is during this grueling battle of his mental and physical strength that he draws upon the prayers for help. Through hours of recitation, he asserts “thousands of days of indulgences streaked through the thatched roof toward heaven” (134). He quite literally stakes his life on the power of these prayers and develops a confidence in them that inevitably betrays him. In this scene, Kosinski plays on religious images and themes to ultimately undermine them.

Finally, the storyline pushes through spring and the boy is “already ten years old” (135) this is the longest episode thus far, and it was the feast of Corpus Christi. The

Catholic festival, which celebrates the institution of the Holy Eucharist, is a distinctive event. As a new albeit unofficial member of the church, it is important for him to attend, since “it was said that on this fete day the bodily presence of the Son of God would make itself felt in the church more than on any other feast” (135). This seems to be the boy’s last-ditch effort to gain favor in God’s eyes in order to be granted reprieve from his tortuous life. He acknowledges how his prayers “had not produced perceptible results,” yet asserts “they must have been noticed in heaven, where justice is law” (135). Due to this perception, the boy is undeterred when the peasants “scourge” him at the entrance to the church with “osier branches and horsewhips” (136). He escapes and assumes his position as altar boy and carrier of the missal, which is “the Holy Book filled with sacred prayers collected for the greater glory of God by the saints and learned men throughout the centuries” (137-138). Kosinski mirrors the importance of this book as a religious object in its sheer size and weight, which the boy is unable to handle because of the torture inflicted upon him. Thus, it is the physical strain of constant torture from which this religious experience was supposed to rescue him is what causes him to commit this deadly mistake. The boy’s commitment to prayers and his deep faith cannot overcome the physical weakening of his body.

In response to the boy’s unintentional desecration of the Holy Book, the crowd of parishioners drag him to a “large manure pit” and “hurled” him in (138). The boy, he is rendered mute upon emerging from the pit. The boy abandons his faith in the church, indulgences, prayer, and God as a result of the peasants’ despicable reaction. Again, it is no coincidence that the boy’s loss of faith coincides with his loss of voice stemming from

a brutal trauma. A series of tortuous events corresponding to religious gains culminates in the boy's rejection of God and humanity.

Some critics like Lavers claim that the boy protagonist is symbolic of Christ. In light of Kosinski's statement: Perhaps, in their deepest thoughts lies the belief that while both the arrival and the appearance of the Boy endanger them, yet, he may have been sent to save, lavers designate the boy as a "Redeemer" For Lavers, this explains the congregation's violent reaction to the boy dropping the missal during the church service, in which a parallel to Jesus' own suffering at the hands of any angry mob is clearly drawn.

Another evaluation places the boy in very different role. In Paul R. Lilly Jr.'s essay on "Violence in Kosinski's Fiction," he discusses the issue as complex studies in the shifting identity of victim and oppressor. Lilly understands Kosinski's literary violence to be about power and how one evolves from the powerless to the powerful. The boy's powerlessness and victimization come to a head when the church parishioners nearly drown him in the pit of excrement. This is the critical turning point for the boy in terms of both self- and worldly-realization. It is at this moment that he relinquishes any faith in his religious truths and strives to reclaim power over his destiny. Moreover, Mary Lazar notes how the peasants' brutality speaks to a higher moral message in this episode of the novel. The Holocaust was not caused by a lone sadist but was the product of a generation which chose or was persuaded to believe that its version of "the good" preempted all other moral concerns. This is precisely the lesson taught in the *Corpus Christi* chapter. This is a critical understanding of the role of religion representing morality rather than a specific church or religious concept. Lazar also speaks to an issue

already presented in this study: the episodic violence that illustrates widespread brutality outside of the Nazi universe.

Thus, the prolonged torture, investment in religious faith, and ultimate religious failing in dropping the missal renders the boy stripped of his worldview reflected in his physical lack of speech. It is important to emphasize the interconnection of violence and religion and how they effectively mirror each other. Critics note Kosinski's matter-of-fact articulation of the unspeakable, as well as his singular appreciation of the more elegant forms of physical and mental tortures. Kosinski subtly entwines the two in the powerful build up to the climax of the novel where they betray each other and ultimately the boy. Furthermore, the manipulation of language through multiple layers of perspective takes on a new character and signals a change in the boy. He no longer has access to speech, regardless of the peasants' inability to understand him. So, while the sense of alienation is heightened by depriving the characters of the ability to metaphor for dissociation from the community and from something greater. It is no exaggeration to say that the boy is alienated from the foundations of his entire understanding of the order of the universe. While critics suggest, the speechless child became a great symbol of the inadequacy of language confronted by atrocity, Kosinski overcomes the prescribed shortcomings in his rich narrative. However, it seems implied that this is only possible through the adult's perspective and his ability to reflect on atrocity at a later time through the adult's perspective and his ability to reflect on atrocity at a later time.

## Chapter Four

### Narrative Art as Technique

The literary method used by Horowitz to examine *The Painted Bird*. This method is based on the idea that fiction can be a vital vehicle for delivering testimonies, some of which would be lost without the liberties that fiction allows. The boy protagonist of the novel experiences more than a dozen brutally violent episodes throughout the story, which are typically separated by chapters. The progression of violence at the hands of his caretakers and the villagers, soldiers, and other figures he encounters can be understood as reflective of experiences that involved more than one victim. They are telescoped into the story of one character for purposes of depiction. Thus, one can analyse the boy's experiences as representative of more general collective suffering during the time period covered by the novel. In the following section.

The boy's initial encounter with a group of villagers is a familiar scene: the stoning, Humiliating, and beating of a pariah figure. The villagers pummelled the boy with "dried cow Dung, moldy potatoes, apple cores, handfuls of dirt, and small stone" (16). The public attack culminates with the boy being forced into a burlap sack and his internment in a small room in a local farmer's house where villagers watch the farmer whip him. Despite his deliverance from this particular farmer by the town's witchdoctor, Olga, those same villagers later throw the boy onto a fish bladder sending him downstream. The boy asserts "if the bladder should burst, I would immediately drown. I could not swim" (27). The elements of humiliation ebbed in this episode are obviously very traumatic for anyone, much less a small child.

The boy's next destination marks one of the first memorable acts of violence that the boy witnesses throughout the novel. He is now under the care of a new village's miller, nicknamed jealous. The drunken miller plucks out his farmhand's eyes with a spoon in a jealous rage. The boy's description of the scene in hauntingly, matter-of-fact detail makes the episode all the more "grotesque." Through a youthful simplicity, the boy describes the scene as "the eye sprang out of his face like a yolk from a broken egg" (38). The poetic purity of this metaphor reflects Kosinski's literary skill, while the boy's feeling about the eyes that "surely they could still see" enhances the boy's innocent perspective (39).

The motif of sexual violence manifests itself in the first of two particularly brutal scenes. At this point in the novel the boy meets Lekh, who is responsible for the novel's title, and his lover Ludmila, who is branded the town whore because of her adulterous reputation among the married villagers. A mob of village women comes upon an orgy between Ludmila and two of the village men. The women proceed to beat her with rakes, tear her flesh with their hands, and kill her dog with a shovel.

The act of public brutality culminates in sexual vengeance in the following passage:

One of the women now approached, holding a corked bottle of brownish-black manure. To the accompaniment of raucous laughter and loud encouragements from the others, she kneeled between Ludmila's legs and rammed the entire bottle inside her abused, Assaulted slit, while she began to moan and howl like a beast. The other women looked on calmly. Suddenly with all her strength one of them kicked the bottom of the bottle sticking out of Stupid Ludmila's groin. (55)

This fierce act of communal vengeance and sexual exploitation against Ludmila represents local acts of alleged “justice.” This scene is unspeakable and shows humanity at its very worst. Regardless of the transgressions Ludmila committed, the reader certainly sympathizes with the unbelievable cruelty enacted upon her.

The most prolonged torment the boy suffers is certainly at the hands of the peasant Garbos and his vicious dog, Judas. In addition to Garbos’ daily beatings, the aptly named Judas functions as an instrument of fear and torture for the protagonist. This leads the boy to find avenues of redemption through religion, the church, indulgences, prayers, and the like. Meanwhile, the boy states that Garbos “invented new ways of persecuting me. Sometimes he hung me by the arms on a branch of the oak tree, leaving Judas loose underneath” (125). This event morphs into a daily hanging of the boy by his arms for hours, locked in a room, with Judas underfoot. It is during this episode that the boy makes discoveries about religion and God’s role in his suffering. The boy survives with a triumph of will through his recitation of “prayers to the exclusion of all else” (133). This horrific example of violence and persecution illustrates how suffering extended beyond the physical to the mental and religious realms.

The boy protagonist’s next experience with violence arrives at the hands of young village boys rather than his caretakers. This example of abuse deals again with sexual violence in particular, but with boys raping boys rather than women. He begins with an eyewitness testimony of seeing “a band of cowherds raping a boy from another village who happened to wander into their territory” (158). Because of the boy’s first-hand knowledge of these occurrences, he is prepared for the group’s attack and plans his response accordingly. The boy describes: “I allowed them to take off my pants,

pretending I was exhausted and could not fight any more” (159). The boy kicks one of his attackers, which results in an exemption from being raped. Instead, the gang force the boy under a frozen lake where “the cold encased” him and the air “felt like a stream of boiling soup.” (180) The boy miraculously survives the frozen submersion with the help of a village woman.

Undoubtedly, the most gruesome episode occurs toward the end of the novel immediately before the Red Army temporarily adopts the boy until the war’s end. At age 11, the boy finds himself living in a village where the Kalmuks decides to attack. The boy knows about this band of soviet deserters who joined the German army because of tales about them told by the villagers. The Germans permitted this group of lawless “volunteers” to join the army and “loot and rape in the manner of their war customs and manly traditions” (175). Above all others, this scene embodies the novel’s oft-criticized and allegedly exaggerated violence, as well as its macabre descriptions and the boy’s unwaveringly candid descriptions of incomprehensible trauma. The boy witnesses the Kalmuks’ invasion of the village from the temporary safety of some nearby bushes. The men of the village unsuccessfully try to protect their women and are wounded or killed. The boy describes a farmer who “ran through the main street with his hand cut off. Blood was spurting from the stump while he kept looking for his family” (171). The boy witnesses the communal raping of several women:

Nearby the soldiers had forced a woman to the ground. One soldier held her by the throat while others pulled her legs apart. One of them mounted her and moved on top of her to shouts of encouragement. The woman struggled and cried. When the first was done the others assaulted her in turn. (177)



The scene becomes increasingly more brutal when one girl is brought out, and “two men raped her at once, one in the mouth” (177). Not far from there, “some soldiers were raping from the front and from the back two young girls, passing them from one man to the next, forcing them to perform strange movements” (177). When the Kalmuks tired of these methods, the boy notes how they not only “copulated with each other,” but “then competed in raping women in odd ways: Two or three men to one girl, several men in rapid succession” (177). This was horrifying enough, and more than that the “younger and more desirable girls were nearly torn apart”(178). The Kalmuks continued to advance their attack by raping women on horses. Women were passed from man to man, horse to horse, and even “two soldiers raped the fainting woman simultaneously” upon one horse (178).

The scene continues with the gut-wrenching report of the Kalmuks’ attack on a young girl:

One of them rushed into a house and brought out a small girl of about five. He lifted her high so that his comrades could see her well. He tore off the child’s dress. He kicked her in the belly while her mother crawled in the dust begging for mercy. He slowly unbuttoned and took down his trousers, while still holding the little girl above his waist with one hand. Then he crouched and pierced the screaming child with a sudden thrust. when the girl grew limp, he threw her away into the bushes and turned to the mother. (179,180)

The seven-page account culminates with a man who is held down and forced to witness the torture and rape of his wife and two daughters. The man finds an opportunity to strike back and “dealt a sudden blow to the nearest one” (180). The soldier’s “skull

crushed like a swallow's egg" (180). This results in a devastatingly gruesome revenge carried out against the man:

The enraged soldiers surrounded the peasant, overpowered him, and raped him. Then they castrated him in front of his wife and daughters. The frantic woman rushed to his defence, biting and scratching. Roaring with delight, the Kalmuks held her fast, forced her mouth open, and pushed the bloody scraps of flesh down her throat. (180)

These accounts is the sheer lack of flowery or distracting language. The boy's perspective is stark and does not reflect judgment or emotion. Hints of the boy's age and innocence are reflected in the inability to describe the sexual scenes in any kind of informed detail. The terrorized women are made to do "strange" movements or put into "odd" positions. There is an uncertainty of the sexual acts or positions the boy witnesses. In the midst of view point, which is still spotted with purity in spite of years of trauma.

The stories highlighted here are unspeakable and render the reader speechless in true disbelief. They are difficult to swallow, even more impossible to understand, and that is what makes the novel as effective as it is. These stories make up only half of the episodes of violent persecution either felt by the boy or witnessed by him. Totalling at least a dozen episodes of horrific trauma in all, the novel's chronicling of one boy's suffering during the Holocaust clearly invokes unparalleled emotion and reaction amongst readers and critics alike. While these episodic tales are difficult to swallow, it is clear that to seek a definition of Holocaust fictions that extends beyond camp and ghetto sites, and includes terrifying war narratives of the Polish zeitgeist in the war years. Kosinski refuses to allow the reader to become indifferent to the mass brutality inflicted

upon the child, who represents the communal suffering of all during this time, but specifically focuses on suffering outside of camp walls. These episodes are obviously stylized in order to achieve the shock and awe effect that comes through so powerfully. Kosinski employs his matter-of-fact style in order to enhance the shocking viciousness of these episodes.

Many critics have noted the unlikelihood of all of these shocking incidents happening to the boy at all, or at the very least within the scope of his witness in such a short period of time. Following Horowitz's approach, these collections of episodes about the horrors of mundane life during the Holocaust give a voice to stories buried with the victims. In this light, instead of debating whether Kosinski depicted his authentic autobiography in the novel, one can understand that he related stories of nameless and voiceless victims who experienced what the boy saw or knew about, in addition to what he himself experienced. In creating this Holocaust fiction, Kosinski took on the role of storyteller and used the boy as a representative figure for communal suffering.

Inevitably, Kosinski's own wartime experiences and perspective intrudes with the narrative, but this fact enhances the novel rather than detracting from or solely informing it. As Kosinski states in his foreword to the second edition, none of the events are "fiction," in the sense that one can verify such instances of horror and tragedy in the historical records and testimonies of the Holocaust. One such account that mirrors Kosinski's episodes in terms of creative brutality can be found in the historical accounts of concentration camp life. In one case around October 1941 five homosexual prisoners were singled out and taken to the wash room. Their hands were bound behind their backs, and they were restrained by SS men while a hose was shoved down their throats and

turned full on until they drowned. Any who struggled were beaten. When all five were dead, the corpses were Hung upside down until all the water drained out, making it difficult to establish that the cause of death had not been natural.

After this official, verified, historical account of unimaginable cruelty, Kosinski's "tales" no longer seem to be so exaggerated.

Thus, Kosinski telescopes stories of cruelty and violence that were experienced by someone into a single narrative with one protagonist. While these events are not told from the perspective of a memoir or historical testimony, they also did not happen. Kosinski uses the fictional boy protagonist as a vehicle to give a voice to nameless victims, delivering them from the fate of eternal muteness. Thus, the boy as an allegorical figure must witness or experience these horrifying episodes in order to tell the story of many muted victims who did endure these tragedies and cannot tell the story for themselves.

In this way, Kosinski's representation, his fiction, is critical to the understanding of the Holocaust experience. In the novel, Kosinski succeeds in representing multiple voices, multiple victims, and a range of experience. As a novel, *The Painted Bird* surpasses the limits of fictional representation by crushing the muteness inherent in genocide and human tragedy. Inherently, this feat could neither be accomplished without invoking a fictional genre to speak for those without voice nor without utilizing Kosinski's own wartime experience to illuminate the stories. Kosinski's own childhood gives them life and authenticity from a perspective that was well acquainted with the realities of brutality, regardless of the extent to which they were directly experienced. The Kosinski family's "easy" wartime existence posing as Christians rather than surviving the death camps does not refute the probability that he either heard of or witnessed similar

events. Regarding this point, Sloan acknowledges while many harrowing episodes of *The Painted Bird* did not happen literally as Kosinski would write and speak of them...at least one medical professional was persuaded that Kosinski's anatomy revealed a physically traumatic event in which his shoulder sockets were damaged.

Here, Sloan reflects the critical fixation on the correlation between Kosinski's biography and the boy protagonist. Despite what Kosinski may or may not have said at various times throughout his life, the boy's life does not mirror Kosinski's. *The Painted Bird* is not his memoir. The information regarding injuries to Kosinski's shoulders does echo the scene in which the boy is made to hang from rafters for hours. Sloan's statement speaks to the influences in Kosinski's life that illuminate the violent events of the novel. There is evidence from Sloan's biographical investigation that Kosinski did experience or witness similar events during his childhood that are subsequently expanded upon in the novel. It is important that these similarities are explored in order to understand their role as assisting Kosinski in speaking to the conditions in rural Poland at this time, rather than as a literal transcript for the autobiographical accounts in the novel.

Sloan uncovers these corresponding details beginning with the Kosinski family's first hiding place in an old woman's cottage. This woman, "Pasiowa," would later be the inspiration for Marta, the old peasant woman who initially cared for the young boy until her death. At the next point in their journey away from the closing ghettos of Lodz, a priest assisted the Kosinski's in finding a safe village to reside. In the novel, it was the priest who also saved the life of the young boy, but then subsequently delivered him to Garbos. Once the family arrived and took over the apartment of another Jewish family who was rounded up and killed, a maid became a regular fixture in the household. Her

name was Labina, who was “memorialized” in the novel with a character of the same name. Finally, Sloan discovers testimony that Kosinski dropped a missal during a mass service just like the boy in the novel. While Kosinski was not disciplined, Sloan speculates that it must have been a devastating and pivotal event” for the adolescent Kosinski. From a young age, Kosinski was conditioned to assimilate in order to protect his family, and this event must have made him think he somehow endangered his family’s status in the community. This would account for the boy’s exile into the pit of excrement and subsequent loss of voice as symbolic of Kosinski’s inner feelings about the event, rather than the literal consequences that Kosinski experienced.

Sloan’s extensive biography reveals many more parallels between Kosinski’s childhood and the events of the novel. Unlike the common critical approach of aligning his biography with the novel’s episodes, these instances as material that provided creative inspiration novel’s episodes; these instances should be read as material that provided creative inspiration instead of source material for Kosinski’s attempt to fabricate his Holocaust experience. It is almost unavoidable that an author of fiction would be able to omit any personal influence on a story. With Kosinski’s unique role as a Holocaust survivor writing fiction rather than memoir, this understanding of literature and the role of the author are magnified. The vehicle of fiction gives survivors like Kosinski, Wiesel, and others the freedom to talk about the Holocaust without the responsibility of literal fidelity to any one life narrative or experience. In the case of *The Painted Bird*, Kosinski’s personal Holocaust experience contributes to the success of his telescoping efforts in portraying many Holocaust experiences. In some cases, it is likely he drew on his experiences, but in other episodes not. The important distinction is that no matter the

degree to which Kosinski expanded the episodes, they did not swell beyond historical records and testimonies of the mass brutality that occurred during and after the war in Poland and all-over Eastern Europe.

In short, the chapters of *The Painted Bird* as it is a collection of testaments to the mass brutality that existed throughout Europe and the former Soviet Union. There were many people who roamed the Polish countryside, seeking asylum throughout the war. Many outsiders, whether Jewish or Gypsy, were beaten, tortured, killed, raped, humiliated, starved, intimidated, and punished amounting to levels of mass brutality that surpassed the barbed wire fences of the concentration camp universe. For the peasantry, the fear of outsiders and violent reactions to them in the height of war was pervasive given the level of punishment exacted on peasants who betrayed German soldiers and partisans alike. These unspeakable atrocities happened and illustrated communal suffering during this time. As Kosinski states, the novel is more effective as a collection of violence enacted on an innocent child to show the cruelty of human nature during the height of society's most fragile state in war. These stories force the confines of the concentration camp that occurred outside of Auschwitz and the confines of the concentration camp. The next chapter deals with the metaphysical awareness that is discussed in the novel.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

*The Painted Bird* is a novel that saddens, horrifies, and disrupts one's consciousness. In spite of Kosinski's rollercoaster career and damaged reputation, the novel outshines the controversy. *The Painted Bird* stands as a representation of the general climate of Eastern Europe during the Holocaust and what humans are capable of. It is easier to regard a text like *The Painted Bird* as exaggerated or lies, rather than come to terms with the realities of the atrocities it describes. All too often, people refuse to accept mankind's ability to enact such cruelty. No one wants to read about gruesome acts that one's neighbour is capable of carrying out. This is why people make monsters out of men like Adolf Hitler. If someone has to be, this evil monster who is far from human, then it is easier to deal with the suffering that is beyond our understanding, like the Holocaust.

Auschwitz has evolved into a synonym for concentration camp and for the Holocaust. The image of the camp filled with order and organization is one of the dominant portrayals of the Holocaust. However, the Holocaust can be packaged up neatly in the representation of a gas chamber, an oven, or a Nazi. That is certainly not to undermine the multifaceted horrors of the camps. But, it is critical to remember that the Holocaust embodied mass brutality, not simply mass murder. Many different people, in many different places, carried out the horrors. It was not confined to Nazi guards and German soldiers in prisons and camps.

It is dangerous to "other" the Holocaust in order to facilitate acceptance. If Hitler is an "other" who is distant from the rest, then everyone is safe. The mentality "that could



never be me or my brother or my friend” Should be adopted. If the Holocaust is “other-worldly,” then it took place a long time ago in a distant land very far from current reality. It could never happen in this day and age. It is this false sense of security and understanding that must be protected against as time pushes farther and farther away from the event. However, associating fiction with denial or undermining the Holocaust cannot accomplish this. It is through fiction that Kosinski makes it impossible to dismiss the gravity of the Holocaust to another place, another time, another society, and another world entirely. In light of the impending turn the field of Holocaust studies is about to encounter with the loss of all survivors, perpetrators, and bystanders in the next decade or so, The field is going to have to deal with Holocaust fiction in a more thorough and productive way. They must confront and reconcile it with their understandings of the nature of representation, truth, authenticity, and experience. This will likely be the only new, emerging literature we have in order to talk about the Holocaust. There will be children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of all three groups who will write and represent their understandings of the horrors of the Holocaust alongside writers who have no personal attachment to the brutalities. It will be critical to accept this form of Holocaust writing and recognize its potential for representing themes of suffering and preserving the memory of the millions who perished. Thus, *The Painted Bird's* contribution to the field of Holocaust studies and the canon of Holocaust literature is substantial. It belongs alongside the great writings on the Holocaust because of its complex, rich narrative structure that represents and honors those who suffered mass brutality and did not survive. The victims of random brutalization during this time are recognized through Kosinski's skilled literary technique and his employment of fiction as

a vehicle to deliver these narratives. While it is not easy to confront, it is the readers responsibility to do so.

In *The Painted Bird*, Holocaust survivor Jerzy Kosinski tells the story of a young boy who travels through peasant villages in Eastern Europe during World War II. The boy's parents send him to the countryside from their urban home in the hopes that he will survive the war without them. Although it is unclear if the boy is a Jew or Gypsy, his parents' motivations for sending the boy away are connected to the father's anti-Nazi political activity rather than his religious or ethnic status. The boy's dark hair, eyes, and skin tone make his identity a question and an issue throughout the novel. His physical appearance also functions as a contrast to the blonde-haired, blue-eyed peasants, resulting in his alienation and subsequent struggle for survival.

At age six, the boy is initially placed into the care of Marta, an elderly peasant woman who dies shortly thereafter. The boy is then forced to leave her home and travel the countryside from village to village in order to survive. Each chapter of the novel is an episode in the boy's journey, describing in vivid detail the experiences he has with each of his peasant caretakers. In a relatively short period of time, the boy witnesses and experiences a dozen horrifyingly violent and grotesque events. The boy is subject to episodes of cruelty, sexual and physical violence, and Torture, all of which result from his status as "other." As a witness, the boy watches a farmer pluck out the eyes of his farmhand with a spoon. He sees a group of village women rape another woman with a bottle full of excrement, then beat and kill her. He witnesses the rape and torture of an entire village by the Kalmuks, a band of Red Army deserters employed by the Germans, who are allowed to rape and pillage as they please.

As a victim, the boy suffers from daily beatings, exposure to the elements, and a constant state of fear of his oppressors. At the hands of a peasant, the boy is forced to hang by his arms for hours at a time dangling over a vicious dog trained to kill him. A group of local boys attack and force him under the ice of a frozen lake. He is buried in the ground from his neck down and attacked by ravens. A group of church parishioners throw him into a pit of excrement. The climax of the story is his submersion in the excrement pool that renders him mute for the remainder of the novel. After this turn, the boy protagonist changes and adapts to the horrors that dictate his fragile existence. Though the boy is ultimately reunited with his parents at the end of the novel, it is clear that he is a different person. His development from a naïve, innocent child into a hardened, vengeful young man illustrates the effects of his experiences in the novel.

The novel addresses issues of identity, perspective, muteness, voice, religion and magic, nature, and the dramatic cruelty of the peasants against a subtle backdrop of the Holocaust. The novel's title stems from one of the many caretakers the boy has throughout the novel. Lekh, an expert on birds in the countryside, plays a particularly cruel game in which he captures a bird, paints its feathers a rainbow of colors, and then releases it back to the wild. This results in other birds viewing it as an outsider and a danger to their flock, which leads them to kill The Painted bird. This scenario reflects the predicament of the boy, who must navigate his way marked by his physical differences, in order to avoid the fate of the bird.

Kosinski wrote the novel in the first person from the perspective of the young boy. However, it is apparent that a retrospective narrative is interwoven in the text. There is a consistent mixing of perspective in the story that reveals the presence of an older,

retrospective voice, presumably the boy as an adult. In the text, the adults around the boy often influence the narrative voice as well, resulting in the boy relaying information that would not otherwise have been available to him. He adapts the language of those around him, imitating their stories, as if they were his own. Thus, the boy is able to tell his story through varying levels of narration and perspective.

The controversy surrounding the novel begins with the problem of categorization. With the dizzying combination of the Holocaust theme and the narrative style briefly outlined above, critics find themselves searching for a literary genre to use to identify the story. Once that is established, the tools and standards of the chosen genre are used to analyze, criticize, and understand the purpose and meaning of the text. In the case of *The Painted Bird*, this has not been uniform or clear-cut, since critics have assigned the novel to a number of categories, including Holocaust memoir, autobiography, fiction, autobiographical fiction, and even fraud. Thus, debates over the nature and genre of the text have resulted in a number of drastically different understandings of the story. The most popular reception has been the designation of the novel as a Holocaust memoir.

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**Pre eminence of Reason and Intelligence in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

**Selsia S**

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**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**



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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Pre eminence of Reason and Intelligence in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*** 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 Selsia S during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

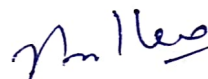
  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Pre eminence of Reason and Intelligence in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*** 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**

  
**Selsia S**

**April 2023**

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## Preface

William Golding is best known for his debut novel, *Lord of the Flies*, which is regarded as an English classic for its unique theme and relevance to society. Awarded with the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature in 1983, the coveted Booker Prize in 1980, and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1979, William Golding's writing continues to touch every country in the world and is today read in more than 35 languages. He was knighted by the Queen in 1988, and his classic novel *Lord of the Flies* is a global phenomenon. He was a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

*Lord of the Flies* is a literary phenomenon; the title is instantly recognisable as a synonym for societal breakdown and the book has been read by millions worldwide. In addition to its impact on the literary world, the book pervades popular culture, spawning a variety of parodies, tributes and re-imaginings as well as providing inspiration to the most unlikely of cultural forms.

The project entitled **Pre eminence of Reason and Intelligence in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*** analyses how mankind struggles to form benevolent governments or ruling bodies, and how reason and democracy so often gives in to "strong men" and authoritarians through the struggles undergone by the Children in the island to emerge successful. It also explores how fear and group thinking destroy the high ambitions of civilization.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on William Golding's fame, social situation of his period, and the inspiration that made him to write the novel *Lord of the Flies*. It also showcases the biography of the writer along with the characteristics of the novel.

The second chapter **Darkness of Man's Heart** explores the dark side of human nature and stresses the importance of reason and intelligence as tools for dealing with the chaos of existence.

The third chapter **Confrontation between Christ and Devil** records the good and evil inherent in all human beings. It delivers a message about real-world issues and incidents to help people understand the importance of laws and rules through various strategies.

The fourth chapter **Glimmering of the Conch** throws light on how Conch is used to symbolize a civilized society that regulates life through democratic engagements.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters.

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

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Sir William Gerald Golding the British writer, poet and playwright was best known for his debut novel, *Lord of the Flies*, which explored themes concerning the battle between good and evil and humanity's hidden savagery. He won Nobel Prize in Literature and was awarded the Booker Prize for fiction in 1980 for his novel *Rites of Passage*, the first book in what became his sea trilogy, *To the Ends of the Earth*. Golding was knighted in 1988. Golding's unflinching examination of mankind's inner darkness resulted in some of the most compelling fiction of the 20th century.

William Gerald Golding attracted a sect of followers, especially the youth of the post-World War II generation. A leading figure of the 19<sup>th</sup> century he successfully pursued two careers in life; first as a school master and later as a poet. William brought revolutionary changes to the world of literature. His *Lord of the Flies* is a powerful novel that operates on both a symbolic and a realistic level. On the one hand, it is clearly an exploration of man's brutish nature when freed of the illusion of civilization. On the other, it is a thrilling story of a group of children sliding into primitive terror, and serves as a warning to everyone who reads it concerning the fragility of our society.

William Golding can be said to be a writer of myths. It is the pattern of myth that we find in his manner of writing. A very few basic experiences and basic conflicts of a deeply general nature underlie all his work as motive Power. In one of his essays he describes how, as a young man, he took an optimistic view of existence. He believed that man would be able to perfect himself by improving society and

eventually doing away with all social evil. His optimism was akin to that of other utopians, for instance, H.G. Wells.

The Second World War changed his outlook. He discovered what one human being is really able to do to another. And it was not a question of head-hunters in New Guinea or primitive tribes in the Amazon region. They were atrocities committed with cold professional skill by well-educated and cultured people – doctors, lawyers, and those with a long tradition of high civilization behind them. They carried out their crimes against their own equals. He writes:

“I must say that anyone who moved through those years without understanding that man produces evil as a bee produces honey, must have been blind or wrong in the head”.

Golding speak against those who think that it is the political or other systems that create evil. Evil springs from the depths of man himself – it is the wickedness in human beings that creates the evil systems, or, that changes what, from the beginning, is, or could be, good into something iniquitous and destructive.

There is a mighty religious dimension in William Golding’s conception of the world, though hardly Christian in the ordinary sense. He seems to believe in a kind of Fall. Perhaps, rather, one should say that he works with the myth of a Fall. In some of his stories, mainly the novel, *The Inheritors*, 1955, a dream of an original state of innocence in the history of mankind – a prehistoric race or breed of animals, poor in words but rich in pictures and wordless communication, a peaceful existence with the women or female qualities in the lead can be found.



The aggressive intelligence, the power-hungry self-assertion, and the overweening individualism are the source of evil and violence – individual, as well as social violence. But these qualities and incentives are also innate in man’s nature, in man as a created being. They are, therefore, inseparably, a part of his character and make themselves felt when he gives full expression to himself and forms his societies and his private destiny.

The *Lord of the Flies* is about mankind’s struggle to form benevolent governments or ruling bodies, and how reason and democracy so often gives in to “strong men” and authoritarians. This novel explores how fear and group thinking destroy the high ambitions of civilization. Golding’s experiences working with unruly boys as a teacher and his time as a combatant in WWII, inspired *Lord of the Flies*. He saw much combat in the war and this novel is a reflection on Golding’s view of society. He believed evil was not an external force, but something born within people. Golding makes that clear in the message of *Lord of the Flies*.

Golding’s experiences in the British Royal Navy and his time as a schoolteacher shaped the themes, message, and setting of his *Lord of the Flies* book. His time as a naval combatant convinced Golding that human nature was inherently evil, that destruction is sown within societies and within the human mind; that evil is not something that besets mankind but is created by mankind. Golding related this view of human nature to the behaviour of his unruly students. The novel uses children in an island setting to demonstrate the inherent savagery of human nature, savagery that people are born with. His work is meant to follow the well-intentioned, democratic beginnings of government that devolves into dictatorship and “might makes right” ideology.

William Golding was influenced by many things before writing *Lord of the Flies*, whether they be historical, cultural or literary. A lot of his influence came from World War II which he experienced first hand as he was greatly involved. This allowed him to see just how poorly people can treat each other when their own life is at stake; this is reflected often in *Lord of the Flies*. This time period was also known for a very Democratic vs. Communist society.

During this time period, the idea of a person's ability to be savage to get what they want had just surfaced in England where before, everyone's lifestyle was very neat and proper. England was also on the verge of discovering plenty of new technologies in which many people were interested. Literarily, Golding was influenced the most by the novel *Coral Island* by Robert Ballatyne.

Many writers have borrowed plot elements from *Lord of the Flies*. By the early 1960s, it was required reading in many schools and colleges. Author Stephen King uses the name Castle Rock, from the mountain fort in *Lord of the Flies*, as a fictional town that has appeared in a number of his novels. The book itself appears prominently in his novels *Hearts in Atlantis* (1999), *Misery* (1987), and *Cujo* (1981).

King wrote an introduction for a new edition of *Lord of the Flies* (2011) to mark the centenary of William Golding's birth in 1911. King's fictional town of Castle Rock inspired the name of Rob Reiner's production company, Castle Rock Entertainment, which produced the film *Lord of the Flies* (1990). Iron Maiden wrote a song inspired by the book, included in their 1995 album *The X Factor*. The Filipino indie pop/alternative rock outfit The Camera walls include a song entitled "*Lord of the Flies*" on their 2008 album *Pocket Guide to the Otherworld*.

The imaginative and brutal depiction of the rapid and inevitable dissolution of social mores aroused widespread interest. Golding worked as a school teacher for a part of his adult life after graduating from Oxford. This experience with young boys in an academic setting helped him create the cast of young characters for *Lord of the Flies*. He served in the Navy during World War II, which also impacted some of his fictional creations.

Awarded the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature in 1983, the coveted Booker Prize in 1980, and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in 1979, William Golding's writing continues to touch every country in the world and is today read in more than 35 languages. He was knighted by the Queen in 1988, and his 'you-must-have-read-this' classic novel *Lord of the Flies* is a global phenomenon.

In addition to 12 novels, Golding also wrote plays, many essays and reviews, several short stories, some poems, and a travel book about Egypt. Many of his attempts at other works survive in manuscript or typescript. Born in Cornwall in 1911, he seems to have known from childhood that he wanted to be a writer. His first published work appeared when he was twenty-three. 'Words may, through the devotion, the skill, the passion and the luck of writers, prove to be the most powerful thing in the world' (William Golding, Nobel Lecture, 1983).

Quite apart from his obvious achievements as a writer, it is worth pointing out the vast range and diversity of the subject matter of his novels, and the challenge he set himself. Perhaps his greatest achievement is to have lived through the most terrible and inhumane of centuries, and to have left behind a body of work that can be said to reflect much of the horror of that time as well as an understanding of it.

William Golding was born in his maternal grandmother's house, 47 Mount Wise, Newquay, Cornwall. The house was known as Karenza, the Cornish word for love, and he spent many childhood holidays there. He grew up in Marlborough, Wiltshire, where his father, Alec Golding, was a science master at Marlborough Grammar School (1905 to retirement), the school the young Golding and his elder brother Joseph attended. His mother, Mildred, kept house at 29, The Green, Marlborough, and was a campaigner for female suffrage.

Golding's mother, who was Cornish and whom he considered "a superstitious Celt", used to tell him old Cornish ghost stories from her own childhood. In 1930 Golding went to Brasenose College, Oxford, where he read Natural Sciences for two years before transferring to English for his final two years. His original tutor was the chemist Thomas Taylor. In a private journal and in a memoir for his wife he admitted having tried to rape a teenage girl during a vacation. Golding took his B.A. degree with Second Class Honours in the summer of 1934, and later that year a book of his Poems was published by Macmillan & Co, with the help of his Oxford friend, the anthroposophist Adam Bittleston.

In 1935 he took a job teaching English at Michael Hall School, a Steiner-Waldorf school then in Streatham, South London, staying there two years. After a year in Oxford studying for a Diploma of Education, he was a schoolmaster teaching English and music at Maidstone Grammar School 1938 – 1940, before moving to Bishop Wordsworth's School, Salisbury, in April 1940. There he taught English, Philosophy, Greek, and drama until joining the navy on 18 December 1940, reporting for duty at HMS Raleigh. He returned in 1945 and taught the same subjects until 1961.

During World War II, Golding joined the Royal Navy in 1940. He served on a destroyer which was briefly involved in the pursuit and sinking of the German battleship Bismarck. Golding participated in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, commanding a landing craft that fired salvoes of rockets onto the beaches. He was also in action at Walcheren in October and November 1944, during which time 10 out of 27 assault craft that went into the attack were sunk.

In September 1953, after rejections from seven other publishers, Golding sent a manuscript to Faber and Faber and was initially rejected by their reader, Jan Perkins, who labelled it as “Rubbish and dull. Pointless”. His book, however, was championed by Charles Monteith, a new editor at the firm. Monteith asked for some changes to the text and the novel was published in September 1954 as *Lord of the Flies*. His first novel, *Lord of the Flies* (1954; film, 1963 and 1990; play, adapted by Nigel Williams, 1995), describes a group of boys stranded on a tropical island descending into a lawless and increasingly wild existence before being rescued.

By the late 1960s, Golding was relying on alcohol – which he referred to as “the old, old anodyne”. His first steps towards recovery came from his study of Carl Jung’s writings, and in what he called “an admission of discipleship” he travelled to Switzerland in 1971 to see Jung’s landscapes for himself. That same year, he started keeping a journal in which he recorded and interpreted his dreams; the last entry is from the day before he died, in 1993, and the volumes-long work came to be thousands of pages long by this time.

Golding had a troubled relationship with alcohol. Judy Carver notes that her father was “always very open, if rueful, about problems with drink”. Golding suggested that his self-described “crisis”, of which alcoholism played a major part,

had plagued him his entire life. John Carey mentions several instances of binge drinking in his biography, including Golding's experiences in 1963; whilst on holiday in Greece (when he was meant to have been finishing his novel *The Spire*), after working on his writing in the morning, he would go to his preferred "Kapheneion" to drink at midday. By the evening would move onto ouzo and brandy; he developed a reputation locally for "provoking explosions".

Unfortunately, the eventual publication of *The Spire* the following year did not help Golding's developing struggle with alcohol, it had precisely the opposite effect, with the novel's scathingly negative reviews in a BBC radio broadcast affecting him severely. Following the publication of *The Pyramid* in 1967, Golding experienced a severe writer's block: the result of myriad crises (family anxieties, insomnia, and a general sense of dejection). Golding eventually became unable to deal with what he perceived to be the intense reality of his life without first drinking copious amounts of alcohol. Tim Kendall suggests that these experiences manifest in Golding's writing as the character Wilf in *The Paper Men*, "an ageing novelist whose alcohol-sodden journeys across Europe are bankrolled by the continuing success of his first book".

Golding kept a personal journal for over 22 years from 1971 until the night before his death, and which contained approximately 2.4 million words in total. The journal was initially used by Golding in order to record his dreams, but over time it gradually began to function as a record of his life. The journals contained insights including retrospective thoughts about his novels and memories from his past.

At one point Golding described setting his students up into two groups to fight each other – an experience he drew on when writing *Lord of the Flies*. John Carey, the emeritus professor of English literature at Oxford University, was eventually given

‘unprecedented access to Golding’s unpublished papers and journals by the Golding estate’. Though Golding had not written the journals specifically so that a biography could be written about him, Carey published William Golding: *The Man Who Wrote Lord of the Flies* in 2009.

Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* (1954; film 1963 and 1990), it is about a story of a group of schoolboys isolated on a coral island who revert to savagery. Its imaginative and brutal depiction of the rapid and inevitable dissolution of social mores aroused widespread interest. *The Inheritors* (1955), set in the last days of Neanderthal man, is another story of the essential violence and depravity of human nature. The guilt-filled reflections of a naval officer, his ship torpedoed, who faces an agonizing death are the subject of *Pincher Martin* (1956). Two other novels, *Free Fall* (1959) and *The Spire* (1964), also demonstrate Golding’s belief that “man produces evil as a bee produces honey.” *Darkness Visible* (1979) tells the story of a boy horribly burned in the London blitz during World War II. His later works include *Rites of Passage* (1980), which won the Booker McConnell Prize, and its sequels, *Close Quarters* (1987) and *Fire Down Below* (1989). Golding was knighted in 1988.

Golding read *Coral Island* and thought that it was too unrealistic and that if stranded on an island, the boys would not all get along and have adventures, they would argue and fight to try and survive and it would not all be fun and games. He wrote *Lord of the Flies* as his more realistic idea of what would happen if a group of boys were to end up on an island together. Being a teacher also influenced him because he spent most of his days in a classroom full of boys whom influenced him in his ideas for characters and their personalities. This novel very much represents the time period, as well as Golding himself.

*Lord of the Flies*, rapidly became a world success and as so remained. It has reached readers who can be numbered in tens of millions. In other words, the book was a bestseller, in a way that is usually granted only to adventure stories, light reading and children's books. The same goes for several of his later novel, including *Rites of Passage*, 1980. These books are very entertaining and exciting. They can be read with pleasure and profit without the need to make much effort with learning or acumen. But they have also aroused an unusually great interest in professional literary critics, scholars, writers and other interpreters who have sought and found deep strata of ambiguity and complication in Golding's work. In those who use the tools of narration and linguistic art, they have incited to thinking, discovery and creation of their own, in order to explore the world we live in and to settle down in it.

William Golding can perhaps be compared to another Englishman, Jonathan Swift, who has also become a writer for the learned and the unlearned, or, to the American, Herman Melville, whose works are full of equivocal profundity as well as fascinating adventure. In fact the resemblance extends farther than that. Golding has a very keen sight and sharp pen when it comes to the power of evil and baseness in human beings – just like Jonathan Swift. And like Herman Melville, often chooses his themes and the framework for his stories from the world of the sea, or from other challenging situations in which odd people are tempted to reach beyond their limits, thereby being bared to the very marrow. His stories usually have a fairly schematic drama, almost an anecdote, as skeleton. He then covers this with a richly varied and spicy flesh of colourful characters and surprising events.

The idea of Dystopia is used in many novels and stories both modern and ancient, it simply reflects the idea of how modern society is taking a path which might



lead us to a dystopian society. Although these novels are talking about dystopia in general but each novel or story show us a different way to reach the dystopian society, the author of *Lord of the Flies* William Golding's use kids that are abandoned on an island to show how the society at their age can lead to be dystopian regarding making rules and choosing leader(s) to maintain and control the human actions, William Golding's gave us his idea of dystopia in an indirect way.

*Lord of the Flies* tells the story of a group of English schoolboys marooned on a tropical island after their plane is shot down during a war. Though the novel is fictional, its exploration of the idea of human evil is at least partly based on Golding's experience with the real-life violence and brutality of World War II. Free from the rules and structures of civilization and society, the boys on the island in *Lord of the Flies* descend into savagery. As the boys splinter into factions, some behave peacefully and work together to maintain order and achieve common goals, while others rebel and seek only anarchy and violence. In his portrayal of the small world of the island, Golding paints a broader portrait of the fundamental human struggle between the civilizing instinct—the impulse to obey rules, behave morally, and act lawfully—and the savage instinct—the impulse to seek brute power over others, act selfishly, scorn moral rules, and indulge in violence.

The small society they have attempted to build on this remote island eventually descends into chaos, prompting the reader to question the capacity for supposedly civilised humans to be savage. Although *Lord of the Flies* is a relatively simple tale, Golding's writing is rich and the symbolism is clever. This story aims to show how savage humans can be when left to their own devices and there's no order or morals.

Although Golding uses the island setting to demonstrate this point, this book leaves you feeling uncomfortable as you start to realise that man in a “civilised” society may not be any better. Golding reminds us that we all have the capacity for darkness and cruelty. This story stays with readers long after they have turned the last page because it is so haunting. And it’s haunting because it’s clear that this could so easily happen in the society we live in today. It also poses the interesting political question of democracy vs authoritarianism. Should we be forced to follow someone who is deemed to be a “rational” or “moral” leader, or be allowed to follow whoever presents a view that most aligns with our desires, whatever they may be.

While the novel did not sell well upon its initial publication, reviews were enthusiastic and the novel began to garner a reputation, especially in academic circles. Sales began to build, and the novel is recognized today as one of the most important literary works of the modern era. Telling the story of a group of schoolchildren stranded on a deserted island during an unspecified war and forced to fend for themselves without adult guidance, the novel’s exploration of man’s true nature, ripe symbolism, and terrifyingly effective glimpse into what a society driven entirely by primal urge and the need for security would look like remain powerful and effective in the modern day. The novel is one of the most assigned in schools, and had, by 1962, become enough of a success for Golding to quit his teacher work and devote himself to writing full time.

During this period, Golding was not idle, and published three more novels. *The Inheritors*, published in 1955, is set in prehistoric times, and details the destruction of the last remaining tribe of Neanderthals at the hands of the encroaching, dominant *Homo sapiens*. Written largely from the simplistic and impressionistic point

of view of the Neanderthals, the book is more experimental than *Lord of the Flies* while exploring some of the same themes. Pincher Martin, appearing in 1956, is a twisting tale of a naval officer who apparently survives the sinking of his ship and manages to wash up on a remote island, where his training and intelligence allow him to survive—but his reality begins to crumble as he experiences terrifying visions that cause him to doubt the facts of his existence. The last of Golding's early novels was *Free Fall* (1959), which tells the story of an officer in a prisoner of war camp during World War II who is put into solitary confinement and scheduled to be tortured concerning his knowledge of an escape attempt. As his fear and anxiety eat away at him, he reviews his life and wonders how he came to his fate, breaking even before the torture commences.

There are effective comparisons and contrasts between the two novels Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. The novels deal with many similar issues and contain many of the same themes. Many of the themes present in *Heart of Darkness* and also present in *Lord of the Flies*. Both novels deal with the theme of civilization versus savagery. Also, both novels imply that every man has a heart of darkness or an evil that is usually drowned out by the light of civilization. However, when removed from civilized society, the raw evil of untamed lifestyles within his soul will be unleashed. For example, in the *Heart of Darkness* the main character Marlow journeys up the Thames river and as he gets further away from civilization, the more he journey's into a heart of darkness. A darkness where societal morals no longer exist and savagery has taken over. In the *Lord of the Flies* the boys in the novel are stranded on an island and the longer they stay on the island and are absent from civilization the more savage like they become.

Orwell and Golding use vastly different writing styles, but their message is the same – that mankind is hopeless. Since the beginning of time man has struggled to comprehend the difference between good and evil. The two are so similar, and yet so different. The truth is, no one being is perfect, nor were we created to be. No one thing can be the source of all evil, or the source of all good. Yet man battles with himself, to determine what is right. In his novel “*Animal Farm*”, George Orwell portrays the animals with human-like feelings and emotions. He uses satire to demonstrate the full extent of human emotion.

Joseph Conrad is considered a literary impressionist by some and an early modernist by others, though his works also contain elements of 19<sup>th</sup>-century realism. His narrative style and anti-heroic characters, as in *Lord Jim*, for example, have influenced numerous authors. Many dramatic films have been adapted from and inspired by his works. Numerous writers and critics have commented that his fictional works, written largely in the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, seem to have anticipated later world events.

Stephen King has cited *Lord of the Flies* as one of his favorite books. In a foreword to the 2011 edition of the novel, King wrote that, “It was, so far as I can remember, the first book with hands—strong ones that reached out of the pages and seized me by the throat. In his introduction to the centenary edition of Golding’s novel, Stephen King writes, “It was, so far as I can remember, the first book with hands – strong ones that reached out of the pages and seized me by the throat. It said to me, ‘This is not just entertainment; it’s life-or-death.

Golding reminds us that we all have the capacity for darkness and cruelty. This story stays with readers long after they have turned the last page because it is so

haunting. And it's haunting because it's clear that this could so easily happen in the society we live in today. It also poses the interesting political question of democracy vs authoritarianism. Should we be forced to follow someone who is deemed to be a "rational" or "moral" leader, or be allowed to follow whoever presents a view that most aligns with our desires, whatever they may be.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Darkness in Man's Heart**

William Golding sees moral behaviour, in many cases, as something that civilization forces upon the individual rather than a natural expression of human individuality. When left to their own devices, Golding implies, people naturally revert to cruelty, savagery, and barbarism. A running theme in William Golding's works is that man is savage at heart, always ultimately reverting back to an evil and primitive nature. The cycle of man's rise to power, or righteousness, and his inevitable fall from grace is an important point that Golding proves again and again in many of his works, often comparing man with characters from the Bible to give a more vivid picture of his descent. Golding implies this fall in different manners, ranging from the illustration of the mentality of actual primitive man to the reflections of a corrupt seaman in purgatory.

The central theme of *Lord of the Flies* is the conflict on two competing impulses that exist within all human beings: the instinct to live by rules, act peacefully, follow moral commands, against the instinct to gratify one's desires, act violently to obtain supremacy over others. This conflict might be expressed as civilization vs. savagery, order vs. chaos, or good vs. evil. Throughout the novel, Golding associates the instinct of civilization with good and the instinct of savagery with evil, through different symbols. The conflict between the two instincts is the driving force of the novel. Golding represents the conflict between civilization and savagery through Ralph, the protagonist, who represents order and leadership, and Jack, the antagonist, who represents savagery and the desire for power.

