IDEOLOGY, SUBJECTIVITY AND THE MATERNAL: A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF THE SELECT WORKS OF MARGARET LAURENCE, TONI MORRISON AND JAISHREE MISRA

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language and Literature

by

Indulekha C.

Research Guide

Dr. W.S. Kottiswari
Associate Professor and Head (Retd.)
Mercy College, Palakkad

Co-Guide

Dr. Praseedha G.
Assistant Professor and Research Guide
Mercy College, Palakkad

Research Centre for Comparative Studies
Postgraduate Department of English
Mercy College, Palakkad

July 2019

DECLARATION

I, Indulekha C., hereby declare that the thesis titled "Ideology, Subjectivity and the Maternal: A Cross-Cultural Study of the Select Works of Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Jaishree Misra" is a bonafide research carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of Dr. W.S. Kottiswari and Dr. Praseedha G., and it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, or any other similar title or recognition.

Place: Palakkad

Date : Indulekha C.

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis titled "Ideology, Subjectivity and the Maternal: A Cross-Cultural Study of the Select Works of Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Jaishree Misra" submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy is a work of bonafide research carried out by Indulekha C. under our supervision and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, or any other similar title or recognition.

Place: Palakkad

Date :

Dr. W.S. Kottiswari (Guide)
Associate Professor and Head (Retd.)
P.G. Dept. of English & Research
Centre for Comparative Studies
Mercy College, Palakkad

Dr. Praseedha G. (Co-Guide)
Assistant Professor and Research Guide
P.G. Dept. of English & Research
Centre for Comparative Studies
Mercy College, Palakkad

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the corrections/suggestions recommended by the adjudicators have been incorporated into the thesis titled "Ideology, Subjectivity and the Maternal: A Cross-Cultural Study of the Select Works of Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Jaishree Misra" submitted by Ms. Indulekha C.

Place: Palakkad

Date :

Dr. W.S. Kottiswari (Guide)
Associate Professor and Head (Retd.)
P.G. Dept. of English & Research
Centre for Comparative Studies
Mercy College, Palakkad

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank a few people who had been with me personally and academically all through my journey. I express my sincere gratitude to my guide, Dr. W.S. Kottiswari, who initiated me into the world of research and with periodic assignments taught me to write methodically, and with infinite patience read through my scribblings. I thank myself fortunate for the opportunity to work under her. I would also like to express my thanks to my Co-Guide, Dr. Praseedha G. for her valuable suggestions on the work done.

I extend my sincere thanks to the former Principals of Mercy College, Dr. Sr. Kripa, Dr. Sr. Alice Thomas and Dr. Sr. Lilly P.V. for providing me with the necessary facilities in the centre to carry out this research work. I sincerely thank the Head of the Department, Dr. Sheena John for her timely support. I also thank the former Head of the Department, Dr. T.C. Brindha Kumari for her guidance. I would like to express my gratitude to my dear teachers, friends and colleagues in the Department for their cooperation. I thank my friend Neelima V. for sharing her valuable time listening to all my queries with patience and the discussions with her have benefited me greatly. Her timely assistance to edit my thesis is remarkable. I also thank our library assistant, Mrs. Reena Wilson, for her unfailing help.

I would like to express my gratitude to Jaishree Misra, one of the select writers taken up for study, for allowing me to have a personal interview with

her. Her valuable suggestions and advises regarding motherhood and culture helped me a lot during the course of my work.

My sincere thanks to the faculty members of University of Calicut for their cooperation in completing my work. I express my gratitude to Mr. Ratheesh Kumar V., who has helped me in my DTP work.

I modestly acknowledge the support I received from the faculty of G.H.S. Bemmanur. I thank my headmistress Mrs. Indira K. for her help at specific times of need. I also express my sincere thanks to my colleagues for helping me by adjusting my teaching schedules.

Last but not least, I owe a deep and unending debt to my family. I thank my father, Chandran G. and my mother, Yesoda M. for the love and support they showered on me. I express my love to my husband, Ranjith R., for being a good companion throughout my journey. I would like to thank my children, Ponnu and Kannan, for their endless tolerance in putting up with a mother glued to a book or a laptop during the last six years. I also owe a lot to my uncle Sethumadhavan M. and aunt Nirmala C. for helping my family in my absence. I thank God for giving me such a wonderful family.

Besides the names mentioned here, several others have helped me for the successful completion of my thesis and I thank each of them for their good will and prayers.

Dedicated

To

My father, Chandran G., for being the first and the best teacher in my life. He made me achieve what I only thought in my dreams,

My mother, Yesoda M., for sharing each moments of pain and pleasure with me and teaching me the nuances of femininity,

My soulmate, Ranjith R., for his inspiration and unconditional love, and

My little ones, Ponnu and Kannan for making my life so beautiful.

ABBREVIATIONS OF TITLES IN THESIS

SA	:	*The Stone Angel*
TD	:	*The Diviners*
BE	:	*The Bluest Eye*
B	:	*Beloved*
AP	:	*Ancient Promises*
SS	:	*A Scandalous Secret*

Documentation : MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Eighth Edition) has been used to document the thesis.

CONTENTS

Preface

The evolution of female self is related to the connectedness with others, especially with other females. Out of these the relationship between the mother and the daughter plays an important role in the formation of female subjectivity. The site of maternal becomes important where it renders women a nexus for the reproduction of mothering. The present study gives an elusive account of the struggles mothers undergo to maintain their subjectivities. During the course of their maturation they move from the position of subjection to self-affirmation.

The objective of the thesis is to foreground the maternal ideology and subjectivity in the select works of women writers from different cultures, namely Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Jaishree Misra. The writings from Canadian, African American and Indian feminist writers are analysed using the framework of feminist psychoanalysis in general and motherhood theories in particular. The discussion of the maternal discourse in their novels present maternity as a dominant model for the female validation of self. The study pinpoints the link between the tropes ideology, subjectivity and maternal, and projects how the maternal locus becomes instrumental in defining the female subjectivity peculiar to the culture in which the subject is placed.

Chapter I

Introduction

The aim of the thesis

The aim of the thesis is to study the role of mothers in the novels of three women writers from different cultural contexts. It shows how these mothers emerge triumphant above all odds and configure their identities as a result of the nexus between ideology, subjectivity and the maternal.

The objective of the thesis

The objective of the thesis is to foreground the maternal ideology and subjectivity in the select works of women writers from different cultures, namely Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Jaishree Misra. While Margaret Laurence is a Canadian writer, Toni Morrison and Jaishree Misra hail from black American and Indian cultures. The investigation of the experiences of women of colour leads to new ways of looking at femininity and maternity. It raises questions and issues different from those centering on women from dominant cultures. The discussion of the maternal discourse in these texts suggests that maternity acts as a dominant model for the female validation of self.

Significance of the study

A cross-cultural study of this kind is significant in the present day, as it opens our eyes to the changing trends in society and culture. The study explores the women from the maternal, the familial (mother-daughter and mother-son bonding) and from the

feminist perspective. While the thesis analyzes the position of the female subjects from different cultural backdrops, it also envisages varying trends in child care and parenting. It highlights a future where marginalized women acquire emancipatory changes in predetermined patriarchal structures.

Methodology

This study makes use of the writings from Canadian, African American and Indian feminist writers which are the primary sources. Two novels from each author are analysed using the framework of feminist psychoanalysis in general and motherhood theories in particular. Theories of Nancy Chodorow, Adrienne Rich and Marianne Hirsch are utilized to explore the fragmented subjectivities of the female characters in the texts. Present study explores the link between the tropes—ideology, subjectivity and maternal—and projects how the maternal locus becomes instrumental in defining the female subjectivity peculiar to the culture in which the subject is placed. The study takes up both the perspectives of the mother and the daughter.

Theoretical framework

The emergence of feminist literary criticism as one of the major developments in literary studies has helped in investigating, comprehending and clarifying the perspectives of female identity or subjectivity of women. To understand a gendered society, a thorough understanding of female subjectivity is central which leads to the evolution of the female 'subject,' 'identity' or 'self.' It is Althusser in 1970s who constituted the relation between 'subject' and 'ideology.' For him, ideology is a system of representations, articulating the existing relation between people and their world and the

subject is a product of ideology. The primal function of all ideologies is to constitute individuals as subjects which are a cultural construct.

Radha Chakravarty, the famous Indian writer, critic and translator, in her feminist treatise, *Feminism and Contemporary Women Writers: Rethinking Subjectivity* (2008) demarcates the difference in the concept of female subjectivity as perceived by the feminist academia across the globe. She postulates that, "Such ideas of 'individual,' 'identity' and 'subject' are largely premised on western notion of individualism. But the writings of women novelists across the world often suggest alternative versions of the 'self' produced in accordance with the varying cultural location and discontinuous histories" (12).

The third world women writers, particularly black feminists and postcolonial female writers, question the universalist agenda and vocalize the need to recognize their diversity. Such a reading draws attention to the particularities and peculiarities of women histories across the world. They replace the patriarchal 'woman' by the more feminine 'women' of heterogeneity. It deconstructs the notion of dualisms and constructs alternative structures in validating a female selfhood that occupy divergent theoretic positions. The American poet, essayist and radical feminist Adrienne Rich, postulates the idea that the social order surrounding a woman shapes her identity. Her study aims at the inextricable interconnectedness and mutual constitution of female psyche, society and culture. This brings home the idea that race, class, culture and time make a difference to even the most basic experiences of woman.

The commonly accepted meaning of subjectivity is that of the self (here the female

self) as subject. The term ‘self’ has acquired myriad meanings and interpretations through the centuries. In recent theories, the subject is defined as one in conflict with forces that dominate it in some way or another. As a result, the subject gets fragmented under both external and internal pressures which give rise to neurosis, anxiety and alienation. The female subject moves from a position of subjection to self-affirmation and finally to self-empowerment. It is asserted that subjectivity can only be partial since wholeness or coherence is a theoretical impossibility. However, feminists have time and again, insisted on the social aspect of the female self.

As an approach to women’s history, female subjectivity looks at how a woman herself (the subject) sees her role and how it contributes (or not) to her ‘self’ and being. Nancy J. Chodorow, the famous American feminist, sociologist and psychoanalyst, in her most acclaimed feminist treatise *Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), uses the object-relation theory to explain the evolution of female selfhood. Her theory relies on the credence that every individual’s psychological life is influenced by his/her personal relationships with others. This brings forth the idea that female subjectivity and autonomy are rooted in connectedness. As the validation of female self relies on plurality, multiplicity and continuity, women experience a sense of self not in isolation but in identification and recognition with others, especially with other females.

The words of British Professor Patricia Waugh who is a literary critic and a leading specialist in modernist and post-modernist literature, feminist theory and postwar fiction are worth noting here, “Much of women’s writing can, in fact, be seen not as an attempt to define an isolated individual ego but to discover a collective concept of

subjectivity which foregrounds the construction of identity in relationship" (10). For theorists like Jessica Benjamin, the American psychoanalyst who has contributed theories on intersubjectivity, gender studies and feminism, selfhood is "defined negatively as separateness from others" (148).

Female identity construction is basically premised on her role as a daughter, wife and mother. Out of these roles her position as a daughter and her role as a mother in the society act as major factors in the evolution of femininity. For Chodorow, female selfhood is primarily influenced by her relationship with her mother. Then the mother-daughter duo becomes a determining factor in the evolution of self of each woman and it acts as a decisive factor in positioning woman in a culture. She states that,

> … whatever the particular mother-daughter, whatever the uniquely created self and gender of the mother, and whatever particular cultural inflections of maternality or femininity, both daughter and mother experience this relationship intensely, such that it contributes in profound ways to the creation and experience of self. (xii)

She adds that, "Women's maternal role has profound effects on women's lives, on ideology about women, on the reproduction of masculinity and sexual inequality and on the reproduction of particular forms of labour power" (11).

Marianne Hirsch, the US immigrant professor and feminist writer, in her celebrated *Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism* (1989) concentrates on "female family romance" patterns and highlights the close correlation between female subjectivity and the maternal (43). It underscores the "ideological implications of the

specificity of mother-daughter bonding" as a defining structure of both "feminist plotting and subject-formation" (130). Hence maternal ideology is used in the study to understand the evolution of the female self and it works as a framework for the analysis of female characters in the select novels. Various debates about maternity prove significant in the context of the study. Feminist maternal theories of Nancy Chodorow, Adrienne Rich, Marianne Hirsch, Sara Ruddick, Jessica Benjamin to name a few, have been used in this study in order to project the female psyche.

As female subjectivity is not a unique phenomenon, the concept of maternal is also influenced by specificities and hence heterogeneous. The experience of a Canadian settler is different from an Afro American or an Indian mother. This emphasizes the fact that like other relationships and institutions, motherhood is socially constructed and not biologically inscribed. The choice of three women writers from diverse cultures throws fresh light on the interplay between ideology, subjectivity and the maternal in a much better way. Thus a cross-cultural study reserves a space in which diverse maternal subjectivities could be articulated. The writers selected belong to three different cultures—Canadian, African American and Indian and hence their texts demonstrate the need for theory to negotiate the dialectics of motherhood and subjectivity.

Women writers base their works on certain assumptions about subjectivity, gender roles and their relationship between self and society. However, the maternal has been an unexplored area of interest and "the vast majority of literary and visual images of motherhood come to us filtered through a collective or individual male consciousness" (Rich 61). The strategic importance of thinking back through our foremothers as proposed by Virginia Woolf in her '*A Room of One's Own*,' becomes relevant in this

context. The matrilineal discourse has undergone drastic shifts in perspectives primarily because it has been put to constant re-examination both by patriarchal and feminist ideologies. Radha Chakravarthy opines that,

> The discourse of motherhood thus contains within it both transformative and repressive potential. For the feminist reader, it is interesting to study the ways in which the idealization of motherhood has been deployed at specific historical moments to reaffirm the patriarchal framework or to question its dominance from a resisting perspective. (33)

She points out the connection between ideology and the discourse of motherhood in the above lines.

There have been many theories on motherhood from the psychoanalytic, sociological and feminist perspectives which view mother as a mascot of strength and creativity. Psychoanalytic theories have examined mother's unconscious activities, exploring her deep attachment to her children. Sociologists have attempted to trace the mother's actual experience of child rearing thereby identifying the various ways in which society and culture have affected her behaviour and attitudes. They trace the development of the social self of a mother. Feminists focus on the social, political and economic features of a mother. A combination of these three perspectives—psychoanalytic or psychological, sociological and feminist would help one to explore mother-child relationships in the novels taken up for analysis. Out of the three, psychoanalysis better explains the formation and formulation of female and maternal selfhoods.

Women emancipation movements prior to 1960s viewed maternity as a confining cabal that maintains close connection with patriarchy, "The one aspect in which most women have felt their own power in the patriarchal sense authority over and central of another has been motherhood, and even this aspect as we shall see, has been wrenched and manipulated to male control" (Rich 67). Mother is viewed as a biological fact than its ideological association which prevents the understanding of the role. Among all the gender roles it is in the context of maternal that one sees the existence of contradictory discourses where the mother owns power and powerlessness at the same time. The mother portrayed as an eternal source of angelic love and forgiveness becomes one of the heaviest social burdens she faces. Maternal sublimity suppresses other emotions like aggression and sensuality which is naturally vested in every woman. Women, from the past were scaled depending on the binaries of either Virgin Mary or Medusa. These mothers escape the "myth of female frailty" which haunts the existence of women in general (169).

Though maternal indifference and social victimization of women-as-mothers were prevalent in the society, religion played an important role in mystifying motherhood as a 'noble function' by borrowing theological terminology like maternal vocation and maternal sacrifice. Sanctification of the role of the mother projected motherhood as instinctual and natural. Resonating the arguments of French author and historian Elisabeth Badinter who is best known for her philosophical treatise on feminism and women's role in society, Hirsch announces "institutionalization of childhood" as a main reason for the establishment of maternal ideology as the ideal of femininity (180). For Dorothy

Dinnerstein, the American academic and activist whose works contribute to modern feminist thought, inflated maternity has the effect of mother blaming. The 'crisis' in motherhood arises when it is seen as the only ideal female vocation.

When a woman becomes a mother she is no longer a complete subject with other needs and desires as it embarks voluntary self-denial from the part of the mother.

> … under patriarchy, the mother's life is exchanged for the child; her autonomy as a separate being seems fated to conflict with the infant she will bear. The self-denying, self-annihilative role of the Good Mother (linked implicitly with suffering and with the repression of anger) will spell the "death" of the woman or girl who once had hopes, expectations, *fantasies for herself*—especially when those hopes and fantasies have never been acted on. (Rich 166)

This creates ambivalence in the concept of maternal.

Retrieval of the mother from the mother-child bond as a pre-requisite for the attainment of child's autonomy, reserves a subordinate position for the mother in the society. It views the coexistence of maternity and female autonomy as a theoretical despondency. This explains why though women have been both mothers and daughters, the concept of maternal has remained an unexplored area of interest for a long time. It results in the late entry of theorizing motherhood within feminism. In a cultural context where women mother, "it is impossible to be a good woman and a good mother at the same time" (Leira and Krips 90). In addition, Ann Snitow argues in the "Foreword" of

the book *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise* (1977) by Dorothy Dinnerstein that in infancy both sexes see their mother as a powerful provider of all their needs and wants as both are mother-reared. Their first memory in relation to their mother defines her as a person who can be immensely and infinitely exploitable that denies her a separate subjectivity in the psyche of both sexes. Such a 'powerless responsibility' (as the New York feminist group calls it) induces subversive feelings of guilt and anger in the mother.

Theorists like Chodorow and Rich find that, idealization of motherhood leads to victimization, as it overwhelms and invades not only the mother-child relationship but their psyches too. They suspect the masculine claim, that giving birth or becoming a mother is the most and the only ecstatic and exhilarating experience for a woman in her life. American writer Suzanne Arms who has published several books on childbirth and childcare, demystifies motherhood and pleads for "a rehumanization, a rewomanization of the entire pregnancy, birth, and postpartum process" (qtd. in Rich 181). A mother has to step out of the culturally circumscribed role "which commands mothers to be caring and nurturing to other, even at the expense of themselves" to articulate her true feelings (Hirsch 170).

Hirsch identifies the inability to understand and acknowledge the coexistence of anger and love in a mother, as the motive for placing motherhood over selfhood among women in general. She accounts, "Unconscious desires for unconditional maternal love, unconscious beliefs in maternal omnipotence and potential destructiveness—beliefs present even in feminist writings about motherhood—create irrational, pervasive fears of maternal

power and aggression" (170-171). These fears are accountable for the silencing of mother within the culture. As a result, to keep mothers outside representation, the daughterly perspectives were projected in the literati. This results in "the erasure of the mother" from the feminist plots and the daughterly act of "speaking for her [mother]" emerges (16). Speaking for the mother is one way of the suppression of the maternal. Such a situation induces confusion in her where she is denied a subjectivity which she enjoyed in her daughterhood. Her subjectivity under constant erasure, it is rational to assume anger as her response since her female specificity has already been suppressed in relation to the male dominion (170).

The research and fieldwork observations collected by the theorists on the issue discussed show how mothering and motherhood were viewed differently. Ann Dally, the famous English author and psychiatrist, in her famous book *Inventing Motherhood* (1982) declares that, "There have always been mothers, but motherhood was invented" (9). In her work she traces the gradual separation of the ideal maternity from the actual daily life motherhood. She also analyzes how this change affects mothering as a practice and theory.

Any discussion on motherhood or mothering begins with the distinction made between the two by Adrienne Rich, the American poet, essayist and radical feminist, in her seminal book *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1976). She distinguishes between "two meanings of motherhood, one superimposed on the other, the *potential relationship* of any woman to her powers of reproduction and to children; and the *institution*, which aims at ensuring that the potential—and all

women—shall remain under male control" (Rich 13). According to her, the term 'motherhood' is male defined and is despotic to women. While the women labeled 'mothering' relates to their lived experiences and is potentially empowering to them. Writing from mother's point of view, she criticizes the ideological institution of motherhood and gives primacy to mothering.

Feminist discussions post 1970s perceived motherhood as a social function than as a biological one and viewed maternity as a forte of female potency. Mothering freed from motherhood is not naturally or necessarily oppressive and this helps in overcoming the purposeful silencing of mothers from the feminist discussions. Such a reading edifies the mother and protects her from the 'dangerous archetype' of viewing motherhood as instinctual and sacred. Recognition of the existence of desires and interests in a mother developed a new synthesis in the concept of mother-right, her affirmation in child bearing and child rearing. The period witnessed a shift from maternal repudiation to recuperation in coherence with the celebration of the maternal by distinguishing it on the basis of specificity. Maternal as a site of resistance, action and power was recognized and such a finding views the conjoining of female development and the maternal.

Emergence of maternal aesthetics shifts the mother from the 'other' position to a subject who becomes an active participant in the social process acting upon her. She emerges as a source of strength and support and her independent voice directs her to lead an autonomous plot. She becomes a synonym for all female friendships and her connection with her son determines his sexual being. This acknowledgement elevates the position of the mother and the daughter ceases to feel her mother as a victim in herself.

Such a representation rescues the mother from the "eternal silence[ing]" of maternal plot usually seen in mother-daughter narrative (Hirsch 4).

Chodorow was the first among the feminists to give a theoretical perception to the maternal subject. Maternal subjectivity highlights and celebrates the power of the mother, which she acquires during the period of her motherhood. It analyses how a mother perceives that role and understands the extent to which it contributes to her identity and meaning. Maternal subjectivity as she puts it is the, "mothers' unconscious and conscious experience of being a mother, of having a connection to a child or to children" (Chodorow ix).

Women from time immemorial are responsible for mothering the children and as these mothers treat daughters and sons dissimilarly, they develop differently. Mothers by the virtue of their gender view daughters 'like' them and sons as 'unlike' them. This "unconscious maternal communications" appropriate the girls and boys to behave according to the societal expectations (viii). The daughter who shares a "core female identity" (46) with her mother is encouraged to imitate her and hence, "Women are prepared psychologically for mothering through the developmental situation in which they grow up and in which women have mothered them" (49). As a result less distinct boundaries are drawn between the mother-daughter dyad and psychoanalysis places high priority on this 'primal' relationship.

The general tendency of women to love another woman is discovered as the deep urge of women to be a mother herself and find one in other females. When Freudianism stipulates this desire as fixation, feminists cherish this bonding as a dyad where each

member becomes the mother and the child. Even when the adolescent daughter encourages mother-daughter hostility to attain autonomy, it is difficult for her to repress and rebuff the bond. Rich calls forth poet Sue Silvermarie's words that an adult daughter during love making enjoys the "womb-state of harmony" and as a child she re-enters her mother (qtd. in Rich 233).

However, this powerful bond becomes painful when the daughter feels threatened by her 'mother's engulfment' where she senses a self-loss. "The cathexis between mother and daughter was endangered always and everywhere," says Rich (xxv). She finds 'matrophobia,' the term coined by the American poet Lynn Sukenick, as one of the main reasons for the maternal silencing in feminist discourses.

> Matrophobia can be seen as a womanly splitting of the self in the desire to become purged once and for all of our mother's bondage to become individuated and free. The mother stands for the victim in our selves, the unfree-woman, the martyr. Our personalities seem dangerously to blur and overlap with our mothers'; and, in a desperate attempt to know where mother ends and daughter begins we perform radical surgery. (Rich 236)

Rich explains it as the daughter's fear emerging from her split self in a desire to purge from her mother's 'bondage.' This over-identification is dangerous and destructive to the position of daughter and in order to sustain the central position, the daughter involves in "*othering* the mother" (Hirsch 136). To take Rich's words again,

> Thousands of daughters see their mothers as having taught a compromise of self-hatred they are struggling to win free of, the one through whom the

> restrictions and degradation of a female existence were perforce transmitted. Easier by far to hate and reject a mother outright than to see beyond her to the forces acting upon her. But where a mother is hated to the point of matrophobia there may also be a deep underlying pull towards her. (235)

However, the daughter fears her mother and tries to escape from her, there remains a strong undercurrent of attachment between them. Even during the oedipal conflict phase they remain bound to each other. This bonding helps the daughter to resolve her matrophobia. Within the circle of maternal-filial relationships, "Mothers and daughters have always exchanged in each other—beyond the verbally transmitted lore of female survival—a knowledge that is sublimal, subversive, preverbal the knowledge flowing between two alike bodies, one of which has spend nine months inside the other" (220).

Writers like Nancy Friday and Marie Cardinal follow mother blaming for the daughter's victimization and presents mother-hate as a pre-condition for female liberation and self-determination. Such a paradigm could only support self-denigration of women and female friendships in general. Mother's reluctance in revealing her saga of bondage and frustration to her daughter induces anger at her mother, who is powerless to protect the daughter from the stark reality of gender oppression. Hirsch's analysis of Fran Scoble's essay, "Mothers and Daughters: Giving the Lie," vocalizes the legacy of mutual deception handed over by the mothers to their daughters (165). A daughter feels deceived when she becomes a mother and finds it difficult to come to terms with the incongruity latent in the mystified position projected by the various institutions.

Viewing one's mother as a victim, the daughter tries to move away from the bond and she creates an image of the mother through self-creation by giving birth to oneself. She becomes her own figurative mother while denying her biological one. Feminists like Dorothy Dinnerstein, Nancy Chodorow and Susan Contratto identify the existence of the fear of the maternal power in the feminist theoretical writing and anger at maternal 'powerlessness.' In such a case the real mother gives way to surrogate mothering where the female enjoys motherhood more freely. Feminist suggestion to escape this maternal erasure is the negation of victimhood by the mother. To achieve it she must get out of the institutionalized, sacrificial 'mother love' which men demand and must opt for the "courageous mothering" where she reserves a place of her own (Rich 246). Such a novel thinking endorses Hirsch's point of view that, "Rather than daughters having to "speak for" mothers, mothers would be able to speak for themselves, perhaps "with two voices." Only thus can mothers and daughters speak to one another. Only thus could the plots of mothers and daughters become speakable" (197).

A depressive mother replicates the same in her children, especially in her daughter. The quality of a mother's self determines the daughter's as the former's lived life demonstrates to the daughter that such possibilities do exist. Rich envisions that, "The most notable fact that culture imprints on women is the sense of our limits. The most important thing one woman can do for another is to illuminate and expand her sense of actual possibilities" (246).

When patriarchal motherhood confines mothers to home and limits childrearing to

private care, feminist and empowered mothering positions mothers in the public realm by way of activism. Such mothers view child rearing as a socio-political act. The concept of "feminist mothering" put forward by Tuula Gordon in her *Feminist Mothers* (1989) and "empowered mothering" proposed by Andrea O'Reilly in her edited work, *Feminist Mothering* (2008), aim for the emancipation of the mother. As Reilly puts it, such innovations "calls into question the dictates of patriarchal motherhood" and "clear a space for the articulation of the counter narratives of mothering" (Feminist 7). Such potential mothering practices challenge the traditional gender socialization and makes mothering less oppressive and more empowering for mothers.

Adrienne Rich asserts that 'being a mother' changed through the years as the world moved from primitive matrifocal societies that revered women to patriarchal civilizations that institutionalized them. Feminist theories on motherhood redefine the identity and role of mothers and confer value to mothering. Feminist mothering functions as a counter-practice that seeks to challenge and change the many ways that patriarchal motherhood is oppressive to women. These theories help to document the developmental centrality and power of maternal identity of women in general and to the selected female characters in particular. They identify that full-time mothering as a norm develops potential lack in the individuation of women, as it fails to acknowledge other parts of women's lives and identity (Chodorow xv).

The present study aims at exploring how the works of these select writers uphold the concept of maternal within the feminist consciousness in their writing. They perceive mothering as an experience that brings positive changes in the women engaged. The

study traces how their empowered feminist mothers resolve the conflict between self-preservation and maternal feelings; autonomy and selflessness. These emancipated mothers break free from the institutionalized patriarchal motherhood and reconstruct their own models suitable for their lives and socio-cultural milieu. They also subvert the general assumption that mother-child relationship is by nature regressive and unproductive. Here both the mother and the child (also adults) are benefitted by mutual interaction. They also prove the psychological significance of mother-child bond in the existence of human race.

A brief introduction to the authors

The first author selected for analysis is Margaret Laurence, one of the most prominent writers from Western Canada. Like Canada, the new found land, searching for her history to have a national identity, Canadian literature in general search for its origin and belongingness. Canadian feminism enhances mainly the quest motif—the search for female self among the wilderness—in the writings. The feminine quest gets complicated by her sense of loneliness and isolation which boosts a fractured self in her. Laurence focuses on women characters who struggle for survival and her works portray diverse and deviant females, especially mothers and daughters. Her fiction presents universal concerns in terms of Canadian experience.

Born Jean Margaret Wemyss on 18th July 1926 in the small town of Minitoba in Neepawa, Canada, Laurence was called ‘Peggy’ during her childhood. At the age of four she lost her mother which ended up in her father’s remarriage with her aunt

Margaret Simpson. Her stepmother supported and encouraged her to attain a strong spirit. After her father's death her life with her maternal grandfather and her resentment with his rigid authoritarianism compelled her to challenge him. Her 'battles' with him counterbalanced her dynamic growth and achievement.

In 1944 Laurence joined Winnipeg United College and by the time she completed her under graduation, she published eighteen poems, three short stories and a critical essay to her credence. She became a voracious contributor in the publication *The Manitoban* and 'Tony's' (a basement cafeteria used by students for literary discussions). She became the President of Student's Council and the associate editor of *Vox*, the literary journal from United College. Completing her graduation with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature in 1947, Laurence equipped herself as a reporter for the newspaper *Winnipeg Citizen*. After her marriage with Jack Fergus Laurence, both shifted to Africa where she developed an ardent veneration for the land and its various populace, that find expression in her later writings. The seven 'African years' ended up in a volume of translations and fictions like *This Side Jorden* (1960), *The Tomorrow Tamer* (1963) and *Long Drums and Canons: Nigerian Dramatists and Novelists 1952-1966* (1968).

The Stone Angel (1964) sets the beginning of the first novel in the Manawaka series. Manawaka is a fictional prairie town in the Canadian province of Manitoba, used by Laurence as a backdrop for her five Manawaka novels. *A Jest of God* (1966), *The Fire-Dwellers* (1969), *A bird in the House* (1970) and *The Diviners* (1974) are the other novels belonging to this category. Next she came up with a

children's book *Jason's Quest* (1970) and other publications like *The Olden Days Coat* (1979), *Six Darn Cows* (1979) and *The Christmas Birthday Story* (1980). From 1981 to 1983 she served as the Chancellor of Trent University in Peterborough. In 1986 she was diagnosed with lung cancer which ended up in her suicide in 1987.

The two Manawaka novels studied herein *The Stone Angel* and *The Diviners* delineate female characters with divided selves who crave to escape from Manawaka and ultimately from their past. After much struggle these women who are projected as mothers discover their individual identities by returning to the prairie. Laurence presents a maternal perspective in these select works and the mothers Hagar Shipley and Morag Gunn respectively attain autonomy through their position and experience as mothers.

Hagar Shipley, the protagonist in *The Stone Angel*, is a proud woman of ninety when the narrative begins. Her pride restricts her from exhibiting her feminine self and as a result her role as a daughter, sister, wife, mother and female remain unblossomed. By excavating the past, her self-examination as a mother primarily and then as a woman sets the onset of her journey towards femininity. Female friendship instigates Hagar's evolution of self and mellows her pride and she develops into a full-fledged female enjoying the creative potentialities of womanliness.

The Diviners exhibits the mother-artist conflict mainly viewed from a mother's point of view. This semi-autobiographical work traces the memories of an orphaned woman Morag Gunn who is a single mother and a writer. Her divining of self in order to understand and accept her identity as a woman, mother, artist and as a person forms

the crux of the novel. Being an independent woman she deconstructs the institutionalized femininity and maternity, thus giving space for the emergence of novel subjectivities. Her choice to become a writer, to have a child with a half-breed Métis and to raise the child single handed were all unconventional. Portrayed as an empowered mother she does not look to motherhood as her only identity which often clashes with the social norms of mothering.

The select works portray the development of females who feel themselves as disinherited emigrants in their own land. These fractured selfhoods after much struggle emerge triumphant by attaining their subjectivities. The survival strategies adopted by them often isolate and alienate them. The heroines who are motherless in one way or the other feel a 'lack' throughout their lives. Hence the onset of their journey of self-discovery from the locus of maternal is crucial. Laurence through these mothers suggest mothering as beneficial to female development and is not antithetical to it as assumed in the institutionalized maternity.

The second writer selected is an American feminist author Toni Morrison, who explores the African American experience, ethnicity, ethos and ecriture in her writing. The general disregard for Africanism in the United States led to the emergence of the boldest contributions in it and provided new directions to the African American discourses. Still, black female experience was engulfed by both the patriarchy and American Women literati. Hence black feminism emerged as a protest against white supremacy, sexism, class-oppression and racism. It gave credence to the lived experience of a woman of colour. By acknowledging the split subjectivity of these

females and understanding it within the myth of deviant matriarchs, Morrison authenticates a space for the African American womanhood.

Morrison was born Chloe Ardelia Wofford in Lorain, Ohio in a working-class African American family on 18 February 1931. Her parents migrated to the North in search of better social, political and economic opportunities. They placed extreme value in educating their children and took effort to instill in her a strong sense of black heritage. Her early years during The Great Depression made her sensitive towards the struggling masses in general and the African people in particular. Converted to Catholicism at the age of twelve, she was baptized as Anthony which leads to her nickname Toni.

Morrison joined Hawthorne Elementary School and was the only African American present in her first grade classroom. After graduating with an honours degree from Lorain High School she enrolled at Howard University at Washington D.C. There she came across racially isolated buses and restaurants which gave her first-hand knowledge on racial issues that is often found in her writings. She completed her graduation and post graduation from Cornell University and joined the English faculty at Howard University as an instructor. There she met the architect Harold Morrison whom she married in 1958 which lasts for only six years.

When Morrison became the senior Editor of Random House publishing company in New York, she was privileged to be the first African woman to adorn the post. This new responsibility edified her in bringing the black literature into the mainstream academia which ended up in a collection that included the works by Nigerian and South African

writers titled *Contemporary African Literature* (1972). She excavated and discovered many unknown African American authors and edited *The Black Book* an anthology of essays, illustrations, photographs and other documents of black life in United States from slavery to 1970s.

