



**SURVIVAL OF SOLITARY WOMEN:
A PSYCHOANALYTIC FEMINIST READING OF
ELIZABETH BOWEN'S *THE HEAT OF THE DAY*,
ORHAN PAMUK'S *MY NAME IS RED*, AND KHALED
HOSSEINI'S *A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS***

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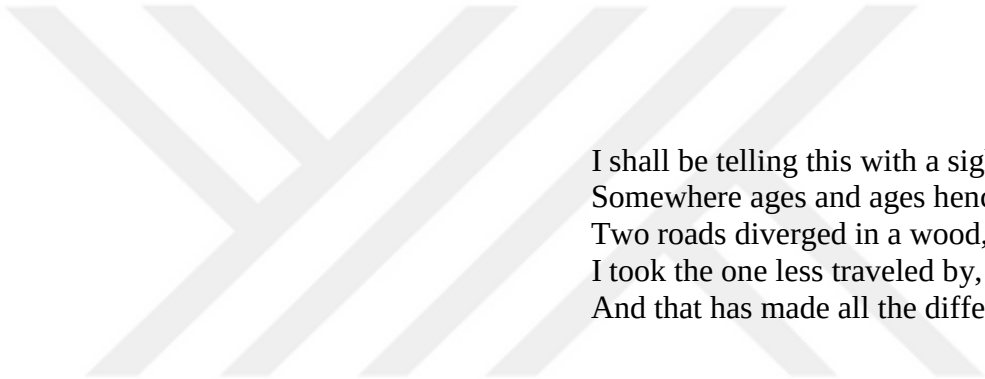
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I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost-The Road Not Taken¹

(1951: 271)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	2
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE.....	4
DECLARATION	5
FOREWORD	6
ABSTRACT.....	8
ÖZ.....	9
ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION	10
ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ.....	11
ABBREVIATIONS.....	12
SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH	13
PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH	14
METHOD OF THE RESEARCH.....	14
HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM.....	16
SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES	17
INTRODUCTION	19
On Gender Asymmetry in Tandem with Women's Oppression.....	24
1. THEORETICAL GROUND OF THE STUDY	36
1.1. Psychoanalytic Feminism	36
1.1.1. Ideology and Formative Premises	39
1.1.2. Dissident and Concentric Matrix: Freudian & Lacanian Aspects	48
1.1.2.1. Feminist Responses to Freud.....	49
1.1.2.2. Feminist Re-readings of Lacan.....	51
1.1.3. Main Tenets of Psychoanalytic Feminism	54
1.2. The Male Gaze.....	59

1.2.1. Ideological and Formative Premises	59
1.2.2. Theorization of the Male Gaze	63
1.2.3. Main Tenets of the Male Gaze Theory.....	67
1.3. Disavowal of Oppression: Defense Mechanisms	70
2. SEMIOTIC CHORA OVER THE SYMBOLIC ORDER IN ELIZABETH BOWEN'S <i>THE HEAT OF THE DAY</i>	75
2.1. Elizabeth Bowen in Context	77
2.2. Disrupting Patriarchy: Stella's Semiotic Chora and Resistance To the Symbolic Order	82
2.3. Gender Dynamics and the Male Gaze: Power and Objectification.....	92
2.4. Psychoanalytic Feminism and Defence Mechanisms: Navigating Trauma and Identity.....	98
3. IDENTIFICATORY LOVE AND FEMALE AGENCY IN ORHAN PAMUK'S <i>MY NAME IS RED</i>	106
3.1. Between Tradition and Modernity: The Making of Orhan Pamuk's Literary Identity.....	109
3.2. Identificatory Love and Female Agency of Shekure.....	113
3.3. The Male Gaze as Narrative and Critique: Objectification and Subversion in Pamuk's Ottoman World.....	121
3.4. Shekure's Resilience: Navigating Patriarchy Through Defense Mechanisms	133
4. PROLONGED SYMBIOSIS AND FEMALE SOLIDARITY IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S <i>A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS</i>	138
4.1. Khaled Hosseini and A Voice of the Afghan Diaspora in Literature	142
4.2. From Estrangement to Mutualism: The Evolution of Female Bonds Under Patriarchy	147
4.3. The Male Gaze and Female Agency of Mariam and Laila.....	166
4.4. Endurance in the Face of Oppression: Survival of Mariam and Laila.	171
CONCLUSION	176
REFERENCES.....	187
LIST OF FIGURES	206
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	207

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Hatice GÜR titled “SURVIVAL OF SOLITARY WOMEN: A PSYCHOANALYTIC FEMINIST READING OF ELIZABETH BOWEN’S *THE HEAT OF THE DAY*, ORHAN PAMUK’S *MY NAME IS RED*, AND KHALED HOSSEINI’S *A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS*” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of PhD.

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Thesis Advisor, Department of English Language and Literature

This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English Language and Literature as a PhD thesis. July 21, 2025

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The degree of PhD by the thesis submitted is approved by the Administrative Board of the Institute of Graduate Programs, Karabuk University.

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Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

Name Surname: Hatice GÜR

Signature :

FOREWORD

“...your solitude will expand and become a place where you can live in the twilight,
where the noise of other people passes, far in the distance.”

-Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters to a Young Poet*

T.S. Eliot asserts, “The purpose of literature is to turn blood into ink,” divulging the purport of such a vast domain that functions akin to collective memory. This purport can be extended to a great range of issues problematized regarding humanity or, by and large, any issues about life on a universal or local scale. Considering expressly what this dissertation aims for, we can enlarge upon this point of literature by unveiling purposes regenerated in alignment with T. S. Eliot’s and add more through other remarks referring to conversion from oppression to liberation or grief to relief. What we need to bear in mind is that “The universe is made of stories, not of atoms” after all, as Muriel Rukeyser says, and as such, all people are supposed to be in pursuit of the utter goal intending that women can be involved in happy stories instead of being victims of tragic ones once they ward off oppression, thus highlighting humanist representation.

Literature bears the mark of reality or revolves around the fact itself and functions as an iron horse that discloses even minor, clandestine psychological themes, both personal and societal, nourished by the period comprised of a myriad of social, economic, political or historical layers. In his review of C. S. Lewis, Paul L. Holmer (1977) acknowledges that literature does more than merely describe reality and contributes to the essential competencies to navigate daily life, thereby irrigating the deserts we have been in, so we can gain competency by engaging our empathy and sympathy for characters in literary contexts (28) by acquiring their perspectives on life and deepen our understanding of human experience.

Operating as a guide, literature opens the door and bountiful windows and lets in the light and air, providing readers with the chance to bring what is off the radar out of mothballs and find a way out of any vicious circles and dead ends. Considering all of these, the selected novels elaborated on within this study appear to be of great importance in the sense that they portray female characters from diverse cultures,

illuminating the realities of women's oppression across history and likewise, in the sense that they offer a point of departure by convincing the readers that solitude sometimes strengthens women so much that they can rise from the ashes.

Everything is for the tranquillity of humankind in general and, within the context of this study, for womankind in the chaos of life and need of new paths, leading more inquiries to struggle with the considerable ambiguity in women's oppression, so I convey my sincere thanks to those who greatly contributed to this study, I am deeply indebted to each of them. First and foremost, I express my gratitude to all praiseworthy people who have made any regulations to ameliorate conditions for strengthening human rights for women, from autonomy to education and law to payment. Concerning the matrix of this study in particular, I would like to thank my former supervisor, Prof. Dr. Abdul Serdar ÖZTÜRK, for offering encouragement to delve into such a global issue and gain insight into the reasons likely to sustain it. I am grateful for every stage, from inception to graduation, to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Harith Ismael TURKI, for expanding the circle of my concern to view lines and texts. His excellent guidance has paved the way for my inquiries and has been instrumental in shaping my explorations. My sincere thanks also go to Prof. Dr. Sinan YILMAZ, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yoga PRIHATIN, and Asst. Prof. Dr. Elvan KARAMAN MEZ for their time and thoughtful engagement.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this study to all women deprived of human rights in various spheres of life, yet resilient enough to revive the tired women inside them and build a life on their indomitable hearts and spirits they can rely on forever as inveterate survivors.

ABSTRACT

Women's oppression has been one of the entrenched and persistent issues, imprinting an indelible stigma on human history. The elusiveness of the reasons lurking behind this issue has been attempted to be demystified perpetually yet women's subjugation seemingly has not languished, and globally it is experienced in imbricated forms, that's why any attempt to address this issue is of great importance in the sense that women are not labeled with misnomers any more so that they can overwhelm the constructed barriers imbued in minds for ages, thus fulfilling their lofty and unshackled destiny.

Contrary to the construal of gender merely on the basis of biology, this study aims to riddle women's oppression through delineation of foundational concepts in Psychoanalytic Feminism in order to disentangle intermingled issues concerning the reasons for women's subjugation and via a counterview against the ostensible reasons ingrained in femininity, *The Heat of the Day* (1948), *My Name is Red* (1998), and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), by Elizabeth Bowen, Orhan Pamuk, and Khaled Hosseini respectively, have been dismantled with references to the ground of gender construction in human psyche during the pre-Oedipal stage and its continual reinforcement in action through allegiance to this stage, inducing women's submission. How authors and characters partake in the enframement of oppressed women has been expounded on the male gaze theory, and how women cope with the unsettling cases, positing them secondary to males, has been examined in terms of the defense mechanisms they employ.

The scrutiny has revealed that the human psyche operates as a black box during infancy and forms the cornerstones of future life through those encoded inside. Each human being constructs perspectives on what is implanted in their psyche during early childhood and experiences the rest of life in pursuit of these codes nourished by actions unveiling the unconscious and fulfilled customarily afterward, and so is the case for women's oppression.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis; Feminism; Gender Construction; Women's Oppression; Male Gaze; Defense Mechanisms

ÖZ

Kadınlara yönelik baskı, insanlık tarihine damga vurmuş, çok eski ve kemikleşmiş sorunlardan biridir. Mütemadiyen bu sorunun arka planındaki nedenlerin tespitine çalışılmaktadır; ancak görünen o ki kadınlara hükmedilmesi konusu tüm etkisiyle devam etmekte ve küresel boyutta farklı katmanlarıyla deneyimlenmektedir; bu nedenledir ki kadınların yanlış etiketlerle damgalanmamaları ve yüzyıllardır zihinlerde inşa edilmiş olan bariyerleri yıkarak tutsaklık zincirlerinden özgürleşmiş kutsal kaderlerini yaşayabilmeleri için gösterilen en ufak çaba büyük önem arz etmektedir.

Cinsiyetin salt biyoloji temelli yorumlanmasının aksine, bu çalışma; kadınların ezilmesi hususunda ileri sürülen nedenlerle ilintili karmaşık sorunları aydınlatmak amacıyla, psikanalitik feminizmin temel kavramları ışığında, kadınlara hükmedilmesi sorununu çözmeyi amaçlar. Kadınlıkla ilişkilendirilmiş görünüşteki nedenlere bir karşıt görüş olarak; sırasıyla Elizabeth Bowen, Orhan Pamuk ve Khaled Hosseini tarafından kaleme alınan *Günün Harareti* (1948), *Benim Adım Kırmızı* (1998) ve *Bin Muhteşem Güneş* (2007) adlı eserler, Oedipal aşama öncesinde insan psişesinde cinsiyetle ilintili olarak inşa edilen ve akabindeki süreçte inşa edilenleri pekiştirici mahiyette olan ve kadınların teslimiyetiyle sonuçlanan eylemler temelinde tahlil edilmiştir. Bahsi geçen eserlerin yazarlarının ve karakterlerinin ezilen kadın portresine katkıları ya da karşıtlıkları eril bakış teorisi çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiş, kadınların kendilerini erkeklere göre ikincil konumlandıran rahatsız edici durumlarla nasıl baş ettikleri, kullandıkları savunma mekanizmaları kapsamında ele alınmıştır.

Eserlerin tahlili çocukluk sürecinde insan ruhunun “kara kutu” işlevi gördüğü ve içine kaydedilenlerle gelecek hayatın temel taşlarını oluşturduğunu gözler önüne sermektedir. Her birey erken çocukluk döneminde ruhuna aşıl原因anlar üzerine bakış açısını inşa eder, sonraları bilinçdışını açığa çıkaran ve gelenek haline gelen eylemlerle beslenen bu erken çocukluk dönemi kodlarının izinde yaşamını sürdürür; kadınların ezilmesi konusu da aynı temellere dayanır.

Anahtar Kelimeler (Keywords in Turkish): Psikanaliz; Feminizm; Cinsiyet İnşası; Kadınların Ezilmesi; Eril Bakış; Savunma Mekanizmaları

ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION

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ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ

Tezin Adı	Yalnız Kadınların Mukavemeti: Elizabeth Bowen'ın <i>Günün Harareti</i> , Orhan Pamuk'un <i>Benim Adım Kırmızı</i> ve Khaled Hosseini'nin <i>Bin Muhteşem Güneş</i> Romanlarının Psikanalitik Feminist Kuram Zemininde Değerlendirilmesi
Tezin Yazarı	Hatice GÜR
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Anahtar Kelimeler	Psikanaliz, Feminizm, Cinsiyet İnşası, Kadınların Ezilmesi, Eril Bakış, Savunma Mekanizmaları

ABBREVIATIONS

COVID-19	: COronaVirus Disease of 2019
CSW	: The Commission on the Status of Women
Ed(s)	: Editor(s)
EVAW	: Elimination of Violence Against Women Law
etc.	: et cetera
HD	: The Heat of the Day (1948)
MNR	: My Name is Red (2001)
OHCHR	: The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Trans.	: Translator
TSS	: A Thousand Splendid Suns (2018)
UN	: United Nations
UNAMA	: The United Nations Mission in Afghanistan
WWII	: World War II

SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

As a paramount, global concern and of great importance in women's history, particularly in the feminist context aiming to provide women with equality to men, how women manage to survive within societies where women's oppression prevails like the continuity of a collective consciousness lays the foundation of this study. The cultural and psychic infrastructure of this aspect is to be elaborated on through the samples of female characters representations of the oppressed women exemplifying features stereotypically ascribed to them for ages.

Evincing that women's oppression is an obdurate issue beyond the borders of culture and cannot be limited to any countries and nationalities, this study analyzes the female protagonists of the selected novels including Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* (1948), Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red* (2001) and Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2018) on the basis of the tenets of psychoanalytic feminism. These novels problematize, directly or subtly, women's issues and reflect how women are posited as secondary to men in any context, regardless of Western and Eastern cultures, albeit at different degrees. Challenging the biological determinism that confines womanhood in Freudian theory, this study explores how the psyche operates in the formation of gender and how it functions in tandem with consolidative sociocultural acts reflective of what has been cultivated in early childhood. In accordance with the subject of this study, the survival of solitary women is the focal point, and how the female protagonists maintain their identities by keeping their clandestine "selves" and, for this reason, how they employ defense mechanisms so that they get rid of oppression are also to be delved into. They are repressed necessarily within a patriarchal structure, yet this appears to be a mask they have to wear in the social context, and they reinforce this argument by giving an ear to their inner voice, which whispers to them that the essence of them is their "selves." They are solitary either psychologically or physically, seemingly the victims of the fate constructed by patriarchy on the ground of various aspects, and are the best actresses, since, even if they do not perform on a stage, they are merely players with the roles assigned to them in the world without negligence of their "selves" in the backstage.

In summary, this study thoroughly thematizes how women, thanks to their wavering belief and fidelity to their “selves”, can venture a resistance against the norms underpinning their oppression and customarily adhered to.

PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH

Women’s oppression has been a perennial issue concerning the entire humanity and leading women to be imprisoned in the prescribed patterns portraying them as frail, bound by no boundaries, yet particularly abiding by the reasons likely to induce and sustain this oppression. Literature is a domain through which we explore identities, cultures, histories, policies, periods, and gain insight into the dynamics that construct all these. As for this study, the selected novels exemplify women’s oppression in various geographies, including England, the Republic of Türkiye, and the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, along with their variety of historical and sociocultural backgrounds. In this respect, how women’s oppression prevails in these cultures and in what way they differ from each other, or what they have in common pertaining to women’s subjugation, are to be explored. Furthermore, the studies conducted so far on these novels have not been based on the tenets of psychoanalytic feminism, and no study has been carried out to view the portrait of the female characters in these novels by taking the gazes of both authors and male characters into consideration. As such, moving beyond stereotypical depictions of oppressed women, it diverges from the previous aspects deemed as pertaining to women’s issues and presents a comprehensive perspective through a cross-cultural exploration.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

Upon the arousal of written literature, the systematic study of literature and analysis of texts have shifted accordingly and the evaluation of the texts have been conducted on the basis of a canon of rules, therefore, as was the case even for the oral literature evaluated considering the context prescriptive along with descriptive aesthetics, written literature forms are interpreted through application of qualitative methods to text analysis. Rather than objectivity which requires empirical evidence, a subjective procedure is employed to elucidate what is intended to in the literary texts

(Rommel, 2004: 88). In line with these, a qualitative analysis of the selected novels is to be conducted and for the scrutiny, in order to utilize the primary and secondary sources, archival research is to be conducted with regard to the literary theory, the selected novels, their authors and all the relevant work carried out in the realm of social sciences and humanities likely to shed light on what is hypothesized in this study.

A meticulous textual analysis is to be conducted so that how women's oppression is nourished by the utterances consisting of more than linguistic content can be revealed through the scrutiny of socio-psychological features buried in the text. Since women's oppression is problematized, the elements on which it dwells will be elaborated through psychoanalytic feminism, and the theories of object relations feminism, contemporary object relations feminism and post-Lacanian feminism. Any periods concerning the female protagonists' lives, from childhood to adulthood, exemplifying how gender asymmetry is constructed, are to be addressed; therefore, through close reading, the text is to be dismantled on the basis of the main tenets of psychoanalytic feminism. Since the interpretation of the text requires being informed of the social and historical context, any sources regarding the setting of the selected novels will be utilized in order to conduct a sound textual analysis in accordance with the literary theory. The methodological approach pursued in this study includes a comprehensive literature review. The bifurcation of the counterarguments against psychoanalytic feminism has been noted, along with their contributions to the development of psychoanalytic feminism. In line with this, pioneers of psychoanalytic feminism from different schools of psychoanalytic feminist views will be referred to.

The scrutiny design has been arranged with chronological aspect and dating back to 1948, 1998 and 2007, Bowen's *The Heat of the Day*, Pamuk's *My Name is Red* and Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* have been analysed with reference to major angles of psychoanalytic feminist thought, the "male gaze" reflective of authors' perspective, characters' reciprocal view of each other in a context as well as female characters' struggle for survival through utilization of defence mechanisms. The choice of theory depends on the oppression women are exposed to in the selected novels. Accordingly, the study path is formulated through a group of questions chosen meticulously, addressing the overall aim of this study. Predominantly psychoanalytic feminist theory and particularly the issues of women's oppression, drawing on matters such as inequality, subjectivity, and any issues problematized as to a patriarchal system,

as well as a myriad of cultural systems constructed according to norms, are illuminated through textual evidence. In order to formulate a scientific basis for these, relevant scholars are referred to.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH / RESEARCH PROBLEM

As this study mainly intends to find out why women are repressed and elaborate on the reasons why this continues in accordance with the issues addressed by psychoanalytic feminism, how gender is constructed will be investigated through the examination of gender identity prescribed by the norms developed within the society under the influence of the conventions adopted for ages. Through this study, what lies behind these conventions is to be explicated on the basis of exclusive female mothering, the structure of gender asymmetry through interpersonal relations, and patriarchal symbolic, primarily what has been put forward about the human psyche. The construction of gender is to be interpreted by taking into consideration the individual, family, and society.

Women appear to be competent enough to deal with the occupations and functions confined by the monopoly of the robust sex, stereotypically men, but their disabilities function to sustain their subordination within the domestic life since the male sex cannot bear the thought of living with an equal (Mill, 1878: 94). In this aspect, they can be regarded as solitary, and far from the support of the opposite sex, they encounter numberless obstacles in various ways leading them to employ defence mechanisms to sustain their entity as a human-being and challenge any cases in which they lack basic rights. They strive to survive in any circumstances, and for this reason, it is hypothesized that they employ defence mechanisms to maintain their entity.

Furthermore, it is to be problematized that female characters are exposed to gender discrimination, which influences their life profoundly in different facets; for this reason, the tenets of psychoanalytic feminism are to be employed to resolve this problematized issue through putting a set of reasons in other spheres. Why women are positioned as secondary to men is to be shed light on through various ways such as the examination of childhood period, family, society and individual in the selected novels including Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day*, Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red* and

Khaled Hosseini's *A Hundred Splendid Suns*; for this, as aforementioned, both Freudian and post-Lacanian perspectives are to be taken into consideration within the context of psychoanalytic feminism, and also the gender construction, formation of identity and gender roles assigned by the society are to be examined. As Damrosch (2003) specifies, a vast corpus comprising works from widely diverse societies with disparate historical backgrounds, frames of cultural codes is included in world literature, which encompasses any work that surpasses the borders of its home base and exists in a literary system far removed from its original culture (4). In accordance with this aspect and also the importance of women's oppression on a global scale, the aforementioned novels have been selected to be delved into.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS / DIFFICULTIES

Identified as "a uniquely human activity," the creation of literature is perpetuated through man's eternal desire to discover, understand, and share experiences (Pickering and Hoeper, 1981: 1). Novels are amidst the literary works that revolve around narrative inspired by this desire. Numerous are the novels of every culture and country worldwide and as a great anthropological power which converts reading into a joyride, the novel provides readers with the essence of individual existence, the perception of language and time, and also the sense of reality redefined by the author. Parallel to its history of two thousand years, the novel operates as a medium of culture including a range of social, political and historical contexts and figures, and it can not be confined to any particular ground since the borders of literature are flexible and expand unpredictably (Moretti, 2007: IX). The novel typically portrays "imaginary characters and situations, yet it is also likely that it can include references to real people, places, and events (Hawthorn, 2023: 3). In line with this, rather than empirical studies that can provide sound evidence to rely on, this study presents a subjective construal of the selected novels; therefore, far from objectivity, the interpretation of the content is variable and can change from person to person. Novels are composed of fictional stories and epitomize real-life issues as well, yet examining real-life problems through fictional characters can be deceptive, and life conditions can greatly change from the ones in the novel, which is likely to result in disappointment. Women, in reality, may not be that strong and just obey what they are exposed to, thus disproving the robustness of the

fictional characters and revealing the difference between fiction and reality. Additionally, the selected novels are narrated from personal points of view, namely, the perspective of the authors. Apart from the subjective view of the reader, novels are bound by their authors and their vision, presenting a limited aspect that can be reduced merely to their own universe. All these can be deemed to be deficiencies and difficulties of this study.



INTRODUCTION

In her speech to the International Council of Women in 1888, one of the pioneers of the women's rights movement, American writer Elizabeth Cady Stanton insinuated the severity of the issue with her verbatim definition of women as "the mere echoes of men" and asserted that the social life was constructed on the constitutions, laws, codes, creeds and customs of masculine origin (Schneir, 1972: XII). To postulate male chauvinism domineering every part of life has not been a brand new subject problematized as to women's oppression in any epoch, somewhat an obsolescent but still valid one proliferating through the gamut of alleys. One of the prominent and also the neglected writers of the world literature, Christine de Pizan stands as an outstanding landmark reflecting the pivotal concern that medieval writers, particularly the women of letters, touched upon with regard to the worsening plight of women then and what they were exposed to in cultural, social and political context. Through her masterpiece *The Book of the City of the Ladies* (1405), she reiterated the prominence of universal oppression and suffering. A radical break with the perception of women, of the opinion that every woman was granted with the potential for real nobility, what she aimed for was to raise awareness of the women to notice that once they realized their feminine potential, they could find a place in the city of the ladies, thus rejuvenating themselves (Pizan, 1982: xix- xxx). Women's plight varies in accordance with the place, time as well as social situation, that is why women's protests vary accordingly. Neither "patriarchy" nor "male dominance" was referred to by Christine de Pizan. Likewise, she did not make mention of the attitude women were exposed to as a group, yet she was concerned about rectifying it. Even if an entire insight into the context of those times seems unlikely, it is worth appreciating, as she showed an attempt to interrogate traditions that form the basis for women's subordination (LeGates, 2001: 8). She functioned as a torchbearer of those times regarding women's issues.

Not a nascent issue, especially for praiseworthy women writers as pursuers of collective consciousness, laying the ground for what women experience universally, "women" as a gender has been addressed, particularly by many writers who purport to underline the severity of the problem. As also inscribed by psychologist Donald W. Fiske (1971), characters are portrayed by writers on the basis of "individual personalities" but with features and problems that can be traced universally. A

significant number of authors, either male or female, from various backgrounds have notably contributed to the disclosure of women's issues. Having the social responsibility, even if contradictory in some aspects, Edward Morgan Forster has portrayed female characters in a way to unveil the oppressive conditions women are subject to and reveal how they are subordinated in the patriarchal society. He problematizes the Victorian moral standards as well as the doctrines of the period, which functioned as a means of male domination over females (Jiang, 2020: 101). For some authors, writing functions as a kind of commitment to people in need of artistic representation and spokesmen on behalf of themselves when they cannot, and Doris Lessing is amidst these groups of authors. She employs writing in order to speak out on their sides, in particular the sides of neglected ones effected by oppression or any issues that can be elaborated on social criticism presenting censure of any forms of institutional oppression, thus raising awareness of the readers about what necessitates correction and calling their attention to this (Fishburn, 1987: 5).

Women's oppression has been unraveled in a wide range of contexts in various nations. Challenging the masculine interpretation traditionally identifying women through confinement to certain stereotypes, Spanish women writers have portrayed "disturbed women," in fact, representative characters of experiences in a patriarchal environment hindering them from the liberty of expressing their desire (Tey, 2013: 1), hence these writers of the nineteenth century including Cecilia Böhl de Faber/Fernán Caballero, Emilia Pardo Bazán and Caterina Albert/Víctor Català have employed their literary works to grant female characters with their whole physical and spiritual identity subverting the construction of the patriarchal system (15). Regardless of culture, neither a product of Western feminism, nor a subjugated figure in her own culture, an Ottoman lady, Fatma Aliye reclaimed an indigeneous feminism which offers gender-oriented reforms in pursuit of proto-feminist stream, thus cultivating the basis of equality at the intersection of Islamic and secular feminism through putting forward departure required in Islam as well as the State and the family (Dell'Abate Çelebi, 2022: 15).

What Virginia Woolf draws attention to in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) is not different from the aforementioned argument of Pizan, indeed, and bears the mark of universal traits attributed to characters as denoted by Fiske. Metaphorically, she identifies women as looking glasses with the ability of reflecting men at twice their natural size (37). Why women magnify men and what outcomes are likely to be awaited

can be elaborated on vicissitudes, cultural and social context, or psychic cases. One of the idiosyncratic authors of Turkish literature, Peyami Safa, also representative of psychological novels, reinforces Woolf's utterances with a reference to women's submissiveness in his work entitled *Woman, Love, Family* and highlights that all the power of a woman is believed to lie in her submission, that's why she avoids any long-lasting discussion in her life that can be reduced to a needle or a hairpin (Safa, 2022: 12-13). This submissiveness can be grounded on women's ability to magnify men as pointed out eloquently by Woolf. Yet the stability of this case is disputable since contrary to Safa's ascriptive identity of women, in *Principles of Turkism*, first published in 1923, Gökalp (2019) identifies Turkish feminism with a reference to the ancient Turks through a description of them as both democrats and feminists and sheds lights on the reasons leading Turks to be feminists in particular as a consequence of various characteristics associated with women in line with the premises of shamanism. The system of shamanism required Turkish shamanists to pattern after women in order to actuate themselves to perform magical acts using the power of theurgy; hence, they used to wear womanish clothes, sound woman-like, have long hair, and also shave to have a smooth face like women (160).

Not reducible to shamanism, "women" are valued in line with their characteristics including fertility, sexual union, birth; nurturing and permanent role in any parts of the growth, so maternal symbolism operates in the embodiment of the deities of almost all cultures, thus sparkling as a universal human reality. In mythology and iconography, this human reality is employed with a reference to their fertility or maternity, particularly with their role as protectors and nourishers, apparently responsible for raising a "divine child," accordingly all humanity (Britannica, 2024). The role of a mother as a nourisher appears to be a steady one, as evidenced by the ancient relief (see Figure 1). However, the position of women has seemingly evolved over the years, which has resulted in apocryphal literature accordingly, on the basis of requirements that are prioritized or supersede each other; nevertheless, women's subjugation has been a component of collective cultural structures in many societies, despite some improvements that ameliorated their status as observed within patriarchal societies such as the Ottoman Empire.



Figure 1 : Relief of a mother breastfeeding her child (B.C. 1000), Asativadaya Castle, Kadirli-Osmaniye.

What ignited a start for women's status was the social upheavals and reforms that took place during the nineteenth century. The educational reforms contributed to girls and women to a great extent, and the status of women accordingly. Girls' schools were opened and women were involved in society by working as teachers. European culture began to influence upper-class women who learned to speak foreign languages in addition to playing the piano. Education marked a remarkable change in women's worldview as well as their lifestyle. Of the ulema class on the father's side originally, Fatma Aliye was amidst the first Turkish feminists and renowned for being one of the first female writers. Women were valued much more than before, and their rights were not neglected as was the case in the past (Ortaylı, 1990: 325-326).

The world does change, so does the rest. Changing paradigms in every society result in changes in different domains. Aiming for a challenge against the myth of female inferiority, Montagu (1999) exemplifies how woman has managed to liberate from her thralldom gradually and how Western society has witnessed the greatest female rulers such as Queens of England (Elizabeth I-II), Queen of Denmark, Netherlands, Poland, and highlights that once women realize their potentials to a great extent, they are necessarily to experience emancipation from the myth of inferiority (60-61). However, the women in the Ottoman Empire seemed to be under the effect of inferiority. In the journal *Terakki-i Muhadderat*, a supplement for women, published for the first time in 1869 by the *Terakki* newspaper (see Figure 2), most women published their writing anonymously or under a pseudonym. They complained about their situation and evaluated the inferior status of Ottoman women in comparison with European women. The idealization of women's status underwent some shifts, and European women were later replaced by the idealization of women from the early Islamic period and, in nationalist paradigms, those of the pre-Islamic nomadic Turkic tribes (Durakbaşa, 2002: 102-103).



Figure 2: Terakki-i Muhadderat- The First Women Journal (Ottoman Empire)

Despite the oxymoronic examples, women's superiority is a bone of contention. Not bound by any particular geography yet inclusive of most of the Western cultures along with the world of Islam, Middle East, North Africa (Montagu, 1999: 65), women's subjugation has proved its longevity and continues to grab the headlines. Interestingly and apparently fateful, the critique cannot extend beyond that everyone looks around and attempts to find a victim to put the blame on, yet, the reality may not be as supposed to be. Traditionally, male figures are critiqued for their potential to lead gender asymmetry, thus pioneering in various aspects to form the basis of discrimination, violence, subjugation, and the like. If so, then what crowns them with this power must be investigated since it results in suicide, homicide, inequality of opportunity, deprivation in numerous ways, and so forth and so on. All these bring to the fore the necessity of providing equality between males and females and positing them as equals.

On Gender Asymmetry in Tandem with Women's Oppression

Insofar as the history of women is taken into consideration, the primary reference points demonstrate what has been postulated as to womanhood, and what has been addressed are the aspects associated with "woman." What formulated the basic outlines of how women are perceived can be interrelated to a wide range of paradigms. Induced by diverse sources including the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Creation and the Fall, the evangels of the Ancients, especially Aristotle, in time, the perception of womanhood was reformulated as a consequence of the Renaissance, rationalism and also the Enlightenment (Proctor, 1990: 1). However, to what extent the reforms have produced desirable consequences is open to debate and actually can be elucidated with the prevalent, entangled issues currently.

Within the theological realm, some theses related to the interrogation of the humanity of women were advanced. The woman was regarded as the mother of all evil, as reinforced by the conception of the original sin in the Bible. Likewise, in Homer's *Iliad*, Helen exemplified how women brought misfortune upon whole peoples. Similarly, plenty of fairy tales and legends comprise indices that depict the moral inferiority and wickedness of women (Adler, 1946: 129). Women have been objectified and, as is the case in the theological realm, from past to present, women's bodies have

been defined to be men's property by legal codes (Weitz, 1998: 3), reinforcing their identity deprived of agency.

Women have appeared to be degraded, criticized figures in various contexts, including anecdotes, jokes, mottoes, literary works, and they have been reproved owing to their pettiness, spitefulness, stupidity, and the like. The payment women received despite their equal work with men indicates the degradation of women and womanly labour. When compared in terms of talent and intelligence tests, boys appeared to be more talented and successful in specific fields. However, when women are investigated closely, these test results are bound to be a palpable fable. Girls are exposed to the perspectives that foreground women as secondary to men since they are thought to be less capable and are associated with unessential activities. This leads women to be endowed with the idea that they are figures of a bitter and unchangeable fate (Adler, 1946: 130), so they believe that they are incapable. These discouragements lay the foundation of the sense of worthlessness whereby girls deem themselves to be incompetent for masculine occupations (131). Two major reasons lead women to feel incapable: a human being is valued on the basis of business or a merely egoistic or one-sided aspect. Another cause is that a girl is born into an environment under the effect of prejudice, which causes her to lose her self-confidence, terminate her hope and belief that she is valued or deserves to be valued. Over time, reinforcements of aforementioned reasons gradually lead a girl to adopt entirely the idea that she lacks capability and any use, and turns into a human being labelled with inferiority (131). Inferiority of women is reinforced with the sharp division which ascribes “worthwhile, victorious, powerful and capable” features to “masculine” whilst “feminine” is associated with being “servile, obedient and subordinate” (132). Cultural codes are built on the assumptions supposed to differentiate women from men. For instance, when described as “feminine,” this is thought to be offensive and a kind of insult to a man. On the other hand, when a female is described as masculine, this is acceptable and carries no sign of insult. Any features associated with women appear to be signs of inferiority (133).

Labyrinthine and decades-long, the history of feminism and psychoanalysis can be built on divergences and schisms particular to each of them as independent realms. Some feminists have stipulated liberty, equality, autonomy, and reason, namely the promises of the Enlightenment for women. Others have employed psychoanalytic

theory to divulge that these promises and claims are incoherent. Psychoanalytic thought, with its various traditions has been credited with making significant contributions to women's oppression as well as the ways of revealing and ameliorating it (Burack, 1994: 41).

The structure of a phallocentric society dates back to the time when men struggled to dominate nature through the replacement of the female goddess by the male god. The phallus was characterized by a magical power that can substitute the womb associated with life and fertility, thus the influence of women's sexuality. The Middle Ages maintained some rituals and pre-Christian fertility pray were in practice through a form of witchcraft so women were regarded as potential witches and their sexuality was associated with evilness. In the fifteenth century, women were accused of causing natural disasters and diseases so they were killed (Slipp, 1993: 4). Women are regarded to be "absence," described as "the dark continent, negativity and a lesser man", thus in patriarchal societies, women are repressed and only accepted as "man's specularized Other" (Moi, 2002: 133). The patriarchal values that provide men with the culture to control women are the chief causes of oppression and sexism (Enns, 1997: 46), as can be seen in some societies, like Afghanistan, which are governed by the rigid norms (see Figure 3). In a nutshell, patriarchy, with its steady norms, functions as the parent of oppression.



Figure 3: Child Bride (Afghanistan, 2003. Photo by Stephanie Sinclair)

Seemingly dominant in undeveloped countries, the concept of "patriarchy" initially emerged as a foundational category rooted in Western political and social thought based on biblical, Greek, and Roman traditions. The primary focus of early formulations was on hierarchical relationships amidst men, mostly regarding the subordination of women as a natural case. Another meaning of "patriarchy", referring to men's sovereignty over women and also social institutions, was activated in the aftermath of women's movements during the 1970s (Smith, 2008: 421). In *Sexual Politics*, Millett (2000) notes that patriarchy is also "a militaristic hierarchy" maintained amidst men in addition to male domination of females (xii). It operates as the backbone of the subjugation of women, but what maintains this structure alive is of great importance to resolve the issue of women's oppression and any relevant issues accordingly.

What oppression women have been exposed to and why this continues incessantly requires a theoretical and practical overview of the roles allotted throughout history. Although Freud attributes this case to anatomic destiny, the influence of conventional sociocultural organization on these roles needs to be delved into (Irigaray, 1993: 117). Chodorow has based women's oppression on "the division of labour" and the division between the public and private. The continuity of this division stems from the continuity of the gender reproduction within the family. Another factor assumed to be influential on women's subjugation is the "inherent misogyny" dating back to the childhood developmental processes, in particular, the various complexes the boys resolve; the infant develops the idea that "he must reject his mother and things female in order to become a man" (Donovan, 1985: 109). Childhood period with its developmental stages is deemed to be influential in gender construction, and likewise, family, especially parents, seemingly designates the foundational concepts and perspectives concerning gender.

Contrary to the male-centred approach propounded to elucidate the gender asymmetry, psychoanalytic feminists postulate that rather than male superiority constructed on biology, various dynamics concerning womanhood galvanize the patriarchal structure. To begin with, mothering is highlighted in playing a fundamental role in forming patriarchy and maintaining male superiority. In *The Reproduction of Mothering*, Nancy Chodorow (1978) poses the problem in relation to the social organisation of gender and mothering. She evinces that despite the increase in women's

rights, such as voting and all rights ensuring equality under the law, by proposing radical changes in different spheres of life, women maintain motherhood, yet neither physical violence nor discrimination women are subject to decreases. Consequently, what brings about the tenacity of sexual asymmetry, along with inequality, necessitates an analysis of the reasons underpinning the constitution and reproduction of sexual asymmetry and inequality (6-7). Women have been claimed to be equipped with an overdeveloped capacity, a penchant for development of sense of relatedness which enables them to set an empathic connection with others whereas men lack this and are described to have an underdeveloped capacity to set relatedness. Chodorow's approach drawing on interlocking of sociology with Freudian view as to personality formation has put forward that the difference between women and men in developing a sense of relatedness is induced by the cultural assignment which ascribes the responsibility of child rearing to women. Accordingly, boys differentiate from girls in that they can achieve full separation from their mothers whereas girls cannot manage to separate as fully as boys do, thus boys grow into maturity with a lack of ability to be nurturant. This assigns child-rearing responsibility to women repetitively in the next generation and patterns of mothering adopted formerly are reproduced (Kramer, 2001: 68). Chodorow (2020) notes that maternal identity and mothering represent "internal mother-daughter experiences," and claims that "internal mother-daughter maternity" encapsulating "practices, concerns, identity, being a mother, maternal sense of self, having been mothered" continues through the life circle (54).

The cultural prejudices which regard women as animals lacking the potential to think like men and identify them less than human and just responsible for serving men were in accordance with Freud's perspective particularly in the sense that women are not endowed with individual identity (Slipp, 1993: 14). The modern feminists of Enlightenment claim that women are subordinated and not given the same rights and opportunities as men have, furthermore, women are imprisoned in the domestic realm although they have innate capacities as men do, but owing to the prejudicial policies and laws, they do not have the right to develop capacities (Flynn, 2002: 25), as was evident in the law which was passed in 1549 when, through the English Reformation, the vow of obedience was introduced, enacting that the bride or a wife was required to obey her husband (Leyser, 1995: 109). Not only oppressive social practices including conditions of mothering, job discrimination, unequal wages" but also emotions and structure such

as “envy, aggression, fear, hatred” nourish women’s unequal sexual world. Mitchell claimed that the sexual ideologies that incredibly influence the gender relations of modern culture require practical examination so that the sexual roles assigned to gender within society and the ideas likely to contribute to restructuring the relations between the genders can be comprehended (Elliott, 1994: 114).

For the time being, girls and women appear to be grappling for their rights and equality. In the past, the case was not different from the current one. A woman-friendly entity, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), along with activists, was involved in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights between 1946 and 1948 to ensure that the use of some terms did not lead to any sexist pole or refer to any group outside the target. The draft was monitored meticulously by the women to exclude any sexist phrases. It was at that time that “man” was recognized to refer only to men, a specific gender, not to the entire species; therefore, it does not encompass women. Consequently, through the effort of women while drafting the Declaration, the word “men” was replaced by “human beings” and likewise, “every man” was replaced by everyone and “no man” was replaced by “no one” (Pietilä, 2007: 17-18). Concerned with the women’s issues akin to various women’s non-governmental organizations, United Nations Foundation has brought gender equality to the fore and emphasized that it is essential to the achievement of human rights and sustainable development, contributing to the entire society, which results in a universal advantage as affirmed by several international frameworks. However, notwithstanding the promise of equality, not remarkable progress has been made so far except for a few slow, reversible and incremental changes, which have gradually weakened, particularly during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. No exception to any region, women and girls have, thus, been far more liable to poor life circumstances owing to which they are more likely to be unhealthy and illiterate, and have to maintain a lifestyle endangered by violence, legally deprived, politically marginalized, and lacking basic rights, they appear to be underrepresented in initiative positions.

In the course of humankind, the attitude women have constantly been exposed to has demonstrated incontestably and flagrantly that they are subordinated and posited as secondary to men or as “other” despite the studies carried out hitherto by various scholars who have stumbled on this topic, aiming for a solution, and come up with a wide range of reasons likely to form the basis of the gender asymmetry. These reasons

encompass numerous issues problematized in literary and social contexts. It is ubiquitous that studies provide the theoretical background through which the cases of women can be delved into but why women are subjugated incessantly has been a formidable question that leads to new theories blossoming in accordance with reality and the requirements to be improvised considering the conditions of each era. The subjugation of women cannot be reduced to any races, religions, or cultures, and it, by and large, appears to be a universal issue. Dealing with the oppression led by racial discrimination, Walker (1944) accentuates that her favourite white women writers, including the Brontës, Kate Chopin, Simone de Beauvoir, and Doris Lessing, are constantly in search of salvation in order to cope with oppression. They can envision a solution that is to enable evolution, the broader aim of which is to be espoused even though the society is brusque and against their vision (251-252). Along with their authoring power, they are expected to come up with a radical solution to terminate women's oppression and its devastating outcomes.

Spivak (1996) underscores that the text is deemed to be "the area of the discourse of the human sciences," also known as the humanities in the USA (54), revealing that the discourse of the human sciences aligns with what is problematized in humanity. Much of the discourse concerning women within the Western philosophical canon has centered on "woman question," previously known as "the querelle des femmes," referring to a myriad of debates related to the nature of sexes, the interaction between them, and their respective roles in social and political institutions (Sreedhar, 2017: 142). Notwithstanding the heavy subordination imposed upon them, women manage to survive somehow and contradict any attitude or cases intended to hold them down. The women's endeavour to survive despite all the conditions dominating their entity psychologically and physically has a long history and there have been various movements to deal with all these. Accordingly, feminism is amidst the basic movements launched for human liberty. To disregard its goal or ridicule it as a temporary impetus is to disregard women, namely half of humankind on the earth (Schneir, 1972: XI). In order to contribute to human liberty, feminist theory scrutinizes the notions fundamental to the construction of gender, including "masculinity" and "femininity," and interrogates the dimensions of inequality women face in various societies. The causes of subordination and the factors that lead to the continuity of gender inequities are the recurring issues addressed by feminists (Hawkesworth, 1990: 11). Therefore, any

arguments considered by feminists arouse curiosity among those whose main concern is to reform the plight of women.

The notion “feminism” laying emphasis on the subjugation of women and their oppression has been used in English aftermath the devastating experiences of women from all eternity which provoked the campaigns conducted for women’s suffrage late in the 19th century (Bowden and Mummery, 2009: 1). The modern movement dates back to the 19th century which flourished in “prosperity” and “peace” and initially the women in Rome were emancipated through the legal fictions (Walsh, 1917: 5). Lately, the feminist movement has been embarked with the resurgence of the movements women get involved into for “equal rights, freedom from oppressive constraints of sex, self-expression and autonomy.” The theoretical work concerning modern feminism has been carried out after the resurgence called “second wave” dating back to the late 1960s (Bowden and Mummery, 2009: 1). Included in the socialist movement, the women movement is in search of exact equality of the sexes and position of women and men equally (Walsh, 1917: 3). Encompassing a variety of perspectives, theories and methodologies, feminism has been referred to in relation to a multitude of aims, amidst which is the belief that women should not be exposed to discrimination because of their sex; instead, they should be recognized with their inherent human dignity on par with males and they should be provided with the same opportunities to conduct an autonomous and fulfilling lives as men are (Okin, 1998: 661). Actually, each movement involved in feminism can be ascribed to this primary goal: to provide equality.