According to Robert McCrum *Lord of the Flies* presents a view of humanity before the horrors of Nazi Europe, and then plunges into speculations about mankind in the state of nature. Bleak and specific, but universal, fusing rage and grief, it is both a novel of the 1950s, and for all time.

*Lord of the Flies* depicts the transformation into savagery of a group of English schoolboys stranded on a desert island without adult supervision in the aftermath of a plane crash. At the beginning, the children manage to take care of themselves and expect the hope of rescue. However, the boys are soon controlled by the fear in their hearts. The island community breaks up into two rival groups, represented respectively by Ralph, who insists on civilized values and the hope of rescue; Jack, who wants to enjoy the freedom and benefits of hunting on the island. Eventually, the paradise-like island is destroyed in fire of cannibalism. The schoolboys are rescued and reverted from savages to obedient schoolboys on the arrival of an English Cruiser when he was in his business of fighting another cruiser.

The boys of different backgrounds who are marooned on an unknown island when their plane crashes try to organize and formulate a plan to get rescued, they begin to separate and as a result of the dissension a band of savage tribal hunters is formed. Eventually the “stranded boys in *Lord of the Flies* almost entirely shake off civilized behaviour: (Riley 1: 119). When the confusion finally leads to a manhunt [for Ralph], the reader realizes that despite the strong sense of British character and civility that has been instilled in the youth throughout their lives, the boys have backpedalled and shown the underlying savage side existent in all humans. “Golding senses that institutions and order imposed from without are temporary, but man’s irrationality and urge for destruction are enduring” (Riley 1: 119).

The island that the boys land on is paradisiacal. It has plenty of fresh water, fruit, trees, and pigs. It also has diverse landscapes, including a forest, a mountain, and a beach. The island is a symbol of a paradise similar to the Garden of Eden. It represents a blank slate for the boys to form a society, whether it be better or worse than what the boys came from. When the boys are first stranded, they need to explore their surroundings to figure out where they are and what kind of environment it is. Jack, Ralph, and Simon explore, finding food, water, and materials to build shelters.

Ralph declares: "This is our island. It's a good island. Until the grownups come to fetch us we'll have fun" (35). The boys are scared of a Beast they think is living on the island. Jack argues that there is no Beast, saying that he has been everywhere on the land. This shows that the island is relatively small, and it is safe. "Well then—I've been all over this island. By myself. If there were a beast I'd have seen it. Be frightened because you're like that—but there is no beast in the forest" (90).

After Ralph is elected, he puts forth the idea of making a signal fire, so the boys have a better chance of getting rescued. Ralph and his followers hope that a passing ship will see the smoke and come to the island. They want to get back to the civilized world. On the very first day, the boys institute a democracy of sorts. Ralph, the group's leader is athletic, charismatic and handsome, his game plan is simple: to have fun, survive, make smoke signals for passing ships. Number one is a success. The others were not so much. The boys are more interested in feasting and frolicking than in tending the fire.

Once the boys start becoming savage, they stop caring about a signal fire or getting rescued. "There's another thing. We can help them to find us. If a ship comes



near the island they may not notice us. So we must make smoke on top of the mountain. We must make a fire" ( 38). When the fire goes out, Ralph gets angry and questions whether the boys want to get rescued. Some of the boys have lost their hope or desire of getting rescued as they have given into their savage nature. "Hasn't anyone got any sense? We've got to relight that fire. You never thought of that, Jack, did you? Or don't any of you want to be rescued?" (102 ).

As Piggy is an overweight and asthmatic boy who needs glasses to see, the boys use the glasses to start a signal fire by focusing sunlight onto a small patch of kindling. Since the glasses are used to start the fire, they, too, are a symbol of hope, rescue, and survival. Piggy's glasses are the only thing the boys know how to use to start a fire, and they need a fire for warmth, food, and to use as a smoke signal. Jack steals Piggy's glasses, and Piggy is unable to see without them. The theft is another example of the horrible things that have happened on the island.

When the glasses were stolen, Ralph, Piggy, and Samneric (the last boys remaining in the original group) lost some of their hope. Piggy's liberal-democratic outlook and sense of fair play lead him to the honorable idea that everyone, however lowly, has a right to speak- even a little who wants the conch must be given it. Piggy support a polyphonic society, Jack a society of mutes, since men require only ears to hear the master's command. Piggy, too, is the first to recognize that life entails making certain choices and establishing certain priorities.

Over the course of time, these boys demonstrate elements of human nature beyond civilized human beings as they are put in a society and environment where there are no rules or civility set in place. Golding contends that human nature, when free from the constraints of society, draws people away from common sense to

savagery. His fundamental arguments are that human beings are savage by nature, and are moved by urges toward brutality and dominance over others. Before long, they have begun painting their faces. Casting off their clothes. And they develop overpowering urges – to pinch, to kick, to bite. By the time the British naval officer comes ashore, the island is a smoldering wasteland. The naval officer with his uniform and pistol appears at the end of the novel on seeing the fire. He confronts Ralph who is running for his life from Jack's hunters.

When he sees the boys playing the barbaric game, he scolds them for showing dirty and rude manners unbecoming of the British boys. He asks Ralph about their game and their presence on the island over which Ralph's eyes are filled with tears. He is hardly able to narrate the barbaric episode to the officer when other boys appear. They instantly become a pack of civilized dirty boys after seeing the officer in uniform with a pistol in his holster representing order, authority, and culture. When he hears three of the children are dead, "I should have thought," the officer says, "that a pack of British boys would have been able to put up a better show than that" (203). At this, Ralph bursts into tears. "Ralph wept for the end of innocence," we read, and for "the darkness of man's heart" (202).

Golding depicts the boys' significant transformation into savages by illustrating their refusal to follow Ralph's orders, their affinity for hunting pigs, and their complete disregard for the signal fire. Despite Ralph's attempt to establish a civil society, Jack undermines his authority and champions hunting pigs over completing essential tasks. Simon's enlightening interaction with the *Lord of the Flies* also conveys Golding's message and the true identity of the "beast" underscores his belief that all humans are inherently evil.

With the progresses in the story, Golding shows how different people feel the influences of the instincts of civilization and savagery to different degrees. Piggy, for instance, has no savage feelings, while Roger seems barely capable of comprehending the rules of civilization. Generally, however, Golding implies that the instinct of savagery is far more primal and fundamental to the human psyche than the instinct of civilization.

Jack has a desire for power at the beginning of the novel and gets furious over the fact that he ends up not getting the role as chief. For a while, Jack maintains the moral sense and discipline that civilization had established in him. “We’ve got to have rules and obey them. After all, we’re not savages” (42). Jack said in the book about establishing order among the group in the beginning. Jack realizes that there is a need to make order, something that being in a society has instilled in him. When he first encounters the pig, he is unsuccessful at killing it.

Golding writes, “They knew very well why he hadn’t; because of the enormity of the knife descending and cutting into living flesh; because of the unbearable blood” (29). It is the civilized Jack who is unable to bear the thought of harming the pig. He then devotes his time into hunting and trying to kill the pig, changing the image of his character very much ever since the beginning, slowly drifting into savagery as he finds pleasure in killing the pigs. As more time goes by, his savagery has affected the whole group as he, along with others have killed Simon, the first character to realize that the barbarianism that has descended within them is just a part of human nature.

Ralph, a symbol of order and civility opposite to Jack also participates in Simon’s murder, revealing that all humans have the ability to be evil in the right setting. Although Ralph participates, Piggy is the only one that does not due to his

greater intelligence in comparison to the other boys. With intelligence, he still has maintained a sense between good and bad, morality. Throughout the novel, Jack can be seen developed from a civilized school boy to a symbol of savagery and anarchy in an environment where there is no such of a society with rules and order. Golding's development of the character Jack is one literary device that Golding utilizes to address how humans are susceptible of savagery when they are far away from civilization.

Most of the boys suppose that there is a terrifying beast on the island due to the physical forms they have seen such as the dead parachutist and believe that it remains hidden in the ocean during the day and emerges only at night. The majority of them believe in this idea, except Simon. "What I mean is . . . Maybe it's only us . . ." (89), Simon proposes that perhaps the beast is only a figure made up within the boys' minds, during the group's questioning of the beast's actual existence. While although all the other boys laugh at his idea, Simon's belief conforms to Golding's idea that an inherent human evil exists. Simon is the first character to recognize that the beast in reality is not an external force, but instead a component of human nature.

Meanwhile, the other boys' belief in the beast increases more as the more savagely they have become, treating it as an immortal god. On the other hand, in spite of his theory, Simon does not fully make sense of his own idea until he confronts with the *Lord of the Flies* later on where he is told that the beast is really inside of them all, "Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill! You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you? Close, close, close..." (143). Though the boys think the beast lives in the jungle, Golding makes it clear that it lurks only in their hearts. Golding's implementation of the beast in the boys' adventure on the island displayed an

irrational fear among the boys through its symbol to uncover an element of human nature as an individual gets farther away from rationalization.

The characterization by Golding supports his argument that humans are profoundly diabolical. He writes, “Kill the pig. Cut her throat. Bash her in...” (75), the group’s chant when they all together have killed their first pig. This indirectly portrays the savagery that has slowly developed in the group, in an environment where there are no rules to live by, but had been attempted to be established. Golding later writes “He could see a striped savage moving hastily out of the green tangle, and coming toward the mat where he hid, a savage who carried a spear...” (198) as Ralph, the last hope of civilization and order for the group is hunted down by Jack’s boys. In this sequence, Golding directly characterizes a group of school boys who had turned into a group of uncivilized human beings with diction. This in turn also gives confirmation to the change in human nature of the boys ever since their arrival after the plane crash. The setting of a society with rules are no longer in place, had greatly changed the behaviour of the boys.

*Lord of the Flies* reflects on Golding’s belief that people of all age groups have innate capacity for evil and that this natural capacity is never too far from a civilized society. He gives an intriguing view of human behaviour when people are in a society where rules of a civilized society are no longer existent. Golding feels that man is naturally evil and the novel strongly suggests that. It also alerts us of our potential to descend from order to chaos when the time is right.

In a situation, when a society is unable to control a man’s behaviour, the man’s sense of cruelty increases therefore leading to violence and savage behaviour. Golding’s idea of the dark side of human nature appears very accurate as one man’s

act of violence against another is seen every day whether on a small individual scale or big global war. Golding's novel delivers an important message to all; man's hope to recognize and control the monster within man himself is with a civilized society, influenced by the effects of government and religion, two things lacking in *Lord of the Flies*. Otherwise, human beings are thirsty for power, despite the rules that try to make order.

Golding conveys the idea that civilization and civility are fragile structures. As social norms break down on the island, Golding shows that humans harbour primal instincts that can make them behave savagely. The isolated setting of the island is meant to illustrate that a group of normal, generally well-behaved boys will revert to animalistic behaviour when the rule of law is dissolved. It is an attempt to trace the defects of society to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable.

The primary message that Golding tries to convey throughout *Lord of the Flies* is that humans are inherently wicked, violent beings and will revert back to their primitive, savage instincts in an environment void of laws, restrictions, and order. Golding conveys this message by exploring the theme of civilization versus savagery, depicting the violent transformation of the civilized British schoolboys, and setting the story against the backdrop of a world war. Golding's personal experiences during WWII influenced his negative perception of humanity as he witnessed firsthand the destructive nature of mankind. The boys' harrowing, violent experience on the island is a microcosm of what is happening in the outside world.

Important symbols like the fire, Piggy's glasses, and the conch shell gauge the boys' level of civility and depict their gradual regression. The reader recognizes that savagery reigns supreme once the firesignal goes out, Piggy's glasses are stolen, and the conch shell shatters. Under Jack's leadership, the boys paint their faces, develop a bloodlust, and contribute to the murders of Simon and Piggy.

At the end of the story, the savages hunt Ralph throughout the island and start a forest fire that threatens to destroy the entire island. The former innocent British schoolboys transform into bloodthirsty savages in an environment without adults, laws, and order. Their dramatic transformation and violent crimes convey Golding's main message that human beings are inherently wicked, violent beings and will embrace their primitive instincts if left to their own devices. In the beginning the boys loved the idea of being alone with no adults. They wanted to play and have fun. Eventually, fear begins to creep into their lives. At first the darkness was just a metaphor for uncertainty, but it escalated to end up representing the boys' fears of humanity itself. Their fears of the darkness and the beast intensify during the night represent the growing evil on the island and the evil within themselves.

Golding does not portray loss of innocence as something that is done to the children; rather, it results naturally from their increasing openness to the innate evil and savagery that has always existed within them. Golding implies that civilization can mitigate but never wipe out the innate evil that exists within all human beings. The forest glade in which Simon sits in symbolizes this loss of innocence. At first, it is a place of natural beauty and peace, but when Simon returns later in the novel, he discovers the bloody sow's head impaled upon a stake in the middle of the clearing. Golding addresses the effects of fear on the individual and on a group.

The world of the children on the island becomes a reflection of the adult world, which, from the children's point of view, serves as a norm in their lives, a way of living which they want to adopt – some more than others. What they do adopt very quickly is the hierarchical thinking which has dominated the Western world in modern time. Extra attention is given to the three main characters in the novel: Ralph, Jack and Piggy and how the hierarchical system affects them on the island. A division is made between the democratic society on the island, which is run by Ralph, and the despotic society run by Jack. The despotic society is where the hierarchy is most evident and also most brutal. In order to secure its own survival, the despotic society completely demolishes the democratic. The hierarchical system is important to both Ralph's democratic, and Jack's despotic, society although the long-lasting consequences of their rule differ.

In addition to this is that neither of the society survives on the island and no one on the island are children. This is clearly emphasized by Golding with the appearance of the Naval officer. The Naval officer also emphasizes the message of the novel as a whole. Golding gives the reader a general message concerning the whole world and all ages, that the hierarchical structure is an important part of both the world at large and the world on the island.

Golding uses fable structure to write the novel *Lord of the Flies*. It is ironic that Golding considered *Lord of the Flies* a fable, because his novel allows much room for speculation. Instead of using cartoonish talking animals, Golding teaches his lesson with fully developed human characters representing the dominant motifs. As the characters interact with one another and with their environment, so do the forces they represent. Using the characters to embody these forces Golding allows the opportunity to compare and contrast the rich shadings of meaning rather than with



simplistic oppositions. Unlike Aesop's animals, human beings act in a way that frequently conflict with the values they consciously hold, as is the case with Golding's protagonist Ralph. Because Ralph finds himself participating in the same savage behaviour as he condemns the other boys, he presents a realistic picture of a humane person resorting to brutality under unusual circumstances.

Golding's characters also bring ambiguity to the motifs they embody. Piggy, for example, represents the scientific rationalist whose knowledge and intellect far exceed that of the other boys. Yet for all his intelligence, he cannot figure out how to speak so that the others will listen. Golding does seek to provide a lesson in morality, but the lesson lacks the straightforward and decisive tone of the proverb that concludes most fables. At the end of Golding's fable, the reader has learned not that evil is confined to the militaristic portion of the population as epitomized by Jack; the pacifist Ralph participated in some of the brutal tribal activities. Neither has the reader learned that science or even simple common sense will save humanity from itself; Piggy is ridiculed throughout and then killed. Mystical revelations or visionary insight into the human condition will not save us; consider the fate of the saintly Simon. Instead the reader learns that evil lives in us all, and there is no proverb to remedy that situation. By invoking the complexity that underlies human nature, Golding's tale brings depth to the fable structure and presents a complex moral lesson as well.

Violence continues to exist in modern society and is institutionalized in the military and politics. Golding develops this theme by having his characters establish a democratic assembly, which is greatly affected by the verbal violence of Jack's power-plays, and an army of hunters, which ultimately forms a small military dictatorship. The boys' assemblies are likened to both ends of the social or civil spectrum, from pre-verbal tribe gatherings to modern governmental institutions,

indicating that while the forum for politics has changed over the millennia, the dynamic remains the same. "Life [...] is scientific, that's what it is. In a year or two when the war is over they'll be travelling to Mars and back. I know there isn't no beast—not with claws and all that I mean—but I know there isn't no fear either. . . Unless we get frightened of people" (104).

The novel shows the reader how easy it is to revert back to the evil nature inherent in man. If a group of well-conditioned school boys can ultimately wind up committing various extreme travesties, one can imagine what adults, leaders of society, are capable of doing under the pressures of trying to maintain world relations:

*Lord of the Flies'* apprehension of evil is such that it touches, the nerve of contemporary horror as no English novel of its time has done; it takes us, through symbolism, into a world of active, proliferating evil which is seen, one feels, as the natural condition of man and which is bound to remind the reader of the vilest manifestations of Nazi regression (Riley 1: 120).

When *Lord of the Flies* was first released in 1954, Golding described the novel's theme in a publicity questionnaire as "an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature." In his 1982 essay *A Moving Target*, he stated simply. The theme of *Lord of the Flies* is grief, sheer grief, grief, grief. The novel ends of course with Ralph grieving the indelible mark of evil in each person's heart, an evil he scarcely suspected existed before witnessing its effects on his friends and supporters. The former schoolboys sought unthinkingly to dominate others who were not of their group. They discovered within themselves the urge to inflict pain and enjoyed the accompanying rush of power. When confronted with a choice between

reason's civilizing influence and animalist's self-indulgent savagery, they choose to abandon the values of the civilization that Ralph represents.

Thus it is proved that *Lord of the Flies* explores the dark side of human nature and stresses the importance of reason and intelligence as tools for dealing with the chaos of existence.

## Chapter Three

### Confrontation between Christ and Devil

William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is a classic novel that talks about the conflict between the human impulse towards savagery and civilization. It is an allegorical tale where Golding explains the brutality of World War II, as it delivers a message about real-world issues and incidents from the war to help people understand the importance of laws and rules. Golding uses biblical allusion to portray the character of a boy named Simon, the pig's head and the island through the conflicts and events shown in the novel. *Lord of the Flies* is best read as a religious allegory because Simon is a Jesus figure, Ralph and Jack are like Cain and Abel, the boys start to create a Pagan like religion and treat the beast like a god. There are many examples of Simon ostensibly acting altruistically and wholly, almost Jesus like.

Golding's symbolism and motifs within "*Lord of the Flies*" are genuinely precise, while gracefully but strongly building upon the novel's purpose. They are not too complex in nature, but succeed in using the religious experience to move readers. We become familiar with Golding's use of biblical allusion while reading the opening pages. We feel that we have stepped into a replica of the Garden of Adam and Eve when the novel's setting is introduced to us. It is a dreamscape of an innocent playground. There are exotic flowers, a sea of glimmering blue, and offers the best of what seems like a child's dream place to play. One boy asks if there are any beasts with them on the island. Another reassures his friend with the encouragement that they are on "a good island."

Genuine innocence separates these boys from the dark truths of the world in which they have come from. This playground-like island reinforces their blissful

ignorance. Critic S.J. Boyd executes this idea grandly when he comments that, “The island, like everything else in the novel is a parody-a parody of the Garden of Adam and Eve, where the first sin was committed. Eating fruit causes sickness, and so the island becomes full of feces. The fruit is tainted by the first sin, whose effects the boys, like all humanity, Inherit” (Boyd 108).

This analysis reinforces the intertwined message that Golding and the holy bible share that mankind is born with original sin, which will taint their actions, behaviours, and motives. Prior to becoming stranded on the island, the boys were clean cut, innocent, relatively well-mannered school boys. The sweetness of genuine innocence and rejection of evil only lasts until the world has a real impact on us. The rejection of evil ends when we must act on human instinct-when we are forced to survive in the real world.

Golding himself refers to the self-sacrificial character, Simon, as a saint when he says that, “So many literary people find that Simon is incomprehensible. But, he is comprehensible to the illiterate person. The illiterate person knows about saints and sanctity, and Simon is assaint.” The enlightenment Simon received is a type that would be extraordinary for a boy of his age to achieve. Most adults have only a few experiences as close to being as one with God as Simon does in the novel. As if this is not profound enough, Simon also shows characteristics of Peter of the bible.

Peter brings the ‘good news’, while Simon brings the news of the parachutist’s crash into one of the mountains of the island (62). Simon seems wise beyond the capabilities of any other boy on the island, seeing and understanding what they do not. This is representative of the loyalty and wisdom that a higher power has granted him. Another character lined with a holy existence is Piggy. Not once does

Piggy participate with the other boys in the savage activities of the island, and continuously tries to give Ralph insight throughout his attempts of leadership. Piggy is described in the novel as a figure more knowledgeable and wise than the others on the island. “And Piggy, with the martyred expression of a parent who has to keep up with the senseless ebullience of the children...” (38). Piggy is much like a Jesus Christ, leading those who are ignorant into the right direction. When his glasses break, the end of sanity and wisdom emerge. The boys do not act like boys anymore, but like savages. They play a literal game of manhunt. Golding chooses, purposefully, the deaths of Simon and Piggy. Their death is symbolic in nature.

The crash site, the island, is the main allusion in this novel, portraying as the garden of Eden from the book of Genesis. Its scenery, abundant fruit and idyllic weather, are keen similarities between the two paradises, that is, before the boys arrive and destroy it. For example, the author alludes the boys to the biblical characters of Adam and Eve. They represent the innocence that people are born into, much like they both are at the time of their creation: “Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (Genesis 2:25). Similarly, Ralph’s first act on the island is to remove his clothes and swim in the water, a gesture that recalls the nudity and the act of baptism.

Later on, the boys too begin to wear less clothing and eventually go around naked. Another example shows how the boys are present around fruits and nature: “Flower and fruit grew together on the same tree and everywhere was the scent of ripeness and the blooming of a million bees at pasture” (57) as well as Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This comparison is highly similar because the island and the garden once started as a paradise, however, it is ruined as Adam, Eve and the boys pursued their savagery and temptation instincts.

On the other hand, the beast in the story resembles Satan as it tempts both characters from the stories to rebel. Adam and Eve encountered their beast, the snake, in the garden, in attempting to make them eat an apple from the forbidden tree. The boys imagined they saw a “snake-thing” (73-80) in the forest which made them fear and worship the beast without knowing what it really is. These examples show how similar Golding tries to express that a craving for temptation as well as an unhealthy fear drive this world, is a better understanding of how humanity is similar to the time of God’s creation. In the end, it drives the characters more to the brink of destruction and violence. This happens sooner than later for the boys. Having no adult supervision forces them into a role they are not ready for-the role of surviving and existing like an adult. This forces them to shed their innocence very fast.

One of the more prominent representations of sin, and perhaps Satan’s encouragement of it, is the ‘beast’ that is claimed by Jack to exist on the island. The boys struggle to find the beast on the island, and continue to fret about it. However, the beast is never found because the beast –evil and sin, exists within the boys. ‘The beast’ is not something that is tangible. When something exists inside of us, it is not tangible in the outside world. Golding wisely chooses this intangible creature to be sin-embodied in the boys. Another important symbol comes to life when Simon, one of the novel’s main characters, takes it upon himself to voyage for food to help out the other boys on the island. This happens to take place on a blazing summer’s day. Simon falls to the ground and becomes exhausted from the heat. The heat, in turn, causes Simon to hallucinate. This hallucination is the slain pig’s head that takes form of the beast, who grants Simon the experience of what is much like a prophetic realization. In the novel, the slain pig head taunts Simon by bellowing, “Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill! You knew, didn’t you

know? I'm part of you? I'm the reason why it's no go? Why things are how they are?" (171).

Simon is the only boy who is informed of the nonexistence of a physical beast, and it is through a power higher than himself. Golding gives no other boy on the island the enlightenment of knowing that evil and sin are actually within each of the boys and it is not a beast on the island. This is yet another proof of another religious symbol, supporting the religious allegory that the novel takes form of.

*Lord of the Flies* as a title is most appropriate for this novel of Golding, as it gives us a definite clue to the major theme of the novel. The title clearly shows that the novel was intended to have an allegorical purpose. The Lord of the Flies is Beelzebub, mentioned in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. Beelzebub is the prince of demons and Milton used this name for one of his fallen angels. For a novel to have this title, evidently shows that the theme of the story would be evil, or a clash between the forces of evil and the forces of good. And, indeed such a clash is the principal theme of this particular novel.

The phrase Lord of the Flies first comes in chapter-8, when we find Simon alone in the jungle. He is looking from his hiding place in the forest at the fly covered head of dead pig killed by Jack and his hunters. Jack cut off the Sow's head, offered it as a sacrifice to the beast in order to appease the beast. This is a "gift for the darkness. Simon has observed the doings of Jack and his hunters and the Sow's head seems to Simon to be Beelzebub – the lord of the flies. He feels as if the head the lord of the flies, was speaking to him. It was Simon that he cannot escape him, the beast, for he is a part of everyone and he is responsible for all of their difficulties. He threatens Simon repeatedly and finally Simon faints. This hallucination is described at the end



of chapter-8 and it explains the title of the novel and the allegorical significance of the whole story.

The head of the pig hung on a stick, becomes a symbol of terror. Golding gives it the title *Lord of the Flies* which is a translation of the Arabic word Baal-zebub, the name of a devil. The head of the pig represents the evil of unreason. The Flies that buzz over the guts of the Sow are instinctive beings and they represent the primitive urges that dominate the boys. The Lord of the Flies asks Simon to go away. Simon insists that the Lord of the flies is only a “Pig’s head on a stick”. In fact this whole episode is a symbolic representation of the conflict between the highest and lowest impulses in man.

Lord of the Flies explains that the boys would never be able to hunt or kill the beast. And, then the Lord of the Flies says: “You knew, didn’t you? I’m part of you?” (143). It answers the question why the civilization of boys is a total failure. The destructive element is in the boys themselves. Golding wants to say that whatever name you give to the evil – devil, sin, neurosis, hate, violence, brutality – the fact is that evil exists inside man. The symbolic encounter between Simon and the lord of the flies represents the conflict between good and evil — as it is found in every man.

In addition to rebelling from their innocent selves, the pig’s head shows a major understanding of the danger of evil within the boys that propels them deeply into a state of savagery and violence, as well as Adam and Eve from God. By eating the apple from the forbidden tree, Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s only rule because of their careless and tempted actions “...So the Lord God banished them from the Garden of Eden” (Genesis 2:15-17). Similar to this example, one of the boys named

Jack is tempted by the desperation of the pig's meat which symbolizes the forbidden fruit in *Lord of the Flies*. Here, Golding makes an affirmation of their step into savagery. Corrupted by fear because of the 'beast', their perception of it turns out to be more irrational and does what it wants "This head is for the beast. It's a gift." (151). Golding uses this to emphasize the importance of their blindness into temptation, to grow awareness to the world of bad people.

Continuing, the beast, who is the *Lord of the Flies*, is shown as Beelzebub, who is Satan in Hebrew, a similar character to the snake in the book of Genesis. As the Lord of the Flies supposedly talks to Simon, we see that the beast is declaring his intention to destroy all that is good on the island, thus learning the beast's attempt on tempting Simon to join Jack's tribe. Simon gradually realizes that there is evil within everyone "You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you?" (158) but as he tries to confront the boys with his discoveries, he died because of misunderstandings, a lead to his relations with Jesus. Golding shows the beast as an act of temptation through the characters in the novel, an act in which humans can not differentiate from.

Finally, one of the main characters in the story, Simon, is viewed as a Christ figure. He is spiritual, compassionate, non-violent, and in harmony with the natural world as Jesus did. Both characters are disregarded and not accepted by society. Some may say that his confrontation with the *Lord of the Flies* resembles Christ's conversation with the devil during his forty days in the desert, where he tries persuading Simon into having fun by sinning, Satan does the same thing to Jesus by giving him his needs in an act of temptation. Both characters, challenged by evil, overcame it. In addition, readers noted the resemblances of their deaths. During Simon's death, he was killed as a misunderstanding "the clouds opened and let down the rain like a waterfall" (Golding 153) – an emphasis to the power of evil. Christ's

sacrifice on the cross was killed for his beliefs “there was darkness over the whole land” (Mark 15:33), to relieve the burden of his people’s sins. Golding reveals the similarities in one another to show that they are not different, and that their characters play a big role in their stories. Furthermore, in relation to God, “Simon found for them the fruit they could not reach” (56). Simon feeds the little’s fruit, just as Jesus fed the multitudes in the New Testament “Jesus feeds the five thousand” (Matthew 14:13-21).

The comparison between Simon and Jesus’ secret places are somewhat similar. Simon goes to his secret place in the forest as Jesus goes to the garden to pray. All in all, Golding makes a connection with Jesus to Simon to show their aspects of qualities, action, and death. These characters bring a light to their stories by keeping their beast at bay that resides in the depths people’s heart.

Simon’s confrontation with the *Lord of the Flies*—the sow’s head impaled on a stake in the forest glade—is arguably the most important scene in the novel, and one that has attracted the most attention from critics. Some critics have interpreted the scene as a retelling of Jesus’ confrontation with Satan during his forty days in the wilderness, a story originally told in the Gospels of the *New Testament*. Indeed, many critics have described Simon as a Christ figure, for he has a mystical connection to the environment, possesses a saintly and selfless disposition, and meets a tragic and sacrificial death. Others tie the scene into a larger Freudian reading of *Lord of the Flies*, claiming that its symbols correspond exactly to the elements of the Freudian unconscious (with Jack as the id, Ralph as the ego, and Piggy as the superego). *Lord of the Flies* may indeed support these and a number of other readings, not necessarily at the exclusion of one another.

Many differences between Simon and Jesus complicate the comparison between the two and prevent us from seeing Simon as a straightforward Christ figure. Simon, unlike Jesus, is not a supernatural being, and none of the boys could possibly find salvation from the *Lord of the Flies* through faith in Simon. Rather, Simon's terror and fainting spell indicate the horrific, persuasive power of the instinct for chaos and savagery that the *Lord of the Flies* represents. Simon has a deep human insight in the glade, for he realizes that it is not a real, physical beast that inspires the hunters' behaviour but rather the barbaric instinct that lies deep within each of them. Fearing that this instinct lies embedded within himself as well, Simon seems to hear the *Lord of the Flies* speaking with him, threatening him with what he fears the most. Unable to stand the sight any longer, Simon collapses into a very human faint.

In all, Simon is a complex figure who does not fit neatly into the matrix framed by Jack at the one end and Ralph at the other. Simon is kind-hearted and firmly on the side of order and civilization, but he is also intrigued by the idea of the beast and feels a deep connection with nature and the wilderness on the island. Whereas Jack and Roger connect with the wilderness on a level that plunges them into primal lust and violence, Simon finds it a source of mystical comfort and joy. Simon's closeness with nature and his unwaveringly kind nature throughout the novel make him the only character who does not feel morality as an artificial imposition of society. Instead, we sense that Simon's morality and goodness are a way of life that proceeds directly and easily from nature.

*Lord of the Flies* is deeply preoccupied with the problem of fundamental, natural human evil—amid which Simon is the sole figure of fundamental, natural good. In a wholly nonreligious way, Simon complicates the philosophical statement the novel makes about human beings, for he represents a completely separate

alternative to the spectrum between civilization and savagery of which Ralph and Jack are a part. In the end, Simon is both natural and good in a world where such a combination seems impossible. *Lord of the Flies* gives an intriguing view of human behaviour when people are in a society where rules of a civilized society are no longer existent. Golding feels that man is naturally evil and the novel strongly suggests that. It also alerts us of our potential to descend from order to chaos when the time is right.

Good and evil is one of the main themes in *Lord of the Flies*. Golding uses characters to represent good and evil. He shows that the longer people go without the presence of good, evil will take over, but humans are naturally good. Characters are the biggest representation of good and evil in *Lord of the Flies*. The characters in *Lord of the Flies* can be interpreted as prototypes of human behaviour, where Ralph represents civilization and leadership, and Jack represents the savagery within the human soul. In a broader sense, we may consider Ralph as representing “good” and Jack as representing “evil”.

Both Good and evil are mutually dependant. Both of them will not exist without each other. This is because; one will never know what is good without the existence of bad and the same goes for evil. Some critics have claimed that these two are mutually exclusive and they have no connection with each other which means good survive in its own way so does evil. But the question here is how could one differentiate what is good and what is evil without the existence of each other?. Because in the absence of good there is nothing as evil could expose itself and everything will remain neutral.

The two representatives of good and evil in the book *Lord of the Flies* are Ralph and Jack respectively. Ralph characterizes righteousness while Jack

characterizes evilness. They are like opposite poles occupying complete opposite positions, having different opinions and are totally against each other. They start off as good friends but gradually grow hate for each other because of their variation in opinions and actions. The actual story starts with the election held for selecting the leader and Ralph gets majority votes to be the leader.

“Him with the shell”

“Ralph! Ralph!”

“Let him be the chief with the trumpet thing”

Ralph raised a hand for silence

“All right. Who wants Jack for chief?”

With dreary obedience the choir raised their hands.

“Who wants me?”[19]

Every hand outside the choir except Piggy was raised immediately. Then Piggy, too, raised his hand grudgingly into the air. Ralph counted, “I’m chief then” [20]. During the voting session, majority of the boys choose Ralph as their chief, thinking he could make a perfect leader and also will plan for their rescue. This makes Jack Merridew feel little so he himself suggested being the leader for hunters which is actually a group of choir boys. He cleverly insert in the minds of the boys that they are hunters who enjoy seeing blood, flesh and they should dedicate themselves for hunting. This action of him itself shows that Jack is not a suitable leader because he is making people go in a wrong way. Golding portrays Ralph as the qualified one to be the leader while Jack lacks the leadership quality though he is the head for choir aka hunters. Jack is not bad from the beginning but his inner thirst for power and

dominance lead him to choose the wrong path. He also makes the others to join his path of violence. Ralph uses his smartness and practical knowledge while Jack always uses violence and savagery to attain what he desire. Though they begin as friends unknowingly they become enemies with mutual hate for each other.

Being a believer of Christianity he made use of some motifs of Christianity like “fall” in his books. Inclusion of violence, cruelty, dark myth with moral values in his work *Lord of the Flies* is the plot developer. He also believes in “fall of man due to his past mistakes and disobedience”. So he included this in *Lord of the Flies* but in a varied sense like how Adam and Eve entered the Garden of Eden with purity and innocence but because of their disobedience their innocence and purity vanished and they fall to the earth as sinned human beings. The same way the twelve year old kids set foot in the Island with angelic faces with pure heart but later their silly mistakes which slowly turn into greater crimes and covet for power make them lose innocence completely. It does not mean that all of them become savages and some of them turns into the victims of the corrupted society.

The first ever controversy between Jack and Ralph happen when Jack took SamnEric for hunting and the fire went out as they were the one who is in charge for the fire. Also the most awaited thing for Ralph is ruined because of that; at the same time Jack’s dream to hunt pigs is fulfilled on the same day. It is the first win for evilness and loss for morality. Ralph pushed Piggy on one side. “I was chief; and you were going to do what said. You talk. But you can’t even build huts- then you go off hunting and let out the fire” You and your blood, Jack Merridew! You and your hunting! We might have gone home [76]. This is the stage where Jack starts to supress Ralph and his power. Though he is the chief he constantly has to remind Jack in every chance he got that he has power and they should listen to him. However Jack’s

dominance over the situation makes the issue change in a different way; more like favourable for him.

William Golding's point of view is that both good and evil are inherent in all human beings. But what they chose to practice; whether good or evil in any kind of situation is the most significant thing. No individual will choose entirely good or entirely bad and always there will be confusion in choosing, in the mind. Sometimes circumstance dominates the whole thing and it will decide whether good or evil will be present in that particular situation. Similarly in the novel *Lord of the Flies*, twelve year old kids were stranded on a lonely island, enjoying everything there, without the naggings of grownups. And it's all only in the beginning because later they pushed to the real struggle of life called survival. In order to survive themselves they choose different ways. Some choose evil dark path and the remaining choose moral ways which cause the conflict between good and evil in the story.

The innocent kids change their nature with time and eventually gets suppressed under the influence of their evilness. Even Jack Merridew is not a bad kid to begin with but eventually becomes the pioneer of evilness in the island. Jack's inherent barbarous nature slowly knocked everything down including the peace of the island, the little ones' playfulness, the innocence of the kids and most importantly the lives of Simon and Piggy. These two didn't do anything wrong; just wanted to be rescued and did everything possible for it but all in vain they just lost their lives in the hands of evil.

Jack's supporting hands are Roger and Maurice. They blindly follow Jack and his rules. The two are too bad that they torture others even little kids. In fact they are the one responsible to take care of the helpless kids who are far away from their



parents but instead they prefer to make fun of the kids and use variety of methods to hurt them without any mercy. One day three of the little one Henry, Percival and Johnny were playing by building castles in the sand next to the little river. While playing they forgot their stranded state in the island and were happily playing. But it did not last long as the two Biggins Roger and Maurice came there after finishing their duties. Roger kicked the castle, scattering everything and Maurice joined Roger in the destructive action. Roger and Maurice came out of the forest. They were relieved from duty at the fire and had come down for a swim. Roger led the way straight through the castles, kicking them over, burying the flowers, scattering the chosen stones. Maurice followed, laughing, and added to the destruction[63].

Of all the boys in Jack's team, Roger is the most malevolent person. Though Jack is the reason for all the evil happenings in the island, Roger is more outrageous than Jack. He is like a right hand for Jack. He does not hesitate to do any brutish action. Moreover, he is the one who murdered Piggy. Ralph and Piggy come to the Castle Rock to reconcile with the tribe and to get Piggy's glasses back. But the boys are not the same ones who they once knew. They really changed a lot. They strongly believe they are tribes and they are not ready to give up their label. So the words of Piggy and Ralph really irritated them.

The rock struck Piggy a glancing blow from chin to knee; the conch exploded into thousand white fragments and ceased to exist. Piggy, saying nothing, with no time for even a grunt, travelled through the air sideways from the rock, turning over as he went. Piggy fell forty feet and landed on his back across that square, red rock in the sea. His head opened and stuff came out and turned red[206].

Suddenly out of rage Roger levers a massive rock forward. Ralph seeing the rock move aside and unfortunately Piggy becomes the target. Piggy painfully dies in front of the tribe and Ralph. No one expected that tragic incident even Roger gets shocked by the result of his intentional action. Piggy's death is so sudden and indigestible for Ralph. He ignored him almost all the time but realizing that he will not be with him in the future to get through the battle of survival makes Ralph really feel helpless.

Ralph sees the island slowly turning into a society filled with nothing but evilness, violence, bloodshed, etc. He could not do anything to prevent the bad things from happening. There is no grownup to advise them so they are free to do whatever they want. So if there is no right person to guide people in a right way then it will become a chance for society of evil to take up their rule. He is desperate for help. He wishes for someone to take him home. He never did any wrong deeds intentionally, didn't agree to live as a tribe even after convinced many times and held strongly to his moral values. He lost his two wise friends but secured his own life for the sake of good. And finally he gets rescued by a naval officer who comes there after seeing the fire made by Jack and his crew. Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy [230].

Like the saying "there will be a good in bad and bad in good" Ralph gets rescued by the action of the boys to burn him to death. But Ralph doesn't want to be saved alone after all the sufferings and tears. So he tells everything happened in the island to the officer so he could rescue all of them. When everyone gets ready go home. Ralph is both happy and sad at the same time because he would be so relieved if Simon and Piggy were also with him in the joyful moment of their rescue. They bid

farewell to the island and its dark memories. Finally the evilness prevailed in the island comes to end and everything is back to normal.

## Chapter Four

### Glimmering of the conch

In '*Lord of the Flies*,' the conch is seen as a beautiful object, a part of the natural world, which, until the boys had landed, was untouched and unspoilt by humans. Right up until, about the last hour on the island, it had represented a symbol of authority, common sense, security and democratic discipline. Its destruction at the end symbolises the willful destruction of order and rational behaviour.

In Greek mythology, the god of the sea used it to calm or raise the oceans. This shows how powerful the conch is portrayed in fiction. As one's reads, it's plain to see, which boys respect the conch, like Ralph, how some just obey it, like some of the littleuns, and how others, like Jack simply disobeys it. It's the latter people who eventually challenge and disregard its authority. As the conch's popularity drops, and its colour is slowly lost, one could see how the boys lose their innocence.

The conch's 'epic' journey starts when Piggy bursts into a 'decorous excitement' (21). Ralph had spotted a creamy shell in amongst the weeds. This is the beginning of the civilization on the island. Piggy has already acquired the knowledge of the conch, and many other valuable things in his life. He recognises the conch's value immediately when he says 'It's a shell! I seen one like that before. On someone's back wall. A conch he called it. It's Ever so valuable..... Ever so expensive' (21-22). Although Ralph spotted it, Piggy suggested its practical use. It helps to collect all the boys together. Ralph blew on the conch to call any other survivors to Piggy and himself. It's not only significant for this however. It's also the trigger of Ralph and Piggy's friendship, when they are laughing around as the conch

has made a low, farting noise (23). When Ralph eventually learns how to blow the conch, all the boys emerge. It's this that calls civilization together, and it was all thanks to Piggy really.

William Golding uses a conch, or a large, milky-white shell, to symbolize a civilized society that regulates itself through democratic engagement. Initially, the boys use the conch to establish a society reminiscent of their familiar British social order: a civil society founded on discourse and consensus. The parallel is immediately clear: one boy recalls that at the airport, a man issued instructions through a "trumpet thing"—an instrument similar to a conch. Shortly after finding the conch, Ralph uses it to summon the other boys on the island and call a meeting.

The shell's power is apparent, and the boys immediately embrace the idea of democracy: "this toy of voting was almost as pleasing as the conch" (19). After exploring the island, Ralph declares the boys will raise their hands in meetings, "like at school," in order to speak. Once holding the conch each boy will be able to express his thoughts without interruption. "We'll have rules... lots of rules!" (33). Ralph announces. The boys' initial enthusiasm for the democratic process imbues the conch with great power as a mode of communication, as the boys unilaterally agree that the conch symbolizes a familiar and worthwhile ideal.

The conch is a symbol of free speech and civil process that even the youngest boy can easily grasp and embrace, but the concepts themselves prove more difficult to adhere to in practice, and soon the conch's power wanes as the boys resist the constraints of the democratic process. Ralph grows frustrated that the meetings he uses the conch to assemble don't actually accomplish much. While the boys agree to his plans for their society in principle, the rules are impossible to enforce, since there are no consequences for disobedience. Jack suggests an alternate form of governance:

“We don’t need the conch anymore. We know who ought to say things... it’s time some people knew they’ve got to keep quiet and leave deciding things to the rest of us,” (112) he says. This introduces the idea of totalitarianism, or a civilization in which citizens do not share power equally. Unlike a democracy, which works on the basis of voluntary participation, despotic monarchy, or totalitarianism, harshly punishes disobedience. In this way the conch represents the limitations of enforcing democracy as well as the possibility democracy represents.

The conch also serves as a symbol of the power, and vulnerability, of symbols themselves. The conch represents civil discourse on the island, and only works as long as the boys all believe in its power and the necessity of the idea it symbolizes. Both literally and symbolically the conch is a fragile, vulnerable object, which is why Piggy, Ralph, and even Jack treat it with care. Once Jack gets a taste of power, however, and realizes he can effectively control the boys through violence, both actual and implied, he loses his belief in the conch as a symbol. The abstract attractions of fairness and civility pale in comparison to the rush of killing pigs and torturing boys. When Jack raids Ralph’s camp, he ignores the conch and steals Piggy’s glasses instead. Unlike the conch, which only has power as a symbol, the glasses have actual utility. With the means to light the fire and a willingness to enforce his rule through violence, Jack has no need to participate in the democratic process. The boys soon follow him in abandoning the agreed-upon symbolism of the conch in favour of the undemocratic governance by absolute power Jack represents, which relies on violence instead of symbols.

The conch represents unity, order, and authority. The conch acts as a symbol of unity when it is used to call the boys together. The first time Ralph blows the

conch, the boys come together, and they continue to do so throughout the novel. Even after Jack forms a new tribe not based on the power of the conch, the boys still respond when Ralph calls a meeting. During one of the early meetings, Ralph decides that they will use the conch to maintain order. Whoever holds the conch is the only boy who is allowed to speak. Although Ralph is elected chief, the true authority lies in the conch. Ralph is elected as leader because he was the boy who blew the conch and called them all together. It was his tie to the conch that provided him authority. When the conch was crushed, Ralph's authority was completely lost their innocence.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter, one gets the impression that Ralph and Piggy's way of doing things is officially over. The feast, the celebration, and the murder strongly indicate that most of the boys prefer Jack's bellicose, dictatorial regime to the reasonable, democratic order symbolized by Ralph, Piggy, Piggy's glasses, and the conch.

"The Shell and the Glasses" is significant because both the conch shell and glasses have symbolic meaning throughout the novel and are treated with disregard by Jack's hunters at the end of the chapter. The conch shell symbolizes civilization and structure while Piggy's glasses symbolize intellect and rationality. At the beginning of the chapter, Ralph refuses to blow the conch shell to call an assembly because he feels that it is useless. The lack of authority and obedience to the conch following Simon's death indicates that there is no hope for civility on the island. The disregard for the conch also represents Ralph's loss of authority. When Jack's hunters raid Ralph's camp, Piggy initially thinks that Jack wants to steal the conch. However, the boys discover that Jack does not want the conch as it sits untouched among the ruins of the shelter. Also, Piggy's glasses are stolen towards the end of the chapter, leaving him

blind and more vulnerable. The loss of Piggy's glasses deprives Ralph of his intellectual counselor and foreshadows Piggy's impending death.

"The Shell and the Glasses", arguably carries an ironic meaning. William Golding has made the conch and Piggy's glasses a part of the title only to show how little power they then have. Although they occupy an important place—they're in the title of the chapter, after all— they do not have much consequence on the island anymore. At the start of chapter 10, Ralph asks Piggy, "Piggy? Are you the only one left?"(175). Piggy responds that some of the little children are still on their side. Ralph replies that they don't count. Thus Ralph and Piggy find themselves in the minority.

Later, as Piggy and Ralph brainstorm how to deal with their marginalized and precarious situation, Piggy suggests that Ralph use the conch to "call an assembly"(175). Piggy's idea causes Ralph to laugh. The laugh reinforces the conch's transformation into a trivial object. It doesn't have the force that it once did; it's a joke.

While the conch has been neutralized, Piggy's glasses, for most of the chapter, retain their use. Ralph and Piggy still have hope that they can start a fire and get themselves out of this chaos. Alas, that hope vanishes when Jack's subordinates attack. Ralph and Piggy's shelter and take Piggy's glasses. By the end of chapter 10, they have no glasses either. As with the conch, the significance of the glasses has been squashed.

The conch has stood for power up to this point in the novel because whoever had it could speak. During the night when Jack's tribe invades Ralph's group's camp, they don't steal the conch which is only symbolic of power. They steal Piggy's



glasses – the one tool they have with which to make fire and therefore, the real source of power.

Ralph and Piggy discover the conch shell on the beach at the start of the novel and use it to summon the boys together after the crash separates them. Used in this capacity, the conch shell becomes a powerful symbol of civilization and order in the novel. The shell effectively governs the boys' meetings, for the boy who holds the shell holds the right to speak. In this regard, the shell is more than a symbol—it is an actual vessel of political legitimacy and democratic power. As the island civilization erodes and the boys descend into savagery, the conch shell loses its power and influence among them. Ralph clutches the shell desperately when he talks about his role in murdering Simon. Later, the other boys ignore Ralph and throw stones at him when he attempts to blow the conch in Jack's camp. The boulder that Roger rolls onto Piggy also crushes the conch shell, signifying the demise of the civilized instinct among almost all the boys on the island.

The Naval Officer has two major functions in the story: a representative of the adult world and a representative of the world war that is engulfing the outside world. The Naval Officer symbolizes plenty of things: First, it is a paternal figure which the boys desperately need. Second, it is a figure of authority and salvation, which the kids are also desperately in need of. Third, it is the first contact the boys have with the outside world. Fourth, it is a figure of discipline, order, and organization- those are the very things that the boys lost when they were left to their own devices. Fifth, he represents reality. Even the Naval Officer himself was a bit grossed out at the state of the children, and the children did not respond to him in a child-like or infantile way: Instead, everyone was shocked in both sides, and that is the same way reality hits-shockingly at times.

Finally, the Naval Officer represents salvation and a return to humankind. The boys had been living in a semi primitive state. How interesting that it is a Naval Officer, one who commands the ocean appears to re-organize and save the boys. Yet, the Naval Officer equally follows nature's signs, and use objects to guide them through the most unreliable elements, and make it. Therefore, the Naval Officer is the ultimate salvation to the boys.

This novel is primarily a coming of age story. At the end of the story the once happy-go lucky Ralph weeps for the "end of innocence". A coming of age story almost by necessity must include a representative from the adult world. The first representation is the dead man with a parachute, who instead of creating order, creates more chaos. The second is the Naval Officer who presumably rescues the boys from their own destruction. He sees the savages as little boys, and ironically teases them about playing war. He scolds them by telling them that as English boys they should have done better. The events that the boys have been involved is sharp contrast to that of the officer's perspective of them as children who play together.

Yet, it is a no coincidence that the man who rescues the boys is an officer of war. Throughout the novel, Golding reminds us that the adults are faring no better than the children on the island. The conflicts, violence, savagery on the island make it a microcosm for the world at large. The adults are not "sitting down and having tea". They are engaged in their own war, and the military uniform of the Naval Officer is a reminder of that. The officer's eyes rest on the cruiser in the ocean.