In 1970 Morrison came up with her first novel *The Bluest Eye* and in 1974 she published her second novel *Sula*. Then came *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981) and the Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Beloved* (1987). *Jass* (1992), *Paradise* (1998), *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* (2008), *Home* (2012) and *God Help the Child* (2015) are other major works to her credit. She has also written several essays and a play titled *Dreaming Emmett* (1986). She has edited and co-edited several books and in collaboration with her son Slade Morrison has authored three children's books. Morrison's *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and Literary Imagination* (1992) is a scholarly work based on a series of lectures she delivered at Harvard University and has written a libretto for the opera, *Margaret Garner,* first performed in 2005.

Morrison received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993. In 1996, the National Endowment for the Humanities has chosen her for the Jefferson Lecture, the U.S. federal government's highest honor for achievement in the humanities. She was privileged with the National Book Foundation's Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters in 1996 and received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012. In 2016 she received the PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction.

Out of Morrison's literary outcome the two novels chosen for study, *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* identify the female Africanist discourse ignored in the mainstream

American literati. The novels extol the need for revival of African heritage which is achieved through the matrilineal discourse. Apart from other mother-daughter dyads, the black bonding is powerful and emotional with such intensity that they exhibit exclusive, violent and enigmatic relationships. Afro American society which is matrilineal in bequest opts for shared mothering and hence reserves a space for a variety of feminine discussions.

The leading maternal figures in *The Bluest Eye*, Pauline Breedlove and Mrs. Macteer are the byproducts of a matrifocal society wrenched in racism. It portrays two types of mothers in post slavery America. The first is Pauline, who becomes an active participant in victimizing her own daughter Pecola Breedlove for her 'ugliness' and refuses to love her. Fearing social gaze of being the mother of an ugly child, Pauline hates her to such an extent that it shatters Pecola's self irrevocably and she goes insane. While the other prominent mother Mrs. Macteer who is a neighbor of Pauline fortifies her daughters with their African heritage which helps them to survive in an endangered hyphenated society. As a result they grow with self-esteem and are never ashamed of their blackness.

In *Beloved*, where slavery becomes the backdrop for the plot, Sethe, the slave-mother, kills her two year old daughter in order to 'protect' her from slavery. It is the story of a woman who placed her motherhood over selfhood and as a result her devouring maternity engulfs her being. Through flashbacks she recreates and relives her past and by coming to terms with it she resolves her maternal guilt and embraces subjectivity. Her existing daughter, Denver, plays an important role in helping her mother

to regain her ‘self’ and brings hope within the dyad. Reincarnation of the dead daughter, Beloved, unveils the presence of the ghosts of slavery in the minds of its victims. The exorcism of the ghost through a joint venture by the women of the clan shows the importance of female networking in black women writings.

This distorted vision of the maternal proprietorship, is the mainspring of the select novels. As slavery deforms everything it touches, slave narratives present distinct and deviant female figures. Morrison’s women often shock by their aggressive feminist discourses and the desperately violent maternal characters explain an anger handed over to them by the generation of mothers who had no control over their self and children.

The third novelist chosen is Jaishree Misra, an Indian writer. Indian Writing in English expresses the cultural experience of Indian heritage mainly focused to the international readers. When the male writers focused on the socio cultural predicament of the modern man, women novelists explore female subjectivity in their writings in order to establish an identity free from the pressures of patriarchy. The image of New Woman and her struggles for existence in a gendered society forms the crux of their plots. Misra’s novels are women-centric and they present the demented minds of women who are oppressed in one way or the other. Yet they do not confine themselves as submissive victims and metamorphose to rebellious challengers.

Jaishree Misra was born in 1961 to a Malayali family in New Delhi. Her father was an Indian Air Force officer and she was brought up in Delhi midst an urban lifestyle. But her parents being the first generation diaspora who had strong roots to their tradition failed to understand their daughter who is born to a hyphenated culture.

This cultural schism ended up in their termination of her teenage love and directs her into an arranged marriage at eighteen with a fellow Keralite. The marriage was a disaster and it further worsened with the birth of a mentally challenged child. The indifference her daughter Rohini endured within the family, gave Misra the courage to leave her marriage. After ten years she met her first love, Ashutosh Misra who showed great concern for her and her daughter. These dramatic incidents in Misra's life changed the whole perception of her being which later gets reflected in her works.

Misra started her writing career in 2000 with her debut novel *Ancient Promises* and in 2001 her second novel *Accidents Like Love and Marriage* came out. In 2004 *Afterwards* was published and in the same year Misra co-authored *Splintered Mind: Understanding Schizoph* (2004), a book on psychiatry. In 2007 Misra came up with her controversial fourth novel *Rani*. She then engaged in three-books-in-three-years contract and authored *Secrets and Lies* (2009), *Secrets and Sins* (2010) and *A Scandalous Secret* (2011). She took up the role of an editor of a marvelous anthology on the subject of motherhood, *Of Mothers and Others: Stories, Essays, Poems* (2013). *The Little Book of Romance* (2001), *Meera's Friends, the Trees* (2013) and *A Love Story for my Sister* (2015) were also added to her credit.

Misra is a regular participant in the literary festivals both inside and outside the nation. Jaipur Literature Festival, the Khushwant Singh literary festival in Kasauli, The Week Hay Festival in Kerala, the Kovalam Literature Festival, Words on Water in Johannesburg, South Africa are some among them. She has also held events at the Frankfurt Book Fair and the Sharjah International Book Festival and contributed a

major part in the panel discussion at the London Book Fair. She was invited to conduct creative writing workshops for adults and schoolchildren by the Arts House in Singapore and she recently inaugurated the Keraleeya Samajam Book Fair in Manama, Bahrain, and led the pledge for International Women's Day at Technopark, Trivandrum. Misra's literary lineage came from her great uncle Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, the famous Malayalam writer and Jnanpith awardee.

The select two novels *Ancient Promises* and *A Scandalous Secret* delineate non-conservative womanhood in their plots. Misra upholds educated upper-class women in these works who have strength of character to rebel against the injustice they face. They expel the staid stereotypical roles circumscribed for women. The mothers and daughters challenge patriarchy and develop novel narratives suitable for them.

Janaki, the protagonist in *Ancient Promises* gets stifled by the Indian socio-cultural standards of femininity and her transition from victimhood to agency through maternity is novel to the Indian ethos. From a docile daughter and a submissive wife she emerges to a liberated independent mother whose mothering becomes beneficial to the daughter. Janaki's mother, grandmother and daughter also develop in the due course and contribute positively to the flourishing of mother-daughter bond.

The second novel *A Scandalous Secret* is the story of a mother-daughter relationship in the shadow of a dark secret. Neha, who gave up her illegitimate daughter eighteen years back, ultimately finds herself caught between the societal norms and her family when her daughter Sonya comes to meet her and make her answer for the heinous act. By revisiting her erased past she revives and recovers her identity as a

mother. Her struggles to keep her maternity in secrecy and her final acknowledgement as a mother show the underlying incongruity between motherhood and mothering.

Through her writings Misra opens up new possibilities of feminine and maternal experiences. Her women are not the traditional suffering, silenced and self-sacrificing women but self-assertive who defy institutionalized womanhood and set off in search for an identity of their own. They neither forsake their procreative role to become a subject nor depart from the family to achieve autonomy.

Structure of the chapters

The first chapter titled "Introduction" introduces how the concept of female self and maternal ideology are analysed within the feminist psychoanalytic framework along with the discussion of the works of Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Jaishree Misra. The second chapter titled, "Margaret Laurence: From Wilderness to Survival" analyses the struggles of mother figures for survival in the two novels of Margaret Laurence, *The Stone Angel* and *The Diviners*. The third chapter, "Toni Morrison: From Slavery to Emancipation" explores the positive and negative images of motherhood in the novels *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. "Jaishree Misra: From Subjugation to Self-affirmation" forms the fourth chapter where the mothers in *Ancient Promises* and *A Scandalous Secret* by Jaishree Misra break the shackles of culture and engage in the process of maternal function. The final chapter concludes the arguments in the earlier chapters.

Chapter II

Margaret Laurence: From Wilderness to Survival

"Women's stories could provide models for the story of Canada's national identity," says Coral Ann Howells in her famous work on Canadian women and fiction, *Private and Fictional Words: Canadian Women Novelists of 1970 and 1980s* (5). Multiculturalism and plurality of Canada is closely associated with that of the uprootedness of her women in general. The marginalized dissociative identity among the wilderness is the chief characteristics of feminist writing in Canadian fiction. The subjective explorations of the female subject to claim a place of one's own becomes the ideal of their writings. Through their texts, Canadian women writers try to resolve their self-division and unbelongingness, "Many of these womens' stories about the lives of girls and women between the 1950s and the 1960s are concerned with exploration and survival, crossing boundaries, challenging limits and glimpsing new prospects" (3).

Margaret Laurence's fiction mainly focuses on the survival of women in a young nation Canada. Though her prairie tales chronicles the uneventful private lives of female characters, it also projects the adventures and heroism of these women. The female characters challenge and deconstruct the cultural and psychological limits and their discoveries when viewed through feminist perspectives articulate a strong female voice.

The study explores the women characters from Laurence's select novels *The Stone Angel* and *The Diviners* mainly from the standpoint of a mother thus theorizing the ideology of motherhood within the Canadian context. Such a perspective highlights

the potentialities of the mother in women discourses. Margaret Laurence's celebrated novel *The Stone Angel* is a quest-narrative that projects the thoughts of a reluctant mother Hagar Shipley, in retrospection. Her self-examination results in her reconciliation with the fractured femininity at ninety, by accepting the maternal in her. Her hesitancy in exhibiting female virtues shatters every bond she comes to contact with, the prominent being the mother-son relationship. The second novel selected, *The Diviners,* is a semi-autobiographical work of Laurence. It is both a *kunstlerroman* and *bildungsroman* that speaks about the growth of a writer and a single mother to maturity. The narrative follows the struggles of dispossessed Morag Gunn, who through divining, recovering and resolving her past succeeds in her attempt 'to become' a mother and a writer at the same time. In both the novels, the protagonists ensure their subjectivities by negotiating with their confused maternity.

The Stone Angel is a feminist romance that delineates the story of Hagar Shipley, one of the most memorable characters in Canadian fiction who learns and ascertains mothering at the age of ninety. The plot captures the last moments of Hagar in her various female roles which was in stake throughout her life. Constance Rooke in her essay "A Feminist Reading of "The Stone Angel"" considers the novel a "*vollendungsroman*" which means a novel of "completion" or "winding up" (31). The term suits the work as the protagonist metamorphoses from a rigid woman into an angel embracing her femininity towards the last phase of her life.

The narrator is Hagar herself, who is endowed with uncompromising pride and she regards independence as her highest value. She fights the current social expectations

of a woman by soaring towards freedom till her end. This makes her multiple roles in the novel—as a daughter, sister, wife, mother and grandmother—a site for the exploration of female subjectivity. Out of these, the focus on her deviant maternity offers a chance to examine Hagar as a quasi-mother and its implications on her life as well as in the lives of her family.

The strategies used by Laurence to project maternal subjectivity can be mainly found in Hagar's role as a daughter as well as a mother. In this context, the mother-child relation comprises an analysis of three generations. The novelist portrays a mystifying link between Hagar and her deceased mother with dexterity and the titular significance of the novel relates to these two women characters. By making her motherless and by unnaming her mother, the writer places Hagar in a delicate situation from the moment she is born. Denying a corporeal existence for the mother and by purposefully shattering her identity, the narrative pushes the reader to a psychic impasse, as the most vital link—mother—is missing in the text.

On the contrary, though invisible from the very beginning of the novel, Hagar's mother dominates the text. Regardless of being her voice silenced, she remains powerful through her children. Maternal absence creates vampiristic effects on the daughter as her gender identification gets stifled that creates a void in her femininity. The mother is very important for the daughter to understand her sense of self and the daughter inherits profound matrilineal bequest from her mother that helps her to survive as a female in a patriarchal setup which is gender specific. Absence of mother and the anti-maternal attitude that Hagar is subjected to right from her birth compels her to show little

reverence for the feminine virtues in her.

Hagar's strict upbringing by her father, Jason Currie, forces her to internalize his values which in no way help her to recognize her femininity. He sees Hagar, who is "Smart as a whip," (SA 3) "husky as an ox" (59) and "sturdy like him," (8) as an heir to his dynasty. He feels proud of his daughter and tells her that, "You're a credit to me. Everyone will be saying that by tomorrow" (43). He even feels no remorse for his wife who died during childbirth as it was a "Wonder consolation" through the daughter (43). She inherits his narcissism and an eternal contempt for weakness which she equates with womanliness that wipes out all the female virtues in her. The masculine aggressiveness that she takes after from her father raises a major threat for the smooth functioning of her womanhood and it proves to be a suffocating experience for her throughout the novel. This creates a landscape of male psyche in her and moulds her to an assertive woman of iron will. To take Brunswick's words, as a male she maintains "the normal male contempt for women" all through her life (qtd. in Chodorow 113). This brings out a totally novel experience of sexuality, femininity and maternity for Hagar.

Hagar's memory of the past unfolds with the stone angel in the Manawaka cemetery which is in itself a maternal icon. Though it inhabits a narrow space in the graveyard, it proliferates the whole locale in the novel. The narrator's impassive remarks introduces the statue, "I wonder if she stands there yet, in memory of her who relinquished her feeble ghost as I gained my stubborn one, my mother's angel that my father bought in price to mark her bones and proclaim his dynasty, as he fancied,

forever and a day" (SA 3). Further she comments, "She was not the only angel in the Manawaka cemetery, but she was the first, the largest, and certainly the costliest" (3). Even her maternal loss is treated by the protagonist as a positive affair as "it was a fair exchange, her life for mine" (59). Her sneering comments on Regina Wesse, the caretaker of Manawaka Cemetery who cared for the stone angel with "martyred devotion for an ungrateful, fox-voiced mother," show her aversion for the mother (4).

Raised as a "Pharaoh's daughter" her toughness deems Hagar to perceive her mother as a synonym for frailty and blames for her weakness, since Hagar is taught to hate all who are weak (43). She detests her mother and calls her "a flimsy, gutless creature" (3) who has "saved her death" for her daughter and not to her sons (63). This thought fills her with bitterness and she says, "I used to wonder what she'd been like, that docile woman, and wonder at her weakness and my awful strength" (59). James King who is the biographer of Laurence observes in his *The Life of Margaret Laurence* that Hagar considers her mother as the antithesis of herself since her birth and her mother's death occurs at the same time. Hagar as a daughter is left with all the "panic, guilt, ambivalence and self-hatred" of the woman from whom she came and the woman she may become (Rich 235). This specification binds her mother with the 'lack' which the daughter fears and refutes to inherit. The 'fear of the mother' in her further alienates her from the maternal.

Lack of proper mothering gives rise to inner complexity in Hagar and as a result she rejects the stereotypical gender roles. Hagar fails to play the role of a mother to her dying younger brother Daniel (called by the family as Dan), who was after the

quest of "looking for a mother" (SA 189). When Dan lay dying, their elder brother Matthew (Matt) asks her to put on the old plaid shawl of their mother and hold Dan for a while to soothe him. Being "unable to bend enough" Hagar rejects his request outright (25). She further says, "But all I could think of was that meek woman I'd never seen, the woman Dan was said to resemble so much and from whom he'd inherited a frailty I could not help but detest, however much a part of me wanted to sympathize. To play at being her—it was beyond me" (25-26). It is Matt who sits with his brother and soothes him until he dies. Seeing that she muses, "I didn't know myself why I couldn't do what he had done" (26). When the maternal relationship remains unsatisfactory for a child, he/she is prone to drive love and tender feelings away and is likely to become as "someone who drives love away" explains her reluctancy (Rich 78).

Maternal absence also bestows a powerful mark in the lives of the two Currie sons—Dan and Matt. Dan is described as effeminate and Matt is childless or homosexual that is silenced in the text. The mother's treatment of a male child 'as different from her' during mothering process, modify his sexual being according to the social expectation in a gendered society. By 'killing' their mother by her birth and by suppressing her own maternal instincts, Hagar makes the whole scenario motherless. Moreover, the mother-son bond being ruptured very early in their life, they constantly crave for maternal love and fail to 'reject the mother' as a pre-requisite for their individuation which causes perverted sexuality in them. Their persistence in searching for a woman with whom they can be infantile and be a primitive child remains unreciprocated by their sister. Her failure to supplement them with maternal love

estranges the brother-sister bond.

Jason Currie, the strong patriarch fails to compensate the maternal loss and on the other hand aggravates the dearth. He despises his sons whom he thinks inherit their mother's frailty and are severely punished for their failure of stereotypical male accomplishments. They further disappoint him by not taking after his dynasty. Hagar remembers her brothers as, "[they] took after our mother, graceful unspirited boys" (SA 7-8). Preference of the daughter over the sons by their father further complicates the existence of Currie brothers as Hagar demolishes the male status and privilege of her brothers. This outlook ends up in the wrong gender socializing of Currie children by their father.

In the families where the methods of upbringing by the fathers promotes defiance, dislike or even hate in children, especially in the sons, the role of the mother becomes deterministic. In such unlikely situation she takes the role of a pacifist who soothes them with her kindness and drives them back into the normal orbit, which otherwise would have broken. The Currie brothers yearn for this feminine tenderness which they never receive. Jason, who is class conscious to the core, restricts their caretaker Auntie Doll, to take up the role of a matriarch to his children and considers her only as a servant. The next feminine figure approachable is Hagar whose deprived femininity fails to take on the role of a surrogate mother or a loving sister for her brothers. Hagar robs them of both parents which boosts hatred in their relationship. Thus "the mother is twice-lost" for them (Rich 245).

Hence the maternal and paternal erasure places the Currie children afar from

heterosexuality and in the long run it emasculates and defeminizes them. The sexual and familial division of labour in which women mother are more involved in the interpersonal affective relationships than men. This maternal parenting produces in the children the psychological capacities which lead them to reproduce the same (Chodorow 7). This compels to believe Chodorow's words that, "Role training, identification and enforcement certainly have to do with the acquisition of an appropriate gender role" (33). Sexual repression and denial of maternal value structure within the Currie family produces perverse masculine and feminine roles.

Hagar seldom exhibits her real feelings and emotions in front of anyone. While going to college, though she feels sorry and shed tears for Matt who is restricted to join college by his father, she takes efforts not to reveal what she feels for him. This brother-sister hesitancy repeats in her marriage occasion when he returns their mother's plaid shawl he sends Hagar as a wedding gift through Auntie Doll. She thinks it a mockery and hesitates to go and talk with him, "I decided to wait and see if he'd turn up the following day, to give me away in place of Father. But, of course, he did not" (SA 50). Later when the father-daughter relation gets affected by her marriage she takes no initiative to recuperate the bond.

Suppression of the feminine negatively shapes her maternal instincts which jeopardize her position as a woman in her future life. Her Scottish Presbyterian upbringing without a proper stereotyped parental matrix wipes out any softness that could have helped her to embrace her womanliness. The despotic patriarchal discipline of her father further instills in her an uncompromising pride that lurks throughout the

novel, which estranges her from others. This restricts her to recognize the existence of other positive female figures in the family. This makes it clear why Auntie Doll fails to supplement as a maternal figure for Hagar in the novel. Nevertheless, when Hagar reaches her prime, she is sent to the young ladies' academy in Toranto to learn the manners suited for a lady. But her acute autonomy creates wilderness in her and she seldom becomes an angel of the home both before and after marriage. Her aversion for all that is feminine makes her reject the suitors whom Jason brings home which ends up in her marriage with Bramford Shipley, the widower, whom Jason calls "Lazy as a pet pig" (46). It offers a space for her to rage and rebel with Jason as she chooses her partner against the wishes of her father.

Hagar is fascinated towards Bram mainly for his wild and unrestrained spirit as masculine values attract her more to the feminine ones. Though his unrefined manners repel her, she anticipates reforming him which ends in vain. His persistent laziness and imprudence make him an unsuccessful businessman and he is often subjected to public clowning. His association denigrates her in the society that distances the class-conscious Hagar from him. Her hesitancy to reveal her love for him, fails to civilize him into a humane person. She regards every word of praise or acknowledgement of love as a sign of betrayal and takes effort to conceal her emotions, "He never knew. I never let him know. I never spoke aloud, and I made certain that the trembling was all inner" (81).

Since women have done the work of loving for centuries and play the role of helper and healer within the family, men at all times depend on her for encouragement

and protectiveness, whether it be his mother or wife. According to Adrienne Rich, a real woman considers everyman as her stepson towards whom she feels motherly tenderness (192). Hagar's rigidity points to her frozen emotions, which makes their relation astray. There are several instances in their conjugal life where she wants to praise her husband, but her persistent pride inarticulate her. The 'other' in her takes over her tender qualities as she confesses that, "a part of me could never stand him" (SA183) which makes her think, "I'd be the last one to maintain that marriages are made in heaven" (167). Instead she emphasizes on his failures and shortcomings, "I spoke my disgust in no uncertain terms, not for the first time. It had gone on for years, but my words never altered him" (85).

Hagar's strong self makes her obstinate towards her husband which disrupts her matrimonial life. Institutionalized heterosexuality demands that a woman must transfer those first feelings of dependency, eroticism and mutuality which she experiences from her first woman (generally mother) to a man if she is to become what is defined as a normal woman. Here she experiences no such mother love. The dearth of maternal love induces an unsatisfactory childhood which preoccupies her with "negatively experienced internal relationship" (Chodorow 78). It induces a central split in her 'self' and remains unresolved throughout her life.

In addition, identification with the paternal law obstructs Hagar's wifely subservience and love for Bram. Identifying with the father's discourse upholds in the daughter an ambiguity which excludes her from any possibility of continuity with the feminine. When an infant compares its self with the father, it provides "major impetus to

the original establishment of separateness in the child" (80). Chodorow makes it clear that, "The basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world, the basic masculine sense of self is separate" (169). Hagar's nurturing of the masculine self in her at the cost of her female virtues, curbs her individuation. These factors explain the fundamental state of separateness in her. Consequently as a wife and a mother, she is equally confused. This reluctant maternal perception is maintained even after she becomes the mother of two sons. Woman's biological role in reproduction involves physical as well as psychological activities, centered on the terrain of the institution of family.

Every culture invents its special version of the mother-son relationship. As long as women are the sole nurturers of children in a patriarchal set up, the son will grow up looking only to woman for compassion and consolation, and resents strength in her as control. For a son to live in a heterosexual society the mother must literally or figuratively allow him to victimize her as a token of his manhood. This helps him to separate from the mother to become an independent subject. Rich identifies that lifelong mothering hampers the self-growth of both the mother and the son. Hagar's reluctant motherhood towards the elder son and overpowering maternity on the youngest threatens the lives of her two sons.

Hagar's indifference makes her an ambivalent mother even after the birth of her elder son Marvin. Before becoming a mother she feels embarrassed with the idea of having a child from a person like Bram. She says,

> That I'd not wanted children? That I believed I was going to die, and wished I would, and prayed I wouldn't? That the child he [Bram] wanted

> will be his, and none of mine? That I'd sucked my secret pleasure from his skin, but wouldn't care to walk in broad daylight on the streets of Manawaka with any child of his? (SA 100)

Even before his birth she suspects Marvin 'as the child of Bram' and not hers.

After Marvin's birth, Hagar anticipates reconciliation with her offended father Jason Currie and expects him to make peace with her. However her expectation turns out to be unproductive and he never comes to see his grandson. The knowledge that Jason fails to recognize Marvin as his grandson; as the potential inheritor of his ancestry, pushes Hagar to keep numb towards him that shocks motherhood. Her rambling thoughts make her admit the truth, "Perhaps he [Jason] didn't feel as though Marvin was his grandson. I almost felt that way myself, to tell the truth, only with me it was even more. I almost felt as though Marvin weren't my son" (66). Her failure to relate herself with her son and her reluctance in displaying maternal instincts prevent her from understanding his good qualities. She brands him as an unspirited boy and devalues the positive qualities in him. She ignores his devotion and accomplishments as a son.

Since Hagar never cherished Marvin as the successor of her dynasty, she maintains a passive relationship with him. Maternal negligence and favouritism of his mother towards his younger brother John, drives Marvin to enlist in the army when he is barely seventeen. As a mother his decision seldom panics her and she does nothing to change his mind. At the time of parting she wants to stop him from going away from the family. She becomes aware of his vulnerability as a young farm boy, but her hubris

holds her back. Dearth of mother models in Hagar's life complicates her perception of the maternal self in her which mars her relationship with Marvin. Lack of motherly love drives him to the army and the parting scene reveals that a word from his mother would have detained him back.

> When Marvin came to say good-by, it only struck me that how young he was, still awkward, still with the sun-burned neck of a farm boy. I didn't know what to say to him. I wanted to beg him to look after himself, to be careful, as one warns children against snowdrifts or thin ice or the hooves of horses, feeling the flimsy words may act as some kind of charm against disaster. I wanted all at once to hold him tightly, plead with him against all reason and reality, not to go. But I did not want to embarrass both of us, nor have him think I'd taken leave of my senses. (129)

She has never done justice to her role as a mother towards Marvin and her unsympathetic attitude continues till her infirmity.

Marvin leads an enforced secluded life from his mother and maintains his relation with occasional letters. After the death of Bram and John, Marvin looks after his mother and even then she maintains an antagonistic attitude towards him. His love puzzles her as despite her failure as a mother, who always felt "ill at ease with him," he is able to love her (166). Marvin's concern which Hagar correlates as weakness and effeminate estranges the mother-son bond and their relationship is characterized by ambivalent feelings. Her obstinacy forces her son to put her in an old-age home and in order to escape from it she leaves her house despite her infirmity. This made him call

her “holy terror” (304). After one day recluse at a cannery, when she is hospitalized for her ill-health in a semi-private room, she wants to thank Marvin. Nevertheless, her reticence inarticulates her.

As Marvin disillusions Hagar, her second child John becomes her much awaited son and she believes him to be the inheritor of Curie dynasty. She expects John to inherit the iron will that his grandfather possessed. Her handing of the family silver plaid-pin, which was passed over by her great grandfather, to John illustrates this. She gives birth to her own unborn self through him and maintains high hopes for him. As she identifies more with ‘masculinity,’ she could easily relate her spirit with John. She favours John to Marvin as he is quick to learn, better spoken and shows pride like her. Hagar presumes John to be well behaved and wishes to bring him up just as her father has brought her up. She takes special care to give him the best she can. When Bram neglects seven year old John after Marvin’s departure, she decides to leave her husband and takes up the job of a housekeeper in Mr. Oatley’s mansion.

Though Hagar maintains a strong relation with John, there is a conspicuous difference between their temperaments that creates tension between them. As a child, like his mother, he is embarrassed by the uncouthness of Bram, but to her dismay he becomes more like his father in his later life. Hagar does not like John’s quarrelsome behaviour and association with uncultured boys. His mischief and irresponsibility makes him uncontrollable to Hagar. She replicates Jason’s overpowering attitude towards children and tries to dominate John which proves destructive to him. Her blind attitude and possessive love could only ruin him. She intrudes John’s privacy and even interferes

in his fancy for girls. She does not approve of his premature interest in the opposite sex. In this respect, she thinks he resembles his father, and to 'protect' him she holds him away from Bram. At the time when the son is supposed to learn to detach from the mother and identify with his father for his better gender socialization, John is pushed to a vacant space by his mother.

It is natural for a boy to have contempt for women in puberty, as he starts to recognize himself with the father and drifts from the maternal side. Maternal intervention through care and kindness teaches him to show respect for other women. As Hagar herself disdains to acknowledge her femininity and shows disrespect for all women, she fails to inculcate in her son, the respect for womanhood. Lack of mother models prevents Hagar from developing a healthy relationship with her son as her maternal lessons were dysfunctional. There is an instance in the novel where John tells to his mother frankly that he simply prefers to have some good time with women than loving them genuinely. This statement makes Hagar repulsive of her son's idea of sexuality.

Class consciousness and Presbyterian outlook of Hagar aggravate mother-son relationship as she alienates John from his friends and Arlene, his love. His irresponsible shameless premarital relationship irritates her. Even though he is thirty and Arlene is twenty eight, Hagar opposes their marriage as she belongs to a poor family and hence beneath her social class. She pities them for their passion combined with poverty. Also, Arlene is the daughter of her school mate No-Name Lottie whom she used to make fun of for her poverty and illegitimate status. She suspects Arlene as an illegitimate daughter like her mother as they do not resemble each other.

When a mother fails to take control of her overprotection, the child either regressively merges with its mother throughout its life or it totally rejects its mother, "even though this mother has, until now been a "good mother" from the infant's point of view" (Chodorow 84). Rich also testifies the above said words. She finds that "a continuing maternal protectiveness is an unwillingness to face the harshness of life, for herself as much as for the child," (212) where "the maternal emotions can hold the mother in arrest as much as the son" (213). These theorists account that overprotection is a non-maternal behavior as it is a selfish act on the part of the mother. John accuses his mother for making him a misfit and outsider throughout his life. He escapes from this overwhelming maternal attachment and tries to get away from his mother in order to attain an independent masculine self-identification.

Rich's perception that sons have to be 'rejected' when they grow old, only then they will turn up mentally healthy seems relevant in this context. She has precisely said that, "the less our energy and power, as women, is expended on making our sons into our instruments, our agents in a system which has tried to keep us powerless, the less our sons need live under the burden of their mother's unlived lives" (207). When Hagar fragments Shipley family for her own wish, it is John who is the most affected. In the company of a domineering mother who is reluctant to let loose her son from her clutches, his evolution of selfhood retards. Hagar, who took an independent and rebellious decision of marrying Bram, did not allow her son to have a life partner according to his will.

Psychoanalysis opinions that, "son of a [strong] mother" either becomes

homosexual or flees from the power of the woman (209). Stifled with the maternal domination, John escapes from his mother and goes to Manawaka to live with his father. Detached from the mother he lives a content and independent life of his own. After Bram's death he is again forced to live with his mother's uncompromising assertiveness, since she is the sole breadwinner and the decision maker of the family. She curbs his wish to choose friends or love of his choice just as Jason curtailed her wish firstly to become a teacher and finally for Bram as her husband.

Hagar heaps all her thwarted energies on John and her devouring and domineering motherhood destroys the life of her younger son. At the Manawaka cemetery, acting according to his mother's suggestions, he tries to raise the toppled marble statue from the ground. She muses, "I wish he could have looked like Jacob then, wrestling with the angel and besting it, wringing a blessing from it with his might" (SA 184). John disappoints his mother when he swore, while struggling to lift the statue. Over-expectation in John wounds Hagar's pride deeply when he fails to live up to the standards. When he wishes to marry Arlene, she protests the idea thinking of her own unfruitful conjugal life, which ends up in the death of her son and his love. This shows her incapability as a mother and as a woman to judge others.

Hagar's greatest maternal failure occurs in her judgment of two sons. She fails to recognize Marvin who always seeks his mother and wishes to remain with her. On the other hand, she spoils John by overprotecting him. John tells his mother pointedly, "You always bet on the wrong horse,… Marv was your boy, but you never saw that, did you?" (237) Hagar's wish to relive her lost life through her son retards the development

of his own identity. His ultimate escape from the omnipotence that suffocates and stifles his being ends up in a truck 'accident' where John drives his vehicle on the trestle bridge all by himself. A woman, whose rage is repressed and concealed, may well foster a masculine aggressiveness in her son, as she has experienced no other form of assertiveness. John's aggressive character can be traced as a byproduct of his mother's own aggressiveness. She bequeaths her rage towards life to her son who ends his life for it.

A 'motherless' woman often shows a tendency to deny her vulnerability by refusing that she has felt any loss or absence of mothering. She may spend her life proving her strength in mothering others especially men, whose weakness makes her feel strong. In a sense she is giving others what she herself has lacked. Conversely, she needs the neediness of others in order to go on feeling her own strength. She may feel uneasy with equals, particularly women. This explains Hagar's hostility towards the women characters in the novel.

The deficient maternal communication that Hagar experienced leads to her inherent inarticulateness which makes her a detached and isolated woman in her later life. Lack of proper mothering leads to her lack of communication with everyone in the novel. Hagar's emotional isolation boosts an unsympathetic attitude towards the sinking Bram. On the contrary, she feels disgusted with him,

> Bram referred to me as 'that woman' like hired help, when he spoke of me to John. In the night once only, I heard him call—"Hagar." I went to his room, but he was only talking in his sleep. He lay curled up and fragile in

> the big bed where we'd coupled and it made me sick to think I'd lain with him, for now he looked like an ancient child. (182-183)

Her rigidity restricts her to shed tears over her dead husband and she recounts that during Bram's funeral "it was John who cried, not I" (184).

The highest emotional aridity is seen when Hagar's unsuccumbing pride restricts her from shedding tears on the sudden death of her favourite son John. Her misconception that exhibition of emotions is one way of the exposition of frailty rationalizes her inability. Her words, "I wouldn't cry in front of strangers, whatever it cost me" justify the above statement (242). John's demise brings out her uncompromising dignity and grandeur as she receives his death with equanimity and without maternal melodrama. Though her stoic response raises her to the occasion as a tragic figure, her overwhelming selfhood eclipses her motherhood.

Though there are momentary laments in Hagar's life, she consciously tries to get back from them, "Oh my lost men. No, I will not think of that. What a disgrace to be seen crying by that fat Doris" (6). The "doubly blind" marble statue acquires significance in the novel, more as a symbol of the daughter than as a monument of the mother as it signifies Hagar's blindness to perceive any life-affirming values throughout her life (3). She rebels with everyone she comes into contact with thus stifling her femininity. Though she has the angelic qualities in her, like the stone she is hard and fails to bend.