Although Farrell (1993) contends that neither sex can be associated with oppression and both sexes operate as slaves to the opposite sex in various ways (41), in his work entitled *The Subjection of Women* (1878), John Stuart Mill stated that although it needed to be modified or weakened, the subordination of women had been consolidated through “the experience of life” and “the progress of reflection.” Any regulations that prioritize one sex or lead to the subjection of one sex to the other appear to be the major hindrances that disrupt human improvement; therefore, a principle to enable perfect equality through rejecting any privilege or power on one side is essential (1). This is what feminists have aimed for since women have suffered from inequality throughout history, so the causes of inequality are revolved around to come up with a solution. As denoted by Safa (2022), discussions revolving around the equality of women and men have led to the publication of numerous sources, including data,

statistics and surveys (13). In addition to those, this study intends to exemplify the inequality through women characters in literary context in the selected novels and come up with the reasons likely to lead this situation.

The reverse of the medal remains a puzzle and the fundamental question feminists have been seeking an answer for throughout the history has been what women would be like if they were liberated from the burden and pressure imposed on them by the male-dominated society and how “true woman” would appear if they could get rid of the societal assertiveness (Schneir, 1972: XVI). What has nourished the expectations of women to be posited beside men and break out of the stereotypes like home-staying, depending on feelings, so on and so forth, are their chances of receiving “a better education” and obtaining occupations as men do (Walsh, 1917: 27). Actually, what makes good education or better positions in occupations peculiar to men is unrelated to the type of education and occupations. As Simone de Beauvoir denotes in *The Second Sex*, in fact, the inequality of the sexes is ratified by no institution; no inheritance, no property, no legal system verifies the inequality of the sexes. Religion is not in favour of one particular sex, it is neutral and likewise, what is worshipped is asexual (Beauvoir, 2011: 76). The classic manifesto of Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1949) laid the theoretical basis at a time lacking any sound feminist movement and initiated feminist activism during 1960s and 1970s in Europe and North America. The popular opening remark of it (Volume II) that “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman” inaugurated one of the famous agendas of the feminist literary theory during the 1980s and 1990s, and the social constructionist critique of essentialism came into focus. Along with her masterpiece which has a permanent influence on virtually all aspects involved in the contemporary women’s movement, Beauvoir has become a landmark inspiring to all feminist theorists including Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler, and Monique Witing (Leitch, 2010: 1262).

Beauvoir invoked the attraction boldly to the inequality women had been exposed to and called into question available laws, traditions, customs and religions. She spearheaded the arousal of the inspiration for women to arrange their way of living to their own benefit, so her masterpiece has been deemed to be the bible for the women’s liberation movement. On the basis of various realms including psychology, biology, history, literature and also the autobiographies of some contemporary women in the Western side, Beauvoir detailed women issues and concluded that women have

been turned into passive objects for males and she offered two corollaries for this case: One major reason why women are constructed into passive objects is that men regarding themselves as the essential entity, that is the subject, posit women as unessential entities and negative objects, thus the Other. Her second critique enunciates that there is nothing that can be named as “feminine nature” and each notion of femininity is artificial (Wallace, 2009: 41). Then, how this inequality is constructed has been interrogated constantly, and all the effort in progress is for the same reason and also to terminate it.

As far as detected, the reasons why women are subordinated to men appear to be encompassing since women are exposed to subjugation in many aspects, and they are dominated physically, sexually, economically, politically, and in almost every realm of intellectual and artistic struggle and philosophical angles. When the history of intellectual movements is taken into consideration, women have turned out to be under “represented” and “denigrated” to a great extent by the theories and ideas (Cudd and Andreassen, 2011: 1). Subordination can be based on various aspects; for instance, in the *Subjection of Women*, the perpetuity of the system of inequality was argued not to be the outcome of “forethought” or “deliberation,” any social ideas which aim for the good order of the society or contribution to the humanity but it was claimed to be merely the outcome of the fact dating back to the early period of the human society in which women associated with the inferiority in muscle power were converted into the state of bondage to the male (Mill, 1878: 8-9). Likewise, according to the argument in *Women’s Oppression Today*, the ideology of inferiority associated with women is described as the manipulation of reality in accordance with men’s interests, and the collusion of women in oppression can be based on false consciousness (Barrett, 1980: 85). On the other hand, physical force is argued to be the chief reason for women’s subordination in various sources. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft mentions that men build their own power structure thanks to their physical force but employing the sophisticated rationalizations, they reflect this as if it were the real case and natural (Hawkesworth, 1990: 83). That is to say, it has been endorsed that it is a constructed perception.

There have been various explanations of feminist groups, including radical, liberal, socialist / Marxist, and women of colour on why women are subject to oppression and each has put forward different reasons for it. Framed by the structure of economy, politics, society and a great variety of relevant issues, women’s oppression is

amidst the most crucial gender-related problems to be solved. Providing the same opportunities and rights as men have for women has been claimed to offer a solution for the issues related to gender inequity by liberal feminists. Radical feminists have argued that the reproductive and sexual rights of men and women, in addition to their responsibilities, need to be revised at once if gender equity is to be achieved. Regarding women's oppression, radical-libertarian feminists have been of the opinion that women are in need of liberation from all the burdens imposed on them, including biological motherhood and also natural reproduction, and restrictions nourished by the sexual double standard (Tong and Botts, 2018: 118).

Inclined to have a counterview against conventional social and intellectual institutions and traditions, radical feminists are situated in an anti-modern perspective. Likewise, they are against technology, science, and the views of male intellectuals, including Freud. Freud's work reflects the inequality between men and women, underlining the domination men have over women and also presenting them unfavourably (Flynn, 2002: 32). Contrary to radical-libertarian feminists, radical-cultural feminists viewed "reproductive role" as a unique feature peculiar to women, and hence they think that it contributes to their power. All children are necessarily born of women, which reinforces females' unique position. Social and Marxist feminists have attributed women's oppression to the capitalist economic structures, which are believed to lead to two classes of the "haves" and the "have-nots," and women are categorized into the "have-nots." This is believed to be overcome only if the capitalist economic system is destructed. No matter what their location is, women of colour feminists have highlighted the intersecting lines of various oppressions needed to be mapped so that each women group is respected and taken into account equally. Different from all perspectives denoted so far, psychoanalytic feminists have touched on the subject profoundly and attributed women's oppression to their psyche, in particular the way they think about themselves, therefore, on the basis of Freudian work primarily related to pre-Oedipal and Oedipal stages and also Lacanian work with the symbolic order, experiences dating back to infancy and early childhood are believed to be fundamental in the formation of gender identity and alike gender inequity. Why boys and girls get involved in either feminine or masculine terms is based on these experiences that can be examined through psychoanalysis. These experiences are claimed to be influential not only on the categorization of gender but also on the basis

of the privilege males have over females. What psychoanalytic feminists hypothesize is that a society liberated from the border of patriarchy would develop a different attitude towards femininity and masculinity, hence early infantile and childhood experiences are required to be changed or more steps further, the linguistic structures leading us to define ourselves within the terms of gender are needed to be altered (Tong and Botts, 2018: 118).

Feminists ground the notion of patriarchy in the discrimination between the sexes as a result of biological differences or the inevitable power structures nourished by the differences between the sexes (Barrett, 1980: 250). On the other hand, the main concern of psychoanalysis is to provide an analysis or elaboration on the structure of the psyche and its relationship with the body so that this understanding can be employed to explain the reasons lurking behind various illnesses and treat them. Mostly women, the patients expect to avoid suffering from unwellness and make progress towards the discovery of self-knowledge through sharing their life stories with the analyst. Popular in the culture of the twentieth century, these scenarios occupy a great place like the primary concepts of psychoanalysis, including “the phallic symbol, Oedipus complex,” etc. As can be deduced from these concepts, psychoanalysis is primarily concerned with “gender, sexuality, familial relations,” as well as the fact that the conscious mind does not always suggest explanation or provide information for the construction of these concepts. These aforementioned concepts are also fundamental in feminism and shed light on the root of the feminist disquiet concerning psychoanalysis. Freudian legacy is criticized since it centralizes the masculine, positing the feminine as secondary to it and regarding it as a “castrated version” of the masculine. On the other hand, in addition to its function in the analysis of the subjugation of women, it elucidates the patriarchal structure. Pertaining to the controversy between feminism and psychoanalysis, what can be deduced is that, based on the insights of feminism, in particular the unconscious, gender is claimed to be the identity of the psyche rather than a concept biologically granted (Jackson and Jones, 1998: 162). For this reason, psyche has been claimed to be liable for gender asymmetry; that’s why psychoanalytic feminists seek the unconscious origins of how gender is constructed in order to eliminate gender inequality and any norms instrumental in leading to asymmetry between males and females.

1. THEORETICAL GROUND OF THE STUDY

This is most strange,
That she whom even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,
The best, the dearest, should in this trice of time

-Shakespeare, *King Lear* (Act 1, Scene 1)

In his *Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud hits upon the deep sacrificial logic and highlights the requirement of sketching a distrustful approach to any theory imposed since none falls from Heaven. He alludes to that an instant generation of a “well-rounded theory” is merely an outcome of speculations rather than a sound inquiry of the facts dissociated from any prejudices (Freud, 2020: 25). Overwhelmed by interminable skepticism in almost all domains, we need bits of information to be provided by theories the root of each can be traced back sometimes to a life span or more, and then the suppositions of which are utilized in various contexts for a range of purposes. Here is the formative background of psychoanalytic feminism with all its labour pains, neither marking a radical departure from psychoanalysis nor generating a brand new theory, excluding the legacy of the previous suppositions. Along with the formative stages of psychoanalytic feminism, the male gaze theory, offering a sound lens on women’s oppression, takes the floor in the second half of this chapter, along with its background story and transference from films into literature. Finally, theoretical definitions of defense mechanisms are to be included to form the basis for elaborating on the actions taken or attitudes adopted by the female characters in the selected novels to resist the harsh conditions they experience so that they can survive.

1.1. Psychoanalytic Feminism

Interrogation ignites a spark, giving birth to novel aspects. Concerning the origin of psychoanalysis, Brennan (1998) posits that adhered to feminism intellectually and politically, feminists were not comfortable with the ongoing undesirable old masculinist practices, which raised the question whether patriarchy could be elucidated on biological basis, or it could rest on some other angles which result in sustainability of “stereotypical pattern-repeats” in pursuit of the “bad old days” (272). What induces those bad old days to reign over today, that is the question.

The integration of oppression into society has formed the basis of patriarchy. For this reason, utilizing psychoanalytic techniques is of great importance to discover the construction of gender and cover a lot of ground for gender differences. Study of the early phases of human life in terms of socialization patterns and reorganization of them will greatly contribute to tackling women's oppression. Still, first and foremost, it is essential to find out the sources both in men's and women's psyche for domination and subordination respectively, which dwell in individuals' unconscious in disguise (Wolff, 2007: 1). Described as a kind of store comprised of "neurographic dispositions or residua," the unconscious encapsulates a great measure of the life experiences (Prince, 1915: 229). Bearing these in mind, what psychoanalytic feminists are required to do is to be plunged into the depths of childhood, exclusively infancy, and experiences of life in order to come up with sound examples for their allegation on which they posit women's oppression.

Intersecting with various schools of literary criticism, including deconstruction, Marxism, and psychoanalysis, contemporary feminist criticism draws on differential ideologies (Bressler, 2007: 180). Both psychoanalysts and feminists have been concerned with sexual differences, but they differ from each other in terms of the means they pursue in order to minimize, resolve, or disregard sexual differences, and thus, the cultural milieus, political aims, in addition to professional training, become obvious. A great variety of solutions are operated, ranging from personal or social therapies to advanced political solutions. Additionally, in the hope of pinpointing how and when the future lives of the infants are determined by their social experiences, sociologists and psychoanalysts have been supposed to penetrate the centre of an individual's psyche (Kurzweil, 1995: 3). Psyche becomes spookier when it is exposed to science more. The empirical study conducted on the psyche and psychic leads to multiple epistemological issues to be raised and problematized (Marcus and Nicholls, 2004: 272). Since psychoanalytic feminism has come out of cultural feminism, which delves into the gender differences, conspicuously to see women's positions within society, early childhood development has been the focal point, chiefly the period prior to the age of three, thus the construction of gender and practice of it in individual, familial and societal aspects can be revealed. Through gaining insight into the evolution of the conscious facets of personality at the stages of infancy, identity formation as well as gender roles associated with "masculine" and "feminine" can be accounted for. This

realm of feminism has been formulated on Freud's theories concerning the human psyche and psychosexual development, in addition to Lacan's reworking of the theories Freud cultivated. Psychoanalytic feminism expostulates that it is the inherent psychological need of men to subjugate women and this need originates from the depths of the human psyche. Likewise, women's minimal resistance against subjugation emanates from their psyche. Considering this argument, psychoanalytic feminists advocate that cognizance of the development of psychic lives will help terminate women's oppression (Wolff, 2007: 1). Women's oppression owes too much indeed to what resides in the human psyche, which seems to be the real domineering power disguising itself there and unveiling through women's subjection and similar aspects.

The theories Freud and his intellectual successors have formulated frame and highlight the emotional tenets of personality, besides the emotions lurking in both the subconscious and unconscious spheres of the psyche. Additionally, they emphasize the cruciality of infancy and early childhood in the emergence of these emotions. Feminists are required to rework Freud's theories in order to evaluate his patriarchal and sexist conclusions. As is the case in all oppression theories, from the perspective of psychoanalytic theorists, patriarchy is regarded as a system in which women are subjugated by men, and with its universal impact, it is pervasive and steadfastly maintained worldwide. As for psychoanalytic feminists, what differentiates them from the others is that they claim that the patriarchal system is intentionally created and sustained by all men, whilst women appear to resist against this only occasionally and mostly acquiesce or contribute to their own subordination. The puzzle psychoanalytic feminists aim to solve is what lurks in men and leads them to strive to sustain patriarchy, spending their unremitting energy and why women lack a countervailing energy to overcome the subjugation they are exposed to. Psychoanalytic feminists are not satisfied with the argument that men support patriarchy merely for practical benefits and they are likely to invest in patriarchy because of cognitive mobilization. Additionally, women would act against patriarchy as the cognitive pursuit of their self-interest. Therefore, psychoanalytic feminists consider the aspects of the psyche patterned by Freudians and focus on the zone of desires and fears, either recognized or half-recognized, of human emotions, of pathology, and neurosis. They propose a clinically proven origin of debilitation and motivational energy, which originates from

psychic structures rooted so deeply that they are challenging to monitor or recognize by individual consciousness (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2018: 563).

Adopting a particular approach towards the phenomenon called “gendered subjectivity,” the main concern of psychoanalytic feminism is how human subjects are engendered. Psychoanalytic feminists do not regard the process of engendering as unalterable or natural and do not ascribe it purely to psychology, yet they are of the opinion that once the process of engendering is shed light on and conditions are gained insight into, it is likely to transform the process and eradicate the reasons which bring about women’s oppression. In this sense, “gender” or “sexual difference,” as denoted by British and French feminists, appears to be the key term to be problematized, scrutinized, and transformed (Elliott, 1991: 3-4). In exploring what forms subjectivity as well as how people are acquainted with gendered subjectivity, besides internalizing definite values and norms, psychoanalysis provides a universal theory concerning the psychic structure of gender identity, which is attributed to repression. The framework it offers constructs the ground on which femininity and masculinity can be expounded (Weedon, 1987: 43). In this aspect, the primary reference points concerning the origin of sexual difference must be discovered so that an inquiry into the issues led by this discrimination can be made accordingly.

Drawing on psychoanalytic theory, remarkably Freudian and Lacanian frameworks, psychoanalytic feminism offers a theoretical approach to elucidate how gendered identities, sexual difference, and power relations are rooted in the unconscious and structured through language, desire, and culture. It reinterprets psychoanalytic concepts rather than merely criticizing or rejecting them owing to its patriarchal biases. The evolution of the psychoanalytic feminist theory is in line with the emergence of feminist critique on masculinism and gender inequality practiced perpetually in multilayer forms in every domain, so it is of great importance to eliminate the disruptions and fatal outcomes led by this asymmetry. The evolution of this feminist trend from the past to the present is detailed below.

1.1.1. Ideology and Formative Premises

As is the case for the women’s movement, each movement is expected to be a launch pad for radical changes and create a seismic impact in the areas where paradoxes

are incarcerated in the voxes, so that they can come to light and be dismantled, enabling serenity over sinuous conditions and chaos. If a movement fulfils this task, then it becomes a fortunate stroke of serendipity; otherwise, nothing more than a grindstone that tantalizes people. In *Looking for Alaska* (2006), the verbatim expression by John Green is “We need never be hopeless, because we can never be irreparably broken,” (262) which underscores that any effort in the slightest degree deserves appreciation when it comes to humankind, cherishing the hope of resurrection. Reproachful for ages and seemingly devastating with its diabolical consequences, the plight of women needs to be restored in the light of theories, and centralised in this study, psychoanalytic feminism is to be expounded on through recourse to its central tenets within this chapter to pave the way for the analysis of the selected novels within this study.

Feminism and psychoanalysis, either together or not, occupied an undeniably adjacent position amidst the most dynamic mainsprings on which modern society was structured. Despite excelling in various spheres, psychoanalysis has been involved in feminism but has not been bolstered by the feminist advances. However, these two movements have been blossomed and grown up as Siamese twins do, hand in hand, have no existence separate from each other (Kurzweil, 1995: 1). Feminism is a less literature-specific term since it has proliferated through transformation into various studies and disciplines (Finney, 2006: 114) amidst which psychoanalysis owns a remarkable spot. In alignment with interdisciplinarity, they blend into a new theory as “psychoanalytic feminism” upon a profound investigation into women’s history throughout which issues epitomizing subjugation have arisen incessantly.

Hinging on conflict, new theories flourish since controversial aspects arouse attention and interest. As confirmed by motivational theorists, epistemic curiosity can draw on the conceptual conflict, thereby motivating more studies for new information or to reconceptualise the knowledge already available, hence what matters is to utilize the conflict to make it productive or impede the destructivity of it (Johnson, 2015: 13). What laid the foundation of psychoanalytic feminism can be enucleated on a similar ground. Although Freud has been denigrated by the majority of feminist movements, as also noted by Juliet Mitchell in her monumental work *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1975), it is the gospel truth that through his studies, he formulated an outline for a great

variety of realms, spanning from psychology to literature. One of the prominent figures in feminism, Mitchell asserted that the women's movement was supposed to probe women's oppression on the basis of sexual ideology and symbolic forms, since, in accordance with them, gender roles have been determined and patriarchy has been constructed. Oppressive social practices including mothering, unequal wages and job discrimination lead to the consolidation of unequal sexual world; besides, any pejorative feelings in gender relations partake profoundly in the construction of inequality. Practical examination seems to be a must in order to ward off any sexual and emotional ideologies that give rise to polarized sexual roles so that the contingencies likely to restructure gender relations can be taken into account. Of great cruciality in the conversion of sexual identities and gender power, the interrelation of psychoanalysis and feminism has generated psychoanalytic feminism, the enterprise of which is currently robust and intellectually efficient (Elliott, 1994: 114).

Women have struggled to a great extent in order to alleviate harsh conditions led by gender differences and ameliorate the miserable plight of women. In modern times, women have experienced three main stages for emancipation. Initially, they struggled for political rights, the affirmation of having equality with men on the ontological basis as a counterview against the argument that "women are equal but different" which encouraged Simone de Beauvoir to prove the existence and to envisage the existence of a "fraternity" between genders beyond the natural differences peculiar to sexes, and psychoanalysis provides the tenets to investigate the differences between men and women, which sheds light on the topic identifying women with a specific creativity and talent almost in all fields of social practices ranging from writing to politics. What is intended is to provide liberation for all womankind (Kristeva, 2004: 494); therefore, any ways and attempts to achieve this liberation are worthy of notice, provided that they terminate gender discrimination and gender-based violence, whether physical or psychological.

The existing merits differentiating men from women are not natural and inborn features of sex but socially constructed mainstreams concerning gender; that's why, these mainstreams are arguable and variable. In a nutshell, notwithstanding the discrepancy constructed between women and men that can be grounded on the roles they play rather than any innate qualities, social policies underpin that any roles conventionally assigned to women can be learned or fulfilled by men; likewise, women

can replace men in any work labelled as “men’s work” thus providing a more equal assignment in domestic labour (Bryson, 2007: 52). Allocating higher status and more power to men in patriarchal social systems (Crawford, 2006: 6) induces men to be the models according to whom women need to be tailored. Recently, women have been involved in plenty of areas they can fulfil the tasks men do yet these areas have been established beforehand by men so women are expected to act in line with the way men behave, otherwise, they are deemed to be ‘problematically different’ (Bryson, 2007: 59). Indeed, this case dates back to the sprout of cultural codes in childhood. The traits of gender personality enable children to orient themselves to the respective roles to be ascribed to them both in the economy and society. Men are associated with independence and have the tendency to display more affectless behaviour in comparison to women whilst women are associated with “interdependency” and “emotional intensity.” Characterized by these factors, men tend to get involved into the capitalist world of production and women tend to function in the reproduction, in particular, the reproduction of mothering (Donovan, 1985: 109). Gender is not concerned with how males and females are, but with the perspective they are seen on the basis of a culture and subculture. Describing women as “timid,” “dependent,” or “self-pitying” is actually to associate some roles with them in accordance with how the speaker sees or wants them to be. “Feminine” is a gender role ascribed to women and can be defined as a kind of cultural construction. Akin to femininity, masculinity and its connotations are constructed culturally. On the basis of cultural or subcultural paradigms, males are associated with “rationality,” “strength,” and “stoicism.” In order to change the power relations that dominate inequality between men and women, gender is particularly focused on by feminism since the gender inequality seemingly originates from the roles assigned to males or females. Once culturally identified with timidity, dependence, and weakness, females are necessarily not granted serious power (Bertens, 2014: 84-85). For this reason, they are described as “less” when compared to men in terms of any notions concerning power.

As for the sprout of the theory, it is of great importance to render how psychoanalytic feminism arose in order to construe the selected novels in an appropriate way and to avoid any misnomers. When the history of psychoanalytic feminism is examined, it appears that the 1980s marked a change for Western feminism, which could not be confined anymore to three primary veins of feminist thought, including

liberal, radical, as well as Marxist or social traditions. Thereupon, several eclectic approaches blending political and social theories were tried and enacted in academic feminism. Amidst the most influential streams, psychoanalysis underwent a reevaluation in Western countries. Once psychoanalysis was rejected by liberal and radical feminists during the 1970s, it was reconsidered and again included as an element in the studies of Marxist feminists (Beasley, 1999: 65). A theory of oppression, psychoanalytic feminism was initially triggered with the development of a critical approach towards the gendered subject, to this end; it was intended to conduct a theoretical and political project. The study of the gendered subject conceptually dates back to the early seventies, as aforementioned, when, in England, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* by Juliet Mitchell, and in France, *Speculum de l'autre femme* by Luce Irigaray were published, raising inquiries into psychoanalysis and feminism with the numerous texts addressing women's issues. As has been the case in other realms, the texts have been reacted to differently by the feminists: some have appeared to be disgruntled, whilst some have been delighted. Disgruntled feminists have been against the works theoretically challenging, particularly when they are constructed on or borrow any concepts generated by men since psychoanalysis is regarded as mostly misogynistic. Contrary to the disgruntled feminists, the delighted ones welcome any coherent explanation which elaborates on gender oppression, and eagerly delve into the reasons of it (Elliott, 1991: 1). So-called misogynistic discourse of psychoanalysis seemingly contrasts with the vantage point of some feminists, and, at odds with their beliefs, creates a false impression, indeed a paradox indicating as if they succumbed to male-dominant system. The prospective lines are to compare and contrast the basics of these opposing aspects.

The controversy between psychoanalysis and feminism has appeared to be of great importance in the metamorphosis of "sexual identities and practices" in addition to gender power (Elliott, 1994: 114). Psychoanalysis has been criticized because of identifying or referring to "a single type of woman" and also making a comparison between "man" and "woman" or "the boy" and "the girl." Poststructuralist and recent feminist works suggest being wary of these types of approaches that employ singular referents. Additionally, psychoanalysis has been criticized since it has produced its universal theory of femininity on the basis of limited samples in terms of cultural location and class. Freud's explanations on women and his interaction with them

encompass a great number of characters, including “a pantheon of greater and lesser ideal-typical goddesses and mortals to praise and accompany ‘Oedipus, Narcissus, Moses,’” and so on, besides the numerous women from the clinical cases. How Freud formed his account and what pretheoretical assumptions, historical and psychological perspectives affected him must be considered to avoid dehistoricizing and universalizing mistakes. As objects, how women are viewed in the masculine psyche and how women are experienced by men have been conveyed by Freud on the basis of clinical and theoretical data (Chodorow, 1994: 3), whereby objectifying women has been authenticated.

Culture, undoubtedly, has played a unique role in assigning gender-specific roles. The transition from nature to culture marks a turning point in the history of humankind; yet, the fate of the sexes cannot be reduced to the choice of mankind or their desire for preserving women intact in their natural (animal) role merely because of their function in propagation and nurturing as well. The inauguration of culture assigned a role peculiar to women in the formation of civilization rather than a natural function in the existence of species; therefore, not the natural procreative possibilities women have, but their cultural operation as exchange-objects forms the grounds of their feminine definition. In essence, males and females are the same inborn; however, the position they are assigned to differs from each other. By and large, boys are conventionally expected to step into their father’s role, whilst girls are expected to want to propagate. Given these points, the foundation of human society appears to be responsible for distinguishing between boys and girls (Mitchell, 1975: 407-408). From a critical point of view based on the theories, the reasons associated with this differentiation appear to be correlated with various cultural paradigms.

Delving into these paradigms, feminists ended up with various aspects and censured misogyny. The feminist movement of the 1960s raised awareness concerning Freud’s work and the treatment of females. A prominent figure within feminism, Simone de Beauvoir (1961) and Betty Friedan (1963) put forward that Freud’s feminine psychology lacked gender equality and maintained the conventional suppression of women. This has resulted in the rejection of psychoanalytic theory by the early feminist writers for the reason that the classical psychoanalytic theory perpetuates the Victorian bias concerning women. Not the Victorian bias but a great variety of realms including “history, anthropology, philosophy, sociology, politics and gender relations” have been

taken into account in the critical context (Slipp, 1993: 13). Amidst the ones vexed by psychoanalysis owing to its approach, feminists develop critical point of view concerning “masculine bias, normative masculinity, devaluation of women” involved in psychoanalytic writing besides clinical practice and politics. They have also objected to universalism and essentialism in psychoanalytic theories and their tendency to generalize and disregard historical, cultural variations, instead, to maintain attention and fascination to sexuality and gender, which intrigues most of the critics (Chodorow, 1994: 1). The most widely known term of Freud regarding femininity is phallocentrism and he claims that prior to discovery of sex, “little girl is a little boy.” In this sense, Luce Irigaray and some other scholars expostulate against Freud since he disregards “womb.” The non-existence of the term “womb-envy” within a theory of consciousness reinforces the allegation that Freud avoids this (Spivak, 2006: 107). With a male-oriented account for gender issues at the core of his argument, Freud seemingly has been incongruous with the universal reality of women’s existence.

As for psychosexual stages of development, Freud asserts the absence of sexual difference in the pre-Oedipal stage and emphasizes that there exists no difference between the girl and little boy during the “oral, anal, and phallic” stages, so the little girl is the same as the little boy as aforementioned. A radical change occurs during the Oedipal crisis in the orientation of the little girl. Whereas the mother continues to be the object of the little boy, the little girl replaces her object, the mother with her father as “love-object.” This is a dramatic shift, challenging both to explain and to get adapted to. It is ambivalent, as also denoted by Freud, whether all women manage to accomplish this completely and can abandon the attachment they have adopted during the pre-Oedipal stage and gain a competent femininity. Irigaray claims that Freud was forced to develop this theory of femininity, which lacks coherence and seems to be contradictory and also misogynistic, by the unwitting subservience and obedience of Freud to the spectacular logic, not of a different axis, but of the same. Freud’s theory of femininity casts the little girl in the same way as the little boy, which is criticized by Irigaray for its incontestably male-centered attitude. The little girl develops an inferior sense of her “body” and thinks that this is the outcome of castration. This also sheds light on the fear males have of castration; since woman is regarded as envious of men’s inborn difference, men can merely rest once they guarantee that they continue to have their

biological difference at all (Moi, 2002: 132). With this in mind, men strive to establish and sustain their hegemony, which necessarily requires women to be subjugated.

In *Psychoanalysis and Women: Contemporary Reappraisals*, published in 1986, nearly forty years ago, Alpert noted that there was an increase in the research about female development within the psychoanalytic framework (xiii). Freud's elaboration on feminine psychology was objected to by female analysts including Karen Horney (1992), Melaine Klein (1928), and Clara Thompson (1950) in the realm of psychoanalysis (Slipp, 1993: 14). Freud's theory of neurosis was based on the disruption in the relationship between father and child during the oedipal phase which lasts for three years, from the age of three to six. During this stage, sexually attracted to the parent, namely the mother or father, the child struggles to knock out the parent of the same sex. This was evaluated from a different perspective by Klein, and she greatly differentiated from Freud's point of view by laying emphasis on the pre-oedipal stage and also replacing the father with the mother. She also argued that, rather than biological instinct, the fantasy of the child was more effective in shaping personality development. Moreover, she downplayed the importance of the biological instinct through reformulation and attributed it to the fantasy between the child and the mother (15).

As indicated hitherto, Freud is a landmark within psychoanalysis and offers ideas effective to reformulate the whole discourse available, but his point of view concerning sexual differences is limited by male-centrism. Actually, what forms the basis of psychoanalytic feminism is these counterviews, as also developed by contemporary feminists, against his approach revolving around "male." Freud has been reclaimed by some contemporary feminist theorists, including Gayle Rubin, Juliet Mitchell, and Nancy Chodorow (Donovan, 1985: 91). Apart from Mitchell, Nancy Chodorow, the author of *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) has developed a critical view on Freudian theory. She has hypothesized that psychodynamics of the family are influential on the construction of gender personality; the "object-relations" are greatly effective, particularly the ones with the mother (109). The object relations tradition of psychoanalysis has been appropriated and modified by feminists, aiming to formulate a unique system of thought on the basis of foundations within object relations theory. Simultaneously, they have benefited from object relations theory, in particular the insights of a pioneer within the realm, Melanie Klein, in conceptualizing passions

including hatred and rage so that feminists have gained insight into paradoxes, dissonances, and clandestine meanings of emotions (Burack, 1994: 4).

Freud's work concerning women has been challenged, and although many parts of his work or all of them have been accepted by many psychoanalysts, his approach and theories have been revised, reformulated, or changed. Two major limitations of his perspective, "the maternal" and female issues concerning desire or sexuality, are viewed from the male perspective. The maternal characteristic, featuring a robust, intense feeling, "preoccupation and identity in women" is disregarded and "the infantile attachment to the mother" is also almost absent in his approach (Chodorow, 1994: 4-5). Concerning the early phase of child development, Melanie Klein developed a different perspective from Freud's theory. Freud disregarded the role of the mother but highlighted the relationship with the father during the personality development of the child. However, Klein argued that the most crucial factor influencing personality development was the relationship between mum and child during the first three years, also known as the "pre-oedipal period." This phase hosts the problems which lead to more psychopathology compared to the oedipal stage (Slipp, 1993: 14).

A feminist critic, Spivak (2006) also substantiates the male-centred approach of Freud through censure of Freud's masculinism and also nuclear-familial psychoanalytic theories regarding "sexed subject" (109). She claims that Freud's masculinist approach and positing it as the primary determinant of femininity is a way of avoiding the reality and confronting the fact that the womb operates as the place of production and cannot be deemed secondary (53). Freud contributes with further evidence gathered from man's world and man's self, and a feminist Marxist deconstructivist Spivak argues that this evidence is unsatisfactory (104). Freud's ideas concerning feminine psychology have been claimed to be erroneous as they have been thought to maintain and reflect the Victorian bias adopted against females. In order to discover what led Freud to have erroneous views on the psychology of females, it is not enough to know only the phallogocentric and patriarchal Victorian community since Freud's personal conflicts are influential on his attitude and ideas concerning females. Freud's perspective towards feminine psychology triggered the conflict within the psychoanalytic establishment in the 1920s, and it provoked the feminist movement, which was inaugurated in the 1960s (Slipp, 1993: 2). Seemingly, Freud's own psychology was influential on his view of females, leading to the arousal of new ideas.

The negotiation of psychoanalysis and feminist criticism is a complex process that seeks to reconcile the foundational theories on which Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis draw with the thoughts concerning gender, subjectivity, and power advanced within feminism. Although they differ from each other in terms of some concerns, what both have in common is their approach to the psychic relation of parents and children, the relation between sexuality and its embodiment, and the fluctuation of identity partaken by readers and authors as well. Furthermore, they both adopt similar methods while treating their texts, either the novels or the unconscious, and regard them as illustrations of what exists beyond the verbalized, as codes emblemizing the unsaid in daily life. Dreams, transference, and displacement are supposed to shed light on individual feelings, both by psychoanalytic and feminist criticism (Humm, 1994: 114). Albeit the similarities, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis diverge in their theoretical frameworks, as evident in the transition from Freud's essentialist views to Lacan's reinterpretation of gendered subjectivity, opening up new avenues for feminist theory.

1.1.2. Dissident and Concentric Matrix: Freudian & Lacanian Aspects

On Psychoanalysis and Feminism focuses on the development of the relations between feminism and psychoanalysis, and Young-Bruehl and Wexler (1992) make mention of the pioneers including Karen Horney, Melanie Klein, Clara Thompson, Simone de Beauvoir, Viola Klein, Betty Friedan and Kate Millett, who have paved the way for emergence of psychoanalytic feminism (454-455). Nourished by diverse sources, psychoanalytic feminism has originated from the essay by Karen Horney on femininity which proposed a counterview-for feminine identity, against Freud's focus on the father. This perspective was further developed by Helene Deutsch, who emphasized the importance of mothering, and by the theories of Anna Freud concerning maternal deprivation, and also adolescence as well as the notion of "self-integration" by Melanie Klein. As for contemporary psychoanalytic feminism, Kate Millett appears to be the pioneer of the movement with her critique of Freud and Phyllis Chesler. Afterwards, Juliet Mitchell challenged against Kate Millett and second wave feminists who rejected Freudian theory and underpinned the differences available between social and psychodynamic structures. What forms the basis of the current psychoanalytic

feminism was the new psychoanalytic theories proposed as a response to what was put forward by the Women's Movement, by Dorothy Dinnerstein, Adrienne Rich, Jean Baker Miller and Nancy Chodorow on the basis of heterosexual relations, and Mitchell's writings of the 1970-8 embarked the beginning of the Psychoanalytic Feminism. Whilst both Dinnerstein and Chodorow highlight mothering from the aspect of the psychosocial relations, Rich and Miller's main focus is on women's qualities such as empathy and relatedness, and some other theorists, including Sarah Kofman, address the positive facets of 'feminine' instabilities (Humm, 1992: 227).

As for the major division, the impact of psychoanalysis has resulted in two primary variants, the first of which is Freudian feminism, centralising the significance of psychology as well as the formation of subjectivities or personalities, sexually specific in delineation of male dominance through studying the influence of the responsibility associated with and accordingly taken by women for mothering. The second primary variant depends on the aspect of Jacques Lacan examining the analytic method of Freud, offering the fraught fragility imposed by sexual identity and its relation to language acquisition. Lacanian feminism can be divided into subcategories comprised of the ones in agreement with the interpretation of Lacan on psychoanalysis and another group referred to as post-Lacanian or French feminists (Beasley, 1999: 65- 66).

1.1.2.1. Feminist Responses to Freud

Founded by Sigmund Freud around the late nineteenth and the very beginning of the twentieth century, psychoanalysis primarily focused on the characteristics of gender socialization and attempted to conduct studies serving to elaborate on the nature of an ambiguous norm: gender socialization, therefore, Freud, his companions and his successors all were interested in the influence of childhood experiences on the construction of thoughts boys and girls have about themselves as well as their gender and sexuality (Chafetz, 2006: 222). Different from their origin, around 1950s, in America, Freud's ideas flourished and offered a novel aspect of rationalising a desire to modify stability and order within a society with the disrupted internal workings, and his understanding of the pertinence between sexes on the basis of his concepts including the Oedipus complex and female castration, etc. were resorted to (Plain and Sellers, 2007: 238). Upon his theories, the gender relationship was attempted to be expounded, and a fundamental intellectual space was opened up.

From its inception, proliferating in a great variety of realms, psychoanalysis has functioned as “therapy,” theory, and risen in philosophy and metapsychology. Therefore, progress in one of these realms have required the others to be recast, that’s why a constant state of flux dominated the psychoanalysts (Kurzweil, 1995: 2). Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) contributed to the critical and modernist creative arena with the concepts reflecting the controversy between the unconscious and conscious mind and refusal of the stable ego. He is of the opinion that socially unacceptable desires do not disappear but are repressed in the unconscious and emerge in various ways. Psychoanalytic criticism examines these repressed desires, which set the stage for the construction of personal and social identities. Actually, it takes for granted that authority and power are dependent on the phallus (Cox, 2005: 152). Freudians intended to find out how women’s behaviour and roles, their position-both in family and society-are influenced by psychic development and biological factors in addition to how repressive conditions can manifest on their bodies through personal growth or the evolution of the human species. However, revolving around male-centricism, psychoanalysis was interrogated in terms of its approach towards gender issues. Karen Horney appeared to be the first woman who counterviewed against Freud through an argument concerning the fate of the Oedipal complex. Helene Deutsch also challenged Freud, pursuing a much milder means compared to Horney. Melaine Klein was concerned about the influence the mother has on her small child. Contrary to these, the psychoanalytic movement was initially triggered in France by Freud’s analysands, Eugenia Sokolnicka and Marie Bonaparte, and the advance of it in Russia was thanks to Sabina Spielrein (Kurzweil, 1995: 5).

Freud has been an undeniably pivotal figure within the realm of psychoanalysis. In this approach, the psychoanalytic feminists refer to Freud’s work in their delineation of how women grow into femininity and thus become mothers. Furthermore, they suggest a re-interpretation of what Freud lays out for the formation of the (sexed) self. In the Freudian aspect, the father occupies a significant role in building psychic (unconscious) life. As a typical cultural symbol of male dominance, the father is thought to be an influential figure; yet, Freudian feminists tend to highlight the prior (pre-linguistic) significance of the mother. Hence, they call for a critical assessment of Freudian aspect offering a male ordering ground for the construction of the self and likewise the account of Freud for femininity (Beasley, 1999: 67). The definition of the

sexes on the axis of a particular gender, namely males, ignoring women, ignoring the role of the mother and explaining development solely on the basis of the father have been rightly criticised by the Freudian feminists.

On the other hand, Juliet Mitchell has introduced a particularly feminist approach to psychoanalysis through her work “Psychoanalysis and Feminism” and provided a review of the contributions psychoanalysis makes to feminism. In her discussion of psychoanalysis regarding femininity and women, Mitchell highlights a return to the theory of Freud and argues that Freud has been rejected by the feminists owing to (mis)representations without any intensive reading. In her work, it is underlined that Freud’s theories are not prescriptive but descriptive (Macey, 1988: 21). Thus, she attempts to illustrate that Freud's approach is not in the nature of a suggestion but a descriptive approach to what exists.

1.1.2.2. Feminist Re-readings of Lacan

Jacques Lacan is a landmark in contemporary literary theory and criticism, shedding light on power relations and why the subject is inclined towards power (Bertens, 2014: 131). What led Lacan to inaugurate a radical breakthrough was the work of modern linguists of his lifetime, including Ferdinand de Saussure, along with Roman Jakobson and Claude Levi-Strauss. Rejecting submission to the existing rules and unwilling to be involved in the official organizations, Lacan founded the Freudian School of Paris (Leitch, 2010: 1157-1158). Highly obscure and ambiguous in style, Lacan’s work and writing appear to be in alignment with his argument that univocal meaning in language is just an illusion. He has a significant impact on French feminist writing by virtue of his distinctive style and writing. Through reconstructing Freud on a new groundwork of linguistics, Lacan repositioned psychoanalysis within feminism. He regards sexuality and the unconscious as an outcome of the formation of the subject within language, that is to say, within the symbolic orders and the imaginary, and thus rejects the claim that they are natural or biological essences. The Lacanian model contends that what makes the child a subject is social intervention, and that the child is not a subject inborn, but rather picks up appropriate social characteristics afterwards. The child grows into a social and speaking subject, expressly a social or Symbolic subject during the evolution of a feminine or masculine position or identity. In

contradistinction to the argument of Freud, the sexes differentiate not owing to the influence of nature or anatomy but psychical aspects according to the Lacanian model. Likewise, the Lacanian model differs from the Freudian perspective in terms of positioning the phallus as a signifier central to the Symbolic order in contrast with its anatomical context in Freudian work (Brooks, 1997: 71). Hence, the Lacanian aspect centralizes the symbolic order and foregrounds it as the basis of gender construction.

Jacques Lacan has presented a new theory concerning the subject through his psychoanalytic writings, which have been rejected by formalist, Marxist and structuralist critics since it has been deemed to be romantic and reactionary, yet a materialist analysis of the speaking subject by Lacanian criticism has been widely accepted. Barely subject pronouns like “I,” “she,” “he,” and so on stand for subject positions laid down by language as denoted by the linguist Emile Benveniste. However, when the persons are reversed, the subject positions to which they refer change. It is fundamental to accept this odd reversibility in communication. The reversibility of persons elucidates that this “I” differs from the word “I” used by the ego (Selden et al., 2013: 156-157), thus indicating the various dynamics influential on communication and meaning construction.

Psychoanalytic theory provides a different approach to finding out how “femininity” and “masculinity” are defined culturally and what is unconsciously experienced, offering a broader perspective through which women’s subordination is scrutinized. Most societies are male-dominated, and women are subordinated to male power. Psychoanalytic theory argues that personal and political violence are outcomes of the unconscious desires and anxieties that are masked through “reason” and “language of consciousness.” It claims that unconscious formations are required to be focused on in order to shed light on the subordination of women as well as other categorizations based on race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Particularly, the French feminists have been into Freudian and Lacanian scrutiny of the ideology which nourishes the patriarchal culture and what role and meaning are attributed to the unconscious and gender discrimination within it (Minsky, 1996: 18). As aforementioned, Freud’s theory provides the basis for the difference between femininity and masculinity. Lacan claims that no matter whether it is in accordance with the personal behaviour of an individual or not, “maleness signifies power and value.” As a result, men are endowed with a privileged status culturally, which is difficult for them

to relinquish. This results in a perception that regards women and their status as downgrading, so it turns out to be challenging for men to be like women either publicly or personally. On the other hand, women have a different aspect and for them, it is desirable to be ascribed cultural masculinity, and this enables upgrading of social status, yet, they can problematize this case as they develop fear of losing their attractiveness and lacking the feature of a real woman once they are assigned male roles (19). Each gender views gender from a personal perspective in tandem with the societal perception.

Lacan expostulates that a pre-existing system, patterning signifiers sensed merely within a language system, forms the ground where the recognition of the human subject arises. Following the entry into language, a person is provided with subject positions, allowing them to find one grounded in a relational system, such as mother/father/daughter or male and female. The stages preceding it are controlled by the unconscious. Freud highlights that in the earliest stages of infancy, the lack of a definite sexual object leads the libidinal drives to revolve around some erotogenic zones, so oral, anal and phallic phases are experienced through these zones of the body (Selden et al., 2013: 157). Hence, getting acquainted with the language also introduces the subject's position.

Lacan thinks that the symbolic order of language is governed by the phallus, which is regarded as the main signifier of difference and he implies that women are not involved in society and human language completely. Even if they are involved in discourse, the feminine inside them disappears (Coyle et al., 1993: 519). Lacan asserted that the construction of the unconscious is similar to a language. He regarded the phallus as a substitution for what is missing. Women lack a phallus, and this leads to it being the chief signifier, inducing language to be composed of a chain of signifiers rather than a system in which a sign and what is signified are interrelated (Mitchell, 2000: xxvi). The focus on the structure of language enabled the use of psychoanalysis to read sexual difference in the texts, which include cultural terms. Through this approach, patriarchy and the father are no longer the central figures; thus, the Freud-Lacanian orientation was employed by feminists. Now, language, sexuality, and textuality are fundamental components to be focused on (xxvii).

The recent feminist theory is grounded in the deconstruction, a concept developed by Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Louis Althusser, and Jacques Derrida,

which has shaken the stereotypes (Kurzweil, 1995: 3-4). Lacan is mentioned with regard to the mirror stage and the role assigned to the symbolic father, reinforcing Freud's explanation. He carries out a critical analysis of the patriarchal system (Macey, 1988: 21). Alfred Adler agitated for recasting social conditions and the available order in order to provide feminism with an environment to thrive (Kurzweil, 1995: 15-16). Freud differentiated himself from Adler, as he presumed that women were to be automatically liberated (16). Navigating a triad of challenges, feminist thought seeks to reconsider the aspects associated with the feminine, reclaim and revalue them by subverting the male domination and gaining access to the areas governed by men, thus reformulating the dynamics within gendered spheres (Benjamin, 1986: 78).