Piggy is the most intelligent, rational boy in the group, and his glasses represent the power of science and intellectual endeavor in society. This symbolic significance is clear from the start of the novel, when the boys use the lenses from

Piggy's glasses to focus the sunlight and start a fire. When Jack's hunters raid Ralph's camp and steal the glasses, the savages effectively take the power to make fire, leaving Ralph's group helpless.

The signal fire burns on the mountain, and later on the beach, to attract the notice of passing ships that might be able to rescue the boys. As a result, the signal fire becomes a barometer of the boys' connection to civilization. In the early parts of the novel, the fact that the boys maintain the fire is a sign that they want to be rescued and return to society. When the fire burns low or goes out, we realize that the boys have lost sight of their desire to be rescued and have accepted their savage lives on the island. The signal fire thus functions as a kind of measurement of the strength of the civilized instinct remaining on the island. Ironically, at the end of the novel, a fire finally summons a ship to the island, but not the signal fire. Instead, it is the fire of savagery—the forest fire Jack's gang starts as part of his quest to hunt and kill Ralph.

The beast imaginary that frightens all the boys stands for the primal instinct of savagery that exists within all human beings. The boys are afraid of the beast, but only Simon reaches the realization that they fear the beast because it exists within each of them. As the boys grow more savage, their belief in the beast grows stronger. By the end of the novel, the boys are leaving it sacrifices and treating it as a totemic god. The boys' behaviour is what brings the beast into existence, so the more savagely the boys act, the more real the beast seems to become.

The symbol Lord of the Flies is the bloody, severed sow's head that Jack impales on a stake in the forest glade as an offering to the beast. This complicated symbol becomes the most important image in the novel when Simon confronts the sow's head in the glade and it seems to speak to him, telling him that evil lies within

every human heart and promising to have some “fun” with him. In this way, the Lord of the Flies becomes both a physical manifestation of the beast, a symbol of the power of evil, and a kind of Satan figure who evokes the beast within each human being. Looking at the novel in the context of biblical parallels, the Lord of the Flies recalls the devil, just as Simon recalls Jesus. In fact, the name “Lord of the Flies” is a literal translation of the name of the biblical name Beelzebub, a powerful demon in hell sometimes thought to be the devil himself.

Ralph, Piggy, Jack, Simon, Roger and many of its characters signify important ideas or themes. Ralph represents order, leadership, and civilization. Piggy represents the scientific and intellectual aspects of civilization. Jack represents unbridled savagery and the desire for power. Simon represents natural human goodness. Roger represents brutality and bloodlust at their most extreme. To the extent that the boys’ society resembles a political state, the littluns might be seen as the common people, while the older boys represent the ruling classes and political leaders. The relationships that develop between the older boys and the younger ones emphasize the older boys’ connection to either the civilized or the savage instinct: civilized boys like Ralph and Simon use their power to protect the younger boys and advance the good of the group; savage boys like Jack and Roger use their power to gratify their own desires, treating the littler boys as objects for their own amusement.

The island itself serves a dual purpose; it is the symbol of hell as well as paradise. The island itself is a microcosm of planet Earth, alone in a vast surrounding universe with the capacity to sustain humanity, but also prone to destructive storms. Early in the story Ralph and his companions finds a certain glamour and enchantment on the island which is symbolic of Garden of Eden. In the last chapter, the whole island is turned into a blazing inferno which symbolizes hell.

The painted faces of Jack and his “tribe” symbolise man’s return to primitivism and barbarism. The introduction of the dead parachutist symbolizes the fall of adult supervision. It also symbolizes the start of destruction. The appearance of the naval officer symbolizes the return of both adult supervision and civilization.

Golding uses the isolated characters and their actions on the remote island to give messages about greater humanity. Ralph represents democracy, while Jack represents dictatorship. Their rivalry is a metaphor for political tension between governments in the greater world and how, if unresolved, it can easily escalate into war. Simon represents the good side of humanity, while an imaginary beast on the island represents fear. The act of a mob of boys beating Simon when they mistake him for the beast is a metaphor for savagery and how easily the dark side of humanity can appear. This is how one of the main themes, that civilization cannot entirely stop human savagery, is shown through the behavior of the boys.

The scene comprises the ocean, speaking to peril; essentially, Simon, Piggy and the pilot are totally washed away by the ocean. The cut-off leader of the pig is an image of abhorrence which is performed in the encounter scene. Likewise, Castle Rock additionally works as an image of shrewdness where Piggy’s demise happens. Along these lines, Golding utilizes imagery in ‘Lord of the Flies’. The above lines mirror Golding’s order over language in exposing the consequences of a symbolical structure.

Golding with his brilliance has crafted the symbols in this novel to relate the gruesome picture of the post-World II human generation. These symbols help to convey the author’s message about human nature, with its contrasting poles of

kindness and rationality and power and bloodlust. Well-written and meaningful, *Lord of the Flies* uses symbols to reinforce its telling of the tale of humanity to the readers.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summation**

William Golding never believed in emotions but is rational thinking. Unlike his father, Golding had a strong faith in Christianity. He remained afraid of the angry and short temper of his parents and particularly of his mother. He always regretted the atheist beliefs of his parents. Writers have also aroused an unusually great interest in professional literary critics, scholars, writers and other interpreters who have sought and found deep strata of ambiguity and complication in Golding's work. In those who use the tools of narration and linguistic art, they have incited to thinking, discovery and creation of their own, in order to explore the world we live in and to settle down in it.

William Golding can perhaps be compared to another Englishman, Jonathan Swift, who has also become a writer for the learned and the unlearned, or, to the American, Herman Melville, whose works are full of equivocal profundity as well as fascinating adventure. In fact the resemblance extends farther than that. Golding has a very keen sight and sharp pen when it comes to the power of evil and baseness in human beings – just like Jonathan Swift. And like Herman Melville, he often chooses his themes and the framework for his stories from the world of the sea, or from other challenging situations in which odd people are tempted to reach beyond their limits, thereby being bared to the very marrow. His stories usually have a fairly schematic drama, almost an anecdote, as skeleton. He then covers this with a richly varied and spicy flesh of colourful characters and surprising events.

William Golding can be said to be a writer of myths. It is the pattern of myth that we find in his manner of writing. A very few basic experiences and basic

conflicts of a deeply general nature underlie all his work as motive power. In one of his essays he describes how, as a young man, he took an optimistic view of existence. He believed that man would be able to perfect himself by improving society and eventually doing away with all social evil. His optimism was akin to that of other utopians, for instance, H.G. Wells.

Golding began his writing profession as a poet but it was through novels that his artistic virtuoso came to be perceived. Despite the fact that his underlying interest was in poetry compositions, it is his one of a kind composition which has won the enthusiasm of his readers. In any case, his compositions despite everything have numerous affinities with the verse in its smoothness and allegorical quality which gives a kind pinch of creative excellence.

A tale by Golding radiates uncommon independence and force with the joined power of its specialized virtuosity and striking composition style. Golding depicts the boys' significant transformation into savages by illustrating their refusal to follow Ralph's orders, their affinity for hunting pigs, and their complete disregard for the signal fire. Despite Ralph's attempt to establish a civil society, Jack undermines his authority and champions hunting pigs over completing essential tasks. Simon's enlightening interaction with the Lord of the Flies also conveys Golding's message and the true identity of the "beast" underscores his belief that all humans are inherently evil. With the progresses in the story, Golding shows how different people feel the influences of the instincts of civilization and savagery to different degrees. Piggy, for instance, has no savage feelings, while Roger seems barely capable of comprehending the rules of civilization. Generally, however, Golding implies that the



instinct of savagery is far more primal and fundamental to the human psyche than the instinct of civilization.

Golding conveys the idea that civilization and civility are fragile structures. As social norms break down on the island, Golding shows that humans harbour primal instincts that can make them behave savagely. The isolated setting of the island is meant to illustrate that a group of normal, generally well-behaved boys will revert to animalistic behaviour when the rule of law is dissolved. It is an attempt to trace the defects of society to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of a society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable.

The primary message that Golding tries to convey throughout *Lord of the Flies* is that humans are inherently wicked, violent beings and will revert back to their primitive, savage instincts in an environment void of laws, restrictions, and order. Golding conveys this message by exploring the theme of civilization versus savagery, depicting the violent transformation of the civilized British schoolboys, and setting the story against the backdrop of a world war. Golding's personal experiences during WWII influenced his negative perception of humanity as he witnessed firsthand the destructive nature of mankind. The boys' harrowing, violent experience on the island is a microcosm of what is happening in the outside world.

Golding's symbolism and motifs within "*Lord of the Flies*" are genuinely precise, while gracefully but strongly building upon the novel's purpose. They are not too complex in nature, but succeed in using the religious experience to move readers. We become familiar with Golding's use of biblical allusion while reading the opening pages. We feel that we have stepped into a replica of the Garden of Adam

and Eve when the novel's setting is introduced to us. It is a dreamscape of an innocent playground. There are exotic flowers, a sea of glimmering blue, and offers the best of what seems like a child's dream place to play. One boy asks if there are any beasts with them on the island. Another reassures his friend with the encouragement that they are on "a good island." Genuine innocence separates these boys from the dark truths of the world in which they have come from. This playground-like island reinforces their blissful ignorance. Critic S.J. Boyd executes this idea grandly when he comments that, "The island, like everything else in the novel is a parody-a parody of the Garden of Adam and Eve, where the first sin was committed. Eating fruit causes sickness, and so the island becomes full of feces. The fruit is tainted by the first sin, whose effects the boys, like all humanity, Inherit" (Boyd 108). This analysis reinforces the intertwined message that Golding and the holy bible share that mankind is born with original sin, which will taint their actions, behaviours, and motives. Prior to becoming stranded on the island, the boys were clean cut, innocent, relatively well-mannered school boys. The sweetness of genuine innocence and rejection of evil only lasts until the world has a real impact on us. The rejection of evil ends when we must act on human instinct-when we are forced to survive in the real world.

Golding himself refers to the self-sacrificial character, Simon, as a saint when he says that, "So many literary people find that Simon is incomprehensible. But, he is comprehensible to the illiterate person. The illiterate person knows about saints and sanctity, and Simon is as saint". The enlightenment Simon received is a type that would be extraordinary for a boy of his age to achieve. Most adults have only a few experiences as close to being as one with God as Simon does in the novel. As if this is not profound enough, Simon also shows characteristics of Peter of the bible. Peter

brings the 'good news', while Simon brings the news of the parachutist's crash into one of the mountains of the island (62). Simon seems wise beyond the capabilities of any other boy on the island, seeing and understanding what they do not. This is representative of the loyalty and wisdom that a higher power has granted him.

Another character lined with a holy existence is Piggy. Not once does Piggy participate with the other boys in the savage activities of the island, and continuously tries to give Ralph insight throughout his attempts of leadership. Piggy is described in the novel as a figure more knowledgeable and wise than the others on the island. "And Piggy, with the martyred expression of a parent who has to keep up with the senseless ebullience of the children..." (38). Piggy is much like a Jesus Christ, leading those who are ignorant into the right direction. When his glasses break, the end of sanity and wisdom emerge. The boys do not act like boys anymore, but like savages. They play a literal game of manhunt. Golding chooses, purposefully, the deaths of Simon and Piggy. Their death is symbolic in nature.

William Golding's point of view is that both good and evil are inherent in all human beings. But what they chose to practice; whether good or evil in any kind of situation is the most significant thing. No individual will choose entirely good or entirely bad and always there will be confusion in choosing, in the mind. Sometimes circumstance dominates the whole thing and it will decide whether good or evil will be present in that particular situation. Similarly in the novel *Lord of the Flies*, twelve year old kids were stranded on a lonely island, enjoying everything there, without the naggings of grownups. And it's all only in the beginning because later they pushed to the real struggle of life called survival. In order to survive themselves they choose different ways. Some choose evil dark path and the remaining choose moral ways which cause the conflict between good and evil in the story.

The conch's 'epic' journey starts when Piggy bursts into a 'decorous excitement' (21). Ralph had spotted a creamy shell in amongst the weeds. This is the beginning of the civilization on the island. Piggy has already acquired the knowledge of the conch, and many other valuable things in his life. He recognises the conch's value immediately when he says 'It's a shell! I seen one like that before. On someone's back wall. A conch he called it. It's Ever so valuable..... Ever so expensive' (21-22). Although Ralph spotted it, Piggy suggested its practical use. It helps to collect all the boys together. Ralph blew on the conch to call any other survivors to Piggy and himself. It's not only significant for this however. It's also the trigger of Ralph and Piggy's friendship, when they are laughing around as the conch has made a low, farting noise (23). When Ralph eventually learns how to blow the conch, all the boys emerge. It's this that calls civilization together, and it was all thanks to Piggy really.

William Golding uses a conch, or a large, milky-white shell, to symbolize a civilized society that regulates itself through democratic engagement. Initially, the boys use the conch to establish a society reminiscent of their familiar British social order: a civil society founded on discourse and consensus. The parallel is immediately clear: one boy recalls that at the airport, a man issued instructions through a "trumpet thing"—an instrument similar to a conch. Shortly after finding the conch, Ralph uses it to summon the other boys on the island and call a meeting. The shell's power is apparent, and the boys immediately embrace the idea of democracy: "this toy of voting was almost as pleasing as the conch" (19). After exploring the island, Ralph declares the boys will raise their hands in meetings, "like at school," in order to speak. Once holding the conch each boy will be able to express his thoughts without interruption. "We'll have rules... lots of rules!" (33) Ralph announces. The boys'

initial enthusiasm for the democratic process imbues the conch with great power as a mode of communication, as the boys unilaterally agree that the conch symbolizes a familiar and worthwhile ideal.

The conch is a symbol of free speech and civil process that even the youngest boy can easily grasp and embrace, but the concepts themselves prove more difficult to adhere to in practice, and soon the conch's power wanes as the boys resist the constraints of the democratic process. Ralph grows frustrated that the meetings he uses the conch to assemble don't actually accomplish much. While the boys agree to his plans for their society in principle, the rules are impossible to enforce, since there are no consequences for disobedience. Jack suggests an alternate form of governance: "We don't need the conch anymore. We know who ought to say things... it's time some people knew they've got to keep quiet and leave deciding things to the rest of us," (112) he says. This introduces the idea of totalitarianism, or a civilization in which citizens do not share power equally. Unlike a democracy, which works on the basis of voluntary participation, despotic monarchy, or totalitarianism, harshly punishes disobedience. In this way the conch represents the limitations of enforcing democracy as well as the possibility democracy represents.

The conch also serves as a symbol of the power, and vulnerability, of symbols themselves. The conch represents civil discourse on the island, and only works as long as the boys all believe in its power and the necessity of the idea it symbolizes. Both literally and symbolically the conch is a fragile, vulnerable object, which is why Piggy, Ralph, and even Jack treat it with care. Once Jack gets a taste of power, however, and realizes he can effectively control the boys through violence, both actual and implied, he loses his belief in the conch as a symbol. The abstract attractions of fairness and civility pale in comparison to the rush of killing pigs and

torturing boys. When Jack raids Ralph's camp, he ignores the conch and steals Piggy's glasses instead. Unlike the conch, which only has power as a symbol, the glasses have actual utility. With the means to light the fire and a willingness to enforce his rule through violence, Jack has no need to participate in the democratic process. The boys soon follow him in abandoning the agreed-upon symbolism of the conch in favour of the undemocratic governance by absolute power Jack represents, which relies on violence instead of symbols.

The conch represents unity, order, and authority. The conch acts as a symbol of unity when it is used to call the boys together. The first time Ralph blows the conch, the boys come together, and they continue to do so throughout the novel. Even after Jack forms a new tribe not based on the power of the conch, the boys still respond when Ralph calls a meeting. During one of the early meetings, Ralph decides that they will use the conch to maintain order. Whoever holds the conch is the only boy who is allowed to speak. Although Ralph is elected chief, the true authority lies in the conch. Ralph is elected as leader because he was the boy who blew the conch and called them all together. It was his tie to the conch that provided him authority. When the conch was crushed, Ralph's authority was completely lost their innocence.

Golding's writing style is a structure which rises above every single creative constraint uncovering a range and force suggestive of the author's vision. Hence, the components of style in Golding's various anecdotal works make a fascinating investigation. Style shifts from writer to writer. Golding's style changes from novel to novel, concerning occurrence. The style he utilizes in "Fincher Martin" isn't really the equivalent in "The Spire" as specifically the components are regulated for their proper execution in singular books. A specific trademark which generally hangs out in his writing style is its visual force. It is an exposition which is realistic and clearly

elucidating. From his first novel, '*Lord of the Flies*' to '*Fire Down Below*' Golding is so perfect in his portrayals that perusing turns into craftsmanship with the readers.

Some of the literary devices that William Golding uses in *Lord of the Flies* are allusion, allegory, and symbolism. Biblical allusion is shown as the boys arrive on the island as innocents, like Adam and Eve arrive at the Garden of Eden as innocents. Allegory is shown as tensions between the two factions of boys escalate into violence, which mirrors the greater world in the novel which is at war. Symbolism brings greater meaning to the novel's themes, such as when the conch shell, a symbol of order, is shattered.

*Lord of the Flies* is an overall novel with many themes regarding life and its experiences, as well as strong points that reflect upon humanity, morality, and civilization against savagery. The novel's strongest feature is the theme and the symbols, which the allegorical literary style forces readers to think critically about and question every aspect in every chapter in order to understand the concepts behind the plot. Human behavior is too immense to ever truly form facts about, but people can make very accurate assumptions about basic reasoning or logic, so it can be said that the human psyche has a natural instinct of savagery, but an acquired trait of civility. Even so, morality holds true for all beings, but on different levels, as long as we follow the societal norms that we've mentally been raised to know. The mind is so extensive with what it can lead an individual to do that it's bound to think of good and bad decisions, attitudes, judgments, etc. Conclusively, society has never changed from the standpoint of human nature and behavior. An individual is given a choice and it's up to him or her to choose the path to take, whether if it's choosing to be civil or savage or, in terms of the novel, choosing to set up bonfires for rescue or hunt pigs for food.

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**Rehumanising Humanity: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Memory and Trauma in Elif  
Shafak's *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

affiliated to

**Manonmaniam Sundaranar University**

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

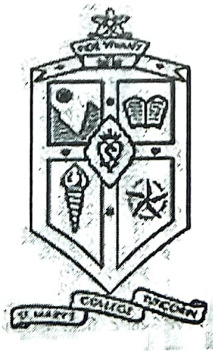
for the award of the Degree of

**Master of Arts in English**

by

**Shanthinee. D**

**(Reg. No. 21APEN25)**



**PG and Research Department of English**

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Rehumanising Humanity: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Memory and Trauma in Elif Shafak's *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*** and 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 Shanthinee. D during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Rehumanising Humanity: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Memory and Trauma in Elif Shafak's *10 Minutes and 38 Seconds in This Strange World*** 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

April 2023

D. Shanthinee

Shanthinee. D

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## Preface

The project entitled **Rehumanising Humanity: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Memory and Trauma in Elif Shafak's *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*** analyses how through the protagonist Leila's dying moments and her last memories, the novelist has explored the psychological trauma through the emotional, the spiritual, and the mental lives of the characters.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin and the important phases of English Literature and the Turkish Literature and also on the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Intrusive Memories** depicts how each one of Leila's memories is associated with a taste or a smell like salt, lemon, cardamom, chocolate, wedding cake, single-malt whiskey, sulphuric acid and how they are ultimately linked to a transformation in her life.

The third chapter **Trauma and Human Existence** records how her brain experiences a last paroxysm of activities like episodes from her traumatic past that span long periods of life flooding back to her expiring consciousness on the back of startlingly vivid sense memories.

The fourth chapter **Rehumanising Humanity** throws light on the novelist's instinct to reverse the anonymity of the outcasts and undesirables through the representation of the Cemetery of the Companionless, and to rehumanise those dead people. It also recounts how the protagonist Leila was pushed away by her "blood family," and how her "water family" consisting of five loyal friends who filled her with the sensation of being cared, loved, and protected.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the

preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## Chapter One

### Introduction

R. J. Rees states that Literature is writing which expresses and communicates thoughts, feelings, and attitude towards life (2). Literature can only come alive through the creative imagination; without this all the technical skill in the world is useless. Most of the literature produced in the world is mediocre; some is bad, some is good, and a very, very little is great. But all of it is literature (5). Geoffrey Chaucer was known to be the Father of English Literature. He was an English Poet, civil servant and also a great author known for “The Canterbury Tales”.

British Literature came from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Island, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. Literature in other languages of Britain focuses on the literatures written in other languages that are, and have been, used in Britain. The nature of British identity has changed over time. English as the national language had its beginnings with the Anglo-Saxon invasion which started around 450 AD. Before that the inhabitants spoke Celtic Languages. The various constituent parts of the present United Kingdom joined at different times. Anglo-Saxon literature encompasses the current literature written in Old English in Anglo-Saxon England, from the settlement of the Saxons and other Germanic tribes in England around 450 AD. These works include genres such as poetry, hagiography, epic, chronicles, sermons, Bible translations, riddles, legal works and others. Overall there are 400 surviving manuscripts from the period. The linguistic diversity of islands in the medieval period contributed to a great variety of artistic production and some made British literature innovative and



unique. After the Norman conquest of 1066 Anglo-Norman literature developed, introducing literary trends from Continental Europe. In the later medieval period a new form of English known as Middle English evolved. *Piers* is considered to be one of the great works of English literature along with Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* and Sir Gawain and *The Green Knight* during the Middle Ages.

The late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century in English literature is known as Augustan Age, at this time writer “greatly admired their Roman counterparts, imitated their works and frequently drew parallels between” contemporary world and the age of the Roman emperor Augustus (27 AD- BC 14). Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Moll Flanders* (1722) and John Bunyan's *The Pilgrims Progress* (1678) are some of the general novels in the beginning of English novel. The major 18<sup>th</sup> century British novelists are Henry Fielding (1707-54), who wrote *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749).

British literature was influenced by Modernist movement around 1910. The writers of 20<sup>th</sup> century often felt alienated from it, so responded by their writing and also by pushing the boundaries of acceptable content. The works of poets Wilfred Owen, Robert Graves, Rupert Brooke reflected their experiences of the First World War. The notable work of the First World War is an epic poem “In Parenthesis” by David Jones published in 1937. The most popular British writer of the early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century was Rudyard Kipling, versatile writer of poems, short stories and novels. George Orwell an essayist and novelist, is noted for the important social and political commentaries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century life through his works during 1950s like Anthony Powell, Dame Iris Murdoch dealt with sexual relationships, the power of unconsciousness and the morality

in their works. Angela Carter (1940-1992) was a novelist and journalist, known for her feminist and magical realism, and picaresque works.

An outstanding concern with Historical fiction has been noted in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dame Hilary Mantel (1952-2022) was a highly successful writer of historical novels, and he also won Booker Prize twice, for *Bring Up the Bodies* and for *Wolf Hall* in 2009. David Mitchell whose famous novel *Cloud Atlas* (2004) spans from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the future which is influenced by the earlier literary styles and techniques of the notable works in English Literature.

Turkish literature has remained as an important means of expression for the people who speak Turkish of Anatolia and the adjacent areas of the Balkans. Since the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century, regions literary activity has centered on Istanbul. The language of the writings will be in Oghuz Turkish it contains both Anatolian and Azerbaijani elements.

Fiction is creative imagination is a representation of the author's mind. It generally is a deliberately fabricated account of something. It is a literary work based on imagination rather than on fact, the writings include novel or short stories. The word fiction comes from a Latin word "Fictus" means "to form." It serves a unique purpose of inspiration and helps the readers to different world with different ideas and experience.

Psychological Fiction is a kind of narrative genre that emphasises interior motivation and characterisation to explore the emotional, the spiritual, and the mental lives of the characters. Psychological realism is gained through the deep explorations and the explanations of the mental states of a character's inner person, or commonly through flashbacks and stream of consciousness by using the narrative mode. The psychological

novel has a rich past in the seventeenth and eighteenth century works of Mme de Lafayette, Samuel Richardson, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and many others, but it is gradually being reinvented by their opponents, because the subtleties of psychology defy most ideologies. In literary terms, Stream of consciousness refers to a narrative mode where in a character's inner thought processes are written down and the readers are able to hear those thoughts of their minds. Here 'stream' refers to the complete flow of thoughts rather than a rational overview of their feelings.

In psychological fiction, the plot is subordinate to the character. Events placed in the story might not be in certain chronological order, and will not be factually true, but it usually follows the thought processes, contemplations of the protagonist, flashbacks and also the memories of the protagonist. Psychological fiction is also known as psychological realism, which talks about the mental state of the characters and their motivations to drive the plotline of the story. All the actions take place in the story as a result of a character's mental state, inner thoughts, and feelings of their inner 'person.', rather than any external force. As a result, a lot of psychological fiction features the narrative devices like inner monologues, stream of consciousness, and flashbacks these narrative devices help explore the characters' or protagonists inner mentality.

Psychological realism involves a deep exploration of the characters mental state to explain who they are and their motivations and reasons proceed. In a psychological novel the emotional reactions and internal states of the characters are influenced by and in turn trigger external events in a meaningful symbiosis.

Psychological novels and short stories are based on psychological thriller, Horror, Drama, and Science fiction. Psychological Thriller is about the features where a particular character suffering from an unstable emotional or mental state or even other form of an extreme psychological order. This kind of disorder causes the character to behave in a way that deviates from the societal norms.

Psychological Horror is nearly similar to psychological thriller subgenre, the character deals with intense and psychological state that is disturbing, frightening and horrific.

Psychological Drama details the inner life and psychological problems of a character. It involves characters being pitted against each other in a way that involves mental struggles versus physical ones.

Psychological Science Fiction incorporates the other psychological subgenres in a futuristic or fantasy setting. The common aspect is the characters' internal struggle in dealing with some form of technological or political establishment or entity.

Psychological novel, work of fiction in which the feelings, thoughts, and motivations of the characters are of equal or greater interest than is the external action of the narrative. And some writers to be mentioned here are Salley Vickers, and Paula Hawkins.

Salley Vicker's first novel is *Miss Garnet's Angel* became a word- of- mouth best seller around the world. Vickers is a British novelist, her works include *The Other Side of You*, *Where Three Roads Meet*, a retelling of the Oedipus myth to Sigmund Freud in the last months of his life. Her recent novels include *The Cleaner of Chartres* (2012), which

considers the struggles of unmarried mothers whose children are taken from them. *Cousins* (2016), her novel explores the moral dilemmas of assisted suicide, a cause to which Vickers has put her name; *The Librarian* (2018), write relevant and *Grandmothers* (2019), is based on her work as a psychotherapist and also explores the intergenerational relationships, and *The Gardener*, (2021).

Paula Hawkins is a British author who is best known for the psychological thriller *The Girl on the Train* (2015), deals with certain themes of domestic violence, alcohol, and drug abuse. This psychological thriller is a suspense story focusing on the flawed character and is written in the form of diary entries from the point of view of three women. It's about the narratives of three different women on relationship troubles caused by coercive men and for the hazardous effect of alcoholism on the main protagonist alcoholism. Hawkins' second psychological thriller novel, *Into the Water*, was released in 2017.

Elif Shafak, writes in English and in Turkish languages, and she has published nearly nineteen novels. Her works have been translated into fifty-five languages and have been nominated for several literary awards. She was fondly described as "Turkey's leading female novelist". Her works have prominently featured the city of Istanbul, and it deals with themes of western and eastern culture, human right issues and the role of women in the society. She addresses the issues of child abuse and the Armenian genocide that, have resulted in the legal action from the authorities in Turkey which prompted her to emigrate to the United Kingdom. Shafak has advocated for women's rights, minority rights, and freedom of speech. Shafak added her mother's first name Safak Atayman, Turkish for "dawn," to her own while choosing her pen name at the age of eighteen. After

her parents separated, Shafak returned to Ankara, Turkey, where she was raised by her mother and maternal grandmother. Shafak's *The Forty Rules of Love*, was nominated for 2012 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, and her *Honour*, won second place in the Prix Escapade, France 2014. Her *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 2019 and also shortlisted for Ondaatje Prize. Her novel *The Island of Missing Trees*, was shortlisted for the Costa Book Award in 2021, and also it was shortlisted for the Women's Prize for Fiction in 2022.

The reference to Istanbul has been prominent in Shafak's writing. She has remarked: "Istanbul makes one comprehend, perhaps not intellectually but intuitively, that East and West are ultimately imaginary concepts, and can thereby be de-imagined and re-imagined." (43). *The New York Times* Book Review said about Shafak, "she has a particular genius for depicting backstreet Istanbul, where the myriad cultures of the Ottoman Empire are still in tangled evidence on every family tree."

Istanbul is like a huge, colourful Matrushka – you open it and find another doll inside. You open that, only to see a new doll nesting. It is a hall of mirrors where nothing is quite what it seems. One should be cautious when using categories to talk about Istanbul. If there is one thing the city doesn't like, it is clichés (56)

Shafak blends Eastern and Western ways of storytelling, and draws on oral and written culture. In *The Washington Post*, Ron Charles says, "Shafak speaks in a multivalent voice that captures the roiling tides of diverse cultures." (57). Mysticism and Sufism has also been a theme in her work, particularly in *The Forty Rules of Love* (58).

Shafak has addressed numerous feminist issues and the role of women in society in her writing. She is an advocate for Gender equality and a Feminist. In an interview with William Skidelsky for *The Gaurdian*, she said “In Turkey, men write and women read. I want to see this change.”(60).

Shafak’s novels have explored Human rights issues, particularly those in Turkey. Specific topics have included Persecution of Yazidis, the Armenian genocide and the treatment of various minorities in Turkey. Shafak lived in Istanbul, and in United States before moving to UK. But she always carries Istanbul along with her. During 2019 she had been in self-imposed exile from Turkey due to fear of prosecution.

Shafak’s first novel, *Pinhan* was awarded the Rumi Prize in 1998, it was a Turkish literary prize. Her novel *Mahrem (The Gaze)* was awarded “Best Novel” by the Turkish Author’s Association in 2000. Her novel in English, *The Saint of Incipient Insanities* marks her American debut and is the first of her books to be written in English was published in 2004. Shafak’s second novel, *The Bastard of Istanbul*, was long-listed for the Orange Prize. It addresses the Armenian genocide, which is denied by the Turkish government, because of that she was prosecuted in July 2006 on charges of “insulting Turkishness” for discussing the genocide in the novel. The story is centred on the characters of Asya Kazanci and Armanoush Tchakhmakhchian. It is set in Tucson, Arizona; San Francisco, California; and Istanbul, Turkey. This novel deals with their families and how they are connected through the events of the 1915 Armenian genocide.

Shafak’s novel *The Forty Rules of Love* was released in 2009. The book highlights the story of Ella Rubinstein, a woman in her late thirties who settled into the

complacency of her life. The narratives follow her unlikely escape from what at first appears to be inevitable unhappiness. She lives without any drive or passion. It also reveals two parallel stories that mirror each other across two very different cultures and seven intervening centuries. This novel begins when a housewife, Ella, gets a book *Sweet Blasphemy* for an appraisal. The story is based on “love and spirituality that explains what it means to follow your heart.” Its central theme is Sufism and preaching the religion of love.

Shafak’s novel *Three Daughters of Eve* (2017), set in Istanbul deals with a wealthy middle-aged housewife, her childhood in Istanbul and her time as a student at Oxford University where she fell in love with a professor of philosophy. It’s a novel about identity, politics, religion, God and women. It is the story of the clash between the lonely secularism of the father and of the young woman Islamic religiosity of her mother. The story is about blending faith and uncertainty. It focused on the lives of three women Miriam, her daughter Nadia, and Nadia’s daughter Nijmeh. It relates their struggle as women in the Middle Eastern culture, it also highlighted their power as women and their strength, and their overcoming personality even in a restrictive society.

Shafak’s novel *10 minutes 38 seconds in This Strange World*, which revolves around the life of an Istanbul sex worker Tequila Leila, was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. It tells the story of Tequila Leila, an Istanbul sex worker. The title of the novel and the first half of the story talks about the last moments of Leila’s consciousness as she crosses from life to death. The novel is considered as the psychological fiction that emphasizes interior characterization and motivation to explore emotional, spiritual, and mental lives of the characters. The tale of Tequila Leila begins with an end. In the



beginning of the novel itself Shafak conveys the end, that Leila was in a garbage dumpster on the outskirts of Istanbul. Her brain is busy for ten minutes thirty-eight seconds after her heart stops, and the next two-thirds of the novel trace Leila's life about her early years in a small Turkish city, how she ended up in a brothel in Istanbul unwillingly, the hardships and hard-won comforts of that life, and how it ended. The final third of the novel is taken up by Leila's five closest friends, a band of outcasts who make difficult lives endurable and sometimes joyful, on the fringes of a city, country, and society in constant flux.

The structure of the novel is divided into three parts as mind, body, and soul. The chapters of mind are titled to indicate how many minutes have elapsed since Leila's heart has stopped. The next part was about Leila's band of friends so called by her as "water family." The adventures of "the five," they are Nalan, Sinan, Humeyra, Jameelah, and Zaynab<sup>122</sup>. The five plotline is comedic, even farcical as they encounter several obstacles in their quest for Leila's body. The third part was emotionally and also deeply related to her soul. A blue betta fish is mainly portrayed as the symbol of individuality, solitude, strength, beauty, defiant spirit, and most importantly as Freedom. It was the fish which was released upon the birth of Leila. The fish is used in the book design as a scene separator as a thoughtful element and the fish which reappears in the end and it's also considered to a new beginning. Leila's soul is connected with the betta fish in the end of the novel. It mainly focuses about the sex workers and trafficking, the secrets that corrupt, willful ignorance, and violence on a grand scale. Shafak leavens the story with arch humor and wordplay.

In the novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in this Strange World* by Elif Shafak written in three parts like Mind, Body, and Soul. And the following chapters discusses the Gender discrimination, Friendship, Leila's dying moments and her last memories, Psychological violence, and importance of one's childhood.

## Chapter Two

### Intrusive Memories

Elif Shafak highlighted Leila's dying memories when her brain was alive for 10 minutes and 38 seconds after her death in this novel. In the beginning itself she was found dead in the outskirts of Istanbul, inside a metal bin with rusty handles and flaking paint. Leila herself was five foot seven and her purple slingback stilettos, still remains on her foot.

She wished she could go back and tell everyone that the dead did not die instantly, they could, in fact, continue to reflect on things including their own demise. People would be scared if they learned this, she reckoned.  
(2 -3)

Once the authorities identified her, she guessed that the police will inform the situation to her parents. But Leila was sure that they will not come to get her body and they would not show any responsibility to give her a proper burial ceremony. Because they rejected her long back. "You've brought us shame. Everyone is talking behind our backs" (4). But Leila knows that her friends would definitely come to fetch her body. She was quite happy and peaceful that she has worth, loving friends for these many years.

Her brain cells, having run out of blood, were now completely deprived of oxygen. But they did not shut down. Not right away. One last reserve of energy activated countless . . . Although her heart had stopped beating, her

brain was resisting, a fighter till the end. It entered into a state of heightened awareness, observing the demise of the body but not ready to accept its own end. (11)

Leila's brain is busy for ten minutes and thirty-eight seconds after her heart stops, the structure of this novel is both intellectually satisfying and intuitive, divided into three parts mind, body, and soul. This chapter deals with her last memories, which is the first part of the novel; that is mind. Each memory is recalled in each minute and ends at eight seconds that is her last memory. Each one is associated with a taste or a smell like salt, lemon, cardamom, chocolate, wedding cake, single-malt whiskey, sulphuric acid. Which are ultimately linked to a transformation in her life. The many disparate cultures of Turkey suffuse this tale, illuminating the charms and conflicts that both destroy and sustain.

In the first minute following to Leila's death she associates with the smell of salt, her conscious began to ebb, slowly and steadily. Her memory collecting pieces of her life that was speeding to a close. She was remembering the things she had forgotten long before, that she has believed to be lost forever. The first memory that came to her mind was about salt, she felt it on her skin and the taste on her tongue. "Mashallah, Mashallah. It's a girl.'"(11). She sees herself as a baby born naked just out of her mother, she looked slick and red. And there arises a question, "Why has the baby still not made a sound?"(18). The midwife affectionately placed the baby in the middle of the bowl and rubbed her skin with salt flakes. But the child didn't give a cry. The midwife asked

Binnaz to be patient for a while. ““Be Patient”” (19). Leila’s mind recalls everything at her forty years after her death. Then the baby started coughing. That made her swallow little salt, and so only now Leila remembers the taste of it. But she didn’t yet cry, “How stubborn she was, how dangerously rebellious her soul.”(19). Then again the baby was dumped in to the salt.

Simply rubbing her with the salt was not going to be enough. That was when the midwife came to a decision. . . .The midwife made a hole in the pile, placed the baby in it and covered her fully with the white crystals; first her body, then her head. ‘What if she suffocates?’ asked Binnaz. (19)

Everyone was eagerly waiting for Leila to cry and Binnaz was very much scared about it, then later baby started crying. At last the Baby reached the conclusion. Once she started crying by having her mouth open, the salt poured down her throat and blocked her nose.

A loud terrified wail filled the room. All four women smiled with relief. ‘Good girl,’ said the midwife. ‘What took you so long? Cry, my dear. Never be ashamed of your tears. Cry and everyone knows you’re alive.’ (20)

The first minute reminds her the taste of salt and it was related to her birth, the sufferings she gave to all around her to make her cry, was the memory which was never lost in her. And Shafak gives a heartbreaking story in her memory that Binnaz, was actually her mother who was turned to an aunt by her father and his first wife, Suzan. The

motherhood was prohibited to Binnaz. She was not allowed to show the affection to her own daughter. And Suzan developed a story that Binnaz was affected with a disease, and was abnormal as she didn't so the baby will not get close with Binnaz.

Lemon and Sugar are the two tastes that Leila's brain recalled after her heart stops. It relates to her childhood memory when she was six years old that has happened in Van. Leila's brain portrayed the images of her home, which always used to amaze her.

A long, winding wooden staircase led her from the living room to the first floor landing. The entrance was adorned with tiles that featured a dizzying array of scenes: peacock strutting their plumage; wheels of cheese . . . they would never be loved the way they wished. Leila was fascinated by these images. (30)

The house they used to stay belonged to an Armenian doctor and to his wife, after the First World War, they all had disappeared. Leila was happily spending her childhood in that home by serving tea to her dolls, watching the trout swimming in cold-water streams, and staring at the patterns in the rugs, and Leila was quite interested in dance. "She longed to become a belly dancer one day" (33). But her father believed dancing is a kind of a evil thing to do, and always restricts her from dancing. She was treated well by Suzan in all ways but not around Binnaz. She also instructs Leila not to kiss her in the presence of Binnaz, "If your aunt sees us enjoying ourselves, she might feel bad," Mother said. "You shouldn't kiss me in front of her.'" (33). But Leila was equally

affectionate with both, that scared Suzan. So she created a false story about Binnaz, that she was ill, and she behaves abnormally and instructs Leila not to get close to Binnaz.

When Auntie got upset she had a tendency to hurt herself. She pulled out clumps of her hair, scratched her face, and picked at her skin so hard that it bled. Mother said that day she had given birth to Leila, Auntie, waiting by the door, either out of envy or . . . Apricots, in January! None of it made sense. They had all feared for her sanity. (34)

Leila was pushed to believe all these details without a second thought. The memory behind the taste of lemon and sugar was, the beauty routine that happened twice a month. The day of leg waxing. Things were quite opposite to the day of Qur'an reading because no men will be around, the house was surrounded only by women.

Today it was waxing time again. Perched on the carpets, foot-stools and chairs women covered every inch of space in the living room, plates . . . where the wax bubbled on the stove. Lemon, sugar, and water. When the mixture was ready they would all set to work, fast and serious, wincing as they pulled the sticky strips off their skin. (37)

This was the memory which was related to lemon and sugar. And in this part, Binnaz conveys the truth to Leila, that she was her actual mother. But Leila refused to believe and was sad for thinking wrongly about her mother Suzan. She was not ready to place Suzan in the place of evil.

Auntie smiled. ‘Then I’ll let you into a secret, a big one. Do you promise not to tell anyone?’ ‘I promise, Leila said instantly. ‘Suzan is not your mother.’ Leila’s eyes grew. ‘Do you want to know who your real mother is?’ Silence ‘I am the one who gave birth to you. (41)

Leila began to panic, because she always loves her mother. She didn’t want to think badly about her. And also she loves her father. She was totally confused, what to believe and what not to believe. She comforted her by hugging herself, she brooded on her predicament, she was unable to decide take a direction she can lead. Leila looked around in search of an answer but she was unable to find it.

As the tastes of lemon and sugar melted on her tongue, so too her feelings dissolved into confusion. Years later, she would come to think . . . Just as the sour could hide beneath the sweet, or vice versa, within every sane mind there was a trace of insanity, and within the depths of madness glimmered a seed of lucidity. (44)

The two minutes of her memory recall the sour and sweet taste of lemon, which relate with her childhood life.

In the third minute, her minds reminds her about cardamom, and the situations related to hardships that she faced in Istanbul. She remembers September 1967. When the area was always crowded that pedestrians had to move sideways like crabs. From the harbour by few minutes of walk there will be street of brothels. The oldest one was the



one where Leila has been working. Everything she recalled, each and every minute detail got triggered in her last minutes.

The air was thickened by the scent of cheap perfume, the taps encrusted with deposits of limescale and the ceiling coated with a sticky brown stains of nicotine and tar from years of tobacco smoke. An intricate . . . Now and then she felt an urge to touch the nest, to break it open and reveal its perfect architecture, but each time she told herself that she had no right to disturb . . . (46-47)

And she also remembers the woman who controls all the prostitutes in the brothel. Leila was always afraid of her and she was a woman who smokes a lot, who shouts too much, who was simply too much of a presence in their lives, one who was referred as a veritable maximum dose. “Both the prostitutes and punters called her ‘Sweet Ma’ to her face and ‘Bitter Ma’ behind her back.” (47). Due to the hectic working hours this cardamom coffee was related to her memory. The working hours are from ten a.m to eleven p.m twice during a day they were allowed to free themselves and drink coffee and relax themselves, though Leila has terrible migraines she was allowed to drink cardamom coffee quite more often than others. “Bitter Ma did not approve of downtime in the evening, but Leila, insisting she got terrible migraines if she did not have her cardamom coffee, stood her ground.”(50).

The difficulties and mental pressures she had undergone during the beginning stage of her life in Istanbul when she was just seventeen years was remembered by Leila.

Four minutes after Leila's heart stopped beating, a fleeting memory surfaced in Leila's mind, bringing with it the smell and taste of watermelon. It was August 1953. It was the hottest decade, Leila was amused with the word decade. That was the time Binnaz's brother returned from war. "The month before, the Korean War had ended and Auntie's brother safely return to his village." (61). And here her brain reminds the particular person was the main reason for the person that she became, and because of whom she suffered these many years, and because of whom her life ended as a prostitute in Istanbul, murdered by someone and was now lying in the dumpster.

Leila and her whole family traveled to a fishing town on the south-east coast, nearly twelve of them, along with her uncle. Leila was slightly disappointed when she saw the place where they were staying.

They waited for the darkness to become complete and slipped into the room at the same time – both the mosquitoes and her uncle. 'Are you sleeping?' he asked the first time he came and sat on the edge of her bed. He kept his voice low, just above a whisper, careful not to wake up the toddlers. (63)

Her uncle, abused her at the age of six, and she felt feverish the next day and Leila's parents called a young pharmacist who was widow and Leila also remembers the boy Sinnan, who became a very close friend of her later. "Meanwhile, half hiding behind his mother's skirts, the boy craned his head and stared at the shivering, sweating girl in the bed. 'Mama, is she going to die?' 'Shh, don't speak nonsense. She'll be fine,' said the

Lady Pharmacist.” (69). The unforgettable memories of Leila runs forward in her brain even after her heart stopped and she was feeling every memory so deep in her.

Leila’s brain recalled her brother’s birth in her fifth minute and it was related with the taste and smell of spiced goat stew made along with cumin, fennel seeds, cloves, onions, and tomatoes. And she was seven years at that time, a young soul who happily moves around her brother, and takes care of him, nurtures him, worries about him, she was happier. “He had the air of one who had traveled from afar to get to this place. This made her love him even more” (76). She was very careful around him, and she was feeling herself to be a younger mom of him, and she touches him slowly. “Binnaz said, ‘From now on, we’ll be inseperable – you, me and the baby. Remember our secret?’ Leila drew a sharp breath.” (78).

Leila was sixteen years old and her brother Tarkan was nine years old but he has the speaking skills of just a three year old boy. He was not normal like other kids around. And she remembered the friendship with Sinnan which they both had on their childhood. Sinnan was an intelligent boy. “One day you too will invent something,’ Leila said.” (89).

Leila said, ‘Maybe I should call you Sabotage Sinnan.’ ‘You serious? I’d love that!’ . . . The boy who one day, not long after Leila ran away from home, would follow her all the way from Van to Istanbul, the city where all the discontented and all the dreamers eventually ended up. (90)

Leila’s childhood abuse meted out to her by her uncle and her childhood friendship was remembered in her rushing minutes of death.

Six minutes after her heart stopped beating, Leila remembered the smell of wood burning stove, that's on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1963. She remembered a function, that uncle's elder son was getting married. All of them in the family gathered for the function including Leila except Leila's brother Tarkan.

Leila studied a happy couple from the side. The bride, a fine-boned, dark haired young woman, fitted neatly into her pearly gown, a bouquet of white gardenias in her hand and around her waist a red belt, a symbol and declaration of chastity. (91)

How proud Uncle was that day. He was dressed in a grey suit, with the white silk waistcoat and a patterned tie. When it was time for the whole family to have their picture taken, he rested one hand on his son's shoulder while his other hand clasped Leila's waist. No one noticed. (92)

She was very much worried about her brother that day. Why he was not allowed to come for these types of family gatherings, and not anywhere. "Why wasn't he allowed in these family celebrations?" (93). They were only taking him to the hospital. Leila felt sad about it and she constantly wants to see her brother Tarkan. She wants to get out of this function and wants to take care of Tarkan in deep inside her heart.

The dissimilarity of her brother leads him to be alone during functions, he was uncared for by others, but Leila always thinks of him and always takes a good care for him, in all ways. Sixth minute was deep dwelling about her brother Tarkan.

As Leila's brain fought on, she remembered the taste of soil which is dry, chalky, and bitter. This is the most violent memory of her childhood and during that time she was close and friendly with Sinan. And her father by hearing the words of his sheikh, he wanted her to stop her from school, because he felt that she is going out of control so until the day of her marriage let her remain in home. "We have to say goodbye now," said Leila."(103) but Sinnan was totally unhappy about Leila's father's decision. So he was trying to convince her, that he will come and talk to her father. "I am going to ask to your father" 'No, please. Baba wouldn't like that.'"(103-04). After Leila made sure Sinnan that need not come and talk to her father, because she knows about her father very well than any other. On the way home, she sat on the ground and started eating soil.

She placed her hand on the warm earth and tried not to think about anything. She grabbed a handful of soil, took it to her mouth and chewed it slowly. Acid swelled in her throat. She grabbed more soil, and this time swallowed it faster. (104-05)

Leila was pregnant and it was noticed by Binnaz, by seeing soil in her mouth. And questioned her for eating soil. And Leila replied that the peasant woman also ate soil when she was pregnant, and says "Maybe me too" (105). All the colour drained from Auntie's face. She was struck in sad who made her to become pregnant. "I mean, does uncle count as a man?" (106). Everyone are not just ready to believe her they were thinking that Leila was acting for some reason. But Leila was very much sure that

something wrong had happened and it's because of her uncle. Leila said “‘If you don't believe me take me to a doctor.’” (106).

But Leila's father decided not to socialize this problem around, and just orders everyone that it is a family problem that they themselves should find the solution together. The mother and the auntie joined with father this time and made a decision to abort the infant.

Auntie had stared at her with sorrowful eyes, recognizing in Leila's miscarriage one of her own. 'It will pass,' she had said in the soft murmur. 'It was the first time in years anyone had told Leila anything about the mysteries of the female body . . . she had no longer had any reasons to fear pregnancy, and it was better in this way, a blessing in disguise; they should all leave it behind and never talk about it again,except in their prayers. (107)

And later her friend Sinnan was accused and doubted by her father, for her pregnancy. But she strongly refused and explained that her abuse that given by her uncle. But everyone in her family was not ready to concern her words.

You mean Sabotage . . . Sinnan? Leave him out of this. He's my friend. My only friend. He's a kind boy. Uncle is lying!' 'Stop it. You need to learn to respect your elders.' 'Why don't you ever believe me – your own daughter?' . . . We've had a family meeting. Your cousin Tolga is a good boy. He has agreed to marry you. You'll get engaged – 'What?' (108)

Leila was shattered into pieces by her own family. She was remembering everything in her last minutes, so definitely the way she was hurt that time by her family members was always a wound which will never disappear. The mind recalls everything, she also decided to escape from her home and move to Istanbul just to avoid her marriage, because her voice was unheard by everyone in her family.

And in November 1963, towards the end of the month her brother Tarkan died, because his flu has deteriorated into pneumonia, but his heart was the one which primarily failed him. “The day Tarkan died, they threw open all the windows in the house” (109). And Leila decided to move out and Sinnan gave the money to her, but he was so heart broken to leave Leila out from Van.

‘Istanbul is massive. You don’t even know anybody there. Stay in Van.’

‘Why? There is nothing here for me anymore.’ A flicker of pain crossed his face . . . ‘I didn’t mean you. I’m going to miss you so much,’ ‘I’ll miss you too,’ he said . . . ‘Look, I’ll write to you every week,’ Leila promised.