Hagar's negative observations on femininity distance her from the females she comes across. Her relation with Auntie Doll, Matt's wife Mavis and Bram's daughters Jess and Gladys by his first wife Clara are all superficial. She feels disgrace for the

women in the nursing home Silver Threads and calls them “unanimous old eves” (98). At school she befriends doctor’s daughter and looks down on Telford Simmons, the undertaker’s son and on Lottie Drieser, a poor illegitimate child. It is Doris, Hagar’s daughter-in-law, who is the worst victim of her verbal assaults. Hagar often snarls at her calling “fool of a Doris” (166) “fat Doris” (6) and “stupid woman” (308). Throughout the novel Hagar shrieks demeaning terms on her and regards her unintelligent and inferior, though Dorris functions as her first surrogate mother who takes care of her like a child. At times she wants to reach out her arms and touch Doris for the love and care she showers on her. But the misogyny in her curtails her to do so.

After Hagar’s one day recluse in a cannery in the Shadow Point, Doris expresses her sense of shock, “Oh, dear, you threw awful scare into us. Why should you go and do such a thing, anyway. Mother? When I came back from the store and found you weren’t there, I nearly went out of my mind. It’s been so worrying for us and we felt so awful, having to go to the police” (251). Such benevolence confuses Hagar and she feels hard to recognize the kindness and piety Doris showers on her. Her egotism creates a sterile relation with her daughter-in-law.

Hagar’s comparison of herself with Meg Merrilies, the wandering gypsy of Keat’s poem portrays her conviction for deviant femininity. Meg who is “brave as Margaret Queen” and “tall as Amazon” is a dispossessed highland Scot from whom Hagar descends (163). Hagar’s remembering of Meg gives her courage in old age than the solace she gets while reciting the Psalms. Though a strong woman, Meg is an out caste and an apostle of nonconformist womanhood like her.

Hence the role of other women in nurturing maternal instincts in Hagar is crucial to the plot. The 'Silver Threads' episode marks the beginning of her change as Mrs. Steiner the Jewish mother in the nursing home kindles in her the need for female association. She helps Hagar to reconcile with her fragmented lost self. She gives a tentative understanding of the life of a woman, thus sharing similar female experience which helps Hagar to discover "some hidden place" in her (105). She who never cherished for a girl child changes towards her last stages of her life where the text generates necessity for a girl, which Hagar also admits. By making Mrs. Steiner say that having a daughter "makes a lotta difference" and Hagar's feeling that Mrs. Steiner is lucky to have a daughter, inaugurates the commencement of femininity in Hagar (103). Earlier in the novel when Lottie says, "A woman misses a lot if she doesn't have a daughter," Hagar doesn't refute her words (175).

The episode with Mrs. Steiner mitigates the denial of femininity in Hagar and prepares her to meet Murray Lees in whom both the male and the female blend. In order to escape from pushing her into an old age home by Marvin, she takes recluse in a deserted fish cannery at Shadow Point. It shows Hagar's zest for independence in spite of her physical infirmity. In her attempt to drive the seagull that entered the cannery, which she thinks a messenger of death, she topples in the dark and feels severe chest pain. In a moment of epiphany, Hagar who is "rigid as marble" realizes her weaknesses as an individual for the first time in her life (146). This reconstitutes and reconstructs her position as a woman. The darkness of the cannery symbolizes the obscurity of her womanhood that she carried with her.

The stranger Murray Ferney Lees whom she befriends in the cannery lends a helping hand to Hagar with whom he exchanges his family history and discloses about his son's death. Her empathetic words, "I'm sorry about your boy" (253) though surprises her, she feels "lightened and eased" by consoling him (252). The shared experience leads to self-scrutiny that compels her to confess about the tragic death of her younger son John and she weeps bitterly over the event which brings catharsis in her. The night John died she was "transformed to stone and never wept at all" (243). Earlier in the novel she lies to Mrs. Steiner that she lost her younger son in the war. After her realization of maternal failure she recovers her ability to mourn that purges the pent up maternal guilt in her. The repression of her sexuality from childhood is one reason for her sterile emotions. Lees offers the maternal comfort that helps her to come to terms with her unresolved grief. The release of her petrified emotions helps Hagar to integrate her divided self.

The role of Lees is crucial as he provides a locus for the exploration of surrogate mothering in the novel by not only caring and nurturing Hagar like a child, but accentuates her rebirth as an archetypal woman in the Shadow Point. Though a male, he is treated as a "non-male figure" in the novel (Buss 18). Since the room is dark it is his voice she hears first and senses it as, "high and fluctuating as one imagines a eunuch's would be" (SA 220). By emphasizing that his middle name is the maiden name of her mother, he deliberately identifies with the feminine. His presence makes it possible for the communion of the male and female in her.

This unison mobilizes her emotions that makes possible for Hagar to converse

with others. Her mourning at the Shadow Point articulates the petrified maternal grief and animates the guilt in her which gives her the strength to admit the emotional responsibility of ruining her son. The retrospection enables her to decipher the truth that she is responsible for her son's death. John's cynicism is the byproduct of her upbringing and she admits that it is she who has taught him to believe in nothing. Her son is a psychological victim of his mother's obsessive emotional grip. Likewise, in the Shadow Point when attacked by a sea gull, Hagar wishes Marvin's presence to tackle the situation as she admits that he is a practical man, a word of praise which she has hitherto unacknowledged in front of her son. Her self-understanding leads to her rebirth, primarily by accepting the maternal in her, leads to her redemption.

When Hagar is admitted in the hospital, in spite of all the inconveniences, she befriends a few co-patients like Mrs. Reilly, Elva Jardine and Mrs. Dobereiner who help her to mediate with her disintegrated self. Their presence whom she first considers as a hindrance for her privacy, later equips her with the fundamental knowledge about mutual help and concern which is a necessity in life. There she is carried away by the warm relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Jardine and the familial love of Mrs. Reilly with her daughter. These women soothe and console Hagar at the hospital.

Their sisterhood rescues Hagar from the emotional bondage bequeathed from her patriarchal past and gives opportunity for her to pay importance to the female friendship in her growth. When Hagar is shifted to a semi-private room for her comfortable stay, she suffers "a sense of loss" as she starts feeling one with them (280). Her hesitancy to leave them shows signs of her positive expressions of transformation. Within the

company of these female inhabitants, she sheds off her pride and pretense, and starts acknowledging her female self which was in stake till then. Her learning to like and love other women is a testament to her capacity to mother. Her question, "Can angels faint?" acknowledges her achievement (307). It ends her secluded life with other women and expresses her wish to remain connected with her womanhood.

Hagar's gifting of her wedding ring to her granddaughter Tina, when she learns about her marriage is crucial. She apologizes to Doris for not giving the ring over to her which she really wanted to. Earlier in the novel, when Marvin plans to dispose the house they live, Hagar threatens to file a suit against him, since it was bought from her earnings. She could not bear the thought of losing things that were dear to her—the knobble jug of blue and milky glass, the gift-edged mirror from the Currie house, the cut-glass decanter with the silver top, Bram's wedding gift etc. Her powerful hold on these possessions signifies her acquisitive character which is against the traditional paradigm of motherly sacrifice.

The altruistic words of Hagar to Doris are like the confession of a sinner, "What is it to me? I should've given it to you. I suppose, years ago. I could never bear to part with it. Stupid too bad you never had it. I don't want it now. Send it to Tina" (304). Her decision to part with the ring indicates a kind of thawing on her side. Sharing—both psychic and physical—among women creates a possibility of mutual nurturance. Her genuine comments on femininity by appreciating the beauty of the nurse in the hospital signify the change. Her maternal awakening helps her to appreciate her fellow beings.

Though Hagar is an agnostic, who rages even against God, after listening to Mr. Troy's prayer song, she was struck by the shattering truth that she has failed to rejoice in her life even if she wanted to do so. The revelation discovers her uncompromising pride as her tragic flaw, which bound her to chains throughout her life. This belated self-awakening equips her with the knowledge that, "Pride was my wilderness, and the demon that led me there was fear. I was alone, never anything else, and never free for I carried my chains within me, and they spread out from me and shacked all I touched" (318). These words allude to the biblical reference ascribed in her name. In an interview with Rosemary Sullivan, the famous Canadian poet, Laurence comments that, "My novel in some way or other parallels the story of the Biblical Hagar who is cast out into the wilderness" (68). In Genesis, Hagar is an Egyptian slave, who bears a son to Abraham and as a result quarrels with his wife Sarah and is temporarily thrown into wilds. Here Hagar represents bondage of the flesh devoid of divine grace. Like her mythical archetype, Hagar Shipley was under the despotism of her own pride from which she comes out through the redemptive journey.

The most prominent illustration of Hagar's maturation is the benevolence she shows in the hospital to Sandra Wong, a sixteen-year-old girl who reminds her of Tina, her granddaughter. Wong calls forth the mother in Hagar with whom she could converse freely shaking off her muteness. Before the surgery she consoles Wong and imparts confidence for the upcoming operation. Her act of putting the switch to call the nurse for Wong and getting a bedpan for her when Hagar herself is supposed to be on the bed shows its intensity. Risking her own safety she engages in mothering and involves in

a primary relation with Wong, which reminds of the primal love within the mother-daughter bond. She then takes on the role of a surrogate-daughter who acknowledges the mother in Hagar and allows the full possession of her maternal inheritance. Later, she proudly recalls it as one of the "truly free acts" (SA 334). Hagar imparts the consolation she enjoyed from female association to the girl when she is in need. Her use of 'we' while narrating the 'bed pan incident' shows their connection, thereby extending her oneness with the female community.

Self-recognition with the women folk activates the woman in Hagar and the mother in particular, which unfolds the maternal narrative within the plot. Though she considers receiving kindness from the night nurse as a kind of weakness, she is able to hold her hand, capable of crying and finally respond to her act of benevolence. Her maternal articulations avert "The greatest tragedy that can occur between mother and daughter," where the daughter speaks for the mother. Here Hagar as a woman is able to speak in two voices—that of the daughter and the mother (Hirsch 199). This results in the achievement of 'the reproduction of mothering' in Hagar which was curtailed from the moment of her birth.

Hagar's transformation that follows her self-discovery has been portrayed as a pioneer conquering the untread female space among the patriarchal wilderness in her. She tells Marvin that he has always been good to her and is the best one out of the two sons, since she thinks that it is what he wishes to hear from her mother. Her final act of blessing him like an angel is relevant as she is able to indulge in acts of mothering before her death which purges her from her maternal sin. The reference to

angel by the narrator reminds the stone angel that connects her mother and herself. This proves her coming to terms with her image of the mother and her image of herself as mother which completes the attainment of her subjectivity. Her final act of taking a glass of water from the nurse before her death shows her ultimate succumbing to femininity.

Hagar gave primacy to independence in her life and sacrifices everyone at the altar of her own formidable strength which indicates her inability to interact with the outside world. As a proud daughter of a proud father, she considers herself far superior to her friends and fails to have one in her life. She also fails as the peacemaker in the family—to bridge the gap among the men folk in Currie family, between the husband and the wife and ultimately between the mother and the sons. Hence the episodes of mothering in the text are few in number. However, the female association unveils her constrained womanhood and her final acts of care and compassion to her fellow beings confirm the mother in her and hence are crucial to the study. Significantly, the novel concludes with the mother-word, "There. There" (SA 71).

Helen M. Buss in *Mother and Daughter Relationships in the Manawaka Works of Margaret Laurence* reexamines the work in terms of the Jungian mother archetype, "As Hagar moves toward the unconsciousness of death she reaches for acceptance of the mother on three levels: her memory of the personal mother; the rescue of her own repressed feminine self; and the experience of the numinosity of the Great Mother" (6). These words affirm that finally the heroine's search for identity gets complete by her maternal awakening.

While discussing *The Diviners*, the second work selected, the words of Adrienne

Rich seems relevant,

> My children cause me the most exquisite suffering of which l have any experience. It is the suffering of ambivalence: the murderous alternation between bitter resentment and raw-edged nerves, and blissful gratification and tenderness. Sometimes I seem to myself, in my feelings toward these tiny guiltless beings, a monster of selfishness and intolerance. (21)

Laurence incorporates this maternal anxiety and acknowledges it through her magnum opus *The Diviners.* The work is autobiographical in impulse, though evidently fictional as it underscores the mother-artist conflict of the author. It traces the accounts of Morag Gunn, the protagonist from infancy to youth and the struggles she undergoes to become an independent woman, an autonomous mother and an acclaimed writer. The novel delves deep into her wilderness, explores her disintegrated self and connects her to the prairie identity which enables her to acquire her subjectivity.

When the novel begins, Morag is a single mother of forty seven who lives with her daughter in a newly bought house in Ontario, Canada. She is a writer by profession and is trying to write a new novel. Her daughter Pique has left her on a fine morning leaving a note on her typewriter. Morag the mother is aggrieved over her eighteen year old daughter's disappearance while Morag the writer is tormented by the writer's block. This concurrent experience somehow shows their profound connection as her convolutions over Pique disrupt her writing. However she tries to separate the two realms of her life—as an artist and as a mother—she is often placed amid the two in conflict.

Morag loses her parents at a young age and is orphaned and brought up by her parents' friend Christie Logan who is a town scavenger and by his obese indolent wife Prin. They were a butt of ridicule in the society and were ostracized for their subaltern existence. This prevents Morag from identifying them as her family. The love and care bestowed on her remains unacknowledged when she despises and remains alien to them. She feels like an adopted misfit; as a creature misplaced accidently among the Logans. She cherished high esteem on her biological parents and treasured her past with them as totems that contained her spirit. She thinks of her father as, "He [Colon Gunn] smells warm and good. Clean. Smells of soap and greengrass. Not manure. He never stinks of horseshit, even though he is a farmer" (TD 8). This "invented memories" mars her from associating with the Logans (10).

At this juncture of her life Morag learns that her relationship with her adoptive father, Christie, can only humiliate her in the society. His profession as a town "garbage man" brings pain in her as a child (38). Her first visit to the Nuisance Grounds with Christie met with despair as a group of boys mostly from her class mock at them. Instead of scolding them and protecting her, he frowns at them. Her words that he grins "like dog's tongue" and his mouth often "dribbling with spit" and "cackles like a loony" show the extent to which he disgusts her (38). After the incident she takes efforts to avoid his company. Later in the novel she corrects her friend Jules Tonnere, when he calls Christie her dad. She tells him, "Christie's not my old man! My dad is dead" (72). She believes her association with him as constraining to her developing selfhood and sets her ambition at teens to escape from the Logans; from Manawaka

and finally from her past.

Morag's adoptive mother, Prin is sluggish in thought and action. She is a hefty woman who is mostly sick all the time and as a result remains at home often. She dresses in an awkward fashion and makes Morag also wear discomfited dresses which embarrass her. Women ridicule them at the church and on the roads people stare at them. Prin's unacceptance in the society is partly because she does not do what a woman is expected to do. She cannot be the mother Morag wants her to be and the inertia and infirmity traps and marginalizes her from other women. The narrator remembers, "Morag's mother [Louisa Gunn] is not the sort of mother who yells at kids. She does not whine either. She is not like Prin" (8). At the very moment she doubts her own words, "Or may be true and may be not" (8). Morag's mixed feeling acknowledges the guilt in her for abandoning Prin. Morag hugs and weeps bitterly when she sees her friend's mother, Mrs. Gerson for the first time and notably which she has never done with Prin. It testifies the above said statement. Though she loves and cares for Morag, her indolence maintains a distance between them which shatters the mother-daughter bond. She retains these mixed feelings till her youth until Prin is fatally hospitalized.

Psychoanalysts stress the importance of a child's relationship to its caretakers as a deterministic factor in shaping its mental and psychic survival in the social environment in which it lives. An infant's interpersonal development is wholly assigned to its relation to the mother and it experiences itself as a continuous being with the mother or with the caretakers in particular. The distortion of Morag's relation with her foster parents

represses her subjectivity, which boosts a sense of lack in her. This inculcates in her a divided self. Feeling unloved, she defines herself as rejected. The dearth of attention and affection sustains anxiety in her relationship with them and her failure to receive the infantile ego support from her mother retards the development of her true sense of self (Chodorow 78). The discomfort thus develops a false self in her which rebels against such an unsatisfactory environment and as a result Morag remains aloof from the Logans.

The double motherlessness—death of the real mother when Morag was a child and her failure to accept Prin as her surrogate mother—creates an unproductive mother-daughter duo which curbs the free development of Morag. Her victimization in the society being the daughter of Prin, creates fear of 'the mother in her' who stands for the victim in Morag. The daughter's indignation of her mother's subjection or failure to defend the former from the society's marginalization aggravates this fear. It clarifies Morag's disapproval of Prin while admiring other mother figures who are especially strong, within the text.

The other female figures compensate the mother-daughter void which Morag utilizes effectively. She seeks solace in relationships with women who are active and assertive than herself. Maternal erasure equips her to have allegiance with strong women who help her to mould as a woman of strength of character. The 'absent mother' in the text motivates her to find a mother in every woman she confronts, clearing space for multiple and surrogate maternity. Laurence provides her heroine with eminent role models for her development and hence a greater thrust on female companionship

articulates the narrative. Right from the young age she is guided by powerful women who instill in her the need for heroism in life.

Though Christie teaches Morag to translate her experience through the medium of writing, it is from Miss Melrose, her teacher from Hill Street, that she receives a strong conviction for her artistry. Her suggestion to submit the story Morag wrote, to the school paper inculcates self-assurance in her to become an acclaimed writer. Melrose also guides Morag to improve her style of composition. Acclamation of her genius amazes Morag as it strengthens her sense of self, "Now it is as though a strong hand has been laid on her shoulders. Strong and friendly" (TD 122). Being a quick learner her inclination towards language and grammar reserves a superior position among the less adept classmates. She learns that language is powerful and can be used as a tool for self-recognition in the society. This motivates her further writings and creates in her the insight that a single woman can have a jubilant career. Because of these attributes, "Morag worships her" (121).

Morag from her early days undertakes part-time job in Simlow's Ladies Wear on Saturdays. This enriches her economically and psychically as it is for the first time she is recognized outside her home. Millie Christopherson, the proprietor of the shop teaches her the basics of modesty and how good taste is learnt which later helps her while mingling with others. This gives her the confidence that despite her 'spiteful upbringing' she can learn good manners and will be acceptable in the society. After Grade Eleven she works as a staff reporter for *The Manawaka Banner* and funds herself to join college in Winnipeg. The self-respect she attains in her working space improves her

selfhood.

Mrs. Gerson, Ella's mother is another character who radiates love and warmth to Morag. She is a strong mother and a working woman who takes care of her three children all alone. Her efficiency in bringing people together is greatly adored by Morag. She teaches Morag how a woman can be strong and squashy at the same time, "It is not only Mrs. Gerson's ability to reach out her arms and to hold people, both literally and figuratively. It is also her strength" (186). Even at her old age she is a member of the New Left movement and is learning a lot and teaching those around her, that age is not a criterion to be active in life. She also introduces her to the writings of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Checkhov and Turgenet, and makes her realize that "English is not the only literature" (151).

Women characters becoming verve and active in old age is a common tendency shown by Laurence's females. Mrs. Gerson's verbosity and dynamism helps Morag to relate to her as a surrogate mother who easily fits into the 'vacant' maternal position and becomes the ideal matriarch for the protagonist. Morag's act of replacing Prin with Mrs. Gerson is her attempt to identify with "others self or their activity to resemble someone else who has abilities, attributes, or powers they want, fear, or admire" (Chodorow 43). Morag's identification with all women who are stronger and powerful adds to the above said statement.

Pre-pubertal girls often show a tendency to idealize the family of a friend in the process to attain individuation and independence. The critical attitude shown by Morag towards her adopted family, projects her wish for an ideal extra familial world. Here

Morag idealizes Ella's family which is more communicative and succeeds in bridging the distance among the members of the family. Her association with this family nurtures in her a positive attitude towards the concept of family which she tries to recreate with Brooke and ultimately finds in Jules.

The next strong figure who influences Morag is the pioneer Catherine Parr Traill, her literary foremother. She was a Canadian author and botanist in 1800s who wrote famous guides for the settlers. Her success as a home maker and working woman has for all time inspired Morag, "writing a guide for settlers with one hand, whilst rearing a brace of young and working like a galley slave with the other" (TD 95). Morag often exorcizes Catherine, who acts as her spiritual mother, from their collective past and pleads her to guide her at the moment of crisis, "Catherine Parr Traill, where are you now that we need you? Speak, oh lady of blessed memory" (96).

Morag respects Catherine's ability in maintaining balance with her daily chores, kitchen works, children, chickens etc. The ease with which she handles her motherhood and profession encourages Morag. She inspires Morag aesthetically and when the latter gets overwhelmed by her daughter's departure, she reads the words of Catharine from her *The Canadian Settlers Guide* for consolation. At moments of crisis Morag engages in imaginary conversation with her from whom she takes lessons to become successful in her femininity and artistry. Morag like Catharine, seldom compromises her role as a mother or as a woman for her aesthetic accomplishment. Nor have they become man-haters as a pre-requisite to become a feminist. For Morag she becomes a model of redefinition, subject formation and female specificity. She further acts as an agency in

rescuing Morag from the self-denigrating delusion of women artists.

Ella Gerson, who takes after her mother Mrs. Gerson, is a highly spirited woman who performs the role of friend, philosopher and guide to Morag. Poetess by profession, she admires and encourages Morag in her writings. She is Morag's confidant and "a friend for life" (181). Their sisterhood helps Morag at the times of crisis and her life depends on the "letters from and to Ella in Halifax" (255). Her practical suggestions encourage Morag to carry on being a woman and an artist simultaneously. Ella like Morag is a successful working mother and hence the latter could easily associate with the former. Majority of the females we encounter in the novel are career oriented mothers who tackle the twin roles with ease.

Fan Brady, Morag's landlady at North Vancouver becomes instrumental in the sexual awakening of the latter, whom she considers more than a friend. She is a ballet dancer (danseuse) at The Figleaf night club who values her work as an art and takes it seriously. She takes pride in her work and her unsuccumbing attitude before men fascinates Morag. Though Fan says she is not the "maternal type" she had looked after "a whole bunch of young brothers and sisters" in her young age (310). Like Fan, Morag also finds repose from her isolation in sex. Morag herself admits that Lilac in *The Spear of Innocence*, the novel written by her, has a strong semblance of Fan.

Morag's maintaining distance from her foster mother offers a reciprocal feminine relational model. Majority of the female characters in the novel are mothers—either biological (Morag, Ella, Julie, Catharine) or surrogates like Eva Winkler and Prin. The support and intimacy she receives from the female community act as surrogate

motherhood and the sisterhood she enjoys acts as transferred maternity in the novel. When Prin, Mrs. Greson, and Mrs. Pearl act as surrogate mothers; Ella, Eva and Fan Brady advocate sisterhood. These 'sisters' seem to be better mothers who provide better nurturance and greater encouragement for autonomy and equips possibilities of mutuality. By doing so, they highlight mothering as function.

Not only the real characters but the legendary ones too edify Morag. The fictious character like Rosa Picardy and Blue-sky Mother from the "spruce-house family," provide a model to show that Morag needs to be heroic and adventurous and need not be a domesticated woman alone (13). Morag remembers that, "Rosa Picardy, [her] alter ego, . . . did brave deeds, slew dragons, and/or polar bears, and was Cowboy Joke's mate" (13). The novel emphasizes the celebration of female friendship and proves Rich's statements that women long for female nurturance and approval throughout their life.

These positive mother models protect Morag from the damage caused by maternal deprivation as they inscribe in her the importance of the potentialities of maternity. This understanding during the process of her maturation helps her to retain her relation with Prin. The difference between Morag and Hagar is clear. While in Morag's case self-willed maternal negligence does not occur that helps her to maintain a strong desire to become a mother. In Hagar's case negative observations on femininity and contempt for other women in *The Stone Angel* compel her to withdraw from female identification till the end of her life. Morag's yearning for a child shows her wish to remain connected with her mother. The text endorses Rich's finding that the more the mother gets

separated from the daughter, the more she can repossess her for mutual affirmation.

Morag boosted by the feminine spirits around her becomes a "figure of feminist self generation and self-birthing" (Hirsch 129). *The Diviners* recommends female coalition as an alternative relation to the dearth of mother-love. Laurence's mother also died when she was young and was looked after by her step mother who was also her aunt. She played a decisive role in making the young Laurence a woman of dynamic aspiration. Her mother-in-law was also a nurturing figure and all these mothers constitute the perspective of maternity in her. This further adds to the comment that female subjectivity rests "not in autonomy but in fluidity and connectedness" (Chodorow132).

Morag's relation with Prin, though a dormant one, rescues her from the conscious erasure of the mother and in the course of events the maternal (her view on her mother and her status as a mother) articulates the plot. Her ability to maintain a balance in her domesticity results from her role identification greatly influenced by Prin. Prin in her obesity and dullness symbolizes the good mother (Neumann 52). Though her dullness irritates Morag in her childhood and as a result she tries in various ways to break the relation, she imbibes the qualities of good mother from Prin, her primary caretaker. The motherliness, care and nurture Prin bestows on her daughter gets acknowledged when she comes to terms with her suppressed past.

Morag's biological urge to become a mother reveals her maternal identification. Her inner drive to become a mother is clear from her words to Ella, her bosom friend, "I want to be glamorous and adored and get married and have kids" (TD 198). The novelist presents a heroine who "wants her own child" and chooses to have one even

through unconventional choice (202). Laurence is unlike many feminist writers who compel their protagonists to react against the conventional enforced maternity by either not becoming mothers themselves or by refusing motherhood. Morag when denied the status of a mother by her husband Brooke Skelton quits his company and becomes a mother by her friend-cum-lover Jules Tonnere. Though her act violates the institution of marriage, her choice makes the maternal a locus of power. Her defiant preference then becomes an act of self-assertion where she declares herself through her choice to become a mother outside wedlock.

Laurence uses Prin, Mrs. Pearl and Mrs. Crawley as examples of feminine archetypes in domestic roles for Morag. Her discovery that she and Prin share a common interest for a child is the first crucial step in her identification with her mother. Her association with Mrs. Greson, Ella and Catherine Par Traill moulds her as a feminist mother and she finds herself caught between two mothers—the one who represents domesticity and conventional motherhood and other a "countervailing figure" (Rich 247). The latter appear as a "counter-mother" who embodies power and pride and a much "freer way of being in the world" who is "alive and vigorous" (247). In such a case the daughter takes no effort to resolve between the choices. Hence she plays the role of a good housewife to her husband, an ideal mother to Pique and becomes a spirited writer.

Once becoming a mother, Morag adheres to the role and raises Pique in the best way she can within the standards of the 'good mother.' She rearranges her working time suitable to the situation; writes longhand at nights and types in the mornings when

Pique is awake. She adjusts her routine and her relation with other men in such a way that her daughter would be the least affected. Though Morag is primarily presented as a bereaved mother, maternal martyrdom for the sake of her daughter's independence does not occur in the novel. This relieves her from the general tendency of the subordination of other roles by the mother and hence she is not dethroned from her primary subject position. Here the child becomes the object who enables the growth of her mother's subjectivity where the mother herself speaks as a subject. Though female *kunstlerroman* focuses on the struggles and maturation of a female artist, it is usually said from the point-of-view of a daughter where the daughter speaks for the mother. By making Morag, the mother, to speak for herself, the novelist reserves a unique space for the maternal in her writings.

However, when Pique grows up Morag maintains a great concern for her daughter which creates tension between them. She wishes Pique to take after her as an artist and wants to settle in life, have a family and children like her. This overwhelmed maternity results in aggression in their bond and Pique goes to the extent of stating that she despises her mother. The deliberate withdrawal of a daughter from her mother is central to the selected study. Morag's omnipotence and overprotection complicates Pique's free development and to separate from the mother she shows a tendency to flee from the home as John in *The Stone Angel*; which is another way to remain away from the mother. Royland, Morag's well-wisher and neighbor, who is a water diviner complains that she, "worry too damn much about that girl [Pique], Morag. She's a grown woman" (TD 26). The narrative opens with the hitherto discussed maternal

anguish that catalyses the inception of the plot. Though Morag is an acclaimed writer, her life at the juncture where she is introduced is that of an anxious mother agonized by the departure of her only daughter who has set out on a quest to find herself.

Morag sees the issue in both ways. The mother in her is anxious and does not want her daughter to take after a journey all alone at her tender age. She reads her daughter's departure note as a distraught mother, while at the same time she judges the language and style of Pique's letter. The writer in her is happy that Pique, who is a budding artist (who makes and composes songs), will have a boosting experience for her artistry. She also anticipates enough time to complete her work as she is wrestling with her writer's block after the success of her prior novels. Her words, "I have got too damn much work in hand to fret over Pique. Lucky me. I've got my work to take my mind off my life" further complicates her position as a mother (4). Pique's disappearance is used profitably by the writer in Morag as she comes out with her tour de force which is the novel itself. She feels lucky being a writer since it helps her to cope with the situation created and it is her position as a bereaved mother that sets her past into action which animates her writer's block. Here Morag reveals her vulnerability in separating her role as a mother and a writer. Laurence strongly believes that art emerges from tension and in Morag's case her maternal self-conflict is the stuff of her artistry.

Motherhood is primarily an action of choice for Morag and hence she always values it. But it is true that her role as a mother increases her struggle to be a writer. Her maternity at Vancouver was a boon and a bane for her. As a single mother she

enjoys the autonomy while as a woman and writer she strives in her life, as it is clear from Rich's observation that "institutional motherhood makes no provision for the wage-earning mother" (225). A working mother is often looked upon by the society since a strong independent woman in most cases is unsexed and viewed as dangerous by the cultural ideologies. Being a working mother she is portrayed as a person with unresolved vulnerability, but the struggles she faces fortify her being which unveils a successful writer in her. The role of a mother and an artist is that of an irreconcilable dichotomy within patriarchy as it expects service from the mother more than the formation of the self. It suppresses woman by limiting her to procreative role alone, denying fulfillment in other areas of her being.

Morag creates a counter-image by balancing her career and motherhood. Becoming a mother is an essential core of her being and without that she feels a lack inside and this fractured subjectivity affects her aptitude. She doubts, "How can she write if she goes blind inside" (TD 284). Understanding the novel in connection with her memoir *Dance on the Earth*, Laurence projects motherhood as a benefiting factor for female aesthetic imagination. In the memoir, she calls *The Diviners* her "spiritual autobiography" (6). This affirms the fact that Laurence and Morag share similar feelings and experiences. She further clarifies that "I have been blessed, with my children, with work" (222). This is analogous to Rich's statement that views intellect and maternal altruism as coexistent, as "it affirms the natural capacity of women to think, to analyze, to construct, and to create and nurture more than our individual children" (91). She escapes from the pre-conceived notion of viewing writing and motherhood as cultural

oppositions as she shows a strong compulsion towards the two. Having a child is an equally strong need to her as to become a writer. Her inherent power in creativity by no means is limited to the biological function alone. Creativity like Morag's maternity functions as a mode of agency for her self-assertion within the novel.

Morag constructs a life amidst the debilitating trichotomies of sexism, maternalism and aestheticism. She redefines the institution of motherhood which demands denial of sexuality and selfhood, by advocating her hopes, fantasies and expectations highlighting the concept of feminist mothering. By doing so she asserts her sexual maturity and aesthetic proprietorship. This independence gives her a new spirit and strength to pave the way amongst the wilderness. Laurence's own maternal tension takes its form in the novel.

Morag's final understanding that Pique's separation is inevitable and a necessity for the mother-daughter maturation enables her to see herself as a subject. Her ability to view her daughter as an individual subject rescues her from feeling empty when the daughter attains a separate identity from the mother. As a result they are not forcibly separated in the process of attaining subjectivity. The resolution is attained when they unite psychically through continued opposition, intrusion and contradiction. Her wish to become a successful writer also gets fulfilled as she comes up with her magnum opus which is the novel itself. By coming to terms with her repressed past and solving the convolutions of the present, Morag unites her disintegrated selves and becomes a complete subject. Her attainment of subjectivity helps to resolve the mother-daughter conflict seen at the beginning of the novel.

In the process of Morag's self-divining, she allows the daughter to tell her own story, just as she was allowed to. Her retrospection with the past opens new vistas in their relationship, where the mother understands that over identification with the daughter could only curb the daughter's personhood. She escapes from the pseudo-empathy that restrains the daughter from forming her 'self.' This sustains a "reliable understanding between the mother and the daughter" where the text grants voice to the two without the risk of hegemony in their nexus (Chodorow 101).

There exists a profound similarity between the mother and the daughter that makes their alliance easier. The conflicts they face are similar and the two set out for self-discovery at a young age. Whilst Morag is belittled for being the daughter of the town scavenger, Pique is ridiculed being a half-breed and the daughter of a writer who writes crazy things. Later when Morag takes pride in her position as the daughter of Logans, Pique goes after her father's artistry and ancestry. The latter's determination to revisit and revive her connection with her father's clan shows the repetition of her mother's character. Just as Morag is related to her Canadian ancestry through the agency of storytelling which she bequeaths from Christie, Pique is related to her roots through songs by Jules. Her visit to Manawaka and the decision to settle with her uncle shows her need to belong to somewhere, the quest which Morag undertook years back.

Though they are not man-haters, they show strong tendencies to experiment with the concept of family. Strong allegiance to their fathers and their ardent tendency to stand on their own legs are also similar. They undertake quests after their fathers though

they never had "an ever-present father" at home (TD 60). By repeating the quest, Pique is imitating her mother and not denying her in the name of attaining maturity. This generational continuity and the repetitive nature of the plot communicate an intense mother-daughter bond though Pique takes after her father's path. The plot accordingly compromises between the mother and the daughter.

Not only the female characters but the males that surround Morag also contribute to the evolution of the self in her. Her relation with the different male characters within the novel shows the graph of her maturation as they in one way or the other help her to unify her disintegrated self. Her connection with Christie plays an important role in moulding her identity. It is he who teaches her to take pride in her past and to believe in her 'self' which boosts self-esteem in her.

Christie spurs in Morag a sense of her ancestry through the tales of Piper Gunn from which she gains a sense of her origin. He connects her to the land of her ancestors, her home country Sutherland, which embarks in her a sense of belongingness in her childhood, "where my people come from" (271). This feeling helps her to mitigate the uprootedness she felt when the Logans adopted her after her parents death. Morag's naming of her only daughter after the latter's dead aunty Piquette Tonnere, confirms his positive influence. The legendary stories which she bequeaths from Christie have been passed on to Pique who has made a legend out of him. Her final decision to settle with her paternal uncle assures her adherence to one's lineage.