Freud and Lacan formulated a valuable outline for gaining insight into the mechanics and premises of sexual desire. Freud conducted his analysis on the basis of the biological basis of sexuality, and central to his account of his theories, not the constructed masculinity or femininity, but the phallus appears to be the mere determinant of sexual desire and sexual difference were expounded on. Consequently, the phallus is deemed to be the symbolic axis of sexual behaviour by men and women, leading them to restrain their individual perspectives and desires and imprison them as internal fantasies. As for Lacan, he affiliates sexual behaviour to the desire of women and men for unity and relinquishes the rationalization based on merely the biological basics of sexuality. What lurks behind sexual behaviour is the fulfilment of fantasies not stemming from being female or male in accordance with essentialist definitions, but arising from the culturally produced assumptions. This sketches the outline and sheds light on the construction of a phallogentric patriarchal society, which inhibits female desire and female sexuality associatively, thereby contributing to the subjugation of women and positioning them as "other" (Wolff, 2007: 3).

1.1.3. Main Tenets of Psychoanalytic Feminism

A variety of concerns, including mainly why men remain firm in repressing women, what leads to the differences between men and women, have been addressed by psychoanalytic feminists as highlighted so far. Two primary divisions in this body of feminism function, one on a micro level and the other on a macro level. On the micro level, the differences between females and males have been focused on, specifically women's psychology in addition to the environment surrounding a child throughout

personality development, including childhood learning and formation, as well as parental relationships and early sexuality features. What is more, the construction of masculinity and femininity, besides affinities with personality and identity, are also included in the studies carried out within this scope. Inquiring into the construction of gender, the other branch of psychoanalytic feminism converges on examinations of both femininity and masculinity, the constant reinforcement that provides the patriarchal system with vigour to keep itself in existence. Whilst psychoanalytic techniques are utilized on the micro level, their application on the macro level is administered through examinations of societal institutions, including science and knowledge, the economy and employment, as well as arts and language. From the vantage point of psychoanalysis, the first subdivision stands for man's desideratum for an heir so that he is able to formulate an entity that outlasts him, which is nourished by fear of mortality, and concurrently provides a medium of domination not only over women but also his children. Furthermore, the need of man for permanency is fulfilled by virtue of the establishment of business, science, wealth, art, and architecture. Taken all together, how a patriarchal system subservient to men to oppress and subjugate women is constructed can be elaborated on the society built upon the aforementioned social systems and larger structures in alignment with the male domination. Apart from these divergent subdivisions, psychoanalytic feminism, as a joint aspect, analyzes the roles assigned to women as mother and daughter. A group of early theorists, including Jane Flax, Jessica Benjamin, Nancy Chodorow, and Dorothy Dinnerstein, treat mothering as the basis of the perpetual reproduction and formulation of the status quo and thus, an authority through which social conversion is likely to occur (Wolff, 2007: 1).

Psychoanalytic feminism is mainly divided into two, one of which is "Anglo-American object relations theory" and the other is "French Lacanian and post-Lacanian theory." Through the canon of the object relations, feminist theorists build their analysis on the "pre-Oedipal child/mother bond." On the other hand, supporters of Lacanian psychoanalysis, poststructuralist feminists disentangle gender terms on the basis of the symbolic order and language with its structuring power. When the approaches adopted by feminist and poststructuralist feminists are compared, they appear to differentiate greatly from each other theoretically. As for practical terms, they have common points of convergence. For instance, French and Anglo-American theories scrutinize the factors which influence women's desexualization and their missing agency within

modern culture, paternal and maternal power affinity during the infant development, the relations of the body, sexuality and the pleasures, and the reformulation of psychoanalytic concepts in political and social contexts (Elliott, 1994: 115).

Psychoanalytic feminism has been based on four theories, including “object relations feminism”, “contemporary object relations feminism”, “Lacanian feminism,” and “post-Lacanian feminism.” In terms of gender asymmetry and sexuality, “object relations feminism” claims that exclusive female mothering forms the basis of gender power whilst “contemporary object relations theory” highlights that gender asymmetry is structured on interpersonal relations, therefore, pre-Oedipal sexuality and intersubjectivity have been the key terms dealt with by object relations feminism and contemporary object relations feminism respectively. In accordance with their prominent areas, object relations feminism sheds light on core gender identity, and contemporary object relations feminism is concerned with the mother as subject. On the other hand, Lacanian feminism argues that the socio-symbolic order constitutes gender and sexuality, while post-Lacanian feminism focuses on subversion led by the feminine imaginary and how the patriarchal symbolic distorts pre-Oedipal sexuality. As for key terms, sexual division and patriarchal symbolic appear to be remarkable points for Lacanian feminism, yet, post-Lacanian feminism deals with female imaginary, semiotic, and dereliction (Elliott, 1994: 142).

Initially an analysis on the basis of psychoanalytic feminism is conducted through Freud’s techniques, and the experiences of the pre-Oedipal and Oedipal periods are scrutinized on the subject of gender and identity formation. Encompassing the interval from birth to the age of three, the period when children are acquainted with gender roles is paramount in terms of its impact on the rest of their lives. Freud theorized that the natural tendency of children to identify their gender through either father or mother, that is to say, aligning with the same sex. Some psychoanalytic feminists comply with this theory on the grounds that the Oedipal stage is pivotal for boys in the formation of gender, whilst for girls, it is the pre-Oedipal stage that is of key importance in the same aspect. Other psychoanalytic feminists, including Chodorow, carry out their analysis of gender acquisition on the basis of the pre-Oedipal stage. Chodorow resorts to the object relation theory of Freud and digs deeper into the relationship between mothers and children (Wolff, 2007: 1-2).

The symbolic attachment of children to their mothers during infancy can be viewed in terms of the dual identity a mother is enframed with: one facet is her role as a mother, and the other is that of a child raised by a mother. This dual identity furnishes people with insights into why a mother has a different relationship with her son than with her daughter, discernible through its reflections in many aspects. While rearing her daughter, the mother reflects on her own childhood and experiences pertaining to her own mother's attitude, which yields a deep union with her daughter. By the same token, the baby discovers her gender and identity thanks to her mother as well as representations of sameness. Hypothetically, this deep bond of a mother with her daughter leads to a lessening of individuality in girls, thus their ego becomes more flexible, and merely the attachment to another person confidentially provides the girl with a sense of completeness. As for son, the formation of identity can be expounded on a similar manner but different in the sense that not via representations of sameness but difference, the boy signifies "the other", as an outcome of his expectations, to the mother, which gives rise to individuality in boys in addition to a sense of completeness in contrast with the girls' insufficiency. The boys are required to detach from their mothers so that they can develop their masculinity. Unlike boys, the girls seek after and are obliged to maintain their attachment to their mothers in order to acquire their femininity. Since separation from the mother results in a dualistic bond between the mother and the son. As a result, femaleness and maleness are positioned in contradiction. In pursuit of the split from the mother, "abstract masculinity" is formulated. Upon this and all the reasons aforementioned concerning the formation of gender identity during childhood, both men and women cannot welcome any challenges contrasting with the early practices (Wolff, 2007: 2).

Children vary in the constitution of their sense of self according to their level of intimacy in relation to their mother. Girls and boys grow through a reinforcement of femininity and masculinity as polarized categories, distinct from each other. Femininity stands for a robust bond to the mother, whilst masculinity manifests itself detached from any parental tie. With regard to the relationship between parents and children, another theory expostulates that, indeed, it appears to be no more than a symbolic process. What lurks behind the construction of masculinity and femininity is castration, which arises as a consequence of a split accompanied by the desire targeting unity between genders; however, it is repressed. Consequently, masculinity symbolizes the likelihood of

gratification by contrast with femininity, which represents the impossibility of union (Wolff, 2007: 2).

Gender roles are built up in accordance with household practices parents are associated with, in addition to the way children are socialized, both consciously and subconsciously. Power imbalances arise between mother and father with regard to what they are required to do within the household and outside of it. This consolidates the desire of boy to dominate girls and likewise the willingness of girls to compromise and obey their agency. What is offered to come up with a solution to this problem is providing a breakthrough in gender construction. The practice of men seemingly overwhelming can be fulfilled by means of altering parenting practices stereotypically conducted in a family. Once men are actively involved in raising the children and allocate time for caregiving as women do, this will lead to a turning point in long-lasting structures of femininity and masculinity, which also determine a framework for the labour to be performed on the basis of sexual division. Afterwards, this will necessarily become grounds for the stable paradigms in gender construction to change, thereby decreasing the domination of men over women and thus women's subordination while increasing women's liberty and men's dependence on others. According to numerous theorists, another issue that holds the floor in relation to the developmental phases of a person's sexuality is that children appear to have the tendency to be bisexual in the pre-Oedipal phase. Upon the integration of parenting with the progress of masculinity and femininity of boys and girls respectively, children grow into heterosexuality. In this aspect, a girl is necessarily involved in a relationship with her father to build up her heterosexuality. Her broader aim is to attract the attention of her father so she deems her mother a rival. Her father's emotional as well as physical absence leads her to maintain an emotional attachment to her mother, who is always present. As regards boys, a romantic love or a sort of feeling nourished by the sexual drive for the mother flourishes during the transition of boys from the pre-Oedipal phase to the Oedipal one, partially because of her physical otherness. In the aftermath of the entrance into the Oedipal phase, boys are acquainted with the presumption that they are required to emotionally detach from their mothers since they cannot strive to take their mother's attention through involvement in a competition with their father (Wolff, 2007: 2).

The separation of boys from their mothers induces them to form a bond with males, thereby reducing the pain caused by the separation and its influence on their male identity. This draws on what they are familiar with from birth in relation to familial and sexual divisions. All these form the basis of the roles boys and girls adopt. Of great significance in terms of the consolidation of cultural stereotyping, boys are involved in a major collective group comprised of males and tend to subjugate women, whilst girls sustain their close relation to their mother, thus standing in the margins, submitting to the male domination acquiescently (Wolff, 2007: 2-3). Indeed, all these compound the tragedy women experience. In pursuance of constructed masculinity and femininity, what women and men seek for while getting engaged in romantic and the like relationships differentiate. Women long for intimacy, completeness, and intend to cease emptiness in the hope that men can provide them with completeness. On the other hand, men feel restless with intimacy; rather, they disapprove of it and condemn women because of their emotions, consolidating their dominance and distinction from women (3).

1.2. The Male Gaze

“Seeing comes before words” (Berger, 1972: 7) is apparently the impulse of this section and what we expect to precipitate in the end since “the male gaze” can be validated solely through the lenses of males either infinitesimally or not, yet in pursuit of enlightenment, the following parts are to encompass main premises concerning “the male gaze.”

1.2.1. Ideological and Formative Premises

Liberated from the border of academe and involved into mainstream approaches applied in fictional and art works as well as movie reviews, “the male gaze” has been popular since the 1960s (Bloom, 2017: 1). Inviting fresh insight as well as intellectual rigor, the recent approach to disrupt the difference between men and women attempts to dislodge its organizing premises (Rhode, 1990: 3). The male gaze can be considered as one of these, forming the basis of difference led by the gaze. At the core of feminist cultural analysis lie the themes grounded in the interplay of “gender” and “looking.”

How an image is perceived depends on “sight” or “looking,” necessarily, that is why the studies to be carried out on the impact of gender, along with the relations in society under the authority of patriarchy, are of great importance. In this aspect, the patterns of women’s operation have been focused on in particular. Women have been postulated to be “sexual spectacle” and positioned to be “on display,” serving the male gaze as denoted by the early feminist scholars as well. An inquiry into what leads women to stand for “sexual spectacle” and how the entire process produces women stigmatized with these misnomers necessitate elucidation (Walters, 1995: 50). In line with the primary arguments of feminism, whether the male gazes are influential on the construction of “inferiority of women” and objectification of them or not are prerequisite to gain insight into the reasons nourishing women’s oppression.

“The gaze” not reduced to any specific gender can be traced back in a range of sources. In the introductory part of J. Paul Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness* (1956), Hazel E. Barnes touches upon the concept of the gaze as rendered by Sartre: He elucidates “the gaze” with a reference to the Creator and his extrapolated entity on the basis of our sense of ourselves and indeed how we regard ourselves as “manipulators” taxed with “the instrumental complexes” available in the world. People are inclined to assign a center of reference or a kind of source for “objects” existing in the world, and God is deemed to be a type of “master artisan” as the real fabricator of all entities. Likewise, the term “an omniscient Deity” is embodied as “an absolute Third who would look at us without being in turn looked at.” Sartre suggests that this requirement arises inside and people’s sense of community is interrelated to an “Us-object” as they have the sense of themselves together with others, thus becoming “the object of the gaze of an Other” (Sartre, 1956: xxxi). In his elucidation, rather than adopting a literary mode, but through an existentialist discourse, Sartre addresses the requirement of “the gaze of an Other” and describes it through sacralization along with references to its sprouting inside.

In feminist discourse, the gaze is gendered and identified as “the male gaze” since the main concern of feminism is the dynamics that construct the basis of differentiation between males and females. The male gaze addresses the female and sees her as a thing, an item different from the others, with her characteristics of attractiveness serving to code her in accordance with the passive entity created to subjugate her to the male. In *Second Sex* (1988), Simone De Beauvoir indicates how

woman means “the sex” in the male’s mind. Reduced to “the sex” and essentially deemed to be a sexual being by the male, a woman’s entity is framed with reference to males, whereas man is “the subject” and “absolute,” contrary to a woman who is encoded as the “Other” (16). This aspect cannot be interpreted as fortuitous or mundane since women are posited secondary to men through priority of virility, which proves that women are oppressed, raising as a reverberating issue in each epoch.

A sense of validation is suggested to be another reason for women to submit to the male and act as an object. Through the lens of the male gaze, a woman appears to be an object and Mwedzi (2021) suggests that a woman is valued when she acts in accordance with “dominant male expectations” so she can be validated upon receiving male attention, which reduces her to a passive meaning bearer (3). In his groundbreaking work *Ways of Seeing* (1972), John Berger states that the way of seeing women has not changed in the sense that the depiction of women differentiates from men remarkably not owing to the discrepancy between femininity and masculinity but because of the assumption that “the ideal spectator” is male and in alignment with this assumption, the image of women is sketched “to flatter him” (64). As rendered in objectification theory, self-objectification is rooted in internalization of “the sexually objectifying male gaze” (Calogero, 2004: 17). Sounding contradictory, what lurks behind the objectification of women is elucidated as follows:

(...) Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object-and most particularly an object of vision: a sight (Berger, 1972: 47).

Feminism has been at odds with what women are stereotypically labeled with or how they are positioned. Weedon (1987) emphasizes that one of the main concerns of contemporary feminism is the objectification of women. Drawing on the “Women’s Liberation Movement,” which has been constantly in struggle for change, contemporary feminism has flourished out of a political layer indeed. Spanning a period from the 1960s up to now, the Women’s Liberation Movement has been concerned in a myriad of areas to restore women’s lives. In a patriarchal society with its elements constructed by the overarching power, namely, the male, the main goal of the campaigns aiming for liberation of women is to redefine what has been defined by the male and to develop a counter view against “objectification of women” and position of them as sexual objects to satisfy male consumption and any destructive violence (1). Treating women as

objects is likely to posit men as sexual offenders owing to their objectifying view of women, which may result in a negative impact on men in heterosexual relationships (Ramsey and Hoyt, 2014: 167), yet it pursues a long history. Even the European humanist spirit could not terminate the tradition's cultural terms, which is seemingly contradictory. The European oil painting of the nude is deemed to be the reflection of the European humanist spirit but in action, "the individualism of the artist," "the thinker," "the patron," "the owner" contradicts with "the woman" posited as "the object of their activities," "an abstraction" or "a thing" (Berger, 1972: 62). This is paradoxical in the sense that the manifestation of humanist spirit is in contradistinction to its fundamental principles.

How "the gaze" is defined conduces to how it is construed. When the gaze is described as a sort of looking with "an erotic purpose," men appear to be the owner of the gaze and "active erotic subjects" whereas women are treated as "passive erotic objects" (Kern, 1996: 10). Berger (1972) exemplifies how the body of a woman is arranged to depict itself to the onlooker, the man in order to tempt his sexuality. Women are claimed to exist in order to "feed an appetite," not as a subject but as an object (55). All these ineluctably contribute to the "inferiority" of women and, in a similar vein, to the construction of a woman's image characterizing a secondary entity or rank in value or position.

Seemingly, the male gaze is contributed to by multiple arguments. Upon the overarching power of heterosexuality institutionalized in the course of the regime, women are inexorably involved in building their perspective on themselves as "objects" and "prey," thus confirming that they are for the man. Contemporary patriarchal culture draws on a "panoptical male connoisseur" imbued into the consciousness of a great number of women, hence they submit to the male gaze and their control as well. As stated by Bartky (1990): "Woman lives her body as seen by another, by anonymous patriarchal other" (72). Likewise, Luce Irigaray argues that in line with the social order, women are no more than commodities, and deprived of the right to be involved in exchange and articulate anything, they function as products of merchandise. Lacking the characteristics of a "subject," indeed, what they submit to in the social order is organized and reproduced in accordance with how their sexualized bodies are consumed, leading them to be infrastructure in the social and cultural spheres. Women are framed as objects and their social inferiority is consolidated through the reality that

they are not granted “access to language” apart from the one grounded on the masculine system (Irigaray, 1985: 84-85). As a counterpoint to this, the stereotypes associated with women and conventional figures women have been identified with hitherto are challenged by contemporary women writers. Hence, the notion of “woman as silence, absence, gap, object of male desire and Other” is not welcomed by these writers. Furthermore, the usage of the word “woman” is avoided intentionally since it is deemed to be contaminated through misogynistic meanings and affirmed to be generated by “masculine language” (Schuster, 1993: xxviii). Despite the counterviews by some scholars, the domination of males in the language system results in the subordination of women and the compulsory depiction and approval of themselves as passive.

What forms the basis of the male gaze in ideological, psychological, and societal angles appears to be pertaining to the reasons which induce women’s oppression; therefore, the male gaze can be impeached as one of the conducive factors in inquiries about women’s oppression. Rooted in cinema, the evolution of this concept into a theory is elaborated on in the following section.

1.2.2. Theorization of the Male Gaze

Conceptualized initially in the revolutionary essay entitled “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” by Laura Mulvey, the male gaze was referred to in the analysis of the classical cinema on the basis of psychoanalytic and feminist tenets. Drawing on a binary opposition which juxtaposes the female and the male, positing them as passive and active objects, respectively, the theory hypothesizes that the man operates as “the owner of the gaze” whereas the woman stands for the image gazed at by the man (Schuckmann, 1998: 671). In the context of film studies, the camera can be characterized both as phallic and cannibalistic in the sense that it intermingles what is seen with who sees and, with its powerful “hallucinatory and anesthetized magic,” can have an impact on the viewer (Coykendall, 2000: 340). Succinctly, the camera replaces the eyes metaphorically and administers the process by which “the look” is constructed.

What appears paradoxical and worth discussing in terms of the feminist perspective is the attitude of women in getting ready to the male gaze. Styling of the female characters through their self-embellishment or in various ways to maximize their visual fascination on onlookers can be construed as their compliance with their

own objectification (Leet, 2016: 83). A female object gratifies the demand of “male scopophilic desire” and thus in accordance with the projection established by Laura Mulvey through elaboration on active male desire and passive female bodies, the female body exposed to the male gaze is necessarily objectified (76). It is arguable whether the female ratifies “objectification” or does not regard herself as pilloried. Moreover, as Coykendall (2000) notes, notwithstanding the ambivalent assumption, it requires further examination to determine whether the cinematic and sadistic gaze is necessarily male (336). Herein lies the problem, and the solution can provide us with the perspective to examine how the male gaze and women’s oppression act in solidarity.

Amidst the primary interrogation within the realm of early feminist film theory was the question of why women seemingly enjoyed “their own objectification” despite lacking any basis and although they were in disagreement with this depiction, which induced a dichotomy. Furthermore, regarded to be a commonplace and the reflection of the way how “women are sexually objectified” within the societal sphere, resistance against this is deemed to be senseless by some women (Ruti, 2018: 13). This may be elaborated on a multilayer ground or associated with an arbitrary principle, yet what requires a refutation primarily is women’s narcissism. Segal (2002) suggests that “surface phenomena” are fundamental for female narcissism, which implicitly aims to construct “elaborate surfaces” serving the male gaze through “clothing, make-up,” etc. Although it is ascribed to replacement of “lack” or substitution, or a cover of “the shame of castration” on the basis of Freudian aspect, “narcissistic vanity” of women cannot be elaborated on either “self-love” or “self-knowledge” and contrary to this, women’s narcissism is believed to operate as a way to prove that women are not comfortable with what they see in the mirror, thus constructing a “masculine epistemophilia” which rejects the “physical wholeness” of the sight as seen in the mirror, beyond the ostensible “imaginaries” (182).

What is constructed in the societal discourse seems influential on the objectification of women. Nourished by the societal codes, women’s minds have been imbued with the perspective that they are “enticing objects” attractive to male desire (Ruti, 2018: 36). All robust critical aspects considered in the scrutiny of visual materials in terms of “the male gaze” by feminists refer to specific motifs including “objectification, voyeurism, fetishism, scopophilia” as well as “the bearer of male lack” and “woman as the object of male pleasure.” In alignment with all these characteristics,

masculine vision is identified with being “phallogentric, patriarchal and ideological,” and any terms exclusive are associated with “female spectatorship” (Snow, 1989: 30). Notwithstanding the function of demystifying any motifs grounded on patriarchy, ideology or pornography, the male gaze theory is also likely to hinder what is included in the gaze challenging these terms. Whatever fugitive within vision resisting or eluding the ideology can be incorporated into the ideological apparatus and turn into a supplementary angle in contradiction. Likewise, the paternal superego is nourished by the reduction of “masculine vision” to any locutions pertaining to “power, control, violence” and necessarily results in the reinforcement and maintenance of the father’s law in vision (31). Consequently, male-centrism has reverberated for ages as foregrounded in the following excerpt:

(...) considerations of both the literal and the metaphorical gaze are inseparably connected to an interest in differential gender roles. In the standard formulation: men look, women are looked at. Not just this, but if the owner of the gaze has power, then this gendered relation to the gaze is both the product of patriarchy (the power exercised by men over women) and also a way of reinforcing male dominance (Hawthorn, 2006: 513).

Psychoanalysis overarches numerous realms in various forms. Feminist film theory can be divided into two the first of which spanned ten years from the 1970s to the 1980s and contributed to itself drawing on the terminology of post structuralism and psychoanalysis to generate new vocabulary to scrutinize the subjects concerning how femininity and masculinity have been socially constructed along with a range of issues including the male gaze, “the masquerade of femininity,” female spectatorship and so on (Ruti, 2018: 13). Psychoanalysis is thought to elucidate the fundamental operation of heteropatriarchy. The employment of cinematographic techniques and conventions is used in order to frame the perfect woman in a seductive manner and to present this “seductive image” to the male gaze (36). As for the role of psychoanalysis in dismantling formations and mechanisms in traditional narrative cinema, Mulvey (1972) alleges that traditional narrative film and psychoanalysis can be related since “the scopophilic instinct” and “ego libido” operate as “formations” and “mechanisms” that the traditional narrative cinema has been built upon. Considering the structure of representation in line with the ideological premises the patriarchal order has adopted, what has been argued by Mulvey is that woman signifying “castration” is deemed to result in either “voyeuristic mechanisms” or “fetishistic mechanisms” in order to “circumvent her threat,” thus framing “a raw material” for the male gazes (815).

Viewing a person as a seductive object can be traced back to the early works of Sigmund Freud. Prior to the objectification of another body, infantile sexual pleasures obtain various sources of pleasure sensations, the primary of which is “auto-excitation.” The initial satisfaction is fulfilled by the infantile on its own body in the first stage of its sexual life (Freud, 2020: 68). Following this phase of “auto-eroticism,” as can be exemplified in “thumb-sucking” to satisfy erogenous zones or likewise, “passionate sucking,” sexual pleasure seeks another object. Apart from auto-erotic manifestations, “libido” drawing on sexual pleasure grounded on the impulse-components posits another person as its object. As Freud (2020) states: “These impulses appear in opposed pairs, as active and passive” (69). Although Freud alleges that the impact of the discrepancy between the sexes is not great (70), this can be construed as the basis of objectification and the position of women as a passive entity, whereas men are posited as active.

Sexual pleasures manifest in various ways. One of the ways for sexual gratification through objectifying the other is “taking of nourishment,” and the breast of the mother is “a sexual object” for the infant, along with its own body. The regular continuance of the sexual impulse operates autoerotically, and the original relation with the mother as the sexual object resumes after subduing the latency period (Freud, 2017: 90). From this point of view, “objectifying women” can be grounded on the mother-child bond during the very start of infancy. In addition to the key concepts of Freudian psychoanalysis, as one of the landmarks within the realm, Lacan has contributed to cultural studies with his key concepts, which have been utilized in numerous studies. As for film studies, certain concepts pertaining to “the male gaze” and “visualization” have been drawn upon Lacan’s theories (Lewis, 2002: 179).

Lacan describes “the object” as follows:

The *objet a* is something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself off as organ. This serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say, of the phallus, not as such, but in so far as it is lacking. It must, therefore, be an object that is, firstly separable and, secondly, that has some relation to the lack (Lacan, 1981: 103).

The way looking constructed through in narrative film is controversial in itself as can be hinged on that “the female image” standing for “a castration threat” permanently exposes “the unity of the diegesis” to danger and appear to be “an intrusive, stable, one-dimensional fetish” within the world of illusion, which

subordinate aforementioned looks notwithstanding their existence in time and space to the neurotic desideratum of the male ego (Mulvey, 1973: 816).

1.2.3. Main Tenets of the Male Gaze Theory

“Gaze theory” has been applied in various studies across a wide range of realms, including psychoanalysis, feminism, and postcolonialism (Grumberg, 2011: 161). Ranging from feminism to psychoanalysis, from film to literature, from Sartre to Lacan, each work examined through theories of the gaze has revolved around “the gaze” regarded as “one-sided” and subordinating “other” besides objectifying the one exposed to the gaze (168). “The gaze,” despite characterizing a distorting lens with its phallocentricism, is what makes feminine presence visible, and it is presented as if it were the only one, and no other choice exists. Feminism sheds light on this dark side by raising awareness of other lenses. The phallogentric gaze maintains framing the women’s figures as disfigured. This dates back to the past as can be exemplified through the male pseudonyms used by women writers including the Brontë sisters, George Sand and George Eliot owing to the disfigurement of the feminine voice (Schehr, 1997: 83). Through male pseudonyms, they tried to disguise their gender and make use of the power and priority granted to masculinity.

“The gaze,” deemed to be one-sided and view the object accordingly, has been suggested to vary on the basis of the “cinema-based sight.” Mulvey (1973) proffers that “the voyeuristic-scopophilic look” can be evaluated in multivalent course and beyond its role in traditional filmic pleasure, can be categorized according to the cinema-based sight. The first of these is the look that can be identified with the camera as the recorder of the “pro-filmic event,” the second sort is that of the audience as the watcher of the “final product” and the last is the look of the characters that can be expressed as their look at each other during “the screen illusion” (815-816). Skomp (2003) has adapted the three facets of the male gaze categorized by Laura Mulvey into the literature: The first of these is the author’s gaze, the second one is men’s gazes, and the third one is “the male gaze spectatorship” that can be adapted into the literature as a reader-response scrutiny of the texts. The primary impulse in the male gaze theory lies in that “the gaze” conduces to framing women as objectified and eroticized objects. The male gaze theory

also suggests that gender is influential in shaping the gaze, which differentiates invariably in accordance with the male and female perspectives (137).

In the course of gender studies, how women are looked at by men has appeared to be a widespread topic, particularly concerned with and the most prevalent form of objectification (O'Neill, 2002: 98). The cinema is likely to present the variability of the look through changing the emphasis of it since it revolves around "the place" and the variety of "the look" accordingly. What differentiates cinema from any shows, theatre, etc. is its voyeuristic potential that can provide the perspective to notice that "a woman is to be looked at into spectacle itself" rather than bringing her "to-be-looked-at-ness" (Mulvey, 1973: 815). Pertaining to the construction of women in the masculinist discourse or through masculinist lenses, Schehr (1997) highlights how the male gaze determines the presence of women:

(...) it is the gaze, the defining mode of operation of masculinist discourse, that constructs the "woman" as textual object, prevents the woman from being herself-from "being," from "Being," from having a "self" separate from or prior to the sociovisual construct imposed by the male gaze and its/his discourse (83).

The entity of woman, excluding her "self," is an object as noted in the masculinist discourse built on the male gaze as highlighted above.

The representation of gender appears in two layers that lack commensurateness: Masculine power is highlighted through constant representation of it, whereas women are represented in terms of "feminine construction" as well as "feminine beauty." Both feminine beauty and feminine construction are intermingled in the sense that the dominance of a phallogentric image is implemented for representation. The construction of feminine beauty is grounded on the masculine. Feminism has brought "the gender in literature" into prominence with a particular focus on its functions through various profiles of the feminine figures indeed disfigured by the overarching masculine discourse (Schehr, 1997: 82). Feminists have criticized that the contents of visuals are sexist, therefore, they are open to reprehend morally (Lopes, 2005: 181), thus contending that, from psychoanalytic perspective, visuals can be examined in order to find out whether they lead to women's oppression or depiction of the women as inferior to male.

In her groundbreaking study, Mulvey (1973) articulates the impact of the sexual imbalance on "looking" and posits males and females in line with this imbalance:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is stylized accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role, women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness (808).

Amidst the norms established in the film industry, the male gaze has been deemed to nourish cultural and societal aspects, increasing hostility to women. Rather than epitomising visual erotic appeal, women can be viewed from manifold aspects such as their agency and how they contribute to the narrative, thus subverting the norm of the male gaze (Mwedzi, 2021: 2). Sprouting from Laura Mulvey's essay concerning visibility and narration in the cinema, the male gaze theory has not been confined to the film studies but also employed in literature and visual arts. Apart from the portrayal of women in visual arts, the male gaze theory in literature provides writers with a critical perspective on women's representations along with their treatment. Furthermore, they can subvert the patriarchal view of women on a conventional basis regarding women as appealing products attractive to the heterosexual male viewer (Bica and Martin, 2019). How a woman is portrayed is fundamental to how they are viewed. Female empowerment can be consolidated through films or the elements of misogyny can be nourished. Female characters can be involved in the scrutiny from the feminist perspective regarding nudity as the primary element in the film. Women's representations in the visual narrative can present them as objects aiming for desire satisfaction and providing pleasure for the male gaze. Once the viewers are deemed to be male, then women are necessarily objectified and presented as sexual objects (Acar, 2023: 182). In line with this, women are positioned so as to serve the male gaze almost in every aspect of life, even in irrelevant contexts, thus reinforcing the oppression imposed upon them. A radical break from this perspective can deconstruct all the stereotypes objectifying women that sustain patriarchal power structures and fuel their subjugation.

1.3. Disavowal of Oppression: Defense Mechanisms

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles
And by opposing end them ? . . .

—Shakespeare, *Hamlet* (Act III, Scene 1)

Defence can be described as “the earliest representative of the dynamic standpoint in psychoanalytical theory.” It was first used in Freud’s study entitled *The Defence Neuro-Psychoses* in 1894 and then in his subsequent works to refer to “the ego’s struggle against painful or unendurable ideas or affects” (Freud, 1942: 45). Freud’s early formulation of defense mechanisms posited them as psychological counterforces that function to regulate or inhibit the expression triggered by impulses and instinctual drives, primarily aiming to shield the individual from psychological influences like anxiety that is likely to arise upon awareness of unacceptable internal content. This framework was subsequently broadened to fulfill the management of external sources of stress along with internal conflicts (Cramer, 2006: 7). With the arousal of advances in biological science in the nineteenth century, Freud’s elucidation concerning defense mechanisms was taken into consideration (Vaillant, 1993: 13). Aftermath of the introduction of the notion of defence, Sigmund Freud ushered the perception that human mind is likely to deceive or delude itself (Cramer, 1991: 3). Defenses appear to be inevitable, worldwide and adaptive means of experiencing the world. Initially, Freud inaugurated observing defenses and named them. Keen on military metaphors, he made analogies on the basis of the comparison between the psychological operations people employ while experiencing the world and army tactical maneuvers to achieve their aims. In order to avoid reexperiencing any unbearable emotions and attitudes, people employ defenses (McWilliams, 2011: 100).

The entire life of human beings is essentially bipolar since controversial feelings such as pleasure and unpleasure, joys and sorrows, or pain and grief are juxtaposed in various contexts, so the pendulum swings constantly between two different poles of sentiments. When the fundamental facts are taken into account, human beings have to deal with a real world from the early phases of life onwards and have partial supremacy over the world; they are required to reconcile to conditions of the world through miscellaneous modes, including activity, passivity, constructiveness, submissiveness, resistance, and so on. One of the inextinguishable characteristics of human nature is to

aspire and find a way to avoid the sorrow and access the pleasure (Drever, 1945: 67-68) whereby they can survive.

The phenomena called “defenses” function in benign ways. They are initially creative and sound adaptations and maintain operating adaptively in every walk of life. When a defense is employed, a person is either striving unconsciously to avoid or manage some robust and threatening feelings, mostly the ones including anxiety, devastating grief, shame, envy, and all disruptive emotional experiences, and to achieve the maintenance of self-esteem. Self psychologists have underlined that defenses function in maintaining “a strong, consistent, and positively valued self” (McWilliams, 2011: 101). The reactions to sorrows and pains are practised through defence mechanisms. People recourse to the defence mechanism against the disagreeableness, either consciously and unconsciously, as a consequence of which the disagreeableness is hindered from peneatreting into people’s consciousness and instead, is compensated for via a substitute enabling them to undergo an agreeable experience (Drever, 1945: 68). Defenses can operate not only in the cases of scary reality but also when any incongruous desires, relationships and taboos are triggered instinctly. Akin to the function of the immune system to the body, the defense mechanism works for the mind and temporarily clouds the reality via feelings, behaviours, and thoughts (Vaillant, 1993: 10-11). Defenses are of great importance to the well-being of people as their immune mechanisms are so human creativity attempts to transmute pain somehow, thus restoring the self (27).

Mechanisms of defence cannot be categorized into a common, global group or list, and accordingly, textbooks vary in sorting defence mechanisms. However, bearing in the mind that those are listed invariably in plenty of standard sources as parallel to the variety of defence mechanisms mostly accepted in the literature and introduced by remarkable figures including Anna Freud (1946) along with Frazier and Carr (1964) in addition to Freedman and Kaplan (1967), Brenner (1973) and Kolb (1973). These defence mechanisms consist of “repression, conversion, inhibition, displacement, rationalization, reaction formation, undoing, isolation of affect, regression, denial, projection, turning against the self and dissociation” (White and Gilliland, 1975: 35). Apart from these mechanisms, three other mechanisms of defence including “identification, sublimation as well as compensation” are employed as psychological defences yet differentiate from others since they also function as a part of normal

development besides “non conflictual psychological” mode (35-36). In the theoretical works of psychoanalysis, “repression, isolation, regression, reaction-formation, projection, introjection, undoing, turning against the self and reversal” have been mentioned, and a tenth method, “sublimation” or “displacement of instinctual aims,” can be included among the methods employed by ego (Freud, 1942: 47).

Reaction formation manifests as drives and goals that are more appropriate and tolerable in terms of personal and social aspects, and as the antithesis of the latent ones hidden inside. Through this dynamism, inappropriate or unbearable thoughts can be automatically hindered from the involvement into consciousness thanks to the development of antagonistic attitudes and adverse behaviour (Laughlin, 1979: 280). Displacement is another unconscious way by means of which the individual is involved in an effortless process of averting awareness of one aspect of an emotional conflict or an internal threat. Through displacement, the feelings associated with the emotional conflict are transferred to another commodity or object (89-90). Repression originates from motivated ignoring or forgetting. Any external circumstances or internal dispositions that are threatening and confounding enough can be intentionally conveyed into unconsciousness. Not only is a total experience involved, but also the influence of an experience, or the wishes or fantasies of a person related to that experience, can be incorporated into the process of repression. Apart from cases that bring up difficulty in remembering and paying attention, this defense operates when the potential of an emotion, idea, or perception to upset leads to inaccessibility consciously (McWilliams, 2011: 127). Regression occurs as a reversion to thoughts, behaviours, or habits dating back to old times. To be categorized as a defense mechanism, the process must be unconscious (130). Compared to other operations of defense mechanisms, regression seems to be less complicated and can be observed in every stage of emotional and social development, even if not ongoing in a straight line, and appears to be less dramatic as people get older, but never perishes entirely (129-130).

Isolation of affect operates through isolating feelings to cope with any anxieties or any cases that are painful to the mind. The affective side of an idea or an experience can be differentiated or excluded from the cognitive dimension of it (McWilliams, 2011: 131). Considered a subcategory of dissociation by most of the contemporary analysts, the isolation of affect was also regarded as the most primitive type among those categorized as “intellectual defenses” and it is likewise the primary unit of

psychological operations, including rationalization, intellectualization, and moralization. As a high-order version, intellectualization is the “isolation of affect from intellect.” A person who employs isolation as usual typically indicates that they have no feelings, whereas the one who employs intellectualization mentions feelings strikingly to the listener as if they are emotionless (132). As isolation copes with traumatic overstimulation, ordinary emotional overload is endured through intellectualization. This indicates the strength of a person to be able to produce rational thoughts. Once more, emotional acknowledgement processes the affective aspects of the circumstances, allowing the defense to function persuasively (133).

Rationalization occurs when something desirable is not obtained, and the person concludes that the thing is not very desirable. Conversely, when something negative occurs, people can think it is not so negative after all. The intelligence or creativity level of a person provides them with a higher probability of being a good rationalizer. People try to base their activities on sound reasons and are not satisfied merely with doing something because it is just good (McWilliams, 2011: 133). Moralization is akin to rationalization. Through rationalization, a person unconsciously tries to come up with a cognitively admissible basis for his/her direction, whereas when moralizing, a person tries to find ways to feel and to regard it to be his/her duty to maintain that course. Rationalization converts what is desired into admissible language, whereas moralization confines what is desired to morally obligatory (135).

To sum up, the ego conducts defensive operations through the mental mechanisms, which can also be named as ego defenses. The psyche evolves ego defenses automatically to eschew psychic discomfort and pain through the resolution of emotional conflicts. It is an automatic process as aforementioned and without any conscious effort, the ego defenses of a person occurs in the psyche (Laughin, 1979: 4). Ego defenses do not indicate a psycho-pathologic condition and depending on how they are used, to what extent they are efficacious psychologically and whether their contribution is destructive or constructive, they can be either pathologic or normal (5). Ego defense, a mental dynamic or mechanism, is a specific defensive process that operates beyond and outside of conscious awareness. In the pursuit of relief from tension, conflict, and anxiety, emotionally destructive, ego defense is unconsciously and automatically employed. A dynamism is triggered by the ego in order to handle an otherwise consciously unendurable situation (6). Ego defenses are mostly in synergistic

operation and overlap with another one (8). They take the role of a security guard and do their best to defend the self.



2. SEMIOTIC CHORA OVER THE SYMBOLIC ORDER IN ELIZABETH BOWEN'S *THE HEAT OF THE DAY*

In her seminal work *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Hélène Cixous (1976) advocates for women's writing and emphasizes that it is a must for women to bring themselves into the text as has been the case in history and the world, and write about their "self" as an imperative act (875). Cixous identifies women as engaged in the inevitable struggle to survive against the conventional man. She points out that women have been kept in the dark as a consequence of strict repression exacerbated for ages (Leitch, 2010: 1942-1943). Why women have been secondary to men and why they are required to struggle against this is fully related to male-centred perception and structure prevalent from the very beginning of history. In "Lecture XXXIII" on "The Psychology of Women," Freud, referring to women, articulates that the comparison made between the sexes was unfavourable to their (women's) sex and women were suspicious of "deep-rooted prejudices maintained by men against the feminine" leading bias to occur (in *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis*, 1933: 159).

One of the prominent psychoanalytic feminists, Luce Irigaray (1992) critiques the position of the woman as the other in her work *Speculum of the Other Woman* and highlights that women are not involved in any contexts so deprived of generating a discourse regarding the logograph and the riddle they represent for men, thus becoming "the object, the stake, the target of a masculine discourse" that disregards them (13). As a counterview, a critique of phallogocentrism requires challenging and cracking down on dominant discourse in a patriarchal society, which is renowned for positing women as objects and exposing them to derogatory language. However, even critique can be confined by the border of what has been encoded into the psyche, early childhood experiences, and recurring societal practices, once the tenets of psychoanalytic feminism are taken into account. Revolving around Stella Rodney, the female protagonist, Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* (1948) embodies how female autonomy is incomplete without male validation and how a woman can challenge this. Inspired by her own life and authoring her "self," Bowen portrays Stella as a multilayered figure to be scrutinized with regard to the female subject, desire, repression, internalized patriarchy, and maternal symbolism, all of which can be interrelated to the psyche. As a female identity, how Stella withstands the patriarchy can be deemed as an example of

semiotic chora over the symbolic order, which is groundbreaking in terms of prioritizing the articulation of one's own self while in limbo on self and male-centred society (other). Self-companionable, Stella appears to be resilient, and moreover, at odds with the norms of patriarchal structure, she does not give up, even when shaken.

"Semiotic chora," coined by Julia Kristeva, symbolizes the pure human being, unaware of the symbolic order, and the maternal body is the only entity with which an individual manages drives and impulses during the pre-linguistic period. Merely a being of raw emotion and drives, a child has no knowledge of the constructed world and recognizes neither societal norms nor the language of the symbolic order. As elucidated by Cuddon (1999), this language represents a mode of expression that precedes the Oedipal stage as well as structured language, featuring fundamentally semiotic and related to the chora, contrasting the symbolic order of language associated with male-dominated discourse and patriarchal structures within Kristeva's framework (249). Based on this, Stella's struggle to maintain her individuality against the symbolic order, disregarding the external voices, whereas she pretends to consider them, embodies a semiotic chora over the symbolic order in Bowen's novel. Akin to a baby unacquainted with the outside world and its impositions, Stella prioritizes her "self," but different from a baby of the pre-linguistic period, she knows the symbolic order and is familiar with its requirements. Yet, since her "self (the semiotic chora)" outweighs the other (the symbolic order), she portrays a robust femininity in a male-centred world, justifying that a person can manage to pursue a pure version of "self" even when overwhelmed by the patriarchy.

As the author portraying this character and not reducible merely to the literary realm but also pivotal in history and culture, Bowen stands for one of the primary figures of modernist thought and innovation in Britain; that is why, to this aspect may be attributed the critical attention given to her work (Cusick, 2006: 39). Accordingly, she is supposed to exemplify a woman who knocks out the conventional man to survive, as highlighted by Leitch (2010). As aforementioned, Cixous offers a powerful stance for women, wishing them to maintain their identity through speech by challenging the phallic domination, and underlines that women will empower women in a position different from the one decided and reserved by the symbolic, thereby exceeding the "silence" prescribed beforehand. They should object to submitting to a domain, either a margin or the harem (Leitch, 2010: 1947). Female life experiences are peculiar to

women; hence, a woman's life can be reflected through a woman's perspective, necessarily different from the way it is narrated by a man, as female lenses are radically different per their emotional and conceptual perception of life (Selden et al., 2005: 121). In this sense, Elizabeth Bowen's narrative as a female writer formulates a reference point for comparing the selected novels within this study, making it perceptible how female and male lenses differ or to what extent they share a common line of vision.

Set in World War II, *The Heat of the Day* (1948) exemplifies the perspective of a solitary female attempting to navigate life in wartime London as a widow with a son. The portrait of a woman under the threat of being in a love affair with Robert, alleged to be a double agent, is conveyed through her resistant attitude against everything surrounding her. As an English woman who confronts the stereotypes of society, the tenets of which require meeting the expectations and prescriptions, Stella illustrates that a woman, regardless of the country or culture, is subject to concerns that can extend to the universal zone. In line with the arguments of psychoanalytic feminism, Stella is to be considered in the context of Western culture, beyond her female identity, since repetitive societal practices that form the psychic codes are also fundamental to psychoanalytic feminism.