(111)

She was ignored by her family, so she stopped getting connected with them, and decided not to call them anymore on phone.

The next memory that Leila pulled from her archive was the smell of Sulphuric acid. She remembered a man who once came to her brothel. An arrogant, and foul-mouthed man, whom Bitter Ma sent to her. “Cruel, mean and foul-mouthed, he had been so violent a couple of times that he had been banished from the premises.” (122). He was

taken to Leila this time. Leila was so terrified and unaware of the situation. He started behaving very rude and vulgar and raised a bottle in his hand, the sulphuric acid to pour on to her.

Sulphuric acid. He was planning to pour the rest on her face, but she managed to dash into the corridor, despite the acid burning in her flesh. The pain was unlike anything else. Out of breath and shaking, she leaned against the wall like an old, discarded broom . . . her voice broke, raining down on all the rooms inside the brothel. (124)

The memory of her eighth minute was horrible, Leila lived her life by pretending that it was happy. But it was not actually.

Leila's memory simultaneously slowed down and spun out of control as fragments of her past just whirled inside her head. She remembered about her only love of her life that is, D/Ali. Thoughts of him brought along the taste of chocolate. "chocolate bonbons with surprise fillings inside – caramel, cherry paste, hazelnut praline . . ." (133). The question which she constantly faced from every man was, what made her end up in this brothel. But D/Ali was different he never tried to ask any kind of questions like that to Leila. And he was totally different from other men.

Strangely, though, it was only in the absence of sex that she allowed herself to think of him in that way, to the point that, every now and then, she caught herself wondering what it would be like to touch his . . . 'I come because I like seeing you, it's as simple as that . . . D/Ali said



unhappily. But let's imagine for a moment that we are dating, and I could take you out or you could take me out. (143)

But he was different, he was a revolutionist. He wants every woman in the brothel to be left freely. He wants them to release themselves from here and just live their life. He decides to paint the women over there in brothel, at first they refused then everyone rushed to him to picture them in to a beautiful portrait.

When D/Ali had finished the painting, the woman on the canvas looked like a happier, younger, and thinner version of the original model . . . The world is no longer the same for the one who has fallen in love, the one who is at its very centre; it can only spin faster from now on. (146)

Those were the beautiful moments in her life which were with her love, D/Ali. A man who understood her, and who respected her as a human soul.

Leila's mind happily recollects the taste of her favourite street food, deep-fried mussels which contains flour, egg, yolks, bicarbonate of soda, pepper, salt, and mussels fresh from the Black Sea. She remembered her marital life with D/Ali.

'Look, that woman makes a profit from your body. Yours and many others. After the revolution she will have to be punished – fairly, of course. But we will shut down all the brothels and clean up the red-light districts. They'll become factories. Prostitutes and streetwalkers will all be factory workers – or peasants.' (151)

He promised that nothing wrong will happen to Leila and her friends. As a proletarian, the revolution will defend your rights. And then he stated the thought straight with D/Ali, “I want you to marry me” (152). First time she was not accepting his proposal, and asked him not to ask these kinds of questions again.

It was Leila’s final seconds before her brain completely shut down, she remembered a wedding cake which was three tiered, all white, layered with buttercream icing that reminded her of their wedding, “The revolution, he claimed, was all for love and for lovers.” (162). She was moving out of the brothel in a wedding gown, and D/Ali was very happy to marry her, but his parents and his family were so unhappy about this. D/Ali decided not to upset Leila. ““Does it not bother you? And even if it doesn’t now, won’t it in the future? knowing who I am, what I have been doing . . .”” (162). And Leila knew that D/Ali was in love with her but Leila doesn’t want him to regret this decision about the marriage. They got married happily and Leila thought it should be a never ending happiness.

He kissed her gently, his eyes aglow with warmth. He guided her fingers towards the tiny scar on the side of his chin. ‘See this? It happened when I fell from a wall. Primary school. And this one . . . She cried more than I did. Another mark to carry for life. Does it bother you that I have so many scars?’ ‘Of course not! I love you just as you are!’ (163)

They both went to a revolution. Leila decided to take part in it because D/Ali requests her to, and for every few seconds he was looking at her performing in the

revolution. The place were surrounded by banners and posters everywhere, it was scattered everywhere with the swarm of words, on July 1968.

Snipers with automatic weapons were shooting – aiming directly at the crowd. A scream shattered the protesters' startled silence. A woman was crying; someone else was yelling, telling people to run. And they did without knowing which way to go. To their left was the . . . Pushing, shouldering, shouting, running, tripping over each other . . . (168)

In that situation people were scared and rushed over not having an idea of where to move, Leila and D/Ali where separated to different places. And Leila hears the gun shots all over and she was very much afraid, and confused about D/Ali.

There were many Alis in the hospitals they called; some were being treated in beds, others were in the morgue, but there was no trace of her Ali. Two days later . . . they confirmed that D/Ali had been brought there. He was one of the thirty-four fatalities, most of them trampled to death in the stampede on the Street of Cauldron Makers. (169)

Leila phoned every public hospitals and private doctors to know about D/Ali, but there was nothing left about him. And after two days through her friend Nalan she came to know that D/Ali was the one among those thirty-four fatalities. And that took away all her happiness. This was the memory her brain recollected her in the last dying last minutes.

In the final seconds before Leila's brain surrendered, her brain recalled her, the taste of single malt whisky. "It was the last thing that had passed her lips on the night she died" (170). Bitter Ma ringed her to call her back as a prostitute as she wants her to go to a hotel "The Intercontinental" (171). But Leila doesn't really wish to fall as a prostitute again, but she has no other choice left after D/Ali passed away. "Is this the son's request or father's?" (172). It was because of that man's father, his son is not really interested in getting married. But his father wants him to marry a girl. So that Leila was fixed to change his mind.

'Good evening, darling, 'Leila said cheerily. 'How can I assist you?' The receptionist's voice was as cold as her gaze. . . . 'Whom shall I say is calling?' 'Say it's the lady he's been waiting for his whole life.' The receptionist's eyes narrowed but she said nothing. Quickly, she dialed the number. A short conversation ensued between her and the man at the end of the line. She hung up, and said without looking at Leila, 'He's expecting you.' 'Merci, darling.' (175)

And again her situation forced her to become a prostitute, but that did not happen fully, the man over there was very upset about his marriage and he was busy talking over his phone, Leila guessed it might be his lover. He was very kind to Leila. And she was paid. So Leila returned just getting the money from him. She also convinced him not to end up in this marriage which was supposed to happen him, because she felt that it was a trap for him to fall.

He stared at her – nervous. ‘Look, darling. I understand you don’t want to do this. I also understand there’s someone you love and you’d rather be with that *person*’. She stressed the last word, avoiding mention of gender. ‘Give that person another call now, and invite them here. Spend the night . . . ‘I’m leaving. But you shouldn’t tell anyone. Neither your father nor my fixer can know. (177)

She was picked up by a car. There were two men inside asking Leila for a drive for one hour, and they are just making a deal with her. That made Leila suffer and she face death, and she was found lying in the dumpster, and it was very scary for her to be with them inside the car. “A shiver ran down her spine. She sensed, too late, that he would not listen to her.” (180).

The last thing she remembered was the taste of the home-made strawberry cake. She remembered her childhood days in Van where she used to eat, that particular special flavour her friends decided to provide on her birthday party. Her friends decided to give her a surprise birthday party but Leila already knew it because she heard their discussion.

Strawberry cream with fluffy, fairy-tale-pink icing. That’s what they had planned. Leila was not a fan of pink. She liked fuchsia better – a colour with personality. Even the name melted on the tongue, mouth-wateringly sweet and punchy. Pink was fuchsia without grit; pale and lifeless as a bedsheet worn thin from too much washing. (182)

They were all very happy that night, “She never told her friends this, not in so many words but they were her safety net” (183). Leila always feels that her friends are her everything and they are the ones who always shoulders her pain, erases her scars and they used to pull her up and breathe life into her lungs.

Now slowly Leila’s brain was ready to stop, and her life was recalled in her last 10 minutes and 38 seconds, her last memory was the bright pink cake, “the very last thing she saw in her mind was the bright pink birthday cake.” (183).

Elif Shafak encapsulates the whole life of the protagonist Leila by recalling in her brain after her heart stops, the brain recalls her memories in 10 minutes and 38 seconds and that time period was really short and her brain recalls the moments which were unforgettable, through the specific tastes and fragrances which relate certain prominent moments in her life.

## Chapter Three

### Trauma and Human Existence

Elif Shafak's eleventh novel *10 minutes 38 seconds in This Strange world* (2019). It is a psychological fiction that mainly discusses the interior characterization and motivation through the emotional and the mental states of the characters. Shafak's one main idea to write this novel was related to a place, an actual place that exists in Istanbul, a graveyard, which has no surnames, mostly just numbers, called 'Companionless Cemetery'. The buried people are the ones who are shunned, rejected, by their families. Shafak is curious to know their stories, their actual individualistic traits, so she took a specific number and named her in her fiction and created her own story of that person. The people among them are mostly AIDS patients, sex workers, abandoned babies, LGBTQ members, and refugees. Shafak paid attention to that specific societal issue, because she felt that the novelist should be equally interested in science, silenced people, whose stories have been erased, forgotten, or pushed to the margins, she also felt that their untold stories should be told. This book relates the recollections of an Iranian sex worker Tequila Leila after her brutal death. She was killed and tossed in a dumpster, Leila's heart stops but her mind continues on for 10 minutes and 38 seconds. Oscar Wilde states that, memory is the diary that we all carry about with us.

The novel compiles the dying memories of Tequila Leila as a predominant part and traces the impact of her death on a group of friends introduced in the first section. As she lies in the bin she knows that she is dead, her brain experiences a last paroxysm of activities like episodes from her past flooding back to her expiring consciousness on the

back of startlingly vivid sense memories. Leila experiences dilation of time in this state, with memories that span long periods of life.

The initial chapters talk about the upbringings of her childhood. Life was always hard for her even from her childhood, she was born to her father's second wife, but raised by his first. Her father was a typical religious man with a sworn opposition to anything he considered to be western. He increasingly restricts the women of his family by enforcing the life of pious severity. The worst of all is that Leila begins to be sexually abused by her uncle when she is just six years old. He chooses her of all the girls of the family he tells her that "“You have always been my favourite”" (65). But her family's horrific response is to betroth her to the son of the uncle who abused her. To escape this situation Leila the young woman runs off to Istanbul. And there Leila ends up being sold into prostitution at one of the government-sanctioned brothels of 1960s in Turkey. She ended up as a prostitute unwillingly.

Hermann Hesse states that, if I know what love is, it is because of you. The only man who saw Leila as a human and the only one who didn't want her body but he made her to feel herself is D/Ali. The whole worth of Leila was brought to light by D/Ali. From the brothel she was released by D/Ali, he has a sincere love towards Leila, D/Ali was a socialist and he was shot dead in the riot and this leads Leila to become a prostitute again. But Leila's life was the happiest when she was with her only love D/Ali.

After Leila's death, she was buried in the Companionless Cemetery in Turkey. It will be a deposition in to a unnamed and just numbered, it's a grave used for the bodies of social cast-offs, and then the novel moves the reader to follow the misadventures of



“the five” they are Nalan, Sinan, Jameelah , Zaynab, Humeyra. The people over there refused to give Leila’s body to her friends saying that they are supposed to give the body only to her family. So one of Leila friend’s Sinan says in a trembled voice that “we are closer to her than family” (195).

The deep friendship was expressed by Shafak as emotionally and comically in the last part of the novel, it was really heartwarming. Her friends conspire to retrieve her body from its ignominious resting place in order to give her a proper burial. They encounter several obstacles in their quest for Leila’s body.

The structure of this novel is actually divided into three parts such as mind, body, and soul. The first part deals with her last minute memory which is associated with a particular taste or smell like lemon, cardamom, wedding cake, sulfuric acid which are deeply linked to a transformation in her life. Then later part deals with her friends who try to free her soul like the blue betta fish in the ocean befitting Leila’s wish.

Elif Shafak ends the novel with the new beginning by sending Leila’s soul along with the blue betta fish. It conveys the readers that there is always a new beginning to start again. Istanbul was referred by Shafak as illusion, “Istanbul was an illusion” (202). In this novel Shafak weaves intricate details, juxtaposing the changes in Turkey’s societal circumstances. Shafak leavens her story with wordplay that “If Paris was the city of love, Jerusalem the city of God, and Las Vegas is the city of sin, Istanbul was the city of multitasking”(249 -50).

Shafak is highlighting the multitasking throughout the novel. Ultimately the novel isn’t really about death, but the persistence of love. Without ever losing her grip on the

tragedy of Leila's experience and the experiences of so many Turkish women like her Shafak also celebrates Leila's brave and compassionate life.

Shafak leavens a drastic importance for the women who face Psychological violence due to the men domination of men, the gender discrimination, and the memory is heightened throughout the novel. All the female characters, Leila's mother Binnaz, and even her friends are forced to suffer, deprived of their rights, prejudiced, discriminated and oppressed by the male dominant norms of the society.

We women sometimes play a role of continuity of patriarchy, because patriarchy is not a black and white system in which men oppress women. It's much more complicated. I think we need to go back to the basics. Remember the solidarity. The sisterhood. And expand it (Shafak, Interview, 2021).

Simon de Beauvoir's states in *The Second Sex* argues that humanity is male, and men defines women, not in herself, but in relation to himself. The young woman named Binnaz was just nineteen years old when she got married to Haroun in a kind of religious ceremony. Her husband Haroun was a man of scintillating opposites. He wanted a son more than anything in the world. His long years of marriage with Susan, his first wife has yielded no offspring. But Binnaz was pregnant for the seventh time, she had six severe miscarriages. When she was pregnant with Leila, Binnaz was so careful and conscious and believed in a lot of superstitions and even followed it.

she had not touched a single peach so the baby wouldn't be covered in fuzz; she had not used to any spices and herbs in her cooking so the baby

wouldn't have freckles or moles; she has not smelled roses so the baby wouldn't have port-wine birthmarks . . . and secretly after every summer, she had collected hairs from Suzan's hairbrush and burned them into fireplace so as to reduce the power of her husband's first wife (14-15)

The only hope for her to get an acknowledged position in the house is to have a child.

Here, Shafak points out the strong male domination that happens after the childbirth, the baby was named as Leyla Afife Kamile, which means full of virtue and high in merit. Even motherhood was denied to Binnaz by her husband as he wanted his daughter to be known as the daughter of his first wife and asked her to accept that she will be rewarded again from Allah. And how helpless Binnaz would have been felt, as the situation is out of her hands. She has only one option that is to give her own child to Suzan, the struggles she had gone through the six severe miscarriages and inspite of the birth of the child she has not been granted the status of the mother her husband who said "Susan can be *Mummy*. You'll be Auntie" (22).

Because she was a woman the rights were just taken away from her. Even her motherhood was usurped from her as she has no other choice and the only choice that was left was to cry and accept. Motherhood of a woman was not respected, her pain and sufferings were not heard by anyone even though it was so loud. The younger child in her was weeping and craving to get back her daughter in her arms to kiss and cuddle her. "Thus the subject was closed, then and there – though, in truth, it would always open, this wound in the mist of their lives that would never heal"(25). Binnaz state was

strongly reflecting all women in the male dominated society. Matriarchy was wounded and helpless.

The protagonist of this novel, Leila was actually a girl baby born to a family on 6 January 1947, in the city of Van – ““the pearl of east””(27). She was named by her father as Leyla Afife Kamile. Her father named her like this so that she should be chaste, untainted and should always remain perfect. ““You’ll be modest, respectable, pure as water . . .”” (26). But unfortunately it didn’t happen to be true in her future. She came out of her home and was forced to become a prostitute. She had undergone a lot of struggles in Istanbul and met her five loyal friends. The end was actually the beginning of the novel, she was found dead in the outskirts of Istanbul in a dumpster.

Tequila Leila would have given anything to be in her apartment now. Instead she was here, somewhere on the outskirts of Istanbul, across from the dark, damp football field, inside a metal rubbish bin with rusty handles and flaking paint. It was a wheelie bin; at least four feet high and half as wide. Leila herself was five foot seven – plus the eight inches of her purple slingback stilettos, still on her feet. (1-2)

Her father wants her to be like a woman who takes a good care of her husband and her children. But even from her childhood she faced all kinds of abuse. Once when she was only six years old Leila’s uncle who was trim, tall and handsome, with hair shaved closed to the scalp and bluish-grey eyes with long lashes that curled at the ends, abused her. He was the prominent reason for Leila to move out of her home and end up as a prostitute. He chose her because she was innocent and not selfish. “Because you are

not selfish like the others. A smart, sweet girl. Don't ever change. Promise me you won't change" (65).

The femininity was not respected, because when Leila openly voiced about her uncle's misbehaviour towards her at the age of six, nobody accepted it even though they all knew the cause of her pregnancy. They took a bad decision to marry her to the uncle's son. Everyone noticed Leila's pregnancy by seeing her eating soil. "Are you eating soil? My God, why would you do such a thing?" (105). Later on after growing she asked herself several times that why me? and not others. Why should her uncle choose her and it leads her to get pregnant and it was noticed by the family and they first decided to abort the child. Here, the innocent small girl who was facing these struggles and broken into pieces by her own family. And this made Leila open up about the abuse by her uncle but the family members and her father were not bothered about that and they refused to believe Leila. She sensed that they all have already known this. "I don't think so. I think you are trying to save Uncle" (109). But even though they all know the truth they wanted her to get married to that uncle's son to hide this situation from the society.

And her father was accusing her close friend from the school and she shouted back not to involve him into this, "You mean Sabotage . . . Sinan? Leave him out of this. He's my friend. My only friend. He's a kind boy. Uncle is lying!" (107). And she was just informed that she'll get engaged. And Leila felt so unhappy and asked that why they are not ready to believe her even she is their own daughter. "Why don't you ever believe me – your own daughter?" (108). That really shatters Leila and so she decided to move out from her home and her city Van. And she went to Istanbul where everything was new and she was unaware of it. Two of them sold her to a brothel in spite of her

unwillingness. This changed her life drastically. Society and even her own family blamed her, she was not the reason for the cruelty that was thrust on her.

So the woman, the girl child was not even considered by man in the family. Shafak reflects women's life through the mirror of Leila, the mental tortures she had undergone to prove her virginity even among her own family was intolerable. Leila felt that she was "*like a trapped butterfly*" (110). This disbelief of her father towards her lead her to suffer throughout her life.

Nalan was a friend of Leila in Istanbul. Nalan was called Osman, the youngest son of the farming family in Anatolia. Nalan was an assertive, bravest friend of Leila, one of the five. The mental tortures that she had been affected with through her surroundings made her to move to Istanbul. She was bullied by the boys in his school. His feelings were not considered by her family.

In the stories he invented, he would always take the main role – a Persian poetess, Chinese princess or a Russian empress; the characters wildly, but one thing remained the same; in his mind, he was always a girl never a boy. At school things have been more different. It wasn't a place for stories. (58)

Nalan always felt the femininity in him. He wants to be a girl not as a boy even for once in his life time. Even though he went for the military training he returned to his home as the same person, always a girl. But his parents ignored his feelings and wanted him to marry a girl. He was not able to do it and his explanations are not heard by any single soul in his family. So he came out of his house and went to Istanbul. "Yet he was

not the same. He had always known he was a female inside, but the ordeal of the army had flattened his soul to such a degree that, strangely, he felt emboldened to live his own truth” (59).

He stayed in Istanbul, because only here in Istanbul that he could outwardly transform himself in to the person he really was inside. “Osman was no more. There was only Nalan, and no going back” (60). Nalan leaves her home on her wedding night forcefully fixed by her mother and moves to Istanbul where she gets her gender changed; from a boy to a girl though it had never been accepted by the society. Everywhere she was insulted, abused, and humiliated by the people. The society never accepted her, it was not her mistake that she was shunned away and ill-treated by everyone. She never led a happy life.

Jameelah was born in Somalia, poverty was not something she has to worry about in her childhood. After the death of her mother whom she adored died of cancer, her life has totally changed. Jameelah’s family members forced her father to marry again and want him to live a happy life. So her father decided to marry a widow. Because of her step-mother Jameelah lost her education and she forced herself to move to Istanbul.

Jameelah’s stepmother, a widow herself, was jealous of a ghost, determined to erase all traces of the woman she felt she was there to replace. Soon Jameelah – the eldest daughter – was clashing with her stepmother on nearly everything, from what she wore to what she ate and how she spoke. (118-19)

Jameelah failed to maintain her relationship with her stepmother which makes her skip her education. Her peaceful life was taken by her stepmother. So she decided to move to Istanbul just to have a peaceful life but she also ended up as a prostitute unknowingly, along with forty people mostly women she made a journey to Istanbul there she was later understood that it was a sham. “By the time she understood it was a sham – a pretext to bring people in as cheap labour and for sexual exploitation – it was too late for her to escape” (120). Again a young woman was pulled in to a situation where no one wants to settle, because of her step mother she was undergoing all these peaceless situations. The girl moves to Istanbul only to have a peaceful life.

Zaynab, friend of Leila. She was physically unattractive short and was uneducated because her physical stature restricted her position in the society. She was not responsible for her height, she was always avoided by the people in the society for the way she looks. But that does not define a person. The ignorance by the society leads her to face a lot of mental tortures because she was not allowed to study, she was not given a proper job, she was not respected equally as other human beings in the society. But she always got her father’s support at all time, he wants her to get married to a man who is similar to her, unfortunately it never happened.

So Zaynab left her place and moved to Istanbul to seek a job for herself. “Finding a job in Istanbul, however, was not easy. No one wanted to hire her” (131). But she ended up as a cleaner in the brothel where Leila was working. The birth is something which one person cannot decide. The society treats people well or badly based on their appearance. So Zaynab who came from high mountain ended up in Istanbul. The depression she faces was miserable.



Depression was common among the woman on this street, tearing into their souls as fire tears into wood. No one used the word though. *Miserable*, was what they said. Not about themselves, but about everyone and everything else. *The food is miserable. The payment is miserable. My feet hurt, these shoes are miserable.* (125)

Zaynab was the face given by Shafak for those kinds of people who don't look physically attractive and she flashlights the way how society treats them. Shafak portrays the society's in human ways of belittling such different people and how it affects them psychologically in a realistic way.

Humeyra, another friend of Leila, the year she turned fifteen, was instantly pulled out of the school and married to a man, whom her father has been doing business with.

Her husband was an unambitious man, taciturn and easily frightened. Humeyra knowing he had not wanted this marriage, suspected he had a sweetheart somewhere whom he could not forget. Time and again, she caught him watching her with resentment, as though he blamed her for his own regrets. (158)

She was working in her in-law's house as a servant. She was treated like a servant without a name. Going back to her parents house was out of the question, so unwillingly she stayed in the place of misery. Even though she works harder for everyone in that house she was beaten by her husband. The gender domination forced her to endure psychological violence.

Still she might have endured it all if it hadn't been for the beatings. Once her husband broke a wooden coat hanger on her back. Another time he hit her on the legs with a pair of iron tongs that left a claret-coloured mark on the side of her left knee. (158-59)

She escaped from her in-law's home to enjoy her freedom, and she lived near the streets of brothel where she met Leila. And she was often afraid that she might become a victim of an honour killing. She was always imagining about her murder. "Women accused of indecency weren't always killed, She knew; sometimes they were just persuaded to kill themselves" (159). Shafak strongly states that unhappy marital life, the education which was prohibited to her, the way she was treated as a servant in her in-law's house are the main factors that affected psychologically which leads her to develop suicidal thoughts, that kind of depressed life she was leading. He not only focuses on the physical tortures and beatings she had undergone but also the mental tortures that lead her move out from her husband's home and the thoughts which always force her to kill herself.

Men have greater social and physical power than women and, relatedly, that women's beliefs and reactions are shaped by the constant threat of male violence with which women live. Because of these differences, women and men often have divergent perceptions of interpersonal behavior, for instance, behavior that men see as merely flirtatious may be experienced by women as offensive or even threatening (Whitsnant, 173).

In other words, power is an instrumental concept in Leila's society that never inspects the paradoxical nature of itself. This notion is reflected in each part of the story to provide a proper context of a protagonist who is searching for individual socialization.

## Chapter Four

### Rehumanising Humanity

“The Cemetery for the unknown exposes a story of dispossession that denies the marginalized a social afterlife entrenched in a hegemonic spatial and temporal order.” (Afterlives. May, 2020). The Turkish cemeteries for the unknown are graveyards where the state buries the bodies of those people who remain unidentified or unclaimed over a certain period of time. In practice they are the burial site for social outcast: homeless people, victims of honour crime, premature babies, disowned members of blood families, and more recently unaccompanied Syrian refugees. These cemeteries also contain the bodies of political detainees who were disappeared under police interrogations and state violence. It can be termed as transgressive death, to capture those social forms of transgression that emerge at the moment and at the aftermath of death in the social and the political spheres. These margins may be sectarian, religious, ethnic and economic in addition to being gendered or sexed. A deep focus on transgressive deaths presents a “deathscape” (Maddrell and Sideway, 2010) of social and political margins in Turkey.

The second prominent reason for Shafak to write this novel was a little-known graveyard in Istanbul, the Cemetery of the Companionless. This particular graveyard was unlike other cemeteries in Istanbul, there are no flowers, no tombstones, no people to be seen around, this was the place for the outcasts and undesirables. Those graves will only be marked by wooden posts with numbers, but no names. Shafak’s instinct was to try to reverse that anonymity, and to try to rehumanise those dead people.

The cemetery for the unknown exposes a story of dispossession that denies the marginalized a social afterlife entrenched in a hegemonic spatial and temporal order. It marks the repeated eviction of the marginalised from social life at the moment and at the aftermath of death. The cemetery of the companionless (Kimsesizler Mezarligi) in Kilyos where the “undesirable,” the “unwanted,” the “unworthy,” the “doomed,” and the “unidentified” are buried, is such a place of dehumanization. That was the “loneliest graveyard in Istanbul” that becomes the last stop of a miserable existence.

The largest cemetery in Istanbul was the Kilyos cemetery. There are huge difference between the old cemetery and the new. The newest one is an arid, neglected, and untended parcel of earth that is equally divided as rectangular sections bounded by concrete and was covered in weed. Each division has an assigned number from the side of the grave where Asli Zengin assumed the deceased head would rest. The highest number that Zengin located was 683. Here the numerical identity functions as a technical tool either to manifest sign of anonymity, into a sign of “non /status” (Sharpe, 2016). Though Zengin was curious, the answer revealed to her by the officer for the mystery behind the numbers that are denoted for the dead bodies in the cemetery was “if there is no one to claim the body, then there is no need for the name.” And it was also because of financial issue: unless there is someone to claim, there is no one to pay for a headstone.

And the old cemetery was so disorganized with hundreds of number plates sticking out the ground, sparsely distributed or it was on the top of each other. And the abandoned babies who have not fully lived one year of their life have also been buried in

that Cemetery. Their names were inscribed outside blood kinship networks, such as “Baby Nermin.”

Shafak created the character of Leila and her friends in her fiction to give her their dignity back to those “sinners” who are rejected, mistreated and misunderstood by the “the normal” in the society. Cosmopolitan and philistine, imperial and plebian, macho and feminine, the “she-city” Istanbul is loved and hated at the same time. “She” is both beautiful and cruel, teaching “her” inhabitants the art of survival in its many forms.

Therefore, Shafak writes about all marginalized, othered and subdued individuals in an attempt to reveal to the world that they do exist and that they have voices they want to convey to the world. She functions her writings to be the voice of the figures who are kept in the shadows regardless of their religious; ethnic or cultural affiliation (Nihad,2019:2909).

The protagonist Leila was pushed away by her “blood family”, her “water family” consisting of five loyal friends who filled her with the sensation of being cared, loved, and protected. When the last part flies away from Leila’s mind, the adventurous journey of “The Body” begins in the second part of the novel. Leila was buried in the companionless cemetery and her friends wanted to give her a proper burial, so they struggled and took her body from the burial, and in that companionless cemetery she was buried with the number 7053.

Among the residents of the graveyard were also the cold-blooded murderers, serial killers, suicide bombers and sexual predators, and, as

baffling as it may be, their innocent victims. The evil and the good, the cruel and the merciful . . . Neither a name nor a date of birth. Only a coarsely hewn wooden board with a number and sometimes not even that, just a rusty tin placard. And somewhere among in this unholy mess, among the hundreds and hundreds of untented graves, there was one freshly dug. This is where Tequila Leila was buried. Number 7053. (256)

Number 7054 which was the grave to Leila's right side, was that of a songwriter who took his own life. Still people used to sing his songs but were unaware of the fact that the man was lying in the Kilyos cemetery. "There were many suicide victims in the Cemetery of the Companionless" (256). The grave 7063 belonged to a murderer. Who killed his wife out of jealousy, and also shot the man who his wife had an affair with, his wife "missed, taken of the side of his head, slid into a coma and died a couple of days later. No one had claimed his body." (257).

And even more graves were accompanied around Leila were occupied by revolutionaries who died in police custody, they themselves took their lives by committing suicide. A large number of Kurdish insurgents were also buried in that cemetery. "On average fifty-five thousand people died in Istanbul every year – and only about one hundred and twenty of them ended up here in Kilyos." (258).

The bleak plotline, though, is repeatedly interrupted by short anecdotes of kindness, countervailing moments of friendship between Leila and other outcasts, Leila's five closest friends, a group of outcasts who made difficult lives bearable and sometimes

joyful on the outskirts of a city, and society in flux. Her friends —Sabotage Sinan who was a shy boy and one who was in love with Leila since he was a young boy. Nostalgia Nalan who was sarcastic transvestite. Zaynab 122 who was sunni dwarf from a Lebanese mountain village. Hollywood Humeyra who was an obese singer. Jameelah who was gorgeous Somalian who doesn't have a cute nickname.

Silently, they pushed the cemetery gate open and went in. Five intruders, five friends, looking for the one they had lost. As though on cue, the moon disappeared behind a cloud, plunging the entire landscape into shades of black, and, for the passing moment, this lonely site in Kilyos could have been anywhere in the world. (261)

During the night time as Leila's friends has already planned they moved to Kilyos in search of Leila's dead body. The plan scripted by Nalan, the brave one among her friends and he was the one who took everyone along with him to search Leila's body. But even though others deeply love Leila they were not that brave or bold enough to come to Kilyos. Because that cemetery was quite dangerous, and they all felt it was not that easy to find the number, dig the sand, and give Leila a proper burial. But the love they all had towards Leila made them travel all over to Kilyos cemetery.

A pungent smell rose from the ground – of damp earth, wet stone, wild thistles, rotting leaves, and things they did not wish to name. A heavy, musky smell of decay. They saw rocks and tree trunks covered with green lichen, its leaf-like scales bright and ghostly in the dark. In places, an



ivory mist hovered before their eyes. Once they heard a rustle that sounded as if it rose from below the earth. Nalan stopped and panned her torch around. (262)

After a long search they found the number plate which was placed upon the burial site of Leila. They started to dig, and Zaynab 122 raised a hand and said ““we must pray first. You cannot exhume a body without a proper ritual.”” (270). She had a jar in her bag and she took it and sprinkled the water around the grave. Humeyra also joined along with her in the prayer. They all are full of grief by seeing the place where her dead body was buried and sad about that there was even no name, in the cemetery.

Finally, they had made it. Leaning in towards one another, they stared at a particular grave as if it were a riddle they needed to decode. Like most of the other graves, this one, too, had just number on it. Neither ‘Tequila’ nor ‘Leila’ was engraved on her headstone. She did not have a headstone. Nor a well-tended plot with a neat border of flowers. All she had a wooden board scrawled on by some cemetery worker. (270)

Leila’s memories were running through all their heads while they started to dig her grave. “Sabotage now stood on the edge of the grave, watching Nalan with a wonder tinged with admiration.” (272). Because Nalan had never involved himself in any of the activities that needs manual labour. He used to always call the neighbours. Now the grave was opened and they all started to lift the dead body of Leila outside but actually Nalan

was the one who is using all his strength. But they all took another dead body, instead of Leila.

‘How could we make such a mistake?’ asked Jameelah, after they had reburied the bearded man and smoothed over his grave. ‘It’s because of the old man at the hospital.’ A tinge of embarrassment in her voice, Nalan took out the piece of the paper from her pocket. ‘He’s got the worst handwriting. I wasn’t sure whether this was seven thousand and fifty-two or seven thousand and fifty-three. How was I to know? It’s not my fault.’  
(278)

Again they started to dig another grave expecting and wishing that it should be their friend Leila. Sabotage felt very unhappy that because of his physical weakness he cannot help Nalan at the same time he felt happy that Leila will be definitely proud of Nalan. Nalan who hated his hands for her all life now those hands are helping to dig. “And she had a strong, solid hands of a farmer, which she had been ashamed of all these years. But tonight she was grateful for them. Leila would have been proud of her” (279).

And next time the dead body which they lifted was lighter and they gently placed it on the ground. “‘It’s her,’ said Humeyra, her voice breaking.” (279). Carefully they placed her body on the wheelbarrow. And Nalan warned others by saying there were dogs. “Stay calm everyone. If you don’t make a move, they won’t attack” (280). Nalan searched some snacks in Humeyra’s handbag, and she found rusksack and with the help of that they were able to escape from the dogs by feeding them with those leftovers.

The food not being enough for each and every dog, fights broke out. A minute ago they had been a team. Now they were rivals. Nalan grabbed the stick, dipped it in the meat sauce and hurled it as far as she could. The dogs bolted after it, snarling at each other. ‘They’re gone!’ Jameelah said. ‘For now,’ Nalan warned. ‘We must hurry. Just make sure you stay close to each other. (281)

While returning around sixty feet they saw there was a car, they noticed that was a police car “There’s a police car behind those bushes.” (282). Then Nalan noticed that everyone is too terrified so she came with the new idea that wheelbarrow can be placed on the ground and she informed others that she will carry Leila. “Nalan lifted Leila’s body in her arms and hauled it over her shoulder.” (283). Sopping wet and exhausted, the friends reached the Chevrolet. Nalan placed Leila at the back of the car and everyone expect Nalan were seated inside and after tying Leila’s body with ropes, they all started moving the car slowly.

At last somehow five friends of Leila took her out from the Companionless Cemetery. Because of her identity in the society she was buried in there, she became a sex worker not by her wish and she was unhappy to live as a prostitute, but the society just states her as a victim and they just buried her in the Companionless Cemetery in Turkey.

Accidentally, the music blarred out when they all were about to escape. “The two police officers, out stretching their legs, were staring in their direction, stupefied.” (287).

But Nalan doesn't lose hope, she just wanted to take Leila's body out from the cemetery. Elif Shafak states "Every true love and friendship is a story of unexpected transformation. If we are the same person before and after we loved, that means we haven't loved enough." (212). While moving back to the city Sabotage Sinnan remembered that he loved Leila deeply.

Sabotage Sinnan had many regrets in life, but nothing compared to the regret he felt for never having told Leila that since they were children in Van, walking together to school every morning as the sky above them cleared to blue, finding each other during break times, skipping stones . . . ever since those long-lost days, he had been in love with her. (290).

Sinnan always used to feel guilty that he should not have sent her to Istanbul. If he stopped her she might not have become a prostitute in her life. And he always regrets for not showing up his love towards Leila. Things which are unsaid are beautiful but it will remain painful. Jean Evans in *Things Unsaid* states that "So many words unspoken and never get heard, Too afraid of the pain, too afraid of hurt. Feelings kept to deep down inside . . . not knowing what their tomorrow might hold". Leila was truly unaware of the affection which Sinnan holds towards her.

Leila's friends were discussing where to give her a proper burial. Zaynab interferes and talks about Leila's wish, "She meant the sea. She said she had been told that day she was born, someone in their house had freed the fish they kept in a glass bowl. She seemed to like that idea very much. She said that when she died she would go

and find the fish, even though she couldn't swim.'” (292). The friends were shocked “Are you telling us that Leila wanted to be thrown into the sea?” asked Humeyra.” (292).

Let's take her to the sea, said Jameelah, and the way she said it, with such lightness and certainty in her voice, made the others feel like it had been the right thing to do all along. And just like that the Chevrolet Silverado zoomed towards the Bosphorus Bridge. The very bridge whose opening Leila had celebrated with thousands of fellow Istanbulites once up on a time. (293)

Leila's friends decided to free her soul in the sea as per she wished. With a lot of adventures they all together took her body out from that lonely Companionless Cemetery. Maria Shriver states that “When the world is so complicated, the simple gift of friendship is within all of our hands.” Even though Leila's “blood family” rejected her and the society made her a victim, Shafak highlights that “water family” that is Leila's five friends stayed with her even after her death. And proved that their love Leila was a genuine one.

## Chapter five

### Summation

Elif Shafak was a feminist and an advocate for gender equality. Shafak's writing prominently addresses the numerous feminist issues and the role of women in society. She writes about motherhood and violence against women in the society. In an interview Shafak said that in Turkey, men write and women read. She was an international feminist icon and she is also an activist who publicly advocated for women's rights, minority rights, and freedom of speech.

Shafak's themes on writing are particularly about feminism, secular doubt, religious devotion, and political upheaval. She has lived in various places, including Spain and the United States. For the past eight years she has divided her time between London and Istanbul. The human right issues, particularly in Turkey made Shafak to write splendid novels, according to her what literature tries to do is to re-humanise people who have been dehumanized and she felt that her writings should be the voices of people who were never heard by others.

The chapters dealt with how women in the novel suffer mentally and physically by the society and by their families. Leila's mother Binnaz was forced to sacrifice her motherhood, Jameelah ended up as a prostitute while in search of peace, Leila was also ended up as a prostitute in Istanbul by escaping from her parents ill treatment, Nalan was a trans woman who suffered a lot in the society, Zaynab a sunni dwarf who was ill-treated and disrespected by the society for being physically unattractive, and Humeyra who was beaten and tortured by her husband and in-laws.

Memory plays a prominent role in the novel, Shafak deals with Leila's dying memories in her last 10 minutes and 38 seconds, it was really a kind of strange world the reader gets in to, the way she expressed the thoughts of Leila was engrossing and the way she moves by minutes to seconds was riveting for the readers. Shafak's skill with language and storytelling was staggering which tempted everyone to read further. Each of her characters is unique and fully imagined, and the way she expressed the lives of the inhabitants of Istanbul, and the descriptions of their respective relationship with Leila was also a notable one.

Shafak uses each character's experience to sketch a general picture of Turkish life, pinpointing on the marginalized outskirts of Turkish society. Through these men and women, she reveals how the country's politics and customs have made life and even death unusually hard and unfair. Next the focus shifts away from Leila's memory and toward her physical body, as her friends try to give her a burial. Though the Cemetery of Companionless is a fascinating place to read about and Leila's friends embark on an adventure in their effort to do right for her.

The focus narrowed from the social issues of Istanbul to the treatment of its dead, especially its unclaimed or disrespected dead. Leila's friends are more interesting and one could emotionally be connected to rewarding way Shafak in which reveals the definition of friendship. They are not the actual characters who drink and mourn over their friend's death, they broke the rules of their country to take the body of their friend Leila they worn down the harsh laws and prejudices.

In the final section Shafak stolen the heart of his readers by connecting Leila's soul with the blue betta fish, and she reveals that every ending has a new beginning. And

ultimately Leila's soul was given freedom forever and all her sufferings were put to an end, those tragedies she had undergone throughout her life were defeated by freedom in the end of the novel. It was a soulful and an indelible touch given by Shafak to fellow readers, and for me it was indelible.

Leila was the illustration of an individual who wasn't given her life; rather, she was chosen by fate. The protagonist serves as an excellent illustration of the idea that experiencing an adverse or troubled childhood can eventually result in personality loss. Only rare situations continue to set an example and prosper. But, the majority of people who are looking for their identity are just halfway there.

People call these women prostitutes and absolutely loathe them, but no one who criticizes them will acknowledge the anguish underneath their identity, and something that they chose without option, their ruptured childhood, prejudice ruling at both their homes and in society, intolerable harassments at a tender age, exploitative in-laws, an adulterous fiancé, a troubled marriage, a voyage of tragedies that broke their faith and confidence, experiences of guilt, shame and solitude, ruptured spirits, and life of captivity with a loss of emancipation.

Three separate people inhabit the women in brothels. There is an innocent girl who, due to her background, was forced to seek refuge in brothels, rely on their customers for survival, and be chained there for all time. Then there are Femme Fatales, who are sedative, particularly those who are prone to upset or hurt a man who develops feelings for them. She voluntarily turns into a weapon and uses her body to exact retribution on men. Then there is the Knowing Mother, who cares for the hearts that require guidance and listens to the hearts of men by reducing their sense of isolation.



A terrible childhood might keep destroying their future, even if they have to sell their body to survive. However, living as a prostitute is not as simple as society perceives it to be. They must struggle with the life that fate has assigned them in a bizarre, scandalous manner that teaches them something about their own mysteries, their own light, and their own darkness. They also have to deal with their own traumas related to their respective lifestyles: one wants to live life to the fullest and experience all of its joy, passion, and adventure, while the other wants to be a slave to routine and things that cannot be planned for or accomplished.

Men head to brothels to get away from reality, forget about their issues, and unwind. But what do women receive in return from people especially men? They are mistreated, called awful names, used as examples, and, in the worst cases, their occupation is used as a justification by authorities to break the law or do anything that jeopardizes their health and safety. This can be observed in Leila's life. The burial customs in Turkey are strongly politicized. The book shows that there is burial discrimination; some of it is based on gender. All outcasts are cremated in a Cemetery of Companionless, which makes this policy seem harsh.

Death was much more unfair to them than life had been because it was interred at the Cemetery of the Companionless with bodies belonging to people who had no claim on their family, including crack addicts, alcoholics, missing people, people with AIDS, and prostitutes. As described in the book, Leila was a sex worker who had no claim on her family, therefore her remains were buried at the Cemetery of the Companionless. She is rejected by her family because she has insulted them. She was interred without a name and simply with a number.

They are not protected by the law in any situation. The Turkish Criminal Code's Article 438 states that rapists who can show that their victim is a prostitute shall have their sentence lowered. In contrast to raping a “decent” lady, a prostitute is regarded as “filthy,” and “wicked,” therefore doing so is not morally wrong. This law remains in effect until 1990, when it is repealed following fervent demonstrations over the rising number of assaults against sex workers that took place around the nation.

How can a vile, evil woman be acknowledged for her feelings and given protection by strangers when her own family failed to do the same and failed to comprehend them. Early phases of their growth determine whether they will end up as victims of the outside world or explorers in pursuit of hidden wealth. It all depends on how they perceive their life. If people are able to resolve the issue, they will leave the stage with mental ability that will benefit them throughout the rest of their life. They might not acquire the critical competencies required for a strong sense of self if they are unable to resolve these disputes successfully.

In order to make sense of the world, individual memories are crucial. Children's capacity to engage, perceive, connect, and react to their surroundings has a significant impact on how they develop into people. They replicate everything they are taught. Parents serve as excellent role models for their kids. Of course, genetic factors also make an impact. There is a chance that the child may be vulnerable to emotional disorders if the parents suffer from conditions like anxiety and depression. The same incident goes with Leila's parents, which influenced how she would turn out. Without recognizing it, her parents played a significant effect to the way she was going to develop in the future.

Everyone we encounter outdoors deserves to be treated with honour, dignity, and consideration, and every individual has a unique history to share. They each have a unique set of experiences that have influenced their ideas, perceptions, and final personalities. Evaluating them doesn't demonstrate how they are, but it does demonstrate the inability of the judgmental eyes of others how they emerged in this weaker state.

All people are on a quest for happiness, and everyone is on the same path. Nobody wants their life to become chaotic. And for this reason, many people keep the threat under control, while others give themselves over without a second thought to rotten things in the expectation of discovering an answer to their troubles. The childhood of one person is responsible for the future whom she/he will belong too. So I conclude that in the novel *10 minutes and 38 seconds in This Strange World* showcases the characters who have dealt with certain unimaginable problems they face throughout their life, especially in their childhood which were immensely responsible for their problematic state and the parents who didn't ensure love, affection and protection at the most crucial time are also responsible for their tragic state.

It was a serious work with a divine purpose when two souls, a parent and a baby, come face to face. When parents first encounter each other, they transform into two celestial spirits, two universes interacting. If the initial meeting and the subsequent encounter is not conducted with the utmost respect and care, one universe will obliterate the other. The novel has encapsulated how the lives of woman they suffer entire life, how the society treats a prostitute, the political aspects which deal with Cemetery of Companionless in Turkey, the tragic memory of the woman who were the victims of the brutality of the society, the masculinity which dominates the women, the right issues

raised by the women in society. Their devoted friendship are delineated by Shafak from the psychological perspective.

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**A Postcolonial Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

affiliated to

**Manonmaniam Sundaranar University**

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

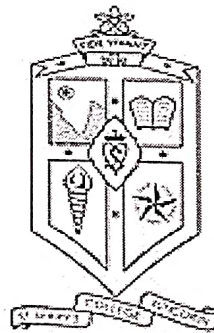
for the award of the Degree of

**Master of Arts in English**

by

**Sheraly. S**

**(Reg. No. 21APEN26)**



**PG and Research Department of English**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled *A Postcolonial Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus* 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 Sheraly. S during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

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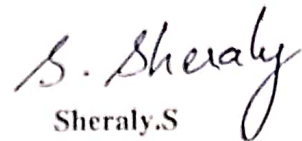


## Declaration

I hereby declare that the project entitled **A Postcolonial Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*** 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

April 2023

  
Sheraly.S

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## Preface

The project entitled **A Postcolonial Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*** analyses the struggles undergone by the protagonist in the male dominated society. In this novel *Purple Hibiscus* Adichie uses Kambili as her mouth piece to expose the inner psyche of women. Adichie suggests that violence constructing women should be eliminated. She implies that both men and women should be equally treated.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the origin of African Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Subverting Subalternity** deals with the women who are excluded from certain crucial economic and political activities and their roles as wives and mother are associated with fewer power and prerogatives than male roles.

The third chapter **Postcolonial Perspective** attempts to expose the internal and external struggle of the adolescents in a disintegrated home and homeland.

The fourth chapter **Gender Discrimination** aims to bring out how Adichie satirises upon the male chauvinistic attitude in the family and the society.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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

## Chapter One

### Introduction

Literature explores the texture and meaning of human experience. Man views it as a document of life, as the joys, miseries, adventures and yet other happenings of the world could be witnessed in reality. But it goes beyond reality, to present the hidden truth and the complexities of human existence. The most important value that literature holds back is to nourish the emotional life of man. The society mirrored through literature, at times expresses social sympathies, and develops some positive influence in the minds of the readers. In most of the literary works, the impact of literature on society is effective. Civilizations, political system and injustices are shaped, changed and exposed respectively through literature. Thus, an American abolitionist and author, Harriet Elizabeth Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is the most responsible novel to open up with a movement against slavery in America in earlier days. While Stowe's novel had a direct influence on society, an English writer and social critic, Charles Dickens's novel had an indirect influence. No work of a single writer or a country could be identified as the finest literary piece, since each work is composed in a unique way concentrating on diverse social issues.

The Literature of various countries has focused on the colonial and postcolonial literatures that have engraved much about the suffocated societies. The countries that suffered the pangs of the colonial rule have not failed in producing colonial and postcolonial literatures. Many of the poets, novelists and socialists of the colonized countries had the feeling that they were subjugated in their own country. Their yearnings for freedom from the foreign ties stimulated their creative imagination, which found an outlet in their works. While the renowned writers of the



world have acquired a significant status in the society, the African writers have also carved a niche for themselves and won several accolades from various associations. They have presented the grandeur of their country which is not subservient to other countries. Their works are comparatively equal to that of the other writers of the colonized countries. Literature produced by the African writers is classified into three distinct domains. The earliest was the traditional African Oral Literature, otherwise called Precolonial Literature in which narration was the marginal source.

African literature is rich in diverse European languages, such as, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Dutch and Afrikaans. The audience for African writings is found in European countries and the publishing sectors of the European languages grew strong in publishing indigenous African works. This popularity induced the writers to continue to write about the imperial hegemony and its aftermath, even several decades after independence in Africa. The struggle for independence from the colonial rule of many nations in Africa, Asia and Latin America created Postcolonial Literature and Postcolonial Criticism. The works of the African writers reflect their condemnation against the corruption in the independent states and they have also defended the dominating forces which tried to misuse the freedom and overpower the subjects. A galaxy of writers emerged in African literature and everyone is special in portraying the society in their own aspect. African literature in the late colonial period increasingly showed themes of liberation and independence among the Africans in French – Controlled territories. The general themes in African literature are the clash between Africa's past and present, between tradition and modernity, between indigenous and foreign, between individualism and community, between socialism and capitalism, between development and self reliance

and between africanise and humanity. Other themes in this period include social problems such as corruption, the economic disparities in newly independent countries and the right to roles of women.

The female writers are today far better represented in African Literature than they were prior to independence. Their texts offer self – image, pattern of self – analysis and general insights into women's world ignored by male colonial writers. Chidi Amuta says that the female writers bring into focus their femaleness or femininity in their narratives and in doing so highlight the power difference between men and women. As a result, women scholars and activists have pioneered intellectual revolution built on sexual politics aimed at stamping gender and feminism into both criticism and its philosophical appendage theory, replacing a tradition that is masculine and domineering.