The other fatherly figure who enacts the archetypal 'Wise Old Man' in the story is Royland, the guide and philosopher to Morag. She, the diviner of words is indebted

to him who is a diviner of water. She respects the insight and knowledge he shares with her, "Morag always felt she was about to learn something of great significance from him, something which would explain everything" (4).

Jules Tonnerre, Morag's friend is another positive male influence who endows her with examples of bravery and courage. He is a Metis—half French and half Indian—a half-breed and hence an outsider in the society. He is the agent of her sexual awakening and the relation with him is emotionally satisfying as she enjoys parity within the bond which she lacked with Brooke, her husband. She maintains a sense of friendship and a feeling of love with him and he is the "man-who-would-understand" familiar in female family romances (Hirsch 58).

Daniel McRaith, a painter from Crombrauch in Scotland, though a seldom visitor in the novel plays a decisive role in the personal make up and self-narrative of Morag. McRaith's role as her mentor plays an important role in the re-possession of her 'self.' His love for the land results in Morag's delayed revelation about her true ancestry. Tilie Olsen in her book *Silences* states that, "being a woman writer and a mother is very different from being a male writer and a father" (135). Laurence shows a strong conviction to Olsen's words and has purposefully included McRaith as one of Morag's lover who is an artist like her and is also a father of seven children.

When Laurence presents majority of the male figures as catalysts to her attainment of subjectivity, Brooke Skelton, her husband is responsible for putting the woman and artist in her in trouble. He represents a commanding patriarch who eclipses the life of Morag. Her marriage ends up with dearth of freedom and liberty and thrusts her into

the world of estrangement and humiliation. Brooke's denial of Morag's self-representation (through her body and art) can be easily connected to what Rich mentions as the "ancient continuing envy, awe and dread of the male for the female capacity to create life has repeatedly taken the form of hatred for every other female aspect of creativity" (40).

This residual envy latent in patriarchy usually takes the form of "hatred of overt strength in women," the abhorrence to all female articulations—let it be genetic or aesthetic (70). As the natural accomplishment of a female cannot be forbidden, her intellectual enterprises are usually suppressed. Through the control of his wife, Brooke ensures the possession of her needs and demands. Liberation from her husband, who jeopardizes her feminist ideology and artistic inclinations, is highly crucial as it shows her perception as an artist and as a woman. The role of a wife and a mother are seen by patriarchy as the woman's inbuilt destiny and her only acceptable roles.

In the book *Mothering the Mind: Twelve Studies of Writers and Their Silent Partners*, Ruth Perry considers mothering as one of the crucial pre-requisite for artistic gratification, and it seems true with relation to Morag's character. She also highlights that artistic innovations arise not in isolation but with constant interaction with the interpersonal environment. Susan Sulaiman in her essay, "Writing and Motherhood" also upholds the view that mothers can write from the stand point of a mother. *The Diviners* questions the general hypothesis that motherhood and authorship are essentially antithetical. Morag also conquers the taboo of relating harmony between maternity and sexuality thereby constructing a unique liberating discourse. By doing so, she challenges

and revives the position of mother in the women's writings.

While Morag uses artistry as a mode to express her suppressed stories, Laurence by projecting her as a mother and allowing her to write her story, questions the daughter's monopoly on the female *kunstlerroman*. Through Morag, Laurence presents a troubled mother-artist who embodies the intricacies of the complex modern mother *kunstlerroman* as she fulfils her artistic destiny through the mediation of motherhood. Maternal anxiety helps Morag to overcome her writer's block and this once again proves the connection between the two. The novel redefines the general assumption that maternal muteness and marginality act as a prerequisite for the survival of a woman in any culture. Hence *The Diviners* can be put under the 'mother fiction' where the mother is given a voice and a space of her own.

Designating Morag as a mother and placing that role in jeopardy, Laurence cracks the masks of motherhood in the feminist writings as the tabooed words are spoken here. By a realistic portrayal of the conflict between womanhood and motherhood, she has deromanticized the concept of maternal. Likewise, her resolution to raise her daughter single handed is also unconventional. Motherhood shapes the artistic maturity and the articulation of the self in Morag. Though she receives a fulltime husband in Booke, she is dissatisfied in that life which restricts her to become a mother. Thus Morag becomes a devoted mother and a diligent artist with uncompromising selfhood.

When Virginia Woolf and Adrienne Rich theorized the difficulties of female creativity (literal and figurative), Laurence through Morag portrays the intricacies of a

mother-artist in the various institutions dominated by men. The work is also exceptional in relation to its treatment of female subjectivity. When various cultural ideologies define women as wives and mothers, Laurence gives space for a female subject where all the realms of her sexuality are given equal weight. Towards the end of the novel we witness a Morag who balances her diverse female potentialities along with prioritizing her artistic self. Most of the former works of the genre expose an estranged disintegrated woman artist engrossed in conflict between femininity and ambition who finally succumbs to the former than the latter. Laurence deconstructs the general notion where the protagonist attains success as a woman and as an artist. Within the socially enshrined institutions her role as a daughter, wife, mother, friend, female and as a person are given due credence that makes the novel which is also a *bildungsroman* a unique one.

Morag explores and expresses her identity as a woman allowing its infinite possibilities to come to terms with her fractured past. Every representation of Morag changes for betterment and she takes control of her life by writing it herself. Her coming to terms with the different realms of her being—the resolution of the mother-daughter conflict, the unification of her fractured self and achieving a sense of belongingness—concludes her search for self. Her quest completes when she passes on her legacy of artistry to her daughter Pique, who unites her mother's gift for words with her father's bequest of music through 'Pique's Song' which ends *The Diviners*. The mother-daughter resolution occurs through the mother's acceptance of the daughter's growth.

The Manawaka series starts with *The Stone Angel*, where maternal repression

forms the crux of the novel through the characterization of troubled maternity in Hagar. The sequence ends with *The Diviners* in which the focus is mainly on maternal anxiety. However, it concludes with a satisfactory reconciliation of the mother and the daughter thus evinces hope in the futurity of the bond. Hagar and Morag start their journey with the need to rage and fight for their survival. There is an element of maternal self-consciousness in the heroines' awakening. They exhibit different attitudes towards motherhood, that is, they do not equate femininity with maternity while at the same time, resolve their self-division through their nurturing role. The mothers in these novels, who are in one way or the other 'motherless' testify Hirsch's statement that, maternal absence rob the daughter "of important role models for her development, of the matriarchal power which could facilitate her own growth into womanhood" (190).

Chapter III

Toni Morrison: From Slavery to Emancipation

Marianne Hirsch in her critical treatise, *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism* identifies the uniqueness of Afro American maternity as,

> Their public celebration of maternal presence and influence and their portrayals of strong and powerful mothers, combined with the relative absence of fathers, make this uniquely feminist tradition and particularly interesting one in which to explore issues of maternal presence and absence, speech and silence. (177)

There exists a great difference between the cult of motherhood and black mothering. A black mother though protective and strong, displays deviant prototypes as their female identity is inseparable from the triple jeopardy that dictates the society. Her compromise as a woman and as a mother deserves her, a distinct place among the traditional expressions of femininity. At times her atypical maternity baffles the onlookers but convinces and empowers her in a unique way.

Toni Morrison, the select novelist of American woman of colour, is one of the representative writers who mainly set her novels against the backdrop of Slavery and Great Migration. They uncover the unconventional family units latent in the Afro American culture where majority of the children are separated from their mothers and families. Then the community functions as a space where unusual maternal bonds exercise their power and powerlessness. It further permits the interplay of subject and

the maternal in varied patterns. The present study focuses on the empowering characteristics of African American motherhood exposing its cultural specific values from Morrison's select novels, *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*, mainly from the standpoint of mothers. As the black women identity is mainly defined in terms of their maternal role, it analyzes how the concept of maternal helps the women in maintaining their selfhoods.

Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye* focuses on an atypical kind of mother-daughter relationship between Pauline Breedlove and her ten year old daughter Pecola, under the backdrop of the Great Depression. These females who hate their selves are contrasted with that of Mrs. MacTeer's family who takes pride in their black heritage. It can also be read as the principal narrator, Claudia MacTeer's, story of maternal awakening highlighting her ability to mother amidst the reluctant ones. While in Morrison's most acclaimed fiction *Beloved*, Sethe the slave mother who has committed infanticide, compromises her devouring maternity and begins to learn and value her selfhood. Both the novels deal with atypical mothers where they attain their matured selves either by conquering or negotiating with their motherhoods. In both ways the maternal becomes the spring board wherein they achieve their subjectivities.

The Bluest Eye presents three families—the Breedloves, the MacTeers and the Dick and Jane Primer. Racism and classism drive the Breedlove family to a pariah status where each member is disintegrated and disillusioned. Breedloves boosts self-hate among themselves and are disliked by everyone in the society for their poverty and ugliness. Pecola, a true representative of the family, being rejected by her mother, molested by her father and exploited by her own clan, goes insane. The MacTeers is a

close knit family who idealizes their blackness and rebels against the victimization of the society. The principal narrator, Claudia MacTeer, acts as a communal mother to Pecola (whose story is being narrated) and protects her from the societal gaze. Her abundant love and concern for Pecola, celebrates maternal love and evinces hope within the narrative. The third family presented is a white family which is purely immaculate and acts as a contrast to the other two.

While analyzing the novel from the maternal perspective, one discovers how maternity functions as a unifying factor in the lives of the various disintegrated feminine selves. Living in a hyphenated culture these women are subjected to various oppressions both from within and outside the society. The first and the most important mother figure discussed is Pauline who hates her own daughter for being black and ugly. Although the text is not about the maternal destiny of Pauline, it explores the issue of motherhood through her unique viewpoint as a 'non-mother.' Her narrative questions the centrality of motherhood as a biological and social imperative and delineates how the maternal identification can also imprison women. Her maternal deprivation opens the space for the reading of motherhood as a psychic, social and cultural phenomenon.

Before discussing the issue of subjectivity, femininity and maternity of Pauline, the role of her mother Ada Williams in her life should be examined since the identification with one's own mother is the detrimental factor that produces the daughter firstly as a woman, secondly as a mother and finally as a subject. Ada plays a vital role in shaping her daughter's ideology though her corporeal existence is not discussed in the novel. On the other hand, her absence as a maternal figure envisions the limited range of maternal

voice within the narrative. Being the ninth child among eleven children, Pauline experiences no special care from the family. Further, her lame foot and ugliness makes her mother passive towards her. Her cavity in one of her front teeth left her with neither a nickname nor moments of sweet childhood memories. No one took pains to serve special food for her; no funny jokes were cracked on her and nobody teased her in a friendly manner, "She never felt at home anywhere, or that she belonged any place" (BE 88). This creates a "feeling of separateness and unworthiness" in her (88). Pauline's vicious ideas about the concept of beauty is somewhat she inherits from her mother, who dumps her daughter being a disabled.

When Ada fails to fill the emotional isolation in her daughter, Pauline feels unmothered throughout her life. Adrienne Rich's words, "inorder to fight for herself she needs first to have been both loved and fought for," seems relevant in the case of Pauline (244). The dearth of normal mother-daughter association defines the daughter with the lack—her amputated leg and tooth, fragmented family both before and after marriage, Pecola's blackness and the occasional disappearances of both her son Sammy and husband Cholly. The absence of maternal love inversely affects the growth of self-worth in Pauline. When she takes up the role of a mother as the primary caretaker of her own daughter, she repeats her mother without any improvement. Hirsch finds that "mothers internalize and perpetuate oppressive structures of parenting" where the daughters show tendency to repeat it (175). Pauline's wish for normal leg, which will never happen, inflicts a deep wound in her psyche. Her craving for perfection and her failure to acknowledge her physical discomfiture entraps her in an eternal fragmentation.

This physical and psychological amputation intensifies when she confronts the failures in her life.

Pauline works as a black mammy, "the faithful, obedient domestic servant" who takes care of the white children in the family named Fishers (Collins 266). Patricia Hill Collins in her article "Controlling Images and Black Women's Oppression" finds the image of a mammy as a controlling cabal of a black woman where she is forced to nurture and care the white children of the master pushing her children to oblivion (266-73). Recognized and acknowledged in the working space, Pauline enjoys the tag of a perfect servant while she suppresses her maternal feelings towards her children. This imbalance between her selfhood and motherhood creates barriers within her, inducing mother-child disidentification.

The imaginative dialogues of Pauline with her unborn child show her ability to exhibit maternal love to her daughter. She vows to love the still-born whatever be its appearance. However, the shame and embarrassment she faces during her childbirth stifles the mother in her. When the doctor scorns her by saying that black women deliver babies like horses, she yells and imitates 'like a white woman.' Furthermore, Pecola is just the opposite of what she expects by watching the movies. Pauline's illusory self anticipates the birth of a perfect child and to her dismay, the sight of her baby makes her aware that she could only alienate her being the mother of an ugly child and whines, "Lord she was ugly" (BE 100). Even the specific areas of a woman's experience are obscured here that creates an aversion in her, to the newborn. Rich's words, "The very nature of the mother-child bond may depend on the degree of

contact in the first hours and days of the child's life," envisions the futurity of the bond between Pauline and her daughter (180).

Like her mother Ada Williams and majority of the society, Pauline too inherits and idealizes the white value system and standards of beauty. The maternal subjectivity of Pauline rests fully on her internalized western notions that compel her to victimize her daughter. It forces her to marginalize Pecola so as to reserve a better position for herself in the society. As her selfhood rests on the dominant cultural paradigms, her position as the mother of Pecola aggravates the racialized 'other' in her, where she easily falls prey to the racial self-contempt. This explains her reluctance to take sides with the victim and she actively involves in the communal scapegoating of her own daughter. Marianne Hirsch observes that, "Anger, potential violence and destructiveness are still aspects of this reluctant maternity which in women's poetry, is defined by fearful fantasies" (175).

Maternal responsibility towards an ugly child, whom the whole society despises, becomes a heavier burden for her than providing a living for the family. It is not that she is devoid of any maternal love as she exhibits maternal tenderness to the Fisher girl, but poverty and racism restricts her to exhibit the same to Pecola. Beyond the sentimental image of motherhood "for a woman living in poverty, the child can be perceived as a disaster, as an "enemy within"" (Rich 161). The sole proprietorship of the children thrust upon Pauline as her husband fails to look after the family, amplifies the rage in her. The triple jeopardized maternity enslaves her and she develops a hatred for everything that obstructed her way. Her femininity is "drastically limited by the bonds

of racism, sexism, and poverty" (204).

Feeling a sense of entrapment within maternity, Pauline shows her frustration through frequent outbursts of anger towards her family. When Pecola accidently spills the pie on the Fisher's white tiled kitchen, Pauline showers coarse words on her daughter and pushes her out of the house. Apart from her psychological ill-treatment, she physically abuses Pecola by knocking her to the floor and slaps her for frightening the white girl. By doing so, she joins hands with the society in victimizing her daughter. The status as an "ideal servant" on her dream home mars the other major roles in her life (BE 100). The Fisher family bestows a nickname for Pauline where the young girl calls her 'Polly' and in return she calls her "baby" (100). While Pecola calls her mother 'Mrs. Breedlove' and Pauline showers no such affectionate epithets on her daughter. Her treatment of the oppressor's children with compassion at the cost of her own, results in the enforced erasure of her own children. Enamored by her false identity, she forgets to take steps to nurture her family.

Though Pauline is closely associated with the "affectionate, appreciative, and generous" white family, she fails to imbibe any good qualities from them (100). In her urge to become an ideal servant, she eclipses herself in bringing love, concern and orderliness to the storefront home where the Breedloves live. When she drains her strength in keeping her employer's house set, she distances and disappoints her family by being an ambivalent wife and unnurturing mother. The perfect family picture of Dick and Jane reader is contrasted with Breedlove family where each and everything is reversed. She denies her family the love and care, which are the pre-requisites for the

correct blending of familial ties, and as a result her family disintegrates.

The mother in Pauline has been so damaged by racism that the vigor she exhibits in consoling the white girl is restricted to her daughter who has been molested by her father. Her distrust in Pecola's words of her father raping her, gives evidence of her maternal failure. Her slapping of her daughter when she discloses about the incident aggravates Pauline's maternal malfunction. Her ultimate dereliction makes the sexual assault repeat the second time in the novel. For Pauline, Pecola has failed her in the eyes of the society again being raped by one's own father. If anything wrong on the part of the child happens, the mother is usually blamed and then the maternal becomes a site of oppression. In Rich's statement when a mother complains or victimizes a daughter when she is raped she finds that, "It is not simply that such mothers feel both responsible and powerless. It is that they carry their own guilt and self-hatred over into their daughters' experiences. The mother knows that if raped *she* would *feel* guilty; hence she tells her daughter, but through weakness, not through strength" (244).

Imprisoned maternity retards the pre-oedipal connection with her children and Pauline could only pass low self-esteem and self-hate to her children, "Into her son she beat a loud desire to run away and into her daughter she beat a fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life" (BE 102). Sammy, her son, often runs away from the family and even goes to the extend of attacking and beating his father. Pauline's fractured maternal self disempowers the mother in her and though she has the chance and choice to fight against victimization, she prefers to go with the society as it is easier to practice than rebel against the accepted norms. Being the mother of an 'ugly black

child' Pauline finds it easy to hate her daughter as it wins the gratification of the society. So joining hands with her community, she too devalues Pecola and unleashes her anger and frustration on her.

Pauline's inability to understand the black feminine power boosts the inward growth of the self in her. In addition to that, her strong conviction for white standards which she could never acquire left her astray. Inarticulation that lurks in the Breedlove family curbs her from teaching her daughter about the communal values on solidarity and morality. The doom starts when she forfeits the pride which she once cherished of her true ancestry. She could in the past enjoy the beauty and blackness in the voice of Ivy, a native woman in her village who sings in the church choir in Kentucky. Her negligence to pass on the stories of Ivy, whose voice strengthens the people with what they are, leaves the Breedlove children with no powerful models to succumb. She fails to instill in her daughter their rich ancestral pride, the strong maternal figure Aunt Jimmy who looked after Cholly when he was abandoned by his parents. This mother-daughter reticence hovers over their relation throughout the novel.

Lack of attachment with the female world held Pauline back from constructing an alternative feminine plot. The migration from rural South to urban North of Ohio after Pauline's marriage pushes her to a world of isolation. In Ohio, she faces harsh racial erasure by the whites and enforced segregation for her meager existence and physical deformity among the blacks. Her insecurity and disillusionment compels her to imitate the neighbouring women that end in vain. Ridiculed for her naive village ways, she is unwelcomed among them. They renounce any scope of female friendship and snub her

for the triple jeopardy she faces in the new land—her limp, language and low self-esteem—that alienates her from them. Deserted by everyone, she finally engages herself in the world of movies where the women amplify her failure. Pauline remembers her stay over there as "the lonesomest time" of her life and sighs "I didn't even have a cat to talk to" (93).

The husband-wife relationship also meets with despair since Pauline's wifehood too acts as the locus of oppression, from which she tries to escape. Cholly, at the beginning of their married life, takes special care of her infirmity and treats her with great care, "For the first time Pauline felt that her bad foot was an asset" (92). After migration, his unemployment, new friends and drinks withdrew him from the family and she was left alone to struggle with her household in the alien land. Instead of taking responsibility in bringing him back, she on the other hand "avenged herself on Cholly by forcing him to indulge in the weakness she despised" (100). Being an "upright and Christian woman burdened with a no-count man, whom God wanted her to punish," Pauline considers herself as an avenger (36). She never tries to correct or redeem her husband as "she needed Cholly's sins desperately" to sustain her martyrdom (37). She becomes a martyr, "Holding Cholly as a model of sin and failure, she bore him like a crown of thorns, and her children like a cross" (100).

Cultural displacement from the society and estrangement from the family creates an empty space in Pauline. She turns her anger at her children and husband unleashing violence and hatred against them, which results in her perverted femininity. Her acute self-interest makes it impossible to integrate anger with care, which makes her activity of

mothering a stifling agent of her subjectivity. The space of the maternal then becomes an abode of self-alienation and absence. Self-negation, guilt and depression distort the mother in her. The principle narrator Claudia wonders while speaking about Pauline, "What kind of something is that [Pauline]?" (23). Her role as a decision maker, the sole breadwinner of the family, and as a 'single mother' produces far-reaching changes in the family and in the woman's lives in particular.

Analyzing Morrison's writings in *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A Politics of the Heart*, Andrea O'Reilly confirms that "Before the child can love herself, she must experience herself being loved and learn that she is indeed valuable, and deserving of affection" (33). It is the mother who gives the child a "loved sense of self" which stresses the importance of mothering for the emotional wellbeing and growth of children (33). Rich explains the above said statement from the view point of a mother, "The mother's self-hatred and low expectations are the binding-rags for the psyche of the daughter" (243). A repressive mother continues the cycle of abandonment, "merely showing her daughters both that the female condition is depressing and that there is no real way out" (Rich 247). Being an impoverished mother, Pauline bequeaths hopelessness and self-contempt to her daughter where she repeats her mother's broken dreams.

The trauma is thus being transmitted from the mother to the daughter damaging her sense of self-worth. The maternal passivity and self-mutilation of the mother creates a debilitating self in Pecola. The tragedy of Pecola becomes fatal since she is rejected by her own mother giving no room for the acknowledgement of a self in her.

Restrained maternity cracks the feminine consciousness of the daughter since, “there is no indifference or cruelty we can tolerate less, than the indifference or cruelty of our mothers” (Rich 231). She falls prey to the negative self-image of her parents, especially her mother’s self-denial and frustration. This permanently envelops her and she seldom comes out of that shroud. Pecola’s curtailed femininity drains her from appreciating any life affirming qualities in her life. She when cared and pampered by Mrs. MacTeer during her first menstruation, feels uncomfortable and fears about being loved. Since she has only been accustomed as the rejected ‘other,’ she suffocates while loved and wonders, “how do you get somebody to love you?” (BE 32) For Pecola love is only the chocking sounds of her father and silences of her mother.

Viewed as an alien and an interloper, the maternal lessons Pecola learns is that of self-hatred. Hence, she internalizes self-remorse and self-rejection that forms the crux of her living. Nurtured by a reluctant and hostile mother and with no other positive female models, Pecola in one way or the other is unmothered and hence motherless. Her longing for blue eyes is the transferred craving for the possible relation between the mother and the daughter which she never attains. Female futurity and growth rests in the smooth functioning of mother-daughter dyad in a girl’s life. The maternal detachment makes Pecola’s subjective self dysfunctional that shatters the confidence and basic trust within the bond, which are the prerequisites for the beginning of self or identity in a girl (Chodorow 59). Her ‘self’ is so shattered that she slips into madness where she engages in conversation with her broken self. Pecola attains subjectivity in the world of illusion/madness where she is beautiful with blue eyes acquiring an “imaginary wholeness”

(Bloom, "The Bluest" 86).

Just as Pauline takes after her mother, Pecola too imitates her mother in many ways. Firstly, both fail to learn to cope with their lacks and fall prey to it irrevocably. Secondly, they fall short to look at what they have. Pecola's quest for blue eyes is the replica of her mother's wish to be like the movie stars and can be interpreted as an extended craving for love and care from their parents primarily and from the society in general. When Pauline tries to look like the movie star Jean Harlow, Pecola on the other hand cherishes Shirley Temple.

The text focuses on the demystification of the myth of motherhood, when like Pauline; mother earth also remains unyielding for Pecola. It is clear from the central narrator's melancholic words that the earth forbids the growth of any seeds that year. The mother-daughter bonding—both biological and metaphorical—were obstinate and were devoid of any healing effect, so central to feminine identity. This double maternal rejection prevents any scope of renewal and rebirth that sabotages her feminine and maternal selves. Also Pecola's unblossomed maternity leaves the text ambivalent and unresolved.

Though maternal spite lurks in the hitherto discussed women, the plot as such is not anti-maternal in its stance. Morrison through these mothers openly discusses about the stifled and smothered maternity who feel entrapped within it. However, she counteracts it with powerful women on the other side who take up the role of surrogate mothers and acquire their subjectivities through the mediation of their maternal. The prime narrator Claudia MacTeer and her elder sister Frieda MacTeer's maternal

awakening are the most empowering ones contextualized in the novel. As the black survival strategy is a learned one, these girls of colour edify themselves with positive self-definition which they bequeath from their mother, Mrs. MacTeer that constitutes maternal legacy. She makes it possible for her daughters to achieve the legendary status of communal mothers. Her up-bringing makes them aware of the need to suppress the white supremacy surrounding them. This helps them to fight against the oppressive social mores even at a young age. Allowing space for her daughters for the modification of their selves, the mother boosts self-growth in them.

Mrs. MacTeer endorses her daughters with the survival strategies needed for them to survive in a hyphenated culture. Gloria I. Joseph, who has done major works on Black maternity and daughterhood, observes that, “There is a tremendous amount of teaching transmitted by Black mothers to their daughters that enables them to survive, exist, succeed, and be important to and for the Black communities throughout America. These attitudes become internalized and transmitted to future generations” (106). Through her songs and soliloquies, Mrs. MacTeer makes her children aware of their ancestry and connects them to their culture. To take the words of Victoria Seggerman, who had produced notable works on feminism and motherhood, that, “Mothers are responsible for the economic, social and ritual knowledge of their daughters” seems significant in the context (8). The MacTeer children listen to their mother’s songs, understand them and decode their meaning. She teaches the importance of rebellion and power in the society which they practically use in their lives. These Amazons try their best to protect the black pride in a triple jeopardized society.

Mrs. MacTeer inculcates in her daughters the lessons of hard work and the need to be independent. Their act of selling marigold seeds to collect money to buy a bicycle shows their self-sustainability. Further she educates them with the practical knowledge as they knew that women like Maginot Line are 'ruined women' in the eyes of the society which Pecola fails to identify. Mrs. MacTeer protects and possesses her daughters in her own way and they on the other hand understand and acknowledge maternal love. It allows them to maintain a strong connection with her. For the daughters their mother is strong enough to stand alone in the wake of a tornado that sweeps through their town, "The wind swoops her up, high above the houses, but she is still standing, hand on hip" (BE 146). Her harsh protectiveness enables the daughters to preserve themselves in adversity and rescues them from self-denial and self-deterioration. Though she scolds them when they get sick as it makes her struggle for survival tougher, she balances it by caring for them.

Mrs. MacTeer reserves a unique space among the female characters within the novel. Along with expanding the limits of her femininity, she acts as the agent of her daughters' feminist awakening. More than upholding a strong maternal subjectivity she transmits the same to her daughters. Mothers with self-esteem generate daughters having the ability for nurturance and a strong sense of self. The conscious gender role identification with the mother reinforces the maternal in the MacTeer children. As Rich postulates,

> A woman who has respect and affection for her own body, who does not view it as unclean or as a sex-object, will wordlessly transmit to her

> daughter that a woman's body is a good and healthy place to live. A woman who feels pride in being female will not visit her self-depreciation upon her female child. A woman who has used her anger creatively will not suppress anger in her daughter in fear that it would become, merely, suicidal. (245)

The potential parenting capacities of the MacTeer sisters are precisely influenced by their mother since parenting directly constitutes the relational ability in the children. Chodorow also expresses a similar idea that, "Women, as mothers, produce daughters with mothering capacities and the desire to mother. These capabilities and needs are built into and grow out of the mother-daughter relationship itself" (7). The MacTeer children recreate the unique maternalism when an opportunity comes to them. When Mrs. Dunion, Mrs. MacTeer's neighbor, doubts about Frieda's chastity as she was mistreated by her boarder, her mother defends her on all grounds and becomes a savvy mother who stands for her children. Her daughters exhibit the same when Pecola is bullied by a group of boys. By doing so they articulate the protective rules of their mother. Claudia says that Frieda with her "Mama's eyes" and voice "loud and clear" rescues Pecola from the boys (BE 55). These words show their strong affinity to identify with the mother.

The attitude of communal love and care shown by Mrs. MacTeer towards Pecola during her stay with the MacTeers, replicates in the benevolence exhibited by the MacTeer sisters. This explains why they take care of Pecola though she is the eldest of the three. The attention they show towards her during her first menstruation calls forth

the harmonious resolution of the mother in them. Exhibiting strong alliance with their mother, they boldly take up the role of alternative mothers exploring the experience of maternal within the limited range of voices culturally available in the Afro American milieu. Rich explains the 'reproduction of the mother' in the daughters in the followings words,

> The quality of the mother's life—however embattled and unprotected—is her primary bequest to her daughter, because a woman who can believe in herself, who is a fighter, and who continues to struggle to create livable space around her, is demonstrating to her daughter that these possibilities exist. (247)

Pecola becomes an agent of the maternal awakening in the MacTeer sisters and gives an opportunity for them to identify with their mother as they are able to sympathize with the former when the rest of the society shuns her. By doing so, they take after their mother in rebelling against the society by protecting the black feminine identity. When they are able to achieve, grow and exhibit subjectivity amongst the alien community, their education is almost complete. In the process of their becoming feminist daughters too, the MacTeer sisters do not cut themselves off from their mother as it is clear from the reminiscence of Claudia as an adult daughter. Both the mother and the daughter inhabit a space, "whose lives and whose roles, whose very selves are deeply intertwined with one another" (Rich 253). This creates a sense of interconnection between them.

Significantly, Toni Morrison makes Claudia the principal narrator and allows her to speak in the voice of a nine-year-old child and an adult. As she occupies the twin

positions—as a daughter and as a mother—the tale becomes inscribed both in the daughterly and maternal narrative. As Pecola is muted throughout the novel, Claudia becomes her voice both in the perspective of a child and a woman looking back to the events of her childhood from 1940 to 1941 at the verge of the Great Depression. Bloom identifies the importance of Claudia in the novel, "Claudia's childlike voice is interspersed with the knowing adult voice who can look back on the events of her life and begin to interpret them" ("The Bluest" 78).

Claudia perceives herself more than a child to Pecola and her ability to empathize with the victim transcends sisterhood and involves in extended mothering. She befriends Pecola when rest of the society victimize and rejects her. She takes special care in entertaining the latter, treats her as a guest and tries hard to keep her from feeling an outsider. When Pecola is made a scape-goat by the society, Claudia breaks the accepted norms, defends her and wishes her illegitimate baby to be born. Her matured self helps her to take control of her actions where she exhibits maternal networking at a young age. Portrayed as a complete subject, the subject formation of Claudia by exhibiting the maternal provides a space for the recuperation of the mother in the narrative. Though she negates femininity by exhibiting disinterest to mother blue-eyed baby dolls, she inadvertly displays mothering throughout the novel. Her contribution as the 'other mother' invokes power in her and this new status brings recognition and empowerment in her femininity.

Claudia along with Frieda feels responsible for Pecola as a mother for the child. They go to the extent of burying their meager savings by planting marigold seeds as an

offering for the safe delivery of Pecola, "But so deeply concerned were we with the health and safe delivery of Pecola's baby we could think of nothing but our own magic: if we planted the seeds, and said the right words over them, they would blossom, and everything would be all right" (BE 9). Making Claudia the empowered mother at a small age the novelist celebrates her maternal self-birth. As a result in her, the daughter and the mother meet; the child and the adult meet. She transmits her racial powerlessness into dominance through her communal mothering. Her abundant love and concern for Pecola risking her position signifies the cultural specificity of black American maternalism.

Claudia attains the primary focus in the novel not as a principal raconteur, but it is she who successfully leads the fight for black female survival and self-reliance. Being a woman of colour who takes pleasure in her unique cultural identity, she retaliates against all forms of oppression by questioning it and denying the generalized accepted race, class and gender roles. One survival strategy taken up by the MacTeer sisters to identify their selves is that they look for flaws in other people to maintain their equilibrium. When everyone cherishes the white child actress Shirley Temple, Claudia calls her "old squint-eye Shirley" flouting the general acceptance of white skin over the black (BE 19). She demolishes the superiority of Maureen Peel, the light-skinned school mate, by showering verbal violence on her and 'discovers' her gap-tooth and mocks at her sixth finger. When rest of the girls adores Maureen, the MacTeers though wish for her friendship want to kick her for the luxury she enjoys. Claudia even plots "accidental slamming of locker doors on her hand" and wishes to throw her fur muff into the gutter

(54).

Claudia's minor tasks of mutilating the white supremacy and upholding her self among the disintegrated feminine selves amplifies her formation of subjectivity. Her ability to identify the contradictory nature of the blacks' contempt for their own blackness creates an "unsullied hatred" in her towards them who succumb to the alien culture (19). She muses,

> ... we were still in love with ourselves then. We felt comfortable in our skins, enjoyed the news that our senses released to us, admired our dirt, cultivated our scars and could not comprehend this unworthiness.... And all the time we knew that Maureen Peal was not the Enemy and not worthy of such intense hatred. The *Thing* to fear was the *Thing* that made *her* beautiful, and not us. (62)

Recognized as the tradition bearer, Claudia acquires a unique identity where she takes up the oral tradition of her ancestors. Her artifact which she achieves from her mother, whose songs bind her to the land, elevates her to the position of a griot. A griot is a historian, storyteller or a musician who through the stories connects one generation to the next. These minstrels foresee everything and they occupy an esteemed position in the African history by their wit and wisdom. Lisa Williams in her essay "*The Artist as Outsider in the Novels of Toni Morrison and Virginia Woolf*" writes,

> Through her song, Claudia's mother communicates to her daughter the beauty of African-American folk tradition of storytelling. By listening and then speaking, Claudia becomes a modern-day griot who affirms, as she

> participates in storytelling, the culture that the white society would like to destroy. Her positive self-identity is nurtured by her continuing relation to a maternal oral tradition. (62)

Claudia's narration is the repetition of her mother's songs, showing generational continuity, where Mrs. MacTeer passes on the authority of the oral tradition to her daughter. Alice walker in her essay, "*In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*" relates the black women's artistic creativity to their maternal past, which is true with respect to Claudia. She recounts the stories handed down orally by her matrilineal heritage. Like Morrison, the MacTeers preserve the traditional values for next generation through artistic means.