Prior to the scrutiny of the female protagonist within the framework of psychoanalytic feminism, it is necessary to present some information interesting to the reader about the author and the novel. Next, regarding the aim of this study, the portrait of femininity is to be examined in relation to its familial, societal, and individual aspects. Furthermore, through the male gaze theory, the author's portrait of the characters and the characters' view of each other is to be analyzed to determine their contribution to women's oppression. Lastly, how Stella makes her own choices and employs defense mechanisms, considering her "self," at least attempting to give an ear to her own voice, is to be elucidated.

2.1. Elizabeth Bowen in Context

Holding the floor in multifaceted aspects ranging from the roles of air-raid warden, celebrity-artist, besides a lover and a wife, to fulfilment of investigation for the Ministry of Information and, further to this, as to literary concern, the writer of great English stories and the novelist of World War II, Elizabeth Bowen stands for a woman

not of a local settlement but the world (Lassner, 1990: 1). She has been figured as “the modernist Bowen,” the “British wartime author,” “the postmodernist Bowen” in literary and cultural criticism (Laird, 2009: 193). The Second World War led to radical shifts not only in English culture but also in the story of English literature, ending modernism and starting a new period commonly called the post-war (Brannigan, 2008: 618), perhaps that is why she is figured as the modernist and postmodernist simultaneously.

She has gained increasing popularity as one of the best-loved and most remarkable British women novelists who flourished before the second half of the twentieth century (Glendinning and Robertson, 2008: 1). Amidst the writers who address themes of universal cruciality rather than national significance, Elizabeth Bowen occupies a great position in the front line. Akin to Oscar Wilde and Samuel Beckett, Bowen cannot be confined to a nationality or described as a citizen of it, yet a world inhabitant dealing with the domain inclusive of problems of all humankind (Lonergan, 2008: 62-63). In pursuit of this, she problematizes the issues and, through contextual pertinence, elucidates the aspects that have received little or no attention.

In relation to gender, major terms including mothering, power, sexuality, and the constitution of selfhood, either successful or not, are interrelated in Bowen’s writing. Bowen refers to gender evidently and she frames the characters representing ambiguous qualities attributed to “masculinity” or “femininity” in line with the common social signals and, contrary to their gender appurtenances, cross-gendering qualities predominating emotional life that can appear to be “womanishness” of a male character or a “boyish” or “boylike” air of female ones (Coughlan, 1997: 105). Based on this approach she adopted, Bowen appears to go beyond the stereotypical construction bound up with gender and disregard any confinements concerning sex. As denoted by Lassner (1990), blending her imagination with her gift for recognizing and examining the constraints built on the political and social codes, Bowen devised plots through which she could reverse convention and devise a “new woman” with an unusual aura (1-2). Her life of literary achievement, lasting for almost fifty years till her death in 1973, witnessed the dilemma in her work since the characters, who are in favour of or against the change, are exposed to the lives shaped by the firm pressure put either by family or social tradition on them (2). As an idiosyncratic English novelist in terms of fusing Anglo-Irish literature and European modernism, she thematizes some personal, emotional concerns which epitomise English middle-classes (Lee, 1981: 11). Woven

into her short stories and novels, the quintessential depiction of the issues she is concerned about reflects her perspective and position as a woman writer. She problematizes the issues faced by solitary women in her works. For instance, in *The Last September* (1960), she tells the story of an orphan called Lois Farquar and the affectively rich story of her potential marriage to a British soldier (Stasi, 2017: 715). Through her characters, Bowen voices a critique of the lack of alternatives for girls outside marriage, without which they cannot build a future for themselves (1960: 239). Marriage is deemed to be a way for asserting agency, as can be inferred from the lines included in *The House in Paris*: "...that is partly why women marry-to keep up the fiction of being the hub of things" (Bowen, 1959: 77). Likewise, how women idealise men and tend to take care of them is evident in *The Death of the Heart*: "...she was a woman who thought all men are great boys at heart, and she took every care to keep him one..." (Bowen, 1938: 21). As illustrated through these examples, almost all her works bear the traces of women's lens and position in male-centred societies.

Women's exposure to male power, their social marginalization, and the strategies they utilized to submit to or deconstruct assigned identities are voiced by early twentieth-century women writers, who broke new ground. Simultaneously, they maintained foregrounding the sensibilities of female characters. The conflict between independence and social convention, as well as subordination and revolt, was accentuated in the work of writers such as Woolf, Mansfield, and Bowen (Lonergan, 2008: 111). Bowen gave prominence to her writings and once articulated that she allocated a great amount of time: "Chiefly of course my life has been lived round the edges of working at the novel. I'm now about half way through the last chapter. I am working it about eight hours a day" (Glendinning and Robertson, 2008: 112). As for the setting, in pursuit of some writers, including George Eliot, Jane Austen, E. M. Forster, and Henry James, Bowen delves into the periods embracing pre-war, wartime, and post-war, both in England and Ireland. She also sparkles as a modern writer by scrutinizing betrayal, unease, and dislocation (Lee, 1981: 12). Rather than the difficulty expected to appear on concentration during war years, the comparative productivity of Bowen can be traced in her works published on a regular basis from 1939 to 1945, during which she was also actively engaged with life both personally and politically (Kuster, 2014: 245-246). Bowen penned her best short stories and novels during the war time so that she attempted to counteract and avoid the violence led by the war surrounding her life (Parr,

2015: 5). “War” obviously induced her to generate more and nourished her literary power, as also exemplified through *The Heat of the Day* (1948).

Bowen’s characters seek an attempt to avoid their languorous fates, hence they tend to run away, disappear, hide, or self-blink in their dull lives, implying that when modern life is incompetent in filling the hole in their hearts, an alternative way to a supernatural reality or a retreat from the unsatisfying world can do instead. However, despite their attempts, her characters are besieged by spider webs and cannot manage to change the situation that domineers over them, so their self-actualization is hindered, regardless of their effort to cope with their existential vacuousness (Holland, 2020: 3). In this sense, the female characters exemplify a vicious circle women have been trapped in, seemingly no exception to any era. In the introduction to *Bowen’s Court and Seven Winters-Memories of a Dublin Childhood* (1984), Hermione Lee specifies that regardless of the fictional setting, Bowen’s works create characters including wards, orphans, spies, homeless lovers, lonely innocents, ghosts, criminals, disinherited gadabouts, and through these characters, she thematizes the moral interrelationship they have. The gospel truth about her is that she bears the marks of Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, Henry James, E. M. Forster, and Gustave Flaubert in her fictions. Involved in the Country Cork Protestant gentry, she was a London literary symbol preoccupied with wartime London and the English middle classes around which she revolves in her works (Bowen, 1984: x). As such, she constructs her fiction as an acknowledgement of that period. For instance, she creates the image of ghosts in her fiction, and through their ambiguous presence, she reflects the psychic stress that the civilians experience during wartime (Murphy, 2019: 17). War has such a great influence on daily life then that Bowen (1948) refers to this situation in *The Heat of the Day* through an analogy and states that people of wartime “idolise day and summer” whereas “night and autumn” are regarded as enemies (3-4). Having much in common with Virginia Woolf regarding sensibility and perception, Elizabeth Bowen is claimed to have a more incisive but less confined sensibility and perception that the boundary of the world cannot confine. Amidst her most popular and widely read novels, *The Heat of the Day* (1948) stands out as one of the best, thanks to its universal appeal. Through the characters she portrays in her works, she suggests “the fantasies, manipulations and fears” on which social behaviour is constructed (Glendinning, 1977: 2), and so it is with *HD*.

Depicting a departure from innocence and experience, which she usually thematizes in her previous works, in *The Heat of the Day* (1948), Bowen recounts a love story set in the uncertainty looming over wartime in Nazi-besieged London. Apparently an advance in style, vision, and structure, she employs a refined technique and characterizes subjects who, in peacetime, lacked their identities, now replaced by obsessions, delusions, and fantasies. They manage to remain alive like a phantom in all gloomy suspense (Hanna, 1961: 304-305). Some people are observed to be stuck in “some unhearing obsession.” Likewise, loneliness either physically and psychologically is described to contribute to the pessimistic mood led by the war explicitly since people enjoying the time accompanied by the performance of the Viennese orchestra seem to experience the increasing level of stoicism and be grateful for being amidst the other people rather than walking about alone (Bowen, 1948: 5). Actually, Bowen divulges an uncanny blurring of what forms boundaries and unfamiliar overlapping between people and space, self and other, private and public, inside and outside, along with familiar and unfamiliar. The narrative strategies employed in response to the war, which deeply influenced Bowen, can be woven throughout Bowen’s fiction (Zimmerman, 2015: 43-44). One of the works that confirmed and consolidated the centrality of Elizabeth Bowen in English literary culture is *The Heat of the Day* (1948), with its great success like *The House in Paris* (1935) and *The Death of the Heart* (1938). This success was partially because of the gradual increase of Bowen’s confidence in her style of the modernist novel and her employment of various narrative forms, especially in *HD* (Walshe, 2009: 95). In the literary sense, *HD* elucidates a generic dissolution and scrutinises the grounds of characterization, either analyses or alters them. Portraying ghost, spy, and love story all together (Bennet and Royle, 1995: 84-85), in *HD*, Bowen opens up a space that the theories of psychoanalytic feminists can help shed light on.

Seemingly inspired by her own life, Bowen formulates the novel’s outline. Given that the novel is built on the author’s biography, prior to the scrutiny of the female protagonist in terms of different variables of psychoanalytic feminism along with the male gaze theory, addressing the sources in the literature indicating that the author was inspired by her own life while constructing the story will contribute to figuring out the way Bowen approaches the women’s issues. Charles Ritchie was the person she loved most. She was a successful author and had been married for eighteen years when she met this young Canadian diplomat during wartime. As for Charles Ritchie, he was an

unmarried man and seven years younger than Elizabeth, and he was in such a flattering relationship with Elizabeth that he could end it without a second thought. On the other hand, Elizabeth Bowen was in love so much that she regarded it as indispensable from the beginning and was fueled by this love, which increased her creativity. They had been in a relationship, emotionally intense and no more than one week under the same roof, which lasted for twenty-eight years until the death of Elizabeth (Glendinning and Robertson, 2008: 1-2). Authors' own experiences inspire them to pen stories, poems, and novels, portraying characters in accordance with their own experiences, as can be explored in *HD*. *The Heat of the Day* was published for the first time in 1948, ten years after Bowen's former novel, *The Death of the Heart* (1938). These war years between the publications of the novels led Bowen to relieve her traumatic experiences such as "loss, separation, and terror" and her childhood apprehension that everything lacks safety (Kenney, 1975: 65-66). Yet, what ignited her to write *The Heat of the Day* (1948) is her love, that is why, the novel is dedicated to Charles Ritchie, so it is "his" book (Glendinning and Robertson, 2008: 7). In terms of an intense love affair, particularly, and submission to it, Elizabeth's own life forms the basis on which the relationship Stella Rodney has with Robert is constructed. Then, how Stella is characterized can be deemed to reflect Bowen's point of view, and also how she reacts to what is going on in life can be elaborated accordingly.

2.2. Disrupting Patriarchy: Stella's Semiotic Chora and Resistance To the Symbolic Order

Stella Rodney's struggle against patriarchal norms through the lens of semiotic chora, the concept coined by Julia Kristeva, is encapsulated in this part, which is, accordingly, comprised of the analysis of Stella's fragmented subjectivity, her negotiation of identity surviving wartime ambiguity, and her prioritization of personal desires over societal norms depicted through textual evidence. As a subject, Stella appears to unconsciously maintain her pre-Oedipal experiences rooted in the psychic space during her infancy, and the semiotic chora in her subjectivity enables her to survive in the patriarchy and its impositions. She portrays a woman whose non-conformity places her outside traditional patriarchal roles mostly associated with household work or mothering, thus disrupting the stereotype of women as passive

figures subjugated to men's power (the symbolic order) represented in every sphere of life. Exposed to the perpetual manipulative demands of Harrison, she is forced to submit to the male domination, offering her to betray Robert, suspected of being a Nazi spy, and end her romantic relationship in exchange for her safety, yet she does not act in line with what is imposed and refuses to be fully obedient. Moreover, she rejects her past experience of divorce, exemplifying the rejection of the imposed narrative and attempts to construct her own story for her own goodness and welfare, converting the constructed system that posits women secondary to men and male power, namely, the symbolic order. Contrary to the typical woman expected to conform to the male domination, Stella perpetuates the semiotic chora against the symbolic order and disregards the language and social norms of it.

Introduced in Kristeva's *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1984), the "semiotic chora" refers to a psychic space wherein the infant undergoes a range of bodily drives, raw emotions, and a symbiotic bond with the maternal body. The infant, not a subject yet, is in a pre-linguistic and pre-symbolic space called "semiotic chora," confined by the maternal body and the early experiences of an infant as well. Elaborating on the etymological basis of the words, Kristeva expresses how she conveys them in psychoanalysis. Referring to "distinctive mark, trace, index, precursory sign, proof, engraved or written sign, imprint, figuration," the term "semiotic" combines with "chora" borrowed from Plato's *Timaeus*, indicating "an essentially mobile and extremely provisional articulation constituted by movements and their ephemeral stases" (25). Kristeva redefines the term as a dynamic, non-structured domain of rhythms, drives, and impulses experienced prior to language and societal norms (26). The chora is closely connected to the maternal since it originates in the pre-Oedipal relationship of the infant with the mother, preceding the intervention of the symbolic order, namely, social structures and language. This tie makes the chora a subversive force against the patriarchal and rule-based system that overwhelms psychic development (27). Kristeva underscores the relationship between language and gender and claims that gender difference is rooted in language that operates as an apparatus through which meaning is applied to the world. She draws heavily on Lacan's work in developing her theory of poetry since she claims that language is the space wherein psychological subjugation takes place, so language can be questioned for the emergence of psychological subjection. However, she differs from Lacan in her concept of the

"semiotic" dimension ascribed to language, offering "a novel poetic maternal linguistic practice" (Choudhary, 2015: 107). The semiotic chora is instrumental in the formation of subjectivity and contradicts the symbolic order.

By some critics, Bowen is considered to regard gender as an unwilling performance and hence, she has identified characters of feminized men and masculinized women. Likewise, her female characters are drawn near to each other as they are to their fiancées or husbands. The desire of female characters is mostly towards an illicit and triangulated (by another female character) relation, so in Bowen's fiction, desire cannot be confined to its approved channels (Linett, 2010: 449). Excluding another female character, Stella's relation with Robert and Harrison's involvement in this relation is in line with Bowen's outline of the characters. Robert is the illicit figure Stella desires in the fiction, and Harrison is another figure who leads the fiction to be triangulated through his struggle to replace Robert, suspected of being a spy. How Stella navigates this embodies the strength of femininity and her cunning, as she is not manipulated by the male power, which is deemed to be the sole arbiter. She confronts the cases in which she prefers to disrupt the stereotypes attributed to the patriarchy and prioritizes her "self" declaring her power subtly over the patriarchy.

In *The Heat of the Day* (1948), Bowen wrote, "Everyone has a poetic relevance of its own, each love brings to light only what to it is relevant. Outside lies the junkyard of what does not matter" (Glendinning, 1977: 140). One of the factors that underlie the nature of love, influences, and determines it is "time" (142). Wartime functions as a watershed in numerous aspects, and the flow of the narration revolves around it in the selected novel within this study. Set mostly in London during World War II, *HD* reflects the stance against modern disorder through Big House, regarded as a separate sanctuary (Walshe, 2009: 14-15). Regarding the ineffaceable modernist experience, including obstruction, liminality, and transience, in Bowen's works, the house can be regarded as emblematic, referring to all these experiences, particularly consolidated with the outbreak of WWII as well as the loss of Bowen's court (Ridge, 2013: 123). The language employed in the description of "destruction, violence, conspiracy" does not include metaphorical usage, but it is quite literary. The wartime London, like a sea of horror, witnesses how the characters survive amidst the shored-up ruins (Kenney, 1975: 68). "Worry" appears to be a quintessential activity in her fiction and surviving in a world of nervosity, her characters can be associated with "puzzlement, unease,

wariness and uncertainty” (Austin, 1989: 8). Since it is set in mainly in wartime London, *The Heat of the Day* necessarily tells about wartime conditions. Described as the most daring work of Bowen, the novel characterizes the best-realized heroine in Bowen’s gallery. Revolving around a love triangle, the novel depicts a woman who abdicates the responsibilities required by her class (aristocracy) and two male figures, a spy and a counterspy (48). Categorized into both a love story and a war novel, *The Heat of the Day*, in fact, appears to be not dominant in either (49). It can be categorized as a type of subversion of stereotypes, representing the disruptive acts and attitudes of the female protagonist.

The unsettlement of the heroine who reflects inevitability and do not obey willingly is a common aspect in Bowen's serious works. Some of them desire to change their milieux as Stella did in *HD* (Austin, 1989: 7). Pinpointing the upheaval led by the tension between the semiotic chora and the symbolic order, *HD* embodies how the self under the influence of the semiotic webs of desire, doubt and imbalance dares to challenge the symbolic structures of the period including identity, morality, and nationality during the course of WWII in London. In line with the ambiguity of wartime, Bowen’s narration draws a zigzag pattern reflecting the dichotomy by neither entirely rejecting the symbolic order nor completely accepting its norms. Contrary to a clear, neat stream, the novel demonstrates the nature of a human being whose reaction is shaped by the ambiguity of reality, particularly during wartime. Hence, the novel seems to embrace both sides, the semiotic chora and the symbolic order, yet in terms of the depiction of the female character, an implicit description of robust femininity is included through Stella Rodney, who is not fully obedient to the patriarchy. This results in fragmented female subjectivity and an identity crisis that can be traced in Stella’s portrait.

The fragmentation of identity is situated as a strategy of resistance and representation of indeterminacy, in particular gender indeterminacy, by theorists as different as Judith Butler, E. Ann Kaplan, Ellen G. Friedman, and Constance Penley (Layton, 1995: 107-108). Judith Butler offers inspiring means of rethinking gender, which occasionally seems troubling. Her main contribution has triggered an interrogative approach to social constructionist ideas and subjectivity, which has been maintained conventionally. Drawing on a paradigm of performativity, what she underscores is a radical interruption in what is conventional as to identity (Nayak and

Kehily, 2006: 459). In *Gender Trouble*, Butler (1990) refers to “genealogy” designated by Foucault, which offers the investigation of the political stakes operating as origin and cause instrumental in the foundational categories of sex, desire, and gender. Institutions, practices, and discourses form these categories. Rather than a stable notion, “female” is an unsteady term, the meaning of which is troubled like “woman” (ix). She highlights that gender should not be prescribed as a stable identity or confined to “locus of agency” expected to perform various acts. Contrary to this, gender is described to be “an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts” (140).

Embodying the fractured female subjectivity, the female protagonist appears to be a figure with an unstable identity tending to shift in accordance with the patriarchal society dominated by the war then. She portrays a woman of vagueness partially:

During their dark walk home Stella had given the impression of being a soul astray – but how, it had seemed for the period of illusion, should she not be? What indeed, was there for her? She could not but be out of her sphere here, nonplussed, a wanderer from some better star. It had been much to find in the world one creature too good for the world (345).

Described as “a soul tray,” Stella embodies a fragmented subjectivity, as aforementioned, in accordance with the wartime environment and the expectations of the patriarchy that impose on her a narrow sphere, representing the constraints. As Scott (1992) denotes, “subject and selves belong to circulations of powers and to a destiny of not belonging to anything at all” (105). Parallel to this, she is required to adapt to the circumstances to survive. However, the elliptical language, in tandem with affective undertones, can be interpreted as a reversal of the typical pattern and conventional narrative clarity. Furthermore, Stella's introspective attitude resonates with her approach, prioritizing the semiotic chora, albeit oscillating between rational structures imposed by the symbolic order and repressed feelings in the semiotic chora.

Although dislocation is revolved around and reflected within a symmetry through three portrayals, including Stella seemingly lacking a permanent life, Harrison appearing from nowhere, and Kelway with his acrimony for the family home, it derives from Stella since she is the source of it. Contrary to the female characters in Bowen's previous work, Stella lacks a home base and provides merely her borrowed flat (Lassner, 1990: 123), thus she turns out to be the first female in Bowen's work who quits the idea of obeying tradition and making a home, which reinforces that the past has been abandoned. Stella welcomes dispossession, unlike Karen Michaelis and Anna

Quayne, both of whom care about possession, home for familial or personal concerns, respectively. This marks a shift in the formation of female characters and triggers questioning traditional aspects of women's prerogatives and social stability. Dispossession and loss, necessarily resulting from the war setting, create a tragedy that turns out to be a gain for Stella. The state of dislocation provides her with the chance, as she wishes, to live for the moment and in the moment (124), in other words, in accordance with the philosophy of "carpe diem", thus dislocation turns into a home for Stella where she dwells. The war setting is instrumental in nourishing psychic fractures and controversial characteristics in identity, predominantly for women. Internal psychic tensions are exacerbated by external political conflicts, which is evident in Stella's internal conflict triggered by love, loyalty, and survival:

All that time, all the same, the current had been against his face. The war-warmed impulse of people to be a people had been derisory; he had hated the bloodstream of the crowds, the curious animal psychic oneness, the human lava-flow. Even the leaden unenthusiasm, by its being so common, so deeply shared, had provoked him – and as for the impatiences, the hopes, the reiteration of unanswerable questions and the spurts of rumour, he must have been measuring them with a calculating eye. The half-sentence of the announcer's voice coming out of a window at News hour, the flopping rippling headlines of Late Night Final at the news-vendor's corner – what nerve, what nerve in reverse, had they struck on in him? Knowing what he knew, doing what he did. Idly, more idly than all the others doing the same thing, in the streets with her he had thieved the headline out of the corner of his eye, without a break in their talk, with a hiatus in his long pitching step so slight as to be registered by her only through their being arm-in-arm in the falling evening. She now saw his smile as the smile of one who has the laugh... It seemed to her it was Robert who had been the Harrison. 'This is some malady of yours,' she said. 'How dare you say I have been in what you have done? The more I understand it the more I hate it. You're determined, then, to be on the winning side?' (Bowen, 1948: 309-310).

Comprised of the treacheries and entangled loyalties, *HD* is a wartime novel that depicts erosions of identity and destabilizations as parallel to disorientations and displacements. The tenuousness of identity Bowen is preoccupied with conventionally now appears to be the generative element. Stella Rodney, the heroine reflecting the erosion of identity also sparkles as a mother, female figure, who is anxious about her son, Roderick, with a growing fear for that he would be obliterated by the Army. In the course of a process, a being processed, she could do nothing to stop, her son might possibly disappear" (Bowen, 1948: 49). "Disappear" stands not only for "die" as a euphemism, but also means that what Roderick stands for will come to an end. The wartime world is not only the setting but also operates as a platform hosting the panic led by the likelihood of losing identity, and also the others likely to deceive about their own identities. The potential panic consolidated with the appearance of anyone in any

form operates as the texture of style and the agency of plot (Corcoran, 2004: 169). As aforementioned, the ambiguity of wartime is explicit in the identities of the characters. Stella struggles not to be exposed to the erosion of identity, and by resisting the impositions of the symbolic order, she prioritizes her semiotic desires, which can only be traced back to her early infancy, grounded in the pre-linguistic period, far away from the language of the symbolic order.

HD has attracted heavy criticism owing to the absence or inadequacy of human dimension, clear motivation, and character delineation. As is the case for Bowen's other female characters in her previous works, Stella seems to be the most evidently developed figure. An intelligent woman, a mother with a son, a middle-class divorcée as well as a spy in connection with the Anglo-Irish landed gentry, Stella is characterised by the variety in her roles (Laurence, 2019: 188). Once she is informed that her lover is suspected of being a Nazi spy, she undertakes a new role: rereading past events to come up with proof of her lover, Robert's defection. The novel's language difficult to dismantle parallels with Stella's lack of resolution while attempting to find clues and *HD* refuses to unveil all the secrets in line with the complicated backdrop set during the midst of London Blitz (Johnson, 2016: 34). Seemingly, the language employed in Bowen's wartime writing appears to interrogate the potential competency of the language to verbalize the experiences of the war (Laurence, 2019: 197), thus Bowen posits her narrative as the basis through which she verbalizes the reflections of the war.

As parallel to the entanglement roles of Stella and the complicated narrative, Stella's choices induce her to experience clashes between chora and the symbolic order since she is identified with different roles in familial and societal domains:

"Stella's work at any time in her kitchen was not badly done but erratic, punctuated by thoughts.

Tonight she accomplished things rapidly in the wrong order (...) He searched in Stella for some identity left by him in her keeping. It was a search undertaken principally for her sake: only she made him conscious of loss or change. It was his unconscious purpose to underline everything he and she had in common. And this worked each time: each time she was reassured. While she and Roderick stayed so closely alike, it seemed less likely that he would, after all, shift away to somewhere outside her ken – whatever happened, whatever was done to him. For what nagged at her, what flickered into her look each time she confronted the soldier in battle-dress, was the fear that the Army was out to obliterate Roderick. In the course of a process, a being processed, she could do nothing to stop, her son might possibly disappear. There must still be so many months before he saw action: she did not envisage or dread his death. She dreaded dissolution inside his life, dissolution never to be repaired. Months in the Army had made Roderick notice what he had taken for granted when he was more at home – the particular climate in which his mother dwelled. Of this, the temperature and the pressure were gauged by no other person, unless Robert"(Bowen, 1948: 49-50).

1939 marked the start of a change concerning sexuality and gender. The war resulted in employment of women in various jobs conventionally deemed to be masculine so led flexibility in polarization of stereotypes associated with femininity and masculinity, yet, following the war, nourished by a remarkable ideological pressure, a rigid attitude expecting women to stay at home and dealing with raising children became widespread whereas men were supposed to maintain their careers and deal with the activities in the public space (Brannigan, 2008: 637). As evidenced by the excerpt from the novel, Stella is portrayed in a way that reflects the expected role of a woman during that period.

The interplay with changing dynamics between the semiotics chora and the symbolic order is central to the narrative in *HD*. Fundamental to the core of the novel is emotional repression along with psychological conflict. The portrayal of Stella Rodney pinpoints what to criticize in the patriarchy as well as the symbolic order comprised of societal norms, language, and patriarchal structures. Stella is challenged by the symbolic order, and thanks to the semiotic chora, she is provided with a space to liberate herself from the symbolic order, reversing the societal expectations. The symbolic order in *HD* manifests in relation to the wartime context as well as the societal expectations that form the basis for manners, loyalty, honesty, honour, etc. Through all her roles, as a woman, as a mother, as a widow, and as a lover, Stella struggles to negotiate the symbolic order in society. Furthermore, she ends up with involvement into the espionage world owing to her relationship with Robert, who turns out to be a potential spy, and in line with the requirement of the symbolic order; she acts under the influence of external forces based on the social norms, conventions, as well as wartime politics, which ignites manipulation when necessary. Since an individual is a member of society and her/his personal identity forms in accordance with the rules and expectations of society, Stella apparently conforms to the expectations of the symbolic order. On the other hand, she considers her internal motivation and despite the ambiguity and possible consequences of her relationship with Robert, she does not give up and ignores what Harrison, who represents the voice of the symbolic order, says. In a patriarchal society, women are expected to merely submit to the symbolic order and masculine domination, yet Stella acts just to meet the requirements of the symbolic order without neglecting her intrinsic motivation, liberated from the social conventions.

The symbolic order operates in different spheres of life. Social hierarchies positing men superior to women, identities constructed on the basis of gender, are all generated with regard to the symbolic order. What determines morality is the symbolic realm, and so loyalty, betrayal, honesty, along with other manners, reflect the symbolic order. Acting rebelliously is likely to create a chasm that Stella cannot deal with in a patriarchal society; that's why she needs to be astute and avoid any practices that can cause her to wither like a desolate rose marginalized in the society. She seemingly conducts impression management and neither fully excludes her from societal codes nor disregards her "self." The novel centers on Stella Rodney, an attractive woman around forty, her lover, Robert Kelway, and "her would-be lover" Harrison. When compared to two male characters, Stella appears to be relatively normal (Austin, 1989: 50). Drawing on the patriarchal power empowering them, two men make the most of this in every case. The difference between Stella and two men can be elaborated on a variety of causes yet the setting has a profound effect on the character, therefore, the reason lurking behind this can be the ambiguity of the war time during which people could not follow a linear stable way as was the case also for women required to practice what the society imposes. Some keep the typical female figure, and some, like Stella, dare to challenge these stereotypes. Subjectivity can overwhelm in case semiotic is prioritized and the stereotypes of the society (patriarchal structure) are disrupted for the sake of subjectivity. Stella, representing a robust femininity, believes in the primacy of semiotic chora to experience desire, just as the pre-linguistic space of desire. She can articulate her emotional expression only if she allocates the space for her passion, and she is aware that neglect of her desire means her absence as a subject:

(...) She did, however, somewhere keep one impression-that Harrison had not so much defied as invited her to check up. What had he expected her to do? Or that he expected her to do nothing?-in that case, he had been right. She had asked nobody anything about Harrison-why, yes, but of course she had: had she not asked Robert? She had asked Robert nothing about himself-but, again, what but a question about himself had been, really, the question about Harrison? On that occasion-flippancy, boredom, love: how sweet, how grateful had the diversion been! Diversion, not answer; not end, only beginning-beginning of her watch on Robert's doors and windows, her dogging of the step of his thoughts, her search for the interstices of his mind. Her espionage-but apparently, better that. Better than what? Than the saying of "I am told you are selling our country: are you?" She should by now, Robert might well reply, be able to judge for herself whether that could be possible. And he would be right, she would know-her having ever asked must end all equability between them. A demonstration of innocence, as from him to her, could be nothing but icy cold-the more final it were, the more it must be final to everything. Volatility was a great part of Robert, but not the whole of him-laugh he might, but as a man he would not forgive her... Or, he could lie; or rather, lie once again-the first lie spoken not being, in most cases, the first lie acted.-"Is he," Harrison had wanted to know, "anything of an actor?"-If actor, to her and for her so very good an actor, then why not actor also of love? Incalculably

calculating, secretly adverse, knowing, withheld had Robert been, all this time, from the start? No, no, no, she thought: better anything! Better what, then? Better to hear him say, "Since you have chosen to ask me-yes." That would be love: that would be the consummation. What in effect were they but one another's accomplices already: deep into, and involving everything else in, the confederacy of love? Stop-stop him? I would be stopped when Harrison closed the trap (Bowen, 1948: 191-192).

In the novel, disagreement between the semiotic chora, manifesting as Stella's desires, and the symbolic order, manifesting in each societal code and expectation, produces a sort of tension and rivalry between these two choices. Acting in line with the symbolic order turns out to be a necessity in a patriarchal structure; however, the semiotic chora challenges the societal expectations from time to time, and Stella's preference can be construed as the victory of the semiotic chora since it cannot be associated with any codes of the symbolic order. The wartime society constructs its symbolic order in accordance with what is in progress at the time, and societal expectations form the symbolic order at the time, yet what patriarchal structure requires can be based on some common principles, including the disinvolvement of women in the construction of the symbolic order and instead the objectification of them. Stella's resistance against Harrison is symbolically a resistance against the symbolic order, as Harrison is the male authority trying to manage Stella to act as he wishes. On the other hand, Stella keeps her love for Robert even if it is accepted as guilt and likely to be condemned by the symbolic order and the semiotic chora, namely her unconscious feelings and desires, is beyond the societal norms that necessitate rational action, differentiating what is acceptable or not according to the societal codes:

"What you're asking isn't the point-it's immaterial, crazy, brainspun, out of a thriller. Am I passing stuff across? No, of course not: how could I be, why should I, what do you take me for? (...) As to one thing, we know we could never deceive each other; but that is just that, apparently-where you are concerned?-just that, lovely but only that. Which I didn't realise-how was I to? How well you have acted with me for the last two months-two months, you say? Someone comes to you with a story: with you, the story takes-seeds itself in some crack that you felt between us. Some crack-should I have known it was there? I, you see, simply thought we were happy. Happy?-I hardly thought that, even; I simply thought that we were us. You couldn't-no?-just have come and said, 'Listen, because this is what I've been told'

(...)

He went on: "Then you acted on the assumption that it was true?"

"How could I take any chances, when I love you?" (Bowen, 1948: 212-213).

In essence, personal desires (the semiotic chora) and collective desires (the symbolic order) are at odds with each other; therefore, the societal codes of wartime London and the patriarchal structure on a global scale cannot be compromised with what Stella as an individual desires. She is exposed to the dichotomy of being an

individual nourished by both the internal emotional drives and external societal codes and identities. She manages to survive since she gravitates toward being manipulative and does not jeopardize her societal identity, even if passive and objectified.

2.3. Gender Dynamics and the Male Gaze: Power and Objectification

Originating from psychoanalytic theory, the male gaze offers a lens to examine broader societal dynamics wherein women are treated not as subjects but as objects. How women are tailored to mere spectacles to serve male enjoyment is the focal point of the male gaze theory. The male gaze is renowned for the hypermasculine portrayal of women it frames, underscoring that women are situated to be looked at (Caffrey, 2024). Rather than an active agent, a subject, a woman functions as an object.

The male gaze is instrumental in shaping women's lives and operates as a multifaceted force embodied through power dynamics, social positioning, and emotional tension in *The Heat of the Day*. Forming the basis of allure and threat, the male gaze is reflected through themes of identity, control, and survival in *HD*. Entangled in a web of personal betrayal and espionage, Stella Rodney is conscious of being watched and judged by the gazes, notably the gazes of Harrison and Robert, and even his son's gaze judging her manifests in his conversation with Donovan, articulating her resilience. Referring to the wartime city, London, Donovan says the city is being bombed again and wonders whether the mistress is in London. Roderick affirms that and says "...she's always done what she's liked" revealing her autonomy and independent acts regardless of others, in pursuit of what she likes. Donovan foregrounds the circumstances within the patriarchy that restrict Stella and says: "...she'd always done what she could" (Bowen, 1948: 355). In this context, it is evident that the male gaze does not see a female figure in terms of physical appearance but also judges her in terms of her stance in life.

Stella Rodney, as the female protagonist, seems to be emotionally guarded and intelligent. She diverges from another female figure in the novel, Louie, in terms of her position, being in charge of a government agency. Furthermore, she is desired by the male in contrast with Louie. The novel begins with a chapter in which Louie portrays a woman enthusiastic to serve a male figure, Harrison. Despite the penetration of the male gaze, she experiences a kind of invisibility. Contrary to Stella, Louie is disregarded in

the male gaze that can be ascribed to the prescription of the wartime city with its atmosphere of heightened sexual awareness, though, wherein Louie's step is described to be deprived of "illicit semaphore," characterizing other women typically. This absence induces her to be overlooked, which affects her self-image as well as social interactions:

To be not seen was for her not to be. It was a phenomenon of wartime city night that it brought out something provocative in the step of most modest women; Nature tapped out with the heels on the pavement an illicit semaphore. Alone was Louie in being almost never accosted; whatever it was missing from her step; she walked, she strode, she bulked ahead through the dark with sexless-flat-floated nonchalance of a ten year-old, only more heavily. No, this was no season for her to starting anything out of doors. Neither did Sundays, her only daylight at liberty, any more bring return: from the Sunday park the illusory sensuous veil was striped (...) (Bowen, 1948: 161).

This case reflects the diversity of the male gaze and the subjective characteristics of it since the male gaze does not view all women as equally appealing, as can be traced in the difference between Stella and Louie viewed differently. Offering a different lens on the portrayal of the woman in wartime London, Louie can be contrasted with Stella and posited as a counterpoint. Labour, position, social interactions appear to parallel with the male gaze and this can be construed as a reflection of the patriarchy that prioritizes the male in every domain. In a male-centred society, a woman's sense of self is necessarily developed in line with the male-centricism. While waiting for Harrison's arrival for their meeting, Stella gets ready both physically and psychologically, which reinforces the pressure under the reign of the male gaze. Apparently, the male gaze functions as a "big brother," representing the authoritarian gaze that controls the society, as seen in George Orwell's 1984. "BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU," as articulated in 1984 (Orwell, 2001: 8) manifests as the male gaze in *The Heat of the Day* (1948).

Stella's self-perception develops on a pervasive male gaze:

She had one of those charming faces which, according to the angle from which you see them, look either melancholy or impertinent. Her eyes were grey; her trick of narrowing them made her seem to reflect, the greater part of the time, in the dusk of her second thoughts. With that mood, that touch of *arrière-pensée*, went an uncertain, speaking set of the lips. Her complexion, naturally pale, fine, soft, appeared through a pale, fine, soft bloom of make-up. She was young-looking-most because of the impression she gave of still being on happy sensuous terms with life. Nature had kindly given her one white dash, lock or wing in otherwise tawny hair; and that white wing, springing back from her forehead, looked in the desired sense artificial-other women asked her where she had had it done; she had become accustomed to being glanced at. That, but only that, about her was striking: her looks, after the initial glance, could grow on you; if you continued to know her, could seem even more to be growing for you. Her clothes fitted her body, her body her self, with a general air of attractiveness and ease (Bowen, 1948: 23-24).

The male gaze is instrumental in defining how she experiences herself, revealing that she has internalized the male gaze as “... accustomed to being glanced at.”

In the introduction to *When the Lights Went Down*, focusing mainly on the crime in wartime, Steve Jones (2000) refers to the personal experiences of various groups, including murderers, prison-officers, prisoners, black-marketers and foregrounds the harsh conditions of wartime London. He highlights the dramatic increase (50%) in the rate of imprisonment between 1938 and 1945 and articulates that the crimes cannot be reduced to greed but also passion. In the aftermath of the enforced separation husband and wife experienced, taking a new partner resulted in a tragedy when an armed soldier appeared all of a sudden (1). Stella’s relations reflect the conventional pattern followed during that period. As aforementioned, *HD* focuses on Stella Rodney, a widow, aged 21, with a son who serves in the army. The novel starts with a part from Regent's Park, dating back to September 1942, and revolves around a wartime blitz affair between the female protagonist Stella Rodney and Robert Kelway. A confidential government agent, Harrison informs Stella that Robert Kelway is suspected of being a spy and offers to conceal this, provided that Stella has an affair with him. Stella vacillates and cannot help but suspect Robert. Overwhelmed by this curiosity, she confronts Robert and discovers that he is guilty, as Harrison claims. Robert gets angry and unrepentantly tries to escape after his confession, but falls from the roof of Stella's house and dies. By 1944, when Harrison returns, he finds Stella is engaged to marry someone else (Walshe, 2009: 105). This engagement with another man can be construed on the patriarchal structure which requires male validation or bond with a man to exist in that type of a society but no clear reason is given and nobody can disclaim she is engaged to marry another man merely for her own desire so Stella’s engagement with another man contributes to the portrayal of Stella as a woman featuring the robust femininity

Since passion was amidst the reasons for crime in wartime London, Stella’s relationship with Robert resembles the stories included in Jones’ book. Reminiscent of the crimes of passion, Robert’s death is described as a misadventure as found by the coroner and construed to emerge out of a “crazy midnight escapade on a roof” (Bowen, 1948: 340). Stella’s relation with him is a depiction of her submission to her own desires rather than the male gaze, she challenges, albeit her internal conflict triggered by suspicions about Robert’s loyalty, claimed to be spying for the Nazis.

The psychological and social implications of the male gaze can be traced not only in personal interactions but also in societal attitudes. A wartime society, as is the case in Bowen's narrative, can contribute to women's oppression by intensifying traditional gender roles and calibrating its expectations accordingly. Reinforcing the male gaze, the social circles construct an environment wherein observation and appearance are of great importance. This case is exemplified in Louie Lewis's first encounter with Harrison in Regent's Park:

Their look at each other, across the chair between them, took a second or two. She, during it, faced a man of around thirty-eight-or-nine, in a grey suit, striped shirt, dark-blue tie and brown soft hat. His unconsciousness, which had been what had mainly drawn her, was now, like the frown with which he had sat through the music, gone; it was succeeded by a sort of narrow, somewhat routine alterness she did not like. His 'interestingness'-had that been a lie of his profile's? No, not quite: now that she had him full-face a quite other curious trait appeared-one of his eyes either was or behaved as being just perceptibly higher than the other. This lag or inequality in his vision gave her the feeling of being looked at twice-being viewed then checked over again in the same moment. His forehead stayed in the hiding, his eyebrows deep in the shadow, of his pulled-down hat; his nose was bony; he wore a close-clipped little that-was-that moustache. The set of his lips-from between which he had with less than civil reluctance withdrawn the cigarette-bespoke the intention of adding nothing should he happen to have to speak again. This was a face with a gate behind it-a face that, in this photographic half-light, looked indoor and weathered at the same time; a face, if not without meaning, totally and forbiddingly without mood (...) It could not be enough to say she was discountenanced; her eyes dropped, looking their last at those stained two of his fingers, holding the cigarette (Bowen, 1948: 9).

Louie's analysis of Harrison represents the female gaze and suggests that it is far from objectifying the man, but rather involves reading between the lines. Moreover, the female gaze is aware of the male gaze as can be inferred from "...being looked at twice-being viewed then checked over again..." Harrison's gaze describes Louie in terms of the physical details:

He confronted a woman of about twenty-seven, with the roughened hair and still slightly upward expression of someone who has been lying flat on the grass. Her full, just not protuberant eyes looked pale in a face roughly burned by summer; into them the top light of the roofless theatre struck. Forehead, nose, cheekbones added no more than width. Her mouth was the only other feature not to dismiss; it was big; it was caked round the edges, the edges only, with what was left of lipstick inside which clumsy falsified outline the lips turned outwards, exposed themselves – full, intimate, woundably thin-skinned, tenderly brown-pink as the underside of a new mushroom and like the eyes once more, of a paleness in her sun-coarsened face. It was the lips which struck him and could have moved him, only that they did not. Halted and voluble, this could but be a mouth that blurted rather than spoke, a mouth incontinent and at the same time artless (Bowen, 1948: 8).

The narrative foregrounds her appearance and the impression her appearance makes by describing her physical features. Highlighting Louie's physicality, this excerpt appears to be in alignment with the male gaze perspective that foregrounds what furnishes desire or judgement. Representing her internal conflict affected by the presence of males, Louie's wish reveals her own sense of self depicted as vulnerable and exposed to the influences of men, their attitude, and perception:

She had committed herself, by speaking, then by speaking again to him, to the being of something she never was: what crisis of egotism or loneliness had been reached by her in the musical fading light? Egotism could be the more likely; it had been her self not her sex that she had wished to assert" (Bowen, 1948: 9).

While in an attempt to have a conversation with the man at the concert, as a sense of subjugation revealing itself through insisting on speaking to the man again and again, identifying him as "the being of something she never was" can be elaborated on the psyche, positing women secondary. Arousal of feelings upon the musical fading light leads the lady to be overwhelmed by an unnamed crisis of loneliness or egotism. She wishes to have asserted her "self" instead of her sex, which again enframes the perception of women in wartime London around the 1940s (9). Rather than egotism or self, what appears to be underpinned is sex indicating what is encoded in accordance with the childhood period.

Left alone behind her husband Tom who was in the Army, Louie implies her desire, indeed the requirement to be completed: "...she was ready, nay, eager to attach herself to anyone who could seem to be following anyone course with certainty" and her desire extends greatly that she does not tend to inhibit herself and furthermore, interrogates whether she is queer or not (Bowen, 1948: 13). Outdoor concert seems to symbolize a freedom and it is up to his or her will to come or go (17). Contrary to his repudiative attitude, Louise maintains her curiosity about the man and even asks his name. While they come to the end of the road they have been walking, her eyes follow him leave, leading her to be left incomplete (19). Based on these, Louie's view of Harrison and her desire can be construed as a desire for freedom or autonomy rather than physicality.

On the other hand, rather than objectification of women based on her physicality, Stella's interaction with Harrison embodies a power dynamic positing Stella as an object of manipulation and Harrison's attention. Harrison's gaze is evident in his attempts to control Stella, representing vulnerability. During their interaction, for instance, how the male gaze operates can be inferred from: "So placed, he viewed nothing but Stella's profile, unless he could provoke her to turn her head" (Bowen, 1948:142), an act that illustrates the dynamics of visual power as well as objectification.