The early man led a tribal life and lived under the commander, the chief of the tribe. The instructions from the chief were mandatory and scrupulously followed by its members. The tribes were honest and their laws were considered moral. But the people did not blindly abide by all the commands. They analyzed them and conflicts arose among the members during dissection. Minor conflicts that rose between the people were solved by their traditional rulers. The role of these rulers gained them high respect in many communities and they had considerable political and economic influence. They acted as the mediators between the people and the state. Their intention was to enhance national identity, resolve minor conflicts and at times provide essential counsel to the people to abide by the laws. Laws might vary in every individual group and also in countries. No single law could be accepted or denied by everyone. It is a highly complicated task to lay some universal laws that constitute the

ultimate moral standard. Laws may not be consistent. Yet the tribal people were united and their unity distanced the miseries of poverty, dishonesty, egocentricity and much more nearing them. Later on, the innocence in man was replaced by the immorality from outside. He learned to be selfish and parted from his own community.

The egocentric self of man and his strong desire to acquire something particular compelled him to grab more and more things from others, since he was not satisfied with the portion of benefit that he deserved. He began interrupting and overpowering the people nearby, ignoring the consideration of necessity over the thing targeted. Man's needs are never stabilized and are also subjected to changes. His urge for advancement towards the materialistic world induced him to open up new lands. That craving imposed a state of tension between the indiscriminate and the rational self. When man fought for obtaining something, the good in his self was overpowered by the evil inherited from the external world. The impiety in man conquered and induced him to disintegrate from his community to attain the required need. Man desired to be special and tried to acquire the foremost place at all occasions. In a society, every individual attempted to procure the greatest share. Due to such aspirations of man, he tried to invade other countries in order to expand his territories and empires. The target of expansion provoked man to concentrate more on discovering new domains to acquire material goods. Therefore, new discoveries and inventions have become indispensable to meet the needs of man that sprout every day. Carl Menger, an Austrian economist and the founder of the Austrian School of Economics, views the purpose of economic activity as the satisfaction of human needs. Discoveries always lead to advancement, but the geographical discoveries of



some new lands insidiously developed colonialism, imperialism and exploitation. It resulted in the invasion of the strong nations over the weaker ones leading to subjugation, and the greater impact was disintegration of a community or a society.

Gradually, one country began to dominate and influence the other, which brought in immense desolation. The invasion of the outsiders perturbed the natives and they were exploited materialistically. When the outsiders invaded a country and setup their colonies for materialistic benefits, colonialism" as a term and exploitative measure came into practice. It perpetuated itself through oppression and aggression, based on the exploitation of natural and human resources of the colonized nation." The colonial powers intended to acclaim wealth for their own nations and developed misunderstandings, rivalries and battles among themselves. The Europeans contended with one another and disintegrated entirely to claim power over the colonies captured. The incoming of new people, their custom, colour, language, religion and status are the several factors that broke up the amalgamation of man in the colonies also. The researcher explicates the deprived state of the colonized which became disunited by letting in the colonial powers to rule over them.

The infiltrated Europeans enjoyed the prosperity of the East while the suppressed Easterners endured the subjugation of the West. The chief aim of these Europeans in establishing the colonies was that of an economic concern. Their high growth in population demanded large area of lands to live in. Hence the European politicians concentrated more on colonialism to meet the increasing demand, and steadily disintegrated the natives as stated by Ngugi Wa Thiongo in his novel *Petals of Blood*:



In the beginning he had the land and the mind and the soul together. On the second day, they took the body away to barter it for silver coins. On the third day, seeing that he was still fighting back, they brought priests and educators to bind his mind and soul so that these foreigners could more easily take his land and its produce. (281)

Thus, the European countries slowly started colonizing Africa in 1870, which marked the beginning of disintegration.

Initially, the European nations established a friendly relationship with the colonies for commercial purposes, but later on within a short span of intrusion they began disintegrating the natives to obtain the entire wealth. Disintegration, in Africa, brought in colossal changes, when the entire nation was colonized by the end of the nineteenth century, but for Abyssinia. By dividing Africa between Britain, France, Belgium and Portugal, the colonizers had disintegrated the natives. These invaders, in order to detach the tribes and capture the wealth, travelled through the Nile, Niger, Zambezi and Congo rivers and the hundreds of lesser streams and the great lakes of the eastern plateau region.

The explorers greatly prompted disintegration among the Africans to rejoice in the prosperous mines of diamond, gold, copper and iron. Further, the Portuguese established their trading centers and political control on the western and other parts of the coast of Africa. Gradual interruption of the Europeans became strong in all the fields and they advanced scientifically, technologically, economically and culturally in modifying themselves. While the Europeans benefitted from the Africans, the Africans lost themselves under the regime of the Europeans. The Europeans, who were well advanced in all the fields, should have promoted integration among the

weaker ones; instead they took privilege over to disunite the Africans from their society. They maintained a wide gap between the highly civilized colonizers and the indigenous colonized. When the invaders settled in Africa, they subjugated the Blacks and compelled them to work in the farms. They indoctrinated their minds and souls to establish everything in Africa. An Indian activist, Giriraj Kishore's *Pahla Girmitya* registers the experiences of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of India in South Africa. Adichie retraces the socio-political background of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century South Africa. The opening lines of the novel *Purple Hibiscus* state about the dreams of the White men. The White men carried over their own dreams to the colonies with an aim to supplant it with the dreams of the natives. Though they pretended to civilize the uncivilized people, their intention was truly to disintegrate the Africans and exploit them economically.

The African familial unit comprised three generations of family members residing under one patriarchy. Larger family units in Africa were framed by the sons, their sons and their sons commonly living in the same compound of their father. In such homes, the head of the families assembled all the members and involved them in every activity of the home. They trained them to take part in the activities of the home. Thus, the African family members framed a tight miniature social system that stood for family integration.

The introduction of western education to the Africans targeted at providing personnel for the clerical and administrative classes. Only a select group of men were offered formal western education system, paving way to disintegration among the natives. The Africans were provided secondary education, since the Europeans reckoned that their own teaching might turn to be a weapon and cause distress in the

prolongation of the colonial rule. Some of the selected and dedicated Africans were in administration to command over their own people. Thus, clashes that led to disintegration were generated among the natives by the administrators from the European countries.

The poor Africans believed that formal education would lift them up. They wished to climb up from the depths of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and the political instability that deteriorated the life of people. But the missionary education was not facilitating their growth; Those who withstood the brutal punishments at the schools were employed under the rulers, but they experienced racial discrimination in and outside the offices. The Africans were completely ignorant about the attitude of the Europeans who regarded education and racial discrimination as tools to disintegrate the natives.

Division of man and woman arose in education. Men were provided formal education while women were deprived of that privilege. Some women, who had easy access to education, entered the fields of teaching and clerical jobs which were considered feminine jobs. Women in the sphere of education and employment raised the ego of men and they began to disrespect women. Once, the African women were respected and treated as an equal member, since she lived in an integrated family. The African women became economic partners with the head of the family, as they earned their own income to support the expenses of the family. They performed the role of a producer equal to men in cultivating land, growing crops and grinding and cooking.

While women lost their potentialities in such a way, men and the nation as a whole lingered on poverty, illiteracy, redundancy and slavery. The African men and women, who endured all such heinous complications, slowly started to know about



the real nature of the Europeans and the need for an integrated life. They became cognizant of the Europeans who disintegrated, exploited, robbed and made them subjects. This realization of the Africans brought an awakening in Africa to join hands, to resist the Western imperialism, to vocalize their dumb natives and to demand for independence in the early twentieth century. The imperialist rule threatened the Africans to accept and follow up Christianity and the Western principles of life. The damage imposed on their country and culture roused the suppressed agonies. It created a sense of awakening to free themselves from the clutches that effaced their lines in the palm. Hence, the Africans grew resurgent against the colonial powers to obtain freedom, and the Europeans, who did not expect such a counter-attack from the colonized, could not withstand it for a long time.

Many international organizations and movements were established all over the world for the betterment of the people and the country. Some of the movements developed in and outside Africa had played a significant role. They aided the country to emerge as an independent nation and also acted as anti-colonial movements. All these movements aimed at integration and unity of the Blacks people to stage a oneness in opposition towards the colonizers. The Africans picked up a new route in their march towards independence working against the Europeans. Until the end of the Second World War, Nationalism was not much concentrated in Africa. After the war, the African leaders pressurized African unity due to which the aspiration for freedom became strong. They organized movements against the Europeans such as The Anzanwan Freedom Movement, The Mau Mau revolt, The Biafran War, The Namibian Liberation Movement and so on.

Gabriel Jibaba Okara, secured a significant place in African fiction through his first novel *The Voice*. Okara is specialized in portraying the internal conflicts of heroes which do not differ much in case of common people in a neo-colonial situation. Okara, the central character's voice in the novel, is individually and universally a representative voice of the Africans. Okara, is deeply distressed by the contemptuous issues which encompass the clash of traditional African and the Western cultures, identity crisis and corruption. Okara returns home after a long time to discover the true meaning of life. But his attempt towards the search becomes futile. Izongo, one of the elders, presents the questioning spirit of Okara to prevent him from reaching out the missing thing. Okara is even threatened to be exiled. Okara has deliberately portrayed the ruthless exploitations of the powerful people who have made the Africans helpless against the prevailing condition. As a unique crusader, Okara strives to drive out corruption in the neo-colonial Nigeria. The voice of Okara echoed solely and the quest failed to rise in the external militancy.

Nadine Gordimer, a White South African writer, who earned a prominent place among the White academicians, probes the interdependence of the Blacks and the Whites. His strong conviction is that the colour-bar has to be eradicated, as she faced the crucial moments in her life. Being a radical White South African historian, she is more bothered about the human attitude towards the apartheid. He has focused on racial, religious, political and personal conflicts. Being brought up on the soft side of the colour bar, Gordimer examines the life of the civilized men and women in her novels. Most of her characters are dissatisfied with their personal relationships, and as an outstanding writer she won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1991. Gordimer's masterpiece, *The Conservationist* is about Mehring, a business man who longs for

identity in the land of the Blacks. He plans for his burial on his farm to preserve his identity. But Antonia, his mistress is sure that the desire is futile, as the natives would not let their land to be in the hands of others. In this novel, Gordimer has focused on the importance given to the land and circumcision in Africa.

Chinua Achebe, the most acclaimed Nigerian writer, is born of Igbo descent and is the first African novelist to be read all over the world, and is prescribed in most of the Universities. His works are vastly translated into numerous languages. Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Africa are depicted in the novels of Achebe. Achebe supported the Biafrans, when the region separated from Nigeria and demanded for independence. His first novel, *Things Fall Apart* paints the clash between the Igbo of Nigeria and the European colonization. The first part of the novel describes the normal, pastoral life of the villagers in Umuofia. In a precolonized state, Okonkwo, a leading wrestler claims himself to be the hero of Igbo tradition. But the arrival of the White men, in the later part, brought in new religion, custom, administration and education which disturbed the social harmony of the village. Through this novel, Achebe highlights how social and psychological dominations of the Europeans could be resisted. His third novel *Arrow of God* describes the downfall of Ezeulu, a traditional leader on whom many of the villagers lose their faith at the hands of colonialism.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, a prolific Kenyan writer, reveals an earnest yearning and desire to reside permanently in Kenya. Modernizing Kenya has become a major theme in his early works as he lived through the Mau Mau War of Independence. He had devoted himself for the emancipation and edification of the peasant and worker communities of his country. The blood and sweat of those people were like the



energetic drinks for the pioneers, and Thiong'o strove to create awareness of their social status and the importance of their labour. In his first novel *The River Between*, Thiong'o portrays the traditional Gikuyu society and the peaceful life of the Gikuyu which was spoiled by the intrusion of the Europeans. Exploitation is one of the main themes in his second novel *Weep Not, Child*. Thiong'o sketches the theme of exploitation of the colonized through missionary education through the child Njoroge.

Ama Ata Aidoo, a committed female writer, discloses the tension that prevails between the Western and the African culture. The influence of the Western culture on the native Black people has discomfited her, and in most of Aidoo's novels, she has accumulated her scathing criticism against the imposed culture. All her writings are in support of the Blacks. Her great commitment towards her country and people is revealed through her works. She has detailed the effects of postcolonialism and the changes brought in by the colonizers in the minds of the colonized. Her novel, *Our Sister Killjoy* is about Sissie, a young female migrant who leaves her native land and enters a foreign country expecting a better life.

Buchi Emecheta was a distinguished as a Nigerian writer. She was forced to establish herself as a single parent, since her partner departed from her. *Gwendolen*, Emecheta's most famous work, offers a critical commentary on the sexual abuse of children. *Gwendolen*, a young West Indian girl rises to her adolescent life which is filled only of excruciating agony. In most of her novels, Emecheta has emphasized the problems that women encounter as an expatriate. She has also concentrated on young girls being snatched away from the world of innocence by the sexual exploiters.

The authors discussed above have exhibited fiction as functional and entertaining, aesthetic and didactic. Their works reveal that they are highly complex.

varied and rich in content and form. Following the footsteps of the above said writers, the fledgling Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie concentrates on the themes of identity, racial discrimination, colour consciousness, exploitation, restlessness, moral depravity and much more. Especially she traces out the annoyance of disintegration in Nigeria, which aggravates the intention of the natives to move out of their home and homeland.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a native of Nigeria, was born on 15 September 1977. Adichie writes about colonialism like all other writers, yet she deserves to secure a special place by incorporating the home of her people. She records the sorrows of her people who could not feel being at a home. She has taken pains to focus on the Nigerian home and country that has fallen apart. She considers herself, ridiculously fortunate to be a Nigerian. Her deep passion for the Igbo ethnicity induces her to contribute for the integration of the state. Her parents are James Nwoye Adichie, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Nigeria and Ifeoma Adichie, the first registrar at the University. Adichie was born as the fifth child. Her dream of becoming a writer inflicted her to drop out from the medical school. She had received several academic prizes at the University in Philadelphia. She joined Western Connecticut State University for a degree in Communication and Political Science. Her stay at Connecticut was easy as her sister Igeoma was already running a medical practice close to the university. Later, she completed a master's degree in creative writing at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore.

Adichie realized her desire to write when she was just ten years old. She began writing short stories from thence. She read Achebe's *Arrow of God* when she was ten years old and being influenced by the work of Achebe, she decided to write about



colonialism. From her early stages, she had a deep passion for the ethnicity in Nigeria and was also depressed of the hardships endured by the Nigerian immigrants in America and Britain.

Adichie has been awarded with several prizes which include O. Henry Prize 2003, Anisfield-Wolf Book Award 2007, International Nonino Prize 2009 and Chicago Tribune Heartland Prize 2013. As a young and dynamic Nigerian writer, Adichie has written a play *For Love of Biafra*, a collection of poems *Decisions*, collection of short stories *The Thing Around Your neck*, Her novels includes *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, and *Americanah*. She has also produced a number of short stories and essays which are published in journals, anthologies, newspapers and magazines. Her works have been translated into more than thirty languages. She declares herself as a realist fiction writer of Africa. In all her novels, the characters feel their home is not home because of disintegration.

Adichie's novels reflect everything about the Nigerian society. Adichie, as a creator, has accomplished her task of exposing the social evils of the society. Adichie was completely exposed to the world around her and all her works reflect the societal virtues and vices. She has transported the real life events in her society into fiction and presented it to the society as a mirror with which people can look at themselves and make amends wherever necessary. Adichie has portrayed the challenges between colonizers and colonized worlds in multifarious dimensions and shades of archetypal experience. Her works reveal that the feeling of oneness had not been evolved yet and it is at the point of upspringing in the Nigerians. Like all other African writers Adichie too explores and investigates about the history of Nigeria and its predicament.

Adichie's novels *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah* expose the impact of the western colonization, priority of ethnicity, indigenous and Christian beliefs, dogmatic ruling of the overseers, misfortunes of civil war, agony and longing of the adolescents, murder of the religious zealot and the sole administrator, and the hardships endured by the displaced Nigerians in America and England.

Adichie's debut novel *Purple Hibiscus* published in 2003 was awarded the Commonwealth Writer's Prize for Best First Book. The novel is divided into four main sections. The novelist's childhood experiences are described in the form of a novel where a young girl Kambili of fifteen years narrates the story. Adichie has portrayed the difficulties of adolescence in the characters of Kambili and Jaja. Kambili views hers as a disintegrated family, while she finds her aunt Ifeoma's family to be conjoined. The children are like puppets in the hands of their father Eugene Achike who expects them to follow his high standards. The central character Eugene Achike, the converted Catholic begins abusing his own religious traditions. Though Achike imposes strict authoritarianism at home, he is loved by his daughter. He raises social consciousness among his people by publishing the defects of the corrupt government.

The novel *Purple Hibiscus* comprises a variety of themes that focuses on corruption and religious convictions. Most of the characters beset by political instability are traced out from the postcolonial Nigeria. Adichie's description is around the Nigerian politics which has widespread corruption in the government. The victims, who face atrocious violence at home and country, later on, grow increasingly

bold after several occasions of suffering and subjugation. Attaining liberation from the rigid life is the centralized theme concentrated on by the novelist Adichie

Adichie's second novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* has won Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction in 2007. The novel published in 2006 describes the civil war of 1967-70 in Nigeria during the ethnic clashes. In an interview, Adichie has stated that she was agitated by the impacts of Biafran war. Even though she was born after seven years of the war, it provoked her to write a novel about war. Adichie has dedicated this novel to Nwoye David Adichie and Aro-Nweke Felix Odigwe, her grandfathers whom she lost in the Nigeria-Biafra war and to Nwamgbafor Agnes and Nwabuodu Regina Odigwe, her grandmothers.

*Americanah*, a lengthy novel of Adichie written in seven parts published in 2013, moves on easily from Nigeria to America and England. The novel tells the story of Ifemelu, a spirited young girl who immigrates to America. It was shortlisted for the 2013 National Book Critics Circle Award and selected as one of the ten Best Books of 2013 by the New York Times Book Review. With love, race, identity, integrity and independence as main themes, Adichie has produced a story stressing the need for globalization. Ifemelu and Obinze like Kambili and Jaja in *Purple Hibiscus* come of their age in *Americanah*. To escape from the military dictatorship of Nigeria, they leave their troubled homeland and move to America and England. Before attaining adulthood they are affected by betrayal, disillusionment and loss of identity.

The second chapter deals with the women who are excluded from certain crucial economic and political activities and their roles as wives and mothers are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives than male roles.



## Chapter Two

### Subverting Subalternity

This chapter introduces power relation in *Purple Hibiscus* to investigate how female characters fight with their subjugation and the oppression growing from patriarchy. The images of women and their position in the universe of the novel and the oppressive gender structures which push women to the margins as well as how women came back to the centre is examined.

Simon De Beauvoir modifies the Hegelian concept of “other” in her studies and in description of the male dominated culture. De Beauvoir calls the “other”, the minority and the least interested one. It is the idea of “othering”, which brings about domination. Domination depends on construction of social and cultural differences among people since without differences there would be no basis for distinguishing those who wield power from those who are subjects. The most potent ideas are those that are naturalized to appear not to be created by humans themselves but by nature. Patriarchal thinking for example, holds that men are naturally superior to women. Such ideology justifies male domination and forms the firm foundation of patriarchy. Adichie confronts patriarchy and other forms of marginalization of women in her works.

Patriarchy compels women to believe that their inferior position is natural and irredeemable. Adichie’s writing is an effort to voice internal knowledge and needs of women in a way that challenges the status quo. She reworks earlier images of African women projected by patriarchal order and figures female characters as speaking subjects in *Purple Hibiscus*.

In the *Purple Hibiscus* Eugene fits the descriptions of a Gothic patriarch and Beatrice, Kambili and Jaja are the suffering subjects of his authority. These victims of paternal patriarchal authority do everything possible to claim their free space in the oppressive circumstances occasioned by Eugene.

The character of Beatrice and Ifeoma in *Purple Hibiscus* are a case of women asserting their positions in their societies and challenging patriarchy with its several manifestations. The system of oppression draws much of its strength from the acceptance of its victims, their image and get paralyzed by a sense of helplessness. Adichie's story explores numerous societal structures through which women are oppressed. She identifies domestic violence, religion, tradition, family life, in-lawism, civil unrest extended families, polygamy, desire for sons, racism, colonialism and neocolonialism as being responsible for unequal gender relations forming the basis of exploitation of women and domestic violence that characterize Eugene's household in *Purple Hibiscus*. Adichie introduces polygamy, in-lawism, demand for sons and religious fundamentalism and how they negatively bear on women.

Eugene's attack of his pregnant wife shows the brutal behaviour of the evil face of patriarchy but also the insensitivity of such practice to basic principles of humanity. Mama's act of raising her hands while being flogged together with her children symbolizes surrender and helplessness that made women once exposed to male violence. Adichie condemns Mama's failure to speak about her situation since the silence regained by Eugene results to several misfortunes that would have been averted. Although Mama

is abused and unloved by her cruel husband, she is subservient to her husband as expected in her marriage. Kambili observes:

She cried for a long time. She cried until her hand, clasped in hers, felt stiff. She cried until Aunty Ifeoma finished cooking the rotting meat in a spicy stew. She cried until she fell asleep, her head against the seat of the chair. Jaja laid her on a mattress on the living room floor. (249)

Crying makes Mama's situation to be hopeless and unbearable. Mama cries in the face of violence. When Kambili is hospitalized after being acted by Papa for visiting Papa Nnukwu, she observes from her hospital bed that:

Mama reached out to hold my hand. Her face was puffy from crying, and her lips were cracked, with bits of discoloured skin peeling off. I wished I could get up and hug her and yet I wanted to push her away, to shove her so hard that she would topple over the chair. (213)

The opening lines of *Purple Hibiscus* signal a threat to continued co-existence of the family members because of lack of free space. The home is in turmoil and things are about to fall apart. It means the centre symbolised by male domination cannot hold anymore and further suggests that several centres of authority are necessary. It is in the other centres where the characters living in Eugene's family enjoy their own freedom. Kambili is concerned about every member of the family but does not speak her mind because of lack of freedom. Mama informs the daughter that she will not replace the figurines and Kambili realises that, "when Papa threw the missal at Jaja it was not just the

figurines that came tumbling down, it was everything". The word "Everything" implies even the authority that Papa has taken over his family. Mama's refusal to replace the figurines suggests a need to live without the usual patriarchal control occasioned by Eugene.

Religion is partly to blame for what Papa becomes since he is brought up by a priest and as a result his world is structured in Biblical terms of evil righteousness. The familial space, occupied by Beatrice and her children is so packed with catholic rituals and religious activities that they have no time left for anything else. This happened only because Eugene's cruel domination. However, this constriction of people's freedom dictated by religion exists only at St. Agnes in Enugu and not anywhere else. At Nsukka the church accords its members some liberties and that way religion is a source of freedom and not a burden to the faithful. The church at Enugu knows the happenings at Eugene's house but does nothing to rectify the mess. Father Benedict becomes one of the different types among priests in the novel in sharp contrast with Father Amadi. Adichie pours scorn on any kind of faith that encourages oppression. She calls on her people to reject those churches which do not do anything to expand democratic space or entrench equity among the faithful.

Mama's influence is limited to the domestic space whereas that of Papa is the public space. The world gives him an award for speaking against oppression. The irony of this award is evident when Eugene does not accord the slightest freedom to his family members. In this episode Adichie attacks the patriarchal order that proposes to support and speak for women but oppresses them.



Everyone at Eugene's family exhibits peculiar apprehension occasioned by Papa's religious faith and ritualized living. Eugene's ghost hangs precariously threatening other family members in their private lives. The narrator feels suffocated and the framed photos of the grandfather bear down upon her. Any symbol of the male authority becomes a burden and Kambili happens to see this in all those things that Papa stands for like his religion. Therefore the portrait of Kambili's maternal grandfather becomes one of the symbols of the suppressive patriarchal order in place. Hot tea, given to Kambili by Papa in the name of love is a source of torment to the young narrator: "The tea was always too hot, always burned my tongue and if lunch was something peppery, my raw tongue suffered. But it didn't matter because I knew that when the tea burned my tongue, it burned Papa's love into me" (8).

This kind of punishment that Kambili suffers yet cannot complain about serves to explain how patriarchy manifests itself and destroys those who it is meant to shelter. The hot tea experience points to the contradictions in Papa's house.

Adichie suggests that women should do something to change how society functions through the character of Ifeoma. Ifeoma wonders when people would speak out against oppression and suppression. "Auntie Ifeoma's voice was raised. But the blaze in her eyes was not focused on the woman; she was angry at something bigger than the women before her" (223). Ifeoma is angry about oppression and lack of freedom at both domestic space as well as public levels. It is the disturbing helplessness and passivity that she finds with Beatrice and some colleagues at the university that Adichie admonishes. Adichie's voice calls upon women to identify all forms of social oppression and to go



ahead and confront the same. After Papa's death and Jaja's incarceration Mama and Kambili take over the management of the family and the family finances. They even get to know to bribe, to hire or to fire. Though they are silent that is silence with freedom. This is an indication of a new family that has freedom and some joy though it has its problems and ghosts.

Wives are expected to be mothers and motherhood has over his time been seen as a source of strength in most African communities. All over the world women have had status and respect for their role in nurturing and ensuring continuity. *Purple Hibiscus* surveys motherhood through the characters of Beatrice and Auntie Ifeoma. Simon De Beauvoir argues that women's ability to give birth is subsequently the source of their subordination.

The identity of women is linked to their children and one realises that those women who are childless suffer the indignity of lacking mother-derived identity. The identity of mothers is crucial in getting business names. Such identification serves to marginalize those who are childless. Rarely have women been studied as daughters in literature since the identity of wives and mothers overshadows other identities.

Catholicism is shown as patriarchal in Adichie's works and the voice of women is totally subsumed in its masculine system. Adichie dismantles this ideology when Papa reverts to praying through Mary, Mother of God. Papa prays through Mary and he had designed his own title which is 'our lady shield of the Nigerian people'. From such prayers Adichie undermines the patriarchal order characteristic of the catholic faith. The prayers done through Virgin Mary do prop women to a considerable level of power in the

Catholic Church circles. It is worth nothing that the apparitions of Virgin Mary at Akpe are the source of inspiration to push the quest for freedom to achieve higher.

The illustration of the gospel by Father Benedict rarely mentions Mary-Mother of God, but through Papa, Adichie inscribes the name of a woman in his daily prayers. Consequently authority of women is realised and their state of subordination subverted. Since Catholicism accords a lot of respect to Mary Mother of Jesus, the failure to regard her and other women is a peculiar shortcoming of Father Benedict probably resulting from his colonial and patriarchal mindset. When Amaka suggests an African name for her confirmation, she goes against the traditions of Catholicism and draws an ideal world with stretched freedom.

In *Purple Hibiscus* Auntie Ifeoma and Auntie Phillipa are educated and thus liberated. Ifeoma does not want to marry again after the death of her husband and when Papa Nnukwu informs her of his prayers for her to get a good man to marry her, Ifeoma disagrees because what she requires most is a promotion to a senior lecturer and not get married one more time to suffer. She is free from male influence and determined to enjoy her freedom. Ifeoma's forthrightness and assertiveness are as a result of the power of education. She is educated and aware when things are going wrong. Adichie uses her so that she can contrast her with the sister-in-law Beatrice who depends on her husband economically. Due to lack of proper education and a paying job, Beatrice suffers all the effects of patriarchal domination perpetuated by Eugene and the Igbo culture.

Ifeoma becomes strong with her education and she leads her life on her own without depending on others. She is liberated from the patriarchy and is able to give

voices for the society, she is exiled but she does not stop her action. She continues to give voice for the voiceless and searches for a good paying job. She is strong and her achievement shows the power of education on her. Adichie portrays the miracle of education for women empowerment through projecting characters who are educated and others with less or no education so as to draw parallels and give some freedom to the educated ones. Educated women in the novel are able to escape male oppression unlike the uneducated ones. The educated women can voice against suppression, oppression and also towards male domination.

In this chapter inequalities, restrictions, penalties and denials directed toward women in Adichie's novels have been identified. It emerges that tradition, religion, marriage, motherhood and the desire for baby boys among other factors are to blame for the silencing of the African woman. Adichie strongly indicts those institutions and practices which perpetuate gender inequality and continue to marginalize women. The chapter also explores the different strategies Adichie adopts to accord women a voice in the face of the silencing structures. Women's writing is taken and understood as a process of challenging the dominating powers and creating oppositional discourse so as to engender change. The way Adichie's female characters struggle to end their oppression is an issue that has received special attention in this chapter. Speaking to traditions and cultures that are suppressive, strong female characters, education for women and female bonding are identified as the strategies that women and female writers utilize to fight oppression and exclusion. Although other African female writers explore the gender issue discussed in this chapter before, Adichie has unique voice in the sense that her works are cast in wider human oppression and not necessarily exploitation confined to sexuality and



gender. Her approach to fighting oppression confirms that despite the struggles by women to assert themselves in a world dominated by men through the ways identified in this chapter the war against gender subordination in Africa is far from over.

The ensuing chapter attempts to expose the internal and external struggle of the adolescents in a disintegrated home and homeland.

## Chapter Three

### Postcolonial Perspective

And the sins of the Eastern father  
Shall be visited upon the Western sons,  
Often taking their time, Stored up in the  
Genes like baldness or testicular Carcinoma,  
But sometimes on the very same day.

- Zadie Smith

Postcolonialism deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. It had a clear Chronological meaning, designating the post independence period and from the late 1970s, the term has been used by critics to denote the various cultural effects of colonization. It has also been widely used to signify the political, linguistic and cultural experience of societies that were former European Colonies.

The most significant effect of Postcolonial Criticism is the undermining of the universal claim once made on behalf of literature by liberal humanist critics. There was a preference to judge all literature by a single 'universal' standard and thereby, disgraced Cultural, Social, Regional and National differences in views and experiences. The theory does not confine itself to literature only. but it extends to performance media, art and film.

Postcolonial women theory in one aspect. It is interested in exploring why and how women have served as symbols in the nationalist imaginary, as well as in the actual historical role they played in many anti colonial struggles. A closely related

subject of interest is the situation of women caught in a conflict that all postcolonial societies experience acutely that between a putative 'tradition' and 'modernity'. To conclude with a study of the implication queer sexualities have had for national, imperial and 'international' politics.

The novel *Purple Hibiscus* analyzes the characters through the postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory mainly focused on the Colonizer and Colonized people and also the nation, The theorists especially focused the postcolonial aspects through the gender discrimination because each and every situation focused through the characters behaviour and their actions. This chapter takes up three key terms of postcolonial studies – 'hybridity', 'semoitics' and 'post colonial' views. Semoitics analyzes through the deconstruction theory of Derrida.

The term 'hybridity' commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. 'Hybridity' is also a useful concept for helping to break down the false sense that colonized cultures. It can be analysed through the social, linguistic, political and religious. Postcolonial perspective emerges an important concept in post colonial theory, referring to the integration of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and colonized countries.

Hybridity in the postcolonial sense, is the third location created out of the fusing of two or more locales. This third location of course, exists not on maps but in the minds and hearts of peoples exposed to these conflicting cultures. Hybridity or post nationalism has been the future of postcoloniality despite its limitations. With the speed with which globalization is gaining popularity and force around the world, hybridity is fast becoming the unstoppable fate of many postcolonial societies. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's works in light of this will find that she too, suggests



that hybridity is the future of postcoloniality. She believes in the retention of native languages and cultures and histories, but not by stopping the expansion of foreign cultures in the native land.

The evolution and change of cultural course is in practice in *Purple Hibiscus* first with the theme of Catholic Christianity. In the novel the situation of admission of Christianity as having come as part of the colonization mission but its overarching depiction in the novel is not as a foreign and alien religion as it is in the novels *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. In Adichie's generation of writing, christianity has obviously evolved and changed into a less foreign culture and because its indigenization has lapsed history. It is therefore nearing the stage of seeming and being depicted as 'organic' in the Nigerian Society.

The plot line in *Purple Hibiscus* is also highly reliant on the becoming hybridity of Kambili, the impetus of the story being the process she undergoes in negotiating and Weighing traditional and modern identities in the present day of Nigeria. But it is not only plots that are based on cultural hybridity, Characters in these works are also related with the predicament of being a hybrid in one way or another. The characters in Adichie's novel can be classified into Five major groups. They are the pure native, the hybrid resister, the perfectly balanced hybrid, the mimic men, the pure colonizer and the exceptionally good white.

The pure natives are indigenous Nigerian and still exist in the form that one imagines precolonial Africans to have existed. These characters are not only highly traditionalists, they are unequivocally good. They are wise, beautiful, content, stable and they always know the right things to say. The author portrays these untainted, essentialized personalities in a way that shows she is protective of their characteristic

as one thing only when they are purely good. For example, Papa-Nukwu in *Purple Hibiscus*. To take Papa-Nukwu as an illustration, he is an aged grandfather of the main character Kambili but is shunned by his wealthy catholic son, that is Kambili's father, because of his heathen ways. Throughout the novel Adichie shows him as exhibiting the sense of humour that makes his cosmopolitan grandchildren laugh and giggle, tells them delicious folk stories in the dark and yields profound wisdom and integrity unprotestingly forgives his son for Ostracizing him. The respectable and honourable quality of Adichie has endowed him in the following excerpt where Kambili is watching in hiding, as he prays to his 'Heathen' Gods or ancestors at sunrise.

Papa-Nukwu was on a low stool, his legs bent into a triangle... A kerosene lamp, turned to its lowest, was right next to him... He leaned down to draw a line on the floor with the Nzu in his hand. He was speaking, his face down...." "Chineke! I thank you for this new morning! I thank you for the sun that rises". His lower lip quivered as he spoke... He bent down to draw another line, with the fierce determination that shook the flesh on his arm, "Chineke! I have killed no one, I have taken no one's land, I have not committed adultery". He leaned over and draw the third line. "Chineke! I have wished others well. I have helped those who have nothing with the little that my hands can spare."...A Cock was Crowing..."Chineke! Bless me. Let me find daughter, Ifeoma. Giver her enough for her family... Chineke! Bless my son, Eugene. Let the sun not set on his prosperity. Lift the curse they have put on him...". I was surprised that he prayed for Papa with the same earnestness that he prayed for himself and Auntie Ifeoma (168).



In *Purple Hibiscus*, Christianity affords its faith holders the type of social capital that is not enjoyed by those who follow Igbo traditions. Papa Nnukwu exemplifies this very point. Eugene's father, Papa Nnukwu, holds true to Igbo traditions and incurs his son's disapproval in doing so. Although Papa Nnukwu appears to be an eternal optimist, the facts in the narrative show the desolate conditions of his life. He cannot afford medicine, and he survives on the bare essentials. Kambili describes Papa Nnukwu's home by stating that "The house that stood in the middle of the compound was small, compact like dice, and it was hard to imagine Papa and Auntie Ifeoma growing up here" (63). Prior to this description of Papa Nnukwu's meager dwelling is Kambili marveling at the enormity of her own home: "She proclaims that her house is majestic with me four stories, a a spurting fountains in front and the coconut trees on both sides and orange trees in the front yard" (55). Eugene's home exemplifies the social capital that is afforded to the conservative Christian believers in this novel.

Eugene, a central character lives lavishly and comfortably while arguably, Papa Nnukwu suffers physically from ailments for which he has no medicine. Adichie has skillfully constructed a clear tension between the privileged positionality afforded to conservative Christian followers and the inferior positionality of traditionalists. Just as Eugene is the embodiment of the colonizer's Christianity, Papa Nnukwu represents the Igbo and more importantly, the colonized Igbo. Eugene's identity is an endless entanglement of traditionalism and christianity. But the text deconstructs itself, however, it shows that Eugene could not assume a role of hardened superiority without being an Igbo. His strict observance of Christianity is the result of an inextricable relativism with the Igbo tradition that Derrida States:

The Identity of a culture is a way of being different from itself; a culture is different from itself; language is different from itself; the person is different from itself. Once you take into account this inner and other difference, then you pay attention to the other and you understand that fighting for your own identity is not exclusive of another identity, is open to another identity. (13)

Eugene feels that removing Igbo from his identity is an impossibility because doing so would compromise his power dampening it. Adichie constructs Eugene's character in such a way that his devotion to Christianity can simultaneously be interpreted as his cleaving to Igbo. Eugene believes that to be free of Igbo traditions would mean his fanatical devotion to Christianity would be dismantled. In order to illustrate the inherent instability of the Christian traditionalist binary, it makes sense to examine the aforementioned scenes in order to absorb how the scenes contradict themselves. Kambili, recalling the moments shortly after Papa and Jaja's confrontation states that "Our steps on the stairs were as measured and as silent as a Sunday: the silence of waiting until Papa was done with his Siesta so we could have lunch; the silence of reflection time, when Papa gave us a scripture to read and mediate on" (31). It shows Papa's dominance enveloped in the colonizer's christianity and the colonizer. Eugene's power is fueled by silence, subservience, and hatred. In other words, although his power and oppression exist, that power cannot be defined without those he oppresses.

Kambili describes instances of the family remaining silent until Papa was done with his siesta and the silence of reflection time. This silence empowers Eugene and promotes the growth of his dominance. Emerging from the paradox is the simultaneous privileging of the subordinating element represented by Eugene's family

in this binary opposition. In a border sense, this is one of the first examples in *Purple Hibiscus* of the colonized binary being problematized. The problematized binary is the understanding that colonized.

The colonized is what brings into existence the colonizer. Essentially, both the colonized and the colonizer occupy the same privileged position. Not only is the hierarchical tension inverted in Adichie's text, but the text continuously collapses onto itself resulting in an erasure of any linear construction of meaning. After hearing Aunt Ifeoma and her children mix Igbo into the Catholic rosary, Kambili describes her state of mind thus: "I felt as if my shadow was visiting Aunty Ifeoma and her family, while the real me was studying in my room in Enugu, my schedule posted above me" (125). Adichie seems to suggest here that Eugene's conservative Christian indoctrination of Kambili has resulted in her being in a state of limbo. Her shadow is with Aunt Ifeoma and the mixed religions but her body is back in Enugu following her father's strict schedules. Kambili's shadow that was visiting Aunty Ifeoma and her family appears to be Kambili's essence that seeks to dismantle the metanarrative that Eugene has perpetuated. Visiting Aunt Ifeoma has introduced Kambili to the idea that Christianity can be manipulated to suit the needs and desires of those who practise it. Before this visit, Kambili is very much indoctrinated to believe that Christianity is a singular, pure institution that transcends all who believe in it. The visit with Aunt Ifeoma dismantles this notion for Kambili, throwing her into a tailspin. She is now introduced to the concept of faith holders being autonomous agents and practising their faith in a way that suits them rather than situating themselves to accommodate the religion. Kambili can never unlearn this knowledge since that is the case, She partitions her spirit and body in order to make sense of her



world. While She visits Aunt Ifeoma, she disciplines herself and controls her body so that she remains true to her father's wishes. She does not join in singing and continues to silence her voice. However her essence and her shadow, remain open and free to subverting the grand narrative that has been instilled in her throughout her whole life. Kambili's spirit, free from her father's taint, devours the concept of agency.

Adichie's narrative continues to unravel itself at this point. Although Kambili partitions her spirit and body, both occupy a space of ambiguity and ambivalence that privileges neither tradition over the other. Derrida points out that the instability of language creates a space in which newness emanates.

That is what deconstruction is made of not the mixture but the tension between memory, fidelity, the preservation of something that has been given to us, and at the same time, heterogeneity, something absolutely new, and a break. The condition of this performative success, which is never guaranteed, is the alliance of these to newness (6).

Eugene's insistence on Papa Nnukwu having a Christian funeral is a scene in which memory, fidelity, and heterogeneity occupy the same expense. Eugene tells Aunt Ifeoma, "I cannot participate in a pagan funeral, but can discuss with the parish priest and arrange a Catholic funeral" (189). As it is mentioned in the previous close-reading of this scene, Aunt Ifeoma is outraged by Eugene's apparent callousness for wanting to impose Christianity on Papa Nnukwu, a steadfast traditionalist such an important transitional state. Using Derrida as a guide for examining now this line deconstructs itself, this scene shows a heterogeneity that sparks new possibilities.

Despite Eugene's long-standing disapproval of Papa Nnukwu's traditionalist beliefs, he nonetheless wants to involve himself in laying his father to rest. Here the novel *Purple Hibiscus* unravels itself in a stylistic fashion. Eugene insists that he "cannot participate in a pagan funeral," but then he goes on to say that he will inquire about a Christian funeral instead. No matter what type of funeral Papa Nnukwu has, he is still considered a "pagan" according to Christian beliefs because of his traditionalist beliefs. Therefore, whether he is buried according to traditional beliefs or Christian rites, he, himself, is still a pagan. The same Eugene, and the wealth he has accrued and maintained because of his strict Christian principles, Papa Nnukwu would not be laid to rest in an honourable and traditionalist way. In this case, Eugene is still entangled in this tension between Christianity and traditionalism because his money and his spirit are the impetus behind Papa Nnukwu's spiritual transition.

Post-Colonialism is thus projected in the novel. As a postcolonial text it is all about the political and cultural effects of the nation. As Bhabha contends "such 'indeterminism' is the mark of the conflictual yet productive space in which the arbitrariness of the sign of cultural signification emerges within the regulated boundaries of social discourse"(173). Adichie's dismantled text points to the ambivalence that is created when the colonized binary is pulled apart. Each segment of the binary only has meaning because of the other segment. Again, Bhabha's theories on postcolonial discourse support this notion. He states, "The Postcolonial Perspective resists the attempt at holistic forms of social explanation. It forces a recognition of the more complex cultural and political boundaries that exist on the cusp of these often opposed political spheres" (174). In terms of the text, the colonizer

has no meaning without the colonized and the colonized has no meaning without the colonizer.

Postcolonial literary theory inadequately defines the postcolonial identity because it attempts to engage in interpretation and reinterpretation within the context of a binary opposition that is unstable, baseless and meaningless. The fourth chapter aims to bring out how Adichie satirises upon the male chauvinistic attitude in the family and the society.

## Chapter Four

### Gender Discrimination

When you grow up as a girl, it is like there are faint chalk lines traced approximately three inches around your entire body at all times, drawn by society and often religious and family and particularly other women, who somehow feel invested in how you behave, as if your actions reflect directly on all womanhood.

- M. E. Thomas

The term, "childhood" is generally recognized as a socially constructed phenomenon. The construction of childhood identity is thus dependent on culturally determined behaviour of a given society. Therefore, it is inevitable that the socialization of the girl-child will be marked by the existence of distinct gender roles. This is because the role which is often seen as ideal for the girl, is a being whose purpose is derived from the existence of another, whether husband, father or extended family and whose locus is the home or household. Often, this is done with the objective of turning the girl into a good wife or mother as the hallmark of a successful woman.

Hence in feminist writings, there is a deliberate attempt to deconstruct literary representations of femininity and girlhood. There is a result of the sex role stereotyping of children into specific modes of behavior deemed acceptable. For instance, in many short stories, it is the tradition to cast boys in the roles of heroes and protagonists while the girls are often cast in domestic roles. This causes gender discrimination in the novels. It can be seen therefore, that patriarchal values still



dominate many literary genres above childhood. Kate Millett takes gender differences to have essentially cultural but rather than the biological part of something. For her, gender is "the sum total of the parents", peers and culture's notions of what is appropriate to each gender by way of temperament, character, interests, status, work, gesture and expression. (31)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie uses a female protagonist, Kambili rather than her brother Jaja to tell the story of *Purple Hibiscus*. This is deliberate because the traditional model from a boy whose voice carries on the narration throughout the novel. But, in a typical novel by women writers, the stories told about to be married and her self-development is then motivated by her frustrations with her life and her problems are often tied to a controlling husband in a failed marriage. But for the young female protagonist Kambili, the author allows her development to be shaped by events around her and she even saw her mother's suffering under the control of a cruel husband, and also her family, school and interaction with other members of the society shape her world view and how she reacts to events. Her father, Eugene puts over control and rules on his daughter Kambili to be submissive and without her own voice. He refuses to allow her to develop freedom. And he does not permit an independent mind in order not to question his authority and decisions. In his house, schedules are prepared for her and her brother Jaja and nothing is done without his permission. for example, not even a simple action like turning on the television or stereo and also a smile. They grow without knowing how to smile and how to laugh. These are all because of her terrible father.

Adichie in depicting a girl-child as the protagonist gives room for the character to develop with her different experiences in the novel. This is done with the



aim of helping her to find a voice at the end of the story. Adichie also makes a strong case for girl-education. Kambili is depicted as not just intelligent but top of her class and she never came down of her level. Also, unlike what is to be established in many conventional African societies, Kambili is allowed to have her first crush as a teenager. Adichie allows a reader to go through her intimate moments as a young woman coming to terms with her inner feelings. She falls in love with a priest, Father Amadi. Even as young as she was, the author demonstrates the right of a girl to express her sexuality in a controlled way and not be repressed on account of her gender.

Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is built around the lives of Beatrice, Ifeoma and Kambili among others. These female characters portray one quality which is uniquely womanist. They are conscious of the male-engineered exploitation and prepared to confront patriarchy in all its manifestations. Beatrice is most oppressed and suffers most among all the female characters in *Purple Hibiscus*. Her husband Eugene is a domestic bully and an inconsiderate patriarch out to exert his crude masculine authority at the slightest provocation. Beatrice, however, remains steadfast and does not dissolve her marriage even when things are not working. She cannot afford to be labeled a divorcee and wants to keep the family despite the odds that male domination controls her efforts. This great compliment toward Eugene captures Adichie's feelings on polygamy. It is simply unnecessary, exploitative and a retrogressive practice that needs to be urgently dealt with and discarded. In Beatrice, the character honestly plays her social responsibilities well. Even though she was brutally abused by her husband, she remains in marriage for the sake of her children. She serves her husband

and children diligently and dutifully as a wife and a mother. Kambili observes that she always plaited her hair on Sundays. In one episode the narrator observes:

I was at my study desk when Mama came into my room, my school uniforms piled on the crook of her arm. She placed them on my bed. She had brought them from the lines in the backyard, where I have hung them to dry that morning... "Thank you Mama, I was about to bring them in", I said, getting up to fold the clothes. It was not proper to let an older person do your chores, but Mama did not mind, there was so much that she did not mind. (19)

Ifeoma is progressive and feels that the husband and wife relation should not be marked by brutality of whatever magnitude. She advocates for the concern of one another in the marriage arrangement thus she tells the sister-in-law that "Ifeoma and I had nothing eh! Yet he never raised a hand to me". Adichie discredits situations where material things are used as the justification for women to remain permanently cooped in abusive marriages. Through Ifeoma and her house, we witness love at the family and the bloom of diverse ideas in her house just like the flowers in her garden. Ifeoma's family members diversity becomes a source of strength. As they prepare to go out of the country, there are those who are opposed to the same. All the divergences are accommodated.

Ifeoma compliments her brother and takes care of the aging father without any diffidence. Eugene rejects the old man but then the sister behaves differently and helps Papa Nnukwu when he has become frail due to old age. It is also through Ifeoma that her brother's children discover the truth about their grandfather and realize the freedom in her house and the world. It is at Nsukka where the vision of

freedom is realized through the little family garden of flowers and Aokpe apparitions. It becomes very clear to them that a different world away from the oppressive air of Enugu is possible. This is a world without stringent controls where it can do the best for ourselves and still regard the humanity of others. Father Amadi reveals how human beings have their own dignity as he interacts with the boys at the football stadium. He also promotes humanity in the way he interacts with the troubled Kambili. He does not take advantage of her situation even when Kambili tells him that she loves him. Father Amadi interacts with Ifeoma's family very well and the children whose father is dead regard him as their religious father. He advises and admonishes when and where necessary.

Adichie suggests that violence constricts women should be eliminated but those men who regard and respect women should be projected positively as she does with Jaja. Jaja's sacrifice marks the process of bridging the gender divide and partly the healing process of the strained gender relations. Jaja becomes the redeemer and for once realizes:

I should have taken care of Mama... God works in mysterious ways...

Look what he did to his faithful servant Job, even to his own son. But have you ever wondered why? Why did he have to murder his own son so we would be saved? Why didn't he just go ahead and save us? (284)

While family care by mothers should be complemented by love of fathers so as to build a joyous family, Beatrice's effort to care for the husband and children is paid by molestation from her husband. Lack of appreciation means lack of love for the wife and children and so Eugene fails in his role as a husband. Ifeoma gives the love and concern and her family is a lovely haven full of happiness.

To Adichie, the re-birth of the family is essential since freedom at the family level means freedom at the national level. When Adichie presents her last chapter and calls it 'a different silence' she suggests that men are essential in the lives of women and vice versa. The silence in that final section in *Purple Hibiscus* is occasioned by the absence of Jaja and Papa. It is the silence where the diverse voices of both men and women are lacking. Adichie advocates for the need of men, but she also suggests doing away with those who cause suffering for women. She is propagating her dream of gender roles.

Responding to a question from the audience during an interview with *fora*. Adichie expresses her deep worry about modern religious state of the world. She remarks:

We have to engage with religion because it's a huge force. I think it is shocking in debates that go on to invoke God in spaces where really God has no business of being invoked. There's a problem with people telling you constantly how born again they are, how close to their pastor they are when actually we should be talking about why pensions aren't being paid etc. I believe religion can be a force for incredible good but I have a problem with the brand of religion that seems to be exploding in Nigeria now. In lagos there's a church in everybody's backyard and poor people are giving their money to pastors who then buy private jets. Nobody sees the horror of it, because it's all in God's name, covered if you like by God. I think that is very worrying and it's something we should talk about more in Nigeria rather than covering up this kind of corruption in Jesus name. (56)



While financial corruption in Jesus name is not a major issue in *Purple Hibiscus* Papa's appropriation of Catholicism, leads to a corruption of his family home, warranting the kind of concern expressed by Adichie above. According to Ike,

Religion is such a huge force, so easily corruptible and yet so of doing incredible good. The streak of intolerance I see masquerading itself as faith and the way we create an image of God that suits us, are things I am interested in questioning. I am also interested in colonized religion, how people like me can profess and preach an aspect of their indigenous culture and yet cling so tenaciously to a religion that considers most that indigenous culture evil. Religion in this novel is seen to have evolved from man's relationship with his God, to a tool for violence.