The next mother figure in the novel *The Bluest Eye* is the middle-class light-skinned woman who hails from the rural South, Geraldine. She is class conscious and feels superior to other people of colour in her neighbourhood. As she was chosen by her husband Louis for her pristine nature she tries to preserve it even at the cost of her relationships. She works hard to keep her house spick and span. Likewise, her son Louis Junior is always brushed, bathed, oiled and shod to 'conceal' his coloured identity. But her taciturnity and stringency in exhibiting her mother-love and the suppression of the maternal dismisses the smooth functioning of the relationship between the mother and the son.

Being light-skinned, Geraldine's family is called coloured and is considered "neat and quiet" people different from niggers who are "dirty and loud" (BE 71). She thinks it her duty to sustain this privilege though it is misleading to her African self. Hence she

disdains her black roots. She knew that "the line between coloured and nigger was not always clear; subtle and tell tale signs threatened to erode it, and the watch had to be constant" (71). This fear forces her to submit her entire energy in maintaining the 'high' position in the society. Her hatred of Pecola and calling her "black bitch" delineates the extent to which she hates her true self (75). In Pecola she sees her own repressed self.

Self-denigration of Geraldine stifles the ingenuity in her son. Projecting her inner struggles on him, she restricts his freedom to befriend boys of his community. Her hysteria for cleanliness, which is a transferred liking for the immaculate white, obstructs his wish to roll over the mount of dirt while playing. Though he yearns to become a black child, he learns from his mother to hate his true ancestry and as a result becomes choosy of his companions that end up in boredom and anxiety even at home. Repression of his self-growth loosens the family tie and lack of physical intimacy from the mother drives Junior to acts of cruelty. Pestering of his inherent nature, leads to a sadistic pleasure in him that he bestows on torturing others, especially children and girls.

Though the maternal reading of the text identifies an undercurrent of the repression of the mother throughout the novel, the novelist allows the principal narrative to take up the role and fill the lack. When blood mothers like Pauline and Geraldine display dereliction, the novelist counters it with strong women like Aunt Jimmy who saves and raises Cholly when abandoned by his parents. Mrs. MacTeer and her children also involve in extended mothering thus compensating for the non-maternal attitude exhibited by the major women characters in the novel. The text counterbalances such approaches by the involvement of community through female connection.

MacTeer sisters' accompaniment with the grown-ups for collecting coal from the railroad tracks becomes a communal gathering and group history, "We do not hear their words, but with grown-ups we listen to and watch out for their voices" (15). Further, they "watch their faces, their hands, their feet, and listen for truth in timbre" (16). Later, when they reach every door nearby, selling seeds for money to buy a bicycle, they are invited for lemonade and rest which are signals of black female companionship. This relationship with grown-ups validates them with the lessons of communal harmony as it idealizes mutual love and celebration of women working and spending time together. Shared parenting strengthens their roots and their shared interests push the community forward. It helps them to understand the female world better as it enables them to comprehend the lessons of survival which Pecola fails to appreciate.

The second work *Beloved*, is a haunting story of maternal love and black kinship. Plainly, it is a slave narrative of a group of slaves who work in Sweet Home plantation in Kentucky in 1850s and after a silencing of two decades the course of events restarts in 1870s. Aesthetically viewed, it is the celebration of maternal omnipotence amidst the most dehumanizing institution the human race had ever witnessed—slavery. Emotionally it is the mother-child separation that forms the crux of the story. Sethe, a slave mother of three and pregnant with the fourth, escapes from Sweet Home plantation where she works as a cook, nurse and seamstress. After her escapade with her children and an interim of twenty eight days freedom, when the slave-owners arrive to catch them, she murders her infant daughter of two years 'out of love.' The plot becomes haunted when the murdered baby returns from the other world to question her mother's deed. The

story interests when the novelist makes it clear that it is the fictionalization of a newspaper report of Margaret Garner, a fugitive ex-slave that Morrison came across while compiling *The Black Book*, a memorabilia of black culture and history.

Sethe is brought to the Sweet Home plantation as a young teenager who hardly remembers her parents. Mr. and Mrs. Garner, the owners of the plantation were kind when compared to the other slave-owners read in literature. The sudden death of Mr. Garner, followed by the entry of his brother who is referred as the Schoolteacher along with his nephews to the plantation changes the whole set up. When their cruelty becomes unbearable, the slaves plot an escapade, which allows Sethe for a bonanza of twenty eight days of freedom. The new found maternal freedom and proprietorship creates in her an insatiable appetite that disintegrates, disperses and diffuses the role.

Finally when the slave-owners come to seize their 'legal property,' Sethe kills her elder daughter Beloved, who has been named after her death. She is put to jail along with her new-born Denver for the murder. Though a group of white abolitionists headed by the Bodwins fight for their release and they return to the house at 124 in Cincinnati, the community shuns them and they lead a secluded life. The novel begins with Paul D, an ex-slave of the Sweet Home plantation, who comes to meet Sethe after a gap of two decades. His entry unveils the past in her that has been locked under her inner recess all through her life. Articulating a maternal voice the narrative allows the mother to speak for herself and gives space to reconcile with the guilt she carries with her. The dead daughter returning from the other world questioning her mother's incomprehensible act and the mother's acute attempts to convince her, acknowledges the maternal

remorse in her. It is Paul D who 'disturbs' this "maternal silencing of the mother;" the silence that fails to communicate her story for the past eighteen years (Hirsch 15-16).

Among the blacks, it is the woman who suffers the most as she is tormented physically, subjugated sexually and subjected to degradation emotionally. Bloom points out that a "slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standards as others" and finds that "Slavery is terrible for men, but it is far more terrible for women" ("Beloved" 77). He further observes that slavery has made the least possibility for a woman to be a good mother with relation to the prevailing standards and conventions on maternity. Interestingly the social matrix of Afro American family is matrifocal due to the absence of men from the household. The woman takes up the role of the head of the family, while she is oppressed and powerless in the larger context in which she is placed. This inconsistency makes her performances fascinating. Rich finds that slavery as an institution has "ghettoized and degraded female potentialities" (13) and motherhood for a slave mother is only a "powerless responsibility" vested on her (52).

In order to comprehend what causes a mother to act differently or commit infanticide, it is necessary to know her in terms of what she had faced and suffered; and the various institutions which have acted upon her. A slave mother, perceived as a breeder of future slaves, is solely used for her procreative role where she has to engage in forced suckling for the slave owner's children. A woman's claiming of decision power over her reproductive life is considered illegal in slavery and childbirth is seen as a means of production and seldom perceived as a female experience. For a slave mother, her twin positions—as a woman and as a mother—are under constant threat.

No privilege is given for a mother as she is often attacked by the male owners for her sexuality. Sethe being raped by the slave-owners when she is at the verge of her fourth delivery clarifies the above statement.

As sexual honesty and marital fidelity are impossible for a black mother, she places high value in maternity and upon her children. The only claim a woman can have in her life is of her children—that too for a short span of time. An omnipotent slave mother is an irony within the institution of slavery. Violation of domesticity is the pre-text of slavery which blurs all the relationships that come across disfiguring the family fabric. Born in slavery every child belongs first to the slave owner and not to the mother. There exists no pre-oedipal attachment between a slave mother and her child. This specificity moulds a special kind of motherhood and different construction of maternity in Afro American heritage.

Marianne Hirsch finds that, "If mothers cannot 'own' their children or even themselves, they experience separation and loss all the more intensely" (6). Commenting on Sethe's maternity she further says, "In Morrison's novel, the economy of slavery circumscribes not only the process of individuation and subject formation, but also heightens and intensifies the experience of motherhood—of connection and separation" (6). Sethe's experience is bound to contradiction as her life is a mixture of frailty and fortitude; love and hate. Maternal responsibility of a slave mother towards her children is serious, strong and specific. Sethe's strong relation with her children and her confidence that her mother had not tried to escape from the plantation leaving her daughter, adds to the situation.

In addition, the Sweet Home plantation being liberal towards its slaves allows Sethe to develop as a woman with pride. Sethe is allowed to choose her man among the five male slaves in the plantation and conducts a wedding ceremony with the chosen person, Halle. No one molests her till she delivers her three children and all of them are fathered by her husband. Her words, "I birthed them and I got em out and it wasn't no accident. I did that" shows her female pride and maternal omnipotence (B 162). The knowledge that out of many children of her mother, she is the only one who is given a name and a life induces in her an esteemed sense of being. These privileges embark in her a selfhood which is close to that of the masters'.

As slavery denies the possibility of the emergence of selfhood in a slave, the twenty eight days of freedom incurs in Sethe a maternal subjectivity which she experiences for the first time. It is motherhood that she experiences first and this vulnerability compels the mother in Sethe to take over the woman in her. When most of the mothers in the novel are separated from their children at an early age, Sethe enjoys the privilege to have them for more than ten years and maintains continuity and oneness with them. No other mother-child bond is discussed within the novel with such dexterity and this specificity differentiates her from other mothers of the plot.

The matrifocality of African American culture embarks the woman of colour to maintain a strong bond with one's mother. Sethe hardly remembers her mother who is called as Ma'am in the novel and both talk to each other only once in the novel. Cut off from other maternal figures from childhood, her concept of maternal is strongly related to what Nan, the black nurse of Sweet Home Plantation, tells her about Ma'am.

Though unmothered by slavery, Ma'am indoctrinates into Sethe the importance of maternal authority in the mother-child bond and unveils the possibility to utilize motherhood as a space for rebellion. Ma'am during the Middle Passage could not escape rape and the subsequent pregnancy, but she rebels by refusing motherhood until she gets impregnated by someone whom she accepts. She throws all the children born out of rape to the sea. By inscribing the destiny of a slave child, the slave mother in this context "had enforced her right to define herself as mother, not as breeder" (Bloom, "Beloved" 105). Sethe is raised by her mother since she came from a man whom Ma'am gave consent to.

The daughter bears in mind the instance when Ma'am shows her a scar under her breast so that the former could identify her if anything worse happens to her. The scar thus is used as a means of maternal communication and identification in the novel. Sethe's wish for a similar one shows the natural eagerness of a daughter to remain connected with her mother. Not long her mother gets hanged and she identifies her with the scar of slavery. It connects three generations of women in the novel—Ma'am, Sethe and Beloved. When Sethe's 'chokecherry scar' formed by the whippings of the slave-owners for her reporting of the theft of her breast milk to the Garners signifies her violated motherhood, the handsaw scar of cutthroat on Beloved signifies her denied motherhood.

The maternal attitudes transmitted by Sethe's mother exhibits violent prototypes to her daughter and hence her maternal legacy is strongly associated with death. Ma'am's act of showing the scar to Sethe is her attempt to remain connected with her daughter

even after her death. Sethe's strong connection with the mother creates in her the need to become a good mother. Her act of recreating this unique intimacy can be explained in Chodorow's words, "A mother identifies with her own mother (or with the mother she wishes she had) and tries to provide nurturant care for the child" (90). Sethe's overwhelming wish to remain connected with the deceased Beloved is what she takes from her mother. Ma'am instills in her the notion that a mother is responsible for her daughter, thus fixing in her the idea that a narrative of abandonment does not exist for a mother. Ma'am instills strong hold on her daughter even after her demise and edifies Sethe with the maternal lessons of violence and mutilation.

Dearth of proper mothering and lack of mother models in Sweet Home fails to provide the basic elements of motherhood and mothering in Sethe, "The women who have had the opportunity to see the very flawed mothering of other women often develop impossible ideals of what good mothering is finds reflection in Sethe's fevered attempt to remother both girls as soon as she decides Beloved is her returned daughter" (Bloom, "Beloved" 76). Sethe is unmothered, but when she takes up the role, her mother-love becomes risky. Her cry for mother and milk during her childhood gives a firsthand knowledge of the emotional pangs of maternal absence in the life of a child which she does not want to recur in her children. She desires to give them in abundance what she lacked as a child. This makes her judge the stealing of her breast milk by the slave-owners as the ultimate brutality than molesting her. Lack of the presence of other women in Sweet Home to take care of the slave children which was common in bigger plantations is another reason for Sethe's urge to protect her children

single handed. She was taken care of along with the other children of the plantation by Nan that helped her to sustain her life in the plantation amidst her parental absence.

After enjoying twenty eight days of freedom (which is a rare phenomenon in slave stories) it opens a space for Sethe "where you could love anything you chose—not to need permission for desire-well *now*, that was freedom" (B 162). She enjoys "a selfish pleasure" (162) which she had never experienced before and says, "I couldn't let all that to back to where it was, and I couldn't let her nor any of em live under schoolteacher. That was out" (163). The powerful spell of maternity she enjoys changes her whole conception of life. The new existence of a free mother thrills her and instead of thinking it as one of the female process, she crowns it as the only identity of all time.

> It was a kind of selfishness I never knew nothing about before. It felt good. Good and right. I was big, ... deep and wide and when I stretched out my arms all my children could get in between ....I loved em more after I got there. Or may be I couldn't love em proper in Kentucky because they wan't mine to love. But when I got here, when I jumped down off that wagon—there wasn't nobody in the world I couldn't love if I wanted to. (162)

These words reveal her first maternal acknowledgement within the slave kinship though she knows that a slave mother has "neither the right nor the permission" to enjoy maternity and "everything belonged to the men who had the guns" (162). She is clear about her deed that if she fails to kill her daughter, the slave owners will execute

it either physically or metaphorically and as a mother she cannot bear that to happen.

Being a mother and a slave is the worst thing one faces in slavery as the two roles contradict each other leaving no space for negotiation. This discrepancy influences the model of motherhood where she cannot have a lackadaisical attitude in parting with her children. In order to protect them Sethe "took and put my [her] babies where they'd be safe" (164). The narrator vocalizes her thoughts, "*She* might have to work the slaughterhouse yard, but not her daughter. And no one, nobody on this earth, would list her daughter's characteristics on the animal side of the paper" (251).

The slave narratives often show the tendency among slave mothers to prefer death for their children than living in a continued state of slavery. To quote Christopher Peterson, "Infanticide is most often read either as an unintelligible aberration from normative kinship, or as an act of pure love, in which case it is thought to be completely intelligible" (551). Sethe is not the only mother who commits filicide in the text. Her mother who is "taken up many times by the crew" during her Middle Passage and Ella who has been raped by the white father and son repeatedly commits the same as they suspend the idea of nurturing their children born out of rape (B 62). The former throws all the children fathered by the whites to the sea, while Ella hesitates to feed the infants born of her masters. Excavating the history of other mothers who have committed infanticide the novelist tries to pacify the guilt in Sethe.

Killing one's children by the above said mothers is different from the filicide committed by Sethe as she murders her child out of her love and not of hate or as a means of protest. The narrator says that, "The best thing she was, was her children.

Whites might dirty *her* all right, but not her best thing, her beautiful, magical best thing—the part of her that was clean" (251). Choosing her toddler daughter first to kill brings out the strong mother-daughter bond as it is her best self that she chooses first. The other reason can be the gender identification where Sethe feels continuity with girl child more to the sons. Killing a slave daughter was more reasonable for a slave mother as no one will invade her daughter's private parts or threw her out of the wagon as it was done to her. It is a daughter who is affected the most in slavery and hence choosing a baby girl for infanticide is crucial. Jean Wyatt in her article, "Giving Body to The Word: The Maternal Symbolic in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," finds that "The novel withholds judgment on Sethe's act and persuades the reader to do the same, presenting the infanticide as an act of pure love" (214).

By deciding to return her children to womb/tomb, Sethe takes the maternal rights to write their destiny. Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman who focus their writings on American slavery, finds that slaves within the slave culture develop an extreme sense of familial loyalty and sexual morality "that remarkably resembled the values of their masters" (205). Sethe's act of ultimate defiance acts as a counter narrative within the slave parable where there exists a strong conflict between the master who tries to surrender the child born out of slavery and the slave who struggles to protect their family ties. Their struggle for self-affirmation brings them under the trope of "The Good Mother" (Wright 34). A Good Mother is defined as a woman/mother who values her maternal self over and above other realms of her femininity. She identifies herself first and foremost as a mother and denies her own self for the sake of her children.

Stamp Paid who helps Sethe to cross the river and reunite with her family, reminisces her reaction when the slave-catcher arrives 124 to catch them is significant, “How she flew, snatching up her children like a hawk on the wing; how her face beaked, how her hands worked like claws, how she collected them every which way; one on her shoulder, one under her arm, one by the hand, the other shouted forward into the woodshed....” (B 157). He further complains that, “Your [Sethe’s] love is too thick”, to which she retorts that “Love is or it ain’t. Thin love ain’t love at all” (164). He doubts about the outcome of her action saying,

> Your boys gone you don’t know where. One girl dead, the other won’t leave the yard. How did it work?” and she replies that “They ain’t at Sweet Home. School teacher ain’t got em.... It ain’t my job to know what’s worse. It’s my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible. I did that. (165)

Bill Moyers, in an interview with Morrison asks, “What kind of love is that?” and she answers, “Some of it’s very fierce. Powerful” (28).

The slave mother portrayed in this slave narrative is a symbol of self-sacrifice as she goes to great heights to protect her children. Her whole being is bound by motherhood and her appalling escapade can be reread as her flight to motherhood. The motive of her escape is her ardent longing to reunite with her children who are waiting on the other side of the river under the care of her mother-in-law Baby Suggs. She not only kills her two year old infant but tries to kill the rest as a rescue mission from the slave owners. She goes to the extent of exchanging sex to carve the word ‘Beloved’

on her daughter's tombstone with the tomb engraver. She says, "No more powerful than the way I loved her, … Ten minutes for seven letters. With another ten could she have gotten "Dearly" too?" (B 4-5)

Paul D's comments on Sethe in 124 when he sees her after a long gap, illustrates the change of Sethe from a woman to a mother. He wonders,

> This here Sethe was new. The ghost in her house did not bother her for the very same reason a room-and-board witch with new shoes was welcome. This here Sethe talked about love like any other woman; talked about baby clothes like any other woman, but what she meant could cleave the bone. This here Sethe talked didn't know where the world stopped and she began. (164)

Refusing to consent to normal maternity Sethe, the demonic mother, demystifies motherhood unveiling the various possibilities of its destructive power. She is perceived as an unnatural deprived mother both within and outside family who has abandoned all maternal responsibilities. Sethe stifles the maternal value structure in the eyes of the society which distances her from other women of her own clan.

Maternal rage is silenced in almost all cultural ethos since an angry mother is unwelcomed in family sagas. Sethe's silence that followed the maternal egotism for eighteen years pretexts the anger within her for her powerlessness in protecting her daughter. Feminist literati finds a "strange liaison between silence and anger: silence makes us uncomfortable, because we tend to suspect that it conceals anger" (Hirsch169). Anger acquires a new form whenever the subject is denied speech. To

theorize the anger is to claim an ownership. It is one strategy adopted by the oppressed to vocalize their feeling. When slavery abducts everything from a slave, anger becomes a means of expression by the slave. Her desperate act of love by committing infanticide vocalizes the unspoken anger of other maternal figures discussed in the novel. Her anger has the matrilineal history of generations of mothers who have no control over their children.

Though anger is one way of asserting and articulating one's own subjectivity, here the protagonist's wish to sustain only one bond in her life calls forth the other allegiances—her femininity and subjectivity—into question. Sethe's maternal subjectivity is so devouring that her children are reduced to mere objects. Her two sons run away from home fearing the ghostly presence in 124 and Denver though eighteen when introduced in the novel has a stagnant self.

For the mother whose child is dead, "the dead child is maternity in *potentia*, the mother truncated" and the maternal remorse of Sethe conjures Beloved in flesh and form (Bloom, "Beloved" 73). Demetrakopoulos terms it as enantiodromia, which means "the principle that any natural force suppressed will have gained demonic force by the time, it finally bursts forth, is a rule of life in this novel" (78). When the maternal proprietorship of Beloved comes to her the second time, her process of identification with the daughter eclipses her whole identity. Her urge to urinate at the sight of Beloved as she feels her bladder full of "endless water" gives the whole event an impression of Sethe giving birth to her suppressed maternal guilt (B 51). Her return allows the mother in Sethe to restart and renovate her smothered motherhood and

mothering becomes the core of her identity.

The common wounds of slavery makes possible for Sethe to maintain an intense relation with the daughter and her extreme mothering empties her 'self.' Becoming a slave to her daughter, Sethe, in order to spend entire time with Beloved quits her job in the restaurant and starves so that her daughter can feed well. Their ego boundaries remain undifferentiated and her intense re-mothering invokes ferocity within the dyad. Over identification with the daughter results in "maternal ambivalence and inconsistent behavior" in the mother which are "obstacle to the successful attainment of femininity" (Chodorow 106-7). Sethe who feels a void after the incident fails to accord a separate identity other than the murderous mother. The greater is her dissociation between subjectivity and maternity.

Sethe's inflated maternal attachment pesters her femininity that results in her flight from selfhood. By redefining the institution of motherhood, by fostering it to devastating effects she willfully engages in the renunciation of her self. Apart from the maternal self she feels amputated and her maternal omnipotence threatens her subjectivity. The authority and domination within the maternal makes her struggle for the attainment of selfhood tougher. The hegemony of motherhood over selfhood tears her apart as her self-repression results in stagnation which isolates her from the society.

Through *Beloved* Morrison shows how intense maternity can stifle the female individuation. Bloom identifies that, "Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is the first book-length work to examine the dangers of mothering to the individuation of the mother herself" and it decodes the "dark and painful side of mothering" in women's writing ("Beloved"

70). Imbalance between the individual subject and the mother in Sethe signals her split identity suggesting self-division in her. The prolonged attachment stifles her individuation to an extent that it causes "boundary confusion" and "lack of sense of separateness" with the children (Chodorow 110).

Evocation of the past makes possible for Sethe to live in the present forgetting about her past and discarding the future. With Sethe's understanding of Paul D's words that she is her best thing stamps her self-consciousness. She speaks for herself for the first time, "Me? Me?" is the first moment of self-recognition in her (B 273). Marianne Hirsh opens her critical treatise by analyzing *Beloved* which allows the mother to speak as a subject (6-8). Apart from the general tendency of the daughter speaking for the mother, the novelist takes special care in making a mother's voice heard above all other voices. By allowing the mother to speak for herself, she compromises with her devouring motherhood that enables the growth of her subjectivity. Recognizing the legitimacy of maternal anger, the novelist allows her heroine to speak her resentment.

During exorcism, Sethe mistakes Mr. Bodwin for Schoolteacher, but instead of repeating the filicide she attacks the perceived enemy that proves her maternal maturity. Her inability to identify Beloved after she is banished from Sethe's house by Paul D, shows her gradual rift from demonic maternity. To Paul D's question, why she had not left the haunted house, Sethe replies that she will no longer run away from anything again. This shows her firm assertion to reconcile with the past memories that bothers her. Beloved's over-possessiveness and atrocities she creates in the life of her mother show the need for an amicable distance in every bond. It also gives a chance for Sethe

to judge her actions and by doing so she liberates the maternal anger in her. She re-discovers her once lost subjectivity, sexuality and finally femininity. The maternal suffering, guilt and pathos make her a heroic mother who finally acknowledges her 'self.'

The second prominent figure who exhibits maternal love and care is Denver, the surviving teenage daughter of Sethe. Like the MacTeer sisters in *The Bluest Eye*, she reserves a special position as a mother in the novel among the deviant ones. She is the person in flesh and blood who suffers the most in the novel being victimized as the daughter of a murderous mother. Fear and resentment towards her mother strains their relationship. Her memory in relation to her mother is that of violence and death that boosts maternal fright in her. This interrupts the normal mother-child bonding though she gets the privilege to live with her mother from childhood. Denver makes it clear, "I love my mother but I know she killed one of her own daughters as tender as she is with me, I'm scared of her because of it. She missed killing my brother and they knew it" and anticipates that it "could happen again" (B 205).

Denver blames her mother firstly for isolating her by killing her sister and secondly by shunning her from the society and finally for maintaining a tacit mother-daughter relationship. Society's ostracism confines her from developing any contact with its members which results in self-alienation in her. Lack of self-esteem restricts her from mingling with other females outside 124. Till Paul D's intervention Sethe actively impedes the formation of subjectivity in her daughter. Denver often called 'baby' even in her adult age is reduced to a child-like state by the articulation of maternal hegemony

within the plot. Sethe's maternal ambiguity forces her to exhibit reluctant maternity towards the existing daughter which pushes her to the world of isolation. It justifies Denver's desire to leave her mother and the haunted house, as she knew that it is because of her mother's act of killing her own baby that the clan suspect and shun them.

The dormant self in Denver gets dynamic by the exhibition of the maternal firstly towards her sister and then towards her mother. After Beloved returns to 124 resurrected, Denver takes care of her and plays a vital role in nurturing her. She considers it her duty to warn and protect her sister from Sethe, "This time I have to keep my mother away from her [Beloved]," since she anticipates the recurrence of violence (206). Return of her dead sibling from the grave makes her happy and mentions it as not an evil ghost whose presence induces "a vague smile on her lips" (18) and recognizes it as "the only other company she had" (19). She is sure that, "It wouldn't harm me because I tasted its blood when Ma'am nursed me" (209). The relation between them is fatal since one "traded the living for the dead" (152). Later when Sethe and Beloved become close, Denver is relegated to the background. Even then she feels responsible for the safety of her sister and fears Sethe would 'kill her again' as "she would and she did" (206).

Though inarticulation obscures the mother-daughter relationship, confrontation of her mother's past by allowing the mother to vocalize her experience, gives Denver a chance to understand her and the circumstances that led Sethe to become a murderous mother. Denver who viewed her mother as a murderer till then calls her "a quiet,

queenly woman" (18). Her constant wish to escape from her mother gets thwarted after hearing the horrors of slavery and she empathizes with her for the mistreatment she faced in the Sweet Home plantation from Schoolteacher and his nephews. She re-mothers herself from a girl who "hates" and "fears" her mother to a daughter who "dripped tears into the stove-fire" after hearing about the abduction of her mother's milk which she reserves for her daughter (17).

The sympathetic attitude of Denver towards her mother leads to the climax of the plot where Sethe is rescued by the efforts taken by her daughter. She takes care of Sethe when infantilized and avenged by the ghost and helps her to arbitrate with her brutish maternity. When Sethe quits her job, Denver steps out of the house and seek for communal support to feed herself and her mother. Taking up the role of a mother to the deteriorating Sethe, she advocates surrogate mothering. She moves a step forward by rescuing her from the impending murder by Beloved thus giving life to her mother. When both often switch their roles—where the mother is infantilized and the reincarnated daughter taking up the role of a murderous mother—Denver on the other hand protects Sethe as a mother does.

Denver's deciphering of the maternal articulations of Sethe gives the mother and the daughter a second chance to reborn afresh. It advocates for a normal pre-oedipal bonding between them and without eliminating or disempowering the maternal, Denver engages in feminine self-birth thus allowing the mother and the daughter to have a voice of their own. The final pages of the text evince hope and promise a free mingling between them. "The greatest tragedy that can occur between mother and daughter is

when they cease being able to speak and to listen to one another," says Hirsch which the text finally resolves (199).

Confrontation of the past and mitigation of the maternal regression clears the space for the manifestation of the self in Denver. Her self-awakening sets her to think and act as an adult woman. The re-entry of Beloved in 124 the second time after Paul D pushes her out of the house brings delight in Denver and she rejoices as if her long lost sister has returned. She says,

> BELOVED is my sister. I swallowed her blood right along with my mother's milk. The first thing I heard after not hearing anything was the sound of her crawling up the stairs. She was my secret company until Paul D came.... she was my company and she helped me wait for my daddy. Me and her waited for him. (B 205)

Later in the novel when Denver understands the real motive of Beloved's resurrection, it signifies her gradual awakening of the self. It is she who first understands and tells the community that Beloved is the baby who was murdered by her mother and has returned to avenge the deed. Denver's maturity as an individual becomes complete when she becomes able to see through the things, "The job she started out with, protecting Beloved from Sethe, changed to protecting her mother from Beloved" (243). Likewise she maintains high esteem and expectation for her father Halle though she has never seen him and says, "My daddy was an angel man" (208). She anticipates his return and dreams of a family reunion with him. By the time the novel ends she is ready to reconstruct her family with the inclusion of Sethe and Paul D as she

understands the need of the latter in their life.

Denver identifies her mother's personal pride and maternal arrogance as the factors that distanced them from the other members of the community and she becomes an agent in bridging the gap between the two. When she decides to step out of the haunted house there begins the development of an independent sense of self in her. Mrs. Lady Jones welcomes her and offers a cup of tea, and calls her "baby" (248). The word conjures her up as "said softly and with such kindness that inaugurated her life in the world as a woman" (248). The female friendship supplemented from the society catalyses the formation of self in Denver that triggers the feminist self-generation in her.

By getting out of 124, which remained as a miniscule of the institution of slavery till the entry of Paul D, Denver enters a new space where she reshapes her subdued subjectivity and becomes a self-created subject whom everyone feels proud of. Being an adult, her individuation is embedded in connectedness—with both internal and external female world. When Mrs. Jones compensates for her failed maternal nurturance, Ella unites her with the neighbouring women who help in exorcising Beloved from the haunted house. The women outside 124 help Denver to attain her 'self' and she in turn helps them to reconcile with their suppressed past. This mutual nurturance is yet another quality of feminine development. Denver is finally presented as a member of new generation feminist woman who is dynamic in constructing new stories for herself.

The next maternal persona discussed is Baby Suggs, "the only person she [Sethe] felt obliged to" (161). Sethe's choice of choosing Halle as her husband is closely

related to motherhood as she anticipates the inclusion of Baby Suggs within the family by marrying her son. The narrator assumes that, “Maybe that was why she chose him. A twenty-year-old man so in love with his mother he gave up five years of Sabbaths just to see her sit down for a change was a serious recommendation” (11). Their strong mother-son bond forces Halle to buy freedom for his mother in exchange for his five years of Sunday extra work.

Though a free slave, Suggs laments about the painful memories of her lost children. She bore eight children and lost all, “four taken, four chased” (B 5). Suggs calls Sethe lucky having three children left with her, while she has none. The painful memories of her lost children torment her and she remembers how her first-born loves to eat the burned bottom of bread. Though fortunate enough to free from captivity, the scars of slavery haunts such ex-slave mothers. She is physically, emotionally and psychologically abused to such an extent that she remains enslaved to the excruciating memories of the past throughout her life.

Sethe who places her maternity over selfhood is contrasted with that of Baby Suggs who does not remember much about her children. It is the survival strategy adopted by Suggs as she knew that loving one’s children in a slave narrative will only hurt the mother. When Sethe tells Suggs that she finds it difficult to draw a breath without her children, the latter identifies the fierceness of Sethe’s motherhood and warns her that she is going beyond the limits of slavery where her maternal pride takes up the role of an omnipotent mother. According to her, a slave mother’s best way to express her love for her children is to abandon and not to cherish the moments with them. It

will help the mother to sustain her life even after her children are thrown into the abyss of slavery or murdered by the slave-owners. The novelist discusses the different perspectives of maternal subjectivity by portraying Suggs as a detached mother while Sethe usurping the role of a sovereign mother.

Suggs offers Sethe a momentary solace both as a motherly figure and as a good grandmother to her children. She loves and nurtures them when they are away from their mother and yearns for her runaway grandsons, Buglar and Howard, after infanticide. In a way Sethe's act of infanticide has withdrawn Suggs into a cocoon where she restricts herself till her death. When Beloved reaches 124 resurrected, Sethe feels her to be a spirit sent by her mother-in-law. She goes to a clearing in the forest where Suggs used to heal the sufferings of ex-slaves as a preacher, to commune with dead Suggs. This shows the protagonist's tendency to remain united with her even after her death. Mothers are powerful in the text—either dead or alive.

Though the text delineates various institutions that stifle women, the denouement of the novel envisions triumph of female maturity. It celebrates the unison of various fractured feminine selves discussed in the novel along with the collective effort of black female friendship. Sethe who once turned her back against her community is betrayed by the same by remaining silent when the slave hunters came to seize their property from 124. After a gap of two decades the same community taking initiative for the exorcism is central as it redeems its past mistakes. It gives a chance to the remorseful subjects to repent their pent up guilt in them.

As the gender paradigm of femininity is rooted in closeness with others, Sethe

finally relates to the other women of the community who actively participate in the process of her individuation. The community's joint venture in exorcizing Beloved who metaphorically stands for the scars of slavery, signifies their shared past with the protagonist and saves Sethe from her overwhelming maternalism. Like Sethe, the community was also shocked to react when the Schoolteacher first approached 124, but the second time both the sides take conscious steps not to repeat the past mistakes. Her movement towards individuation harks the connection with the black community, especially with the women. They help her to resolve the silence and secrecy surrounding 124.

It is Denver who energizes the communal connectivity between the inhabitants of 124 and the women of her clan. She further lends a helping hand for them to excavate, reconcile and resolve their entombed remorse and succours them in achieving their subjectivities. Ella an infanticide and ex-slave herself taking the leadership of women is crucial. Her self-determinism and forgiveness towards Sethe is an extended representation of herself to acclimatize with her own past. In her leadership she gets the opportunity to reclaim herself. Lady Jones supplements the dearth of maternal love in Denver and the neighbouring women extend their help by offering grain and grocery to support her family. Her visits to their houses to convey her gratitude offers a chance for Denver and the women to mingle and converse with each other. It helps them to remember the love and respect they held for Baby Suggs and they exchange with her the memories they had with her mother eighteen years back. Denver evaluates their change as, "May be they were sorry for the years of their own disdain" that compels

them to take up the role of communal mothers for the deserted family (249).

The name 'Denver' in the novel itself calls forth a strong female bonding beyond the limits of race and class. Morrison promotes female alliance in its dexterity by depicting a strong sisterhood between Sethe and the white-slave Amy Denver who helps her during her escapade. Their extreme relationship is evident when Sethe names her second daughter Denver as a token of gratitude for the woman who helps her at the time of crisis. Amy, who inherits the servitude of her mother after her demise while working in a plantation, delineates the plight of slave women irrespective of colour. Her escapade to freedom connects her with the protagonist where they share common wounds of slavery.

Morrison, who focuses on the "feminocentric plot patterns" in her writings, moulds her narrative so that mothers have a central position in her texts (Hirsch 29). Most of the women characters in the novels *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*, fail to exhibit the potential female power, until they come to terms with their fractured maternal subjectivities. Morrison compels the mothers—Pauline, Mrs. MacTeer, Geraldine, Sethe, Baby Suggs etc. to come up with the unspeakable maternal stories that have been hushed up for a long time. Though motherhood is not idealized in these texts, they explore female subjectivities that dramatize the contradictions inherent in the maternal role, "The [maternal] words are being spoken now, are being written down; the taboos are being broken, the masks of motherhood are cracking through" (Rich 24-25).