The Male Gaze theory provides insight into how Bowen portrays women and how these female characters are positioned, objectified, and exposed to oppression within the novel. Readers can accompany Bowen in her navigation of the patriarchy and

its norms, as seen in *HD*. Bowen's perspectives and the portrayal of female figures, how they set relationship with the male characters can be scrutinized through the Male Gaze theory. This allows for the identification of the influence of the male gaze on the formation of dynamics between male and female characters, as well as the societal and narrative frameworks of Bowen's work. From the initial chapters, it can be deduced that the female and male figures are positioned differently in a male-centred society, and the portrayal of Harrison and Robert indicates women were secondary to men at the time. Actually, as set in wartime London and also based on Bowen's life, the characters' perspective can be deemed to mirror Bowen's own perspective and her own experiences. The oppressive structure and its impositions are exemplified through Bowen's depiction of gender dynamics. Bowen sheds light on how the gazes and desires of male figures in the novel determine female characters' self-worth and how they interact with men in line with the structure formed on the basis of their gazes. In her narrative, the author presents the female characters mainly from the perspective of males and their eyes which reflects the Male Gaze Theory and also provides a critical perspective by means of which a counter argument can be posed since the dominant system is unveiled through the representation of the female characters. How Stella's life and body are scrutinized reflect the way the male gaze operates and how she is objectified embody the intense male gaze she endures:

A zip fastener all the way down one back made one woman seem to have a tin spine. A dye-green lettuce leaf had fallen on to the mottled rubber floor; a man in a pin-stripe suite was enough in profile to show a smudge of face powder on one shoulder...Not a person did not betray, by one or another glaring peculiarity, the fact of being human: her intimidating sensation of being crowded must have been due to this (...) (Bowen, 1948: 252).

As the female protagonist, Stella is identified with her relationship with the male figures in the novel. How she is seen can be attributed to her beauty, attractiveness, as well as her desirability. Besides, she is portrayed as a romantic and sexual object as manifest in how she is objectified by the male gazes. Furthermore, Stella develops her sense of "self" under the effect of the male gaze around. Rather than being a fully subject, she appears to be in need of validation by the male since the patriarchal structure requires this. She is regarded as a being to be gazed, possessed, desired, and objectified to serve the male gaze:

“...Here, and not in one paper only, was where it said about her, the bottles, the lover, the luxury West End flat. She had had other men friends; there nearly had been a fight (...) there she was with someone she was not married to...” (Bowen, 1948: 345-346).

Seemingly the public scrutiny is in alignment with the male gaze and Stella's desirability depicts both power and vulnerability. Additionally, in her interactions with Harrison, Stella portrays a woman in need of negotiation and asserts her “self” within the male-dominated power dynamic:

“You would be sorry, you say, if I sunk Robert. How would it be if I sank you?...Harrison, throughout this, had not shifted from Stella's face a look of patience and admiration” (Bowen, 1948: 41).

Deemed to be an object of desire, Stella's entity in her lover's life, as her ex-husband's wife and even Harrison's wife, lacks subjectivity and positions her as a possession to be manipulated in accordance with the requirements of the patriarchy. Stella's subjectivity, autonomy, and identity are confined by the male gaze, reinforcing the hegemony of the patriarchy and its norms on subjects. Aware of the male-centred structure, Stella knows that the existence of a female is based on her submission to the male, so, despite her critical point of view, she chooses to be passive. Albeit her counter argument against the system, she knows that a radical change is impossible at the time, and it is a must for her to submit to the system.

2.4. Psychoanalytic Feminism and Defence Mechanisms: Navigating Trauma and Identity

Wearied of the patriarchal norms in the society and psyche, the female characters practise various defence mechanisms, mostly as a response to what World War II led to psychologically, that is, to deal with the stress, complexities, ups and downs, and trauma. Nourished by the ambiguity of wartime, all the complexities ranging from emotional struggles to relationships, along with the societal upheaval, require the female characters to exhibit a variety of defence mechanisms to pull through the burden of the period and minimize the havoc induced either by personal relationships or the societal norms. How these defence mechanisms help Stella manage to grapple with trauma, betrayal, and the tension ignited by the controversy between her semiotic desires and

social expectations is illustrated in this part. As noted by Di Giuseppe and Perry (2021), defence mechanisms carry out a psychological function such as fulfilling the need for avoiding shame or guilt led by confronting intolerable emotional experiences, unacceptable thoughts, self-esteem failures, and withdrawing anger (21). Not natural but human-made traumatic events, as can be traced in *HD*, can be overcome through defense mechanisms along with coping strengths (Gasparyan, 2005: s2). These provide people with a breath in hardship.

Both Stella and Louie represent the portrait of the women in wartime, as can be traced in the second chapter, including the description of Stella's desolation in the house she temporarily rented while waiting for Harrison, which can be considered a metaphorical depiction of the woman's psychological isolation. The atmosphere during the Battle of Britain is described through Louie and her family running a small business until retirement (Bowen, 1948: 13). She herself works at the factory and tries to survive on her own (14). Bowen articulates how it is challenging to write this novel, likely induced by tracing personal experiences at the time of war, as follows:

(...) Any novel I have ever written has been difficult to write and this is being for the most difficult of all (...) The thing revolves around and round in my brain like what you're at work at does in your brain. Almost anything that happens around me contributes to it" (Glendinning and Robertson, 2008: 43).

The ambiguity of wartime reflects on the narrative. The first episode tells the coincidental meeting of Harrison and Louie, whose husband is in the military, and albeit married, seems to be keen on interacting with Harrison excessively, in Regent Park. The person who preoccupies Harrison is Stella Rodney, with whom he is in love. Although he was rejected by Stella, his promise to meet one last time gave rise to hopes. He thinks that he will convince Stella that Robert, with whom he has been in a relationship for a long time, is an agent working for the secret service, and thus, he will have the opportunity to have a love affair with Stella. These consolidate the objectification of women, which is then conventionally expected to serve the male. How this is challenged can be based on Bowen's own expressions. On a psychological basis, wars resulted in the termination of barriers and boundaries and Bowen says: "It seems to me that during the war in England, the overcharged subconsciousness of everybody overflowed and merged" (Bowen's preface to the Knopf edition of the *Demon Lover*, reprinted in *Collected Impressions*, cited by Glendinning, 1977: 142).

The male-domination is depicted through references to the female characters' life: Louie works at a factory near their house in Chilcombe Street and in order to meet the rent, she spends the money left to her by her parents killed by a bomb and does this with her husband Tom's consent, which indicates that the man is a figure of authority whose consent is required in some aspects, reflecting the power associated with male. While she feels no pressure over her shoulder or no censor inside herself to prevent her from submitting to her feelings, her husband's question, in his letter to Louie, asking whether she is being a good girl is seemingly a reminder of what is expected from a female in accordance with the prescribed features (Bowen, 1948: 13). The airman condemns Louie highlighting her marriage: "You ought to be ashamed with your husband fighting" and criticised her on giving an impression as if she were lonely and upon turning out to be married, Louie is blamed for wasting his time (17).

As a critique of the desire men have for romantic relationship, Stella establishes a similarity between her husband Tom and men in general: "...all men to be one way funny like Tom...no sooner were their lips unstuck from your own then they began again to utter morality" (Bowen, 1948: 15). Actually, this reveals how the structure of the patriarchy is of the opinion that it is up to men to decide on or differentiate between what is moral or not and once they satisfy their need, they can denounce it addressing to morality. Another case embodying the language of the symbolic order is evident in another context. The atmosphere of tense rising up and down owing to what Stella Rodney feels prior to meeting Harrison can be interrelated to the power he tries to impose and on the telephone, he uses a tone of someone in power and Stella feels the rising tension as she infers from his way of speaking that a threatening attitude has been adopted by Harrison. Stella prepares herself and arranges everything to show that she does not have any concern or interest in what Harrison is planning to say (21). This indeed embodies that even if a woman lives in a patriarchal structure where men are the main focus, she can feel the courage to adopt a repudiative attitude (24).

Bowen makes use of allusions, tracing echoes of fairy tale and myth in her fiction. As for *HD*, the Fisher King legends may deserve mention here in terms of the themes they revolve around, such as maiming, infertility, and physical restriction. The attachment of Madame Fisher and Naomi to the wounded king's image stands for polarised stereotypes of women in a negative sense: the tyrant, downtrodden spinster, and lascivious widow. In alignment with the Fisher King tales, which call for the

healing of body, Bowen's mythical allusion can be related to a different sort of wound led by the societal roles assigned, indeed, forced upon women. This argument can be based on Cousin Nettie's recounting of her life, referring to the very beginning of her marriage (Wilkinson, 2018: 11):

what [Francis] had wanted me to be was his wife; I tried this, that and the other, till the result was that I fell into such a terrible melancholy that I only had to think of anything for *it* to go wrong, too. Nature hated us; that was a most dangerous position to build a house in – once the fields noticed me with him, the harvests began failing; so I took to going nowhere but up and down stairs, till I met with my own ghost (Bowen 1998a: 217).

Nettie's account for her feelings and actions, their influence on the land's fertility connotes the Fisher King stories and she actually expostulates the perception concerning marriage and motherhood by means of a subtle critique of them for being regarded as natural ideals for women. Nettie's childlessness is implied through wifely duties described and implicit in withering harvests. The failure to have a child is regarded as a drawback in the nature of a woman expected to be a mother. She refers to the sense built upon being watched by the land her husband runs via "the fields noticed me" and lacking a place to go through expressing nowhere to go except for up and down stairs, implicitly defining the patriarchal line as a cyclical torment leading her to be in limbo between the wife role forced upon her and herself, her self (Wilkinson, 2018: 11).

Psychoanalytic feminism underscores unequal parenting while illuminating gender inequality, and in accordance with this, how the psyche tends to submit to male domination. While describing the atmosphere of wartime London, referring to the mother and their continuous effort while fulfilling their role as a mother, Bowen denotes: "Mothers tired by being mothers forgot their children as their children forgot them..." (Bowen, 1948: 4-5), representing the heavy responsibility women undertake in wartime. As a depiction of endurance, the atmosphere and the figures are portrayed to be in accordance with stoicism (5).

Beauvoir states that maternity formulates the basis for women to fulfil their physiological destiny and enables the species to perpetuate. Women are repetitively reminded that they are made for childbearing and exposed to appreciative words highlighting the splendours of maternity. What drawbacks are available in her situation, as well as household drudgery, are justified by this unique privilege she has, that is, giving birth (Benjamin, 1995: 425-427). The fact that the mother-baby bond and the

caretaking role given to the mother continue at all times, regardless of age, is exemplified once again in the third episode, when Stella prepares a bed for her son Roderick, who is performing his duty as a soldier in the war. Stella's portrayal of Roderick as passive, far from entrepreneurial, can also be considered in line with the dominant mother role defined in psychoanalytic feminism. On the other hand, the fact that Roderick inherited from one of his cousins on his father's side exactly coincides with the coding accepted in psychoanalytic feminism about men having children as the continuation of their offspring. Harrison tries to convince Stella that her boyfriend Robert is trying to be a secret agent, and for sure, it is not easy for Stella to accept that the person she has been in a relationship with for a long time is like that. In this episode, his son, Roderick, plays the role of saving Stella from the psychological situation to which he was exposed by Harrison, and the son, who is seen as compensation for the woman's deficiency, can be expressed here by basing Harrison's psychology on uterine jealousy.

Stella, navigating trauma and identity, represents a robust character overcoming betrayals. Along with the cities, under the influence of the convulsive effects World War II caused, how the relationships and temperaments of people are formed during wartime can be traced back in Bowen's fiction (Laurence, 2019: 182). In *HD*, different from her previous works, Bowen thematizes betrayals and loyalties through national and personal passions of the characters, including Stella, Kelway, Harrison, and Louie. In various experiences, betrayals the novel centers around can be exemplified: Kelway betrays England since he is engaged with Nazi espionage discreetly and simultaneously betrays Stella's love with his latent political and personal aims. Stella is also betrayed morally by Harrison since he intends to blackmail her emotionally and sexually (187). The life conditions in *The Heat of the Day*, the setting including destruction, disruption and dislocation justify why London during the wartime fostered the feelings of insecurity of the characters and how their feelings of betrayal, conspiracy were nourished by the machinations and intrigue of spy keeping the characters in the darkness of the period (Kenney, 1975: 68).

As the female protagonist of the novel, Stella Rodney appears to be manipulative, sometimes through adherence to the patriarchy and the prevalent norms, and sometimes deeming them to be peripheral. Denial of past experiences, and realities of life enables her to maintain a dignified life, warding off the harsh truths they are

exposed to. Stella's relationship with Robert, in spite of all claims indicating that he is a spy, is a challenge for Stella to accept and aware of the emotional toll likely to be caused by this secretive relationship, she prefers not to forgo but to maintain it. Abide by her desire, she is in this relationship, yet she cannot manage to fully acknowledge it since she suspects his betrayal and treachery, so denial operates in this case, providing her with a chance not only for prioritizing her desire but also a way for not confronting the reality and its potential consequences. Baumeister et al. (1998) denote denial as the simple rejection of confronting certain facts, highly upsetting or likely to damage self-esteem (1107), as Stella's case exemplifies. Confronting reality is most likely to lead to self-esteem deficit, and self-esteem, as Bailey (2003) defines, includes various complicated mental states concerning a person's view of himself or herself (388), therefore, a lack of it can result in mental disorder or loss of psychological well-being, that's why Stella avoids the realities. Stella's denial of her past experiences and the harsh realities surrounding her life functions as a psychological defence mechanism that protects her dignity and keeps her safe from the emotional devastation likely to be caused by these truths. In her conversation with Harrison, she refers to "loss of face" that is likely to be induced owing to "be the one who was left" (Bowen, 1948: 251):

-What I am talking about is the loss of face."

-Loss of what?"

-Face. How do you suppose that felt? All the world to know. To be the one who was left-the boring pathetic casualty, the 'injured' one (...)

What lurks behind the untrue story Stella tells Roderick about her marriage is her desire to schematize a strong image. As also referred by Corcoran (2004), Stella intends to enable Roderick with the maintenance of the sense he has towards his dead father, and besides she wants to rear a femme fatale through manipulating the truth and making Roderick believe that his father, Victor was the abandoned side, not she (Bowen, 1948: 170). Stella needs to employ defence mechanisms not only for the current situation she is involved in but for her past and the trauma induced by it. Her marriage to Roderick's father has ended, but the painful memories and sorrow she experienced during this marriage reinforces her fear of betrayal. Her relationship with Robert is threatened by his treachery, exposing Stella to betrayal once more, but she tries to repress her previous deplorable experiences and painful emotions so that she can maintain her love. She struggles to eliminate the risk likely to destruct her idealism.

Repression protects Stella from awareness of the idea associated with her sorrowful experiences in line with the function of repression, as stated by Di Giuseppe and Perry (2021: 9).

Rationalization appears to be another way for Stella to regard her life as compatible with the war time in progress. Rationalization, as defined by Di Giuseppe and Perry (2021), enables an individual to cope with emotional turmoil, or external or internal stressors, through generating self-serving or reassuring but incorrect explanations for somebody's behaviour (11). As aforementioned, albeit risky, Stella rationalizes her relationship with Robert since she thinks it is substantial for self-preservation and dealing with the complexities likely to appear by virtue of the war. Through rationalization and justification of her risky relationship with Robert, Stella finds a way not to confront any potential risks of this relationship and to avoid the guilt. Consequently, she ramps up the emotional balance and maintains her entity, considering her "self" regardless of external perceptions. Stella's emotional experiences seem to determine what defence mechanisms to employ. Experiencing the betrayal beforehand, Stella develops a sense of suspicion in her following relationships, whether she loves or not. Building on her past experiences, Stella fortifies suspicion inside her and through projection, she suspects of the other characters in the novel by providing her with a chance to grapple with her repressed, unresolved emotional turmoil.

While rejecting Harrison, Stella clearly denounces that it would be a waste of time to be with a man unattractive to her, privileging her "self" and told him to stay away and maintain a life far from her (Bowen, 1948: 12). This rejection is not merely a rejection but also stands for how women can employ defence mechanism and even though they can seem to be selfish, they are courageous enough to be honest and give an ear to the inner voice and consider "self." Stella asserts her agency through this approach.

Another female character employs a defence mechanism as Stella does, reinforcing that it is essential to survive in the patriarchy. Dreaming is a defence mechanism for Louie to stay away from the life conditions she is striving in to feel mindfulness. Going for a walk in the park and when it rains, drugged by the rainy dusk, taking an imaginary expedition to her childhood results in the arousal of her childhood emotions so that she feels the same as what she felt by the seaside when she was a child

and Bowen embodies how Louie feels through descriptions utilizing five senses such as “she felt her feelings..., she smelt the shingle,...hear it being..” (Bowen, 1948: 14-15). Daydreaming functions as a substitute for problem solving, human relationships, or any issues to deal with (Di Giuseppe and Perry, 2021: 12).

Through a Kristevan lens, the analysis of Bowen's novel appears to disrupt the rigid Symbolic order characterizing the patriarchy and its language and norms. Stella portrays a fragile but resilient female prioritizing her inner world, run by the semiotic chora through her introspective moments, desires, and fragmented memories, challenging the Symbolic order. As parallel to this, Stella uses defense mechanisms so that her subjectivity serves to challenge the patriarchal control.



3. IDENTIFICATORY LOVE AND FEMALE AGENCY IN ORHAN PAMUK'S *MY NAME IS RED*

"The light, still absent, seemed to me to shine..."

-Umberto Eco, *The Name of the Rose*

Embodying the centrality of women in sovereignty, in her seminal work, *The Imperial Harem Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire*, Peirce (1993) alludes to the ascent of the imperial harem in the 16th century during the reign of the Ottoman Empire, which marks a period when high-ranking women operated as significant political power and appeared as prominent public figures much more than up to and after that century, that's why, this period is referred to as "the sultanate of women" (vii). Renowned also as "Rule of the Women," this age hosts a change in the centre of power and the ladies including Kösem Mâhpeyker Valide Sultan, a landmark within the sultanate of women, rule the Empire (Alderson, 1956: 47). This justifies that women can be involved in dynasties and undertake political roles typically assigned to men. Embodying the power dynamics in the 16th century, the sultanate of women apparently subverts the severe restrictions women are exposed to and overwhelms what women are deprived of. Additionally, it seems to be inspiring for Shekure, who attempts to reclaim her agency; akin to the power dynamic of the century it is set in, *My Name is Red* (2001) represents the ascent of Shekure from the oppressed patriarchal to identity formation, reinforcing that she is likely to have been inspired by the sultanate of women and attempted to take charge of her own life.

My Name is Red (2001) presents a narrative that is the convergence of psychoanalysis and gendered subjectivity as well as other aspects. Central to the novel is a murder mystery the narration ostensibly revolves around, yet beyond the ornate layers lurks a narrative terrain constructed also on love, identity, along with voice and visuality. Identificatory love manifests through mirroring, projection, and the desire for autonomy and recognition. It can be traced in the novel through Shekure, the female protagonist, thus leading to an interrogation of the structure of desire, negotiation of power thanks to love, and representation. The narrative voice is influential on the psychic structures of identification.

Consequently, gender domination and submission emerge out of identificatory love along with other reasons. Developing a sense of failure in the construction of her

own autonomy, a woman loves a man not as a partner but a figure through whom she can experience the independence she really desires, so she posits men superior and thinks necessarily that submission is a requirement. In her work “Father and Daughter: Identification with Difference,” Benjamin (1991) reveals her argument as follows:

I suggest that the rapprochement girl's wish for a penis is not a self-evident response to anatomical difference. She desires it even as the boy cherishes it (or will come to cherish it) because she is struggling to individuate. Girls seek what toddler boys recognize in their fathers and wish, through identification, to affirm in themselves—recognition of their own desire. Girls' ambivalence around separation may be more intense than that of boys because of the bond of likeness between mother and daughter—all the more reason for them, too, to seek a different object in whom to recognize their independence. This other object is very often the father, and his otherness is guaranteed and symbolized by his other genital. Precisely when this father is unavailable, envy of the penis expresses the girl's longing for him (285).

Identification with the father harbors a dual meaning for a child in that it denies the helplessness experienced during the rapprochement phase and affirms the fundamental experience of being the subject of desire. From a certain angle, the identificatory drive masquerades as a defense against the ambivalence associated with the mother. Seen differently, the desire to resemble the father reflects a deeper need to claim desire as one's own, experienced as legitimate, self-generated, and not merely projected onto an external object. In this way, various aspects of the child's development may direct them toward the father, positing him as a symbolic figure of recognition, fulfilling the need for separation, along with the need to escape maternal ambivalence, and the need for a figure who embodies desire and vitality (284). In Lacan's *Écrits* (2006), identification is described as an essential step for recognition of “I” as can be inferred from the following case:

Now, her (Dora's) only means for gaining this access was via her earliest imago, which shows us that the only path open to her to the object was via the masculine partner, with whom, because of their difference in age, she was able to identify in that primordial identification through which the subject recognizes herself as *I* (...) (181).

Shekure, in pursuit of her subjectivity, asserts her agency through her relationship with Black, thus liberating herself from the social constraints and rejecting relational dependencies. She yearns for her autonomy unconsciously, and her attachment to Black represents her unconscious desire for autonomy. Considering the patriarchal Ottoman society wherein women's autonomy is under severe restriction, Shekure's desire for autonomy necessarily requires a great struggle to grapple with all the disruptions constructed by the patriarchy.

Distorted in line with the service of the patriarchy, the virtues men and women are identified with reinforce male domination in society. Autonomy and mastery, for instance, are ascribed to men and operate through the subjugation of women and the exclusion of them from full and equal participation in society, whereby they are hindered from obtaining and making the most of their full human potential. Likewise, virtues such as wit, gentleness and obedience women are identified with are distorted because they are not oriented toward practicing these therefore they do not provide women with a chance to experience genuine human flourishing, rather they contribute to the perpetuation of male dominance by nourishing patriarchal structure (Snow, 2002: 43). Autonomy is revealed through self-determination and personal autonomy operates as self-determination of an individual self. Once provided with preliminaries in familial and societal domains, the self as the acting and choosing self is required to determine on acts and choices (Friedman, 2003: 4). Personal autonomy, along with knowledge, is essential in resisting against oppression as people can identify and pursue their own way, their good for themselves. Influenced either by internal and external factors, personal autonomy is in tandem with independence of mind, strength of will, good judgment, the courage to make personal choices, and the competency to envisage (Snow, 2002: 60).

Framed as a masterpiece not because of an external fact or a value ascribed to it, but the constitutive aspect the work itself owns, *My Name is Red* is a story of both murder and love set in İstanbul, dating back to the 1590s, dominated by the Ottoman reign. Aiming for reinforcement of his domination and the Ottoman supremacy over both the East and the West, the Sultan privily arranges to send an illuminated book to the Venetian Doge and ordains the miniatures to be painted in accordance with the European manner by virtue of the Islamic millennium. Leading to an uproar amidst the miniaturists, finding the Western methods in painting enigmatic, and among the Islamic zealots against painting regarding it as heresy (Almas, 2012: 75), the desire of the Sultan for supremacy results in a circle of mystery to be unravelled. Sultan's desire also can be related to the pre-Oedipal stage and his pre-Oedipal experiences. However, as this study aims to interpret the subjugation of women, examining how Shekure's life changes and what imbricated plagues lead her to strive against forms the basis of the present study.

As the main concern of this study is to dismantle how women subjection is experienced in different settlements in the light of the aspects ingrained in psychoanalytic feminism, this chapter is to elaborate on the portrayal of Shekure, the female protagonist in a historical novel, *My Name is Red* (2001) revolving around a murder mystery set in İstanbul in 1591. In alignment with the primary dynamics of psychoanalytic feminism, Shekure and her relation with the male characters including her father named Enishte Effendi, her two sons, Shevket and Orhan as well as her future husband, Black in addition to her previous husband, his father and another prominent male figure, his brother Hasan is to be scrutinized with reference to the assumptions that can be grounded on the pre-Oedipal stage and Shekure's overarching role in parenting likely to result in and result from her subjugation respectively.

3.1. Between Tradition and Modernity: The Making of Orhan Pamuk's Literary Identity

Building a broad literary reputation as the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2006, Orhan Pamuk is one of the foremost authors of the 21st century accompanying other Nobel recipients including Harold Pinter, Doris Lessing, Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul and John Maxwell Coetzee (Persky, 2011: 79). Prompting an increase in Pamuk's international recognition, the publication of *The White Castle* in English language in 1990 marks the beginning of his popularity which has increased incessantly (Hunter, 2010: 269). He ascribes his popularity to the fading away of the previous generation of authors. He articulates that there is a correlation between undertaking a social responsibility and awareness of the contribution literature makes to morality and politics (Gurría-Quintana, 2005). Juxtaposing Christians with Muslims, secularist Westernizers with fundamentalist traditionalists as depicted in *Nights of Plague* (Gates, 2022), exhibiting contrasts through the dichotomy of East and West as produced as to the competing painting style in *My Name is Red* (Javelidze, 2023) Pamuk indulges his readers in a journey throughout which they can explore a great variety of themes ranging from political and religious tension to identity and the self within myriad components of historical and cultural domains.

Amidst the novels he has authored since the very beginning of 1980s, his sixth novel, *My Name is Red* (1998), the winner of the 2003 Impac Dublin prize, occupies a

great position contributing to his literary recognition (Persky, 2011: 79). It marks a watershed in Pamuk's novelist career since it is precursor of the novels he authored afterwards and differentiates from the previous ones in terms of its content and portraits. Integrating the Western characteristics of the novel with the Eastern tradition of narration, the author outlines his narrative on a Western art challenging an Eastern soul. He greatly contributes not only to Turkish literature but also to the world literature through employing a multinarrative technique personifying animals, colours, objects and situating them as narrators along with human characters, that's why, it is deemed to differentiate from the previous ones and stand for a transition to the following novels (Demir, 2016: 86). McGaha (2008) articulates that *My Name is Red*'s striking difference from Pamuk's previous novels lie in its "shameless, uninhibited celebration of sexuality" (146). In her review of Orhan Pamuk's *Memories of Distant Mountains*, Poyrazlar (2025) notes that Pamuk creates a landscape representing his mind as the writer-painter and including what he is engaged with or involved in, his relationship, house, and travels. He is keen on presenting shadowy sides of people and the city (The Guardian). McGaha's construal of *MNR* can be interpreted within Pamuk's depiction of the characters with the darker sides, and he might have dared to exceed the limit typically confining narration.

Ecevit (2004) specifies that *My Name is Red* (1998) is Pamuk's most lively and engaging work. Constructed on pluralism in postmodernism, the novel is comprised of various features of art, besides amusement, of various topics including "love and sexuality, abstract and concrete, painting and text, art and life, East and West, humanism and theocracy, God and evil, pornographic slang and Quran verses" (36-37). An interrogative discursive analysis of art within a comparative approach to the oriental miniatures representing 16th century Ottoman with Renaissance painting is entangled with a combination of a "whodunit thriller" and a love story. The tension between two ideological dimensions of painting apparent as artistic creativity and merging history outlines the flow of the narration. Through the polyphonic narrative style, the novel's abundant thematic lines are conveyed (Javelidze, 2023). Ekphrasis, as embodied through oral description of an image, an object, or artwork in *MNR*, is instrumental in the investigation and elucidation of the murder (Racolta, 2020: 227). From different angles, the reader is exposed to some clues to become acquainted with the murder, the killer, and explore the love story evolving towards a space of identificatory love.

As underpinned by the Swedish Academy in 2006, Pamuk reflects Turkey's cosmopolitan heritage in his work, and he ends up with symbols through which he conveys the clash between cultures discernibly. Employed as the context within which modern Turkish dilemmas are translated in his fiction, the Ottoman Empire is contextualized as a long period of interchange between the values of Eastern and Western parts. As is the case in the works of the prominent postmodern writers, including Italo Calvino, Salman Rushdie, and Umberto Eco, Pamuk's work exemplifies complex narrative strategies and massively allusive prose. He employs the Western literary form in his novels to resuscitate the Ottoman past, thus reflecting the cultural interchange (Hunter, 2010: 269), as is the case in *Istanbul: Memories of a City* (2005), mostly featuring an autobiographical novel in which he mentions the skirmish and the interplay between the modern and the past. Turkish identity is represented allegorically in his novels, including *The White Castle* (1990)" and *My Name is Red* (2001).

Pamuk's global fame has been cemented by the Nobel Prize and he has been the bestselling writer of Turkey with his novels published in different languages (Hunter, 2010: 269). In *The Naive and the Sentimental Novelist*, Pamuk (2011) underscores that a synchronic sense of being naive and sentimental provides an author with a quality of writing well (71), so his success can be elaborated on his conformity with the qualities of a good writer he outlines. He has a sparkling competence in integrating fiction with real-life, too. Pamuk is inspired by historical and literary figures, as is the case in *Nights of Plague*, loomed over by the presence of Abdul Hamid II and the imaginary Sherlock Holmes, exemplifying his creativity for making up from what history furnishes him with (Gates, 2022, The New York Times). Pamuk's narrators speak akin to the "Meddah," the storyteller, in old Istanbul coffee-houses (Javelidze, 2023). The narrator of the novel is also assigned as the author of the novel in some of his novels, whereby Pamuk portrays fictional characters equated with the real ones. In the introduction to *Nights of Plague* (2021), Pamuk's character Mina Mingher, as the author of the novel, elucidates that it is both a historical fiction and the novelization of history (11), that's why his characters resemble historical personages like Commander Kamil, representing Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Likewise, in *MNR*, the author refers to the historical figures such as Nakkash Osman and Velican who lived during the 16th century. The narrator sometimes addresses the reader and includes him/her in the novel (Ergeç, 2020: 1816). Both *My Name is Red* and *Nights of Plague* are works of historiographic metafiction

that operates to posit itself, as articulated by Hutcheon (1989), as autonomous fiction within historical discourse. It requires an intricate web of mutual implication and interaction by configuring a relationship between history and fiction in a postmodern context (4) as can be traced in these novels.

The spearhead of new dimensions within Turkish novelistic art, the author of major works translated into almost fifty languages and the winner of international awards, Pamuk has been likened to the precursors of modern literature such as Borges, Eco, and Calvino. He confessed that he devoured the works of the authors he admired and desired to resemble most. Contrary to the conventional idea, which prioritizes Hemingway and Steinbeck, Pamuk ascribes the creativity of the novel of the Western World to “Joyce, Proust, Woolf, Faulkner, and Nabakov.” Rather than the idolized or conventionally adopted ways, Pamuk strives to make use of influences and create an authentic and original novelistic art (Halman, 2013: 183). The world literature canon has situated Orhan Pamuk as a bridge metaphorically, which represents connection, harmony, unity, and reconciliation within a universal context. Deconstructing the metaphor of the bridge and displacing fictions of him, Gürses (2023) explores the multiplicity of new metaphors, symbols, and allegories in Pamuk’s narration to depict the non-constant changes and the representative mission of literature in line with these ongoing changes accordingly as exemplified in his novels (Nijdam, 2025).

As for the context of the novel, set mainly in imperial İstanbul, the cultural component of *My Name is Red* (2001) stretches from the locales of Anatolia and İstanbul, to Persia, Venice and Central Asia. Though set in the sixteenth century, *MNR* enframes a multivalent gesture reminiscent of present-day Turkey. Varying in multifold translations including God and man, life and death, man and woman, second and third dimension, object and consciousness, Pamuk's work thematizes the "Ottoman" not merely aiming to refer to history but rather, to aesthetic terms of form and content inclusive of gaining novel insight into selfhood and identity subversion along with the critical review of Turkist national culture (Göknar, 2006: 36-37). The heteroglossic interaction depicted in the Ottoman along with the contemporary contexts in *MNR*, not only East and West are blended in the global dialogic aspect, but also juxtaposition of tradition and modernity as well as religious conservatism and secularism are contrasted (Ali and Hagood, 2012: 506). Akin to *White Castle*, *My Name is Red* embodies a distinctive comparison between European and Ottoman theories of knowledge from the

perspective of art. It exemplifies the clash between Ottoman and European through art in two different aspects, which results in the conflict between the artists of the Renaissance following the new realism of representational art of the West, and of the artists who are the followers of the Islamic miniaturist convention. The plot of the novel is based on the murder mystery driven by this conflict between the court artists responsible for illustrating a text for the Sultan of the 1590s (Hunter, 2010: 270).

As aforementioned, Orhan Pamuk includes Islam and its culture in his works, and accordingly, the female protagonist of *MNR* stands for a Muslim woman representing the essence of women in Islamic culture. Through Shekure's voice, Pamuk depicts how a woman can voice out her own thoughts contrary to the stereotypical Islamic woman. Therefore, examining the women in Islamic culture is a prerequisite for a meticulous study of the novel. Since literature mirrors the values of a culture in a society, this novel reflects the dominant perspectives towards women in that period. Unlike the strict Islamic tradition Shekure has been involved in, she counterattacks the inferior role and place assigned to women. The women of Eastern or, in general, Islamic countries struggle for freedom and equality to a much greater extent compared to the West. Notwithstanding the rise of popular feminist figures in Western countries, the women of Islamic cultures have objected to the rigid rules they are exposed to by the patriarchy (Rajan, 2019: 1-2). A well-known Turkish aphorism-"a hand above her head and a baby in her stomach"- illustrates how a task of taming and controlling is assigned to men empowered to subjugate women (Robins, 2009: 189). This structure positions men as dominant figures, while defining women primarily through their roles as obedient wives and mothers. In alignment with this, Shekure exemplifies how females are harshly under the effect of the patriarchal structure that can be metaphorically expressed as "a hand above her head" and also expected to fulfill her role as a mother both by bearing children and raising them, which clarifies how "womanhood" is identified in the patriarchal context.

3.2. Identificatory Love and Female Agency of Shekure

In *On Culture and Literature*, Mudrick (1970) specifies that novelists and playwrights along with social reformers and journalists were necessarily assigned to be liable to record what industrialization and urbanization induced since social sciences

were on the verge of infancy in the 19th century (44). As a novelist, not a recorder of industrialization or urbanization of the 19th century but mostly a recorder of the history and culture, Orhan Pamuk partakes in the following century and, on the basis of a comprehensive and painstaking study, he records the period his novels are set in. Through *My Name is Red*, the cultural and historical contexts of the sixteenth century can be explored, and gender relations and power dynamics can be examined within Pamuk's narration, tracing the records of the period.

Identification is described as the earliest form of an emotional bond with another person. For a little boy, his father is a role model to pursue so he would like to be like him and replace him in every domain. This is unrelated to any kind of sexual tendency and an utterly representative of masculinity (Freud, 1949: 60). Contrary to Lacanian theory, the concept of identificatory love Jessica Benjamin offers highlights intersubjectivity and mutual recognition, enabling the subject to develop a sense of self drawing on the identification with the beloved. In Shekure's relationship with Black, identificatory love emerges out of Shekure's struggle for agency and recognition, exceeding Ottoman cultural restraints. As a prominent figure within the psychoanalytic feminist framework, Benjamin's theory departs from Freud's Oedipal model and redefines love through a claim that it requires identifying with the other without negligence or loss of her subjectivity. *The Bonds of Love* foregrounds novel aspects she offers. Remarkably distinct in focus, identificatory love underscores the need for connection and independence whilst Lacan posits "object petit a" as an unattainable goal.

Shekure's identificatory love for Black is prompted by her desire for agency and independence, that's why her love cannot be equated with projection yet self formation within a relational process. As a widow, Shekure is required to maintain her life depending on male figures; however, she is simultaneously overwhelmed by her desire for autonomy and "potential suitors." Benjamin draws attention to a "paradox of recognition" triggered by the desire, which contrasts with each other, since women seek connection, whereas they struggle for their independence. Shekure makes up her mind to marry Black in spite of societal pressures, representing the paradox experienced through identificatory love. She asserts her agency through her own choice of partner, but she is also in pursuit of connection, which can be realized only if Black recognizes her emotional and intellectual depth.

In *Shame and Sexual Politics* (1982), Benjamin refers to this paradox:

The problem of women's unique relationship to her own oppression is greater than any individual experience. Our dependency ties us to those who have oppressed or denied us by the bonds of love" (157). The question of dependency between men and women - not only of violence and objectification, but the way that domination is interspersed with love and reciprocity in intimate relationships - must once again become an aspect of our reflection and struggle (159).

Within psychoanalysis, identification is deemed to be a crucial mechanism that forms the basis of a sense of self a child develops through internalizing the images significant others represent and the roles they undertake. Amidst the significant others, parents occupy a fundamental position. In line with the Oedipus complex coined within Freudian theory, the child's social and sexual identity is formed within a triangular dynamic comprised of the child and parents, the mother and the father (Freud, 1949: 117). Benjamin (1988) posits a critical argument on this. "Identificatory love" provides an essential approach to view love from a different perspective and explore the influence of gender, identity, and power on love. Love has been necessarily identified with patriarchal ideals in the patriarchy, paving the way for the subjugation of women. Prioritizing the feminist aspect and exceeding the stereotypes serving to male-centricism, psychoanalytic feminism posits love as a space wherein autonomy, self-expression, and mutual recognition are aimed at. Rather than serving to women's subjugation, love is framed as a tool for liberation and beyond.

Black represents a mirror Shekure employs to reflect on and form her own identity, therefore, her relationship with Black demonstrates a form of identificatory love. Shekure's view of Black can be interpreted through his tie with her father, Enisthe, so her love for Black is interrelated with her father. For Shekure, her father is the ideal person with his distinct artistic and intellectual legacy. She identifies with features including wisdom, creativity, and cultural preservation that are often considered unlikely for a woman in the patriarchal structure of Ottoman society. Black turns out to be a watershed in her life since she strives to reclaim agency in the patriarchy, hence her love for Black paves the way for her internalization of Black's characteristics, thus bolstering her own identity, "I" as a subject as underscored by Lacan (2006).

Regardless of gender, a person cannot be excluded from sociocultural elements of society, which are paramount in shaping and maintaining interpersonal relations. As one of the prominent psychologists of the early twentieth-century with his legacy influential on the social theory, L. S. Vygotsky has contributed to various disciplines

and his elucidation concerning the formation of mind also leads to the upspring of the current theoretical developments in which cultural, social and historical circumstances are taken into consideration (Daniels, et. al., 2007: 1). Accordingly, culture and history with their multilayer forms have been amidst the major forces to take into consideration while critically engaging with a character, situation or event. Central to this chapter is Shekure's identificatory love and quest for agency, yet what induces her to experience these is of great importance in order to find out the reasons lurking behind women's oppression. As per the framework of psychoanalytic feminism, exploration of how gender, identity, along with desire and power dynamics, operate both within the conscious and unconscious experiences of Shekure and her interaction with the male characters is fundamental. Confined into a triangle of personal desire, societal expectations and patriarchal constraints, Shekure is in a psychological turmoil that can be explored in her complicated feelings toward desire, love, marriage and autonomy. These can be construed as the reflection of how unconscious drives, social structures, and family relations, as offered by psychoanalytic feminism, are instrumental in shaping the female protagonist's psyche and also her experiences. As Bailly (2009) illuminates, one of the primary preoccupations of Lacan was the evolution of the individual human psyche, which is comprised of conscious and unconscious elements inseparably, leading to the "birth of subject" (28), hence, Shekure's agency draws on both the conscious and unconscious.

Female subjectivity and identity formation are two terms challenging to assert within a patriarchal society. Navigating a world constructed by male authority, Shekure attempts to carve out an identity of her own, liberating herself from patriarchal constraints. From a psychoanalytic feminist perspective, her internal conflicts concerning desire, love and autonomy can be elucidated. She is aware of her increasing love for Black, yet she is also a married woman, even if she has not heard from her husband for a long time; therefore, she needs to negotiate her own desire and societal norms. Having received Black's letter, she ensures that he is in love with her as he was in his childhood, but disregarding her desire, she says: "I'm a married woman. I'm waiting for my husband" (Pamuk, 2001: 136). However, she also accepts Hasan's (her brother-in-law) letters, encouraging him as he is in love with her, too. Esther warns her to be wary of Hasan since he intends to marry her by establishing that Shekure's husband, namely his older brother, has died (136). As a female whose heart belongs to

Black, albeit married to another man away, she also receives Hasan's letters, reflecting her unconscious desire, whereas she says she is a married woman, embodying her conformity to the societal norms in a patriarchal structure that depicts her psyche as adjusted to obey these norms. This tension can be elaborated on the conflict nourished by desire and autonomy, threatened by external factors, including family expectations and societal norms.

Her ambivalence about love, desire, and marriage, in line with her conscious and unconscious processes, appears in her question: "Fine but which one will become my husband?" And as a response to Esther's construal implying that her heart knows the answer, Shekure reveals her ambivalence once more, which can be read as a reflection of her position surrounded by her desire and the societal norms and expectations: "...I don't understand what my heart is saying that I'm dispirited" (137). Her conversation with Black expresses a deeper commentary of her own on love and marriage, reinforcing how her subjectivity is formed on the basis of societal norms commodifying marriage not as a romantic bond or fulfilment but as security:

The truth is contentment. Love and marriage are but a means to obtaining it: a husband, a house, children, a book. Can't you see that even in my state, with a missing husband and a deceased father, I'm better off than you in your isolation? I'd die without my sons, with whom I spend my days laughing, tussling and loving. Moreover, since you long for me even in my present predicament, since you secretly ache to spend the night with me—even if not in the same bed—under the same roof with my father's body and my unruly children (...) (Pamuk, 2001: 306).

Repression and desire, amidst the key terms within psychoanalytic feminism, manifest through Shekure's experiences. Within patriarchal limits, a woman is required to act in line with the norms and repress her desire as embodied in Shekure's rejection of the sexual act as Black desires and disregarding his disappointment, she shows her anger both by her words and acts:

"... when he abruptly tried to force me to perform that vulgar act that even Kipchak women and concubines who tell stories at the public baths wouldn't do, I froze in astonishment and indecision" (Pamuk, 2001: 237).

This refusal can be interpreted as Shekure's agency and her rejection of oppression and subjugation. However, prior to this, she conforms to her desire and does not thwart Black from touching her, which reveals her sexual agency. This conflict can be read as a negotiation between desire and societal norms, leading to her ambivalence,

apparent in her acts and attitudes. Furthermore, it embodies that the unconscious desire is confined by the patriarchal limits and repressed or regulated in accordance with the societal norms.

Shekure's unconscious is uncovered through her frequent dreams of her husband's death and a corpse during four years he is away, battling the Persians (225). Her internal dialogues unveil:

Do you know I have the sinking feeling I've fallen in love with his incompetence and his melancholy childlike glances? At a time when it would've been more appropriate to be irate with him, instead, I pitied him. "Oh, my poor child," a voice inside me said, "you suffer such torment and are still so utterly incompetent." I felt so protective of him that I might've even made a mistake, I might've actually given myself to that spoiled little boy (Pamuk, 2001: 284).

Her unconscious is in line with the maternal subjectivity and adopts a protective approach toward even her beloved. Black is portrayed as an incompetent figure with childlike glances in her unconscious when she is overwhelmed by her emotions. Shekure's subjectivity seemingly reflects her internalization of the patriarchy whereas she is likely to contest it at the psychic level as can be inferred from her utterance: "I'm just struggling not to be unhappy and to protect my children, whereas you're stubbornly trying to prove yourself. It's not because you love me" (Pamuk, 2001: 469). Aware of her subjectivity confined by her position as a woman and her role as a mother, Shekure articulates the case, whereas Black represents the power and struggles to prove it in alignment with the superiority of the symbolic.

As a reflection of her unconscious scenario, her psyche induces her to fantasize to grapple with her internal desires and also anxieties triggered while waiting for her husband's return:

(...) I'd fantasize that a man stricken with love would finally be roused to write a letter that could stir the heart of an intelligent woman like myself—beautiful, well-bred and widowed, yet with her honor still intact—and set it pounding. And to discover that the letter was from one of the usual suitors, would, at the very least, fortify my resolve and forbearance to await my husband's return (Pamuk, 2001: 138).

Shekure asserts her agency and exhibits intelligence along with strategic thinking. Subverting the male-dominance, she attempts to silence Black: "He made an overture to speak, but I easily silenced him with a look—as though this were something I'd done countless times before" (303). She employs strategic thinking in order to reject subjugation:

I did not reply to Hasan. Even if he was actually going to the judge today, I didn't believe that the men he and his father were assembling would raid our

house immediately. If he were indeed ready to take such action he'd have done so without writing a letter or awaiting my reply. He's surely awaiting my response, and, when it doesn't arrive, it'll drive him mad (Pamuk, 2001: 222-223).

Over the centuries, the experience of personal freedom by Turkish women has fluctuated in response to changes in dynastic rule, religious influence, and cultural norms. Marking a remarkable change in the fifteenth century, the Ottoman state converted from a frontier principality into an Islamic empire, and in accordance with this conversion, the status of women began to fashion itself. This change should not lead to the arousal of thoughts such as the seclusion of the Ottoman woman, after she was in *purdah* and thus maintained her life like a prisoner. Although her life was mostly spent behind closed doors and limited to a great extent, she was allowed to contact the women outside the family (Davis, 1986: xiii-xiv). Within this context, the social life of the female protagonist, Shekure exemplifies the characteristics of women's life as she has contact with Esther every now and then. As for the males outside the family as well as inside the family, how relationship is constructed can be construed on the basis of mothering and the pre-Oedipal stage during which mother attachment is primary as alleged to have the leading role in women's oppression by psychoanalytic feminism.