The weight of religion is expressed by Adichie through the character of Eugene in *Purple Hibiscus*. The novel begins with Jaja's rebellion against his deeply religious Catholic father when he deliberately did not take part in communion on Palm Sunday, an important Christian religious holiday.

The narrative in *Purple Hibiscus* introduces the central conflict right at the beginning. Eugene, who sees himself as a devout catholic sets a standard in his house that does not allow for any flexibility. Rules on appropriate behaviour at home and outside the home are set. When a routine is violated contrary to his instructions, Eugene reacts by acts of violence in which his wife is the principal recipient. An instance in the novel is when his wife is reluctant to visit the priest after mass because of her pregnant status, beats her up, oblivious of her pregnant status. Kambili describes the scene thus:

I WAS IN MY ROOM after lunch, reading James chapter five, when I hear the sounds. Swift, heavy thuds on my parent's hand-carved bedroom door. I imagined the door had gotten stuck and Papa was trying to open it. If I imagined it hard enough, then it would be true. I sat down, closed my eyes, and started to count. Counting made it seem not that long, made it seem not that bad. Sometimes it was over before I even got to twenty. I was at nineteen when the sounds stopped. I heard the door open. Papa's gait on the stairs sounded heavier, more awkward, than usual... Mama was slung over his shoulder like the jute sacks of rice his factory workers bought in bulk at the Seme Border. (32-33)

Kambili gives a vivid description of what transpires when she continues, "We cleaned up the trickle of blood, which trailed away as if someone had carried a leaking jar of red watercolor all the way downstairs. "Jaja scrubbed while I wiped" (33). Afterwards Eugene asked the children to recite sixteen different novenas for Mama's forgiveness. Eugene's house is like a luxurious concentration camp where all the trapping of wealth couldn't mask the constant battery and various acts of violence that take place. His wife, Beatrice's polishing of the figurines was her way of containing her emotional and psychological turmoil after each physical assault. Not even the pregnancy of a much awaited child is enough to persuade Eugene against executing God's imagined justice on his unlucky and long-suffering wife whose physical demands as a result of early pregnancy could not be tolerated. This is how Beatrice recounts her experiences to Aunty Ifeoma, her sister in-law, who lives in Nsukka:

I got back from the hospital today. The doctor told me to rest but I took Eugene's money and asked Kevin to take me to the Park. I hired a taxi and came here... You know that small table where we keep the family Bible? Eugene broke it on my belly. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save the pregnancy . . . (248).

Eugene beats his pregnant wife to the point of miscarriage over a domestic dispute. She attributes her inability to bear more children to the constant beating and subsequent miscarriages that follows each beating by her husband. After her discharge from the hospital, Eugene invites the priest to his house for him to cleanse the house from all unrighteousness and pray for the forgiveness of his wife's sin of disobedience. The irony in the novel is shown when Eugene requests the priest, to cleanse the family from the mother's sinful act of refusing to visit the priest after mass, despite the miscarriage caused by the beatings.

Eugene uses power over his wife and children to whip them into fearful submission. The wife's subordinate position as a full time housewife with no educational background or money of her own makes it easy for her husband to perpetuate violence against her and their children without her making any effort to stop the violence or report it for fear of losing her marriage and her source of dependence.

Physical and psychological violence is experienced in Eugene's home as well as acts of resistance as found at the beginning of the novel. The dinner table is where the order of ritual, including the invention of tradition is enacted through Papa Eugene symbolically presiding over prayers and novenas, some lasting for up to twenty minutes. Kambili describes a normal activity at meal time by Papa. "For twenty

minutes he asked God to bless the food. Afterwards, he intoned the blessed Virgin in several different titles" (11). A religious polite behavior is illustrated in an obsessive compulsion to pray before and after meals, as well as during the meal, to be a perfect example of the pervasion of ritual activity in this household. These activities also depict the functioning of patriarchal power. Simon de Beauvoir says that "Social discrimination produces in women's moral and intellectual effects so profound that they appear to be caused by nature" (18).

The fact that certain women occupied a position of power in pre-colonial Africa cannot be dismissed, as it is true that women could exercise sovereignty in some parts of Africa. But, the changes brought by colonialism which include the creation of many patriarchal systems of leadership contributed to the undermining and denigration of women and many African societies. Women suffer especially because of oppressive cultural traditions, many of which still persist in modern African societies like Nigeria. In *Purple Hibiscus*, Beatrice in many ways personifies the stereotyped image of many African women as subdued and victimized without a voice of their own. By introducing Ifeoma and Amaka, Adichie offers a more nuanced and complex picture of contemporary African women. Eugene's younger sister Ifeoma and her daughter Amaka represent Beatrice's and Kambili's opposites. Where the latter is suppressed and silent, Ifeoma stands out as a modern, strong, outspoken and independent woman. With her independence and courage, Ifeoma contributes to demystifying the patriarchal and despotic establishment she is a part of Beatrice's upbringing and marriage has made her a woman of few words, quietly accepting the mental and physical cruelties committed by a fanatic father and her present husband. She had a hope and serves her husband in all possible ways and becomes a shadow in



her own life without her own voice and opinions. Eugene seems to believe that Beatrice rids him of all evil intentions and thus makes her the catalyst of his frustrations.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, the economic benefits of being married to Eugene represent a security Beatrice in her position is not able to change for her personal freedom and integrity. She is brought up in a time where women's place was at home and Beatrice has accepted her role as mother and nurturer. Beatrice interrogates, "A woman with children and no husband, what is that?" (75). Being Eugene's wife seems more important to Beatrice than the sufferings the marriage implicates. Even when Eugene almost beats her to death and she loses her long-desired unborn child, Beatrice still acts as the loyal and devoted wife:

She wrote the same white t-shirt with GOD is LOVE written on the front. Her green wrapper hung lower than usual on her waist; it had been knotted with a lazy effort on the side. Her eyes were vacant, like the eyes of those mad people who wandered around the roadside garbage dumps in town, pulling grimy, torn canvas bags with their life fragments inside. There was an accident, the baby is gone, she said.

(34)

Having suffered years of battering from Eugene she seems to have lost her sense of self. Despite her husband's violence against Kambili, Beatrice refuses to leave, clinging to her conviction of marriage as scared and her only way of existence. Eventually Beatrice is the character that is more surprising, silently poisoning Eugene slowly to death in order to save herself and the children. The name Beatrice, meaning the bringer of joy or the blessed gets a deeper meaning to the reader when she finally

finds the courage to save her children. Her actions reveal a deeper strength than expected of a woman who is oppressed to an extent almost unthinkable, leaving her to be the true heroine in Kambili's story. Although she is the self-appointed martyr throughout, she impresses with her final and most important decision made in her life: she craves and takes back the liberty on behalf of the family. Her personal outcome is not happy but she manages to save her children from a life of entrapment and violence. The fifth chapter sums up all the chapters and brings out the researcher's finding.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

African literature has a history dating back to ancient times, as far back as any other society may have begun its literary production. It is better-documented, studied and popularized. The factors behind this are many while most importantly are colonization and the fact that much of traditional African literature is predominantly oral literature.

The thesis is entitled as 'A Postcolonial Study of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*'. This final section of the study is to recapitulate the major arguments during the study and make recommendations for further research. The study reveals that Adichie and her female characters from the progressive voices calling for change in the society treats women and the marginalized. Adichie's writing is identified as a contemporary voice from the margins which requires serious consideration as the African society grapples with gender, class, ethnic and other social inequalities. It is a voice of agency that seeks to challenge the established structures of the oppressive male order at both domestic and national levels.

This chapter sums up all the above chapters. The first chapter 'Introduction' has dealt with the introduction to African literature its origin from oral literature and the form of writing style. It dealt with the periods of African nation with the colonial period, pre-colonial period and also the postcolonial period and the present condition and the situations of the African nation. Then it tells about the common themes used by the African writers and it shows the condition of the nation especially Africa. It dealt with the clash between the past and the present its culture and the traditional condition compared with the modern society but the common area is about the

patriarchal domination, racism, immigrants, struggles of women under their control. It gives an introduction to the female writers and how they emerged and it gives the reason by which the situation makes them expose their feelings through their writings.

The beginning point of their struggles make them to write their problems and struggles in their writings so that the world can understand their condition. Then about the African female writers and their common theme was based upon male domination. It shows the condition of the postcolonial in African writings and about the introduction to postcolonial theory. Africa is a colonized country so the condition most probably based on colonial problems the influence of the foreign cultures into their country will follow their own Igbo cultures and their rituals and the fighting between their cultures and tradition problems will rise in the country due to colonization. This chapter says about the history of the past and it was dealt with different theory and theorists for analyzing the problems. Adichie's writings almost based on the themes of V. S. Naipaul and Chinua Achebe, because they are the influences so she used their method, style and their techniques in her writings.

This chapter introduces African women scholars with their abilities. They tell about women empowerment through self development and self identity in the African Nation that helps them to overcome their oppression is mentioned by all the African women writers as well as through the African scholars. The study focused on the novel of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. Many interpretations and interviews are given in the novel. The interviews of the other people help the readers get some ideas about the condition of the novel and also the postcolonial situations of the African country. The interviews show the patriarchal control in African country. The interpretation and the



interview expose the distribution of power and the complex relationship between literature and the politics of the nation.

The project mainly focused on the novel of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. It says about the male domination and their over women and the silence of the women in Africa. Then the novel throws light on gender discrimination which is also dealt through the control of male over female. It also has focused on the postcolonial condition with many theorists. The postcolonial theorists are Edward Said, Homi. K. Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak. This chapter says about how the novel *Purple Hibiscus* came into the postcolonial situation and it gives a brief introduction about the condition of Nigeria under postcolonial condition and also about the characters in the novel how they struggled and suppressed under the male domination. Many scholars have given their literary reviews about the novel *Purple Hibiscus*.

The study of Adichie's most important novel *Purple Hibiscus* and the second chapter 'Subverting Subalternity' gives a detailed introduction about the plot and it gives a short introduction about other works of the novelist. Adichie and her female characters are informed by personal experience or historical truths. Her texts are not biographies. Adichie is a voice against oppression and exploitation. She criticises different forms of oppression and exploitation that muzzle the human spirit and demean the soul. Adichie examines the oppression of women and indignity suffered by women and African people in the postcolonial dispensation. The study discusses how she imagines the predicament of African women of that nation. The novel therefore can be read as an allegory of the national situation. To realise that the marital failings, romantic relationships, maternal miscarriages and deaths have a symbolic meaning in the novel. The study notes that Adichie's characters are

inscribed in a complex sphere of meaning whereby their personal stories become allegories of the Nigerian situation. This study argues that Nigerian women in particular and African women in general are still oppressed, exploited and degraded by a mix of traditional cultures and the modern forms of patriarchy. Violence against women and children, desire for sons, in-law problems, polygamy, traditions, illiteracy, complacency and religious intolerance are isolated as core challenges that still burden the African women.

Adichie challenges women to have a voice so as to confront their oppression. Silence in *Purple Hibiscus*, for instance, is to blame for the suffering that Beatrice and her children go through. In the novel, Adichie tells women to talk back to their oppressors so that their condition may be redeemed. This study affirms that women employ several strategies to battle with the patriarchal order in their societies. In confronting the patriarchy, women are not adversarial but work tirelessly to keep their household intact. This is achieved through the lives of various female characters. Adichie does not destroy her male characters despite their weaknesses and in doing so, she advances the womanist idea of complementation. Women literacy, adoption, female solidarity, voicing oppression, strong women characters and challenging oppressive traditional practices are sampled as strategies that give women the capacity to fight oppression and exploitation. Adichie has also used male characters that are weak and morally inferior so as to plead the case for oppressed women.

The Female characters in her texts are tolerant to the failings of their men, an aspect which serves to help in our conclusion that Adichie is an African womanist. For instance, it is notable that Beatrice, in *Purple Hibiscus*, goes through hell and not for once, does she think or attempt to divorce Eugene. Ifeoma is also determined to

safeguard the honour of her husband even when he is dead. She has a lot of positive feelings about him.

The third chapter 'Postcolonial Perspective' has been dealt as family conflicts is the colonial oppression. The Colonization was a fate-changer not only for Africa but for many other parts of the world that suffered decades if not centuries of western dominion over their culture, human organization and resources. This western invasion of indigenous societies throughout the world on an unprecedented scale, met with instinctual resistance by the invaders. However, postcolonial theory derives its sentiment from anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles while its intellectual critique arm dealt with the heritage of western philosophy and of the European humanities and universalism. It was in the late 1960s that a wave of postcolonial critics started to properly examine the most basic ideologies of colonialism and begin a search for a cure to the postcolonial condition that was uniformly inherent across formerly colonized societies.

This theory concerned itself with the critical remembrance of the colonial past, deconstruction of the colonial ideology and ways forward for the post-colonial societies bearing the legacies left behind. One of the various lines of scholarship that this theory found ways into literary studies. In fact, postcolonial literary study is one of the most important branches of postcolonial theory due to the instrumentality that literature is believed to have wielded in the colonizing project. Postcolonial literature is therefore an important area of study to postcolonial studies in general and many scholars have specialized in this domain as we have seen in preceding chapters. Recalling what has been said about modern African literature virtually being a study inextricably dependent on the political and social realities in the history of the



continent, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie then automatically becomes a writer whose works will be studied in the light of Africa's history of which most looming is colonialism.

In other words, studies of modern African literature almost always are, quintessentially, a postcolonial study. But in addition to that, our analysis has shown that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a writer whose works are shot with the postcolonial condition. The novel is analysed using the deconstruction and postcolonial theories and semiotics. The different types of character that were inherently linked to hybridity in one way or another in order to form the backbone of the theme of the works, more shown in *Purple Hibiscus*.

The fourth chapter 'Gender Discrimination' tells the prime aspect of the 'Womanist' in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* novel is stated. Childhood identity and the girl child is stressed because the girl takes the role of the mother, sister and so on. This shows her success in the world and for the society her duty is to maintain the household things. In many novels the male takes the role of the central character and he only narrates the whole story and not even a single part is given for the girls who are involved only in the domestic works. This also causes gender discrimination in the novels. In Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* it helps to understand the gender dynamics of using a girl child as a protagonist and the narrator of the novel. The author uses the female protagonist in this novel *Purple Hibiscus* and she tells the story of the world. Kambili is the protagonist of the novel she sees her mother's suffering under the control of her father and also the society. Kambili's father Eugene controls the whole family and gives order for Kambili and her brother Jaja. But at the end of the novel they find voice and freedom. Like other girls Kambili had the inner feelings



so she falls in love with a priest. The novel *Purple Hibiscus* revolves around the lives of Beatrice, Ifeoma and Kambili. Beatrice suppresses and suffers under the patriarchal set up.

In this chapter, the concerns of the author are interrogated and integrated to reveal her vision on gender. It surfaces that Adichie advocates gender struggle to be linked with other efforts undertaken against problems which cripple Third World people. Adichie identifies racism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, misrule, dictatorship, ethnicity, civil conflicts, poverty and religious fundamentalism as bad practices in the African context as is patriarchy. She however calls for understanding, complementation, conciliation, collaboration and constructive gender engagement as men and women dealt with dehumanizing problems which affect people in the Third World countries.

Working on this project is an experience of revelation of the life's struggle and also it shows how the women overcome the male domination of the society. This has made the researcher read this novel and also her other novels. A Feminist study can also be done on this novel.

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**Psychological Realism in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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

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**PG and Research Department of English**

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**Thoothukudi**

**April 2023**

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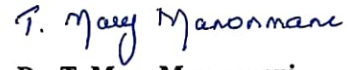
## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Psychological Realism in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*** 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 Srikeerthanalakshmi. D during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Psychological Realism in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*** 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**

**April 2023**

*D. Srikeerthanalakshmi*  
**Srikeerthanalakshmi. D**

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## Preface

The project entitled **Psychological Realism in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*** analyses the psychological struggles undergone by the protagonist Rodion Raskolnikov to overcome his fear of guilt of committing the crime and captures the psychological changes after his revelation. It records the difference in human psychology during an inner conflict and at state of peace and highlights the psychology of the nineteenth century Russian people through the given characters.

The first chapter **Introduction** focuses on the nineteenth century Russian Literature and the characteristics of the pioneering works. It showcases the author's rudiments of work and the novel chosen for study.

The second chapter **Nihilism versus Utilitarianism** depicts the causes for Rodion Raskolnikov's possession of the two characteristics and his actions justifying the failure of the possessed characteristics.

The third chapter **Inner Conflict to Revelation** records the psychological battle faced by Rodion Raskolnikov out of delirium, especially in fear of guilt because of murdering the two sisters.

The fourth chapter **Revelation through Spirituality** throws light on how Rodion Raskolnikov escaped his inner conflict through revelation. Due to Sonia's spirituality, untiring love and support he accepts in revealing the crime to overcome his fear of guilt and experiences a period of imprisonment. In spite of the persisting imprisonment, he becomes successful in achieving peace through revelation of crime and his love for Sonia.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sums up all the important aspects dealt in the preceding chapters and thereby justifies the key terms of the title.

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



## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature is seen as a documentation of voices and emotions of people lived in the earlier period. Each generation can have a picturesque view of the previous generation's living through literature. The word literature comes from the Latin word 'litaritura' meaning 'writing organised with letters.' It is a medium of communication by the society to the people. It can be classified according to a variety of systems including language, national origin, historical period, genre and subject matter. It took years to change from the position of a form of entertainment to the purpose of reform. Being the literature of a nation characterized by the spirit of determination, adventure and diligence, literature imprints the changes underwent in a society from the earliest to the modern time.

Russian literature marks its beginning with the characterization of Kievan Rus in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. Mikhail Lomonosov was the first highly regarded writer to emerge in Russian literature. He was a fisherman by birth who became highly educated and found Russia's first university in 1755. The primary form of literature included folk and fairy tales which arose from the pagan traditions, the historically based primary Chronicle, the *Tale of Bygone Years* and the Christian inspired *Lives of the Saints*. Medieval Russian literature had an overwhelmingly religious character, and the Church Slavonic language was used as an adapted form with many South Slavic elements. Any kind of writings taken from Russian literature notably dealt with the struggle for stability as Russian history has been a whirlwind of war and tyranny. This struggle often translates as redemption through suffering. It is crystal clear that Russian literature depicts only the reality. This depiction led to the view of Russian's

mental state and the society that prevailed in the late centuries which are concluded as an impact of war. Soviet literature includes Russian as the predominant language among other 88 languages. It gained dignity due to the adaptation of “socialist realism” as the literary style.

Nineteenth century Russian literature is celebrated as the “golden age” of Russian literature. At this century, modernism entered Russian literature as the aristocrats read English and French literature and also philosophy and they considered themselves to be a part of modern Europe. New forms of writing were introduced by poets and novelists. The modern Russian was materialized. As a result, it includes the emergence of great writers like Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin, Nikolai Vsilyevich Gogol, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky. Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky are noted as the two giants whose works influenced by European romanticism and realism gained reputation. The preeminent works of this century include *War and Peace* (1867), *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880), *Dead Souls* (1842), *Eugene Onegin* (1833) and *The Crime and Punishment* (1866).

Nineteenth century in Russian literature led to the introduction of romanticism and realism. The writers of Russian literature during this century mainly worked on the themes of duplicity, hope and heavy social criticism. Duality was the cardinal theme for Imperial Russia. Pushkin shaped the literary Russian language and introduced a new level of artistry to Russian literature. It is seen as the time of changes including the significant uprisings, wars, the enlightenment and democratization which resulted in a breakthrough in arts. In time of exploring the reality, including the exploration of human condition the works didn't exclude humor and satire. Literature of the reality was the medium of communication in order to

explain the emotions of Russians to the world. Under Vissarion Belinsky's tutelage the realistic movement was introduced in the mid – 1840s.

The most important writers of the nineteenth century include Leo Tolstoy, Ivan Goncharov, Nikolai Leskov, Mikhail Saltykov Shchedrin, Alexander Herzen and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (9 September 1820 – 20 November 1910) commonly known as Leo Tolstoy is regarded as the master of realistic fiction and one of the world's greatest novelists. He was an author, philosopher, novelist, playwright and essayist. He is most famous for his two longest works including *War and Peace* (1865 – 69) and *Anna Karenina* (1875 – 77) dealing with the French invasion of Russia, the impact of the Napoleonic era on Tsarist society and betrayal, faith, imperial Russian society, desire and life of rural and urban respectively.

Ivan Alexandrovich Goncharov (18 June 1812 – 27 September 1891) was a Russian novelist and travel writer, also worked as a theatre and literary critic. In his works he focuses on the social change in Russia and includes some memorable characters of Russian literature. His famous novels include *A Common Story* (1847), *Oblomov* (1859) this novel acquired him fame which was published in a magazine *Otechestvennye zapiski*, *The Precipice* (1869) which was published in *Vestnik Evropy* was his last novel. He wrote a memoir titled *An Uncommon Story* (1924). He was considered as an author of high stature by Dostoyevsky.

Nikolai Semyonovich Leskov (16 February 1831 – 5 March 1895) was a Russian novelist, short story writer, skaz writer, playwright and journalist. Some of his literary works were written under his pseudonym M. Stebnitsky. His works include the themes of religion and politics reflecting the situation during his time. He

even has set up a Leskovian sense of humor through his Skaz writings. His notable literary works include *Lady Macbeth of Mtsnesk* (1865) later was made into an opera by Shostakovich, *The Cathedral Folk* (1872), *The Enchanted Wanderer* (1873) and *The Tale of Cross-eyed Lefty from Tula and the Steel Flea* (1881).

Mikhail Yevgrafovich Saltykov-Shchedrin (27 January 1826 – 10 May 1889) known by his pen name Nikolai Shchedrin was noted to be a major Russian writer and satirist of the nineteenth century. His dignified works include *The Golovlyov Family* (1880) and *The History of a Town* (1870). These two turned out to be the important fictions of nineteenth century.

Alexander Ivanovich Herzen (6 April 1812 – 21 January 1870) was a Russian pro-Western writer. He was commonly known as the “father of Russian socialism” and one of the main fathers of agrarian populism. His notable works include a memoir titled *My Past and Thoughts* was started early in 1850s and an important social novel *Who is to Blame?* (1846).

Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoyevsky (11 November 1821 – 9 February 1881) was an eminent Russian novelist, short story writer, essayist and journalist. He was born and brought up in Moscow, Russia. His novels had a great understanding of psychology, noting to the psychology of people who, losing their reason, would become insane or commit murder. He was learned and trained to be a military engineer, but he developed a huge passion for literature. As a result, he completely devoted himself to writing. He left a volume of works consisting of sixteen short stories, four novellas, twelve novels and many other literary works. His writings have been translated into about one hundred and seventy languages. His earliest letters show him to be a young man of passion and energy, as well as somewhat mentally

unstable. The instability can be seen as a result of his death of his parents especially his father's, who was brutally murdered.

In 1843 Dostoyevsky published his translated work "*Eugenie Grandet*" a novel by Honore De Balzac which was printed and published in a journal, Repertoire and Pantheon. Following this work he wrote many unsuccessful translated works. He then began writing his novels by expressing the life of poor people facing adversities. His first novel *Poor Folk* (1843) is a social tale about a down-and-out government worker. His second novel *The Double* (1846) and his later works in the 1840s faced its own consequences.

*The Double* is known to be his best early work, and in many ways, it was ahead of its time. The consequences of *The Double* that Dostoyevsky faced resulted in frequent seizure attacks. As a result, his life and work from 1846 to 1849 were characterized by aimlessness and confusion. His works during this period are subjected to the experiments in different forms and different subject matters. The psychological depictions in his works are more or less related to his own life. He is often regarded as the ultimate heir to both European and Russian Romanticisms. He joined an anti-government group called Petrashevsky Circle in 1847. In 1849 he was arrested along with the members of Petrashevsky Circle. During his life in prison, he came to understand that he had only moments to live. Later he was sentenced to four years in prison and four years of forced service in the army in Siberia, Russia. In order to avoid his unhappy married life, he edited the journal Time with his brother Mikhail and wrote a number of fictional works.

Dostoyevsky with his writings has influenced many writers and owned their appreciations. James Joyce praised him that he is the man more than any other who

has created modern prose and intensified it to its present-day pitch. Virginia Woolf praised that Dostoyevsky's novels are seething whirlpools, gyrating sandstorms, waterspouts that hiss and boil and suck us in. they are composed purely and wholly of the stuff of the soul. Against our wills we are drawn in, whirled round, blinded, suffocated, and at the same time filled with a giddy rapture. William Faulkner, the American novelist has mentioned that Dostoyevsky was one of his main literary inspirations, alongside the Bible and Shakespeare. *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) influenced him most of all. He even wrote to poet Hart Crane that American literature has nothing similar to this novel. Friedrich Nietzsche stated Dostoyevsky as one of the happiest discoveries of his life noting that except Stendhal no one was such a nice surprise for him and no one delivered him so much pleasure. Orhan Pamuk admits that Tolstoy is a more masterful novelist, but he personally was much more influenced by the politicized Dostoyevsky. When lecturing in St. Petersburg, Pamuk admitted that when he first read *The Brothers Karamazov*, he realized that his life had changed completely. He even felt that Dostoyevsky was talking to him directly to him, revealing something about people and life that no one else knows.

The *Poor Folk* (1846) is the first novel by Dostoyevsky which was written over a span of nine months between 1844 and 1845. It was originally published on 15 January 1846 and in English was published in 1894. This novel mainly focuses on the literary naturalism and the lives of poor people and their day-to-day basis poverty and relationship with the rich. While writing this novel he was in the state of financial difficulty which was the result of his extravagant lifestyle and his craze for gambling addiction. In spite of his little success with translating foreign novels he planned to write his own novels to raise funds in order to overcome poverty and lead a happy life. This financial struggle out of his irresponsible life led to the development of his

writing styles through which he produced many dignified writings which mostly took part in the upliftment of the Russian literature worldwide.

In 1861 he published *The House of the Dead*, which is a fictional work based on his experiences in prison. It is a semi-autobiographical novel published in the journal *Vremya*. It has been established in English under the titles *Notes from the House of the Dead*, *Memoirs from the House of the Dead* and *Notes from a Dead House* which are the literal translations of Russian title. It portrays the life of convicts in a Siberian prison camp. It is defined to be a fictionalised memoir; a loosely knit collection of experiences, events and philosophical discussion based on his experiences as a prisoner. It attempts to justify the existence of individual freedom as a necessary part of humankind. Also insists that humans desire freedom more than happiness he adds that the unchecked freedom as a destructive force, since there is no guarantee that humans will use it in a constructive way. He states that man is a creature that can get accustomed to anything and he thinks it to be the best definition of him.

*The Idiot* (1869) was first published serially in the journal *The Russian Messenger* in 1868-1869. This novel explores the themes like societal corruption, innocence, isolation, human nature, life and death, faith and suffering. The theme of human suffering is likely influenced by Dostoyevsky's circumstances at the time of writing. The tragic situation includes the death of his first-born daughter and his struggles with debts. In this novel he tries to portray the ideal of a 'positively beautiful individual,' a man who wishes to sacrifice himself for others. The tone covers the psychological intense. He quotes his state of mind through this novel stating that, "I almost do not exist now and I know it; God knows what lives in me in place of me" (458).

*The Possessed* (1872) is also known as 'Demons' or 'The Devils.' It was first published in serial form in *The Russian Messenger* between 1871 and 1872. It is based on a real case of Sergei Nechayev, who believed that violence is a reasonable method to employ. He even thought the Tsar should be assassinated and when his follower opposed on the propaganda and left the group, he with other followers killed him on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1869. The novel's protagonist Pyotr Stepanovich Verkhovensky is more or less related to Nechayev. This novel also portrays the possessive power of Nihilism and is a complex story of a conflicted Russian society. This work affected Camus the most that the themes were so absorbing that in 1959 he published a three-act stage adaptation, *Les Possédés*. The theme of this novel mainly focuses on the importance of limits in the relationship of love and questions what it means to be possessed by someone who does not feel the same way. Marriage is the moral death of every proud soul, of all independence.

*The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) was first published as *Bratya Karamazovy* is Dostoyevsky's final novel which is an alteration of his own personal tragedy. This is a result of the death of his three-year-old son Alyosha due to epilepsy, a condition inherited from his father. He expresses his personal grief through words of tears. It is a murder mystery, a courtroom drama, and an exploration of erotic rivalry in a series of triangular love affairs involving the 'wicked and sentimental' Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov and his three sons. This novel is his deepest and detailed examination of crucial philosophical questions of human existence. Here he notes on the conflict between faith and doubt, the problem of free will and the question of moral responsibility. On the view of faith and doubt, he denotes that faith does not, in the realist, spring from the miracle but the miracle from faith and the man who lies to



himself and listens to his own lie comes to such a pass that he cannot distinguish the truth within him, or around him, and so loses all respect for himself and for others.

The above-mentioned novels more or less bring out the journey of inner struggles through the protagonist and the attainment of remedies through that journey. Dostoyevsky's works attained dignity and honesty as he only spoke the life he lived and not the lie. As a short story writer Dostoyevsky wrote and published several short stories in the magazine named *Notes of the Fatherland* which includes *Mr. Prokharchin*, *The Landlady*, *A Weak Heart*, *White Nights*.

One of the Dostoyevsky's most famous novels *Crime and Punishment* (1866) also was published like his other novels in the literary journal *The Russian Messenger* in a twelve monthly instalments, later was published in a single volume. On the whole it is a psychological, crime and philosophical fiction. Eventhough it was planned to be on first person narrative Dostoyevsky switched to third person narrative in order to make the readers get into the protagonist's tormented psyche. This novel mainly focuses on the wrong doings out of situations and loss of mental control and overcoming of the adversities by undergoing a period of tremendous sufferings through which understanding of the reality and realisation of one's own self takes place, finally the protagonist finds out the right path to attain inner peace which was long disturbed.

The protagonist of this novel Rodion Raskolnikov out of poor living drops his studies from law and lives a just life with no proper vision of future. This hits his mental state even harder in which he fails to have control over his own thoughts and actions. This action of failure leads to the murder of the old woman pawn broker, Alyona Ivanovna and her sister, Lizaveta Ivanovna. Now the focus turns to the life of

Raskolnikov after the action of murder. Raskolnikov starts leading a life with the absence of inner peace. He grows weaker and weaker, distances himself from others especially from his close one as he doesn't open up about his action of murder to others. A strong bond of friendship between Raskolnikov and Razumihin is beautifully depicted. In spite of facing insults from Raskolnikov Razumihin stays with him all through his struggles. Sofiya Semyonovna Marmeladov is seen as the light of hope where she takes a major part in Raskolnikov's overcoming of the struggle. The emotion of love beautifully portrayed, depicts the importance of surrounding with the right people and hope which leads to a prosperous life. Talking of love and friendship insists the importance of having these relationships with loyalty. Finally, to put an end Raskolnikov confesses about the murder to the police and leads a life of imprisonment for eight years in Siberia. His life in prison was not that easy. He lost his mother who suffered hard through delirium and wasn't there to attend his own friend Razumihin and his sister Dounia's wedding which only took place with worries of the prevailing situation. The end of the novel gives a huge hope for a prosperous life and the spiritual turmoil that Raskolnikov faced shouldn't be forgotten.

Here, the crime is not erased but through punishment the criminal is reformed with the raising of his moral standards. The name Raskolnikov contains the word Raskol which means split or schism. It refers to dissension that took place within the Russian Orthodox Church in the seventeenth century. Dostoyevsky was an ardent Christian who took care to plant orthodox symbols in his work; the name Raskolnikov is an apt for split personality which could manifest itself as hypersensitive intellectual or axe-swinging maniac.

Dostoyevsky imparts a psychological shade of his life and the life of his characters in *Crime and Punishment* in an unorganized way by not mentioning it

exactly but accurately. In 1847, Dostoyevsky became an active socialist, mainly because of the opposition to the institution of Serfdom. On April 23, 1849, he was arrested for his participation in a group that illegally printed and distributed socialist propaganda. After spending eight months in prison, he was sentenced to death for membership in the group and led, with other members of the group, to be shot. But the execution turned out to be a mere show, meant to punish the prisoners psychologically. Dostoyevsky spent four years at a labor camp in Siberia, followed by four years of military service. Raskolnikov's time in a Siberian prison, described in the Epilogue of *Crime and Punishment* is much related to the life of Dostoyevsky.

The reason for the light sentence of Raskolnikov gives a moral lesson indicating the importance of helping others and being loyal to ones ownself. Raskolnikov lend his hands to one of the fellow students at his crucial time with tuberculosis. After his death he took good care of that student's destitute father and when the father died as well Raskolnikov paid for the funeral even at his poor living. Also during his stay in a five storey apartment he helped people. His loyalty is noted through his confession in which he explains everything and the very minute details of the murder and his doings after the murder. It is understood that he made no use of what he had stolen and it came to a conclusion that he suffered from an abnormal mental condition when he committed the crime.

Raskolnikov's small act of moving towards spirituality gives a different perspective to *Crime and Punishment*. His act of reading the New Testament shows his life of redemption, in detail. His new perspectives and new life can be taken in a form where Raskolnikov is chosen by God to lead a happy life. This reflects the spirituality upheld by Dostoyevsky.

One of the great ideas of Dostoyevsky is that through suffering, man can expiate all his sins and become more closely attuned with the basic elements of humanity. In *Crime and Punishment*, Sonia represents the sufferings of all humanity. It was written with the emerging of the concept that when Raskolnikov suffers so greatly he will be purified. Also, a person of great conscience will suffer from his transgressions and as soon as the crime is committed, Raskolnikov suffers so greatly that he does become physically ill and continues to live in a semi-coma for days. Dostoyevsky has concentrated more on the psychological struggles than the physical ones. The following chapters deal with Raskolnikov's struggles out of the guilt of murder causing a huge impact on the physical and mental illness.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Nihilism versus Utilitarianism**

“Since there is no wrong or right, you just reap what you sow.”

Nihilism derived from the Latin word “nihil” which means “nothing.” It is originally defined as a philosophy of moral and epistemological scepticism that arose in nineteenth century Russia during the early years of the reign of Tsar Alexander II. Friedrich Nietzsche used this term to describe the disintegration of traditional morality in western society which resulted in the popularity of this term. In the twentieth century nihilism started denying the existence of genuine moral truths or values, rejected the possibility of knowledge or communication and asserted the ultimate meaninglessness or purposelessness of life or the universe.

After the Russian campaign to subdue Napoleon, western ideas, which clearly articulated a desire for a constitution defending human rights, a representative government, and democracy, were brought to Russia. As a result, when the Czar Alexander I died in 1825, a regiment of soldiers refused to pay allegiance to the new crown, wanting the establishment of a Russian constitution. And although the “Decembrists” as they were called, were finally suppressed, there remained a possibility of big social change throughout the century.

The above-mentioned changes resulted in the emergence of “Nihilism.” Russian monarchs realised that their system of serfdom and social structure were not sustainable and would end in a bloody rebellion. The problem was implementing the reforms that were both effective and politically realistic. But, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the forces of state repression coupled with the longevity of the problems had already created such an intolerable situation that fixing the system

through reform was almost impossible. This situation can be clearly defined as nihilism. Moreover, the failure in the Crimean war put Russia in the dire situation of being forced to make reforms and this made the Nihilist movement more urgent. Finally, no sources were able to stop Nihilists and other revolutionaries, and Nihilism movement took control of Russian society.

Russian literature dealing with nihilism helped in the emergence of realism style, such literary works showcase the Russian culture during the 1860s, the nihilism movement. In Russian literature nihilism was probably first used by N.I. Nadezhin, in an article *Messenger of Europe* (1829), in which he applied nihilism to Aleksandr Pushkin. There are many writers who have produced many realist novels reflecting the nihilism movement. Taking into account Dostoyevsky's realist novels with nihilism movement include *Notes from the Underground*, *Crime and Punishment* and *The Devils*.

*Crime and Punishment* condemns the concept of nihilism as a destructive force, which usurps institutions and leads to heinous acts. Dostoyevsky deals with the philosophy of nihilism through the protagonist Rodion Raskolnikov. Raskolnikov possesses all the characteristics of the nihilist, in which, his current life and his relationship with the family and the society can be taken into account. His lifestyle of isolated living resulted in a huge impact on his mind and behaviour resulting in his action of the dreadful murder of the crooked pawnbroker Alyona Ivanovna and her sister Lizaveta Ivanovna. His murderous action justifies his lack of concern on the moral living. His lack of emotional connect with his loved ones are clearly depicted with the conversations between them.

In the opening of the novel the nihilistic perspective is introduced through the description of the state of senselessness and meaninglessness of the world portrayed by the characters in the novel,

The heat in the street was terrible: and the airlessness, the bustle and the plaster, scaffolding, bricks and dust all about him, and that special Petersburg stench, so familiar to all who are unable to get out of town in summer – all worked painfully upon the young man's already overwrought nerves. The insufferable stench from the pot-houses, which are particularly numerous in that part of the town, and the drunken men whom he met continually, although it was a working day, completed the revolting misery of the picture. He was so badly dressed that even a man accustomed to shabbiness would have been ashamed to be seen in the street in such rags. (2)

Rodion Raskolnikov's poor living and his day-to-day activities throw light on nihilism. His self-imposed isolation reflects his view on relationships as futile and meaningless. And so, he avoids human interaction of any kind as much as possible. His self-isolation serves to perpetuate his nihilistic tendencies. A person being alone for a long period becomes the dominant, superior figure to his own world. In other words, Nietzsche's concept of "superman" serves to characterise himself as a superman, above the laws of his own society. Leading a life on his own being far away from the family and lacking contact with the society results in a great damage on his mental ability. "He had become so completely absorbed in himself and isolated from his fellows that he dreaded meeting not only his landlady but anyone at all. He was crushed by poverty, but the anxieties of his position had of late ceased to weigh upon him" (1).

One of the main causes for Raskolnikov nihilistic nature is due to his persisting poverty and isolation. This led to the huge turn in his educational career where he discontinued his studies. From being a student pursuing law to becoming a normal person and struggling to lead each day made him take paths which led to some tragic incidents in his life. The struggle in poverty guided him to an old, rugged pawn broker Alyona Ivanovna who built herself to be superior to everyone. Raskolnikov went in search of the old pawn broker to sell an old-fashioned flat silver watch which was his father's once. His act of selling his father's watch the only memory that he can look into in remembrance of his father but his readiness to sell the watch notifies his lack of emotion towards his closed ones as a result of poverty. Even he accepted to marry his landlady's daughter not with love but to escape poverty.

Raskolnikov's nihilistic character is noted with another incident in a tavern during his meet up with a drunkard Marmeladov, a titular counsellor. During Marmeladov's soulful narration of his tragic life and how he became a great drunkard would bring tears from the eyes of the hearer for sure, but Raskolnikov didn't give any kind of reaction to the narration of Marmeladov on the other hand other listeners were eager to hear his story.

‘Honoured sir,’ . . . ‘poverty is not a vice, that’s a true saying. Yet I know too that drunkenness is not a virtue, and that that’s even truer. But beggary, honoured sir, beggary is a vice. In poverty you may still retain your innate nobility of soul, but in beggary – never – no one. For beggary a man is not chased out of human society with a stick, he is swept out with a broom, so as to make it as humiliating as possible; and quite right too, forasmuch as in beggary I am ready to be the first to humiliate myself. (10)



After a long narration of Raskolnikov's tragic life Marmeladov, out of curiosity asks Raskolnikov “. . . have you ever spent a night on a hay barge, on the Neva?” ‘No, I have not happened to,’ answered Raskolnikov. ‘What do you mean?’” (11). Raskolnikov answering only to the question asked reflects his nihilistic characteristic, he lacks to get into the life of others with an emotion.

Another example supporting Raskolnikov's nihilist characteristic by turning completely unsentimental and caring nothing about the emotions of others is his brutal and senseless murder of the old pawn broker Alyona Ivanovna in order to steal her money and an unexpected murder of her sister Lizaveta,

As she was so short, the blow fell on the very top of her skull. She cried out, but very faintly, and suddenly sank all of a heap on the floor, raising her hands to her head . . . . He laid the axe on the ground near the dead body and felt at once in her pocket (trying to avoid the streaming blood) – the same right hand pocket from which she had taken the key on his last visit. (68-69)

His action of stealing the things collected by Alyona Ivanovna and never having a bit of sadness for her death clearly reflects his main motive on the materialistic world (another characteristic of a nihilist) which gives no sort of happiness to him. He lacks giving importance to the realistic world of people and his concern for the materialistic world turns him to be lifeless. He develops no feelings and finds no justifying answer for his unplanned murder of Lizaveta due to her sudden entry to Alyona Ivanovna's house during the period at which the murder of her sister took place.

Raskolnikov's strong nihilistic nature can be noted as he gives a numerous reason on why he murdered Alyona. Firstly, he states his action of murder to be an act of revenge as he sold his father's watch to her and received only a very low price and that hit him harder, as his situation was even worse, he accepted the low price offered by the old pawn broker.

Raskolnikov narrates the conversation that he heard in a tavern between a student and an officer including the characteristic description of the old pawn broker, her rugged attitude to people who approach her to pawn and the same attitude is reflected to her sister Lizaveta. Also, she doesn't give the exact money for an object which is pawned, she is denoted to be a wealthy woman and is too selfish to share the money. The student and the officer then discuss an idea on murdering the old pawn broker and so the money which she has can be used to help the needy people. This conversation triggers Raskolnikov and he wishes to murder her for a positive cause. When he comes to know that Alyona is going to be all alone on a particular date and time through Lizaveta's conversation with a couple. The student and the officer's conversations are as follows,

I was joking of course but look here: on one side we have a stupid, senseless, worthless, spiteful, ailing, horrid old woman, not simply useless but doing actual mischief, who has not an idea what she is living for herself, and who will die in a day or two in any case. You understand? You understand? (58)

Finally, Raskolnikov becomes prepared to murder her as a result he could get revenge, could get his watch back, take her money, and get rid of someone that nobody likes. Then nobody must deal with her. Overall, by stating the above

mentioned Raskolnikov ensures that the murder of the old pawn broker is justifiable. Dostoyevsky did not believe in nihilism. He portrays the danger through Raskolnikov's activity of hurting others including his family and the beloved ones due to his strong belief in nihilism.

In the beginning and in the middle of the novel, Raskolnikov possessed the nihilistic characteristics but towards the end of the novel Raskolnikov never displays any dominating qualities besides depression, nightmares, paranoia, pride, and rage. The contradiction here is that he suffers great emotional pain before and after his action of murder "fear gained and more mastery over him." As an extraordinary man, he would not constantly be obsessed over the details and mistakes made during the crime. The portrayal of convoluted and emotionally shaken thoughts of Raskolnikov clearly states that the theory of an extra ordinary man cannot be applied to him. He possesses feelings and emotions that he cannot live without, and that nihilism turns to be failure on him.

During Raskolnikov's period in prison, Sonia comes often to visit him. Her visit takes the infatuation to the next stage, love. Earlier, Raskolnikov was little hesitant to hold hands with Sonia but towards the end he allows her to hold his hand, which is seen as a symbol of his love. Sonia helps him to completely free himself from the chain of nihilism, self-imposed psychological isolation from others, and discovers love. Her understanding of his love denotes the purpose of his life. The realisation is as follows, "But at the same moment she understood, and a light of infinite happiness came into her eyes. She knew and had no doubt that he loved her above everything else and that at last the moment had come . . ." (464).

Utilitarianism is defined as a theory of morality which focuses mainly on an action that gives the outcome of happiness or most pleasure. Jeremy Bentham was the founder of modern utilitarianism. By using the mid-nineteenth century utilitarianism, *Crime and Punishment* mainly focuses on the revelation of the transformation of the nature of Raskolnikov, Dounia and Sofya Semyonovna (Sonia).

Firstly, the murder of Alyona Ivanovna can be related to utilitarianism because the old pawn broker was corrupt to the society. Raskolnikov believes that he has done a justifiable action. He states his murderous action from the idea of utilitarianism. His action states that moral decisions should be centred on profit of the greatest number of people. In this way he justifies the murder of the old pawn broker. He feels that he has done something good for the society by removing her from the society. Along with the idea of utilitarianism he completely disregards social conventions by doing what he thinks is beneficial to the ideal world and murders for the sake of improvement.

Raskolnikov himself states “An extraordinary man has the right . . . to decide in his own conscience to overstep . . . certain obstacles . . . for the practical fulfilment of his idea” (221). His moral justifications are formulated upon the ethical doctrine of utilitarianism, whose major premise is that morality depends solely upon the consequences of an action. Raskolnikov categorizes himself as an extraordinary man who has the power to break the moral barriers for a good cause. But has no justifiable answer for the murder of Lizaveta. His justifications on the murder reveal his thought of being superior to others and his action of violence in bringing goodness states that utilitarianism also can be misused at times.

An act of utilitarianism can be seen in Dounia’s acceptance of the marriage proposal to Pyotr Petrovich Luzhin. Even after knowing Luzhin’s concept of marriage

that he wishes to marry a beautiful, intelligent girl with a poor background and so she may look upon him as her benefactor always, Dounia accepts. No personal profit in her acceptance can be seen. She accepts for the sake of her brother Raskolnikov, deciding that by marrying Luzhin who owns a respectful profession she can place her brother to a respectful position and can help him with the money by becoming the wife of Luzhin. But towards the end after knowing Luzhin's personality Dounia rejects the marriage proposal considering herself and her family in the first place.

She is a resolute, sensible, patient and generous girl, but has a passionate heart as I know very well. Of course, there is no great love either on his side or on hers, but Dounia is a clever girl and has the heart of an angel, and will make it her duty to make a husband happy who on his side will make her happiness his care. (31)

Sofya Semyonovna's act of utilitarianism describes her self-sacrifice for her family. She turns to be a prostitute to support her family with the persisting poverty. Through Marmeladov's description of Sonia to Raskolnikov it is clearly understood that due to her father's alcoholic addiction and not persisting in a particular profession, Sonia is pushed into the position to bring money for the survival of the family out of any profession. So, she chose prostitution as she wasn't well educated to get seated in any other profession. "At six o' clock I saw Sonia get up, put on her kerchief and her cape, and go out of the room and about nine o' clock she came back. She walked straight up to Katerina Ivanovna and she laid thirty roubles on the table before her in silence" (15).

Raskolnikov directly attacks Sonia by giving rude comments on her act of choosing illicit profession. But she doesn't take his comments to heart at the same

time realises that it is true. She becomes a martyr for her family, and by accepting the responsibility of breadwinner, she demonstrates her capabilities of empathy and understanding. She understands that her profession as a prostitute does not help her family to come out of poverty but helps them in leading a day-to-day life. It is clearly revealed that she would face huge hurdles to secure a better future for her family.

But you are a great sinner, that's true, . . . , and your worst sin is that you have destroyed and betrayed yourself *for nothing*. Isn't that fearful? . . . how this shame and degradation can exist in you side by side with, opposite, holy feelings? It would be better, a thousand times better and wiser to leap into the water and end it all! (274)

Utilitarianism discussed in this novel clearly defines that sacrifice is essential, and the sacrifice is not always worth the reward. The old pawn broker Alyona Ivanovna's life is sacrificed out of murder to help the society of poor people out of her money, Dounia's attempt to sacrifice her life for her family especially for her brother, Raskolnikov and Sonia's self-sacrifice for her poverty-stricken family. Throughout this novel utilitarianism projects, the true nature of the characters through their willingness to sacrifice also it is noted that utilitarianism should not be blindly followed, and the given situation should be taken into consideration to proceed with utilitarianism.

This novel implements Dostoyevsky's view that pain and suffering are always inevitable for a larger intelligence and his thought that great men must have great sadness on earth. It is associated with Dostoyevsky's living, the portrayal of nihilism and utilitarianism is associated with the period mainly focusing on Russia's mid-nineteenth century as a motivation of characters' actions, while demonstrating his own perspective on the philosophy.

Nihilism and utilitarianism were dominant but towards the end it grew weaker taking different turns in respect to the characteristic and decisions that prevailed in the initial stage. Both nihilism and utilitarianism create a huge impact on the psychology of the characters that welcomes great tragedies which helps in the change of the character in an appreciable way. The following chapter is a study on the psychology of the protagonist Raskolnikov.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Inner Conflict to Revelation**

Psychology is the study of one's behaviour to find his motivation, intention, and thought process in doing a particular action. The inception of psychology as a science can be traced back to the year 1879. Since then, psychology has gained its power and various subfields of psychology have evolved like criminal psychology. Various experiments conducted by numerous psychologists have been contributed to the genesis of criminal psychology. Taken into account, Milgram's experiment in the 1960s which clearly showcased how a person's natural behaviour mutates under pressure. Though Milgram's experiment majorly contributed to the literature of criminal psychology, still he was not called a criminal psychologist. The roots of criminal psychology can be traced back to the nineteenth century.

The introduction of the themes like crime and psychology of the criminals in nineteenth century Russian literature is due to the serfdom's abuses which led every major Russian writer to address the implications of violence and crime in the rapidly reforming nineteenth century Russian empire. Meanwhile, urbanization which is a result of peasant migration turned to be the main cause of crime and mental illness. The depiction of crime and psychology in Russian literature is a kind of effort taken by the writers to transform the social life in the Russian empire.