Chapter IV

Jaishree Misra: From Subjugation to Self-affirmation

In the essay, "Indian Feminisms: The Nature of Questioning and the Search for Space in Indian Women's Writing" Jasbir Jain recommends the need to reserve a distinct space for Indian feminist discourse from the western treatise as both are grounded in entirely dissimilar history and agenda (28). Likewise motherhood must be understood in relation to the socio-cultural contexts in which the mothers are placed. The Indian author selected for study, JaishreeMisra, is well aware of the dangers in idealizing maternity, "a certain biological female experience," into a more politicized term motherhood (Hirsch 163).

Motherhood is considered as the ideal of womanliness in India that institutionalizes the very basic experience of women. The cultural treatise tagged with motherhood entraps women as a dichotomous being bereft of an independent self. It relies on the make belief that female fulfillment is achieved only through her relation with her child. The story of individual development for a mother is erased in Indian context and hence highly romanticized, nurturing and self-sacrificing mother figures are projected in Indian literature. The ideology of motherhood in India is derived from the ancient Vedic cults of 'mother goddess' where the mythic strength of women is perpetuated while the real power is detained from her.

JaishreeMisra's artistic endeavors mainly focus on the gender and class issues faced by the educated women of twenty first century urban India. The crux of her

fiction depicts the private landscape of the women protagonists, especially the mother-daughter bond and the literary images she projects are explicitly influenced by her feminist ideas and enquiries. Her novels *Ancient Promises* and *A Scandalous Secret* are passionate illustrations of the fight for a redefinition and reinvention of motherhood in the Indian cultural context. The prominent maternal figures in the above said novels, Janaki (often called Janu in the novel *Ancient Promises*) and Neha in *A Scandalous Secret*, become the silent sufferers of the burden that patriarchy under the guise of tradition and orthodoxy thrusts on them. Both the novels speak about the construction of female selfhood in Indian milieu through the negotiation of motherhood claiming a place for mothers and maternal plots.

The narrative of *Ancient Promises* gives emphasis to the mother's voice amidst her miserable life in a patriarchal household of the Maraars. Janu's story delineates the innumerable insults heaped on her and her dire attempts to seek the good will of her husband and his family leading to her final emancipation. The plot sublimates Janu's subjectivity through the agency of motherhood. In the author's note attached after the novel Misra reveals the novel as a semi-autobiographical one.

> I am not Janu, just as no character is ever quite the one it is based on. It is true that I did fall in love at seventeen. I, too, lost my teenage sweetheart to an English university and an arranged marriage. We met again, after a ten-year period of silence, in circumstances not dissimilar to those described in the book, effectively ending my marriage. I do have a Riya, with a learning disability, and as dear to me as Riya is to her mother in the

book. (AP 307)

Even though Misra boldly sets out to write 'her story' she tactfully utilizes the author's license to blend facts with the fiction.

> …I was quite consciously setting out to blur the truth and fictionalize the story, precisely because that was what I believed a novelist's real job was. It is therefore obviously of particular importance to point out that reality ends abruptly on the road into Valapadu—a fictional name for a fictional town. The characters that populate this fabricated town have sprung entirely from my imagination. While I had obviously, a husband and in-laws in my first marriage, I wish to state quite clearly that they bear no resemblance whatsoever to the corresponding characters in the book.
>
> … I married my Arjun eventually and Riya, happily, lives with us. (307-8)

By claiming her novel to be a semi-autobiographical one, Misra discloses her motive in asserting her subjectivity—as a daughter, as a mother, as a woman and finally as a writer through the fictional character named Janaki.

Janu like Misra is a Keralite brought up in Delhi who is forced into wedlock with Suresh on her eighteenth birthday. He hails from an affluent snobbish Maraar family in Kerala and after marriage, like every Indian woman, her femininity is identified with maternity. A mother is mystified only if she delivers a 'normal' child and Janu's motherhood becomes a blotch when she delivers a mentally disabled girl, Riya. Patriarchy boosts victimhood in Janu as the mothers are made to feel responsible for any 'failures' on the part of their children. The novel then traces the conflict between

the cultural politics within the trope of motherhood and the real maternal experiences she face. As Riya's physical and emotional development is restricted, it allows the mother to develop her selfhood freely and more strongly.

Mothers are often viewed as cultural transmitters to the daughters whose prime vocation is to mould them according to the socio-cultural expectations. However, Janu and her mother tagged as deviant matriarchs escape this stereotyping and utilize their feminist consciousness to remain independent mothers thereby enabling their daughters to achieve autonomy. The novel contextualizes a narrative that does not depend on maternal 'othering.' Placing oneself in the matriarchal line in the position of both mother and daughter, Janu advocates doubleness in the narrative voice—the novel becomes a product of both the daughter and the mother.

The novel explores such maternal voices where the mothers show empathy towards themselves along with empowering the daughters. It allows the mothers and the daughters to speak for themselves. By attributing a discourse of identity and subject formation in maternal and daughterly voices, Misra goes beyond the Freudian concept of family where the mother is muted for the daughter to speak. To speak for the mother is one way of silencing and marginalizing her. The plot creates a condition where the "mother and daughter would each be able to speak for themselves as well as for and with one another" (Hirsch 16). These theoretical standpoints help to explain the relationships in which the central character Janu is caught and projects the roles she opts to become an empowered mother.

As feminine identification is predominantly parental, Janu internalizes the female

identity bestowed by her mother. Janu's mother plays a pivotal role in shaping her daughter's femininity, notably her maternal instincts and inculcates in her the basics of a woman's position in the patriarchal system. The endorsement she receives from her mother strengthens her morale, self-esteem and self-worth. Chodorow's words, "the mother senses a double identification with her own mother and herself through the child as she can relate to the daughter as an extension of herself" becomes relevant in this context (24). This relation synthesizes Janu to a sociable person both within and outside the family. She further inherits her mother's "good-enough mothering" which instigates the relational capacities in her (33).

Analyzing the feminist object-relation theory, Marianne Hirsch puts forward a similar idea that mothers remain an important inner object for the maturing daughter though her identification and differentiation with the mother does not always end up as a successful process. She states that, "Because of maternal dominance in early childhood, and mother's closer identification with daughters than with sons, women acquired a characteristically feminine, affiliative, and relational sense of self" (20). Janu's mother instills in Janu a good and a stable foundation for her role as a woman. Janu mainly takes over this feminine insight from her mother with whom she shares her historical continuum of maternal strength.

Janu's mother, who succumbs to the patriarchal norms within the family, inculcates those values in her daughter which make Janu exhibit the same soon after her marriage. Since Janu's mother occupies a good wife-good mother realm, Janu too embodies all the virtues within the patriarchy. This proves Chodorow's concept that daughters

"identify with their own mothers when they grow up, and this identification produces the girl as a mother" (31). This reproduction of mothering is triggered from the earliest mother-infant relationship and its healthy development provides the foundation for the expectation of women as mothers. The opening comments of Janu on her mother show the strong bond between them, "Ma, sitting up as close to me as she could get, seemed to be absorbing some much-needed warmth from our longed-for proximity. It was strange that I'd had to come back to her to be set free again. Almost as if it couldn't be done without that one final blessing" (AP 4). Riya's strong emotional attachment with her grandmother explains how she radiates maternal warmth to the entire family.

Even after knowing the real condition of Janu and Riya in the Maraar household, her mother tries to pacify the whole event and advices her daughter to remain connected with her husband and in-laws. She knows that being the weaker sex they cannot escape the gaze of the society if they go against the expected norms. Hence, when Janu decides to leave Suresh forever, her mother shows signs of disapproval. Her bewilderment explains the anxieties of an agitated mother who believes that her daughter's solitary existence after leaving one's husband will marginalize them in the society. Her mother's apprehensions towards their community surprise Janu, though they belong to Nair community which is matrilineal in set up and she doubts the position and power of women in it.

Opting for a better life apart from the fundamental one prescribed for women is something new for Janu's mother's generation. They are accustomed to tolerance and

acceptance which they consider as the pre-requisites of femininity. Hence when Janu decides to take up matters into her hands and imbibes courage to write her own story, it causes confusion in her mother. Though she acknowledges her son-in-law as a failed husband and an indifferent malevolent father, she does not favour her daughter's idea of divorcing him as it will be a blotch to their whole ancestry. She says, "No one in the family had ever been divorced before. It just didn't happen in decent families like ours, which was why poor Suma chechi put up with her beatings about twice a month, turning up at family functions looking tired and defeated, but married" (238). So powerful is the class and gender consciousness in Indian culture that even Janu's mother is at first reluctant to accept Janu's advances to decide her life all by herself. She fears that her daughter will be stamped as an arrogant promiscuous adulteress.

Janu's mother is portrayed as a stereotypical woman who represents traditional culture in the early part of the novel. Her frequent questioning of Janu about "a new friend" during her school days shows her concern for her sixteen year old daughter (24). She warns her that, "I never had friends like that when I was growing up. You have to be careful, you know, ther's lots of boys out there who will be only too willing to take advantage of pretty girls" (25). However, her understanding of the laxity Janu and Riya experience among the Maarars gradually pushes her out of the cocoon where she acquires a voice so as to protect them from the crisis. The new role moulds her to an empowered mother who speaks for the daughter when Janu is silenced in her new family.

After the birth of Riya, it dawns on Janu's mother that the Maraars are not the

sort of people they expected for Janu, but a "strange unloving clan" (161). This understanding helps her to stand with her daughter as she becomes perceptive of her son-in-law's indifference towards Janu in making things go smooth. When she defies the idea of putting Janu in the asylum for the treatment of her 'hysteria,' her repressed anger reserves a space in which her maternal subjectivity could be articulated. She further shows signs of maturity by forbidding Suresh from taking back Janu and Riya, after Janu is 'deliberately hospitalized' for neurosis. She comes out of the shell of a submissive woman, especially before the Maraars, through her role as a defiant mother.

Acquiring a strong self, Janu's mother gives enough space for her daughter to choose and act according to her life and ignores the jibes of the neighbours who have no role in their lives. The development of Janu's mother is crucial as she refuses to curtail her daughter's subjectivity in the name of culture and succeeds in encouraging autonomy in Janu. Being a feminist mother, she encourages the development of her daughter which in turn influences Janu who repeats her mother's plot to fight for her daughter, Riya. Generally, in Indian fiction daughters and mothers seldom speak to each other as the mothers are engulfed by the shackles of patriarchy and when they start speaking to their daughters they take the patriarchal voice. The plots which give emphasis to the stories of both the mother and the daughter, end up in the better understanding of female consciousness.

Becoming a maternal subject, Janu's mother escapes from being the "primary negative models for the daughter" (Hirsch 11). Her empathy and understanding result in a growth fostering relationship between the mother and the daughter that enables them

to engage mutually and to converse from two female positions. As mother and daughter they succeed in co-inhabiting the fictional space without replacing each other. Here the mother is not a mere object supporting the daughter's individuation but acts as a subject asserting a self based on experience, far removed from the socially constructed one.

Janu's mother inscribes in Janu the true model of Indian motherhood and wifehood which she utilizes in her association with the Maraars after her marriage. Janu's efforts to remain connected with the new family illustrate the above said statement. The mother-daughter relationship stands as the base for the tendency of women to remain connected with others, notably with other women. Historian Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, who had paid attention to the morals and manners of women of nineteenth century America, moves a step forward and suggests that the relation between the mother and the daughter is the beginning of all female friendships. From the beginning of the narrative Janu is portrayed as a person who has the capacity to love others as it is clear from the healthy relation she maintains with her friends and family. It also explains her ability to sustain her inter-personal relationship within the narrative.

Having an affair at a tender age with a non-malayali and roaming about with him has brought disgrace to the family, Janu expects her arranged marriage to mitigate the wrath of her parents and considers it as a compensation for the deeds she has done. Victimized and 'convinced' by dominant cultural values she leaves her teenage love without much protest and succumb to their wish, "Ma was right. It was crazy to expect we'd [Janu and Arjun] ever share a future together. We'd always occupied different

worlds, now it could have been separate universes" (62). Janu's parents have proven their love for her all these years and she "just can't believe they'd push me into something that would be wrong to me" (63). She had grown up watching her parents' straightforward honest lives who "wanted the same for me, their only child. …They had left all major decisions in their lives to the wisdom of their parents, who had always chosen wisely and chosen well" (25).

Idealizing the patriarchal ideology, Janu has lived the life that her parents wanted her to live and the things she had been asked to do. Even then, after marriage she becomes a victim of the same value system. She enjoys an arid conjugal life with Suresh, who is much older and has nothing in common with her. He chooses her as she was "pretty," "young" and "could speak English" and foremost, he saw in her an agency to start his motel business in Bombay (96). His "avuncular, half-amused and half-irritated attitude to marriage" makes him a stereotypical husband who advocates his superiority over Janu and fails to understand the tender feelings of an eighteen year old bride (114). In addition, no privacy is given to the husband and wife by the Maraars to develop a strong emotional bond between them, which is an important factor in arranged marriages. He discusses business with his father, household with his mother and spends leisure with his sisters, leaving Janu as a mantelpiece with no specific role to play. Her life in her in-law's home becomes monotonous except for the nocturnal cravings of her husband. She relates terms like "ungraceful," "awkward," "revulsion" and "sore" to specify their loveless conjugal relation (87).

After marriage, Janu is constantly thwarted for her 'alien Delhi ways' by her

domineering mother-in-law and nagging sisters-in-law. The Maraars who own a fleet of ambassadors and motels opt for Janu from 'a poor family' (both in terms of caste and class) so that she will not be arrogant towards them and will easily get used to the new set up in terms of servitude. But this disparity strains the Maraars from relating with her and the taunted words of her mother-in-law on her first day in Maraar household make it clear, "Look, you're not in Delhi anymore. Like it or not, you now live in Kerala, so I suggest you drop all these fashionable Pleases and Thank Yous. Here we don't believe in unnecessary style" (80). This damages her morale as she is deliberately made to feel an outcaste among the folk which forces her to pretend "to be a bashful bride" in Suresh's house concealing her true self (86).

Class consciousness prevents the Maraars from associating with Janu who expects warmth and affection from them. In the new family, things are measured in terms of elegant houses, jewellery and fleets of Ambassadors. She is stamped as belonging to some strange and "unfortunate breed" (146). They remind her often of her low pedigree that alienates Janu from them and she resorts to solitude. Being a single child Janu's parents presume the new family to compensate the gap in her life, "providing me miraculously with surrogate siblings and surrogate love….You've always wanted sisters. Now see, two sisters all at once!" (94) But Janu's stay in the Maraars makes it clear that her marriage seems to be an "expensive mistake" done on the part of her parents (5).

> All brides cried and then stayed and loved and got loved. That was the myth that had been perpetrated by families like mine. I was less than half

> my mother's age but I'd already learnt that this wasn't a universal truth. Some people could be impossible to love, and I was already fairly sure that, for my mother-in-law and me, this was going to be an undeniable and mutual fact. (94)

As Suresh's choice of Janu as his wife was against his mother's wish, the women folk engage in the "needling game" which further traumatizes her position among them (97). Even Gauri, Janu's "schoolgirl sister-in-law," who is much younger to her, scares her with her sharp tongue and burning eyes (88). When Gauri, pokes fun of Janu's father and her lineage, instead of pacifying the whole event her mother-in-law becomes proud of her daughter's wit. As taught by her parents to be polite to everyone, even to children, Janu tries her best to remain insensitive to such mockeries and was eager to avoid doing anything that risked discontentment in the Maraars. She is made to feel ashamed of her being and even her status as a single child becomes a blotch on her. However, her mother's influence prevents her from being defiant and she decides to mould herself according to the expectations of her family, "as the only child to my parents, I carried with me the collective responsibility towards my clan" (212).

Janu's training as a daughter becomes a determinate factor in her moulding as a daughter-in-law. Her relation with her mother helps her to internalize the social and gender paradigms of the culture in which she is replanted and her mother participates in the process of her daughter's evolution. As a result Janu tries her best to overcome the 'cultural lack,' inscribed on her name and becomes optimistic to set things right, "…this new family of mine might have developed a pre-conceived notion of me! Somehow I

had to let these strangers know that I was kind-hearted and affectionate. … [I] had come into their lives very eager to love them" (85).

The cultural chasm Janu faces in the new home along with the subtle taunts rob Janu of herself which in course of time does grave damage to her identity. Even then she manages to cope with the forced erasure she is subjected to. By citing the examples of joyful conjugal lives of her parents and other members of her family she anticipates her marriage to be one among them (39). Hence, she adjusts desperately as she "needed to put down roots and attempt to survive, whatever it took" and finally realizes that "the soil I had been replanted in would be so hard and unyielding" (95).

In spite of her life of false pretense in accordance to the normative code of the Maraar clan, it does not help Janu to set things right. By suppressing her self-identity and self-esteem she tries her best to acclimatize by accepting the socio-cultural norms of the society, "…changing my whole personality to fit in with the Maraars" (121). She even thinks, "I know better now, of course, that I was only fooling myself. I had been meant to come here all along" and tries to rediscover her own quiescent sexuality which the Maraars expect from her (7). She becomes a character acting according to the script written by them. She is enforced to wear sari, put washed clothes in correct manner, attend innumerable marriages and visit unknown houses with her in-laws. Despite all these, Janu fails to live up to their expectations and she is abandoned out of the 'good-wife realm.' The ordeals she undergoes being a woman within the familial institution and her independent spirit rebelling to come out of it often clashes with each other. Thus home becomes the primary agent of her oppression.

Although Janu takes efforts to bring harmony in her marriage, she becomes a scapegoat to the unseen contours like casteism, classism and sexism prevalent in the Indian society. Her inter-personal experience with Maraars collapse as they constantly try to oppress her and treat her as the 'other.' When Suresh blames her for her failure to love his family, she refutes the idea as she has proven her capacity to love others (Arjun, her teenage love and Leena, her friend) and to be loved. She again proves to be a sociable person while working in Sheela Kuriakose's school for special children, where she is wanted by everyone over there. In the school she becomes every body's mother and the children there cry when their parents come to fetch them home at the evening. Her relationship with others is rendered fruitful and throughout the novel she tries to maintain a cordial relation with all the members around her. Nevertheless the Maraars' reluctance to mingle with her widens the gap between them which strains their relationship.

At this juncture in her life, neglected and spurned by everyone, Janu decides to become a mother which she thinks will elevate her status in the Maraar house-hold. Betrayed as a wife and daughter-in-law, she tries to attain her feminine fulfillment through her role as a mother. Looking through the feminist perspective, her choice can be taken as the stepping stone to her evolution of the self within her fractured femininity. As Jasbir Jain pinpoints, Indian women's attempt to redefine freedom should begin with the body and only by the reconstructions on womanhood they can claim a space of their own (36). As motherhood is often idealized Janu thinks it a means to escape from the jeopardy she faces in Suresh's family.

Janu's presumption that having a child will solve her problems in the Maraarhousehold, specifies the value attached to motherhood in the Indian cultural context. The very idea of becoming a mother is one among her desperate efforts to have a respectable position in the new lodging and in the subtext it is an act of self-protection. Prior to becoming a mother, Janu like every Indian woman, believes in the archetypal projection of the ultimate goal of womanhood is to become an ideal mother. Her identity as a woman rests on her distinctiveness as a mother and motherhood is here seen as a mascot of her life, the only space where a woman is glorified.

Janu becomes a victim to the illusion of motherhood projected by the society and views maternity as a talisman for the melancholy she faces. She expects the child to bring her indifferent husband close to her. If it is a boy, she will be praised, since 'her son' will be the much-longed grandson of her overbearing mother-in-law. Then she will be "elevated to the position of Good Mother and Good Daughter-in-Law" and can "spin out the rest of my days basking in a kind of reflected glory and blissful motherhood" (AP 113). The gold jewellery Suresh bought before the baby is born indicates his desire to have a male child. This points to the general tendency for a son to a daughter—a particular institutionalized Indian thought for a male child. The reaction of her in-laws to the birth of Riya again projects the callousness of culture towards a girl child. For an Indian woman "marriage must be followed by motherhood" (Nubile 12) and "a woman is morally obliged to bear a son" (Nabar 52). Though Janu also craves for a boy, the first sight of Riya moves her, "here was the thing that would grow up to be the light of my life. She was a pink and purple walnut but I could see

already that she was going to be my Transformer of bad things to Good. My potential best friend" (AP 116).

After becoming a mother, Janu is seen through the lens of a Delhi spoilt child unfit for Keralite etiquette to look after a child. The situation becomes doubly worse by the discovery that the child is "definitely mentally handicapped" (127). For everything, her child is unfairly compared with her elder sister-in-law's children. Riya is deemed as a blemish to their lineage, since their family is always admired in the town. For this reason, Riya is expected to be handed over to the servants than bringing her to the forefront amid the people.

Ironically, Suresh escapes this new shock by spending longer periods away from home under the pretext of business. His escapism from familial responsibilities especially from his wife and daughter surprises Janu. He does not dislike Riya, but she is a terrible disappointment and an inconvenience for him as he cannot believe that a child of his could have any sort of problem. Janu, on the other hand, thinks her daughter's illness a blessing in disguise for both as no one intrudes the mother-daughter space between them. Also, Riya's infirmity rescues her from the knowledge of her rejection in the Maraar house hold, including her father. It is a general tendency shown by men to withdraw from such crisis whereas women show an inner drive to cling to the family in such situations.

The fear that Riya would let him down before the society distances Suresh from the family. His willful denial of moral responsibility as a father and leaving Janu to handle the issues all alone, results in his erasure from the family picture. While for Janu,

Riya becomes a hope for her future and she acts as a saviour who unravels the hidden potentialities in Janu. This narrative hints the polarities of parenthood programmed within the gendered dichotomy. Chodorow's finding that feminine identification processes are relational, whereas males tend to deny relationship in their identification processes seems relevant within the parenting process of Suresh and Janu. This explains women's affinity to remain connected with familial ties. When Suresh becomes more and more aloof and seeks refuge in comfortable hotel rooms and in new bottles of Jack Daniels, Janu on the other hand prefers to remain tagged with her daughter. Though the relation of a mother to her child is relative, Janu says if she owns other children too, Riya cannot be replaced.

The rest of the Maraars also remain untouched by Riya's apparent problems. Janu expects her in-law's support and sisterhood to raise Riya, since "women did support themselves emotionally by supporting and reconstituting *one another*" (36). To her dismay, just as Janu was isolated and excommunicated from all human love, Riya is left alone to suffer. This forces Janu to leave Riya in her mother's custody while going for an interview in Delhi. Despised by her forebears and ignored by her father Riya becomes a tragic victim of the socio-cultural standards for perfection and domination. This laxity thrusts in Janu the need to take initiative as the sole protector of her child. Janu and Riya share a unique bond of isolation and rejection among the Maraars. This recognition compels Janu for a determined rebellion against traditional womanhood and motherhood.

As stated by Hirsch that 'lack' forms the basis of female plots, here Janu's

cultural amputation among the Maraars, the differentially challenged daughter as a means of her survival, and 'elimination of the husband' from the family romance forms the core of her maternal story (179). This distinguishes her from other mothers in the novel. In Indian society, giving birth to a disabled child the mother is sure to feel self-guilty of it by attributing it to the karmic philosophy—that the mother might have done something bad in the previous birth. Janu overcomes the dominant belief of relating the 'lack' usually associated with women by the society. Her words, "endings were really only beginnings in disguise" exhibits creative flexibility in her (AP 3). This induces self-growth in her contrary to the inhibition related to the 'lack'.

Though Riya no longer provide "a passport to their [Maraars] love and affection," the child animates Janu with a new spirit (132). Her birth represents the end of Janu's boredom in Suresh's house, enlivens her empty married life and compensates for the passivity the latter receives from her husband. Janu tries to find emotional sustenance in her child, "Very early on there were signs (that I chose not to notice) that Riya and I were to become a team. We would in fact become the kind of team on which my sanity would later depend. For the time being, though, she was my hope for the future" (117). Further she feels that they are connected generations back and realizes that she no longer needs the support of anyone to raise her daughter, since it is she who needed Riya more than the other way round.

Discovery of her latent powers results in the rebirth of a new Janu who considers mothering her disabled daughter as her *Karma* and believes herself to be a debtor to Riya in her previous birth which endows her with an extraordinary sense of

responsibility in looking after her daughter. She takes the sole responsibility in taking care of Riya and overcomes the shock she had in giving birth to a child with disabilities,

> Somewhere in my distant past, perhaps even a thousand years ago, I'd done something that had committed me to dedicating this life to Riya's care. Had I been a thirsty traveller at her door and she had taken me in, washed my feet and watered me? I would never know what ancient promise I had made to her, … we had both lived many lives that linked us together now. (160)

Janu believes that Riya is destined to rescue her from her unhappy marriage and in return reserves it her duty to give her daughter all the comforts within her reach. So she decides to speak for Riya; to give voice to her inarticulateness. This resolves the complex process of identification with the daughter within the mother-daughter dyad. They arrive at a point at which mother and daughter merge in their common wounds. The mother-daughter identification could be read as the invitation for the mother to speak as a subject. The mother's speech, the novel itself is the gradual emergence of maternal speech from silence. Objectification of the mother by silencing her for the child's subject formation is subverted here.

The way in which Janu asserts her choice in life, her sudden freedom to act and her transformation from a passive object to an empowered agent in the narrative, constitutes the crux of the story. Her sense of self is related to her development in her role as a mother. Through the agency of motherhood, Janu attains her selfhood free

from the constrains of an oppressive cultural paradigm. She achieves a respectable womanhood in the eyes of people around her and wifehood with a man whom she really loves. The novelist gives full freedom for her protagonist to attain self-development not only in the maternal trope but in all the realms of her femininity.

What makes Janu unique among other mothers in the novel is that after identifying her daughter's illness without succumbing to the fate, she deviates from "the unquestioning all accepting eyes of a mother" to a woman who has potentialities to break the maternal silence and vocalize both for herself and for her daughter (129). Rather than becoming an obsessive mother, she becomes an independent woman who thinks and acts according to the situational demands. Hence Riya seldom becomes a psychological victim of her mother's emotive grip.

Lack of language seldom muddles the mother-daughter bond and Janu acquires the competence to understand the unspeakable words of her daughter. Since Riya's articulations and needs are restricted by the author, she needs her mother to be her voice. Denial of a narrative voice for the daughter necessitates the hasty growth of individuation in Janu. This probably gives her the strength to fight back intensely, "*Fight,* I told myself fiercely, … fight!" (150) This undermines the tendency of 'othering the mother' universally acclaimed in the maternal narratives once the child becomes capable of its own narration. Janu's love for Riya is reciprocated fully by her daughter thereby eliminating the conflict arising between the interplay of domination/submission usually existing in the developmental stages of the mother-daughter dyad.

When Suresh tries to move away from the home mainly in connection with Riya,

Janu on the other hand acquires a new status within the feminine realm. From a wife bored by the monotony of loveless married life, she becomes a mother with vigilant readiness upon every call of her daughter. She doesn't want her plight among the Maraars to recur in her daughter and craves to free herself from the prejudices she is already surrounded by. She finds immense pleasure in Riya's little triumphs and recreates the intimacy of the mother-daughter bond which she enjoys with her own mother.

Janu the mother feels more insulted than Janu the wife. The reason why Janu struggles to provide a good life for Riya is that, she becomes a mother first and foremost by her own choice. Secondly, she recognizes that "a child like Riya, left unloved, would simply wither and perish" (132). When Riya comes to her life, Janu feels the dire need to fight for her daughter more than for her own. Instead of waging a battle to claim her right to be loved by the Maraars, she takes pleasure in asserting the position of her daughter among them. The familial denial enrages Janu and makes her think the other way of leaving them. If she had received such a support from her in-laws she would have adjusted with her oppressed mediocre living with the Maraars. "Being able to cry together must create the strongest of human bonds and Riya's problems could have become the glue to fix me forever to my husband and my in-laws," says Janu (131).

The realization of her daughter's marginalization among the Maraars triggers the awakening of a self-willed mother in Janu. Snubbing Riya creates aggression in her maternal space and when they try to suppress her maternal function, she lets out her

anger by choosing the latent potential female power in her. Though Janu's mother has taught her to contain herself in her husband's house and never to raise her voice against them, her unsatisfied maternity necessitate her to fight for their survival. She recognizes the need for rebellion for the self-preservation of her daughter and herself amidst these dominant expositions.

The triple oppression of class, caste and gender Janu faces heightens and intensifies her experience of motherhood which in turn nurtures the process of her individuation. Thus family which functioned as an agent of oppression, at this juncture, acts as the major institution of her subject formation. Janu acquires omnipotence through her maternal role by tactfully breaking the entrapment of patriarchy. This shifts her from the role of a mere baby sitter to a working woman and later to a student of London University. She develops into an empowered woman who has the verve to choose and decide the best among the odds. Her Delhi trip to raise a scholarship for her higher studies in abroad all alone foreshadows her progress towards the maturation of her 'self.' Her journey to Bangalore to find better treatment for Riya, her determination to earn a living for herself, her decisiveness to fund herself for her studies—all exemplifies her reconstruction of subjectivity.

Janu's first act of resistance is associated with her role as a mother. With great firmness and sharpness she defies her mother-in-law's 'command' to leave Riya in the hands of the servant maid, to attend a wedding. This first daring action resolves her maternal fear and ambivalence archetypically labeled with mothers giving way to maternal anger. She values caring her daughter more, than attending a wedding. She becomes

angry and assertive for the first time and by subverting her mother-in-law's command she breaks her submissiveness, resurrects and reconstructs new structures of motherhood. This further activates and elaborates her position with relation to the maternal. Janu's defiance of her in-laws is the first step of breaking the maternal silence within the culture in which she is placed. She is surprised at her minor triumph—the strong words of a mother—which marks the slow process of her evolving as a person; more specifically as a subject. Her obstinacy to refute the Maraars turns into a kind of heroism for Janu and they sense a new sharpness in her maternal voice. While, for Misra this maternal rage turns her into a creative artist.

Janu further makes a protective move by putting Riya in a nearby school which again can be considered as an act of maternal rebellion. In order to bring up her child, Janu sets out of her home unlike stereotype mothers and enters into public sphere where she joins Sheela Kuriakose's Special school, partly to keep an eye on Riya and to escape from the Maraar's caustic jibes. Working women are considered demeaning in Suresh's house while her mother's profession as a teacher marks in her the need to stand on one's own legs. Janu eulogizes Thomachan, her acquaintance, who is proud of his wife Saramma who is educated and has a government job. Her self-affirmation in finding a suitable living for herself and her daughter shows signs of her maturation firstly as a mother and secondly as a woman.

The job in the school brings Janu self-respect and self-esteem along with creating a new space where she could prove her new existence and excellence. This results in the gradual evolution and individuation of her character. She does not work for a living,

but it brings self-sufficiency in her. It becomes an area where she is wanted and liked by some; a space far away from the loveless world of her marital home. Developing an identity of her own, she re-discovers a part of herself, which she thought was lost on the corridors of St. Thomas Primary School, where her child is unfairly compared with normal children and is considered inferior to them. From the school where she works she learns many things in return; mainly that life as such will not offer any miracles but with great effort, fortitude and patience one can create it.

Janu's altruistic attempts to find a school for Riya, clears a path for her which changes her course of life. Sheela Kuriakose who runs a school for children with special needs, sows in her the possibility of going abroad to do a course in Special Education so that both Riya and Janu will be benefited by it. This gives her a new kind of courage and when Janu discloses her decision of going abroad to Suresh, her constant use of 'I've,' 'I'm' etc. shows her self-affirmation of her proprietorship of Riya. From a powerless female who is afraid "to raise the shutters that Suresh and all the Maraars had pulled down" on her and her daughter, she progresses into a position of a resilient mother against whom no one dares to question her moves (AP 163).

Riya becomes an agent of Janu's self-identification as she completes her B.A. out of boredom in the Maraar household and M.A. out of determination as it becomes a pre-requisite for higher education. She feels herself as the sole proprietor of her future which equips her to raise fund for her higher studies all by herself, even though money is something that Maraar women (including Janu) are free to use. This determination signifies her progression towards individuation and her transition from a sense of

victimhood to agency forces the Maraars to refrain from their usual jibes since Janu acquires strength to snap back "at every bit of meanness, perceived and real" (142). Her decision not to return to Suresh after Riya is treated for her illness exemplifies the gradual awakening of Janu from a subservient wife to an assertive mother.

In the stereotypical Indian setup, idealized motherhood mars other major roles of a woman. The mother usually represses some aspects of her self in order to function in accordance with others' or her own expectations or fantasies about herself as a mother. Here, Janu's motherhood in a way strengthens other realms of her femininity. Before seeing Arjun for the second time in Delhi, she recounts, "I could be leaving this house with Riya to begin our new life abroad. I had not thought about divorcing Suresh. No one in my family had ever had a divorce. I was satisfied with just getting away and being able to take Riya with me" (153). These words said with much firmness confirm her autonomy in deciding her life. Even though she wishes to withdraw from her marital life, she knows that filing a divorce from the part of a woman is considered taboo in Indian etiquette.

What is significant is that Janu affirms her maternal subjectivity only after she develops positive human interconnection with those around her. Her relationship with her daughter, mother, grandmother and finally her relation with Arjun—all constitutes and nurtures her maternal instincts. Parenting as Chodorow speculates, "…is not simply a set of behaviours, but participation in an inter-personal, diffuse, affective relationship" (33). Her meeting with Arjun and her friend Leena amidst her journey to Delhi revives her inner spirit. After the Delhi episode, unhesitant she discloses her relationship with Arjun

to Suresh and demands separation from him. Her independent voice which till then was curbed under the pressure of claustrophobic patriarchal norms, dissolves the tension and conflict in her. He speaks her part to Suresh both in the voice of a wife and a mother and for the first time he listens to her. Janu's confession shows the completion of her self-identification and this recognition sustains her to lead the indomitable rebellion against traditional womanhood.