As one of the main concerns of psychoanalytic feminism is unequal parenting, on which women's oppression can be elaborated on, Shekure's motherhood can be read as a central facet of her identity shaped in line with the gendered expectations within the patriarchy. Her interaction with her sons, Shevket and Orhan, embodies maternal subjectivity. The absence of Shekure's mother and the absence of her husband, namely Shevket and Orhan's father, can be juxtaposed, and paternal and maternal subjectivity can be examined comparatively. Her empathy and sympathy with them depict the psychoanalytic feminist approach, which situates women as caregiver full of affection towards the other:

My poor forlorn and fatherless son, my poor solitary Shevket, you're so alone in this immense world. I thought of myself as a small child, like Shevket, a child all alone in the world, and remembered how once I'd been held in my dear father's arms the way Orhan was now being held by Black. But unlike Orhan, I wasn't awkward in my father's embrace, like a fruit unaccustomed to its tree (Pamuk, 2001: 330).

Resembling "a fruit unaccustomed to its tree," Shekure's sons are introduced to Black as unfamiliar with obedience as Shekure has reared them on her own without their father (328). Likewise, representing the position of a father within the patriarchy, Black is described as a figure to teach Shekure's sons what a beating from Hell means if they do not listen to him (330). With her missing husband and deceased father,

Shekure's attitude towards her sons, her attachment explicit in her expression "I'd die without my sons," accompanied by her protective manner, can be interpreted as the intersection of gender roles, which necessarily becomes a part of identity in the case of a lack of a parent.

Representing the symbolic order in the patriarchy, power and patriarchal structures that dominate Shekure are exemplified through her experiences. The novel foregrounds the coercive structures women are surrounded by in the Ottoman society and illustrates how Shekure is exposed to the constraints defining her marital status, autonomy, and inheritance. The presence of her father-in-law and brother-in-law (Hasan) poses a threat to her autonomy, so her husband's family means imprisonment for her.

In the eyes of the judge, it is my husband and his family who succeed my father as my guardians. This was the case even before his death, for according to the judge my husband is still alive. It was only because Hasan tried to take advantage of me during his older brother's absence, a failed assault that embarrassed my father-in-law, that I was allowed to return to my father's home though not officially a widow. But now that my father is dead and I am without even a brother, there is no question that my only possible guardians are my husband's brother and my father-in-law. They've already been scheming to have me returned to their home, coercing my father, and threatening me. Once they hear my father is dead, they won't hesitate to take official action. My only hope to prevent this is to conceal my father's death. Perhaps in vain, for they may be the ones behind the crime (Pamuk, 2001: 303-304).

She is required to act in a strategic way to maintain her agency; therefore, she conceals her father's death (304). The symbolic order manifests in Shekure's marital status as a decisive force comprised of male figures from the Sultan to the SheikhuIslam:

Considering that my husband left me without alimony and hasn't returned from war for four years, even judges of our Hanefi creed couldn't grant me a divorce. The Üsküdar judge, however, knowing how the number of women in my situation is increasing each day, is more sympathetic and so—with a nod from Our Excellency the Sultan and the SheikhuIslam—the judge occasionally allows his proxy of the Shafii creed to rule in his place, thereby granting divorces left and right to women like me, including conditions of alimony (Pamuk, 2001: 306-307).

Sex is influential on definition, expansion, construction and constraint of experiences and opportunities since society gives meaning to the biological or physical features that differentiate males from females or vice versa. On the basis of these meanings ascribed to gender, people make choices and decide on their beliefs, actions, and assign meaning to their experiences, which can lead to major controversial consequences, such as happiness and misery or life and death. The definition of gender

as a cultural construct forms the basis of the suggestion that it is not gifted by nature or biology but rather by nurture and culture (Mascia-Lees and Black, 2000: 1-2). In *I am a tree*, Pamuk (2013) underscores the stereotypes regarding the gender with the hook of the chapter and asks a rhetoric question interrogating why a crying man alarms us, and indicates the difference between women and men through his construal of a crying woman as an extraordinary but emotional and pathetic part of life whereas a crying man fills us with a sense of helplessness and gives the impression of having reached the end of what can be done (13). How the position of culture and nurture can be elucidated is of great importance. In *MNR*, how Shekure is identified with her role as a mother, and also when she considers her “self,” how she turns into “other” exemplifies how psyche transubstantiates an individual.

The female was perceived not to be an autonomous individual but a means of reproduction, the incubator of the race of men. In the view of the Bible and Aristotle, what seems to be converged on is that either by God or Nature, women operate as a vehicle thanks to which men had the chance to reproduce himself (Proctor, 1990: 3). In *My Name is Red*, Shekure reproduces herself and recognizes her self “I” through her identificatory love for Black, thus subverting the conventional perspective positing women as a vehicle to benefit from and utilize as an object. Psychoanalytic feminism contends the contradictory arguments are in contrast to the ones perpetually accepted as ancient knowledge. Hashemipour (2017) notes that “The joy of living” and “retaining hope” are offered as the implied theme of *My Name is Red* (46). This can be explained by the novel’s disruptive characteristic that shakes the stereotype.

3.3. The Male Gaze as Narrative and Critique: Objectification and Subversion in Pamuk’s Ottoman World

Whilst a woman’s destiny was confined by her function of reproduction and the relevant spheres, a man’s destiny was liberated from any confinements. Once more, emphasis was put on “individuality,” the male destiny contributed more to man. Man was identified as an active and productive entity and regarded as demonstrating initiative to go ahead, conduct great deeds, or deem over thoughts. On the other hand, women functioned to maintain the continuation of the species in accordance with the reason for her existence. She was nothing herself but supposed to give birth and look for

the generation of males (Proctor, 1990: 4-5). Patriarchal societies have conventionally been covetous of the privileges granted to males and afraid to be deprived of them. This permanent desire to keep male superiority causes fear and leads males to perceive the female sex with exaggerated power and influence (38). This is the main characteristic that defines patriarchal societies, requiring women to submit to the Symbolic order.

As per the male gaze theory, how *My Name is Red* depicts Shekure from masculine and heterosexual perspectives sheds light on the portrayal of women as passive subjects to meet male desire. The novel foregrounds this dynamic obviously, but simultaneously it critiques the male gaze and problematizes it through revealing its oppressive force. Central to the reading of *MNR* through a psychoanalytic feminist lens is the female protagonist; hence, how she is viewed from a masculine perspective unveils whether the male gaze is instrumental in her secondary position as a woman in the patriarchy. As can be traced in numerous parts of the novel, Shekure is remarkably described in terms of her beauty, physical appearance, and desirability. She is also controlled by men. Seemingly, her physical attractiveness is idealized, but it also leads to personal and political power struggles as she is appealing to two males at the same time.

Apart from the male characters, the male gaze theory elucidates how Shekure is depicted by the narrator. The male gaze theory cannot be equated with erotic desire, but it also functions as a mode of control and objectification. Shekure is observed from a position integrating admiration, dominance, and possession. Shekure, the central female figure in the novel, is introduced to the readers by a male author through the eyes of male characters, including Black, her brother-in-law, and the others surrounding her, and their desire and admiration are embodied through their gazes. Exposed to objectification of the male gaze, situating her as an object of desire, Shekure can not exert her autonomy till she prioritizes her self-determination, triggered by her desire.

Sexism unequivocally has occupied a pivotal place in the subjugation of women, and it has been institutionalized as a system of domination, yet it is influential to some extent and has never predetermined the fate of women; hence, the term “oppression” has implied the absence of choices (Bailey and Gayle, 1993: 409). Shekure is offered limited choices under the patriarchy and by the assignments of motherhood, she is confined, and likewise, with an emphasis on what is priority for a woman, she is

supposed to deal with her children, family, and what they need. What Shekure is exposed to by her brother-in-law can be perceived in this circle, namely the absence of choices since Shekure has been provided with no other option but to wait for her husband until he comes back after long years following his departure. However, Hasan makes mention of this as a must, but without suppressing his desire for her, he reveals his reality and how he perceives Shekure as an object, exemplifying the objectification of women dating back to the pre-Oedipal period in accordance with the criticism put forward by psychoanalytic feminists. The letter sent by Hasan telling how he is burning with desire and his dreams as a reflection of repressed feelings he has for Shekure, his brother's wife ends with his emphasis on that she is still married to his brother so required to be bound to their household:

Shekure appears on the stage manipulatively, and in *MNR*, she characterizes various facets of women, yet one of the most upfront facets is the one that suits the typical woman, characterizing a secondary position with regard to men, adapted to a life within the cultural norms and expected to maintain such a life obediently. Concerning the issue problematized within this study, why Shekure is posited as secondary and how low order ascribed to her contributes to male-centricism are to be studied through the primary tenets of psychoanalytic feminism. Once analyzed on the basis of psychoanalytic feminism, Shekure's subjugation can be elaborated on through the perspectives adopted by males vis-a-vis the early childhood experience, culminating in the gender difference nourished by culture and economy ritually.

Not only as a narrative device but also a means of critical commentary on the domineering dynamics influential on gender, identity, and all the elements of society in line with the Symbolic order in the Ottoman Empire, Orhan Pamuk employs the male gaze in a way which depicts how women are defined and confined. Primarily through the portrayal of Shekure and her prescribed roles constructed on her interaction with the male characters in the novel, Pamuk simultaneously explores and conveys his critical approach to the patriarchal ideologies, reducing the female figures merely to objects to be possessed. It is likely that the marginalization of women and their secondary position in the Ottoman Empire is reflected in the novel through narrative voices of various characters, amidst whom female figures occupy a marginal number, remarkably less than male voices.

In line with the male dominance, Orhan Pamuk reproduces stereotypes of the period and constructs a narrative on gendered power relations. Male dominance overwhelms female agency in that setting, albeit Shekure individually subverts this. Through Shekure, Pamuk provides readers with a subversive aspect by underscoring female agency and showing that they do not disappear entirely even if they are subject to an oppressive attitude in every domain of society. Portraying Shekure as a courageous female figure who attempts to challenge the constructed system, he exemplifies she does exist as a subject regardless of the male gaze objectifying her. The reader is invited to develop a critical aspect and reconsider the power dynamics that identify or shape gender, identity, and practices in society, which posit women as objects and seeks the ways to perpetuate this by means of Shekure, employed as one of the narrative voices. Set in the Ottoman Empire, as a reflection of the period, *My Name is Red* is necessarily dominated by the male gaze in the familial, cultural, and societal contexts; yet, Orhan Pamuk's portrayal of the female protagonist proves that he appreciates female agency and deconstructs the stereotypes by encouraging females to reduce male-centrism. What configures Shekure as a subject as well as an object is her intelligence and manipulative attitude while negotiating her relationships. She appears to be a decision-maker operating as an agent robust enough to articulate her entity and challenging the perception that she is just an object to be subjugated.

MNR is a multi-narrated novel, as aforementioned, that paves the way for gaining insight into the different lenses of the characters, both males and females, and helps readers construe the nexus in relation to gender. Upon this narrative style, the scrutiny of the female protagonist with her overarching role in the construction of this analysis can be conducted soundly. As Ergeç (2020) underscores in her study analyzing *MNR* through a new historicist lens, typically women have been secondary figures qualifying as "mother," "wife," "daughter," "sister" in the patriarchy whereas men have been in charge of leading roles. Dovetailing with this, the ongoing historiography characterizes a patriarchal feature. The New Historicists critique the marginalization of women and emphasize that they should be involved in historiography. Pamuk's assignment of Shekure as the narrator elucidates Shekure's emotional side and reflects her mentality, instrumental in the interpretation of the events. Pamuk foregrounds his critical aspect on male-dominant structure and addresses the issues women suffer from

in the chapter narrated by “meddah,” “I, Woman” (1810) so adopts a woman-friendly stance.

From the very beginning, the culture a male child is exposed to supposedly values maleness whilst the case is vice versa for females who are devalued. This elucidates the aspects of women’s oppression. The male child raises awareness of his male identity gradually and tends to fulfill a rapid separation from the mother or woman, and excludes his identity from any female figures and simultaneously attempts to achieve an emotional separation to some extent, too. Lacking emotional satisfaction as a result of the separation in childhood results in the emotional carryover dating back to the early childhood period, and feelings including love, hate, need, and possessiveness trigger a man to search for a woman who belongs to him and meets his emotional needs under his control and is granted obedience as well. Overwhelmed by a strong desire to dominate, a man is also uncomfortable with the recognition of the other and finds it challenging. Black’s desire can be expressed on this aspect. As for the female child, born into a culture appreciative of maleness, she does not differ from the male child and, with the same aspect as the male child, discovers her identity as female. Bearing both negative and positive feelings about the mother or the woman and also about herself, she ambivalently allocates her potential to resist against social subordination (Oliver, 2000: 97-110). In order to deal with her emotional carryover, she highlights her potential for according recognition mostly obediently with males in sexual attractiveness and reciprocally with females in kinship maintenance besides friendship. In brief, rather than replacing their mother with a substitute, the female rebuilds the early infant and woman relationship through becoming a mother (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2018 : 564). Shekure’s bond with her sons can be related to this aspect, and the expectations of the patriarchy from her depict objectification of women by the male gaze, ignoring the entity of women. Haaken (2008) underscores that the dominant part is more inclined to disregard the subjectivity of the other because it does not need to consider the needs of the “other” (205).

As aforementioned, the tradition of object relations in psychoanalysis forms the ground on which Nancy Chodorow draws, and rather than rejection, she suggests reconsideration of Freud’s work and alleges that his writings provide a sound treatment of how females are posited in the male psyche, which regards women not as subjects but as objects. Since Freud’s account of women is based on his lenses, necessarily the

perspective of a man is unveiled through his works and thus psychodynamic elucidation of how women are viewed and likewise how femininity is interpreted in the masculine psyche suggest that women are deemed to be objects (Chodorow, *Rethinking Freud on Women* in Kivisto, 2000: 350). Not Shekure's but the storyteller's view of women reflects the male lenses and how women are regarded as objects towards whom "feelings of lust" are nursed (Pamuk, 2001: 566) and with each body part enchanting for men, women seem to function to satisfy manliness (569).

In *The Museum of Innocence* (2010), Pamuk elucidates on the sexual oppression of women and underscores that cultural context plays a role in determining which is the oppression and which is love. "Serious intentions" along with a portrait of a decent and responsible man can neutralize the case, and an action can transfer from oppression into love (11). He also argues that there is a correlation between wearing Western-style clothes and freedom for sexuality (63-64). Considerably different from the setting of *The Museum of Innocence*, *MNR* embodies how the male-domination treats women as objects deprived of agency:

"...We'll be coming with a group of men we've assembled; so let your father be forewarned. Collect your things, you're to come back to this house ..." (Pamuk, 2001: 217). As for female concerns, it does not provide any comparisons between the women of the East and West, but the female protagonist Shekure characterizes a woman of the sixteenth century heavily run by the patriarchy.

Gender oppression has been grounded on various reasons by different theorists, and some argue that it inheres in the family or the state, in capitalist relations of exploitation and work, in subordination amidst women, in male violence, congruity amongst men, and control of women's sexual and reproductive capacities. On the other hand, some theorists argue that women are oppressed owing to the objectification of their bodies, reproductive anatomy, the mothering and the marriage relation, the ideological and cultural forge of women and their involvement in the domestic sphere (Chodorow, 1989: 1). What Shekure is exposed to and forced to do can be read as the objectification of her, expected to submit to the male-domination.

Not only the objectification of females but also how gender difference operates in dominating females is exemplified through this letter since the father stands as a figure to ask for permission in advance in order to take Shekure back to her husband's

house. Moreover, phallocentricism and the role assigned to the father in relation to the phallus are obvious as “...a group of men,” “we” and “father” stand for the phallocentric system and the authority they are associated with on the basis of the phallus. The phallus is identified as the signifier signifying patriarchal character. Since Lacan argues male dominance or patriarchal character is granted culturally, not biologically, and the notion of phallocentrism of feminist origin indicates that “maleness is the natural and mere source of authority and power” (Bertens, 2014: 135). Hasan’s attitude can be ascribed to this Lacanian perspective within psychoanalytic feminism.

The phallocentric system leads to any devilish cases or events to be attributed to females. Even the strange creatures in Shekure’s dream are identified as female, which can be the voice of others as referred to as unconscious by Lacan. From the Lacanian perspective, the period from reality to the mirror stage provides the child with the awareness that the mother is a separate entity once it is realized in the mirror stage that the child is not a part of the mother, thus leading to the concept of the (m)other to occur. In *MNR* (2001), Shekure spends the night in the house of Black’s distant relative and her restless dream is described as follows:

(...) In the bed where I curled up with Hayriye and the children, I was occasionally able to nod off amid the sounds of snoring and coughing, but in my restless dreams, I saw strange creatures and women whose arms and legs had been severed and randomly reattached; they wouldn’t stop chasing me and continually woke me (Pamuk, 2001: 653).

Since dreams are regarded to reflect the unconscious and since Shekure describes her dreams as restless, this can be linked to the chaos a child experiences in the mirror stage in mother and child bond and after she wakes up, she begs Allah for nice dreams like the ones she had in blissful days in her father’s house, reflecting a return to father as a safe figure to replace the chaos and groundbreaking effects of the childhood period. The influence of mothering appears in her approach towards her sons:

(...) Toward morning, the cold roused me and I covered Shevket and Orhan, embracing them, kissing their heads and begging Allah for pleasant dreams, such as I’d enjoyed during the blissful days when I slept in peace under my late father’s roof (Pamuk, 2001: 653).

Additionally, it is obvious that the expression “under father’s roof” can be replaced with “in father’s house” which is described as a safe place, full of bliss and far away from all disruptive situations and alike restless dreams. Father’s house, as a symbol of safety, reflects the patriarchal dominance and the role attributed to men to provide safety with the power they are believed to have, consolidating the alienation of

boys in the pre-Oedipal period and their growing into an expectation for providing safety. Both Dinnerstein and Chodorow think that paternal authority is a system for sons and daughters to turn to so that they can avoid encompassing pre-Oedipal mother. Contrary to Dinnerstein, Chodorow argues that the sexes cope differently with the emotional break from the mother, led by the feeling of powerlessness. Since boys are perceived as sexually other by the mother, they can manage to establish autonomy, separation, and boundaries, whilst daughters develop emotional dependence on relationships, care, and nurturance as they are identified with the mother narcissistically. This review of the role assigned to the pre-Oedipal mother leads to a decrease in the function the father has in psychic differentiation (Elliott, 1994: 122). Shekure's perception of her father's house as a safe place can be based on this aspect of Dinnerstein and Chodorov.

(...) We began to kiss. Embracing him in the dark, still holding the candle in one hand, I took his velvety tongue into my mouth, and my tears, my hair, my nightgown, my trembling and even his body were full of wonder. Warming my nose against his hot cheek was also pleasant; but his timid Shekure restrained herself. As I was kissing him, I didn't let myself go or drop the candle, but thought of my father, who was watching me, and of my former husband, and my children asleep in bed.

"There's somebody in the house," I shouted. I pushed Black away and went out into the hall" (Pamuk, 2001: 472).

Since the phallus is central for language and penis within the context of Lacanian psychoanalysis and even The God is associated with the phallus, Shekure's thinking of his father watching him, of her former husband and also her two sons, all of whom are male identities, can be perceived as a reflection of phallocentrism in accordance with Lacanian aspect. Shekure's attitude is described as "timid," reflecting the effect of women's oppression based on the identification of women lacking confidence as submissive and subjugated.

The conversation between Hasan and Black on the death of Effendi is as follows, reflecting the patriarchal system and the father as the dominant figure and seemingly the owner of Shekure, even if she is an adult. Moreover, the father figure is reflected as a guard since Shekure was safe as long as his father was alive:

"You killed him so we couldn't get married," said Black.

When you learned that he'd permitted Shekure's divorce and our marriage, you lost your mind. Besides, you were furious with Enishte Effendi because he'd encouraged Shekure to return home to live with him. You wanted revenge. As long as he remained alive, you knew you'd never get your hands on Shekure (Pamuk, 2001: 344-345).

Feminism is mainly concerned with the oppression of women with an emphasis on the relations of gender (Barrett, 1980: 8). As is evident in the quotation above, Shekure is in need of security when her father is no longer alive. Patriarchy was initially used by one of the landmarks within the realm of sociology; Max Weber employed it to refer to “a particular form of household organization in which the father dominated other members of an extended kinship network and controlled the economic production of the household” (10). As exemplified in the following quotation, father figure is central in household organization, and why Shekure gets worried about how they live on when her father gets much older and how her children can manage a life without a father can be based on Weber’s point of view:

My mind’s all ajumble, she said suddenly, perhaps afraid of her own thoughts. “It seems that matters will become even more confused. My father’s growing older. What’ll become of us, of these fatherless children? I sense an evil approaching, that the Devil is preparing some mischief for us. Esther, tell me something that will hearten me (Pamuk, 2001: 137).

Language operates in various ways for both sexes, it can be seen as a supporter of male dominance or as a resource for women to resist oppression or maintain their interests or projects. When women and men are compared to in terms of language, women’s language has appeared to reflect the characteristics of women such as prestige consciousness, conservatism, insecurity, connectedness, emotional expressivity, nurturance, sensitivity to others and solidarity. On the other hand, men’s language has been thought to reflect their toughness, competitiveness, competence, independence, hierarchy, control, and lack of affect (Eckert and Ginet, 1992: 1-2). Although they are very young, the conversation between Shevket and Orhan reflects that women are associated with timidity in accordance with the typical features ascribed to females:

“And you’re as timid as a girl,” said Orhan (Pamuk, 2001: 218).

Within the context of feminism, by radical feminists and American writers including Kate Millett, patriarchy is used to refer to the overwhelming position of male, in other words, “as an over-arching category of male dominance” (Barrett, 1980: 11). While announcing Black as their father, Shekure constructs the basis of the patriarchal structure and male-dominance:

“Black is now your father. Let’s see you kiss his hand.”

They did so, quietly and docilely. “Since they’ve grown up without a father, my unfortunate children know nothing of obeying one, of heeding his words while looking into his eyes, or of trusting in him,” I said to Black. “Thus, if they behave disrespectfully, wildly, immaturely or childishly toward you, I know that you’ll show them tolerance at first, understanding that they’ve

been raised without ever once obeying their father, whom they do not even remember (Pamuk, 2001: 328-329).

Shekure reflects women subjugation with her words following the announcement of Black as the father:

(...) From now on Black's word carries more weight than even my own." I faced Black. "If they refuse to listen to you, if they are disobedient or show even the slightest sign of being rude, spoiled or ill-mannered, first warn them, but forgive them," I said, forgoing the mention of beatings that was on the tip of my tongue. "Whatever space I occupy in your heart, they shall share that space, too (Pamuk, 2001: 329).

The earliest contact with an omnipotent mother results in a feeling of fear and loathing of any female things as denoted in the work of Dorothy Dinnerstein, an American cultural theorist. In the work entitled "The Mermaid and the Minotaur (1976)," the psychic effects led by societal nurturing arrangements are included and examined by Dinnerstein. She argues that female mothering contributes to the development of a fear of women and children grow into a social context vigorously deforming gender, in particular, female subjectivity (Elliott, 1994: 118).

Children of both sexes are claimed to get afraid of the power their mothers dominate over them during the infancy and they attempt to find emotional security so they turn to the father. The paternal authority provided by the father is also regarded as an escape from the feelings of helplessness, hate, and rage towards the mother (Elliott, 1994: 118). Since Shekure's sons grow up without their father, they do not need a father to avoid their mother, nor are they afflicted by any negative feelings toward Shekure. What she wants is the paternal authority to be imposed by Black, representing power, and autonomy that can be liable for fulfilling the role of a father in a patriarchal structure.

"What kind of living do you expect to earn?" she asked.

"Will you be able to care for my fatherless children?" (Pamuk, 2001: 244-245).

Contemporary psychoanalytic feminists have focused on the impact asymmetrical relations have upon sexuality. As a consequence of a comprehensive political critique on how the supremacy of the phallus operates in personal individuation, feminists have indicated that "anatomy is not destiny." The political contact of male power and primacy of the phallus within psychoanalytic theory is thus the main concern highlighted. As the essential third term, culture has been under scrutiny in addition to others, including the father and his phallus, leading to disruption

and division in the relationship between the child and mother. A great variety of aspects are considered to impact the reproduction of gender asymmetries (Elliott, 1994: 117). With an elaboration of female sexuality on the basis of penis-envy and a male norm, psychoanalytic theory seemingly contributes to empowering phallocentrism to a great extent. Some feminists argue that this aspect is the ideological ramification of psychoanalytic feminism. This point of view precisely forms the basis on which women are nullified and not regarded as individuals or active agents. Psychoanalysis acts as a part of repression through reinscribing or adopting women in accordance with oppressive sexual norms, thus the patriarchal system is reinforced (116).

Shekure:

Thank God I've seen enough of life to know that such well-being never lasts for long. Black sweetly took my large breasts into his hands. This felt good and, forgetting all, I longed for him to suck on my nipples. But he couldn't quite manage it, because he wasn't all that sure of what he was doing, though his uncertainty didn't prevent him from wanting more. Gradually, fear and embarrassment came between us the longer we embraced. But when he grabbed my thighs to pull me close, pressing his large hardened manliness against my stomach, I liked it at first; I was curious. I wasn't embarrassed. I told myself that an embrace such as we'd had would naturally lead to another such as this. And though I turned my head away, I couldn't take my widening eyes off its size (Pamuk, 2001: 237)

In *Like Subjects, Love Objects*, Benjamin (1995) foregrounds that identificatory love plays a crucial role in the girl's attempt to situate herself as a subject of desire, aligning the identification with difference (59). Any account of women on the basis of a man's views posits women as objects and reflects the woman in the male psyche (Neu, 1991: 238). Regarded as a sex object, a servant geared to fulfill males' desires or deal with housework, a woman turns into an object, a passivized figure to be benefited from, available but not with their own "self" but roles assigned to them, they exist but like a ghost. Within the patriarchal society, the girl lives far away from her family after the marriage, and she is completely supposed to maintain a life centered on her husband as Irigaray denotes in *Sexes and Genealogies* (1987):

She is transplanted into the genealogy of her husband; she must live with him, carry his name, bear his children, etc. The first time that this takes place, the move is recorded as the abduction of a woman by a man-lover. A war breaks out among men to recapture the stolen woman and bring her back to her community of origin (2).

Some women find their inevitable destiny in the rearing and bearing of children, representing a common perspective regarding the roles assigned to them conventionally, while some women demand independent work as men have, and a group of women seems to be responsible for charming and providing men with comfort (Dell, 1913: 10-11). The first group can be categorized as the mother type, the second group as the

worker type, and the third one, exclusive of motherhood or work can be categorized as the courtesan type since they are extensively attracted to males and granted with particular qualities of stimulus, sympathy, and charm (11).

I say this for the sake of those young ladies who will become disillusioned when they see that there was no difference between the strong desire I felt for Shekure at that moment—as she too could tell—and, say, the dizzying lust I felt for a delicately featured, copper-complexioned, burgundy-mouthed Kazvin beauty during my travels. With her profound God-given savvy and jinnlike intuition, Shekure understood both my being able to withstand twelve years of pure torture for love's sake as well as my behaving like a miserable thrall of lust who thought of nothing but the quick satisfaction of his dark desires the first time we were alone. Nizami had compared the mouth of that beauty of beauties, Shirin, to an inkwell filled with pearls (Pamuk, 2001: 243-244)

Shekure can ostensibly be associated with the stereotypes assumed temperamentally and women have been stigmatized and with femininity for ages in particular when the setting of the novel is considered, but what is intended is deployment of how a woman is subject to oppression because of the unconscious operating as a storehouse and the imbricated reasons that can be hinged on early childhood, in particular, in pre-Oedipal stage as prioritized by psychoanalytic feminists. The first sight, the first glimpse of Black in the aftermath of the long years they were far away from each other is described with the adoration of Shekure to Black (Pamuk, 2001: 41) that can be associated with the glorification females ascribe to male as alleged by psychoanalytic feminists and elucidated in relation to parenting, in particular to the overarching role mothers have in raising their babies which results in close relation with the mother and distance from father in the pre-Oedipal stage. As can be inferred from the traditional family structure Shekure was born into, this adoration can be interpreted as the glorification of the male figure by Shekure that can be hinged upon her pre-Oedipal stage. Black was twenty-four years old when Shekure was twelve, but Shekure contends that she was more mature, and Black, rather than characterizing a feature befitting a man, was timid and attempted to disguise his face aflush. Shekure extols her femininity through self-portrayal of herself as a woman worth being enamored of and against whom no man can resist, and rather falls in a deep passion for her (60), which exemplifies how she centralizes her femininity in contrast to the perspective which claims that women admire men owing to penis-envy culminating in inferiority.

Shekure is in a relation with her sons strongly vitiating the mother-attachment during the pre-Oedipal stage she herself experienced and she sustains mother roles she was acquainted with previously. Likewise, the attitude of the sons towards Shekure as

articulated through their brief skirmish in an attempt to be close to their mother (65) can be elaborated on the problematic experience of the pre-Oedipal stage during which the lack of father, in fact the authority is likely to lead these children to sustain their attachment to their mother as they do not have a father to identify with or idealize and naturally detach from their mother because of fear of castration.

My Name is Red (2001) presents a detailed contextual backdrop on which how the intersections are constructed between identity, gender, and power in a society where the key aspects of the patriarchy are strictly dominant. Analyzing female characters in terms of psychological dimensions as well as their relational dynamics substantiates the symbolic order and societal norms interplay to circumscribe the space of female. Set in the Ottoman period, the novel deepens insight into gendered representations that lead women to confront dominant societal and cultural practices in Ottoman society. In line with these, silences and subjugations lay out the spectrum of oppressed women and suggest a critical point of view for the marginalization of women. Through juxtaposition of Islamic artistic traditions and Western ones, the representation of the self and its interplay with identity is embodied. As is the case for art, the societal and cultural impositions turn out to lurk behind the female characters' experiences since gender, subjectivity, and power determine these as close-knit dynamics.

The portrayal of female subject and the inexorable influence of the patriarchy on women's identity formation can be traced in *Shekure* as the female protagonist. The interaction between psychoanalytic domain investigating repressions, desires and subjectivities, and societal structures appear to streamline gender inequality. Narrated by polyphonic voices, the novel revamps the stereotypes that posit women as secondary to men.

3.4. Shekure's Resilience: Navigating Patriarchy Through Defense Mechanisms

Survival of solitary *Shekure* trying to manage her familial duties, her desires and meet societal expectations constructed on the patriarchal structure simultaneously is challenging in many aspects and she has to navigate emotional, familial and social terrains, which enforces her to use several defense mechanisms to grapple with what she

undergoes including her inner conflicts, societal pressures in addition to emotional distress. From Kristeva's perspective, the subject is of a decentered origin, but both repressed material and unconscious drives influence the subject and unsettle their speech and behaviour. All these trouble the subject who aspires to a seamless unity, which results in employing defense mechanisms as the binding coercion behind xenophobia. A fundamental tenet in Kristeva's perspective is how the perilous consequences of the defenses activated by the decentered self can be mitigated (Meyers, 1994: 10).

People use various defense mechanisms in order to eliminate "intolerable realities" as well as emotional grief grounded on crisis. Though welcoming the truth and experiencing the emotional effects contribute to the sustainability of both emotional and physical well-being (Zook, 1998: 16B). The most popular defense mechanism is "denial" in cases of serious health problems or the death of someone with whom a person has adherence. As a way to get rid of the emotional pain for a while, and maintain functioning, a person can necessarily refuse to accept the reality that is painful and destroying. However, it is quite risky and life-threatening when denial is employed perpetually since it prevents people from dealing with reality. In addition to denial, some other defense mechanisms are employed: "Rationalization" appears to be "self-serving" and wrong construal of one's actions, projection operates through ascribing one's inappropriate emotions to another, regression happens to function through ret to a lower level of maturity in development, apathetic withdrawal functions through avoiding both people and actions which require problem-solving, passive aggression operates as an indirect way to reveal anger and aggression, and isolation of effects leads a person to lose touch with his or her own feelings (16B).

As unconscious psychological operations, defense mechanisms are instrumental in protecting an individual from any thoughts and feelings likely to produce anxiety and mediate how the individual reacts to internal and external sources of emotional conflicts and stress (Avramova and Vasileva, 2024: 159). Shekure is subject to ambiguity in terms of marital status as her (ex-)husband is at war and does not return. She marries a spahi cavalryman when she is at the height of her beauty and gives birth to two sons, yet that soldier, lacking any common sense, goes off on a campaign and does not return. Nobody hears from her husband during the last four years (Pamuk, 2001: 37). Thereupon, Shekure, with her two sons, has to manage harsh realities and feels the grief

for her missing husband as well as its destructive results. She suffers from emotional pain and societal disruption. Simultaneously, she tries to portray a robust mother figure and she replaces reality with lies: She tells her sons hopeful lies to quiet their tears and makes up news that their father will return before spring. Then she believes her own lies, trying to subside her grief (68). In order to grapple with emotional conflicts as well as internal and external sources of stress, the subject (Shekure) rejects the external reality or his/her own experience visible to others. Denial of something's presence provides the individual with a pseudo solution (Di Giuseppe and Perry, 2021: 10).

Including defenses such as “denial, rationalization and fantasy,” these unconscious psychological operations are instrumental in inhibiting unacceptable actions, feelings and ideas through bypassing them so that the individual can avoid feeling threatened (Di Giuseppe and Perry, 2021: 2). Upon her husband's disappearance, Shekure is subject to harsh times since the household lacks the main support. She lives with her husband's father and brother, who assigns kitchen work, shopping, and laundry to her. Rather than asking whether she is that sort of woman to deal with such drudgery, she swallows her pride and does the assignments (Pamuk, 2001: 69), utilizing denial (of self) to manage her life for the sake of her sons as well as in conformity with her duties and the societal expectations. Moreover, she grows into complicated and ambiguous feelings toward Black. Her female gaze views Black in admiration, knowing which route Black will take, she opens the shutters intuitively and cannot help staring at him. His silhouette sparkles like the sun, and seemingly sunlight flooding the room is employed as a metaphor, and Black is the sunlight for Shekure since seeing Black's face dazzles her, and she describes that moment as “lovely,” which depicts a kind of fantasy. Each of the unbearable conditions triggers her to avoid the reality and the ambiguity. She refuses to surrender to pain and confront the painful truths, as she prefers to maintain her prescribed roles not to be humiliated by society. She uses denial to overcome the emotional distress led by and likely to caused by the societal norms forming the basis of confinement imposed on women. Her inner voice whispers to her to marry him, yet she sends a letter wherein she writes the opposite message (60), denying her emotions and admiration.

Shekure, as a woman in pursuit of her desire, inevitably ends up with an emotional bond with Black, and in controversy from time to time, she resists against her desire, yet she seeks out the way to justify her emotions, so she uses rationalization to

defend her case and deem her desire and decisions to be natural and acceptable. The symbolic order prevents semiotic chora from operating, underscoring the subliminal message that a woman is required to consider all the impositions of the patriarchy and act accordingly.

This isn't the only reason I'm hiding my father's death," I said, fixing my gaze into Black's eyes, in which I was gladdened to see attentiveness more than love. "I'm also afraid of being unable to prove my whereabouts at the time of my father's murder. Though she's a slave and her word might be discounted, I'm afraid that Hayriye is involved in these machinations, if not against me, then against my father's book. And as long as I remain without a protector, the announcement of my father's murder, while initially simplifying matters at home, might well, solely for the reasons I've enumerated, cause me great misfortune at her hand; for instance, what if Hayriye is aware that my father didn't want me to marry you? (Pamuk, 2001:304).

As aforementioned, Shekure's desire for Black also dwells on the controversy as a result of inner conflicts induced by both individual and societal contradictions. Shekure's sense of motherhood, and sense of love nourish her inner conflict, so she interrogates her desire in terms of morality and represses it. Additionally, she represses her painful emotions concerning her husband's death and painful memories as she is in charge of two sons who are in need of their mother as the idealized figure, since their father is absent.

Representing Shekure's resilience in navigating what 16th-century Ottoman society imposed in accordance with the patriarchal norms, the defence mechanisms she uses reflect the tension against the patriarchal norms she has internalized. Shekure uses several defense mechanisms to survive: She employs repression to suppress her desires, considering the morality and ethics; she frames a robust woman and mother, concealing unbearable realities through denial; she employs projection to displace her fears; rationalization helps her justify subversive acts, and through sublimation, she conveys her ambitions into appropriate roles.

Overall, her strategic manipulation is evident in her thoughts and acts that can be observed in many contexts, embodying women's unconscious resistance in alignment with the psychoanalytic feminist lens. Each defense mechanism she employs contributes to her survival and depicts the psychic toll oppression creates on women, highlighting the complicated interplay of conformity and rebellion in pursuit of agency. Representation of the interplay between male dominance and female invisibility, *My Name is Red* presents a sample of how gender dynamics are interwoven with the society and the symbolic order of the 16th-century Ottoman Empire. The male gaze operates not only as a visual or physical experience but also as a framework through which

Orhan Pamuk's critique of the patriarchy and the marginalization of women according to the power structures of male domination is conveyed.



4. PROLONGED SYMBIOSIS AND FEMALE SOLIDARITY IN KHALED HOSSEINI'S *A THOUSAND SPLENDID SUNS*

“For we think back through our mothers if we are women”

-V. Woolf , *A Room of One's Own*

Hold my hand in yours,

And we will not fear what hands like ours can do...

-*The Epic of Gilgamesh*

A Thousand Splendid Suns (2018) illustrates the spectrum of the severity of women's oppression and represents women declared void and dull customarily owing to the conservative regime, which enacts misinterpreted aspects of religion and womanhood. The novel explicitly reveals that asymmetric warfare exists not only between the power of the countries in combat with each other but also between the male and female characters, who are expected to abide by the customs that are exploitative of women. The gender inequality manifests itself in that the female characters are required to make use of their self-made weapons. In contrast, the male characters are granted the power to create an attritional loss on women in conformity with the constructed system. The customs of Afghanistan seem to pursue the country's set of core principles that objectify women, whereby liberation of the country from any external terrorism does not save the women from internal terrorism they have been exposed to for ages, thus hindering the merits of equality in a multiplicity of forms. Through the lenses of two female characters, Mariam and Laila, Khaled Hosseini reveals the tyranny imposed on women starkly and narrates the triumph of perseverance within a framework of agony and hope.

Overwhelmed by the burden of living in a strict, conservative society, the female characters reveal how women are stigmatized with inferiority and how men intervene in their lives. Women have to put up with hardships in Afghanistan, where they are permanently ignored and exposed to the intense oppression they encounter in familial and societal spaces. Mariam and Laila, of different generations and circumstances, offer insight into how women are secondary to men and how the male-centred society enforces them to submit to the male dominance to survive in the patriarchy. Their marriage is not based on their love or choice but a consequence of the pressure placed

on them in the familial and societal domains. Likewise, they have almost no control over their own destinies and are required to obey what is imposed by the symbolic order. Experiencing the full force of oppression ranging from physical and emotional abuse to societal rejection in wartime Afghanistan, the female protagonists in *TSS* are subject to circumstances defined by men in a way that is belittling and demeaning for women. Drawing on his sensitivity to his own country's problems, Khaled Hosseini highlights the severity of the oppression of women through his narrative.

At the heart of the novel are two Afghan women presented with their traumas through an empathetic portrayal of femininity under the Taliban regime. The influence of political upheaval is embodied through war and state collapse, in addition to religious extremism as imposed by the regime. Liberated from the influence of September 11, the novel particularly offers a humanizing portrayal of Afghan women, thus subverting the dominant narratives foregrounding terrorism from orientalist perspectives. As for women's oppression, both female protagonists, Mariam and Laila, exemplify how women are subject to oppressive circumstances in the patriarchy and how their voices are disregarded and muted. Different from all narratives defining women in conventional patterns, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2018) reimagines the typical woman in a patriarchal society and portrays women of great ambition for resistance, resilience, and solidarity.

Accordingly, this chapter presents the novel's analysis through an interpretive framework based on the notion of "prolonged symbiosis." It proposes that Mariam and Laila's relationship transcends individual survival and grows into an interdependent companion, resisting the violence of the patriarchy. Rooted in biological sciences, the notion of "symbiosis" describes "the close relationship of two different species of living things that help, harm or have no effect on each other" (Kalman, 2016: 4), and it is also used to refer to "a relationship between people, companies, etc. that is to the advantage of both" (Wehmeier et al., 2005: 1555). Recontextualized within this study, symbiosis draws on Nancy Chodorow's framework. As retold by Martin (1998), Chodorow's *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) intends to shed light on the underpinnings of the reasons why women mother, along with how individuals experience the construction of gender and what leads them to have a profound feeling of being boys/men or girls/women. The arguments interrogating the identities based on gender and how they differentiate have been addressed by Chodorow, besides the cultural and personal basis

of gender. Coming out of the second-wave feminism, which was primarily concerned with women's oppression, representing academic feminist theory predominant during the 1970s, her work was nourished by various intellectual and social aspects (230). Chodorow's main interests were to gain insight into the personal and cultural basis of sexuality, gender identity, and mothering as well as the dynamics between psychoanalysis and feminism (231). Chodorow problematizes why women mother, a question accounted for mostly in relation to biological facts: What they claim is that since women are involved in mothering from the very beginning by bearing children and nursing them. For Chodorow, this explanation is not satisfactory and logical, as she thinks that women cannot be expected to deal with all of the caretaking because they bear the babies and mostly nurse them. This cannot explain why they should be the ones to be responsible for caretaking the whole day. Furthermore, notwithstanding not being a child's biological mother, women fulfill the role of a mother in many societies. Likewise, fathers cannot excuse claiming any biological shortage for the caretaking of children. In a nutshell, biological factors only provide a limited account for the relationship between mother and child, as well as the quality and emotional aspect of mothering. On the other hand, more alternative suggestions have been put forward by many sociological thinkers. According to these thinkers, women's motherhood is a result of socialization, which suggests that women's motherhood dates back to their childhood period, during which they are taught to care for children. Toys seem to address children's role once they grow into adults and since girls play with dolls, they grow up learning the mothering role. Another point suggested by sociological thinkers is that economic reasons are deemed to be accessible to women only through the position of mother and wife. Chodorow's counterview is that all these reasons account for why women mother but do not provide a reason likely to result in a desire for mothering, so why women want to take up the position of a mother and enjoy it is of utmost importance. Chodorow claims that mothering cannot be reduced to an activity women are forced to do, yet women yearn for. Chodorow's another counterview against previous sociological explanations is their definition of mother which confines it just to a behaviour or a group of behaviours. Unlike this view, Chodorow offers that mothering is comprised of more than these and stands for a stance, a bond with an infant or a child, and empathy. Once mothering is viewed from this angle, women's mothering necessitates a more profound and complex explanation. In order to come up with this,

Chodorow tends to find the answer in psychoanalytic theory and asserts that women develop a desire and ability for motherhood through experiencing being mothered by females. Chodorow's account provides a psychoanalytic perspective, and as such, the developmental story of both intrapsychic and relational family dynamics is fundamental in understanding her explanation. Besides, the social structure cannot be disregarded as a gendered division is experienced in labour, as a consequence of which caring for infants as well as small children is attributed to women. What Chodorow seeks to explain is not the origin of the division of labour but its reproduction (232). How each individual constructs gender identity and becomes gendered upon developing a sense of self in relation to their gender identity as a boy or girl is included in what psychoanalytic developmental stories seek answers to. Apart from sexual identity, they attempt to explain how people achieve object choice and develop a tendency to desire men or women, forming the basis of psychoanalytic developmental stories. Chodorow also cares about these issues, yet she differentiates herself from Freud or other psychoanalytic theorists. Concerned with object relational theories, she operates as an object relational theorist (233).

As Chodorow (2000) specifies, despite its title seemingly confirms that the book is on the reproduction of mothering, its primary contribution is the elucidation of remarkable characteristics of female development as well as the dynamics describing female psyche, which proves that *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) cannot be reduced to what its title implies when intersubjective and intrapsychic sense are considered. The mother-daughter relationship and both its construction and reconstruction internally by women are addressed. In line with this, a comparative approach has been adopted and women with men, and in particular the mother-daughter relationship, with the mother-son, along with the father-daughter relationship, have been focused on. The individual psyche forms the main terrain of Chodorow's book, as she notes. Also, she reports that she identifies the female and male psyches with "an unconscious internal world," besides both "a conscious and unconscious sense of self," and explains the formation of the internal world along with the development of a sense of self. She mostly addresses the unconscious communications mother and child have, thus expressing typical gender differences influential on how "I" or the ego is called in the psychoanalytic realm and the effect of internal object relations on how "I" is modified throughout the process. An unconscious process of creation of "rudimentary

pictures” in the child’s mind concerning him/herself forms the internal world and is also contributed to by unpleasant affects, including anxiety and similar cases. To put it simply, the internal world shapes the process of how a person grows up to be a self and how s/he individuates and differentiates him/herself on the basis of drives and generates a sense of differentiation between external and internal, besides how a person posits him/herself with regard to primary others (338).