Russian writers dive deep into the inner self of the specific characters like criminals committing crimes. They try to detail on the cause of the crime, how that cause intruded the mind of a character turning him to be a merciless criminal and the changes that take place in the mind of the criminal after committing the crime resulting in a total change in his character leading to either positive or negative end.



In *Crime and Punishment* Dostoyevsky has made a study on the inner self of Raskolnikov after becoming a criminal by murdering both Alyona Ivanovna and Lizaveta Ivanovna. Raskolnikov is defined to be the most famous criminal in Russian literature. He turned to be a criminal because of his lifestyle that affected his mind deeply as discussed in the previous chapter. He suffers hard from the guilt of murdering them.

Raskolnikov's guilt is obvious and apparent. There is no hiding of the torment that consumes him. His physical and mental torments are the examples stating that one having a conscience can suffer if he acknowledges his error. In spite of his protests to the torments, he acknowledges his criminal behaviour.

The first downfall after committing the murder is that Raskolnikov becomes weak both in the context of the physical and mental state, and he has almost fallen ill. He is seen in a delirious state, sleeps for a long time, refuses to eat and starts losing his internal sense. His worries become inadequate and drive him mad. He feels as if the punishment for his murderous action is approaching him. He even starts doubting whether he committed the crime in real life or whether it was the figment of his imagination.

Fluctuating thoughts of Raskolnikov is reflected through his oscillating behaviour making it obvious that he is subjected to a mental illness, entangled in his own actions and thoughts that he is unable to synchronize both. His thoughts are more elaborated and he spends much time in contemplating the crime but execution of crime is vague totally uncoordinated, as a matter of fact it's just sheer chance that he manages to elude the scene of crime. His inner void is so deeply rooted that at times it branches out vigorously and variedly. As a result he falls into dementias further

manifesting his body into psychosomatic disorder like feverish state and unconsciousness.

Raskolnikov's physical illness is a feverish condition, with moments of delirium. He torments himself by carrying all the guilt because he is unable to uphold the first steps after committing his crime and seizing power. He even suffers the weight of his guilt until he confesses. After the murder, his mental illness acts as his own form of self-punishment, constantly reminding him of what he had done. He sees his guilt everywhere, for example, "Then a strange idea entered his head: that, perhaps, all his clothes were covered with blood, that, perhaps, there were a great many stains but that he did not see them, did not notice them because his perceptions were failing, were going to pieces . . . his reason was clouded" (80).

Raskolnikov's paranoia about blood is sensed to be a strong physical tie to his guilt, this confirms that his strong feelings over guilt are eating him away. While a true murderer may be concerned about being caught, his concerns seem beyond that which would be displayed by a true murderer. He hallucinates that the physical evidence of his crime covers him and he cannot remove traces of it, showing how he cannot purify himself of the blood of his victims.

Raskolnikov himself even realises how he is punishing himself saying, "I've tormented and tortured myself, without knowing myself what I'm doing I'll get well and stop torturing myself . . . . And what if never get well? Lord! I'm so tired of it all" (110). He became unconscious of how he has been punishing himself for his crimes. He is acutely aware of his guilt although he unsuccessfully tries to justify his actions.

A glimpse of Raskolnikov's weak mind can be noted through his view on criminals leaving evidence in addition to his nihilistic and utilitarianistic

characteristics. He wonders how criminals leave evidence after committing an unacceptable crime and states that, “Almost every criminal is subject to a failure of will and reasoning power by a childish and phenomenal heedlessness at the very instant when prudence and caution are most essential” (63). This statement of Raskolnikov is seen as a forthcoming of his own life after the murder of two sisters. After committing the crime, he gets into a huge turmoil resulting in his unbreakable inner conflict.

Inner conflict takes its dominating turn when a person’s mind becomes weak. The weakness of Raskolnikov’ mind came to be noted soon after committing the crime. He starts losing his connection between the mind and the body, the imbalance in the physical and mental health leading to an unbearable tragedy. “Recalling it afterwards, . . . he could not make out how he had had such cunning, for his mind was as it was clouded at moments and he was almost unconscious of his body . . .” (66).

The initial activities of Raskolnikov captured in Alyona Ivanovna’s home notifies a sort of blankness, even dreaminess began to take possession of him. He became numb and started staring at everything. This action ‘staring’ indicates how his mind stopped working denoting the blankness and darkness that is slowly overtaking him. The unexpected murder parted him to pieces with fear. “Fear gained more and more mastery over him, especially after this second, quiet unexpected murder” (71).

Raskolnikov coming home, straight, after committing the murderous action is noted with certain physical and mental changes such as the ill health and doubting himself for everything. The cause for the changes is merely out of delirium. His act of delirium intrudes the inner conflict within him leading to experience sufferings for a longer period.

The beginning of the inner conflict is depicted as follows,

For the first moment he thought he was going mad. A dreadful chill came over him; but the chill was from the fever that had begun long before in his sleep. Now he was suddenly taken with violent shivering, so that his teeth chattered and all his limbs were shaking . . . He turned everything over to the last threads and rags, and mistrusting himself, went through his search three times. (78)

Doubting himself strongly Raskolnikov made a thorough scan of his clothes in search of the blood stains. Also, he risked himself to hide the objects that he took from the old pawn broker's house. He started imagining of what would happen next, the imagination paved way for the negative thoughts which made him weak that took control of his mind.

Pieces of torn linen couldn't rouse suspicion, whatever happened. I think not, I think not, anyway! he repeated, standing in the middle of the room , and with painful concentration he fell to gazing about him again, at the floor and everywhere, trying to make sure he had not forgotten anything. (79)

During the beginning of the novel, it is noted that Raskolnikov alienated himself from the society due to his poor living condition which resulted in the lack of self-confidence but now he stated that alienating himself from his closed ones because of the guilt and fear haunted him inwardly. He became silent, was lying in bed all days and nights, failed to be attentive in conversations and was seen to be sunk in deep thoughts.

The weakness stated in his own words are as follows,

It is because I am very ill, he decided grimly at last. 'I have been worrying and fretting myself, and I don't know what I am doing . . . Yesterday and the day before yesterday and all this time I have been worrying myself . . . I shall get well and I shall not worry . . . But what if I don't get well at all? Good God, how tired I am of it all!' (97)

Understanding his present state of mind Raskolnikov was terrified and turned tired of the persisting inner conflict. He had no other go other than diverting his mind which he believed would help him escape the inner conflict of the guilt of the murder. In order to have distractions Raskolnikov decided to meet his friend Razumihin, who at their first meeting after four months was able to feel his pulse and concluded him to be suffering from serious illness and delirium. The suffering exposed precisely denotes the intruding of guilt and making home in his mind. He wasn't able to express what he was feeling and also didn't accept the money offered by his friend. He chose to meet him for distraction but was not able to cope with the conversation and returned home with blankness. This blankness denotes how he is being alienated mentally when he tries to have connect with people.

A look into Raskolnikov's fear when his landlady is attacked by Ilya Petrovitch, the cry of his landlady as Petrovitch beats her, a huge crowd approached her but he didn't turn up. "Terror gripped his heart like ice, tortured him and numbed him . . ." (101) when he heard Petrovitch's voice. His fear on hearing Petrovitch's voice states his fear whether he had found out the murderer of the crime. Out of fear Raskolnikov fails to hold up the close ones like his friend Razumihin, his mother and sister, Dounia. He even hides his sufferings from them. He has no proper statements

to put forth. Looking at his insane condition his friend, mother and sister too suffer with the love that they have for him, and they aren't able to bare the current situation of Raskolnikov. Even his close ones react in such a way leading to the increase of his inner conflict.

Raskolnikov's family and friend's concern on him during his struggle with his inner conflict haunts him even more. Realizing on how he is surrounded with people who love him more than he does and their concern in taking care of him during his hard situation even though he refused to tell them the reason that has resulted him with the tragedy, he is surrounded with guilt of doing a murderous action without considering the closed ones. When he understands the reality of life, he fears of what will happen in future of his murderous action if it comes to be known by everyone.

When Razumihin and Zossimov discussed in deep about the investigation that took place after the murder suspecting Nikolay, one of the painters to be the murderer as he submitted the earrings that he found in the flat at which they were painting after a long time. Out of fear Raskolnikov cried suddenly stating, "Behind the door? Lying behind the door? Behind the door?" (121). His act of shouting out in terror includes the fear as he missed evidence which would be helpful for the investigating officers and soon, he might be caught as the real murderer.

After knowing about Dounia's engagement with Pyotr Petrovitch, Raskolnikov was hit even harder as he understands that his sister is sacrificing her life for the upgrade of his life. He realises how useless he has become also now has committed a crime realising this he concludes how he has turned to be a huge burden for his family while his mother and sister consider him as a hope of beautiful life that

they are imagining to live. This inner conflict of him is seen as a comparison between the burden he has created and turning to be a burden.

As Raskolnikov understands that his sister accepted for marriage only for him, he starts showering hatred on Pyotr Petrovitch. At a heated argument he directly states his dislike on Petrovitch to his sister. Meeting Petrovitch for the first time he acts in a disrespectful manner which triggers Petrovitch's ego. A glimpse of his fight within himself can be noted during his conversation with Petrovitch.

Raskolnikov's inner conflict is depicted during his visit to the police station. He was called to the police station based on the complaint received from his landlady. As per the complaint he is compelled to pay a huge sum of money to the landlady for his stay in her house. He turns up to the police station with suspense on the reason for his call to the police station. After knowing the reason, he turns to be little relaxed but his fear overtakes him when the other policemen talk about the events happened during the dreadful murder that took place in the house of the old pawn broker, Ivanovna. All of a sudden, he faints due to the fear of guilt. He talks to himself which notifies his struggle with the inner conflict before entering the police station with suspense which even didn't let him breathe freely.

Good God, only tell me one thing: do they know of it yet or not? What if they know it and are only pretending, mocking me while I am laid up, and then they will come in and tell me that it's been discovered long ago and that they have only . . . What am I to do now? That's what I've forgotten, as though on purpose; forgotten it all at once; I remembered a minute ago. (110-111)

Even though people didn't know what Raskolnikov was going through they were able to witness how he was eaten up by the fear of guilt. After hearing the conversation at the police station he faints and later comes to his senses. All other policemen come to a conclusion that he is physically weak but they don't know that it is a result of mental weakness.

At times Raskolnikov tried to overcome his inner conflict by developing a firm determination by having a thought to end up everything within a day until then he wishes not to return home. Even though he tried to push away the thoughts, the thoughts tortured him even more. His fluctuations in emotions like being extremely happy and sad by drowning into fear of guilt reflects how a normal person at times tries hard to overcome his fear.

Raskolnikov consistently interprets the whole process of his terrible self-punishment, not as a failure but as the result of a ghastly mistake about his own nature. His primary mistake lay in imagining himself a Napoleon when he was only a louse. His persisting sufferings from deep sense of guilt becomes self-loathing and even agonises him. The murder broods over him every time, he feels stifled all the time. He is at war with himself and for self-satisfaction to console himself he gives the following explanation,

“The old woman was a mistake perhaps, but she is not what matters. The old woman was only an illness . . . I was in a hurry to overstep . . . I didn't kill a human being, but a principle! . . . I was only capable of killing” (233). These lines reflect that he is trying psychological defence mechanism. Psychology, logic, rationalisation also known as making excuses is a defence mechanism in which controversial behaviour or feelings are justified and explained in a seeming rational or logical manner. The



mechanism that Raskolnikov espouses illustrates his own insecurity and total incompetence in executing the crime and failing to legitimise his theory of being extraordinary like Napoleon.

Razumihin's statement, "Talk nonsense, but talk your own nonsense, and I'll kiss you for it. To go wrong in one's own way is better than to go right in someone else's" (172), clearly depicts the mentality of the people who lived in the nineteenth century Russian period. This can be more or less related to Raskolnikov's mind. Raskolnikov is examined and concluded to be suffering from monomania, a kind of mental illness by revolving around the idea of the guilt of murdering both sisters.

During the period of facing inner conflict Raskolnikov understands what emotion is all about. An example can be taken from his act of helping Marmeladov's family after his tragic death under a cart. He has just seen him once in the tavern but comes forward to help the family by offering the money that he had for his living. To the outer world he was projected as a man with kind heart, but he was facing a huge battle within himself which was not known by the people other than his close ones. Even after helping Marmeladov's family, he had no peace within himself instead he was haunted by the fear of guilt. Suddenly his spirits grew higher, and he strongly believed that he is going to lead a happy life with gained strength later he forcefully pushed himself to the river of guilt.

Raskolnikov had a persisting battle within himself only because of the fear of guilt that he might be caught as the one who murdered both the sisters. Throughout the novel the conversations about the murderous action and people trying to guess the real murderer triggered his inner conflict. When people conversed to him about the murder, he made an assumption that they are questioning him as they know the

reality. This assumption within himself reflects the reality of his psychological state by giving insight into the reduction of his mental power resulting in the dominance of his mind. To justify his present state of psychology a conversation with Porfiry Petrovitch, the investigating officer is taken as an example. In which he assumes the questions raised by Porfiry Petrovitch to him is a tool that the investigating officer is using to prove that he is the real murderer. Unable to bare the conversation he cried out to him out of losing patience. Loss of patience is due to the lack of mind control resulting in the inner conflict. Loss of temper with the questions resulted in the outburst of him,

I see clearly at last that you actually suspect me of murdering that old woman and her sister Lizaveta. Let me tell you for my part that I am sick of this. If you find that you have a right to prosecute me legally, to arrest me then prosecute me, arrest me. But I will not let myself be jeered at to my face and worried . . .’ His lips trembled, his eyes glowed with fury and he could not restrain his voice. ‘I won’t allow it!’ he shouted, bringing his fist down on the table. ‘Do you hear that, Porfiry Petrovitch? I won’t allow it. (292)

Raskolnikov’s inner conflict comes to an end only through his revelation. He confesses his fear of guilt that had been haunting him for a long time, to his loved ones which gives him a chance of living new life as he hoped before. The following chapter deals with his act of revelation and how he steps into a new life.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Revelation through Spirituality**

Confession is seen as a tool to overcome sufferings, but one fails to note the temporary sufferings after confession, which results in the permanent overcoming of sufferings. This is the crucial state which people find it hard to go through, and often try to neglect. Raskolnikov suffers with the same neglect but finally, he overcomes his neglect by deciding to confess and experience the temporary sufferings in prison. Revelation turns to be the key for Raskolnikov's escape from inner conflict. He starts loving Sonia out of delirium. Also, Sonia's life has been intertwined with him which he was able to feel, and this turned to be a major reason for his confession of the murderous act to Sonia.

Raskolnikov realises that he has a strong concern for Sonia when she is falsely accused by Pyotr Petrovitch Luzhin for stealing his money. During Marmeladov's funeral Raskolnikov stays with Marmeladov's family as he was invited by Katerina Ivanovna, wife of Marmeladov. Meantime, Sonia is invited by Luzhin and he offers ten roubles to her, mentioning that he wishes to help her family. This action takes place in the eyes of Lebeziyatnikov. Luzhin arrives at the funeral and accuses Sonia for stealing hundred roubles from him which she strongly disagrees, but she turns shocked by finding out hundred roubles in her pocket. Finally, Lebeziyatnikov reveals the evil plan of Luzhin by stating that in order to portray himself as a humble man he gave hundred roubles to Sonia, without her knowledge and he planned to accuse her at first and later to forgive, which turns him to be a great man in the hearts of the people.

During the false accusation, Sonia turned terrific and stood helpless. Everyone started believing the accusation, and even Katerina started scolding her. Only Raskolnikov stood by her side. It was not a conscious decision of him, but then, standing by her side, he realised how important she is to him. Finally, he brought in courage to tell her the truth. He asks what she would do if Luzhin turns to be a great danger for her family, whether she would allow him to do wicked things or leave Katerina to die. Understanding that he is wishing to tell something, Sonia asks him to tell directly. He confesses to her, which is as follows,

I must be a great friend of *his* . . . since I know, Raskolnikov went on, still gazing into her face, as though he could not turn his eyes away. He . . . did not mean to kill that Lizaveta . . . he killed her accidentally . . . He meant to kill the old woman when she was alone and he went there . . . and then Lizaveta came in . . . he killed her too. (347)

To the above-mentioned confession, Sonia turns clueless of the great friend Raskolnikov is talking about. She states that, she is not able to get the murderer. Raskolnikov then states, “Take a good look” (347). Hearing this Sonia trembles in horror. The fear that Lizaveta expressed is now clearly seen through the fear intruded in Sonia’s face.

Sonia is depicted as an earthly saviour of Raskolnikov who plays the vital role for his peace living. She helps him confess his crime to the society. He goes on to say goodbye to his sister, Dounia but never the crime he committed. “Goodbye, Dounia” (360). She was able to get his words but not the sense. “But what do you mean, brother? Are we really parting for ever that you . . . give me such a parting message?” (360). To this he states “Never mind . . . Goodbye” (360). Here, the

hard goodbye between the siblings denotes the heart breakable emotions prevailed in the air.

Revelation takes its turn by becoming so hard on Raskolnikov to make him walk through the right path. Revelation made Raskolnikov realise how he is surrounded by people who are loyal to him, even after knowing his true nature they try to remain with him and bring him out of the hard situation by helping him to choose the revelation. The strong never-failing love can be noted from Raskolnikov's mother, his sister, Razumihin and Sonia. Even after revealing the truth Raskolnikov is seen to suffer with his possessed inner conflict which is noted through Raskolnikov and Sonia's conversation.

But how did I murder her? Is that how men do murders? Do men go to commit a murder as I went then? I will tell you someday how I went! Did I murder the old woman? I murdered myself, not her! I crushed myself once for all, for ever ... But it was the devil that killed that old woman, not I. Enough, enough, Sonia, enough! Let me be! he cried in a sudden spasm of agony, let me be! (355)

Sufferings of Raskolnikov mentioned above clearly brings in the psychological note that, even after deciding to move on in the right track, nothing escapes one's mind all of a sudden. It takes a huge time to get out of the control of mind. Patience is the only attitude that revelation teaches Raskolnikov.

Finally, when Raskolnikov goes in search of Zametov and Nikodim Fomitch both were not present at the police office. Finally, when he decides to leave the police office without revealing, there appears Sonia. Through her presence he understands her thoughts and as an act of agreeing to her, he goes back to the police office to

confess his murderous action. All of a sudden, he breaks out to Ilya Petrovitch, “Raskolnikov refused the water with his hand, and softly and brokenly, but distinctly, said: *‘It was I killed the old pawnbroker woman and her sister Lizaveta with an axe and robbed them’*” (451).

People stood with wide-open mouths to his statement. He even repeats the statement. The repetition of the statement throws light on how a human’s psychology functions at times. At first when he confessed to Ilya Petrovitch, the blankness in his mind can be noted. He gives no second thought. This state of his mind can be related to the mind that prevailed during his murderous action. He gave no second thought before killing Lizaveta. Repeating the confession, reflects the settling of his mind from tension that arose during his confession for the first time to the police.

After his confession, he is sent to Siberia and placed in a prison which is situated in a fortress. The fortress is placed in a town, one of the administrative centres of Russia. He was confined for nine months. During his trial he reveals what exactly happened, explaining each and every seen leading the judge and lawyers to come up with huge surprise. The lawyers deduced that “. . . the crime could only have been committed through temporary mental derangement, through homicidal mania, without object or the hope of gain” (453). Their deduction of Raskolnikov’s hypochondriacal condition was justified by witnesses like Dr. Zossimov, his former fellow students, his landlady and her servant. Finally, it was admitted that his miserable position was the cause of his murderous action.

The fact that revelation makes everything quite easier is noted in Raskolnikov’s act of revelation. As he came up to confess, the sentence turned to be more merciful than expected. His good deeds like helping his fellow student with the

last penny he had. After the student's death he even took care of the ill father and paid for his funeral too. His act of saving two children when a house got on fire, all his good deeds were noted, and he was condemned to penal servitude in the second class for a term of eight years.

Now the revelation has taken its turn by bringing in the temporary hardships that should be experienced by both Raskolnikov and his family in order to attain peace. The first hardship is the illness of his mother soon after his first trial. She had no idea on what her son is experiencing but she became mentally ill, framing her own world waiting for her son all the time. Her mental illness made her experience ups and downs. One night she was found to be affected with brain fever and she died within a fortnight. In her delirium she dropped down words which clearly depicts that she had known about her son's terrible fate. Through this, it is clearly understood that her state of mental illness is the result of the revelation of her son's terrible fate.

As Raskolnikov was about to leave for Siberia, Razumihin and Dounia come to bid him goodbye. Sonia with the money offered by Svidrigailov makes her preparations to settle in Siberia. In this way she decides to be with him always. This reveals the importance of the presence of the right companion nearer to overcome the psychological conflict. The mental state of Raskolnikov in the prison, describes how he goes through after his revelation.

At first, he was constantly sullen and not ready to talk, he had no interest on the news that Sonia brought for him. As Sonia was able to understand that he guessed about his mother's death, Sonia revealed her death. ". . . he did not seem greatly affected by it, not externally at any rate" (457). Through Sonia's letter to Dounia and

Razumihin, his acceptance of reality and the psychological changes as per the acceptance is noted,

. . . although he seemed so wrapped up in himself and, as it were, shut himself off from everyone – he took a very direct and simple view of his new life; that he understood his position, expected nothing better for the time, had no ill-founded hopes (as is so common in his position) and scarcely seemed surprised at anything in his surroundings – so unlike anything he had known before. . . . He begged her not to trouble about anything else, declaring that all this fuss about him only annoyed him. (457)

Raskolnikov being in the prison turned to be hard. He produced no positive signs on Sonia's visit. It is she who guides him to the light which is clearly known to him. Even though he loved her so much and wanted her to be by his side always his dislike in meeting her in the prison, depicts the change of thoughts depending on the prevailing situation. "Sonia wrote simply that he had at first shown no interest in her visits, had almost been vexed with her indeed for coming, unwilling to talk and rude to her" (458).

The reason for Raskolnikov's sudden admit in the hospital is that ". . . he held aloof from everyone, that his fellow prisoners did not like him, that he kept silent for days at a time and was becoming very pale" (458). The reason for Raskolnikov's illness from the outside world seems to be his struggle in living in the prison by being self-isolated. But it was his wounded pride that made him ill. Realising that the pride that led to the fear of guilt, started haunting him even worsen. He was ashamed on how hopelessly, stupidly he had come to grief through some decree of blind fate and



realised that he must humble himself and should go through the punishment period, for life with peace.

Spirituality takes a great part in his revelation. Sonia was too spiritual which led her to make Raskolnikov follow the path of revelation. But he is referred as a man with no belief in spirituality. How spirituality affected him psychologically, is also noted here through his days in prison. His change from a non-spiritual to a spiritual person gives the psychological reality on the change of people's mind by becoming spiritual. It is clearly understood that people may get fond of what they initially disliked and the vice-versa of this change can also take place.

In prison, Raskolnikov is defined to be an atheist by his fellow prisoners. During his visit to the church, there arose a quarrel and everyone addressed him to be an infidel and stated that he does not believe in God and also they wished him to be killed. He did not even share his view on God, but people shower hatred towards him. He turned clueless with his fellow prisoner's behaviours. He started questioning how the prisoners were able to get attached with Sonia, inspite of her rare meet up with the prisoners. From here, it is clearly brought out, that by possessing spirituality she was able to bring in the humbleness and peace through her presence but Raskolnikov suffering hard psychologically was always seen as self-isolated even in prison and did not give a try to talk to his fellow prisoners.

Raskolnikov's senseless dream during his period in prison is seen as a reflection of the cruelty that prevailed within him at the time of murder. The indication of chosen people in his dream throws light on the importance of revelation in ones life. Here, by choosing the path of revelation he is finally saved from his

persisting inner conflict, which was slowly consuming him to death. His dream is as follows,

Some new sorts of microbes were attacking the bodies of men but these microbes were endowed with intelligence and will. Men attacked by them became at once mad and furious . . . . They did not know how to judge and could not agree what to consider evil and what good; . . . . Only a few men could be saved in the whole world. They were a pure chosen people, destined to found a new race and a new life, to renew and purify the earth. (462-463)

The atheist who questioned about the existence of God now turns out to be a great religious sufferer. Without God, he now does not see his own existence. The person who had been annoyed by religions and holy books, has now New Testament under his pillow which he himself asked for.

The central character, Raskolnikov, who was an atheist and questioned the validity of faith and committed sin, now accepts the redeeming power of God. He turns into a religious sufferer in an attempt to redeem himself from the sin. However, he atones this suffering not for the redemption of all the sinners as Christ suffered, but to redeem his wicked soul. By this time, Raskolnikov understands that to expiate the sin and for redemption from it, he must go through the difficult life of suffering because only through the hard life and self-torture like Christ's suffering on cross, he can quench the quest of redemption from the filth he committed. Thus, Raskolnikov the protagonist enters, into a redemptive relationship with God. His acceptance of suffering is seen as the recovery of faith and oneness with God. His acceptance of suffering has become an occasion for revelation and a deeper insight into what is

spirituality. Raskolnikov, who had died spiritually at the time of murder, now gets resurrected and gets redemption and salvation, by regaining his faith in God.

The approach of warm bright spring days in the prison reflects Raskolnikov's path becoming closer to a peaceful life. The peace he attains, is the revelation of his love for Sonia. When Sonia fails to meet him, as she was ill suffering with mild cold, he turns to wait for her and realises that he cannot live without her. Their visit on the riverbank brings in, the complete state of peace of mind within him. When he sees Sonia by his side, "How it happened he did not know, but all at once something seemed to seize him and fling him at her feet. He wept and threw his arms round her knees" (464).

After realizing their love for each other they looked upon the reality that they should wait for seven more years. Both terrible suffering and infinite happiness at the same time. But now, Raskolnikov was able to handle the duality much easier than before, the secret for his ability to handle is the peace that upholds in his mind. It is a known fact that a calm mind can easily deal with various kind of emotions at the same time.

Through Raskolnikov's revelation he starts experiencing things that provides him with peace of mind. The main incident is the revelation of his love to Sonia. Only by undergoing great striving and great suffering for a long time, he could achieve his hopeful new life. ". . . tears stood in their eyes. They were both pale and thin; but those sick pale faces, were bright with the dawn of a new future, of a full resurrection into a new life" (464). He has come a long way to this current state of peace only through revelation.

Towards the end Raskolnikov's process of confession and his gradual transformation after his act of transgression is witnessed. In Raskolnikov the total change from pride to humility, hate to love and from separation from his fellow men to communion with them is noted. Throughout his journey his spiritual, psychological, and social transformation is expressed. This transformation is both the cause and result of his eventual confession. The complex and multi-faceted motives for Raskolnikov's confession are rooted in three planes of his existence and his confession and punishment serve to relieve the tensions that he experiences in these areas. Only after his acceptance his crime and sin on all three of these planes – social, psychological, and spiritual comes to an end with punishment and temporary suffering in the prison and finally he is reborn.

Dostoyevsky concludes saying that it is the beginning of a new story including the gradual renewal of a man, his gradual regeneration, his passing from one world into another and his initiation into a new unknown life. As if for now, the story comes to an end with the peace of mind and hoping for a new happy life together. The drastic change from complete negative to positive aspect, is noted through the psychological change in relating to the lifestyle, experiences and people around. The total psychological change in Raskolnikov brings in the working of mind in unconscious and unconscious ways, the importance of persisting calmness in a human mind.

## Chapter Five

### Summation

Dostoyevsky's early works emphasised realism and naturalism, and also social issues such as the differences between the poor and the rich. Elements of gothic fiction, romanticism, and satire can be found in his writings. His ideas shaped literary modernism, existentialism, and various schools of psychology, theology, and literary criticism. His works awaken the idea that hope is not madness, also have psychological aspects, where the narrator penetrates deep into the minds of the characters, revealing their full inner and outer personalities. In *Crime and Punishment*, the narrator explains every aspect of Raskolnikov's thought and feelings. The use of repetitive round dialogues and eclipses shows his mental abnormality and uncertainty.

This novel being Dostoyevsky's first masterpiece is commonly referred as a psychological novel dealing with the psychological changes of the protagonist, Raskolnikov. The psychological study made in this novel, brings in the reality of the Russian's mental state as a result of many changes that took place in Russia. Diving deep into the psychology of Raskolnikov, he justifies his act of killing the pawnbroker Alyona Ivanovna, by stating it to be a noble action. He even tries to justify himself that killing the pawnbroker was a noble action as she was considered to be an evil person in the society. But he has no justifying answer for his act of killing the pawnbroker's sister, Lizaveta Ivanovna. A study on his lack of justification concludes that the second murderous action took place merely out of delirium. His murderous action paved way for his inner conflict and by using revelation as a tool, he escaped his inner conflict.

The idea for *Crime and Punishment* was formed during Dostoyevsky's prison life in Siberia. It was conceived as a philosophical response to the radical ideas that Dostoyevsky witnessed within the St. Petersburg Russian society after his return from prison. The historical context of this novel is St. Petersburg, Russia during the 1860s. It was the capital of Russia and a major economic center. It is located in Russia between Estonia and Finland. St. Petersburg was experiencing population growth and increases in crime and poverty. There is a disparity between the rich and the poor, and rates of crime and poverty were high as a result, tension brewed in the city of St. Petersburg that would eventually turn revolutionary. Innovation and increase in population resulted in more significant crime that was difficult to control. There was a high rate of violent crime and high rates of prostitution, leading to unrest. The novel indicates how Dostoyevsky felt about the happenings around St. Petersburg.

The second chapter "Nihilism versus Utilitarianism" deals with the failure of nihilistic and utilitarianistic characteristics mainly revolving around Raskolnikov. Few other characters are also discussed with these characteristics. Nihilism deals with leading a meaningless life, not considering morality. Raskolnikov was noted to be a great example with nihilistic characteristics. His meaningless life of self-isolation due to poverty-stricken condition and his lack of emotions with the characters he met in the beginning, justifies his nihilistic nature. His encounter with Marmeladov in a tavern and having no sympathy on him reflects his lack of emotion, also his act of selling his father's watch is noted. The main cause for his possession of nihilistic nature is due to his low-class living lifestyle. His murderous act of killing the pawnbroker Alyona Ivanovna and her sister Lizaveta Ivanovna, strongly justifies his lack of emotions.

Raskolnikov again turns to be a best example for possessing the utilitarianistic characteristic. Utilitarianism defines an action to be right if it results in a positive outcome and becoming beneficiary to the majority of people. From utilitarianistic view, Raskolnikov justified his act of killing the pawnbroker as a right action, as many poor will be freed from poverty out of her possessions also notified that the pawnbroker was defined to be a person who possessed evil nature and rugged to her poor customers and even to her sister.

Both nihilism and utilitarianism were at its peak throughout the novel. A huge change in Raskolnikov's characteristics notified the failure of his nihilistic and utilitarianistic characteristics. Towards the end of the novel, he turned to have a meaningful life after finding love in Sonia, this breaks the nihilistic nature that he possessed before. Raskolnikov's failure to distribute the possessions of the pawnbroker to the poor marks the fall of his utilitarian motive.

The third chapter "Inner Conflict to Revelation" deals with the inner conflict of Raskolnikov which made him suffer out of delirium as a result of the murderous action. This chapter examines the sufferings that a person might undergo after realising the results of the action which is unlawful. Dostoyevsky through Raskolnikov's quick change in his behaviour after killing the pawnbroker and her sister, brings in the psychological defects that takes place within himself causing him and his loved ones to suffer.

Raskolnikov's state of duality is noted with the struggle within himself on deciding whether to kill the pawnbroker or not. His attitude reflects the real psychological phase that a mentally affected person undergoes. His act of killing Lizaveta Ivanovna, the pawnbroker's sister out of delirium brings in the fact that in a

delirium state a person gives no second thought or have no analysing attitude of what to do next, instead he quickly does what comes to his mind. Here, it is noted that at a state of delirium human mind becomes weak and it becomes easy for the mind to take control of the thoughts.

After the murder of the two sisters, Raskolnikov is depicted as drowning by dealing with inner conflict. He started fearing of being caught for his actions. His psychological changes that are the quick change of temper, being silent in the certain conversations and raising to the peak especially when discussed about the murderous action marks his inner conflict. His failure in opening up his inner conflict turned to take huge turns within himself leading him mentally even worse. In order to hide feelings, Raskolnikov started showering hatred to his loved ones. It is also a known fact, that a person who tries to hide his feelings, tries to talk something to deviate from the topic related to his inner feelings or not knowing what to react, he acts in a rude way and showers hatred as he starts disliking everyone around.

The fourth chapter “Revelation through Spirituality” deals with the psychological change within Raskolnikov after his confession of the crime. Sonia turned to be a light in his life. Developing love for Sonia, helped Raskolnikov to go with Sonia’s words. Sonia being a spiritual person guided him with her spiritual knowledge. As he revealed his crime as per Sonia’s order, he suddenly found himself escaped from the persisting inner conflict. Through Raskolnikov’s revelation it is noted that opening up heals a person from the haunting memory.

Moving in the right path resulted in the sustaining of peace within Raskolnikov’s mind which made him to have a proper way of approach to the life and acceptance of the reality. Also, the truth reveals the mistake, does not give an instant



freedom. Between revelation and freedom there stands the period of punishment for the done mistake. In this novel, the surviving period refers to the punishment of Raskolnikov in prison. He undergoes the period of punishment only with patience and hope for new life. The two characteristics – patience and hope are known to be the results of his knowledge in spirituality only through Sonia.

This project holds the study of psychological realism in *Crime and Punishment* which deals in detail in the above mentioned three chapters. Psychological realism focuses on the interior study of a person and finds out the psychological reason for their behaviour. The study often deals with troubled characters struggling with their choices or suffering with one haunting action they did. In this novel, the study of psychological realism focuses on the murderer Raskolnikov, noting the reason for his murder in which a look on his poverty-stricken life affecting his psychological state is depicted. Then, the inner conflict that the murderer Raskolnikov faced dives deep into his mental illness by denoting his activities out of delirium and finally, his path after revelation out of spirituality and his punishment period in the prison where his dislike to Sonia's visit and longing to meet her, depicts the fluctuation of thoughts as he was not able to accept the reality. His journey from an atheist to a spiritual person is also noted in his psychological study.

The novel thus represents a trial of a class society. It is a castigation of the inhumanity of man to man inherent in the then Russian society and mirrors the people who have been deprived of any and all prospects of a better future in life. Raskolnikov sees the pawn broker as vermin who is part of a class sucking him and his life. But this individualistic revolt appears not enough to cleanse the rot in his society. In *Crime and Punishment* there is no doubt that the society projected is harsh,

oppressive, and injurious to the psyche of the individuals who occupy the lower rungs of the social ladder. This condition dehumanizes and negates the lower classes as represented by Raskolnikov, Sonia, Dounia and other characters. There is a multiplicity of voices which are the existentialist voices, the Marxian, the Freudian and the Christian voice. The philosophical thought is that of existentialism. Dostoyevsky, through this novel notifies that the world is meaningless as it is full of injustice, exploitation, and other forms of inequities.

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**Odyssey of the Santhal tribes : A Study of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will***

***Not Dance***

A project submitted to

**St. Mary's College (Autonomous)**

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

**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**

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

**Thoothukudi**

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## Certificate

This is to certify that the project entitled **Odyssey of the Santhal tribes : A Study of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*** 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 Yamuna Devi. M during the year 2022-2023, and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, or similar title.

  
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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that the project entitled **Odyssey of the Santhal tribes : A Study of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*** 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**

**April 2023**

Yamuna Devi. M  
YAMUNA DEVI. M



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## Preface

The project entitled **Odyssey of the Santhal tribes : A Study of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*** details the story of a whole village being transformed into red light due to the changes brought by the industrialization. This project analyses how the Santhal tribes are subjugated in society and easily blamed for other's mistakes.

The first chapter **Introduction** highlights the Hansda's work, achievements and awards. In *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* Hansda analyses the issue of displacement and the cry of the tribals to protect their lands. It validates the study of anthropological, Social-cultural, political and spiritual reality of Adivasi uprooted.

The second chapter **Subaltern Consciousness** deals with the social inequalities, subjugation and community inflicted upon the Santhal Adivasi community.

The third chapter **Status of Women in Tribal Society** discusses the oppression and suffering of tribals women in their land.

The fourth chapter **The Agony of the Indigenous** analyses the rebellion undertaken by the tribal people to protect their land from the hands of the official landlord.

The fifth chapter **Summation** sum up the historical reality of the uprooted of Adivasi in India and argued that the power of the memory of Adivasi uprooted and their struggles for unequal salvation.

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

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

Literature is the reflection of life. It is also a form of entertainment for the people. Over time, it attained the purpose of reform as well. The writers started highlighting the social issues in their writing. Thus, it became a medium to draw the audience's attention to convey certain matters and urge them to think about 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 also provides escape from the 'grim realities' of life. The higher type of literature helps the reader to escape from trivial reality into significant reality. Literature speaks the language of imagination. It gives us the ability the power to see the world with fresh mind. Literature is important because it ignites the mind. The beauty of literature is the reflection of human self, containing within its realms the entire spectrum of sentiments and emotions that feel or associate. Literature force to know about ourselves and dig deeper into our interest and capabilities.

Indian literature is arguably one of the oldest and richest literature in the world. The earliest Indian literature took the form of the canonical Hindu sacred writings, known as the Veda, which were written in Sanskrit. The oldest works of the Indian literature include oral transmission of knowledge. India is a country with huge diversity and accommodates people from different cultural backgrounds. Indian literature refers to the literature produced on the Indian subcontinent until 1947 and in the Republic of India thereafter. The Republic of India has twenty two officially recognised languages. The

earliest works of Indian literature were orally transmitted. Literature allows a person to step back in time and learn about life on Earth from the ones who walked before us. We can gather a better understanding of culture and have a greater appreciation of them. We learn through the ways history is recorded, in the forms of manuscripts and through speech itself. Modern Indian literature provides a broad sense of the subcontinent's literary traditions from the mid-19th century to the present day.

Indian English Literature is an honest enterprise to demonstrate the ever rare gems of Indian Writing in English. It is also associated with the works of members of the Indian diaspora. The very definition of the adjective “Indian” here is hazy. Indian English Literature has attained an independent status in the realm of world Literature. Many of these writers neither live in India, nor are Indian citizens. As a category, this production comes under the broader realm of postcolonial literature the production from previously colonised countries such as India.

Indian writing in English has come into force only in the last couple of decades or so, as far as literature goes. Its early history began with the works of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio and Michael Madhusudan Dutt followed by Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao contributed to the growth and popularity of Indian English fiction in the 1930s. It is also associated, in some cases, with the works of members of the Indian diaspora who subsequently compose works in English.

Rabindranath Tagore (May 1861 – 7 August 1941) was a Bengali polymath who worked as a poet, writer, playwright, composer, philosopher, social reformer and painter. He reshaped Bengali literature and music as well as Indian art with Contextual

Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Author of the "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful" poetry of Gitanjali, he became in 1913 the first non-European and the first lyricist to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. Tagore's poetic songs were viewed as spiritual and mercurial; however, his "elegant prose and magical poetry" remain largely unknown outside Bengal

Sri Aurobindo (born Aurobindo Ghose; 15 August 1872 – 5 December 1950) was an Indian philosopher, yogi, maharishi, poet, and Indian nationalist. He was also a journalist, editing newspapers such as Vande Mataram. He joined the Indian movement for independence from British colonial rule, until 1910 was one of its influential leaders, and then became a spiritual reformer, introducing his visions on human progress and spiritual evolution.

Rasipuram Krishnaswami Iyer Narayanaswami, better known as R.K. Narayan (10 October 1906 – 13 May 2001) was an Indian writer and novelist known for his work set in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. He was a leading author of early Indian literature in English along with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao.

Mulk Raj Anand (12 December 1905 – 28 September 2004) was an Indian writer in English, recognised for his depiction of the lives of the poorer castes in traditional Indian society. One of the pioneers of Indo-Anglian fiction, he, together with R. K. Narayan, Ahmad Ali and Raja Rao, was one of the first India-based writers in English to gain an International readership. Anand is admired for his novels and short stories, which have acquired the status of classics of modern Indian English literature.

Raja Rao (8 November 1908 – 8 July 2006) was an Indian-American writer of English-language novels and short stories, whose works are deeply rooted in

metaphysics. *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960), a semi-autobiographical novel recounting a search for spiritual truth in Europe and India, established him as one of the finest Indian prose stylists and won him the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1964. For the entire body of his work, Rao was awarded the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 1988. Rao's wide-ranging body of work, spanning a number of genres, is seen as a varied and significant contribution to Indian English literature

Indian short story in English was written systemically in India. The short story writers focused burning issues of India in their stories. The Indian English short story is successfully extended and acceptable with delight. Today, the Indian short story in English has very well served as a powerful vehicle of social awareness and a tool of painting the Indian social scene.

A Short story is a brief work of literature, usually written in narrative prose. It is one of the oldest types of literature. It has existed in many forms such as myths, fairy tales, ballads, and parables. It began with the oral storytelling which led to the composition of epics such as Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. These oral narratives were based on rhythmic verse that made the memorization of the story an easier task. The refined form of the short story emerged from various developments relating to this genre.

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, born on 1983 is an Indian writer. A Santhal himself, who became one of his invisible characters while writing the stories. Also in the collection is the story about a troupe. Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar is a writer and translator based in Jharkhand. From 2002 to 2015, Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar gathered stories about his people, the Santhals of Jharkhand, for his collection *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*. It was published in 2015 to critical acclaim, just as his novel *The Mysterious*

*Ailment of Rupī Baskey*, which won him the Sahitya Akademi Yuva Purashkar the same year. Last Friday, August 11, the Jharkhand government banned *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* saying it had shown Santhal women “in a bad light.” The next day, it suspended the 34-year-old writer, a medical officer at a district health centre 400km from the capital Ranchi, and asked him to explain his actions.

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar is a doctor and Sahitya award-winning writer based in Jharkhand. His published books include *The Mysterious Ailment of Rupī Baskey*, *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, *My Father’s Garden* and *Jwala Kumar and the Gift of Fire: Adventures in Champakbagh*. He won the 2015 Yuva Puraskar for his debut novel, was shortlisted for the 2014 Hindu Literary Prize and the 2014 Crossword Book Award, longlisted for the 2016 International Dublin Literary Award, and jointly won the 2015 Muse India Young Writer Award.

*The Mysterious Ailment of Rupī Baskey* is a novel by Indian author Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar. Published in the year 2014, this was his first book. For this novel, Shekhar won the 2015 Yuva Puraskar was shortlisted for the 2014 Crossword Book Award and the 2014 Hindu Literary Prize, longlisted for the 2016 International Dublin Literary Award and jointly won the 2015 Muse India Young Writer Award. As of December 2019, this book has been translated into Tamil and Bengali. *The Mysterious Ailment of Rupī Baskey* was named by The Hindu in December 2019 as one of the ten best fiction books of the decade.

*Jwala Kumar and the Gift of Fire: Adventures in Champakbagh* is Indian author Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar’s first book for children. It is a novel and its reading level is age 9 years and above. This book features illustrations by Krishna Bala Shenoī. It was

shortlisted for a 2019 Neev Book Award in the category Junior Readers and a 2019 Crossword Book Award in the children's books category. One positive review has called this book for the young to observe the differences in childhoods across India.

*The Adivasi Will Not Dance Stories* is a collection of short stories. The second book by Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, it was nominated for The Hindu Literary Prize in 2016 and included by Frontline (magazine) in August 2022 in a list of 25 books "that light up the path to understanding post-Independence Indian literature. As of April 2021, this book has been translated into Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Gujarati, and Bengali, while the Malayalam and Austrian German translations are forthcoming. 'Stories written from the margin, against the grain, and told with great skill and humanity. Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar is a writer to be sought out and discovered' (The Indian Express).

Mr Shekhar is one of India's most promising writers, his stories deft, compassionate and sharp-edged. His way of seeing is unflinching but not didactic. Mr Shekhar captures an album of people's lives. Shekhar's writing brings aspects of India that the grand narratives in Indian English writing have often ignored. Through characters that are powerless in so many ways, and by fusing an indigenous realism to the content of his writing, Shekhar has created a fresh and much-needed idiom for the Indian experience. Shekhar is the sort of writer who appears only rarely in the literary establishment. His voice is powerful, political, urgent. Yet, there is no reason to imagine that politics overpowers the plots his concerns are deeply literary, his style, effortlessly.

Hansda's analyses the indigenous people of Jharkhand are the easy target of displacement by the state agencies. The identity of being indigenous aims to give any inhabitants the status of original settlers of the specified land. The Santhal tribal



community of Jharkhand forms one among other original settlers who settled down years back. Santhali English writer, Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, in his epoch-making short story collection *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* raises an issue of despondency and injustice over his Santhal people. Development and Advancement are the tools used to displace innocent settlers all around Jharkhand. The alienation of the Santhal people, arising both in physical and mental forms. subaltern from meek to rebel.

From ancient times, land has had social, political, economic, and religious significance, particularly for indigenous peoples. For the Adivasis of central and northern India, land is a gift from God and life itself. Land is heritage and not a property. Therefore, the inheritance of land insures the survival, continuity and flourishing of the Adivasi community. The possession of land also manifests the community's life with God. The uprooting of Adivasis from their land on the part of the extraction industries in the name of development is an unethical and sinful reality. Such dislocation causes unemployment, poverty, homelessness, psychological stress, and a rise in crime. People are uprooted from their faith, culture, and the tradition of their ancestors. Relations are broken and people become violent against the powerful and dominant elites of society. Such uprooting also breeds violence and religious intolerance.

Economically and socially, Adivasis constitute the poorest strata of Indian society. They have suffered disproportionally from the adverse effects of developmental projects, climate change, social exclusion, human trafficking and many other forms of exploitation. Their traditional way of life has also been disrupted by the insurgence and the present political agenda of the current ruling party (BJP) against minorities. Their churches and places of worship have been burnt and vandalized by extremist

fundamentalist groups. The lands of the Adivasis, on which their spiritualities and religious values have flourished, are being desecrated by such anti-Christian elements. At the same time, indigenous people in India are resisting the rapacious development projects that are seizing their lands and vitiating their way of life and survival.

The uprooting of Adivasis from their land raises theological, anthropological, and ethical argues the intrinsic dignity of Adivasis as human persons, created in the image of God. The looting of Adivasi land on the part of the multi-national corporations is an unethical and sinful reality. Adivasis suffers from the oppression, empowers, struggle, freedom and liberation.

The land grab has become a common phenomenon in many developing countries in the world. People's ancestral land, property, and valuable possessions have been seized for the "development" of their respective nations. There are also many instances where people themselves have protested against the governments and their developmental projects, schemes that have jeopardized particular ethnic groups and brought about arrests and mass annihilations of entire villages. Land alienation has occurred throughout the centuries, from time immemorial. The grabbing of Adivasi land in India is not a new phenomenon. However, the loss of land by Adivasis is particularly devastating because it severs the anthropological, socio-economic, religious and ecological relationships of the Adivasis with nature.

The story *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is an immersing story of the influence and the weakness, the middle and the edge, the rich and poor people. The setting of the story is in the region of Pakur in Jharkhand. The hero is a sure Mangal Murmu who will not give execution before the greatest power in the Country leader of India. The president is

welcome to establish the framework stone of a nuclear energy station. The land on which the power plant should be set up had a place with Santhal towns. The occupants are expelled as well as their farmlands are being removed by the mining organization. The repercussion of this was straight forwardly projected by the demonstrations of Mangal Murmu in his forswearing to giving his presentation. They were not restored and that emerged the draft of the uprooted Santhals.

Hansda portrays one of the above mentioned as the reason for the displacement of the Santhals. The coal merchants seized the lands of the ignorant Santhals, leaving them jobless and homeless. The farming land was snatched and the poor farmers were clueless regarding the fact that what the government would do with so much land. Eleven villages were under the purview of vacating process. Initially, they thought that the Tenancy Act could protect their land. They made several rounds to the police station and block office but only to realize that these state agencies lied to them every time, assuring that their lands and villages were safe. Finally, the police came with written orders from the district administration to make room for a thermal power plant.

Adivasis of India have been subjected to systematic oppression for centuries and postcolonial India continues with the same processes by different means. Hansda Sowvendra Sekhar's short story, *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* explores the subalternization of such communities as well as the evolution of subaltern consciousness.

The next chapter deals with the Subaltern consciousness

## **Chapter Two**

### **Subaltern Consciousness**

Postcolonial studies and in critical theory, the term subaltern designates and identifies the colonial populations who are socially, politically, and geographically excluded from the hierarchy of power of an imperial colony and from the metropolitan homeland of an empire. Subaltern perspective goes with these two factors simultaneously. Ernesto Laclau in 1979 also called as Post Marxist who worked in several sectors like the possibility of wars, capitalism effects etc also researched that political party's debate targeted at masses does not indicate that this ideology simple means the conflict between two groups of people.

The literal meaning of "Subaltern" is "belonging to an inferior rank or position". Sociologists study and view the Indian society from various perspectives; subaltern perspective is one of them. The subaltern perspective can be depicted through the caste, race, occupation, class, age, color, and many more factors. It usually means subordination in any field, and it embodies features of dominance and submissive behaviors.

The term "subalternity" refers to a condition of subordination brought about by colonization or other forms of economic, social, racial, linguistic and cultural dominance. Subaltern studies is, therefore, a study of power. The 'Subaltern' is a term given by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in society who are under the hegemony of the ruling elite class. Subaltern classes include peasants, tribes, women and other groups denied access to get hegemonic power.