The leading male figures play an important role in the evolving subjectivity of Janu. When Suresh becomes a negative influence in her life who retards her individuation, Arjun becomes a positive male influence who teaches her to find happiness in the new beginnings. Arjun strengthens and rather participates in the reconstructed family unit with Janu and Riya which not only paves the way to restore the mother-daughter bond but also sets her on a new path amidst the wilderness of her married life with Suresh. The emotional support she longs from her husband gets reciprocated by Arjun. Her relation with Arjun is that of an empathetic one where she feels free as an independent being. He acknowledges the feminine virtues in her and their relationship stands as a signifier for her evolving personality. She enjoys freedom as a woman and a mother, without being fettered by traditional female roles. Her stance to construct a family with Arjun and Riya rewrites the concept of a wife and a mother in Indian culture. Inclusion of positive male figures is one of the chief characteristics in Misra's writings. She is not a man-hater who designs a safe and secure world for her female characters devoid of male company.

Indian readers who are accustomed to the "voluntary self-denial and sacrifice" of

mothers are shocked by Janu's leaving her child in India while going to London with Arjun (Chakravarthy 95). This may feel an unmotherly act, but scrutinizing this deed in terms of feminist perspective, it confirms a metatext of protest against the conformist patriarchal viewpoint. Without Riya even with the company of Arjun in London, Janu is portrayed as a bereaved mother searching for her 'lost' daughter. Her absence from her maternal plot twice—one to Delhi and other to London—is linked with a mother's (self) defacement in the service of her own and her daughter's survival. Her desperate need to defy centuries of tradition in particular proves to be a boon in the course of the novel. This temporary maternal breach comes up with better results as her husband Suresh understands his failure as a father and as a husband, which forces him to bestow Riya to her mother.

Institutionalized motherhood demands mothering above selfhood. The feminist ideology put forward by Janu maintains a balance between her maternal articulations and selfhood, giving no room for the play of power politics between them. If such is not the case she would never have gone abroad with Arjun to attain self-actualization. Her innovation and protest forces to see Janu through the prism of a feminist mother. Magnified maternal influence in domestic life gives way to unequal division of labour and in due course leads to blaming of mothers instead of culture for this monstrous asymmetry. As Dorothy Dinnerstain puts it such an imbalance creates communal and cultural fear of devaluation of the figure of mother.

Suresh who remains an eternal stranger throughout the life of Janu and Riya pretends to be a dutiful husband and caretaker when she demands divorce. In order to

escape the societal gaze and the familial disgrace he convinces others that Janu is licentious and mentally ill. He takes Riya from Janu, who according to him is a fallen woman and prevents her from having contact with her daughter. The Maraar family detains Riya from Janu and contrives it as a mother's desertion of her daughter for her material needs while Suresh's negligence of his duty as a father and husband is hushed up. Janu is considered as selfish and promiscuous by the Maraars since she disrupts the women identity projected by the age old value system in India.

Janu becomes the prototype of every Indian woman who is educated and wishes to be free from the shackles of repressive culture to create a personality of her own. Through another character Suma, who is beaten up by her husband, an IAS officer, Misra problematizes the husband-wife relation as a common issue in the society. Suma and Janu here becomes every woman, "You saw them everywhere, women deprived of their men, sad little shadows that had lost their bodies. Widows, divorcees and those who had never had the good sense to attach themselves to a man. They occupied the fringes of life …." (AP 144)

"Mutual mothering" coined by Lucy Fischer which explains "sense of mutual responsibility and protectiveness," rescues the daughters in the novel from viewing the mothers as the victim in themselves (58). This enables both the mother and the daughter to engage in the process of mothering and being mothered. Just as Riya becomes a metaphorical mother to a self-directed and feminist Janu, Janu triggers the awakening of an assertive mother in her mother. On account of Janu's efforts, Riya shows surprising maturation by showing anger towards her mother who temporarily leaves her for higher

studies. She further becomes able enough to 'communicate' in two languages. Though passive and inarticulate, Riya helps her mother to discover her latent inner potentialities.

These maternal abilities in the daughters mitigate the tension usually associated with the "mother's contradictory double position" (Hirsch 198). Janu and her mother during the course of events elevate from their docile position, boost one's own individuality and metamorphose into persuasive mothers. Just as Janu's mother rescues Janu from her despair in connection with the Maraars, Janu too safeguards Riya by rescuing her from the despondency she faces among the indifferent kinfolk. The prominent maternal figures in the novel are never the legendary Jocastas who represent "silence, negation, damnation [and] suicide," (4) but deviant matriarchs who escape from the over identification with their daughters thus overcoming the "tragic asymmetry" between the maternal and daughterly voices (26). The shared maternal grief binds these two bereaved mothers though they are separated by generation that helps to alleviate the 'matrophobia' latent in every woman.

Further, Janu has the support of generations of mothers which accelerates her evolution of the maternal self. In her absence the support she receives from her mother in looking after Riya is admirable. Not only her mother but her grandmother too imparts full support to Janu. When Janu's mother is worried about her going abroad all alone to pursue her higher education, her grandmother on the other hand consoles her daughter and blesses Janu. Her assurance that this momentary mother-daughter breech will only fetch good to both imparts confidence to Janu and her mother. It is she who for the first time speaks against the Maraars in Janu's home, which was till then a

tabooed subject to be spoken of. The character evolution of the matriarchs who are also revolutionized in the course of the events, play an important role in the emerging subjectivity of Janu.

Being self-willed mothers, Janu, her mother and grandmother constantly remain connected with their daughters. Feminist mothers seldom overpower their mothers or children and they give enough space for them to the development of their subjectivities. This mutual understanding is what makes these women bound together, sharing a common chronicle of maternal sorrow, joy and pleasure. Even though the text draws attention to the mythical value attached to motherhood, by writing the story in favour of Janu, Misra dismantles the myths of mothers commonly woven in Indian fiction. Achieving autonomy through unconventional ways is one of the chief characteristics of Misra's focused women characters. The narrative projects the evolution of silent women to vocal mothers. Janu's feminist consciousness compels her to travel through the untrodden paths of Indian femininity giving equal importance to both her selfhood and motherhood.

Unlike Janu and other maternal figures in *Ancient Promises*, Neha in *A Scandalous Secret* belongs to the privileged section of the society who is forced to discard her maternity ignoring the conventional association of equating femininity with maternity. The book enunciates the story of maternal abandonment of Neha Chaturvedi who forsakes her daughter Sonya, born out of wedlock. The maternal then becomes an abode where "women's claiming of decision power over their reproductive life" is rarely heard (Rich xi). The narrative when allows the eighteen year old adopted daughter who

sets out from England to India in search of her biological mother, to speak her words then the mother-daughter connection and conflict allow for the possibility of the emergence of alternative feminine selfhoods.

Neha, during her studies at Oxford, in order to win the love of her professor Alastair Henderson, engages in a relationship with him and begets a child. She presumes that begetting his child will bring him close to her. Hence, like Janu, she embraces her potential maternity to gain the love of the man she loves, as she believes maternity would strengthen man/woman relationship.

> … if I carried the pregnancy through, I could bring Alastair around. Make him love me,…. I told Alastair about it when I was three months gone and begged and pleaded with him once more to take some interest in me. And in our baby. …I genuinely thought I loved Alastair. And that was why … when I found I was pregnant… I kept it secret at first. I actually thought I'd got lucky to be pregnant with his child…. (SS 189)

Neha believes that, "To bear the child of a man with whom one was entangled in passion, love became an assertion of the seeming uniqueness of that love; to bear *this man's child* was to bring this love to a triangle consummation" (Rich 159). But her love remains unrequited when Alastair after knowing about her pregnancy, vanishes from the campus as for him his relation with Neha was only "a one night stand!" (SS 233) Deceived, she admits she has done something stupid, "It's about power, for some men. Power and the thrill of deceit" (188). Maternity then becomes a traumatic sign of feminist unrest.

A man can father a child either by rape or passion and can vanish from the scene forever. For a woman begetting a child either by her will or pressure, she undergoes a set of irreversible changes that affects her whole being. The stigma of giving birth to an illegitimate child victimizes the mother throughout her life and under such circumstances she confronts,

> … a range of painful, socially weighted choices: abortion, suicide, abandonment of the child, infanticide, the rearing of the child branded "illegitimate," usually in poverty, always outside the law. In some cultures she faces murder by her kinsmen. Whatever her choice, her body has undergone irreversible changes, her mind will never be the same, her future as a woman has been shaped by the event. (Rich 12)

Even a woman, who gives up her child for adoption at birth, will undergo irreversible physiological and psychic changes in her life. At the onset of the novel, Neha experiences a sense of fragmentation and guilt as she remembers her past which is narrated with a lot of pain. Patriarchy induces victimhood in her for being an illegitimate mother. Her sense of guilt springs from her inability to fit into various feminine roles prescribed by the culture and her unshared grief and remorse leads to mental trauma.

Sexuality is seldom separated from procreativity in Indian context and the terms like 'barren woman' and 'childless woman' deny the existence of a woman's future identity. Nevertheless, a woman's assertion over her procreative life is limited by the patriarchal discourses where woman in all cultures are respected for her motherhood

and childbearing capacity only when her maternity adheres to the respective social mores. Motherhood is "sacred" only when its offspring are "legitimate," that is, "so long as the child bears the name of a father who legally controls the mother" (43). Unconventional motherhood becomes a "penal servitude" and unchosen childbirth turn out to be painful as the mother will be bedecked with the status of an adultress (14). Rich's words, "Most women in history have become mothers without choice" generalize the condition of everywoman (13).

The unwed mother is compelled to commit maternal insolence as the whole penalty falls on the mother alone. Marginalized by the society, both the mother and the child fall prey to suspicion and contempt and in the Indian context they are considered a disgrace to the whole pedigree. The deviant mother becomes "a scapegoat, the one around whom the darkness of maternity is allowed to swirl—the invisible violence of the institution of motherhood" (277) and illegitimacy turns out to be "the theft of childbirth from women" (276). When Neha explains why she abandoned her child, she is elucidating the irony and entrapment in maternity handed down through generations of mothers who have no control over their children's lives especially if they are illegitimate.

Though Neha, as a result of failed abortion, accepts the inevitability of childbirth, she is deprived of the 'bliss of motherhood' perpetuated by the conservative mores. This is a deviation from the projected celebration of maternity in traditional discourses. Fearing the cultural gaze, she undergoes an 'alienated childbirth' assisted by her friend's mother in England. Neha's internalized cultural value system forbids her from the public acknowledgment of her maternity and the free exhibition of maternal love. It results in

her abandoning of her daughter born out of wedlock and hence the plot exhibits one of the most complex treatments of mother-daughter bond in the Indo-Anglian literature.

Unable to perform any daring action, Neha lives behind the mask of a childless mother for more than eighteen years hushing up her motherly instincts and maternal love within her. Playing the role of a childless woman for a mother is not of a simple categorization and is evident in the psychic complexity Neha experiences. Her pretense can be taken as a prerequisite for her cultural survival and it prevents her from shedding tears over her suppressed motherhood. Her act may seem unwomanly, but it demarcates the disparity—celebration and ambivalence—within the maternal identification.

Neha is entrapped between cultural values and familial obligations. Indian culture is so steeped in her that forbids her from disclosing about the birth of an illegitimate child to her parents. She anticipates that her parents who are conservative and cherish high expectations about her will be shattered by the truth which forces her to hide the whole affairs from them. As Sonya is fathered in secret at the moment when the whole clan trusted her and took pleasure in her success, the only option Neha had is to hide her clandestine relation, while wishing a good life for the new born. She does not want to shatter the entire hope of her family by her single foolish act and is frightened of the consequences she and her clan have to face once her secret gets revealed.

Neha runs off from "the Big Oxford Dream" that her father had passed on to her and settles in India enacting the role of a dutiful daughter, loving wife and caring daughter-in-law (SS 174). Her immaturity in choosing her life has proven to be a dreadful mistake which convinces her to obey her parents. Neha's bond with her

mother impels her to go on with their wish and marries Sharat, an aspiring politician in Delhi. For an Indian daughter, marriage is considered as a woman's safe destiny and it enables Neha to escape from the bleak memories of her life in England. In addition, unmarried woman in Indian patriarchal set up is an object of suspicion and contempt.

Arif, Neha's friend and the American tourist to India, who acts as a surrogate mother to her like Murray Lee in *The Stone Angel*, after hearing her story recounts it as "a pretty universal story … happens to girls all over the world" (SS 187). But it has a different connotation in the traditional masculinist Indian backdrop, though Neha too remarks it as "a fairy unremarkable story" (187). Unwed mothers are considered outcasts in the society and so she decides to introduce lies into her family, "I emerged from the toilet, and my life was changed. I was a child no more because I now had a dark secret. Nothing like the kind of secret children keep. A big and terrible secret that would need to be covered up, like that pregnancy kit in the bin, hastily shoved under soiled tissues and detritus" (51).

Neha often wonders about her failure to confide her dark secret to her mother right from the age of nineteen to thirty seven, when she is introduced in the novel. After the arrival of Sonya's letter expressing her wish to visit Neha, she becomes upset and visits her mother to find solace; but even then she fails to reveal about her secret maternal identity. One reason for the hesitancy is that everything in her mother's world is "needed to be neat and immaculate" and since she had changed little over the years, at this old age, Neha doesn't want to shock her with an illegitimate granddaughter (70). As mothers are the primary role models and instructors of cultural values, Neha's

concept of womanhood, wifehood and motherhood is deeply connected with that of her mother. Her mother satisfies all the criteria of a perfect Indian womanhood and Neha's failure to achieve that ideal realm strains and fragments her 'self.' So she decides to handle the issue secretly, since "It was she who had first introduced lies into their relationship" (70).

The unshared grief creates a shrouded and subdued maternity in Neha. When Sonya meets her to assert her right of daughterhood, the latter gets torn between her maternal preference and cultural inclinations. Hence Sonya's news of expedition to India in search of her biological mother distresses her. The narrator wonders that, "How foolish it had been to imagine that her past would not catch up on her. Or that there could be no punishment for a mother who had given up her child" (94). Sonya's reentry in her life magnifies the shame and guilt beneath her projected self and further signifies her failures in her life.

Neha's tantrums after she receives the letter from Sonya makes it clear that she has withheld her secret maternal identity to anyone including her husband as it will tear them apart. She will be discarded both from her home and from that of Sharat's life that is unbearable to her. She is so scared of her past that she dismisses her dream to enlist in Foreign Service of her fear that someone knowing her 'dark secret' may detect her. At that juncture of her life, all she wanted was to "burrow herself into a hole and disappear from public view. What if she was recognized? What if everyone found out what she had done? It was too horrible to even contemplate" (30). These thoughts damn her and she contemplates suicide which she aborts later, fearing Sharat's

accompaniment.

Although Neha tries her best to cover up her awful past, the return of her baby she had given up to question her deed agonizes her. Just like the ghost exorcised from Sethe's past in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* revisits to avenge her, Neha gets tormented by the presence of Sonya. Her failure to negotiate with her guilt ridden past portrays her as a trapped woman struggling to attain a balance between her past and present. She undulates among her maternal inclinations, loyalty to the family and obedience to the society.

> Not having any children of their own, the scandal of a secret child would shock Neha's and Sharat's worlds and destroy Sharat's political ambitions and, surely their marriage too. It was too terrifying to bear thinking about. … Public knowledge that she'd not only had a child before marrying Sharat, but had gone on to abandon it, would tear their lives apart on so many different levels. (26-27)

Neha's genial relation with her husband gets disturbed by the entry of Sonya that persuades her to introduce lies in her marital life. She manipulates Sonya's phone calls as crank calls and Sharat remains pained and puzzled by her sudden behavioral change. For Sharat, "She was indeed the most perfect wife that a man could ask for" (128) and "she was exactly as she seemed. With Neha, what you saw was what you got. There was no hidden agenda, no gossip, never any secret deal-making, nothing underhand at all" (6). He feels shaken and uncertainty swirls them since what he loves most about his wife is her honesty which is now put to question.

Looking through the lens of dominant discourse Neha has committed three sacrileges—one by betraying her daughterhood, the second by the dereliction of her wifehood and the last by her maternal deprivation. She betrays patriarchy by not only having an illegitimate child, but goes to the extent of abandoning it. Neha's act can be considered as a "sense of betrayal, of the violation of a relationship" (Rich 254). However, Estella, Sonya's friend from England, verbalizes Neha's helplessness, "a baby before marriage would destroy a woman's prospects" (SS 136). If the mother is forced to leave the child for any reason it is due to the incongruity latent within the institutionalized motherhood since it makes no provision for a deviant mother. Illegitimate maternity is a scandal not only in Indian culture but almost in all cultures and hence the victim has to keep it as a secret for her survival in the society.

Single parenting has become a common phenomenon in western ideologies whereas, it is looked down in the Indian context and as a result she forbids the idea to raise the newborn single handed though the social worker promises support. This forces her to leave her daughter in the hands of fate. The novelist generalizes the issue when Jasmeet, Neha's friend, had to compromise with her husband who maintains an illicit relation with another woman. Her knowledge about the difficulties a 'single woman' has to face in the society, prevents her from the idea of leaving him and she pacifies his infidelity stating such compromises are common in all families.

Instead of experiencing delight in motherhood or taking pride in the "magical power invested in women by men," Neha undergoes the psychic crisis of bearing an 'unwanted child' (Rich 13). A mother, who is depressed by her status as a mother,

could seldom enjoy the pleasure of motherhood. This prevents Neha from maintaining a healthy relationship with her daughter, as getting pregnant at a tender age out of wedlock retards her individuation. Her thwarted self and embittered maternity degrades her and brings forth anxiety and self contempt in her. This painful and problematic experience nurtures a disintegrated self in her which on the one hand tries to conceal her maternity while the other secretly cherishes everything maternal.

Neha's observations of David Cameron's photograph who is beaming into the camera, while his wife smiling at her lace-wrapped child is a fine example, "Her [David Cameron's wife's] hands were mother's hands, gentle and strong, held in the shape of a cradle" (SS 104). Neha recreates her repressed unresolved maternity by appreciating maternal on the sly in everything she sees,

> She had observed all such details in new mother before, the glowing skin and secret smile, that serene Madonna-like look… as though it was in this precise moment that women achieved the acme of their existence. Even Jasmeet, usually brisk and bordering on belligerent, even she had turned all soft and maternal when her girls were newborn. (104)

At the same time, Neha's refusal to consult an obstetrician to find out the reason for her 'childlessness' reveals her fear of her concealed maternity. She manipulates her fear as, "we don't need to know what the reasons are, it will just cause tensions between us, forming silences and barriers? . . . . there's a part of me that feels we're so happy we don't need children, Sharat. I'm contented merely to be married to you…please tell me it's the same for you?" (85) Sonya instigates her suppressed

maternity and Neha's strange dreams in which she wanders through a pediatric ward full of screaming babies, after she receives the letter from her daughter, exhibits her inner remorse.

Maternity and paternity are treated differently in a gendered society. This seems true in the case of Neha and Alastair. A child does not recognize any separate interest for the mother other than its relationship with her, while from the beginning, the child treats the father as a separate being unless he provides the same kind of primary relation and care as the mother. This elucidates that begetting a child for a woman is a socially weighted phenomenon while for a man it is purely biological. This explains Neha's tantrums when the novel begins.

At the onset of the narrative, Neha is portrayed as an attractive woman, who leads an envious conjugal life with her husband. The news of the reappearance of her daughter sets her calm and serene life into trouble. When Sonya wishes to meet Neha, rather than anticipating the return of her long lost daughter, she is anxious of the societal gaze she has to undergo. To avoid the mother-daughter confrontation, she takes up a recluse in Ananda, a tourist resort in the Himalayas. Such a desperation is not shown by the male characters who are accomplice in similar 'crimes.'

Sonya's sole mission of her expedition to India is to make her mother answer for abandoning her by birth and nowhere in the novel she asks for her biological father. The emotional and physical negligence on the part of her mother enrages and hurts Sonya when she knows about her abandonment and hence, "It was anger that was propelling Sonya on in this search, nothing else. Pure unadultered anger" (SS 58).

Sonya's discovery that she was not prised away from her mother, but was "cooly been given away" by Neha to lead a happy married life disturbs her and aggravates her anger (58). This propels her to make Neha answer for the heinous act she has done though she knew that Neha has a family now. Thinking politeness as inappropriate to the situation, she writes a letter to Neha informing her arrival to India in a hard-hitting tone.

In normal mother-child relationship, the child first senses its own existence from the mother's receptive gesticulations, caress and expressions. As stated by Rich, "It's as if, in the mother's eye, her smile, her stroking touch, the child first reads the message: *You are there*!" (36) But if this same relation gets estranged when the maternal relationship with the child becomes unsatisfactory, the infant feels rejected and "remains preoccupied with this negatively experienced internal relationship" throughout its life (Chodorow 78). She further observes that, "the experience of satisfactory feeding and holding enables the child to develop a sense of loved self in, relation to a loving and caring mother" (78). Here, Neha's maternal erasure results in the least possibility of the emergence of such a bond between the mother and the daughter.

As advised by the social worker who assists Neha's childbirth, she becomes cautious in not maintaining an attachment with the newborn, as it is already decided that the child cannot be raised by its mother. She reminds Neha that, "*It's best you don't go choosing a name, my dear. Because, you see, harsh as it sounds, it's crucial you don't bond with the child. Now that the decision's been made to give her up, you see. Naming her will only create a bond. So will breast-feeding*" (SS 28).

Following these instructions, Neha refuses to maintain a relationship with her daughter both before and after she was given up. Feeling a sense of entrapment in her maternity, she remains aloof from making any attempt to know the whereabouts of the child.

American writer Nancy Newton Verrier in her acclaimed book *The Primal Wound: Understanding the Adopted Child* (1993) posits that mother-daughter breach inflicts a "primal wound" in the psyche of the daughter which encourages an ambiguous relation with one's own mother (xvi). Primal wound as she identifies is "a wound which is physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual, a wound which causes pain so profound . . . having been caused by the separation of the child from his biological mother, the connection to whom seems mystical, mysterious, spiritual and everlasting" (xvi). It better explains the damage imposed on Sonya by her mother.

Sonya's sense of rejection amplifies when she understands the affluence of her birth mother. She was convinced till then by the fake belief that her mother gave her up so that the child will have a better life, like that of her friend Chelsea. She always imagined that, "her biological mother was the sort who lives somewhere like Southall or Tooting, a woman suppressed and cowed-down and forced into giving up her illegitimate bout adored love child by a cruelly conservative family who hated the idea of a cross-cultural and mixed-race union" (SS 57).

The knowledge about Neha being an educated woman shocks Sonya and creates in her angst and resentment towards her mother.

> Who would've imagined that her biological mother was a woman who lived in India, rather than Southall or Tooting, and here was the really astonishing

> bit-that she had been a student at Oxford too, the very same university to which Sonya was due to go this autumn!... the idea that an educated woman had chosen to give her up that had been the really shocking thing to Sonya. Her birth mother was obviously one who'd had choices, not a suffering voiceless woman at all. (58)

This understanding hurts her, "That as the really galling bit: that the woman who was her natural mother had made such a cold and deliberate choice, never turning around once to look back at the baby she had abandoned in England" (58). The indifference on the part of her mother infuriates her which on the long run produces crippling effects on her psyche.

Further, the luxury in Neha's house agitates Sonya as she was robbed of those riches for all these years by her own mother. It instigates her ambivalence towards her mother and the maternal rejection inversely affects the psychological life of Sonya which prompts her to be ruthless towards Neha. She consciously makes her face less attractive and voice sharper when she meets Neha for the first time and uses verbal assaults as a tool to show her resentment. Sonya's words that, "My parents told me all along that I was adopted. They said it made me very special than everyone else and that's certainly how they made me feel—very loved" (234) makes Neha feel deliberate from the part of Sonya "to make her [Neha] feel that way" (235). After their first meeting, feeling thwarted by her mother, Sonya calls her, "Bitch… bitch…." (133). Sonya makes use of every available opportunity to show her resentment towards her mother. This lack of connection results in the lack of individuation in the daughter.

While talking of the feminist family Romance of the 1970s, Hirsch says that these fictions are centered almost entirely on the experience of daughters who create "an uncomfortable position for mothers themselves" (136). She finds that,

> It is the woman as daughter who occupies the centre of the global reconstruction of subjectivity and subject-object relation. The woman as mother remains in the position of 'other' and the emergence of feminine/ daughterly subjectivity rests and depends on the continued and repeated process of "othering the mother. (136)

This aspect can be seen in the earlier part of *A Scandalous Secret* wherein Neha is othered by Sonya and by doing so she makes an effort to resolve the lack she felt as an adopted misfit.

As Neha's justification for her daughter's abandonment fails to convince Sonya, she is often tempted to destroy Neha's life by disclosing her identity to Sharat. Even though Sonya threatens her mother by her unexpected arrival at Neha's house, she holds an air of concern for Neha. She restricts herself from disclosing her identity to Sharat before meeting Neha, since Sonya thinks it will put her mother into deep trouble. This proves that the novel contains a subtext of mother-daughter sympathy and a brief moment of understanding between them. Sonya's comments in the letter she sends to Neha, "I am the daughter you gave away for adoption in 1993" and "it is my right to ask you for" signifies a mode of self-identification prompted by the need for her maternal recognition (SS 9). Also Sonya's quest for past signifies her pursuit to reunite with her birth mother.

Sonya's passionate and ambivalent fascination with the mother oscillates between longing for connection and the moral need for disconnection and vengeance. This conflicting emotion towards her mother can be explained through Rich's "matrophobia," where the daughter hates 'the mother' in her (236). The appalling asymmetry between the maternal and daughterly voices in the novel deepens this matrophobia. But Rich also postulates that however, "a mother is hated to the point of matrophobia there may also be a deep underlying pull towards her" (235). This explains the mellowing of the daughter and her participation for the recuperation of the mother-daughter bond.

The latent maternal love in the daughter compels Sonya to warn her mother of her friend Keshav's threat who after knowing about the secret of Sonya's birth, sets off to blackmail Neha. Sonya's change from a revengeful daughter who wishes to avenge her mother for the maternal deprivation to an individual who feels worried in bringing her mother into the blackmail episode validates the above said statement. Marienne Hirsch observes that even during matrophobia the psychoanalytic paradigms between the mother and the daughter stress for a mutual "desire for connection" (5). This explains the transformation of Sonya during the course of the novel and that results in the gradual resolution from the old stereotypical pattern of the daughters viewing one's mother as "our impossible mothers" to a loving daughter who cares and respects her mother (26).

Chodorow ascertains that though it is necessary for a girl child to 'reject' her mother in order to enter into a healthy hetero-sexual life, even in that phase daughters crave for a deep emotional attachment with their mothers. This pre-oedipal closeness

(though restored years back in the novel) hidden in the psyche of every mother and the daughter draws Neha and Sonya towards each other albeit they 'fear' each others' confrontation before their meeting, "Sonya was herself terrified of what she would find when she got there [India]" (SS 13).

While focusing on the biological mother-child bond there is yet another mother-daughter relationship focused in the text with dexterity. Laura Shaw, the adoptive mother of Sonya, though loves her daughter, often feels ill at ease with Sonya. An adoptive mother is generally prone to suspicion and is looked down by the society. The implicit belief is that "only "mothers" with "children of their own" have a real stake in the future of humanity" and only then the child becomes "a symbolic credential, a sentimental object, a badge of self-righteousness" (Rich xxiv). But Rich treats both biological and adoptive mothers as equally able to love their children and the adoptive mother who continues to mother will find,

> . . . the rhythms and priorities of her life changed in the most profound and also the most trivial ways. The woman who has longwanted and awaited a child can anticipate becoming a mother with imaginative eagerness; but she too must move from the familiar to the strange, and this is never a simple process. (167)

Marianne Hirsch also favours Rich and identifies that not only biological mothers but all mothers—either adoptive or communal mothers—can love and care their children.

Laura's emotional need to become a mother compels her to adopt a child and she carries the memories of the first sight of Sonya "like a precious faded photograph."

> … she had known without a doubt that this child had been meant all along to be hers. Laura had looked down at the most beautiful baby she had ever seen; blue eyes like enormous cornflowers in her tiny face and a shock of the blackest hair Laura had ever seen on a baby. … holding baby and bottle, Laura had felt a wellspring of emotion so deep it was as though her entire inner self was washed through with it, receiving her sprits and reorganizing her whole life in that one moment. And Sonya, as though sensing that love, had finished all the milk and then snuggled into the crook of her adoptive mother's arm with a little sigh before falling into a sound sleep. (SS 77)

Laura creates a strong emotional bond with Sonya and attends to all her physical and emotional needs which often prevent her from building an identity outside that of her motherhood. It pushes her to the realm of an obsessive and over protective mother. She sees Sonya primarily as an extension of herself and falls short to acknowledge a separate subjectivity for her daughter. Her act of giving up her job to take care of Sonya proves her maternal omnipotence as she places motherhood above selfhood which generates anxiety in the mother-daughter relation,

> In bringing up Sonya Laura gives up her job as a classroom assistant and Richard takes extra shifts to raise fund to give Sonya everything within their reach, stretching themselves to achieve ballet lessons and school trips and even horse riding when Sonya had read sea biscuit and briefly wanted to become an equestrienne. (78)

Sonya's search for her birth mother inculcates in Laura an unknown fear of losing her daughter permanently. It also brings in her a feeling that she doesn't prove enough for Sonya as a good mother. As Rich says, the mother is made to feel responsible for the imperfections of the daughter; here Laura too feels the same with Sonya which induces the maternal guilt in her. Laura often wonders whether she had failed her in any way or robbed her of a safe childhood which compels Sonya in undertaking an expedition to find her birth mother. Sonya's fascination for everything that is Indian after knowing about her origin, disturbs Laura as each time it reminds of her repeated abortions, childlessness, adoption of Sonya and ultimately her departure.

> … first time she [Laura] had openly stated her fears to Richard about Sonya having perhaps inherited traits that they had absolutely come from somewhere else. There had been Christmases when, with both families gathered around, Laura had looked at Sonya and observed with sudden shock how unlike all of them she was. (98)

Putting gray blue kohl around her eyes and putting silver bracelets jangling on her arms, for Laura she looked like an exotic creature. She further compares Sonya to a Bollywood diva.

Hirsch's statement, "If mothers cannot "own" their children or even themselves, they experienced separation and loss all the more intensely" proves true regarding Laura (6). The features of Sonya which reminds her of her Indian roots disturbs Laura and she fails to understand her daughter's position in the adoption triangle. Her decision to seek her biological mother who abandoned her and even refused to breast feed her

confuses and hurts Laura. Her words, "I might not be your biological mother but I doubt anyone will love you as much as I do," proves her anxiety regarding her daughter's quest (SS 62). Such a transition from the part of her daughter creates tension in the mother-daughter bond as it amplifies her maternal insecurity and suspects her daughter's sojourn as a final departure.

Laura feels threatened by Sonya's search for her real mother and her continuous struggle to hold her back in England shows a mother's desire for her daughter's autonomy. Another reason for Laura's disapproval of her daughter's "punishing quest" is that she fears the recurrence of Sonya's rejection by her birth mother the second time, which she thinks will create damaging effects on her psyche (60). She is fiercely protective of her daughter against the victimization and denial awaiting in India.

> 'The truth can sometimes hurt terribly,' she muttered softly. 'And tha's what we're scared of. Dad and I simply couldn't bear to see you get rejected a second time over, darling. And by the same woman. I mean, you were such a darling little baby. Only someone truly cold and heartless could have picked you up and given you away. And then walked away from you without once turning back to enquire after your welfare. (61- 62)

Though Sonya's departure annoys Laura, her concern for her daughter in her packing session reveals her true love and concern as a mother. She gives *Easy Hindi Translation* book to Sonya as it will help her in her stay in India and she advices her about the spicy Indian food and warns her not to overdo it.

Laura's anxiety as an adoptive mother cripples her relationship with her daughter

and her confused and overwhelmed maternity inculcates in Sonya a puzzled daughterhood. Inconsistency and confusion in the adoption triad creates discrepancy in the developmental phases of those involved in the process. A child in its pre-oedipal stage experiences primary identification with the mother where the child's sense of self is entangled with its mother's. Only a mother with an independent self can help the daughter to internalize the same in her. Sonya's position in the adoption triangle plays an important role in shaping her identity.

As Sonya is an adoptive daughter to Laura Shaw, the former's first bonding is with her adoptive mother. She internalizes her mother's (Laura's) sense of lack and her 'confused mothering' inculcates a fragmented self in the daughter who becomes cynical towards both her mothers. The mother's diffidence and low expectations create deep impressions in the psyche of the daughter as it is crucial for the mother to develop a strong notion of oneself. Unsatisfied and unproductive maternal relationship defines the infant as rejected and unloved and it affects the daughter's concept of mothering and the perception of the self in her.

Moreover, Sonya's "golden-brown" skin that differentiates her from her parents and relatives who are "pale skinned" constantly reminds her as an adopted member of the family (12). Her tanned skin and dark tresses compels her to find out her biological parents, "There was certainly something about her oval shaped face and high cheekbones that set her apart, from the average English look…." (56) The narrator recounts, "how little she was like the parents who had adopted her. In the way she looked, the way she spoke, even the way she thought about things. Much as she

adored her mum and dad, they really were chalk to her cheese" (13). Sonya perceives herself as "a missing piece in a jigsaw puzzle. Or a gap in my teeth that's annoyed and irritated me for years" (61).

Sonya though blessed with two mothers fails to attain subjectivity till the denouement of the narrative as her fractured self induces non-belongingness in her. However, Sonya is not unmothered like Hagar Shipley in *The Stone Angel* and her relation with her adoptive mother mitigates her aversion towards maternal and helps her in the hasty negotiation with her birth mother. Sonya's words, "What on earth am I going to do without you huh?" discloses her love for Laura (100). The emotional parting scene between Laura and Sonya reveals the love-hate attachment between them. Misra allows the daughter to develop her identity all by herself by reserving a separate space for her, away from her mothers. She moves and develops freely and acquires the strength to face and solve her problems. Her evolution of the self makes possible for her to understand both the mothers that bring harmony between them.