4.1. Khaled Hosseini and A Voice of the Afghan Diaspora in Literature

In *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), Edward S. Said underpins that “the earth is in effect one world” and neither outside nor beyond geography, all of us are involved into what is going on worldwide, hence we cannot be indifferent to or exclude ourselves from any struggle aiming not only for geography but also “ideas,” “forms,” “images,” and “imaginings” (7). Inestimable in terms of value and unquestionable in terms of veracity, sympathy for those in need in any part of the world is pivotal; yet, if it is your homeland, then you are required to be a part of that struggle, likely to offer a departure from chaos and complexity induced by the interrelated dynamics, albeit seemingly invincible. In accordance with this, akin to Edward Said, a Palestinian-American activist, Khaled Hosseini problematizes the matters of his own country and its people as an Afghan-American author, no matter that he is distant from them geographically, and takes an unprecedented role in spreading their words. Through his poignant narrative, Hosseini aims to show how women reckon with the oppressive regime representative of the patriarchy at work; therefore, the selected novel, with its context, setting, characters, themes, and plot dovetails with the women’s issues stemming from oppression.

Abundant in the variety of cultures, religions, and peoples, the Middle East, as well as Muslim nations of northern Africa and South Asia, has a remarkable influence on different parts of the world. Drawing on a rich cultural background, Khaled Hosseini is among the ones whose family immigrated to the USA upon the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union; so starting a new life at an early age, he created a space to allocate for the discovery of what he has been acquainted with in the USA (Layton, 2010: 7). However, as aforementioned, he has never been indifferent to his own nation and country and touched upon the issues there. In a phone interview with

Elizabeth A. Harris for “The New York Times,” he shared his view of his homeland and expressed that the stories about Afghanistan revolve around violence, displacement, the Taliban, the U.S. initiatives but rarely the Afghan people, that’s why his books are sought after by millions of readers who can get his perspective and thoughts on the country through his narrative referencing the Afghan people. Born in Kabul and popular as the author of novels including *The Kite Runner* (2004), praised as an incisive and insightful exploration of contemporary Afghan history in the “Acclaim For” section of the novel, and *And The Mountains Echoed* (2014), described as a depiction of Afghan diaspora akin to *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, based on the history and culture of Afghanistan, Hosseini’s works have been necessarily regarded as the representative of his homeland, exposed to ups and downs throughout history. Referring to Salman Rushdie’s utterance comparing the view of any person (in exile) of his homeland to a view “through a cracked mirror,” Hosseini confirmed that his view could not be more than that since he has lived in Afghanistan for a short period of time (Harris, 2021). However, to a more far-reaching extent, his portrayal of the characters and familial issues, along with societal and political ones, mirrors the agenda of the term and reveals all the agony in turmoil led by inside and outside forces, and extends the frontiers of the problematic issues not contingent merely on the border of Afghanistan.

Narrating the life stories of two Afghan women, namely Mariam and Laila, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2018) manifests the devastating influence of the patriarchal system and its oppressive structure, which forces women to obey. As Iswarya (2020) describes, the female characters of *TSS* are subject to the harsh attitudes and conditions imposed by external forces, including the familial and societal systems. Furthermore, they are deprived of any opportunities for mastering their own lives and futures, and are merely forced to live a life of the patriarchy’s choice. Notwithstanding the strict conditions, both Mariam and Laila challenge their prescribed lifestyle in a paternalistic context which pacifies and objectifies them. They show a great attempt to deal with all components of the system constructed to neutralize them, and struggle to make their own choices to realize their desires, thus resituating their position. Hosseini aims to portray women figures robust enough to overwhelm repression and also deconstruct the stereotypes customarily adopted (104). In this respect, he provides novel insights into how women, albeit oppressed, can resist any kind of hegemony, the denial of women’s entity.

In *TSS*, gender relations are epitomized predominantly, and women's oppression is thematized through plenty of references derived from the context constructed in alignment with societal and political norms formed under the influence of regime, religion, and power relations. As denoted by Hosseini, what he has mentioned in the novel is based on what he saw and heard: Women were allowed to attend schools and to be employed during the period he lived in Afghanistan. Most of the women in his family took part in professional life, and they were not away from social life. In an interview, Hosseini expressed that he expected from the readers to put themselves into the shoes of Afghans and empathize with them, particularly with Afghan women who are under the devastating influence of war and extremism (Stuhr, 2009: 4). He stated that Taliban led the groundbreaking shift to occur and "women were denied education, the right to work and move freely" and they lacked the basic rights for adequate healthcare. He also highlighted that he wanted to exclude himself from getting involved in circles supporting the requirement of help or pressure that the West can provide or impose in order to encourage these countries to enable equal rights for women. Likewise, although the trauma experienced by Afghan women has been revealed to the world through his works, he prefers to stay distant from any support from the West as he finds this approach risky in terms of dismissing the values of the target society, thus disregarding its culture, customs, social and political structure (BookBrowse 2007, cited in Stuhr, 2009: 4). This can be elucidated on the likelihood of the risks Eurocentricism may trigger. Amidst the diasporic migrants, as Saha (2022) highlights, Khaled Hosseini's identity has necessarily been nourished by his memories, bringing remarkably different socio-cultural experiences back, reminding him of the constructed privilege prevailing in the devastated state led by both the Taliban aggression and Russian invasion in Afghanistan (101). Adopted in line with Eurocentrism, "First the West, then the rest," as referred to by Hobson (2012: 9), can result in catastrophic cases in the East, which seems to be likely to generate hesitation in Hosseini's mind about supporting any help from the West, which is constantly prioritized.

Afghanistan has been a country of Islamization, and religion forms the core point of social customs and daily life. During the control of the mujahideen leaders, some radical changes were put into practice, and women were forced to wear traditional Muslim dresses, and by the same token, cover their heads with a purdah. Much more rigid regulations were forced out by the Taliban in accordance with its Islamic code, and

its stringent control, enacting the forbiddance of entertainment. Although the Taliban was unable to construct a national administrative system, the lack of viable alternatives impelled most people in Afghanistan to comply with Taliban dictates. The fluctuation in the policy has reflected on the various spheres of life, as has been the case for women. Afghan women have been subject to remarkable changes over the course of history. Wearing purdah became voluntary, women were employed in various areas, and some of them also got a place and studied at the university during the 1960s. However, 1992 marked a departure from these, and especially in the wake of the capture of Kabul by the Taliban in 1996, various regulations were prescribed. Women were pressured to leave their jobs in almost all areas, and girls' schools were shut down by the authorities. Furthermore, women were fined with strong penalties when they did not cover themselves fully in the public area or were accompanied by males they were unrelated to (Dupree et. al., 2024). Thus, they were exposed to oppressive circumstances in various fields, from labour to education.

However, some progress has been made in the tyranny that Afghan women experience. The Elimination of Violence Against Women Law (EVAW), which was passed in 2009 in Afghanistan, was regarded as a remarkable improvement in terms of providing women and girls there with legislative protections. A collaborative monitoring carried out by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Human Rights Service of the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which lasted nearly for two years from 2018 to 2020, points out that the EVAW Law has contributed to the improvement in women's issues yet still there are drawbacks which fail in certain aspects and objectives for women's rights (3). Afghanistan has undeniably made considerable progress in enabling women to access justice for violence and crimes. Still, their access to justice, to a great extent, seems to be concerned with serious crimes such as rape and murder and the ones deemed to be minor are treated accordingly, which can be based on the secondary position of women as reinforced by that not the state is required to act for the minor violence and crimes women are subject to, rather they can be viewed as a private family matter (18). Therefore, inequality is still discernible in terms of legislation and apparently represents a negligible and secondary notion in Afghanistan. Hence, the plight of the female protagonists in *TSS* is evident currently.

As for the latest news concerning Afghan women's issues, on March 8, namely, on International Women's Day, the United Nations called on the de facto authorities of the country to terminate restrictions imposed on girls and women so that they can avoid the severity of increasing poverty and isolation the country is likely to undergo gradually. Afghan women are in urgent need of liberation from the Taliban's restrictions hindering them even from basic rights such as education, employment, and freedom of movement, so they can initiate change and maintain their identity in the public domain only when they are provided with global support. Likewise, they can be represented in their country's future once their risk of eradication by the Taliban is ceased (UNAMA, 2024). Given that they are exposed to inequality accompanied by the Taliban's restrictions, which interlock asymmetrical roles, a substantial degree of emphasis is required to be placed on women's plight acquired by young girls, like hereditary characteristics, in order to prevent gender asymmetries enriched by the inequality of circumstances forming the social, psychological, and physical basis. What Hosseini unveils in his narrative actually intersects with the aspiration of women for liberation and operates in a manner akin to the call by the United Nations.

Inspired by the pain of real life and psychological decadence, through female protagonists, Hosseini thematizes women's issues as parallel to gender norms such as child marriage, mothering, or childcare, along with providing care to the husband, serving to pursue household, necessarily maintaining a life in conformity with the customs bequeathed for ages. Additionally, he explicitly displays psychological outcomes of what they lack as a result of their double burden, yet indicates that the end of the tunnel will lead to light when women take refuge in the stronghold inside them and adhere to it, disregarding what their psyche is nourished by as to gender norms conventionally positing them subjugated. Constructed on women issues still valid for the time being, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* seemingly will retain its top position as long as women's oppression is ubiquitous and even after the resolution of the problem, will exist as an invaluable witness to the deplorable history of women raised in paternalistic milieu with its miscallaneous veins lauding the superiority of males and moving them to the forefront.

4.2. From Estrangement to Mutualism: The Evolution of Female Bonds Under Patriarchy

Exploring the psychological and emotional struggles of two Afghan women, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* underscores Mariam and Laila's shared experiences, exemplifying a common pattern and destiny as to women, and broadens critical thinking with a presentation of a multifaceted context foregrounding how the mother-daughter relationship is fundamental in establishing sense of gender and ascribing certain roles to males and females in line with the threads of gender dynamics. Additionally, it proves that a stark contrast to the adopted principles is feasible only through a venture to challenge all derogatory terms women are labelled with throughout history in male-dominant cultures. Tragedy finds its expression in the stories of Mariam and Laila, which yield a strict dimension, nearly in the same linear form except for some nuances, representing a kind of microcosm in which females are confined, to put it more accurately, unveiling how they are imprisoned by the barriers set against women. Since psychoanalytic feminism regards psyche as one of the keys to unlock the gender construction and, as the mother and the child bond, particularly dating back to the pre-Oedipal stage and the following stages, engender the basis of how women and men differentiate, *TSS* is to be broken down into the components in terms of Mariam and Laila's attachment to their mother and to what extent they liberate from them to survive and exterminate threat imposed on them by the patriarchal society. Actually, "individuation" of a woman in a patriarchal society under the strict regime of the Taliban can seem to be no more than a fantasy, yet relying on spiritual power, which disregards and challenges the constructed masculine power, can result in the emergence of unexpected cases in favour of women, as narrated in *TSS*.

In order to discover the latent underpinnings of patriarchy, the socioemotional environment is focused on, and through the analytic lens of psychoanalytic feminists, how the personality of a young child is formed in this environment is delved into. Likewise, two angles of early childhood development are concerned with: one facet is the presumption ascribing a period of maturity to this period during which humans grow through management of the equilibrium between "individuation," which prioritizes the desire for freedom, and on the other hand, "recognition," which requires confirmation by another. The second facet is the fact that from infancy to childhood, the earliest and

most critical development takes place in an unrelenting, intimate, and adjacent relationship with a female figure, their mother or a substitute for her or a woman. As for the relationship with a father or a male figure, it appears to be rare, secondary, and uncluttered in terms of emotions (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2018: 564). Regarding the female protagonists of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007), both “individuation” and “recognition” require a formidable process since the core principles of the country pose an intentional threat to females’ existence as subject, which is accompanied and consolidated by the patriarchal system and relevant notions bequeathed since the very beginning. However, despite the harsh circumstances described in the novel, Hosseini provides female protagonists with a space to prove their identity, thus subverting the stereotypes that the patriarchy is associated with. Based on the textual evidence, this will be elaborated on in the last part of this chapter but prior to that, Chodorow’s framework is to be included to come up with the tenets to explore prolonged symbiosis in the novel.

Erudite in women’s studies, Nancy Chodorow has contributed to feminism with her canonical works. Keen on the issues revolving around various aspects in relation to gender, Chodorow (1978) has interrogated the reasons lurking behind why women operate as primary caretakers of children and why men do not partake in parenting as much as women do. She has claimed that the mother-daughter bond plays an efficacious role in shaping the feminine psyche, along with inducing men to develop a male-dominant psychology. Chodorow has reinterpreted the feminine Oedipus complex and offered that the Oedipus complex cannot be reduced only to the father and daughter, since it is an issue in which the mother and daughter are also involved. She has extended her argument with her claim concerning the ground of the Oedipus complex: The Oedipus complex evolves from the feminine relational ego, besides the genesis of sexual object preference. The relationship between the father and daughter is formed during the Oedipal period, yet this bond can be elaborated merely on the ongoing relationship of a daughter to her mother (137). We cannot find textual evidence for the pre-Oedipal stage, but the novel presents examples of the ongoing relationship during the Oedipal stage.

The narrative commences with the story of Mariam being disapproved of by her mother, portraying an inborn burden rather than a daughter. Born as the illegitimate child of Jalil and hence positioned as the “other,” Mariam is called as “harami” by her

mother (Nana). She does not know what it means, but when she gets older, she learns that it means “an unwanted thing” deprived of any legitimate claim to those owned by others. Mariam’s father never calls this name but “little flower,” and she enjoys the time she spends with Jalil as he tells stories about Herat and the intellectual aspects of it (Hosseini, 2018: 3-4). Surrounded by rejection, emotional neglect, and isolation during her infancy, Mariam lacks love and mercy; that’s why she develops an attachment to Jalil, her father. Different from the environment wherein she grows, her father represents power and wealth, thus portraying an unattainable ideal that Mariam yearns for. Mariam’s relation with her father is satisfying for her both affectively and intellectually whereas she is subject to cold manner of her mother lacking mother mercy; but presenting an approach otherizing her as “harami,” hence the initial schemata penetrated in Mariam’s psyche in the aftermath of her infancy is a female figure spreading a haunting fear and blaming her as if she were involved into nefarious work intentionally. On the other hand, Jalil portrays a male figure who is pretty sophisticated with his knowledge and also autonomous, as he has explored a lot, contrary to Nana, imprisoned in a small district and unaware of the rest. Gender is constructed on the basis of experiences during early childhood, as posed by psychoanalytic feminism. Mariam meets misogyny at an early age, so she is expected to develop an appreciative attitude towards a male figure through idealisation, while she is under the influence of an affectless relationship with her mother, which is necessarily expected to create an isolation from her mother or any female figure. As particularly emphasized by the psychoanalytic feminists, early childhood experiences form the basis of the perception adopted towards males and females. Mariam schematizes a male figure, adorable and valuable, as she is informed of the poets, minarets, orchards, painters, writers, and Sufis in Herat by her father, leading her to listen to him with enchantment and admiration because he is remarkably knowledgeable. She feels proud of having a father like Jalil (4-5). Upon these, Mariam idealizes her father and deems him to be the one to project all that she lacks, love, mercy, and all emotional deprivation onto her father, Jalil, who offers comfort to her and makes her develop a sense of worth eradicated by her mother beforehand. Her father’s merciful and lovely attitude towards Mariam results in her dependence on external validation and meeting her emotional needs through her relationship with her father, thus compensating for her lack of a mother’s love. Consequently, Mariam develops narcissistic object-attachment to her

father, thus subverting the object-attachment ascribed to the mother and associated with the development of the gender identity.

Mariam's early experience of estrangement is related to the psyche because as a female, she does not need to deny the identification with her mother as males do, as outlined within Chodorow's framework which elaborates on the masculine version of personality structure through reversing Freud on the basis of the object relations lens and argues that masculine identity is constructed against the identification with mother initially, namely primary femaleness (Elliott, 1994: 121). Contrary to what was assumed by Freud originally, Chodorow claims that the initial love for the mother leads to the difficulty in forming maleness (121-122). In order to achieve a masculine sense of selfhood, boys are required to deny the primary intimacy and love they share with their mother. Boys must repudiate their initial affinity to female eroticism by constantly suppressing their own femininity into the unconscious (122). However, Mariam's case differs from the masculine version and is led by estrangement fostered through her mother's attitude toward her.

Prolonged symbiosis can generate passive individuals in the patriarchy and a lack of self-control and social value, inadequate separateness, and a fear of unity with others, which can be based on the ongoing bond between the mother and the daughter. As aforementioned, in line with Chodorow's point of view, daughters do not lose the bond between them and their mothers dating back to the pre-Oedipal period and maintain a profound emotional sense of unity with their mother, which forms the basis on which a strong relational connection is structured in women's adult life. Feminine identity, including the relational component, requires a harsh personal cost, and is not regarded as separate Others by their mothers; daughters lack the affirmation of a sense of self and agency. This leads to the confusion of ego boundaries and women are subject to a series of cases, including estrangement from personal desires, aspirations, and needs. Moreover, emotionally, they feel the lack of self-control, inadequate separateness, and also a fear of unity with others. Upon this, women are identified with a gender category lacking social value. Chodorow argues that how culturally devalued women's social position is reflected through their core gender identity, comprised of immersion in narcissism, weak ego boundaries, etc. As a consequence of this, women construct a series of personal boundaries defensively, deny their needs, and instead, focus on what others need, especially what men need (Elliott, 1994: 121). Mariam's

initial attachment to her father deconstructs the perception of a woman lacking agency and a sense of self; therefore, Mariam can be read as a woman breaking the stereotypes so far, in particular, in Afghanistan, where the patriarchy frames a structure that does not welcome women.

What deconstructs the initial schemata of her parents in her mind and simultaneously sense of gender with the features she attributes to each of them takes no time but place soon, yet, prior to the reference to this tragedy, what leads Mariam to construct the sense of gender as parallel to the stages of development is of great importance to foreground to delve into the reasons for women's subjugation. Dramatically influential on the rest of life, childhood refers to the time when the child is required to depend on others to sustain its existence and to survive. Other may be the prince or king, the father, the party, the parliament, the intellectual or the welfare state or other figures that can be categorized into "other" in the aftermath of the separation of the child from the mother (Kristeva, 1987: 54). For Mariam, safe paternal side is her father, Jalil but for Nana, Jalil is a reflection of the hatred inside her as she gives birth to an illegitimate child owing to him. She is regarded as an object, and upon her belly's swelling, the wives of Jalil, his in-laws, want to get rid of her either by killing or throwing her out. Disgraced, Nana's mother leaves the country and without taking responsibility, Jalil sends her off after "a face-saving deal" (6-7). Furthermore, as a defense, Jalil blames Nana for her pregnancy and says to his wives it is her fault. Nana says to Mariam: "This is what it means to be a woman in this world" (7), implying the oppression a woman is subject to on the basis of her individual experience. She conveys what lies in her psyche to Mariam's mind through an emphasis on that a woman is always to be accused of in any case by a man: "Learn this now and learn it well, my daughter: Like a compass needle that points north, a man's accusing finger always finds a woman. Always. You remember that, Mariam" (7). Obviously, the mother plays the main role in shaping her daughter's psyche through her critique of Mariam's father and makes use of the efficacious verbal act internalized by the psyche in the course of early childhood. As Brennan (1998) consolidates with a reference to the canonical work of Nancy Chodorow, that is, *The Reproduction of Mothering* published in 1978, the psyche internalizes social relations and represents a reflection and functions as a transposition of what is internalized. Lacanian and Kleinian aspects underline the pivotal position of psychological reality in which representations of social interactions, relationships, and

events are unveiled through fantasy or desire (274). Nana's desire for self-entity, self-actualization manifests in her hatred, constructing and situating a male figure worth being hated. In fact, what she yearns for is the autonomy Jalil enjoys in every sphere of life, and once Nana is not accepted by him, she becomes deprived of the male validation; that's why she is jealous of Jalil and hates him as well. Upon her suicide, Mullah Faizullah says that he knew Nana beforehand when she was little and adds she was also unhappy during her own childhood (43) by consolidating the influence of the psyche on life: "The seed for what she did was planted long ago, I'm afraid" (43).

In her study underpinning the reflections on *The Reproduction of Mothering* (2000), Chodorow also addresses "Family Structure and Feminine Personality" (Chodorow, 1974) and highlights the different sense of self a woman and man undergo and claims that women's perception of her self is formed as "self-in-relation" contrary to men's sense of self desiring to be liberated from any relation and connection. She also asserts that the mother is of great importance both in the psyche of the daughter and her sense of self, and as such, the internal mother-daughter lineage is fundamental to the surveillance of the essence of interpersonal and psychological experiences. Regardless of what is triggered by the individualized unconscious or conscious fantasy and also nourished by emotional aspects, on the grounds of a sense of gender, mothers develop a perception of daughters to be like them, whilst they experience sons as unlike them. This ends up with the mutual attitude girls and boys are involved in by transformation of unconscious maternal communications through a process drawing on their individual intrapsychic potential for fantasy as well as their desires, passions, and their reactive attitude against anxiety (339). All these result in some conscious outcomes, amidst which are women's development of intuitive attachment to others, a sense of empathy, and ability to put it into practice, along with dependence on relationship or entrenchment in these relations somehow, whereas many men go through anxiety about intimacy when it indicates dependence, or develop a sense of independence ignited counterphobically. Another aspect Chodorow points out is the necessity of an interrogation into various object-relational configurations generated by the feminine and masculine Oedipus complex without confinement by exploration of how traditionally prescribed gender identifications are formed or sexual orientation is elucidated. Core to the "desire to qualify as a mother" is the relation to the mother and the maternal affects it produces along with identifications as asserted by Chodorow and a sort of "biological

urge” or a “drive” claimed to be led by unconscious fantasy to some extent is attributed to internal relation of a daughter with the mother which is central to understanding of pregnancy and motherhood, which sheds light on the origin of Chodorow’s theory of maternal subjectivity inclusive of conscious or unconscious experiences any mothers have concerning motherhood and the bond with a child or children (339).

Chodorow’s heavy emphasis on how women develop a sense of self thanks to their mothers, rather than their fathers, who are greatly influential on them, confirms that the mother-daughter relationship forms the ground of women’s lives and raises the possibility of the change likely to occur in the psyches of both the mother and daughter. These provide literary critics with an aspect to evaluate female characters and narratives as well, with an emphasis on mother-child relationships either in canonical literary works or contributions provided by women writers of various nationalities, ethnicities, or races (2000: 340). *TSS* embodies how Mariam’s early sense of self is shaped by Nana’s harsh attitude toward her since she is called “harami,” stigmatizing her as illegitimate and unwanted. This implicitly leads Mariam to understand her place, influencing her sense of self-worth.

Likewise, Mariam’s sense of self as a woman is foregrounded through Nana’s articulation of how women are always blamed, and this self-perception of self as a woman is internalized and passed down via her mother. Nana mentions how she is “the other” throughout her life and teaches endurance is essential and the only option for women like them (Hosseini, 2018: 18). Similarly, the relationship of Laila with her mother illustrates how she is shaped by maternal influence. Laila gains insight into grief, motherhood, and also her own aspirations on the basis of Mammy’s depression, led by the loss of her sons, her struggles, her expressions of sorrow and love. Mammy tells the story of her proposal to Babi and memories of tenderness, the romance (118-119), which embodies the transmission of emotional resilience, hopes, and values from mother to daughter. Maternal guidance is also evident in Laila’s relationship with Tariq, as Mammy highlights the gender difference and reminds Laila of her social identity as a woman:

Anyway, this isn’t about me or...It’s about you and Tariq. He’s a boy, you see, and, as such, what does he care about reputation? But you? The reputation of a girl, especially one as pretty as you, is a delicate thing, Laila. Like a mynah bird in your hands. Slacken your grip and away it flies (Hosseini, 2018: 160).

Chodorow's elaboration on the intersubjective and intrapsychic reproduction of mothering also indicates the reproduction of male-centred sex gender system in cultural and social terms, thus revealing the "inextricable interconnectedness" as well as reciprocal construction of society, culture, and psyche (Chodorow, 2000:340). For example, Mariam's increasing attachment to Aziza, nourished by her interactions with the child and Laila, indicates how interpersonal relationships are instrumental in the reproduction of mothering. Why Aziza makes Mariam want to weep can be elucidated in the following part from the novel:

"Mariam bounced her stiffly, a half-bewildered, half-grateful smile on her lips. Mariam had never before been wanted like this. Love had never been declared to her so guilelessly, so unreservedly" (Hosseini, 2018: 246).

The earliest stages of personality development are experienced as an ongoing turmoil of primary emotions such as love, hate, fear, desire, pleasure, and loss. The emotional impact of these feelings, dating back to the early childhood period, is not confined to that term but exists constantly as potent, yet mostly unconscious "feeling memories." A cluster of contradictory feelings towards the mother, woman or caregiver develops and sustains as the experiential residue. The juxtaposition of positive emotions, including love, need, possessiveness, and dependence, with negative ones like fear or rage over her competence to frustrate one's will illustrates what is the remnant of the earliest stages (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2018: 564). As can be traced in Mariam's mother, Nana talks about Jalil angrily and bursts out her hate as an oppressed woman: "He betrayed us, your beloved father. He cast us out. He cast us out of his big fancy house like we were nothing to him" (5). Unaware of the realities, Mariam dislikes Nana's hateful comments about Jalil and feels deserving of all the bounty and beauty when she is with her father, that's why she loves him (5). Her father, namely the male figure, stands for the grandiose side of the life whereas her mother reifies an adamant female figure suffering from what she has had to grapple with and all her utterance appears to be symptomatic of a problem congested in her psyche, thus giving Mariam the license to portray her parents characterizing controversial features unlikely to be involved in any rapprochement, rather at odds with each other. Drawing on these, her narcissistic object-attachment is reinforced.

Nancy Chodorov has focused on exclusive female mothering and its political ramifications. She grounds gender asymmetries and social change within modern societies on psychoanalytic theory. She argues that a mother's love for daughters and boys differs from each other, which brings a socially structured psychological mechanism of gender power. In her prominent work *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), Chodorov claims that mothers adopt a narcissistic attitude of sameness towards their daughters and regard them as doubles of themselves. She ascribes this to pre-Oedipal affinity between mother and daughter, which she calls "a narcissistic object-attachment" that is a mother and a daughter are regarded as related in the sense that a daughter is an extension of a mother's life, not a separate person (Elliott, 1994: 120). On the basis of this perspective, the merging of self and also (m)Other during pre-Oedipal induces daughters to develop a robust aptitude for sensitivity, intimacy, and empathy with other people. Regarded as the same as their mothers, differentiation is thought to be problematic. The female child has difficulty in disengaging from the love of her mother. Under the influence of maternal narcissism, the daughter is physically thwarted from developing a sense of independence and establishing individuality. Succinctly, Chodorov argues that "symbolic envy of male privilege" stands as an indication of the daughter's wish for autonomy, not a biological gift. Aware of the social privilege associated with the phallus and with a hope for developing a sense of independence and being independent from the mother, the daughter pays attention to her father. Since the fathers lack emotional approach and aptness, daughters cannot manage to cease the authority and power the pre-Oedipal mother has, hence Chodorov claims that the concern and sensitivity prominent characteristics of feminine identity are expected outcomes of the bond between the pre-Oedipal mother and daughter (121). The bond between the mother and the daughter is such a robust one that psychological aspects in the rest of life can be elaborated on this experience, dating back to the very start of life. For instance, "loss" was referred to psychoanalytically in Bowlby's model for the first time, and it suggests all attachments can be based on the child's attachment to the mother. Attachment is "engagement of emotion" over a long-lasting period of life. The attachment to the mother leads to disappointment once separation is experienced, and any emotional reaction can be related to the mother attachment (Bloom-Feshbach and Bloom-Feshbach, 1987: 319). In order to hinder the development of personalities "narcissistic, fragile and insecure", a parent is required to get adapted to

reality through submitting to psychic pain led by the acceptance of separation from the child and recognizing that they are different (Pozzi, 1995: 35). Nana's attitude towards her daughter is threatening as a reflection of her psyche which views symbiosis will last for a life time and detachment is threatening to this: "I'll die if you go. The jinn will come, and I'll have one of my fits. You'll see, I'll swallow my tongue and die. Don't leave me, Mariam jo. Please stay. I'll die if you go" (Hosseini, 2018: 27). As a response to her mother's attitude, Mariam's inner voice whispers her to view her mother's trial of guilt as a fear of detachment:

"You are afraid, Nana... You're afraid that I might find the happiness you never had. And you don't want me to be happy. You don't want a good life for me. You are the one with the wretched heart" (28).

How Nana reacts to Mariam, who wants to meet her father in order to take her to his cinema to watch the cartoon (26) seems to be a representation of extremism likely to occur once symbiosis comes to an end. This can be construed as a risk to object-attachment narcissism. In the 1920s, Freudian terms revolving around the phallus were revised by Melanie Klein (British psychoanalyst) through her theory of object-relations, positing the mother as the essence central to the Oedipal drama, and argued that infants, regardless of their sex, identify mainly with the stereotypical maternal breast. With her theory, Klein offered that the infant canalizes feelings of love and complacency to the good breast while reacting with destructive impulses against the frustrating bad breast and inferred that not the mother's lack of phallus but the deprivation of the breast had a central role in turning children to the father (Wallace, 2009: 57).

Partially different from Freud's argument, post-Freudian authors have mainly been concerned with the very early pre-Oedipal phases and mothering (Jackson and Jones, 1998: 161). Not father but mother is involved in the principal critical context by post-Freudian authors, and the striking feature of a mother from the early ages appears to be her long-lasting effect on the future life of a child. All in all, childhood and its stages are obviously sanctuaries, even if age rage is regarded as critical, which varies among different psychoanalysts. This can be deemed to be a radical breakthrough since the transition from father to mother has been offered by psychoanalytic feminism. After Nana's death, Mariam, experiencing her father's hypocrisy, wants to see Mullah Faizullah and replace her mother not with Jalil but with him as she seeks safety. He

offers verses from the Koran to console Mariam yet it does not work and Mariam still hears her mother's exclamation "I'll die if you go. I'll just die" (Hosseini, 2018: 38). After encountering the reality and realizing the hypocrisy, Mariam for the first time sees her father through her mother's lens and feels "insincerity, false assurances, hollow" latent so far. This case can be expressed through Klein's argument. Apparently the primary axis in revealing domination and subordination, besides finding a reasonable cause, the early infancy necessitates a meticulous scrutiny, and thereupon, some controversial issues concerning the theory have been raised. Despite the criticism on Freud's theory, it appeared to be influential in some other aspects, especially with its great contribution to the liberation of women from the sexual morality of the repressive Victorian era. Without a shadow of a doubt, it has been made use of; however, the missing points in psychoanalysis are attempted to be compensated, and some scholars have swerved with regard to critical ages in early childhood. For instance, Klein has centralized the first three years for child development, and this vantage point marks a radical departure from Freud's theory, which hypothesizes that the Oedipus complex occurring at the age of five or six is fundamental in the evolution of the superego and psyche. Freud has argued that following this phase, the child internalizes the first person who is claimed to be the father in his theory, revealing the construction of the superego. On the other hand, Klein has challenged this viewpoint through the allegation that the mother is internalized by the infant from birth onward (Slipp, 1993: 14-15). What constitutes the bedrock of human subjectivity, according to the discovery of Klein working with children, has appeared to be psychic mechanisms monitoring our relation to grief and loss as described eloquently by Freud in "Mourning and Melancholia." At the very beginning, the Kleinian infant establishes a schizophrenic and paranoid relation with the external world. During the first four months, no stable boundary exists between external and internal sides, hate and love, persecution and destruction, but rather anxiety exacerbated by an exceedingly destructive drive rises. Immediately after the mother is viewed as a "whole object," a type of guilty mourning flourishes as the infant starts to be afraid of the effects of the harm it has given to the mother in phantasy. Consequently, the baby develops a depressive mood, worried to atone for the aggression he has and convert the mother into her wellness again. Through Klein's work, the death drive of Freud was associated with a new role concerning the root of psychic life (Marcus and Nicholls, 2004: 282). On the basis of these, how Mariam feels can be

based on the worry a baby feels to ensure the wellness of a mother, yet she cannot compensate for this, as her mother has died.

Experiencing estrangement from her mother and father respectively, Mariam's psyche is in pursuit of a new object-attachment to maintain maternal symbiosis that is interrupted incessantly owing to her mother's attitude, suicide, and then disappointment led by Jalil. Laila fulfills what Mariam lacks, compensating for the lack of maternal symbiosis. In war-torn Afghanistan, the maternal symbiosis between Mariam and Laila, exposed to systemic oppression and harsh conditions, represents a powerful testament to female solidarity. Evolving from initial tension into profound reciprocal support, the maternal symbiosis between these two female characters foregrounds the exploration of resilience and strength that emerged out of female bonds under the patriarchy. Although they originate partially from different backgrounds, what they have in common is societal misogyny, agony, and domestic violence, along with Afghanistan's political turmoil. What brings them together is their shared marriage to Rasheed, embodying abuse and strict male-centricism. Drawing on their unbearable experiences, Mariam and Laila construct a profound symbiotic connection that substitutes for their maternal symbiosis. They maintain maternal symbiosis after developing a sense of separate entity.

Chodorow asserts the existence of a "primary undifferentiated unit" between the mother and the child, which requires a child to develop a sense of separate entity from this bond, hence the child needs to experience a stage of individuation-separation during which the psyche is constructed by the social relations internalized by the psyche itself as aforementioned (Brennan, 1998: 275). In the course of the individuation or separation, the female child undergoes a similar process as the male child does and develops a desire for the father and wants to substitute for her mother, but she learns to end this desire and searches for other objects apart from her father. Identification occupies a great position in gender formation, and a self is constructed on the basis of the equations between external objects and oneself through taking objects as models and internalizing their images (Rivkin and Ryan, 2004: 392). In *TSS*, Mariam's attachment to her father is evident: "Mariam always held her breath as she watched him go. She pretended that for each second that she didn't breathe, God would grant her another day with Jalil." How Mariam wants to be part of Jalil's household and assign her father to

substitute for her mother is expressed through Mariam's imaginary assumptions (Hosseini, 2018: 24):

(...) Mariam lay in her cot and wondered what his house in Herat was like. She wondered what it would be like to live with him, to see him every day. She pictured herself handing him a towel as he shaved, telling him when he nicked himself. She would brew tea for him. She would sew on his missing buttons (...).

Mariam faces the reality gradually. She initially expects to be accepted by Jalil, but afterwards, she realizes rejection through what she confronts and needs to seek other attachments to replace him. Her mother plays a role in this with an emphasis on the fact that both she and Mariam are pokeroots for Jalil and his wives. Mariam does not approve of this at first, but this induces her to realize the reality and think that she is not accepted by Jalil's wives and family (Hosseini, 2018: 8).

A groundbreaking report by the United Nations published in 2002 indicated that the lack of female mobilisation was amidst three primary elements sowing the seeds for retardation in the growth of the Arab world. The Middle East keeps its overwhelming and suffocating patriarchal structure, no matter that the rate of women's participation in society is increasing at the margin in the Arab world (Robins, 2009: 187). Married to three women simultaneously and having nine children, enjoying wealth as the owner of carpet stores, clothing shops, and having a life arranged to serve him with three housekeepers, along with a cook and a driver, Jalil exemplifies a typical male figure deemed to deserve anything good thanks to his gender, appreciated in a patriarchal society. On the other hand, Nana was amidst those housekeepers and was used as an object by Jalil, therefore, she was blamed even for her pregnancy. She was disowned by her father upon her pregnancy, so her image of her father, her idealisation of him, was destroyed as a result of her disappointment. Her own experiences lead her to internalize the patriarchy and submit to it. She merely obeys the patriarchal structures and does not embody a robust character to be a role model for her daughter to assert her agency. She acts in line with the traditional portrayal of oppressed women. This can be construed as her lack of individuation and separation from her mother. As the mother-child bond is asserted to be too strong, even the belongings of a mother mean much to a child, as can be consolidated with how Nana values the tea set, which is the "sole relic" from her mother, and reacts aggressively towards Mariam, who unintentionally drops the last piece of that tea set. Nana was just two when her mother passed away, and seemingly anything that connotes her bond to her mother can be construed as a kind of

replacement; that's why, she blames Mariam for being clumsy and despises her, being "little harami" (Hosseini, 2018: 3-4). By the same token, seemingly a continuation of symbiosis and ego, Nana once says to Mariam:

"But where do I belong? What am I going to do now? I'm all you have in this world, Mariam, and when I'm gone, you'll have nothing. You'll have nothing. You are nothing!" (40).

Identification occupies a great position in gender formation, and a self is constructed on the basis of the equations between external objects and oneself through taking objects as models and internalizing their images (Rivkin and Ryan, 2004: 392). The novel explores how instrumental identification with external figures and also the internalization of their images are in gender formation and self-constructions. Mariam's early experiences, both with her mother and father, embody how external attitudes shape Mariam's sense of self. Her relationship with her father and his attitude towards her like a little flower, not a harami, which results in her development of object attachment with her father instead of her mother, exemplifies how external models impact identification and self-construction. Likewise, Laila's evolving self is impacted by her father and also her experiences, reflecting identification with external models and ideas. Her father, Babi, supportive of education and women's role in it, shapes Laila's gendered self and aspirations. He underscores that schooling is of great importance, and after security, education should be provided:

I know you're still young, but I want you to understand and learn this now, he said (...) Marriage can wait, education cannot You're a very, very bright girl. Truly, you are. You can be anything you want, Laila I know this about you. And I also know that when this war is over, Afghanistan is going to need you as much as its men, maybe even more. Because a society has no chance of success if its women are uneducated, Laila No chance (Hosseini, 2018: 114).

Chodorow points out that, contrary to many sociological theorists, psychoanalysis is into gender and sexuality; that's why it stands for the best place to commence to find out how sexual identities develop and how they grow into gender characteristics. She offers that psychoanalysis elaborates on the social location of gender and claims that both the self and social relationships form it. Another argument she highlights is that the psychological and the social cannot be separated and are intertwined. As for mothering, a psychoanalytic perspective reveals that mothering is not reducible merely to social and cultural aspects but can be identified as a psychological

stance. Moreover, Chodorow is in favour of the uniqueness of psychoanalytic theory in the sense that it provides an aspect for exploring how cultural phenomena are ascribed with profound emotional and personal meaning (Martin, 1998: 231). Mariam's early childhood experiences are instrumental in her internalization of the patriarchy. Shaped by the unconscious guilt and shame nourished by Nana's suicide and her "harami" status, her psyche paves way for her subjugation. Her acceptance of Rasheed's abuse dovetails with her unconscious and psyche, heavily influenced by the norms of the patriarchal structures. Not surprisingly, what she is exposed to mirrors Nana's warnings about how male cruelty destroys women's lives. Deprived of love from early infancy as "harami," Mariam's repressed desire for love, along with acceptance, surfaces in her bond with Laila and her children, which can be interpreted as an unconscious yearning for the symbiotic maternal bond she lacks. For Nana, accusing her father of not killing her with a knife, which she deems to be honourable and better both for her and Mariam, thus enabling her daughter to avoid "the grief of knowing" who she (Mariam) is, since he does not do this, she describes her father as a coward (6). Nana refuses to live with Jalil's family in Herat and also does not want to live in her father's village; instead, she is in favour of living somewhere far from any neighbours likely to disturb her with their insincere, humiliating attitude (8).

Chodorow's account for the universal differences prescribing personality and roles associated with masculinity and femininity draws upon the hypothesis consolidated by socio-psychological and cross-cultural studies, and the insufficiency of elucidation on the ground of deliberate socialization, which disproves any counterview apart from that an argument cannot be based merely on biological sex differences universally accepted. A person's adherence to a sense of self hinges on some factors, such as gender identity and sex roles typically ascribed to certain expectations along with gender identity (1995: 199). Gender expectations play a significant role in various fields of life, as can be traced in Nana's reaction to Mariam's desire for education. She vehemently opposes Mariam's education, whereas Mullah Faizullah supports it:

What's the sense schooling a girl like you? It's like shining a spittoon. And you'll learn nothing of value in those schools. There is only one, only one skill a woman like you and me needs in life, and they don't teach it in school." (...) "Look at me." (...) "Only one skill. And it's this: tahamul. Endure. "Endure what, Nana? (Hosseini, 2018:18).

Even if glorified as the representative of the public, political, and economic spheres, fathers stand for a shadowy emotional entity both for daughters and sons constantly, without any change after the Oedipus complex. All the aforementioned concerning gender relations sheds light on the ideology of male-centricism. The absence of the primary bond to males results in a glorification of males and, unlike this, a devaluation of females (Elliott, 1994: 122).

Contrary to traditional aspects adopted by Freudians who centralize drives people are assumed to gratify, object relations theorists suggest that people are in search of relations with “objects.” In object relations theory, what “objects” refer to is people. Another aspect that separates object relations theorists from Freudians is that their main concern is the preoedipal period, unlike the oedipal period prioritized by Freud. Moreover, not the father but the mother is deemed to function as the key figure by object relations theorists, that’s why the mother is supposed to be influential on children’s development. No difference exists in the initial stage between the sexes, so regardless of their gender identity, both boys and girls experience the same developmental story in the beginning, and attachment to the mother is accepted as a starting point in their life (Martin, 1998: 233).

Chodorow suggests shared parenting to transform established gender polarity. Once both parents are included in a nurturing and caring connection with their children, boys and daughters can establish autonomy and emotional intimacy through a primary pertinence to mother and father (Elliott, 1994: 123). Chodorow (1995) offers a model with an aim for figuring out what precipitates a considerable differentiating males and females experience during the stages of development and attributes this difference to that women are the main figures who deal with childcare during early childhood and later female socialization, that’s why the relationship between mother and daughter is of utmost importance and children of both sexes are asserted to construct the basis of their conscious and unconscious during their involvement into the interaction with a female in early childhood as aforementioned. Why women and men differ in experiencing the social environment sets the stage for the sex differences apparent in personality. Typical characteristics of the relationship between mother and daughter are argued to form the basis of feminine ego structure (199). In the initial stage of development, boys and girls achieve a symbiosis or a oneness with the mother. The initial relationship with the mother through the interaction with the mother’s breast while suckling, as well as being

held or cuddled, leads the child to develop a sense of oneness and not to differentiate between self and mother. Both psychologically and physically, the infant grows into a sense of self and oneness with the mother. Yet separation from the mother marks a departure from oneness and results in the establishment of “self” and what they experience beforehand during the preoedipal phase lasting around three years following the birth, also undergo a change since girls and boys are mothered differently by the mother. This difference stems from the mother’s own sex and shapes the mother’s interaction with the daughter and the son accordingly. While mothering a daughter, a mother re-experiences herself in two ways: as the daughter’s mother and as a mothered child. Her relationship with her daughter is constructed on her perception of her daughter, as if she were her own, thus attempting to create connection and closeness with her daughter. Having a long-lasting influence, the preoedipal relationship between the mother and the daughter appears to continue, and it is represented in the forms of dependence, individuation, and boundary confusion (233). On this relationship, girls construct gender identity, and it is not challenging for them as they are already in an entity of oneness. As a consequence of this symbiosis, girls are necessarily attached or connected to their mothers and maintain a dependence on them from the very start of their lives. As for the mothers, they experience the similarity between them and their daughters and confirm this, so the gender identity of the daughter is formed. Over the developmental stages, as girls are required to separate from their mothers, the mother-daughter bond turns into a challenging relationship, inducing ambivalence and boundary confusion. A sense of self characterizing a profound, unconscious, fixed schema is formed by the daughter via the connection or “identification” with the mother, as called by psychoanalysts. She grows into a feeling of being a girl/woman. Drawing on their relationship with their mothers, girls develop personalities that connate this relationship, featuring its characteristics: connected, dependent, relational, and boundary permeable (233). As for boys, as is the case for girls, they undergo the same feeling of oneness and a symbiosis with the mother. In comparison with the girls, boys experience a more challenging process of gender construction as they need to separate from their mothers as well as change their identificatory love from them. Mothers contribute to this greatly by conveying that the boy is different from her. Actually, mothers’ love for their sons is no less than their love for their daughters, but the motherhood attitude is variable, and they treat them differently. Boys do not establish their gender identity through

identifying themselves with their mothers, yet lacking father parenting and thereby a masculine figure to identify with, they develop a sense of themselves as “not a mother,” a woman or a feminine, hence masculine identity is equal to not being a girl/woman and feminine which induces to define masculinity as a fragile identity. Since the boy constructs their identity lacking a masculine figure but as a different identity from femininity, they perpetually strive to reconfirm and reconstruct their masculinity through repudiating what is related to or embodies femininity (234). As aforementioned, boys experience a harsh period while constructing their gender identity, yet they undergo a much easier experience while establishing their sexual identity in terms of development. Since mothers stand for the figure to be erotically adhered to for both sexes, each child is matrilineal inborn. Throughout the developmental stages, boys maintain their adherence to their mothers, as girls keep their identification with them. During the oedipal development, boys experience a shift in their object choice and replace their mothers with women in general, thus growing into adulthood, establishing heterosexual identities (234). A set of factors such as biological sex, along with gender and other varieties including orientation, behaviour, and values form the basis of one’s sense of self-designation, that’s sexual identity. Drawing on a multilayer structure, nature and nurture contribute to sexual identity (Yarhouse and Tan, 2004: 3). Mothers have been believed to be fundamental in self-formation, and early relations with mothers construct the basis of self. Mothers function in laying the ground for selves and capacities which necessarily end up with a separation from the mother for realization and practice (Stone, 2012: 12).