The term conflict is borrowed from Sir Arther Thomas Quiller Couch, an American philosopher and a critic. Subalternity is adopted from Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, an acclaimed critic and philosopher. The term Adivasi is used by Hansda designates the members of indigenous communities who are identified by the constitution of India as 'Tribes' or Scheduled tribes. This Adivasi preceded the Aryans. The vast heterogeneous population spread across the nation. Adivasis settle in scattered manner region which are rich in resources. The term Adivasi is loaded with variety of derogatory associations and assumptions in both in term of culture and civilizational aspects.

The word Adivasi is borrowed from Sanskrit denoting 'Adi' as original or first and 'Vasi' stands for inhabitants. The conflict of their origin and of being hailed as Adivasi and their subaltern nature. The ontology of adivasis or indigenes is a fault line in the Indian nation-state's narrative of teleological progress. Definitions and representations of the so-called indigenous people are fraught with semantic ambiguity and power politics. The indigenous denotes are calcitrant subject of nation-state mindlessly opposing the modernising corporate projects, sometimes it constitutes a prehistoric innocence, diametrically opposed to the corruption urban life. From the colonial era, or even before that, the large heterogeneous communities, who are presently clubbed together in India.

The term 'Scheduled Tribes' first appeared in the constitution of India. Tribal communities live, in various ecological and geo- climatic conditions ranging from plains and forest to hills and inaccessible areas. Tribals group are at different stages of social, economic and educational development. some tribes communities have adopted a mainstream way of life. 'Scheduled Tribes' have been suffering from essentialisation and

reductivism. They have been tagged as animist ‘tribes’ (as opposed to Hindu ‘castes’) naturally prone to criminality and bestiality, on the one hand. On the other hand, they have been championed as an embodiment of autochthony and innocence. Neither colonial nor nationalist epistemological attempts seem capable of addressing the actual ontological crises of the so-called indigenous population. The suppressed nature of the community is raising the voice of their rights.

Hansda Sowendra Shekhar is a pioneer of tribal welfare movement who intends to rescue tribal identity from invisibility. Hansda lays emphasis on the significance and relevance of tribal culture in mainstream social system. With the use of his characters, Hansda traces tribal struggle of searching their past and claiming it. It explores the issues of representation and identity of indigenous people of India. Hansda writes back in response to the domination and subjugation of tribal communities to rewrite their history that allowed them to exist merely as the “other”. The over simplification of the tribal issues can be held responsible for the obliteration of tribal cultural identity. The mainstream allows the indigenous a mere subliminal existence to maintain hegemony over them.

The subalternization of tribals is the main theme of Hansda’s writings. The attempts of tribal authors such as Hansda to claim a space for tribal identity has brought to light the issues of shared experiences of oppression and abuse. Hansda has created an authentic picture of contemporary India through his works. He belongs to Santhali community of Jharkhand. His works are personal accounts that share crucial elements of tribal culture and identity, and carry immense significance in tribal history. The population of the subaltern groups may be diverse, but one constant variable is their

resistance to be dominated by the elite, regardless of their continual disregard historically and politically. In the context of colonialism, the subaltern is robbed of an authentic history and a voice. To be heard, the subaltern must use the language familiar with the elite, the language of the elite.

*The Adivasi Will Not Dance* to understand the reality of community to come up and reclaim their past along with growing westernization. They are trapped in the generations being inclined to the original culture and the abolishing one spread across their vicinity. On the hand Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak asks a question “can the subaltern speak? Who lack recognition, and cannot contribute to revolution present. Everything is empathically answered by Hansda in his stories. The community has undergone with many uprisings since the beginning of their identification. Originating from the British raj till today, there are number of fights they have fought. To relate, the Mal paharia uprising of 1772 against British and colonial rule. The Santhal rebellion of 1855 led by Sidho and Kanho Murmu, the Koli uprising of 1873 and the most recognized rebellion of Birsa Munda of 1899.

The Adivasi are continually suffering in extensive manner from poverty, education, electricity and healthcare. They are all the time intruded and invaded by the government or private companies at the expense of their lands by which they are made to leave their place or they are forcibly displaced. Their land rights are always encroached.

The Adivasi are always subjugated and exploited since the postcolonial era. The story collection of Hansda are set in the Jharkhandi in nature. They have always faced a conflicts of being deprived of their own rights by the other power plants. The mining companies have displaced almost 26 thousand people during the set ups. Hence, there

have been ample examples of Adivasi subjugation either amongst themselves or between the opposite forces.

The very first story in the collection is entitled as ‘They eat meat’. The title itself seems to have sensed the conflicting opinion and the feeling of addressing them low. The family of panmuiji shifts to Vadodara, he being an employee in Gramin Vidhyut Nigam. He had to rent a house for his family to be settled in the city. The consciousness of identity is visible here since Hansda writes, “ Yes jhi. You see, the food habits here are very different . Er . . . for one, people don’t eat meat here. No fish, no chicken, no mutton eggs” (03). Hansda hires Mr. Rao’s house once during his visit to Biram Kumang surprises us. Mr Rao directly address him with his caste and says not everyone here is like me. He says that Vadodara is strongly a Hindu city and none approves of the Adivasi traditions like eating meat or chicken. Hansda writes, “Vadodara is a strongly Hindu city. ‘Mr. Rao continued. ‘People here believe in purity. I’m not too sure what this purity is, but all I know is that people here don’t eat non-veg. you know? Meat, fish, chicken eggs.nor do they approve of people who eat non-veg” (06).

The identity of Biran Kumang is shown under erasure by Mr.Rao by asking many unwanted questions. The other story named ‘Getting Even’ tells us event of a conflict in between the communities staying together. The event is of a small girl and therefore the medical examination has been ordered. After all how these small kids can go about it? Says the doctor and at last they have come to the conclusion by the boys statement. It’s nothing wrong the boy has done to the girl but the conflict they have amongst the class of society. The entire discourse of this story conflicts in nature. The Santhals and the Thakurs. Hansda writes, “Then I understood that, the woman was Santhal, and that she



had married a Thakur man. ‘They are Santhal, sir Kiristians. The man continued. And this is what they do. They bring Santhal girls from village on the pretext of giving them education and training and work and sell them away’” (54).

The notable conflict between man verses man and also of society shocks us when we learn about the inhuman activities performed by evil brains. The short story collection *The Adivasi will not Dance* is an experiment narrative that deliberates defamiliarised representation of both conflict and subalterenity. The story ‘Eating with the Enemy’ experiments that Sulochona and Subhadra are close friends belonging to Harijan (Ghaasi) and Marwari community. Their friendship is matter of great conflict. Their friendship represents subalternity of Sulochona being of a particular caste since both of them were scolded and beaten up for taking lunch together. The other perspective of using language by Hansda to familiarize the typical Jharkhandy culture, he uses the typical word terminology of a mixture. It consists of both identity and culture and also effectuates the culture, tradition from which he belongs.

The story *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is a monologue of a farmer of Santhal origin named Mangal Murmu explains the multi dimensional exploitation and suffering of Santhals. The entire narrative is an account of mare material deprivation and erosion of cultural identity. In the beginning of the story he introduces himself as a farmer and musician and acknowledges as: “Was a farmer. Was a farmer is right. Because I don’t farm anymore. In the village of Matiajore in Amrapara block of pakur district, not many Santhals farm anymore. Only a few of us still have farmland, most of it has acquired by a mining compay (170-171). This shows a kind of deprivation or exploitation or marginalization of tribals who are driven away from their farm lands and displaced

elsewhere. The tribals are left behind being abandoned and made to live or survive by the mercy of God.

Murmu says, displacing Adivasi from their land is common in Jharkhand from the arrival of private and government companies for mining. In this process the tribals are cutoff from their source of lively hood and also from their motherland on which they have been sustained and fed. Their transportation is agonistic and pathetic. His monologue suggests us this subalterniety and conflicts faces by them. He says,

It is this coal, sir, which is gobbling us up bit by bit. There is a blackness deep, indelible all along the Koyla Road. The trees and shrubs in our village bear black leaves. Our ochre earth has become black. The stones, the rocks, the sand, all black. The tiles on the roofs of our huts have lost their fire-burnt red. The vines and flowers peacock we Santhals draw on the outer walls of our houses are black. Our children dark-skinned as they are forever covered with fine black dust. When they cry, and tears stream down their faces, it seems as if a river is cutting ac a drought-stricken land. (174-175)

Murmur exclaims, “What do we Santhals get in return? Tatters to wear, barely enough food. Such diseases that we can’t breathe properly, we cough blood and forever remain bare bones” (172). In the light of this displacement, disillusionment and the agonistic sufferings of Adivasis we tend to remember Bhabha. Bhabha points out, “The discourse of minorities, the heterogeneous histories of contending peoples, agonistic authorities and tense locations of cultural difference, Jostle for space” (148, Location of culture). This is evident in Murmur’s speech when talks about the local Muslim whom

they identify by the name of Jolhas. His monologues are examples of conflicting views. He says,

A decade earlier when the Santhals of Matiajore were beginning their annual journey to share crop in the farms of Namal, four Jolha families turned up from nowhere and asked us for shelter. A poor lot, they looked as impoverished as us. Perhaps worse. Today, that small cluster of four huts has grown into a tola of more than a hundred houses, not huts. While we Santhals, in our own village, still live in our mud houses, each Jolha house has at least on brick wall and a cemented yard .... Sometimes I wonder who the olposonkhyok [minority] is here. (175-176)

The Adivasis are shown to be the agents of indigenous culture and host of the culture of Sarna faith. Due to the interruptions of others in their culture, they have suppressed their culture. in Derridian terminology, can be called as cultural erasure. The sense of hostility towards Muslims and Christian and caste-Hindus dismayed the Santhals as the children are converted and renamed as David, Mikail, Kiristofer etc. On the other hand the Caste-Hindu equally repelled them to give up their Sarna faith. The Adivasis are shown inferior and subjugated. In addition the conflict of external kind, community versus community and religion versus religion is notable. This process of conversion repeals the theme of subalternity. Murmur resentfully remarks, “We are losing our Sarna–faith, our identity and our roots. We are becoming people from nowhere” (173).

The cultural erasure is dominant in the story and in specific relation with dance and music of Santhals. Murmur narrates and experience of his own troupe. Their troupe was challenged by the conflicting circumstances and are neither materially rewarded nor

appreciated or dignified. Out of this sense of disillusionment Mangal Murmur says, “All our certificates and shields, what did they give us? Diku children go to schools and colleges, get education, jobs. What do we Santhals get? We Santhals can sing and dance, and we are good at art. Yet, what has our art given us?” (178). Such feelings reveal that the communities bitter sense of betrayal. The forced displacement and co-existence of Adivasi is ironic of cultural misappropriation.

At last Murmu becomes aware of holistic process of dispossession confronts by violently addresses the president of India. He writes, “Johar Rashtrapati Babu .... You will now start building the power plant, but this plant will be the end of us all, the end of all the Adivasi. These men sitting beside you have told you that this power plant will change our fortunes, but these same men have forced us out of our homes and villages. We have nowhere to go, nowhere to grow our crops. How can this power plant be good for us? And how can we Adivasis dance and be happy? Unless we are given back our homes and land, we will not sing and dance? We Adivasis will not dance”. (187)

The reality of the downtrodden, backward mass has been exposed to us through this narrative. The short stories exposes us the nature of subalternity and conflicts. The ultimate end of the discussion is the exhaustion of this community and rather disturbed mindsets.

This chapter concludes with the attempts to portray the conflicts and the state of subalternity of Adivasis. The text is the pioneering text for the category of Indian English literature. Hansda in a way brings out the realities of the Adivasi communities by juxtaposing a fine balance of both conflicts and controversies. The aspect of subalternity is highlighted through the characters; events and narrative point of view. The stories tell

the subjugation of Adivasis. Their consciousness has been grouped. The text apart romanticizing it portrays the historiographical narrative. It offers an inevitable critique of the existing stringent customs and hegemonic rules which imposed upon the Adivasis. Hansda offers the picture of the dominant ideologies which became the laws and are applied for the Adivasis to exploit or rule. In a way his writings in general are the treat to the readers who are looking forward to understand the state of Adivasis and the psychological traits they bear in response to the prevailing dominant groups.

## Chapter Three

### Status of Women in Tribal Society

Social and Economics status of tribal women is heavily influenced by the social structure and the sort of society in which they live. Female participation in non-economics activities is as significant. The women of the tribe labour extremely hard, insome cases even harder than the males. The patriarchal nature of tribal communities prevails in the vast majority of them. Women are not equal to men in the traditional sense, but they have a great standing and the raising of their children were dependent on an abundance of riches and a limited amount of control over their lives. Tribal women owed their comparatively high society position to a combination of abundant resources and a clear distinction in their society between the household and the social arena.

Primitive Economy results in overburdening of women. Women are exposed to wildanimals, poisonous at vegetation as a cost of survival. Cultural practices like genital mutilation are disastrous to the physical and mental health of women. Sexual Exploitation, a number of complaints regarding officials committing sexual offences have come to light especially in Naxalite areas. Tribal migrant women face issues of low wages, bad work conditions, malnutrition, unhygienic sanitation and cramped housing. Despite several economic, political and social changes, women, are still far behind.

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is a collection of stories mainly depicts the lives of Santhals from Jharkhand region, constantly struggling to live their life in this mineral-rich land. Women are still facing sexual abuse and harassment, she is made to putup with this torture which causes her bodily and mental

suffering. If a girl comes from a poor, she still holds the issues like gender discrimination, sexual abuse harassment, education and child marriage. Some people worship the girl as goddesses, while on the other, they mistreat them mercilessly and think less of them. One of the most heart-rending tales of poverty and helplessness in the collection of third society, titled, “November is a Month of Migrations.” Epitomised through a 20-year-old-girl, Talamai who is going to Bardhaman district of West Bengal with her family to plant rice and other crops in farms owned by zaminders of Bardhaman depicts the extremes that poverty can lead to. At the railway platform, she was attracted by a young, fair jawan. He was working in the Railway Protection Force. She along with her parents was waiting for the train in the station. Talamai felt hungry and she was helpless to fulfil her hunger. It was at 10:30 pm on the railway platform. The young man signals and asked her: “Are you hungry?” The jawan calls out as Talamai rounds the corner. “you need food?” He is standing front of the police man’s quarters. “Yes” Talamai answers. “you need money?” “Yes”. “will you do some work for me?” ( 40). She is approached by a young jawan for the sexual transaction for “two pieces of cold bread pakora and a fifty rupee note”( 42). At this time he uttered that Santhals women are born to satisfy the sexual pleasure. But an innocent Talamai could not utter a word against him rather she allowed moving his hand over her body. She was so helpless and voiceless.

Talamai a poverty stricken girl is helpless to feed her stomach. It is painful that santhal are disposed of their land and helpless to raise voice against the powerful. Women of santhal troupe, who consider arts as sacred are forced to sell them due to poverty and hunger. This particular short story *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* infuriated many readers and critics and Shekhar was accused for objectifying the Adivasi women.

However, the story *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* clearly indicated that in no way the story meant to illiterate but reflected the painful, disturbing and sad state of Adivasi for whom every day was struggle to survive.

The writer also commented that even with its very explicit description of sex there was nothing romantic about it. Many people think women become sex workers because they are immoral or too lazy to find other work. But most women have no other way to earn. These women need money for food and shelter, to support their children and families and to pay debts. This desperate need often arises in situation which women cannot control, For Example – if her husband dies, if she gets divorced, if her family or husband abandons her, if she may be raped or have an unplanned pregnancy and finds that no one will marry her, if she has no job skills. She is left helpless. She sells the only thing she has her body in order to survive.

In the stories of *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* “Merely whore”, a sex worker falls in love with one of her clients and hopes for rescue from her profession. Nirmal convinces her to be with her forever. Such moments made Sona melt. These were the times when worries of work and money evaporated completely and she began dreaming of spending her life with Nirmal. Sona loves Nirmal and dreams of being his life-long partner rather than a one night stand. Nirmal is reluctant to fulfil her demand. Sona is broken into pieces, she understood that a whore will always be a whore. Illiteracy, poverty and lack of employment led to flesh trade. All dancers turned to prostitution. In the stories of *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, Jharn-di gives shelter to them, fed them and waited for them to die.



Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* (2015). Female characters in the selected stories are studied in their relationship as mothers, wives, daughters, lovers, brides, servants, prostitutes, widows, dahni [witch] and as distinct selves too. Even after being the doubly oppressed and doubly colonized, the female tribal characters stand out in their own unique way in terms of their characteristic traits, attitude, perspectives and intellect.

The characters views and the authors perspective the novel seeks to explore the complex identity and condition of the women in the poverty stricken, middle class, santhal patriarchy society. The socioeconomic, socio-political, religious and ideological origins of the millennial tribal ideals are traced through the stories like "Blue Baby", "Baso -jhi", "Merely a Whore", "Eating with the Enemy", "Desire, Divination, Death" and "November is the Month of Migrations" in the story *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*. The picturing of women characters in literature, especially in Indian English Writings, is as old as its origin. But the depiction generally shows a particular stereotyping about women or female characters. The male dominant mentality in a patriarchal society caused the authors to create such stereotypes, The reason behind it is that there is a serious dearth of women writers.

Most of the literary texts in the canon of Indian English Literature are produced by male authors with their typical male-centric or phallogocentric viewpoint that ends up creating women characters in the same traditional romanticized way as before. Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar, even after being a male author, seems to oppose such phallogocentrism in his depiction of women characters. Rather, in spite of romanticizing the female characters, he tries to describe them as they appear to be. This kind of

depiction of women in a Santhal tribal community is something that separates Shekhar from other writers- male or Female.

Women status in contemporary tribal society are still rigid, and at the same time, loosely defined. Men work and earn money while wives/women stay at home, cook, sew and take care of the children- still considered only as ‘complementary’ to men or only a domestic help. In most cases, this model is the standard of the Santhal families. In few other cases, due to extreme poverty, the women seem to earn their own bread in order to survive in an exploitative society. Shekhar, in his stories, seems to depict both the sides with equal emphasis. Again in “Eating with the Enemy”, Sulochona and Mohini represents the women who are nothing but the sex toys for the male dominating society.

The identity centers on getting married or being the wife of someone. Sulochona though works as a servant in her neighbor and earns her livelihood; her self-assertion is limited to her being the wife of her husband Dinanath. Sulochona was not that lucky. Her husband was “as bad as her father . . . marriage proved to be the second round of misery in Sulochona’s life” (61). And when Dinanath brings another woman Mohini as his wife, Sulochona becomes aggressive and determines to grab control of her own life. Their psyche is so much bent and domesticized by the male perspective that when she looks for a name for her elder daughter, she was offered, by her friend, a name like Sitamata, she could only think, “she will have the qualities of the goddess. When she grows up, she will find a good husband. She will live happily all her life” (62). Mohini’s story is a little different. She used to run a desi-liquor bhati that Dinanath patronized. They fell in love ... and then brought her home as his mistress .... That was all Mohini wanted. She came

from a poor family. Had she carried on selling alcohol, She would have also ended up selling her body” (65).

Shekhar depicts how in the capitalist patriarchal model, the male tendency of treating nature as a commodity to be used and harnessed is extended to their intention of treating women’s body as a sexual and reproductive commodity. Their voice is subjugated as they belong to marginalized society. They face the cruelty of patriarchy in their society, and outside they are exploited by the non-tribal people. Here they aren’t the victims of foreign colonialism at the first place. Rather they are the victims of poverty and hunger. In this manner they are no less than doubly colonized, doubly marginalized and doubly oppressed.

Shekhar’s attempt to bring out such oppression is very much visible in his writings, and this attempt was rigorously criticized by the patriarchs of the Santhal community. “November Is the Month of Migration” is the particular short story that infuriated many readers and critics and Shekhar was accused for objectifying the Adivasi women. However, there was another reading to the short story that clearly indicated that in no way was the story meant to titillate but reflected the painful, disturbing and sad state of Adivasi for whom every day was a struggle to survive.

It is hard to separate the characters portrayed by Shekhar as the life will not let us escape. The way the characters are represented in the stories is a mixture of both empowered and exploited or disempowered characters. Gita, in “Blue Baby” tries to find her power through her aspired job of a teacher. On one hand she attempts her best to achieve what she wants by pursuing her job as a teacher and by getting pregnant beforehand to escape her mismatched marriage. And on the other hand, she is denied her

power when her ex-lover Dilip refuses to take her back to their love life. Now disappointed and broken Gita “determined to cast every last clot of Dilip’s blood out of her body” (111). Sona and Jharna-di, in “Merely a Whore” find themselves empowered when they rule over men: “Sona was a dream; everyone else was merely a whore” (145). On the other hand, they fall prey to the clutches of phallogocentric, flesh loving males and lose their way out. Subhashini, in “Desire, Divination, Death”, although works in a rice-mill and seems to be empowered apparently, loses her power when she lost her only son to mere fever due to lack of money. Baso-jhi in the eponymous story seems to get empowered and gained importance when she singlehandedly runs her family. But soon after her sons’ marriages she felt disempowered all of a sudden when she was accused by her own sons as dahni [witch] and expelled from her house.

Empowerment or the state of being empowered, for women, don’t simply mean to gain physical power to compete with men. Rather the real empowerment is the granting of political, social or economic power to an individual or group. Disempowerment is something that is done to others. They only aspire for and never acquire; and finally end up being the voiceless. Shekhar’s women characters like Baso-jhi, Sona, Jharna-di, Talamai Kisku, Sulochona and Gita seem to get disempowered or powerless in the hand of the men or the circumstances created by men. Spivak argues that the subaltern cannot speak for herself as the double bind of colonialism and patriarchy silence her. In this respect they are again made ‘subalterns’ (Spivak 44-45); they are denied subject position in the mainstream discourses.

The subalternity of the women, especially in the colonial or postcolonial context, is more acute, since she has neither conceptual language nor the audience of the native

men [ both Santhal and non-tribal men] who would hear them. It is not that subaltern women cannot speak, but “they have been denied the subject position in the mainstream discourse and are therefore condemned to silence” (Mukhopadhyay 104). Such is the portrayal of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar that the women characters find their voice and lose it immediately, gather their power and lose it in eye’s blink. Power for them is like both a dream and a nightmare.

Shekhar’s portrayal can be best described as a literature of protest. It takes an in-depth study of ruthless subordination of women at the hands of patriarchy and their consequent marginalization and victimization. Shekhar felicitates the relation between caste and women’s subordination as one of the important points of his conceptualization of women oppression. The characters are from different generations, from different age groups, but what equate them are their sufferings, exploitations and the disparities they are subjected to. Their sufferings and exploitations caused by men equate the exploitation caused to mother nature. Their struggle for gaining power, voice and self-assertion falls prey to the rigid societal labyrinth. Short stories are not very easy to engage with or sometimes they are not complete in themselves.

Shekhar’s stories seem to be the most complete in pointing out various, diversified aspects of women’s lives. So, in a sense, what Shekhar is doing in his writings is targeting and challenging both the moral and social perspectives which he sees as responsible for such oppression and marginalization. Pointing out the lacunas in the society he urges for the solution to his readers. Shekhar might be the first to depict the Santhal adivasi society and its role in subjugating the women, but the depiction is undoubtedly and unquestionably universal.

To every human being, freedom and independence remain governing factors of their experience and interaction with others and their own mental well being. This freedom, independence and autonomy is severely lacking among Adivasi women, as they fall under the lower and thereby powerless strata of society. Women from Adivasi background, historically, have had to play different from that of Adivasi men. Understanding the difference in experience of the two genders, the paramountcy of being able to factor in the adversities encountered by them increases. The story *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is a compilation of short stories by Hansda Sowvendra Shekar. It probes the stories of adivasi people and caters to the reality of the condition of women in Adivasi groups. The author, in an interview with the Telegraph, stated that the stories were all drawn from real life. We shall thus be given a deeper insight into the lives of these while factoring in the grievances of Adivasi people as well as looking at their circumstances with past-considered perspective.

The infringement of a positive open space is a product of the continuous barriers that lay as speed breakers in the life of women. These are not just problems with the general population, but with highly acclaimed people as well. There have been many cases where people in good governmental positions and men who encounter Adivasi women, take advantage of them. Adivasi women tend to be the ones that can easily be suppressed and left unheard. This is because many who lack good education facilities, are paid low wages, have bad work conditions, and suffer malnutrition with unhygienic sanitation. Men that hold a lot of power and position or even can afford to act dominant without being caught, view Adivasi women as objects to seek pleasure from. Thus, men

maltreat and misuse them without paying heed to the effect of their actions on someone's life.

The tribal women workers act as food providers and sustain livelihood security, they tend to be closely connected. During the Chipko Movement, when people hugged trees to avert deforestation, most men were against the movement, as they wanted the development of roads to facilitate their travel into nearby cities and towns, even at the cost of deforestation. It was usually the men in the families who travelled to towns and cities; while women lead the movement as they acknowledged the value of forests in sustaining all forms of lives, including them. A few lines before the end, Shekhar laments over the conditions of Santhal girls and adolescents who are not making any progress at all. He calls a halt to all these terrible activities going on in Santhal people groups and outside Santhal people groups. Like the previous stories, the Santhal ladies were regarded as some gadgets of real delight and not as individuals. As a result of unemployment, neediness, hunger, and vagrancy, the Santhals are forced to turn to prostitution and human trafficking as a means of subsistence. These problems build up and escalate when it comes to talking about women, especially tribal. Along with these, tribal women are one of the major categories facing substantial disabilities in inheritance and the customs of tribal communities discriminate against women by providing them with limited customary land rights.

Historically, women have been impacted in a multitude of areas including occupation, objectification, ownership of property, food-related activities, accessibility to sanitary products, etc. Women are subjected to a lot of problems as well as brutalities that infringe on their freedom as well as affect their say in society. The social and political

concerns pertaining to women aggravate the interplay of their direct dependence on the environment in the current modern world. As gender and various categories intersect; Adivasi women, turn out to be in miserable conditions because they end up having to face the shortcomings of all intersecting identities and variables. In the midst of the struggle of Adivasi women, who are trapped in intersectionality, the idea of freedom and home establishes its pertinence. Having gone through the historical context of Adivasi women as well as the context of real-life stories brings us to ponder upon how piling up of belonging to a lot of categories at lower levels of the various ladders, which exist in society leads to the aggravation of problems.

*The Adivasi Will Not Dance* Stories details the story of a whole village being transformed into a red-light area due to the changes brought by industrialisation. The changes affected women more than the other gender. The tribal villages are altered into a coal-mining town, which is evident in the district of Lakhipur where the story plot is set. Girls are taken from the villages with fake promises that they would be provided education and job. In reality they are sold in the cities to men and women who earn money by misusing them sexually. The girls weep every day thinking of their life being drenched in this business but they have no other option to survive. It fetched them money, which in turn takes care of their other needs.

The tribal women towards prostitution as sexism, racism and colonialism via invasions of people's lands, causing agricultural and community dislocation and environmental destruction. These events then result in poverty and rural-to-urban migration which produces huge urban labour pool available for labour exploitation



generally as well as prostitution of women and children, the status of the women are seriously challenged due to the imposition of alien cultures.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Agony of the Indigenous**

The term "indigenous" has prevailed as a generic term for many years. In some countries, there may be a preference for other terms such as "Adivasi", "tribal", "ethnic groups" and so forth. The people belonging to 'scheduled tribes' in India are generally considered to be Adivasis, literally meaning 'indigenous people' or 'original inhabitant.' 'Scheduled Tribes' is also an administrative term used for purposes of administering certain specific constitutioned privileges, protection and benefits for specific segment of the population who are considered historically disadvantaged and backward.

Tribal people or Social tribes are categorized as a community of indigenous people by the constitution. Tribals are also considered socially and economically disadvantaged. The life of nomads and tribal people is incredibly difficult and arduous. Mostly they possess worn out tents that can even prevent downpours. They are characterized by being geographically isolated and relatively cut off from main stream culture, hence exhibit backwardness in terms of socio-economic and educational parameters. They live a very tough life. There is no enjoyment or recreation in their lives.

Tribal people still live in their primitive ways. This is the sense which was discerned perfectly while carrying out this job. Class of tribal people is still devoid of basic facilities of life. As they don't even patch a fertile land to cultivate, the tribals would prefer to settle permanently. They have to move from hill to graze their livestock. The weather conditions in these places are not always favourable to result the suffer loss of livestock. Tribal lives is miserable. The problem of tribals are still about access to basic needs. Tribals losing their land access to the forest it means the tribals losing their main sources of livelihood and food.

Alienation from their land of birth pushed the Adivasis into poverty and dependence. They were forced out of their homes by the government. The adivasi lands were given to zamindars for cultivation and tribals were forced to work on these lands. Adivasi people's livelihood deeply depend on the forest and they claim to protest forest as their homeland more than their life. Adivasi people live on their own. They maintain a close relationship with the forest. Many adivasis have migrated to cities in search of work where they are employed for very low wages in local industries or at building or construction sites. They were caught in a cycle of poverty and deprivation. Due to deforestation, Adivasis are forced to migrate to cities. The communities which are numerically small in relation to the rest of population are minorities.

The story of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is about the actual incident in 2013 when adivasi farmers were arrested for protesting the building of the powerplant. The tribes have been waiting for a long time in the hope that the government and the general public will listen to their problems and feelings. The book *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* is a moving story of Murmu, a troupe master, and the

wretched condition of his people after he is beaten by the police for protesting against the state sponsored theft of santhal land for a corporation. Troupe master Mangal Murmu refuses for the president of india and is beaten down. He remarks:

They pinned me to the ground. They did not let me speak,  
they did not let my protest, they did not even let me raise  
my head and look at my fellow musicians and dancers as  
they were being beaten up by the police. All I could were  
their mercy. (169)

Inspired by the protest in Jharkhand by the Adivasi against the Jindal Power Plant exemplifies displacement, greed and development. Over 21.3 million people were displaced and among the plan forty percent of them were tribal people. Lack of public representation, barely any public sympathy and physical remoteness from civilisation, snatching lands from these communities is a cake walk for the Indian elites.

The story “The Adivasi will not dance” is a powerful narrative of the multiple forms of atrocities committed towards Adivasis ranging dispossession from their land, helplessness against the might of mining companies, the venality of politicians and the hollowness of middleclass. Adivasi is easily blamed for others’ mistakes. The people who are subjugated in society are blamed easily, they suffer for their unequal treatment and discrimination due to their status as poor people. When a group with power, wealth or authority gives preferential treatment to its own group over members of another group social injustice occurs. Santhals are considered as fool.

I only said, ‘we adivasi will not dance anymore’ what is wrong  
with that? We are like toys someone presses our ON button,

or turns a key in our backsides, and we santhals start beating  
rhythms on our tamak and tumdak, or start blowing tunes on  
our tiriyo while someone snatched away our very dancing ground. (170)

The Adivasi people were considered as toys, they were forced to follow the rules and laws made by the officials. They were intended to dance like objects as the officials plays the music. Coal merchant occupied Adivasi's land for their profit, their livelihood depends on the forest they claim to protest the forest as their homelands more than their own life. Adivasis have been increasingly forced through economic changes, forest policies and political force applied by the state and private industry to migrate to lives as workers in plantations, at construction sites, in industries and as domestic workers. This in turn has resulted in increased land alienation and displacement of indigenous people. This displacement, caused by the expansion of the industrial land resulted in migration of tribal people to outside regions in search of livelihood.

The Adivasi depends on the forest for their entire livelihood, when in forest are cleared for various human activities these people are forced to move out the forest and in turn they lose their source of food and income. Land alienation, loss of access over forest enforced displacement projects and lack of proper rehabilitation and indebtedness have been some reasons for the marginalisation of Adivasis. Santhals are innocent and uneducated states. "Santhals don't understand business. We get coal easy yet we don't charge much for it, only enough for food, clothes drinks, but these jolha know the value of coal, they know the value of money. They charge the price that is best for them." (175).

The forces against them are immense. The corporations, government, police and sometimes even the court acts to repress and persecute the Adivasis, especially those who dare to resist. People have been bullied, tricked, bribed and beaten to get them out of the way of the officials. It takes immense courage to stand up against such threats, but adivasi people feel they have no choice. They consider the forest to be their God, the provider of all things. Most of the tribals follow the form of Hinduism. It is mainly due to the contacts the tribals have with their Hindu tribal neighbours. Christian Missionary was introduced among the people by christian sisters. Almost all the religions across india believe in the existence of spiritual powers. The Christian missionaries brought development among tribals. People among the Christian missionaries provide food, help the tribals financially and ultimately leave them. Adivasi were considered as outcasts and untouchables.

The Adivasi practise a range of tribal religions that are different from Islam, Hinduism and Christianity. These often involve the worship of ancestors, village and nature spirits, the last associated with and residing in various sites in the landscape ‘mountain – spirits’, ‘river – spirits’, ‘animals – spirits’, they worship nature gods. Over the years, alienation from their land push the Adivasi into poverty and dependence them to search for food and shelter. The same process repeated in new stretches of forest land, and these too became the farmlands of non – tribal settlers. Adivasis caught in a cycle between poverty and hungry. “what does a hungry man needs? Food. What does a poor man need? Money. So here I was, needed both. And recognition, too.” (180).

Profit should never come at the cost of human blood. Any government that places profits before people is pure evil. The government officials made substantial inroads into

Adivasi society, they brought moneylenders into the process of encroachment on Adivasi lands by outsiders. Christian missions began to proselytize in some indigenous areas, they achieved a degree of success and Adivasis played a little role in the events leading up to independence. The tribals continue going through crisis for identity, the 'tribe' imposed from outsiders they meet violence to get their self identity. Due to this they lose their lands and get access to the forests, even they lose their livelihood and food. Such loss of identity can result in increase in levels of generalised anxiety, low self esteem, depression, loss of self confidence, social anxiety, isolation, chronic loneliness all of which threaten the ability to connect with other people. In day today life Adivasi people face problems like militarization, urbanisation, construction of dams, industrialisation which cause deforestation. Grabbing of tribal lands has been reduced these days. The education levels are low among them and they are engaged in various kinds of jobs like selling products, some migrate to other regions to work as agricultural labourers.

The Adivasi Will Not Dance stories grants the reader an opportunity to read the life of Santhals in the state of Jharkhand, which is rarely fictionalism in mainstream. The tribal groups in India are exploited by outsiders especially the upper class members, land grabbers, merchants, missionaries, the media corporations and the government. Tribal communities are hardly supported by the rest of the world, So they have started to voice out for the welfare of their lives and to safeguard their group. In The Adivasi Will Not Dance Stories the author speaks to the world about the situation of the tribal people through Mangal Murmu. Thus it is argued that these sorts of development brought calamities into tribal lifestyle that made the villagers restless, for these issues are new to them because they have never been subjected to changes by the outsiders to this level.

Modernisation intrudes the traditional lifestyle by extinguishing the ancient tribal norms which has been blemished from its pristine state as noted in the story. This is the tricky attitude of the colonizers who dominate the innocent natives to expand their territory and misrepresent the tribal communities to the world. The colonisers operate the natives and their territory and misrepresent the tribals communities to the world. The colonisers operate the natives and their land according to their needs by ignoring the tribal traditional values. The development introduced by the colonisers bruised the tribal values making their lives vulnerable to the intrusion of alien culture. The tribal people had survived without the modern invention and western lifestyle. Then indigenous communities are trying to cope with the changes that affect the mere existence of traditional practices. The tribal people being the self sufficient group have not depended on other societies but the current epoch has made them demand help from non-tribal societies.

Mangal Murmu who has suddenly received a letter from Government on thick ivory paper requesting him to perform with his troupe on a very important occasion. The issue is that of a spate of writers who have turned in their Sahitya Akademi awards as protest against a flood of murders and lynchings on which the government refuses to comment. Murmu's troupe is scattered because the performers have no money to live on since the world around them is busy with their quest for minerals rich land which does not belong to politician or the industrialists but to the Santhals and their earthy, rooted race. However no one listens to the adivasi because what matters to the power that the Santhals are only there for entertainment.



An urban society that rules is not the Government that promised a million rights before it was voted into power, but a body compounded of checks and barriers breathing Big Brother like, over the shoulder and remaining silent in the face of organised. In Shekhar's story Murmu finds himself increasingly as loss of his troupe comes to him for food and sustenance and he has none to offer them. All he has at his disposal is the freedom to protest, staged at the most crucial moment back against the wall in front of the prime minister who has come to inaugurate the factory that will destroy their woods and forest and in the long run the culture that they stand for. Adivasi are utilised for the purpose of entertainment and ignored, simply because they too have no voice of their own but are only expected to dance.

The Adivasi will not Dance is about 60 year old Mangal Murmu who refuses to dance at a government function. When the indigent Murmu first receives an invitation to perform, he is pleased. He soon learns that the occasion is the inauguration of construction activity for a privately funded thermal plant by the president of India. The land on which the plant is to be built is part of a village whose residents have been evicted through official diktat. Murmu's daughter and her family is part of the evictee group and has been forced to move to her father's house. They were making the Santhal dance. Officials were organising the ceremony. Shekhar's stories are powerful narratives of multiple forms of violence towards Adivasis, dispossession from land and helplessness against the might of mining of companies, the venality of politicians, the whimsy of missionaries and the hollowness of middle class sympathies. They speak Adivasis being treated as heritage toys who perfume for tourists to show the 'rich' diversity of India, but are meant to forever stay as museum pieces, unable to access good education and health.

The Adivasi Will Not Dance stories are not only earnest of power and powerlessness, but also speak of love, intimacy and loss in the crucible of desperate economic and social circumstances. They are marked by the bracing touch of collapsed infrastructure, rapacious private interests and the erratic paternalism of the State. But , nevertheless hopes desires, aspirations and earnings to escape an oppressive present break free from the flotsam and jetsam of what modernity has wrought for indigenous populations. It is this remarkable combination of creative and political sensibilities that make the collection worthy of admiration. These stories of Adivasis' lives are unsentimental rendering of quotation struggle and aspiration, as opposed to representation of Disneyfield noble savage, infantilised adults and promiscuous strumpets that populate the indigenous imagination. Tribes' identity is to completely miss the relationship between creativity and politics.

The story is inspired by the actual incident in 2013 when Adivasi farmers were arrested for protesting the building of the Jindal powerplant in Godda, Jharkhand, as the president Pranab Mukherjee laid the foundation stone. In the rhetoric of development, land grabbing is often justified because it creates jobs for the 'poor'. But wealth generated by such development is seldom transferred to the hands of the people who owned this land. In retrun for its sale, the Adivasis receive toxic pollutants that infiltrate their water and the air they breathe.

As someone at the inaugural ceremony shouts "Bharat Mata ki Jai!" , Murmu deconstructs this deceptive take on patriotism. He ponders, which great nation displaces thousands of its people from their homes and livelihood to produce electricity for cities

and factories. An Adivasi farmer's job is to farm, become servant in some billionaire's factory built on land that used to belong to that very Adivasi just a week earlier.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Summation**

The Status of women depicts the social, economic and mental condition in a nation. Women were denied for rights and equality in ancient Indian civilization. Women were treated badly and unequally to men. Social evils such as dowry, sati-system, child marriage, and female infanticide spread widely in the early ages. Education and self-consciousness led women to progress over the period. Women are empowered. True female liberty is when people shift their restrictive attitudes and mindsets over women. Women sacrifice all their aspirations for their husbands and children. Society and family believed that only boys deserved to be educated and follow their aspirations. Women were married at young age. They are frequently considered as commodities rather than human beings.

Women faces lot of issues like violence and gender discrimination. Women are not allowed to have self-respect, efficiency, personality, individuality capacity and talent. They are blamed on their mental health, and their parents are humiliated and harassed for growing up self-made women who can empower others. Women are not allowed to take leadership roles and make futuristic policies. Similarly, if women are ground-breaking or discoveries are hidden and given less importance, they are not encouraged and honed to further the new knowledge. Women are given the status of a goddess. On the other, they abuse them endlessly and consider them inferior. Women faces more challenges in society. Women in society still face the issues like gender discrimination, sexual abuse and harassment, education, child marriage. Women are expected to be soft-spoken, calm, and quiet. They should walk, talk, sit and behave in a certain manner.

Tribal women are placed at the absolute bottom of the social hierarchy in India. Tribal women face problem of poverty and caste discrimination. They are deprived of property and wealth. Caste discrimination leads the tribal women in oppression and inequality. Tribal women were subjected to rape, molestation, kidnapping, abduction, homicide, physical and mental torture, immoral traffic and sexual abuse. It is women, especially, Adivasi women are branded as Dayan or witches. They were also subjected to inhuman acts such as stoning and severe torture by community members. The torture for tribal women accessed to cause unexplained illness, death of bad luck to members of the village. Tribal women are considered submissive in society. Despite several economic, political and social changes, women, are still far behind. Tribal women are beaten to death for witchcraft, an accusation against women who do not cooperate or are incompetent for gratifying men's needs. Similarly, in villages and rich families, women are tortured for not begetting sons for the family. Female child is killed, Having a girl child is considered a curse.

Indian tribal literature echoes with the struggles and conflicts stemmed from the structural imbalances that are a result of the unjust mainstream society. Hansda depicts the marginalization and subalternization of tribal cultures through his works set in post independent India. Hansda uses literature as an agency to analyze, understand and assert their identity. Tribal writers act as torch-bearers of tribal consciousness to bring the tribals out of their subaltern existence.

Tribals were exposed to further exploitation by unleashing strong-arm tactics to rob them of their land rights. Adivasis continue to endure sufferings owing to their poor access to education, lack of basic health facilities, and poverty as their resources both

physical and cultural are being continuously consumed by the public and private sector companies in the name of developmental projects. The first four decades after the independence saw the displacement of Adivasis to make space for country's developmental and industrial enterprises. Coal mining projects were the main cause behind Adivasi displacements in Jharkhand, run by Bharat Cooking Coal Ltd. More than twenty six thousand people suffered, and merely a third of them were given employment.

*The Adivasi will not Dance* stories attempt towards sensitizing the society regarding various issues in society and especially the ones with the Subaltern Santhals. The characters in the collection may/may not be real but the issues, the violence and the treatment that he depicts in his fiction is surely relevant to our times as the ideologies of State has the potential to be major threat to the democratic and diverse fabric of the Indian society. The stories, of Hansda, however, mainly depict the lives of Santhals from the Jharkhand region, constantly struggling to live their life.

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar's *The Adivasi will not Dance* are powerful narratives of multiple forms of violence towards Adivasis dispossession from land and helplessness against the might of mining companies, the venality of politicians and exploitation as well as subjugation of women. Shekhar portrays a pioneering text in the realm of Indian Writing in English, not just in terms of its engagement with the subjugation of Adivasis, but also in terms of its representation of a subaltern Adivasi consciousness which is remarkably different from those have been from fashioned by urban, middleclass, metropolitan or diasporic authors.

The literary tradition of India clearly indicate that whenever the feeble voice of the margins have grown loud and strong enough to be heard at the centre, the centre is

left with no other option but to 'listen'. This phenomenon in the contemporary times is Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar recipient Hansda SowvendraShekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*(2015). A collection of ten short stories dealing with Adivasis from Jharkhand, referred as Santhals, the book is an insightful representation of Santhali life and culture.

In the process, the conflicts of subalternity allits historicised details, offers a unique insight into subaltern Adivasi consciousness that not only forces one to take note of Hansda Sowvendra Sekhar's conflicts the grasp of the material and cultural conditions of subalternized Adivasis, but also illuminates new avenues for the growth of Indian Writing in English.

The idea of subalterneity in tribal culture and literature, particularly among the Santhal tribe, the specific issues faced by subaltern is addressed. Subaltern was a term used to define the social groups belonging to a lower class in a hierarchical structure of the society. Subaltern signifies the subdued categories in context of race, age, status, gender or nationality. From a historical standpoint, the academics have more than once interpreted and analyzed the experiences of the subaltern groups from the perspective of the prevailing dominant class. Such groups are demographically and sociologically segregated and are typically placed outside the existing hierarchical colonial structure. The historians do not reproduce the past as it is constructed from their historical experience.

Hansda's *The Adivasis Will Not Dance* presents itself by tapping into a field entirely dominated by the works of upper class writers. The resistance and refusal of the Adivasis to accept their marginal existence, and takes a step forward to break the

shackles of the conventional norms of urban India's perception of tribals, portrayed by the narrative of the Elite India with a defamiliarised representation of nation space. Hansda tries to lay out the subalternized Adivasi sensibility through the voice of Mangal Murmu. The lengthy musings of Murmu summarise the manner of exploitation of Adivasis by distinct bodies ranging from land grabbers to corporations and government. In the grandiloquence of progress and advancement, robbing tribals of their rightful property is rationalised by upholding its "employment benefits" for the needy. In the text, Murmu questions:

Which great nation displaces thousands of its people from their homes and livelihoods to produce electricity for cities and factories? ... An Adivasi farmer's job is to farm. Which other job should he be made to do? Become a servant in some billionaire's factory built on that used to belong to that very Adivasi just a week earlier? (185)

Hansda acts as a local agent who has both a specialist's knowledge of the problems faced by the Adivasis on the whole, and Santhal individuality. He has the authority to give voice to the voiceless, the subaltern. It is obvious that Adivasis being treated as heritage-toys who perform for tourists to show the 'rich' diversity of India, but are meant to forever stay as museum pieces, unable to access good education and health.

Hansda breaks the conventional pity portrayal of his Santhal women and attributes a different dimension to his characterisation. This differs from several other feminist writing in regard that the voicing is not cultivated by a female writer deconstructing the usual suppressive myth but a male of the community who is himself a



part of the heterogeneity that works to present the counter as a victim of reductivism. The female protagonists of Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar are finally proved to be a puppet in the hands of time. They are bold, beautiful and soulful but illiteracy and unemployment always proved to be bane form them. Being a person of flesh and blood, they feed themselves to be alive. Selling their bodies to the flesh seekers is the easiest way for their survival.

*The Adivasi will not Dance* has a large variety of Santhal and non-Santhal female characters spread across the socio-economic spectrum. Most of the female characters be it Baso-jhi, Sona and others featured are defiant and daring. They are weighed down by the burdens of injustice, illiteracy, unemployment, etc. All the female characters mentioned below faced abuse, injustice and exploitation by the so called sophisticated society. Female characters in *The Adivasi will not Dance* portrays the relationships of mothers, wives, daughters, lovers, brides, servants, prostitutes, widows and witch . Among ten stories in Shekhar's *The Adivasi Will Not Dance* , attributes more than half in portrays the women character rather focusing protagonists or narrators.

Feminism address the inequalities or disparities that exist between men and women in a society. Although these stories by Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar mainly depict the lives of Santhals from the Jharkhand region, constantly struggling to live their life with dignity in this mineral-rich land, they also portray the disparities that are predominant in the sphere of Santhal society. The characters like Talamai Kisku, Sulochona, Gita, Baso-jhi, Subhashini, Sona and Jharna-di in the collection may/may not be real but the pain, struggle and the desire for self assertion as portrayed through the characters is very much relevant to the present scenario of the tribal society in India.

Shekhar's portrayal described the literature of protest. It takes an in-depth study of ruthless subordination of women at the hands of patriarchy and their consequent marginalization and victimization. Shekhar felicitates the relation between caste and women's subordination as one of the important points of his conceptualization of women oppression. The characters are from different generations, from different age groups, but what equate them are their sufferings, exploitations and the disparities they are subjected to. Their sufferings and exploitations caused by men equate the exploitation caused to 'mother nature'. Their continuous attempt to escape the never-ending loop of patriarchal subjugation seems futile under the 'glass ceiling' created by male orthodoxy. Their struggle for gaining power, voice and self-assertion falls prey to the rigid societal labyrinth.

Hansda Sowvendra Shekhar inclined that the tribal communities in India are in agony, losing their cultures due to developments brought into their territory. The Santhals are losing their identity and their lands. Modernisation that followed colonisation still has its negative impact on the lives of the tribal and the indigenous societies. Through the character of Mangal Murmu in the title story of *The Adivasi Will Not Dance*, Shekhar sheds light on the agony endured by the Santhal farmers. Murmu belongs to the Santhal tribe and had once been a farmer and now with no proper source of living has changed his profession. Mangal Murmu gives up farming due to the growing mining companies on the tribal habitat. The tribal people are losing their identity as agriculturalists for something they had not even dreamt of. Shekhar details the contemporary state of the Santhals that is suffering due to industrialization. Land is the major source of living that has been snatched from the tribal people. The tribal people live in harmony with their

habitat. With the advent of the colonisers the tribes have been deprived of the rights over the land.

Tribal people are good at dancing and singing but the hunger and poverty compel them to sell. Industrialisation does not leave the women folk of the communities untouched. The women are pushed to the verge of selling their bodies to save themselves from hunger. They are subjected to poverty and pushed to prostitution by giving up their traditional norms.

The tribal people and the indigenous groups are projected in bad light, paves way for further exploit of the wealth in and around them. This involves several stages like breaking down the image the city dwellers have on the native people, which automatically make the modern people look down upon the natives as uncivilised and barbaric. Tribal people are falsely accused and the accusations are believed by the non-tribals. The tribal people lose their religious identity along with their land, women and culture. In the words of Murmu: "We are losing our Sarna faith, our identities, and our roots. We are becoming people from nowhere" (173).

Thus, the Santhal were a tribal agrarian people who inhabited forests and relied on them for survival. Their daily lives were significantly impacted by political event. The short story collection undertaken for study explores Adivasis identity politics and experience. It is infact by the adivasis and it provides a rare glimpse of middle-class Santhal life.

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