Despite the fact that maternal abandonment and deprivation mark the very substance of the novel, the narrative is also about how the mother-daughter bond reaches a state of reconciliation wherein there exists no tension of Subject/Object division. The Subject/Object blurring within the bond, when Sonya undergoes similar mistakes which her biological mother had faced years back, brings epiphany in her. Sonya's failure to recognize the true love of Tim, her friend in England who wants to accompany her to India and secondly, her inability to judge Keshav, a young student whom she befriends in India who tries to use her as a means to settle abroad, makes

her think about her mother's past. This discovery is decisive since it helps her to identify herself with her mother resolving the prior regression and tension between them. Their ambivalence gets transmuted into a connection based on similar experiences. It boosts mutual empathy that merges their ego boundaries and as a result animates their retarded relationship.

Though the plot unveils with the quest of the daughter who becomes the agency for the achievement of maternal subjectivities in the novel, by Neha's recreation and reliving in her maternal past, Misra allows the maternal voice to be heard above all other voices. The evolution of the maternal self to the subject position in the novel is crucial as it not only verbalizes the maternal muteness but also unifies the split subjectivities of the female characters. When Neha, the leading maternal figure, acquires the courage to disclose her secret maternal identity to Sharat after a gap of eighteen years, it also anticipates a similar confession from her part before her parents too. Her transition from a silent sufferer to an assertive person illustrates her purgation of maternal guilt which haunted her life till then. Maturation of her selfhood reaches its climax when the novel ends in her journey to meet her daughter studying in Oxford that too with the consent of her husband. It counters the absence, exclusion and erasure of the mother from the dominant discourses.

The final pages of the novel portray the leading maternal protagonists Neha and Laura, and their daughter Sonya achieving their life goals. The profundity and sophistication in the mother-daughter bond is explored effectively and it is convinced to believe that although the connection between them is of strained relationship it can also

be solved effectively. The mothers and daughters presented are persons of hope and this quality resolves their issues and helps them to move forward even in their crisis. Neha's mediation with the past gives confidence to her to tell the story of her motherhood stifled and suppressed under the cultural subjugation. Her self-recognition makes possible for her to love her daughter without any fear or hesitation. Sonya on the other hand is convinced of her mother's position in the whole affair and starts loving her. The hope to remain connected with her mother motivates her to hand over her forwarding address to Neha which she later uses effectively.

After completing her mission, the return of Sonya to England proves her affection towards her adoptive parents. Laura feels triumphant when Sonya returns and understands her in a much better way. The temporary mother-daughter breach allows Laura to think beyond her maternal omnipotence and she changes from an "over-emotional mother" as Sonya calls her, to a recuperated one who emanates hope and strength to her daughter (62). She emerges as an empowered mother whose maternal conflict gets resolved when Sonya returns just as her "beautiful adopted daughter" (76). Laura's consent for Sonya to maintain her relation with Neha shows her maturity as she is able to empathize for Neha who is a bereaved mother. The mothers' reunion with their daughter signals hope and optimism and completes their search for self.

Refusal of victimhood by the mothers opens new vistas for themselves where they expand the limits of their lives which the culture imprints on every woman. Their brave attempts in breaking the 'othered' position, constructed for them by the conservative ideology of motherhood, make them courageous mothers. Such mothers do not reject

their offspring or their maternal responsibility to attain selfhood. Neither do they go after the sentimental valorization of love and nurture as the only vocation of a woman. Misra's questioning of traditional sentimentalized representation of mother-love in Indian literature does not imply a feminist strategy of rejection of maternal role. The mother-daughter breech within the narrative is an outcome of the societal pressure and not self-willed one for the heroines. The mothers who are separated from their daughters are portrayed as demented ones. Neha's "sharp feeling of *déjà vu*" as she watches Sonya for the first time and her words, "It was like watching herself walk through time," establishes points of contact with the daughter (287).

The mothers presented here not only illuminate and expand a sense of self in the daughter but extends it to other women also. As the feminine development is relational, the connectedness with other females either values or devalues one's sense of self. Such a female bonding can be viewed true in *A Scandalous Secret* as most of the female characters presented achieve self identity and subjectivity through their connection with other women characters in the novel. Neha's portrayal as the "legendary hostess" and as a "famous socialite" proves her ability as a sociable person in the society (SS 7). Jasmeet's daughters calling Neha *maasi* (mother's sister) is yet another example. Sonya's collection of presents, mementos and photographs reveals her sentimental nature as well as her positive relation with those around her. Her relation with Estella, right from the beginning is presented as a cordial one enjoying sisterhood between them and at times acting as a surrogate mother to the former. This further prevents Sonya from being over emotional to the situation where Estella gives her the practical assistance and

advice not to disturb Neha's family. She also gives the emotional assistance which Sonya is in need during her stay in India and warns the latter's relation with Keshav. She protects her as a mother, supports her as a sister and guides her as a good friend. Laura the other mother in the novel also transforms to an amiable person showing sympathy towards Neha when she learns about the circumstances that led her to commit the heinous act of maternal abandonment.

The mutual concern within the female characters in the novel illustrates what feminists affirm that the females for all times show a tendency to remain connected with each other and their development of subjectivities relies on their positive association among them. At the end of the novel the female characters could patch up their internal differences and renovate the female continuum latent in every woman. The ending suggests a complete resolution of the inner trauma of the leading female characters in the novel.

The mothers in *Ancient Promises* and *A Scandalous Secret*—Janu, her mother, Neha and Laura—whose ideology of motherhood is deeply rooted in the idealization of self-denial and self-sacrifice alone, identifies the maternal as a trope of subjugation and move towards self-assertion. Their quests reach its denouement by the unison of their fractured selves and they attain their femininity through the intervention of the maternal. They do not reject the values associated with the role of the mother but locates in them the possibility of female self empowerment. Apart from the idealization of motherhood, they identify maternal as "a trope with multiple significances" relevant for the attainment of female subjectivity (Chakravarty 19).

Chapter V

Conclusion

Patriarchal ideology serves as the conventional lens that modifies common thinking about mothers, mothering and motherhood. Women in different parts of the world are influenced by a variety of cultural and material realities and hence it is difficult to give a single voice to women's writings on mothering. This thesis focused on the intricate ways in which ideology of different cultures—Canadian, African American and Indian—influence the nature of women's experiences as mothers and daughters thereby leading to the processes of self-formation and identification.

The three cross-cultural feminist writers selected—Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Jaishree Misra—sharply critique women's role in society by charting the interiority of the female character's mind. Their writings have evolved through a range of creative stages and ideological affiliations, offering a rich ground of inquiry into the issue of subjectivity. They challenge the current constructions of womanhood as presented in dominant discourses like culture and identity.

Jasbir Jain observes that, "Feminism by itself is not a theory and in itself it is a movement fragmented by region, caste, language, class and levels of education" (30). Likewise, feminist theorizations of the maternal idea have undergone various changes corresponding to the changing histories and cultures. Mothering occurs within the specific social contexts that vary in terms of material and cultural resources and constraints. Feminists today agree that mothering is a cultural construct and the maternal narratives

interpret woman in an entirely different framework. The thematic significance of maternal subjectivity often precipitates the anguish of a class that has been silenced for long. As for woman writers, often the delineation of woman's experience—whether maternal or not—offers them a chance for the exploration of the self from a woman's point of view.

The present study deeply analyses the distinctive ways in which women characters in the works of these three writers negotiate with their self-division through the acknowledgement of their maternal role. Occupying the position of literary and figurative mothers, these characters come to terms with the 'other' within them and through the different modes of maternal discourse resolve the conflicts they face. They believe in the social realities of lived experience of mothers and hence challenge and change the conservative patriarchal notions of motherhood. Different aspects of mothering and motherhood form the crux of these women writers. By re-inventing the images of mothers they open myriad possibilities for the evolution of the female self in a gendered society.

This thesis bases its premise on the theories of Nancy J. Chodorow, Adrienne Rich, Marianne Hirsch etc. in order to analyse the complex mother-daughter relationships across cultures. In the six novels taken up for analysis, mother-daughter attachment is depicted, more often than not, as a fraught relationship that questions the ideal of motherhood. What is significant about the portrayal of motherhood in these works is that the writers create a feminist space where the ideological burden of patriarchal constructs that impact women's lives can be re-examined. This body of

creative writing focuses on the kind of tension generated between women's professional and familial selves, public and personal lives. Race, caste, class and various other factors create feelings of alienation and estrangement in the women characters and these works take a critical look at the hegemonic ideal of motherhood and its influence on the lived identities of women as mothers and daughters.

Unless mothering is demystified and depoliticized, there is no possibility of the articulation of female subjectivity within the feminist discourses. These select writers take up the challenge and effectively present female subjectivity through their mothers and daughters. Margaret Laurence's protagonists are usually people who do not fully participate in the system—old women, single women in middle age and people on the fringes of the society. These women challenge the reader's expectations with their own survival strategies and their stories sound like the sagas of "male heroism" (Howells 3). Though these stories talk about their private lives, they tell us about the inner adventures that are often invisible to other people. They deconstruct the cultural and psychological limits and their discoveries open new vistas within the feminist discussions. Laurence's strategies to depict femininity, especially maternity are not very common and have a unique position in the narrative space of Canadian literature.

Laurence, by creating her protagonists primarily as mothers examines maternal subject experience from a mother's point of view. Maternal diffidence in Hagar Shipley and Morag Gunn is primarily due to the absence of mothers. Since both the heroines lack strong maternal models, they attain their maternal subjectivity through self-creation. The heroines become self-assertive when they resolve their self-division and find a place

among the Canadian wilderness. Though Laurence underscores a deep rooted fascination with maternal, she neither idealizes maternal consciousness nor treats it as a privileged position. Apart from the maternal, these women show inclination towards others realms of their selves. Laurence's heroines do not simply fit into the traditional female roles of caregivers alone, but are self-consciously liberated earning women who have access to a world beyond domesticity. The denial of traditional female destiny embedded in marriage and motherhood constitutes a critique of the conformist social stereotyping.

The novelist utilizes the technique of *vollendungsroman*—where the protagonist achieves maturation in his/her late life—to achieve the maternal self in the novel *The Stone Angel*. Hagar's absent mother marks the maternal discourse in the plot and acts as a major key to Hagar's maternal reticence. Absence of her mother leads to suppression of tender feelings in Hagar. Chodorow's statements are validated in the novel where it highlights the disastrous effects of lack of mother on the character formation of both sons and daughters. Hagar, the daughter and the sons (Hagar's brothers) become products of wrong gender socializing. While Hagar becomes aggressive and brutal, the sons become emasculated due to dearth of mothering. Paternal upbringing kills femininity in Hagar which leads to her estrangement both from the men folk of her family and other women in the community. In her personal life too Hagar becomes a failure. She cannot be a good mother to her sons which prevent them from becoming good individuals. She is unable to reciprocate her love for her elder son Marvin which drives him away from her. However, she becomes overprotective towards her younger son John and as a result of which he becomes a

misfit in society. This proves Rich's statement that overprotective mothers hamper the wholesome development of their sons.

Finally, Hagar comes out of her alienated self in the company of other women who teach her the virtues of maternity. She evolves into a caring and nurturing woman as she comes to terms with her fractured self. The realization of the truth bolsters her and steers her towards mothering, which she has failed to accomplish until the age of ninety. It solves the hesitation Hagar felt about speaking as a mother. Though the conventional maternal roles are only occasionally expressed, at the denouement of the narrative, motherhood does not stifle Hagar's individuality or sexuality. The recuperation and recovery of motherhood celebrates the mother in the novel.

In *The Diviners*, Laurence makes use of *kunstlerroman*—the portrait of the artist novel—to explore the maternal self. The mother-artist Morag Gunn is presented as torn between her work and her child and she writes herself back into existence where she validates the concept of writing the mother. Laurence gives equal importance to the protagonist's gender and her vocation thereby pinpointing the struggle the female artist must undergo to achieve this balance. Morag's artistic and feminine nature progresses parallelly sometimes weaving together and sometimes pulling apart. Both demand her attention and Morag struggles to give her vocation and motherhood equal importance but often writing has the strong pull.

Though Morag is 'doubly motherless'—firstly by the death of her real mother and secondly due to alienation from her surrogate mother—she is fortunate than Hagar since she gets into the company of many women who provide her positive companionship and

warmth apart from inculcating artistic values in her. Laurence presents many maternal figures like Mrs. Gerson, Ella Gerson and Catherine who supplement her maternal absence. She gets the support of Mrs. Gerson who acts as her surrogate mother and Ella maintains the role of a sister and a mentor in Morag's life. Catherine is both a successful mother and an artist who inculcates in Morag the fortitude a mother-artist should have. Laurence also highlights through Morag that motherhood strengthens and supports one's aesthetic imagination.

The second novelist selected Toni Morrison, is interested in studying women who are real and not just women who fit in a world where racism and sexism are common experiences. In other words, they are incomprehensible and are not ideal women. Yet, they are not 'self-destructive' women who destroy themselves emotionally and morally to the point where she cannot continue to function for herself. On the other hand, they move from 'self-destruction' to the hope that there can be a resolution or growth of a sense of self. Morrison is a significant figure as far as depiction of motherhood is concerned. Her characters, especially mothers and daughters startle and shock by their violent action—sometimes the violence is manifest and sometimes it is silent. Similarly, motherhood sometimes becomes a source of empowerment when it is not based on oppression while at other times motherhood is seen as debased when it is presented as a mode of oppression.

Morrison questions the stereotypical presentation of mothers in literature as warm, caring spirits devoted to their primary job of maternity and in her fiction she presents radically unique mother figures. Morrison's novels preserve the cultural importance of the

maternal specificity among the women of colour. The black maternal ambivalence mainly arises from the triple oppression they face, which make their motherhood a site of contradictions. Hence black motherhood and mothering exhibits atypical and deviant prototypes and Morrison shatters the cultural hesitancy to reveal such stories. However, their femininity shows a fulfilment only with the attainment of proper maternity.

Morrison's mothers develop strength and understanding on three different dimensions—self, other and community. Her mothers sometimes gain self-knowledge through their offsprings and this enables them to love themselves since the son or daughter is commonly viewed as an extension of the self. Mothers may also understand love through relationship with others which may lead to love of self. Over and beyond that, she also learns about the child's place in the community. This community mostly comprises of other mothers which lead to the inception of strong maternal selves in Toni Morrison's characters. Sisterhood is of great importance for the emergence of strong maternal selves since motherhood is not strictly biological in black American milieu.

Pauline Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye* is a character who becomes 'self-destructive' as she lives in a world of fantasy, but Morrison highlights the dangers of living in an ideal world through her. Though the novel does not project the vocation of Pauline as a mother, it delves into the issue of motherhood through her atypical status as a 'non-mother.' Her self-alienation and isolation brings despair in her, which shatters the Breedlove family to its core. As she fails to give her children a loved sense of self, it retards the emotional wellbeing of her children, Sammy and Pecola. It is Pecola, the daughter, who is the most affected as denied motherhood fractures the feminine

consciousness of the daughter than that of the son. Pauline's resentment of motherhood, though unfortunate, is the projection of the specificity of African American culture, where the realities of slavery strip the conventionalities of maternal narratives.

Through Mrs. MacTeer and Mrs. Breedlove, Morrison unveils the ambivalence in relation to the generalized notion of motherhood and the lived experience of the mothers as subjects. Mrs. MacTeer, who holds a strong subjectivity of her own, edifies her daughters with the survival strategies which they use effectively in their evolution of the self. This 'reproduction of mothering' in the MacTeer sisters elevates them to exhibit communal and other mothering within the black femininity even at a young age. Though idealization of the maternal does not occur from the mothers (both biological and surrogate) depicted, it is clear that they attain their selfhoods with their harmony with the maternal.

Beloved is perhaps the most complex story of mother-daughter attachment and affinity in literary history. Maternal loss and longing marks the very substance of the novel. The story is a different plot about revealing the maternal complexity so long repressed in women's writings. A slave woman places high value in her maternity since it is the only abode where she could claim something as hers—at least for a short period of time. So within the slave narrative, motherhood holds a great sway than selfhood, which makes the discourse of a slave-mother inconsistent. Sethe's identification with her mother is closely associated with death and when she becomes a mother, she inherits her mother's maternal legacy. Hence her maternity gets embedded in violence and bloodshed which disfigures the mother-child bond. Committing infanticide in the

name of mother-love demystifies motherhood and threatens her subjectivity.

Though the novel ends with the sabotage of the devouring maternity for the free development of the self, the text evinces hope for the new beginning of the mother-daughter bond between Sethe and Denver. Denver attains the status of a surrogate mother to her own mother and a communal mother to the society. Through such a depiction, Morrison shows the importance of the maternal in Afro American milieu. Both the mother and the daughter achieve their selfhoods within the trope of the maternal. Sethe's evolution of the self becomes possible by coming to terms with her overwhelming maternity and Denver animates her arid subjectivity by exhibiting the maternal to the women around her.

In the context of Indian Writing in English, recent years have seen trend-setting works by women who have realistically dealt with motherhood. Women are presented in such writings as individuals caught between the crossfire of changing ideologies, unable to negotiate the tension between traditional and modern attitudes. Middle class women's minds are still greatly influenced by tradition which stresses on women's domestic and maternal roles as central to her identity. How these women respond to these changing trends is not something which can be easily represented. However, Indian women writers have taken up new themes of genres and have handled it innovatively. This change points to the social transformation wherein India women have started to assert their rights of their mind and body against the overwhelming claim by the patriarchal ideologies.

The reason for clubbing Jaishree Misra along with Margaret Laurence and Toni

Morrison is because though her works are woman-centric, her characters do not conform to the staid stereotypes presented in Indian women writers. Similar to the female characters in Laurence and Morrison, her female characters resolve the clichéd binaries of the self and the 'other.' She handles the issue of 'empowering the mothers' within the feminist realm with a difference. Misra's females seldom negate their feminine and familial roles. Even though they regard marriage essential to female identity, they ignore the idea that it is the only abode of self-worth for a woman. To achieve maternal selfhood these protagonists seldom opt for single lives. They give due respect to the family as well as to their male counterparts. By doing so, they reserve a space of their own. Misra goes beyond the traditional representation of mother-daughter bond. She presents the bond as a highly complex one in the changing Indian scenario.

Misra highlights the impact of culturally constructed images of motherhood on the lived identities of women and the consequences it has on mother-daughter relationship. Her characterization subverts patriarchal discourse in shaping women's maternal selves. Her works not only present the complex and ambivalent nature of mother-daughter bond, but also resurrect the figure of the 'mother' out of oblivion in order to recover a sense of self for mothers. Failure in the maternal function boosts despair, isolation and hollowness in them. Even though the mothers accept their mother-daughter breach calmly but painfully at the beginning of the novels, they not only attain reunion with their daughters but also emerge as mothers with strong selves.

Ancient Promises and *A Scandalous Secret* are praised for its feministic concerns and its main focus on the maternal existence. A close reading of these two

novels indicates the experience of mothering as a positive influence on the daughters and empowering to women in general. Janu, her mother, Neha and Laura experience the tension between their individualistic urges and social expectations within their particular fictional frameworks. The narratives trace the various emancipatory strategies advocated by them for validating their selves in order to reconstruct their own stories. The heroines demonstrate warmth, care and tenderness to their offspring which are the qualities usually associated with mother love. They put forward valuable insights into the mother-daughter association in general and its sincere impact on the individual development of mothers as well as daughters.

Janu and her mother in *Ancient Promises* retrieve from the general notion of viewing motherhood as an oppressive feminine trope and attain maturity and selfhood through their motherly obligations. The novel substantiates the findings of Marianne Hirsch as Janu maintains an intense relational sense of self with her own mother which helps Janu to have a stable foundation for her role as a woman and a mother. Janu's mother develops a strong subjectivity by fighting against the whims and fancies of patriarchy and becomes an empowered mother. Janu by defining her subjectivity through her intimacy with the mother, not only inculcates her mother's virtues but exhibits the same in her life when she becomes a mother. This gives credential to Chodorow's statement that a daughter's identification with her mother is the detrimental factor that produces the girl as a mother.

Neha Chaturvedi in *A Scandalous Secret* is not the Eternal Mother found common in Indian Writing in English who demand sacrifice or taking life to giving life.

Through her, Misra examines the different ways in which motherhood affects women's lives and exhibits how a mother gets trapped within the confines of patriarchy. The novel clearly authenticates the difference between motherhood as experience and institution—the idea put forward by Adrienne Rich. Victimized by various cultural institutions, Neha takes up the role of a childless woman while she experiences a sense of fragmentation and guilt until she acknowledges her maternal self. Empowered by her experiences Neha reunites her shattered self and finds a legitimate space of selfhood by exhibiting heroism and courage within motherhood.

Laura Shaw, Sonya's surrogate mother, looks after Sonya as her own daughter. However, the inconsistency Laura suffers within the adoption triangle makes her an over-emotional mother, which boosts incongruity in the daughter as the primary identification of the child with the mother plays an important role in the formation of self in the child. Though Laura's desire for her daughter's autonomy occasionally strains their bond, she resolves her maternal omnipotence and becomes an empowered mother. This helps Laura to see her daughter as an independent subject. Sonya, who enjoyed her primary relationship with Laura, after completing her quest for self, returns to her adoptive mother. The mother-daughter breach, either between biological mother and daughter or between the adoptive ones, is presented as painful and problematic. This strengthens Rich's and Hirsch's findings that both biological and adoptive mothers are equally able to love their children. Though Sonya hates Neha for abandoning her, there exists a strong pull between the mother and the daughter that helps the dyad to recuperate itself.

Representations of female selfhood and maternal subjectivity in general as presented in these selected six novels demonstrate the authors' continuing concern with the predicament of women, as well as their progression towards a feminism that attempts to accommodate cultural differences without obliterating them in the name of fake universality. The mothers they project never reject motherhood as a precondition for their evolving womanhood. Through these feminist mothering, these writers question the traditional patriarchal constructs and resists discrimination on the grounds of gender by transcending the narrow confines defined by the culture. They break the maternal silencing of mothers and speak for themselves.

The mothers during the course of events overcome the moments that make them feel that they have flawed in one way or the other. They achieve their autonomy only after they abstain from the guilt, lack, alienation and loneliness in connection with their maternal role. In order to achieve their maternal self they never forsake other realms of their psyche. Likewise maternity is never viewed as a confining and restrictive trope for women. The abode of a mother makes possible for these mothers to identify their hidden potentialities. Even surrogate mothering is projected as an empowering bond. The daughters of these feminist mothers also enjoy independent spaces for their development of the self thereby paving way for the smooth functioning of the mother-daughter dyad. However, these writers testify that the over attachment of women to their maternity often creates tension in their accountability as mothers.

In considering the representations of women within the chosen texts, the female characters show a tendency to dismantle conventionality within femininity. The feminist

ideology put forward by them recognizes subjectivity as a site for the interaction of multiple possibilities ranging from subjection to self-assertion. These writers affirm that female individuation envisions constant transformation according to the specific contexts in which the subject in question is placed. This result in the "multiple differences within the maternal" (Hirsch 13).

For the development of feminine personality, "women's mothering capacities and commitments" play an important role (Chodorow 209). In other words, the interconnection between ideology, subjectivity and maternal is of crucial importance in the evolution of the female self. Apart from viewing the ideology of motherhood as a confining cabal, these writers of various cultural spectrum find in the maternal, "a vital space for the enactment of the dynamics of female subjectivity" (Chakravarty 189). The above statement is validated in the select works of Margaret Laurence, Toni Morrison and Jaishree Misra, who find in the trope of maternity a "paradoxical relationship between freedom and responsibility" and acknowledge it as "conceptual spaces with emancipatory potential" (189).

Works Cited

Abrams, M. H., and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Cengage Learning, 2015.

Aki, Kader. *It's Not Over - Rememories of a Haunting Past in Toni Morrison's "Beloved."* Grin Verlag, 2012.

Badinter, Elisabeth. *Mother Love: Myth and Reality: Motherhood in Modern History*. Macmillan, 1981.

Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Vintage Classic, 2015.

Benjamin, Jessica. *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism and the Problem of Domination*. Pantheon Books, 2006.

Bloom, Harold. *Toni Morrison's Beloved*. Blooms Literary Criticism, 2009.

- - -. *Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye*. Blooms Literary Criticism, 2007.

Bouson, J. Brooks. *Quiet As Its Kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison (SUNY Series in Psychoanalysis and Culture)*. State University of New York Press, 2000.

Brandt, Di. *Wild Mother Dancing: Maternal Narrative in Canadian Literature*. Univ. of Manitoba Press, 1993.

Buss, Helen M. *Mother and Daughter Relationships in the Manawaka Works of Margaret Laurence*. Engl. Literary Studies, Univ. of Victoria, 1985.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge, 2015.

Caillouet, Hazel Ruth Reames. *Among Women: Toni Morrison's Mothers, Sisters, and Daughters*. 1997.

- - -. https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_disstheses/6170

Caplan, Paula J. *Dont Blame Mother: Mending the Mother-Daughter Relationship*. Harper & Row, 1990.

Chakravarty, Radha. *Feminism and Contemporary Women Writers: Rethinking Subjectivity*. Routledge India, 2016.

Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Univ. of California Press. 1978.

Coger, Greta Margaret K. *New Perspectives on Margaret Laurence: Poetic Narrative, Multiculturalism, and Feminism*. Greenwood Press, 1996.

Collins, Patricia Hill. "Controlling Images and Black Women's Oppression." *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. Routledge, 2015.

Dally, Ann. *Inventing Motherhood: the Consequences of an Ideal*. Schocken, 1983.

Davies, Carole Boyce. *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*. Routledge, 2002.

Demetrakopoulos, Stephanie A. "Maternal Bonds as Devourers of Womens Individuation in Toni Morrisons Beloved." *African American Review*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1992, p. 51., doi:10.2307/3042076.

Everingham, Christine. *Motherhood and Modernity: an Investigation into the Rational Dimension of Mothering*. Open University Press, 1994.

Firestone, Shulamith. *The Dialectic of Sex: the Case for Feminist Revolution*. Verso, 2015.

Fischer, Lucy Rose. *Linked Lives: Adult Daughters and Their Mothers*. Perennial Library, 1987.

Flax, Jane. "Mother-Daughter Relationships: Psychodynamics, Politics, Philosophy." Eisenstein, Hester, and Alice Jardine. *The Future of Difference*. Rutgers Univ. Press, 1994.

- - -. "The Conflict between Nurturance and Autonomy in Mother-Daughter Relationships and within Feminism." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1978, p. 171., doi:10.2307/3177468.

Fogel, Robert William, and Stanley L. Engerman. *Time on the Cross: the Economics of American Negro Slavery*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1995.

Gordon, Tuula. *Feminist Mothers*. Macmillan, 1990.

Hallstein, D. *White Feminists and Contemporary Maternity: Purging Matrophobia.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Harrison, Nicola. "Sethe, a Slave to Her Past" (23/02/01). **http://www.gradesaver.com/ClassicNotes/Titles/beloved/essays/essay1.html**

Hirsch, Marianne. *The Mother-Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*. Indiana University Press, 1993.

Howells, Caroll Ann. *Private and Fictional Words: Canadian Women Novelists of the 1970s and 1980s*. Methuen, 1987.

Jain, Jasbir. "Indian Feminisms: The Nature of Questioning and the Search for Space in Indian Women's Writing." *Breaking the Silence*. Edited by Sobhana Kurien, Ane Books Pvt. Ltd., 2013.

Jeremiah, Emily. "Motherhood to Mothering and Beyond: Maternity in Recent Feminist Thought." *Journal of the Association for the Research on Mothering* vol. 8, no. 2, 2002, pp. 21-33.

Joseph, Gloria I., and Jill Lewis. *Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives*. South End Press, 1986.

Kaplan, E. Ann. *Motherhood and Representation in Literature and Film, 1830-1960*. Routledge, 1992.

- - -. *Motherhood and Representation: The Mother in Popular Culture and Melodrama*. Routledge. 1992.

King, James, and Margaret Laurence. *The Life of Margaret Laurence*. Vintage Canada, 1998.

Laurence, Margaret. *Dance on the Earth: a Memoir*. McClelland and Stewart, 1989.

- - -. *The Diviners*. Bantam Books, 1978.

- - -. The *Stone Angel*. McClelland and Stewart, 1964.

Lawler, Steph. *Mothering the Self: Mothers, Daughters, Subjects*. Routledge, 2000.

Leira, Halldis, and Madelien Krips. "Revealing Cultural Myths on Motherhood." *Daughtering and Mothering: Female Subjectivity Reanalysed*. Edited by Mens-Verhulst, Janneke van., et al. Routledge, 1993.

Lyman, Peter. "*The Politics of Anger: On Silence, Resentment and Political Speech.*" *Socialist Review*, vol. 11, no. 3, 1981, pp.71-2.

Matus, Jill. "Shame and Anger in *The Bluest Eye.*" *Toni Morison: Contemporary World Writers*. Manchester UP, 1998. 37-54.

Misra, Jaishree. *Ancient Promises*. Penguin Books, 2000.

- - -. *A Scandalous Secret*. Harper Collins, 2011.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved.* Knopf, 1987.

- - -. *The Bluest Eye*. Vintage, 1970.

Morton, Stephen. *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. Routledge, 2010.

Moyers, Bill. "A Conversation with Toni Morrison." *Toni Morrison: Dealing with Race in Literature* (Part Two). 11 March, 1990.

Nabar, Vrinda. *Caste as Woman*. The University of Virginia. Penguine Books, 1995.

Neumann, Erich, and Ralph Manheim. *The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype*. Princeton University Press, 2015

Nubile, Clara. *The Danger of Gender: Caste, Class and Gender in Cotemporary Indian Women's Writing*. Sarup & Sons, 2003.

Olsen, Tillie. *Silences*. The Feminist Press at CUNY, 2014.

O'Reilly, Andrea. *Encyclopedia of Motherhood*. Sage Publications, 2010.

- - -. *Feminist Mothering*. State University of New York Press, 2008.

- - -. *From Motherhood to Mothering: The Legacy of Adrienne Richs Of Woman Born*. State University of New York Press, 2004.

- - -. "Mothering against Motherhood and the Possibility of Empowered Maternity for Mothers and their Children." *Mother Outlaws: Theories and Practices of Empowered Mothering*. Edited. Womens Press, 2004.

- - -. *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: a Politics of the Heart*. State University of New York Press, 2004.

Perry, Ruth, and Martine Watson Brownley. *Mothering the Mind: Twelve Studies of Writers and Their Silent Partners*. Holmes & Meier, 1984.

Peterson, Christopher. "Beloved's Claim." *Modern Fiction Studies*. 52. 3. 2006. 548–69.

Purwar, Alka Rani. *Socio-Cultural Consciousness: Contemporary Indian Writing in English*. Omega Publications, 2011.

Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. Virago, 1991.

Riegel, Christian. *Challenging Territory: the Writing of Margaret Laurence*. University of Alberta Press, 1997.

Rooke, Constance. "A Feminist Reading of "The Stone Angel"." *Canadian Literature 93*, Summer, 1982, pp. 26-41.

Ruddick, Sara. *Maternal Thinking towards a Politics of Peace*. The Womens Press, 1990.

Schalge, Susan L. "Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Motherhood." *Encyclopedia of Motherhood*, doi:10.4135/9781412979276.n133.

Seggerman, Victoria. "Navajo Women and the Resistance to Relocation." *Off Our Backs*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1986, pp. 8–10.

JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/25794874.

Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll. "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America." *Making Sense of Women's Lives: An Introduction to Women's Studies*. Edited by Michelle Plott and Lauri Umansky, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000.

Snitow, Ann. "Foreword." Dinnerstein, Dorothy. *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and Human Malaise*. 1977.

Sulaiman, Susan Rubin. "Writing and Motherhood." *The (M)Other Tongue: Essays in Feminist Psychoanalyst Interpretation*. Edited by. Garner, Shirley Nelson, et al. Cornell UP, 1985.

Sullivan, Rosemary, "An Interview with Margaret Laurence," *A Place to Stand On: Essays by and about Margaret Laurence*. Woodcock, George, and Margaret Laurence. NeWest Press, 1983. p.68.

Verrier, Nancy Newton. *The Primal Wound Understanding the Adopted Child*. Gateway, 2012.

Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mothers Gardens: Womanist Prose*. Open Road Media, 2011.

Waugh, Patricia. *Feminine Fictions: Revisiting the Postmodern*. Routledge, 2014.

Williams, Lisa. *The Artist as Outsider in the Novels of Toni Morrison and Virginia Woolf*. Greenwood Press, 2000.

Woolf, Virginia, and Hermione Lee. *A Room of One's Own, and Other Essays*. Folio Society, 2000.

Wright, Lee Alfred. *Identity, Family, and Folklore in African American Literature*. Garland Pub., 1995.

Wyatt, Jean. "Giving body to the Word: The Maternal Symbolic in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Critical Essays on Toni Morrison's Beloved*. Edited by Barbara H. Solomon, G.K. Hall, 1998, pp. 211-32.

The documentation of this thesis is done according to *MLA Handbook* Eighth Edition.

APPENDIX

1. Author(s) : **Indulekha C.**

   Title of Publication : **"Belonging Nowhere and Everywhere": A Shift from First to Second Generation Diaspora in Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises***

   Journal Name : **International Journal of Innovative Research & Development (IJIRD) Volume 3. Issue 2. February 2014.**

   International / National : **International**

   Publisher with ISSN : **Globeedu Group, ISSN: 2278-0211**

   Indexed by : **Index Copernicus International (ICI)**

   Impact Factor : **2.735**

2. Author(s) : **Indulekha C.**

   Title of Publication : **Rendering Resistance through Violence: Violence as a Survival Maneuver in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye***

   Journal Name : **Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal, Volume 3. Issue-11. March 2014.**

   International / National : **International**

   Publisher with ISSN : **Online Research Book Publication, Maharashtra ISSN: 2278-9529**

   Indexed by : **Google Scholar**

   Impact Factor : **3.176**

3. Author(s) : **Indulekha C.**

Title of Publication : **Re-inventing Motherhood in Jaishree Misra's *Ancient Promises***

Journal Name : **Research Scholar**
Volume 3. Issue 4. Dec 2013.

International / National : **National**

Publisher with ISSN : **Scholars Association of Kerala, ISSN: 2249-6696**