Chodorow claims that boys construct their maleness thanks to the assistance provided by their mother, whose perception of gender difference propels the boys towards autonomy and differentiation. Called “anaclitic” by Chodorow, this bond is experienced by the pre-Oedipal mother and son, indicating that mothers establish a sense of otherness, relate to them as other and different from themselves. Thus, the sons are disengaged emotionally from intimacy and care, enabling boys to adopt an abstract and instrumental attitude towards life and the world, and leading to the arousal of expectations from the boys to take place in public and political spheres in addition to the extra-familial realm of work. The gendered self is thus forged on the basis of relations dating back to the pre-Oedipal period (Elliott, 1994: 122).

As she has specified in an interview with Philipson (2022), psychoanalysis has paved the way for a return to her pre-left psychological anthropology period. Inspired by her family members and the female activists, educated but unemployed, yet volunteering in politics to provide the library system, state parks, bike paths, and schools for pupils with special needs, Nancy Chodorow was under the mentorship of strong women embodying courage and assertiveness (501). Chodorow highlights that psychoanalysis unveils the complexity of individual psychology as well as individual subjectivity; therefore, it is a theory of the individual. However, in terms of social science, everything is deemed to be intertwined with the social, the interpersonal, the economic and the cultural (505).

The circulation of mother and daughter is a reflection of how gender and generation overlap. On the basis of her observation, Chodorow has come up with the idea that “being a daughter” is of great importance in women’s development and experience, and so is in the mother-daughter relationship. Delving into this requires the discovery of the position this relationship covers in the psyche and the reflection of it on development. Chodorow interrogates how women grow into motherhood and become mothers, finding that these are interrelated. She concludes that the development of maternity pursues the mother-daughter relationship and draws on women’s mothering (50). In her article “Oedipal Asymmetries and Heterosexual Knots,” Chodorow (1976) argues that the reproduction of the family is represented in difficulties observed in heterosexual couple relationships and claims that it is not a coincidence but an outcome of an intentionally constructed system. What the psychoanalytic scrutiny of masculine and feminine oedipal development indicates is that asymmetrical relational needs occur necessarily as a consequence of a family structure that ascribes parenting to women and in which women are the mothers. The routine process followed by family reproduction sheds light on the same facts concerning male-female relationships operating in regularized ways and recognized in a large number of contexts (454). When parented by a woman and raised as heterosexual, women need a multilayer relational needs which are not satisfied with an exclusive relationship they have with a man since they establish a sense of self involved in a relational triangle embracing their father and men posited emotionally secondary in comparison to their mother and other women, hence, women are in need of establishment of primary relationships not only to men but also to women. Apart from this, setting a relationship with a man results in some difficulties.

Upon separation from a relation to the father, idealization produces an unreal relationship to males and induces denial of genuine feelings (465).

The separation-individuation process is experienced as the psychological birth of a person. In the wake of the arousal of a sense of separateness, a link to a world of reality is established, particularly with regard to what an infant experiences concerning its own body and the primary love object, which stands for the main representative of the world. Akin to any intrapsychic process, separation-individuation is a repetitive process throughout the whole lifespan and never ends. The previous processes that are still active are observable through new derivatives of them during new phases in the life cycle. The predominant psychological achievements, though, are experienced during the early period of life, from the fourth or fifth month till the thirtieth or thirty-sixth month, called the separation-individuation stage (Mahler et. al., 1975: 3).

Chodorow takes the view that mothering is more than a requirement of women's nature, so she has addressed the questions, including what reasons are likely to lead women to maintain their desire for mothering children and viewing themselves as potential mothers or mothers and performing the tasks of mothering, by mostly excluding men. She suggests that psychological character formation prepares women to be mothers or instills in them a desire to be mothers. Chodorow has expostulated the idea ascribing women's mothering to innateness emerging out of the very beginning of human society, in which the species evolved as gatherers and hunters. Lacking any persuasive basis, women's mothering cannot be expressed as their own choice induced by genetic programming or "instincts." In the past, when human beings dwelt on hunting and gathering, women might be dictated to bear and rear children, yet this is not valid anymore in the modern world (Eisenstein, 1983: 87).

4.3. The Male Gaze and Female Agency of Mariam and Laila

A Thousand Splendid Suns presents a portrayal of endurable women oppressed in post-Taliban Afghanistan. Navigating the intersection of patriarchy, cultural traditions, and war, the oppressed women undergo psychologically and physically destructive experiences. Fundamental to the novel is the male gaze operating as a means of domination as well as a framework that negotiates the influence of how women are objectified, how gender roles are constructed, and how identities are formed.

Hosseini conveys his critiques and generates a solution to this through the subversion of traditional gender dynamics. His portrayal of Mariam and Laila embodies the plight of women in a male-dominated society, and he also employs his narrative to subvert the male gaze as a force objectifying women and reconstruct female agency through female protagonists' counterattack by actively resisting and reclaiming their agency despite the strict patriarchal norms. Hosseini allows a space for female protagonists to exist, to maintain their entity, whereby he contributes to female empowerment and paves the way for the reimagining of gender roles, liberating them from the patriarchy. The final moments of Mariam on the surface are like a summary of how traditional stereotypes are subverted. She was washed over by abundant peace, not by regret. Remembering her greeting of the world as a harami child, an unintended thing emerging out of a regrettable accident, Mariam is now a loving and beloved person and is leaving the world as a companion, a friend, a guardian, a mother, all of which satisfy her. She thinks her death is a legitimate end to the world, wherein she has started her life as an illegitimate infant isolated by her father (Hosseini, 2018: 361).

As for the male gaze of the characters, it is obvious that women are situated according to the male gaze, and it operates as a decision-making mechanism that determines women's lives. The male characters believe that they have an inborn superiority over women, which they believe makes them much smarter than women. The judge at Mariam's trial articulates what is endorsed by the Koran and expresses that God has created men and women differently, and men's brains differ from women's, and women cannot think as men do. He says that this difference has been confirmed by Western doctors (Hosseini, 2018: 355) and attempts to present a scientific basis to consolidate this verse. Based on their belief, the male gaze or everything that belongs to men or is peculiar to men can be idealized by men, so they can believe that they are granted the authority to decide women's destiny. What is encapsulated in women's psyche enables them to act in accordance with the male gaze. Males represent safety, safe side in women's psyche and are deemed to be the guardian, that's why when Rasheed keeps her away from the male visitors during the Ramadan Eid, Mariam is pretty glad and even flattered as she thinks this is a reflection of sanctity Rasheed sees in their bond and also how precious her namoos and honor are worth guarding. All these protective attitudes make Mariam prized, significant, and treasured (80). Actually, the reaction of Rasheed represents the male gaze rather than his role in Mariam's mind as a

guardian. This can be elucidated by another indirect excerpt from the novel: One day, while cleaning the house, Mariam coincidentally discovers some magazines in the drawer of Rasheed's dresser. These magazines are full of nude photos of beautiful women (81). These photos obviously intend to serve the male gaze and the gaze of Rasheed, who has curled their corners most probably to make them instantly visible to his gaze. For female gazes, especially for a female growing up in a conservative society, these photos necessarily appear to be disgusting, as is the case for Mariam, who feels drugged and baffled at how these women give permission to be photographed so. Mariam is suspicious of Rasheed if he spends time on these, and how on earth he makes mention of propriety and honour, and also she cannot make sense of his attitude against the female customers he is critical of, merely for trying on shoes (82).

Rasheed brings a burqa, which he thinks is a kind of barrier to save Mariam against the male gaze (69), and for the first time, Mariam tries it (71). For Mariam, unlike Rasheed, the burqa stands as a one-way window. Wearing it, she feels like an observer far away from the anxiety nourished by the possibility of whether the people know all the shameful secrets of her life, so the burqa operates as a barrier against the scrutinizing eyes gazing over her by the strangers (72). As for the embodiment of the male gaze of the character:

"But I'm a different breed of man, Mariam. Where I come from, one wrong look, one improper word, and blood is spilled. Where I come from, a woman's face is her husband's business only" (69).

The conservative attitude against the male gaze seemingly contributes to the power manifesting itself in a threatening form for Mariam, and upon his comment, Mariam thinks Rasheed's will is imposing and immovable, akin to the Safid-koh mountains which loom over Gul Daman (70). While wandering around Kabul, what baffles Mariam most is the women with their modern appearances and modern husbands who take no notice of their wives with makeup, either walking among strangers without anything on their heads or alone without company. Remarkably different from Mariam and her style, these women with their modern appearances and styles, which Mariam deems to be the result of their occupation, have raised her awareness of her own solitude as well as her ignorance of numerous things, in addition to the shortage of her aspirations (74).

How Rasheed takes against the male gaze is explicitly conveyed through his comment, which is also a reflection of what is adopted conventionally:

I have customers, Mariam, men, who bring their wives to my shop. The women come uncovered, they talk to me directly, look me in the eye without shame. They wear makeup and skirts that show their knees. Sometimes they even put their feet in front of me, the women do, for measurements, and their husbands stand there and watch. They allow it. They think nothing of a stranger touching their wives' bare feet! They think they're being modern men, intellectuals, on account of their education, I suppose. They don't see that they're spoiling their own nang and namoos, their honor and pride (Hosseini, 2018: 69).

Mostly, they live in the richer parts of Kabul. I'll take you there. You'll see. But they're here too, Mariam, in this very neighborhood, these soft men. There's a teacher living down the street, Hakim is his name, and I see his wife Fariba all the time walking the streets alone with nothing on her head but a scarf. It embarrasses me, frankly, to see a man who's lost control of his wife (69).

Serving the male gaze is not limited to physical appearance but also extends to food presentation. Mariam feels nervous even about whether Rasheed will like the taste of the meal-the gold-colored doal. "...What if he was disappointed or angry? What if he pushed his plate away in displeasure?" (68). When Rasheed likes the dish, Mariam feels proud of what she has done. "A flare of pride caught her off guard. She had done well, maybe better than good, even, and it surprised her, this thrill she felt over his small compliment" (68) since the male figure is framed to be the one women need to serve to and provide satisfactory service for in order to be appreciated by him.

In a patriarchal society ruled by the male gaze, women may be deprived of the right to choose what to wear, or they may be condemned as Rasheed does the women trying on shoes. In Kabul, Rasheed buys a smart shawl with beaded edges and fringes embroidered with gold thread" (Hosseini, 2018: 75), and then this turns out to be just a pre-award for Mariam, as that night he does what Mariam avoids and is afraid of most (75-76). It can be deduced that the male gaze desires a woman to dress up to serve his gaze and views a female as an object to be adorned. Rasheed refers to the Prophet to rationalize his deed. However, in *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*, referring to several sources, Stowasser (1994) underscores that Muhammad used to treat all women better than all men did during his lifetime and after his death. Western credibility has decreased as a consequence of women's exploitation in Western societies, whereas women's rights in the Islamic context justify the collective dignity all Muslims are identified with (120-121). This proves that men can abuse religious references or lack sound knowledge about it.

Mariam's psyche is encoded with a traditional portrayal of a woman who is created to serve men, and she reveals this through her self-talk inside. Revealing the reverse of the shield, Hosseini implicitly expresses his own thought concerning what happens in reality and how an exposed face cannot go beyond a pseudo attitude adopted in accordance with a person's own benefit, far from any principles of morality. Through Mariam's inner self-talk, he shows the duality of the character, one disapproval of his wife without a burqa and another voyeur of the private areas of other women (82). Mariam accounts for what she has seen in those magazines through an explanation produced by the patriarchal society itself, indeed:

He was a man, after all, living alone for years before she had moved in. His needs differed from hers. For her, all these months later, their coupling was still an exercise in tolerating pain. His appetite, on the other hand, was fierce, sometimes bordering on the violent. The way he pinned her down, his hard squeezes at her breasts, how furiously his hips worked. He was a man. All those years without a woman. Could she fault him for being the way God had created him? (82).

Belittling herself dominates Mariam and results in her sense of self inauthoritative to pass judgment as a harami and villager. She has made a comparison between two male figures in her life: her father, Jalil, and her husband, Rasheed. She finds what Rasheed has done much more innocent and tolerable in comparison with her father, married to three wives with nine children, though having attempted to have a relationship with her mother, giving birth to a harami as a result of that relationship out of wedlock (82). On the basis of her psyche, she subordinates herself and does not go beyond a humble attitude in line with the expectations of a patriarchal society.

How women are repressed in a patriarchal society is embodied by Rasheed's photo with his previous spouse. Rasheed seemingly looms over his wife, and his hands are on her shoulders. His wife has an unsmiling, sullen face, whereas Rasheed stands with his "savoring and tight-lipped smile." The stance of the woman seems to unveil her desire for wriggling free of Rasheed's hands (83). Actually, this photo depicts patriarchal power through the dominant position of Rasheed, the male figure whereas his spouse is shown in a submissive pose, reflecting women's subjugation maintained in patriarchal societies as a consequence of the systemic oppression evidenced in every practice, even in a single photograph.

4.4. Endurance in the Face of Oppression: Survival of Mariam and Laila

Joseph shall return to Canaan, grieve not,
Hovels shall turn to rose gardens, grieve not.
If a flood should arrive, to drown all that's alive,
Noah is your guide in the typhoon's eye, grieve not.

-Hafiz

In the face of overwhelming adverse cases, the human psyche finds refuge in transformation and adaptability, not in escape. The last chapter of *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2018), not as an epigraph but in text, includes lines of Hafiz, resembling the mind's development of psychological strategies to navigate emotional storms threatening the psyche. Through various defense mechanisms, the female protagonists grapple with trauma, inner conflict, loss, and harsh life conditions. Subverting the conventional norms women are stigmatized with, Mariam and Laila prove that they are courageous enough to get over the restrictions and navigate harsh realities in a patriarchal society wherein they are involved in strict and abusive relationships. They experience various traumatic experiences, and in order to cope with them, they need to employ some psychological strategies so that they can minimize or eradicate psychological distress and emotional pain. These psychological strategies form the basis of their survival in a male-centered society that ignores female entities.

To start in line with the chronological order, Mariam is the first female protagonist to be analyzed in terms of the defense mechanisms she utilizes. Abundant in traumatic experiences, the novel unveils the sort of traumas women can undergo in a patriarchal society. Dating back to the very early stage of the narrative, even Mariam's birth can be deemed as a traumatic experience for her since she is labelled with the word "harami," followed by Jalil's (her father's) rejection of her. Mariam is born into an environment surrounded by her mother, profoundly affected by her own traumatic experiences; therefore, inevitably, she develops her initial attachment to a traumatic mother. Upon her mother's death, Mariam is taken to Jalil's (her father's) house, yet she is immediately forced to marry an older man despite her own disapproval. As she does not want to get married, her marriage equals abuse for her. Her life can be identified from infancy to youth with a series of traumas, so she needs to overcome all hardships

and oppressive circumstances imposed by the patriarchy so that she can protect herself psychologically; that's why defense mechanisms greatly contribute to keeping her alive.

Mariam experiences consecutive traumas that shape her life in different periods of her life, starting from her infancy. Mariam's birth can be deemed as a traumatic experience for her since she is labelled with the word "harami," followed by Jalil's (her father) rejection of her. Mariam is born into an environment surrounded by her mother, profoundly affected by her own traumatic experiences; therefore, inevitably, Mariam develops her initial attachment to a traumatic mother. Upon her mother's death, Mariam is taken to her father's house, yet she is immediately forced to marry an older man, albeit against her disapproval. As she does not want to get married, her marriage is equivalent to abuse. From infancy to youth, her life can be identified with a series of traumas. She needs to overcome all hardships and oppressive circumstances imposed by the patriarchy so that she can protect herself psychologically.

In the face of trauma, Mariam needs to detach from reality. Hence, she employs "dissociation," described by Territo (2014) as an experience an individual undergoes through a feeling of disconnection from what surrounds him or her (99). Mariam attempts to adapt to the oppressive environment so "identification" enables her to identify with roles through which she is afforded some protection and control. Additionally, she dissociates from her dull mode by caretaking Aziza:

Mariam found it exhausting to watch the girl's lolloping enthusiasm-and had to admit, if only privately, to a degree of admiration. She marveled at how the girl's eyes shone with worship, even in the mornings when her face drooped and her complexion was waxy from a night's worth of walking the baby (...) The tiniest changes in the baby enchanted her, and everything it did was declared spectacular (Hosseini, 2018:232).

Aiming to safeguard itself, the ego provides balance and hinders any extreme cases likely to be induced by the id and the superego, between which the ego itself dwells; therefore, defence mechanisms are employed so that the ego can stay in tune with reality and arrange everything accordingly. Rather than a "defensive attitude" in the simplest way in line with colloquial speech, defensive mechanisms can be described as "unconscious arrangements" which enable the individual to find a replacement or substitution, or put off satisfaction and when necessary, to compromise "id impulses" with "superego compulsions" (Erikson, 1963: 193). Denial is instrumental in keeping ego safe so Mariam blinds herself and through "psychotic denial," as referred to by Di Giuseppe and Percy (2012:10), Mariam rejects the presence of the crowd:

Thousands of eyes bore down on her. In the crowded bleachers, necks were craned for the benefit of a better view. Tongues clucked. A murmuring sound rippled through the stadium when Mariam was helped down from the truck. Mariam imagined heads shaking when the loudspeaker announced her crime. But she did not look up to see whether they were shaking with disapproval or charity, with reproach or pity. Mariam blinded herself to them all (Hosseini, 2018: 359-360).

In order to survive in the patriarchy, Mariam mostly suppresses what she feels and tries to endure the harshness of life, along with abuse from Rasheed. She hardens herself to be robust against his scorn and reproach. Thus, she can cope with external stressors such as Rasheed and the harsh life through suppression, as denoted by Di Giuseppe and Percy (2012: 6), enabling her to avoid thinking about these:

Over the years, Mariam had learned to harden herself against his scorn and reproach, his ridiculing and reprimanding. But this fear she had no control over. All these years and still she shivered with fright when he was like this, sneering, tightening the belt around his fist, the creaking of the leather, the glint in his bloodshot eyes. It was the fear of the goat, released in the tiger's cage, when the tiger first looks up from its paws, begins to growl (Hosseini, 2018: 234).

Capturing the essence of life and maintaining an effervescent attitude requires liberation from the constructed systems of maverick figures and initiation to debunk all pseudo-conventions that operate for destructive discrepancy rather than betterment. An undeniable fact is that personal identity draws on gender differences posited into the foreground of the system at work. As Harding (1986) deepens the pivotal aspects of gender in "The Science Question in Feminism," what is fundamental is gender differentiating "what is social" from "what is natural." Self-identity is actually an accumulation of the gendered aspects identifying personalities and deeds done accordingly, since gender difference has operated as the most ancient, powerful, and universal system from which numerous conceptualizations originate in the world (17). Mariam subverts the cycle of submission and departs from what her psyche maintains conventionally by killing Rasheed. This embodies the eruption of her suppressed agency, thus reframing the unconscious liberated from the early mother-child bond since her act contrasts with gendered behaviour.

Remarkably different from Mariam, born into marginalization and shame as an illegitimate child, Laila grows up in relative privilege as she is educated, loved, and not exposed to the harsh conditions marginalizing her. Her early experiences play a role in her survival since they are instrumental in her sense of self-worth. Kabul's descent into the war is a watershed in her life since she experiences a considerable evolution. Upon the loss of her parents and her separation from Tariq, she is forced into an oppressive

marriage with Mariam's husband, Rasheed, akin to Mariam's earlier fate. The adversity does not diminish her but nourishes her fierce strength. She turns out to be not only a survivor but also a protector for her children and Mariam.

Displacement and denial can be traced in Laila's struggle to reduce the violence and injustice she is surrounded by and rationalize it. This is evident in that, in spite of the cruelty Rasheed and the Taliban's oppression impose, Laila disregards it and tries to maintain hope and normalcy in her imagination and thinks that it is possible to have a better, brighter future with Mariam and her children:

“...she rambled on anyway, incoherently, childishly, about fruit trees that awaited planting and chickens that awaited raising. She went on about small houses in unnamed towns, and walks to trout-filled lakes” (Hosseini, 2018: 350).

Laila sublimates her trauma into education and hope for the future, eventually becoming a teacher:

When the children spot Laila, they come running. They come running at full tilt. Laila is swarmed. There is a flurry of high-pitched greetings, of shrill voices, of patting, clutching, tugging, groping, of jostling with one another to climb into her arms. There are outstretched little hands and appeals for attention. Some of them call her Mother. Laila does not correct them (Hosseini, 2018: 401).

Subverting the conventional norms women are stigmatized with, Mariam and Laila prove that they are courageous enough to get over the restrictions and navigate harsh realities in a patriarchal society wherein they are involved in strict and abusive relationships. They experience various traumatic experiences, and in order to grapple with them, they need to employ some psychological strategies so that they can minimize or eradicate psychological distress and emotional pain. These psychological strategies form the basis of their survival in a male-centered society that ignores female entities.

Aiming for safeguarding itself, the ego provides balance and hinders any extreme cases likely to be induced by the id and the superego, between which the ego itself dwells; therefore, defence mechanisms are employed so that the ego stays in tune with reality and arranges everything accordingly. Rather than a “defensive attitude” in the simplest way in line with colloquial speech, defensive mechanisms can be described as “unconscious arrangements” which enable the individual to find a replacement or substitution, or put off satisfaction and when necessary, to compromise “id impulses” with “superego compulsions” (Erikson, 1963: 193).

Addressing the reasons likely to lead women's oppression in the stories of Mariam and Laila, in line with the hypothesis of this study, this section primarily focuses on examination of symbiosis and narcissistic object attachment in mother-daughter relationship of the female characters to see whether they form the basis of gender difference and how this is wried in order to trace the patriarchal system sketched by the continuous practices.

Rooted in early psychological fusion between infant and mother, symbiosis operates as a stage that is disproportionately instrumental in shaping women's identities as a consequence of their caregiving roles, embodying unequal parenting as foregrounded by psychoanalytic feminists as a reason for women's oppression, exposing what is absorbed in the psyche in early childhood. The individuation of Mariam from the psychological inheritance left by her mother, Nana, nourished by her own narrative, representing her personal experiences of pain and also her worldview, can be construed as the disruption of symbiosis, whereas the difficulty experienced in the individuation can be related to the prolonged characteristic of the symbiosis. On the other hand, Laila's distant and strained relationship with her mother and her involvement in a profound maternal bond with Mariam, characterizing a transformation in symbiosis as a result of solidarity, empathy, accompanied by shared trauma, presents a novel approach to symbiotic dynamics, reversing the typical framework.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has undertaken a psychoanalytic feminist examination of the survival of solitary women in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* (1948), Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red* (2001), and Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2018) and concluded that women's oppression is rooted in their psyche and reinforced through recurring motifs associated with femininity in alignment with the societal and cultural components uncovering the unconscious. By integrating the Freudian-Lacanian framework with feminist theories, this study has unveiled that the intricate power dynamics, repressed desires, unequal parenting, and psyche, including unconscious codes constructed to submit to the male power, pave the way for women's oppression in imbricated forms. By the same token, as regards women's oppression, the analysis sheds light on how each novel renders female subjectivity in response to psychological, societal, and political constraints and embodies how women negotiate solitude as a space of resistance and existence rather than as a passive state.

In exploring the survival of solitary women on the basis of the tenets within psychoanalytic feminist theory, this study reconceptualizes "solitude" through situating it as a medium for female characters to nourish their internal resilience and form their identities. While it is often assumed that solitude is equated with emotional deficiency or social marginalization, in the selected novels, it provides the female characters with a site wherein they can liberate themselves from external factors and reconstruct their existence, therefore, this study suggests that women are competent enough to turn the conditions in their favour once they detach from the border of stereotypes stigmatizing females with prescribed roles, routines and practices, that is why, the patriarchy is reconfigured as a system to challenge, not to subjugate. In contrast to the typical portrait of women as victims of the patriarchy, the selected novels frame resilient female figures employing strategic thinking and subverting the permanent pattern of femininity.

Integrating Freudian, Lacanian, and feminist theories, as aforementioned, how gender, the unconscious, and power are instrumental in shaping identity and agency in the selected novels have been explored. Dating back to the pre-Oedipal stage, semiotic chora as a resistance against the Symbolic order, identificatory love referring to the

idealization of “male” representing autonomy, that can be expressed through unequal parenting starting in infancy, and prolonged symbiosis rooted in the early mother-infant bond, underscore the reasons in the psyche to submit to the male. Furthermore, it illuminates how the unconscious stores in line with what is nourished by the psyche, thus leading to stereotypes to stigmatize individuals with certain roles and gender them.

What is common in the selected novels is the internalization of the patriarchy in line with the male dominance and norms, depicting the unconscious absorption of societal misogyny that is evident in the repression of desires and truths. The enlightenment of female characters, their subversive approach to challenge misogyny, and to assert their agency through their resistance, embody a watershed in the societies remarkably run by males and exemplify a feminist awakening that can be traced in the attitudes of Stella, Shekure, and Mariam, characterizing subtle, strategic, and violent resistance against the unfair male domination. The critique of the male gaze is conveyed through the oppressive control of Harrison over Stella, the objectification of Shekure by Black, Enishte, and Hasan (brother-in-law), and the brutality of Rasheed, operating as the destructive power over Mariam and Laila. All the female characters represent a departure from the expected practices, and subvert the male gaze and power rather than submitting to it. They endeavour to reclaim their subjectivity, and they are required to be manipulative in most cases within the patriarchy. Conventionally, Oedipal dynamics situate women either as mothers or daughters under the male domination, and the bond between Stella and Roderick, Shekure and Enishte, Mariam and Jalil can be construed in relation to the Oedipal stage, yet feminist revision challenges this common idea and portrays a new relationship, as is the case between Mariam and Laila.

Each novel embodies women’s repressed desires and how they emerge through the semiotic that functions to disrupt the patriarchal Symbolic, thus juxtaposing the semiotic chora and the Symbolic order. Each novel exemplifies the female figures who subvert the imprisonment of the patriarchy as aforementioned. For instance, Stella Rodney, the female protagonist in *The Heat of the Day* (1948) can be read as a figure drawing her survival on her psychological detachment and the ambiguity of wartime London. Despite of distinct cultural and literary contexts, the selected novels are examined as regards the intersections of gender, agency and survival and several key findings foreground that female solitude cannot be reduced merely to a narrative condition since it stands for a psychological and political stance within the patriarchal

societies under the heavy influence of historical and cultural forces that shape familial patterns. A close reading reveals that the solitary women in the novels challenge the dominant patriarchal structures through standing for counter-discourse.

This study has justified the position of the psyche as a battleground wherein identity, power, and desire are negotiated by the female characters resisting the male gaze, subverting the patriarchal structures, and redefining their roles in their own stories they rewrite themselves. A psychoanalytic feminist reading of the selected novels illuminates how the unconscious desires, norms, identities are shaped by the patriarchy as can be traced in *My Name is Red* (2001), and presents various layers of oppression experienced during wartime while under the influence of brutality, tension, turmoil as embodied in *The Heat of the Day* (1948) and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2018). Bowen's critique of gender roles through Stella, Pamuk's exploration of female agency through Shekure, and Hosseini's celebration of female solidarity through Mariam and Laila consolidate the idea that it is likely to disrupt the patriarchy once the unconscious structures forming the basis of female subordination and male dominance are challenged.

Survival of solitary women and how they navigate the patriarchy within distinct historical and cultural contexts, including wartime London, 16th-century İstanbul, and 20th-century Afghanistan, have been illustrated through the interplay of feminist theories, such as semiotic chora, the Symbolic order, identificatory love, symbiosis, the male gaze, female subjectivity, and defense mechanisms. Freudian concept of repression, through which unacceptable desires are banished to the space called the unconscious, presents an intersection with feminist point of view concerning how female subordination is enforced by the patriarchy. Likewise, how patriarchy, regardless of cultural and historical contexts, serves merely to control women and confine them to a narrow stretch of space wherein they are deprived of asserting their agency and forced to meet social expectations shaped by various dynamics has been explored through the analysis of three novels representing different backgrounds.

Settings of novels are instrumental in shedding light on the contexts that are likely to trigger certain actions and maintain them repetitively. As such, World War II, the turmoil of the Ottoman Empire, and the Afghan wars can be deemed to represent the

internal battles women experience; in fact, these mirror the conflict between women and the patriarchy. However, their survival despite the harsh conditions of the period depicts their strength. The settings of the selected novels resonate with what the female characters experience, hence this study contends that what women undergo parallels the historical period, geographical location, social and physical environments, cultural elements, as well as the atmosphere. All these permeate women's psyche and put them in a cycle, enforcing them to act in line with prescribed roles and patterns.

As for contributions to psychoanalytic feminist literary criticism, this dissertation presents a methodological and theoretical lens to gain insight into the gendered subjectivity, resistance, and trauma as well. Moreover, it offers a novel portrayal of solitude, positing it as a ground on which women can reconstruct their existence and nourish themselves to navigate all the harsh circumstances surrounding them. Not as a source of vulnerability but as a psychoanalytic construct, female solitude is reframed within this study, thus reconceptualizing it as a dynamic psychic state besides its political characteristics. In line with Freudian and Lacanian aspects of subjectivity, solitude is depicted as a site of ethical agency and psychic reconfiguration, presenting a model of survival constructed on repression, ambiguity, and resistance. Through psychoanalytic feminist reading of the selected novels of distinct cultures, the scope of psychoanalytic feminism is expanded and it is justified that it can be employed on a global scale regardless of the cultural or historical differences as British wartime modernism in Bowen's *The Heat of the Day* (1948), Ottoman Islamic aesthetics in Pamuk's *My Name is Red* (2001) and post-Taliban Afghanistan in Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2018) root in various geographical and epistemological zones. Albeit flourishing within the Western context and criticized for Eurocentric characteristics, psychoanalytic feminism turns out to be applicable to non-Western narratives without any disruptions likely to be led by cultural diversity as well.

Drawing parallels with what is hypothesized concerning early infancy within this study, in the analysis of *The Heat of the Day* (1948), the central argument advanced is that semiotic chora can overwhelm the symbolic order, and a close reading reveals how bodily rhythms reflecting the pre-Oedipal phase can contrast with the requirements and demands of patriarchal structure and language. Waving amidst a complicated circle

of love and betrayal, accompanied by strong suspicion, Stella Rodney appears to embody how WWII results in the disruption of conventional gender roles but, at the same time, the consolidation of societal constraints. The negotiation of her interior life nourished by the bodily rhythms and affect, and post-war London embodies a subjectivity prioritizing pre-symbolic energies, disregarding the rigidities enframed within a masculine-coded symbol, namely, the symbolic order.

Stella's desire for Robert Kelway juxtaposes with her suspicion of him as he is claimed to be a potential treacherous. Nourished by the societal anxieties of wartime, she necessarily reflects how paranoia is triggered by the characteristics of the period, which forms the basis of emotional anxieties as well. Shaping her life under the influence of the psychological toll of patriarchal structure and its requirements, Stella not only improves her self-perception considering the male gazes around, in particular the gaze of Harrison, but also gains insight into her own desires, thus proving how the male gaze restricts her agency while consolidating her objectification. On the other hand, how traditional gender stereotypes are vulnerable to dichotomy in terms of steadiness in line with the societal structure, and also non-stationarity in line with female intuition. As for maternal dynamics, Stella's bond with her son, Roderick, can be construed as a reflection of what the psyche requires in the circulation of stereotypes concerning motherhood and manifests how early childhood development paves the way for the rest of life. Likewise, a deceased father figure leaves Roderick without a role model to pursue or a threat to detach from his mother, exemplifying a widow functioning both as a mother and an object of desire. How she liberates herself from being an object of desire is through conveying her love to Robert, thus deconstructing the archetype of the self-sacrificing mother. As put on the Freudian aspect, this reinforces how women's roles are shaped by males and revolve around males: a son's mother, a man's wife, a man's beloved, an object of desire, etc.

What Harrison blames Robert for converts into repression of Stella, both as a defense mechanism since she is unlikely to accept that the man she loves is potentially treacherous, and also exemplifies how women are unvoiced under the patriarchal system. She rejects Robert's potential treason unconsciously, which embodies how women are grown into a sight obedient of social expectations and internalize the aspect which prioritizes male authority and, in other words, the symbolic order and preserves its superiority somehow. Bowen's positioning of the female protagonist as a passive

observer and a kind of figure who compromises with the male-driven narrative of power, thus reinforcing the stereotype, highlighting male authority, seemingly dovetails with the male gaze. Likewise, Stella's body is objectified and regarded as an object of manipulation as Stella is reduced to Harrison's surveillance, which enframes her as a compensation for Robert's treachery. Rather than her entity as a human being, she exists as a bearer of meaning, not the maker of it, since her life is interrupted constantly by the male gazes around her, including the gazes of Harrison, Robert, and, intriguingly, her son Roderick. Despite the pressure of the male authority, Stella appears to resist some of Harrison's demands, which shows that she maintains her agency within her limited subjectivity. Her disobedience with societal expectations reveals her prioritizing semiotic chora over the symbolic order.

Patriarchal structure requires females to act in accordance with the expected attitude, that is, submission to male authority; therefore, women are objects, rather than subjects, to obey the expectations of the patriarchy. Yet, desires cannot be reduced to males, and in accordance with this, Stella's affair with a potential treacherous man, regardless of the societal norms, proves that this is a kind of challenge against the stereotypes. Although her autonomy can operate to decide on her affair, her psyche guides her to take male validation into consideration as she is involved in a deep suspicion of Robert in the aftermath of Harrison's utterance, claiming him to be a latent figure serving the enemy. In this respect, Stella's attitude can be read as a reflection of wartime ambiguity, which seems to be instrumental in her survival as much as her solitude.

As for the authorial gaze of Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day* (1948) embodies how a woman is observed and manipulated, as exemplified by Harrison's and Robert's attitude respectively in the novel, illustrating the position of women as objects of desire and suspicion under the patriarchal power dynamics nourished by the control over identities. Despite characterising aspects of the male gaze occasionally, Bowen's narrative presents the insistence of Harrison on surveillance as well as the flaw in Robert's idealism, paving the way for recognition of drawbacks in the male gaze and opening a space to interrogate the stability of the gaze's role and patriarchal power, depicting what it lacks.

Reflecting the fragmented inner world of the female protagonist, overwhelmed by a range of influences that can be elucidated through psychoanalytic feminism, *The Heat of the Day* posits a critique of the rigid norms culminating in the patriarchy. It embodies pre-symbolic forces that challenge linear identity and coherence prescribed by society, without giving a space for the individual to consider affective aspects. The language employed and the portrayal of the character resonate with the presence of the semiotic chora, laying the foundation for disturbing the symbolic order and its extension practised either in the private or public domain.

Pamuk's novel, set in the 16th-century and a patriarchal societal structure, exemplifies how women build their lives as marginalized figures deprived of their own voices. Akin to Stella Rodney, Shekure asserts her agency, albeit the hardship she is exposed to in different spheres of life. *My Name is Red* (2001) illustrates how patriarchal power induces repression of desire as embodied through Shekure's desire for Black within the Ottoman society, wherein gender norms are constructed in accordance with the patriarchy. As a widow, she is exposed to oppression both by her father and societal expectations standing for the Symbolic order. Her repressed desire in the unconscious never disappears and yearns to be realized. Following her father's death, Shekure's unconscious triggers her to fulfill her repressed desire. What Shekure actually desires is the power and autonomy ascribed to and associated with the male. Representing a detachment dating back to the pre-Oedipal, her father's death forms the basis of a requirement to replace the father, the power and autonomy associated with the male figure. She attempts to fulfill her desire for identificatory love through her marriage with Black, and for this, she undertakes an active role, subverting the stereotype positing women as passive. Generating strategic thoughts, she reclaims her voice and disrupts the patriarchy. In alignment with the conventional view of the patriarchy, she is portrayed as an objectified woman, both by the gazes of Black and her brother-in-law, yet employed as one of the narrative voices by Orhan Pamuk, she resists objectification and asserts her agency through her own perspective as a counterview against the overwhelming language of the patriarchy.

My Name is Red (2001) illuminates the interplay of gender, subjectivity, and power within the framework of 16th-century Ottoman İstanbul under the hegemony of the patriarchy. Based on the lenses of Jessica Benjamin's theory of identificatory love along with the male gaze and defense mechanisms, the scrutiny of the novel reveals

how Shekure, the female protagonist of the novel, navigates the constraints controlling her in the Ottoman socio-cultural environment to survive and simultaneously how she resists them to assert her agency in addition to exposing the broader dynamics forming the basis of gendered power in the narrative. Subject to the pressures of widowhood accompanied by other social expectations and the responsibility for securing her sons' lives, Shekure represses her desires that can be associated with what lies in her psyche, assigning her primarily as a mother and acts strategically paving the way for her to channel her desires into calculated decisions and also to develop identificatory love as a member of the patriarchal structure positing women as secondary to men. Shekure embodies how a woman can assert a subtle sort of control and disrupt the prescribed characteristic of female passivity, serving as a label women cannot escape, thus requiring them to submit to male power. Therefore, the narrative presents a subversive approach to the male-dominated society, as foregrounded by psychoanalytic feminists criticizing male-centred structures.

The male gaze is evident in how the female protagonist is objectified by the male characters, including Black and Hassan, who view her as a symbol of desire contributed to by her beauty. Black's idealization of Shekure in a romantic context, tracing the childhood memories and Hassan's possessive obsession to replace his brother (Shekure's husband), indicate the personal desire of the male characters, reducing Shekure to a narrow stretch of male fantasy and turning her into an object to obtain. Exemplifying a polyphonic narrative, *My Name is Red* (2001) reflects how the patriarchy dominates the society, as evidenced by the predominance of male narrators over female ones. Yet, Pamuk's authorial gaze does not seem to support the male gaze, and he subverts the male power by granting Shekure a voice, as aforementioned, through which readers can view the flow of the narrative through the female gaze and gain insight into the critical aspects through the lens of the female gaze.

Presenting an evocative canvas that embodies the intersection of suffering, solidarity, and resilience of the female protagonists subjected to the destructive patriarchal system, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2018) frames oppressive structures. Prolonged symbiosis with the mother is replaced by the intersubjective bond between two female characters, Mariam and Laila, empowering them to resist the oppression, which primarily operates in the form of violence, both psychologically and physically. Mariam channels her repressed trauma dating back to her early childhood into

resilience. Her repressed feelings are unveiled through her adoption of maternal acts to protect Laila and her children from the abusive husband and every brutal act of society. Likewise, Laila channels her grief into endurance, portraying a robust female character empowered by her bond with Mariam. Two female protagonists navigate the patriarchal structure by transforming their unbearable trauma and grief and constructing their strength from their sorrowful experiences. Their endurance within the harsh conditions of the patriarchy illuminates their perseverance in maintaining their sense of self without submitting to what is enforced by male domination.

As a counterpoint to the fragmentation led by the war, reconfiguring prolonged symbiosis through intersubjectivity and mutual dependence, replacing traditional mother-daughter interaction, Mariam and Laila construct their relationship on their shared trauma. Mariam's protective maternal act to save Laila exemplifies how symbiosis transcends the conventional form and transforms into mutual dependence. Mariam's sacrificial act can be construed as a culmination of the symbiosis between her and Laila, compensating for the one expected to emerge out of mother attachment. They embody female solidarity, subverting the oppressive environment that suppresses female agency.

The male gaze is starkly evident in the narrative, and the female characters stand merely as objects of desire as defined by the patriarchal constraints. In accordance with his own mission to voice what people undergo under the strict regime of the Taliban, Hosseini's authorial gaze portrays women sympathetically, granting them subjectivity by exploring the inner lives and emotional tension of female protagonists. Rather than portraying them as resilient victims overwhelmed by the brutality of patriarchy, he situates them as robust enough to challenge the objectifying gazes that suppress them. Hosseini's narrative reflects his sympathy with female characters, albeit stark evidence of the male gaze, and presents his critique of it.

Each novel within this study depicts how the female protagonists employ defense mechanisms as psychological strategies to endure systemic oppression and to maintain a facade of compliance through strategic thoughts in order to assert agency and autonomy. Stella's subjectivity to challenge the patriarchal control, Shekure's subjectivity within the male-dominated Ottoman society, and Mariam and Laila's resilience and agency operating as a subversive force dovetail with psychoanalytic

feminists' point of view and their critique of male-centered systems reproduced psychologically, offering reinterpretations and challenges to disrupt deep psychological dynamics that maintain patriarchy.

This thesis illuminates how solitary women in the selected novels handle both psychological and societal confinements through an analysis within the framework of psychoanalytic feminism, thus revealing that their survival strategies are constructed in response to internal conflicts and external patriarchal pressures. Hence, in this study, resilience appears to operate not only as a psychological act but also as a socio-political one. Moreover, this study examines the universality and specificity of survival mechanisms employed by female characters as the selected novels represent different cultural and historical contexts. Based on the inferences, it can be suggested that the individual psyche can come together with collective gendered experiences and outline a framework to explore women's agency in literature, depicting the global basis of the problem.

Unlike the typical narratives that mostly marginalize women and portray female characters as necessarily required to submit to men, this study presents a portrayal of resilient women who can negotiate autonomy, identity, and desire within oppressive systems, whereby it redefines "solitude" as a space for women to benefit from and fulfill their agency. Accordingly, solitude can be read as a subversive act of self-assertion rather than disempowerment, offering a new perspective for readers or researchers to challenge stereotypes. Rooted in distinct temporal and cultural settings, the selected novels embody various patriarchal structures but also appear to share commonalities when a comparative analysis is conducted, so universal themes concerning women's oppression can be explored through this study, as exemplified in suppressing female agency in each novel. Another contribution of this study to global feminist discourse is the exploration of the types of intersecting factors that are instrumental in shaping women's survival strategies, leading interdisciplinary approaches integrating literature, cultural studies, and psychology to be adopted to carry out analysis.

What is central to this study resonates with contemporary discussions problematizing women's autonomy, resistance to oppression, and both physical and mental health exposed to the detrimental effects of various types of violence. This study illuminates how a radical movement can subvert the stereotypes positing women as

secondary to men and trigger feminist activism and policy through parallels between real-life struggles and fictional narratives revolving around gendered violence.

As for advice for further research, an analysis inclusive of additional texts representing diverse historical and cultural contexts will contribute to broadening the scope psychoanalytic feminist framework is applied to, presenting a space to test its applicability to a wide range of narratives and provide cross-cultural insights into women's oppression along with the reasons lurking behind it. Conducting studies on how solitary women navigate psychological and societal wounds within postcolonial feminism and trauma studies can enrich broader interdisciplinary conversations and provide a comparative analysis with the findings within the psychoanalytic feminist framework. Additionally, it incorporates psychology, sociology, and gender studies, presenting various aspects to examine women's oppression.

Exploration of male solitude in similar contexts to the ones referred to within this study and their survival strategies can be juxtaposed with female solitude and their survival strategies as revealed in this study, shedding light on how gender differences operate in navigating solitude within patriarchal systems. Through incorporating diverse texts from various historical and temporal contexts, interdisciplinary lenses that encompass relevant domains such as sociology, postcolonial feminism, cultural and gender studies, and comparative studies of real-world cases will ensure this study maintains relevance to both academic and activist spheres, producing effective solutions for women's oppression.

Holding lasting intellectual and cultural value, literature comprises “the collective product of especially gifted individuals who are able to capture the elusive universal and timeless truths of the human condition through the sensuous and sensitive use of the tool of language” (Rice and Waugh, 1996: 3). A cross-cultural reading of the selected novels through the same lens within this study exposes “timeless truths of the human condition” fictionalized and narrated by the gifted individuals, and gives us hope that a better world is possible for all, inclusive of women.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 : Relief of a mother breastfeeding her child.....	22
Figure 2 : Terakki-i Muhadderat.....	23
Figure 3 : Child Bride.....	26



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