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Joyce Carol Oates

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## **A Psychoanalytic Approach to the Selected Works of Joyce Carol Oates**

**Neslihan GÜLER UĞUR**

### **ÖZ**

Bu çalışmanın amacı ataerkil toplumun baskı uygulayıcı gücü ile her iki cinsiyette görülen kimlik problemi arasındaki ilişkiyi irdelemektir. Özellikle, erkek seri katiller ile kadın kurbanlardaki bölünmüş kişilik sorunu incelenmiş, ataerkil toplumun erkeklerin seri katile dönüştürülmesinde ve kadınların kurban edilmesindeki öncü rolü vurgulanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, Joyce Carol Oates'in seri katil konulu eserleri bu çalışmanın merkezini oluşturmaktadır, çünkü Joyce Carol Oates bu eserlerde Amerika'daki gerçek seri cinayetleri yansıtmaktadır. Her iki eserinde de ana karakterler bölünmüş kişiliğe sahiptirler. Toplumun belirlediği cinsiyet rollerine karşı çıkan ana karakterler, bir kimlik sorunu ile karşı karşıya gelmişlerdir. Freudyan psikanalitik eleştiri ile Nancy Chodorow'un psikanaliz ve feminist tartışmalarından yararlanılarak, bu karakterlerin kimlik kazanma çabaları incelenmiştir. Bu çaba esnasında, erkekler cinsellik ile şiddeti ilişkilendirerek, fallik semboller kullanmışlardır. Bu nedenle, kendilerini yeniden yaratmak için, üzerlerinde şiddet uygulayabilecekleri ve cinsel açıdan istismar edebilecekleri kurbanlara ihtiyaçları vardır. Öte yandan, aynı çaba esnasında kadınlar kendilerini erkeklere bağımlı hissedip, erkeklerin onları yeniden yaratmalarını umut etmişlerdir. Bu durum erkeklerin kadınları kurban etmesini daha kolay hale getirmiştir. Kadınların mazoşistik eğilimlerine karşın, erkeklerin sadistik eğilimleri toplumun baskıcı gücü tarafından da desteklenince, erkek seri katiller ile kadın kurbanlar ortaya çıkmışlardır.

### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the interrelation between the repressive power of patriarchy/society and the identity problems of each gender. More specifically, the fragmented identities in male serial killers and female victims are scrutinized, with an emphasis on the leading role of patriarchy and society in creating male victimizers and female victims. In this respect, Joyce Carol Oates' serial killer narratives have been chosen as the center of this study because she mirrors the real life crimes in America in these works. It has been argued that the protagonists of these works have fragmented selves. Since their rebellion against the pre-determined gender roles is challenged by society, they end up with identity crisis. Within the framework of Freudian psychoanalytic criticism and Nancy Chodorow's arguments on both psychoanalysis and feminism, it has been concluded that they struggle in order to gain coherence in their identities. In this challenging period of identity construction, men relate eroticism to violence and what they use to realize their plans connote phallic symbols. Therefore, they need victims to abuse sexually and physically to recreate themselves. On the other hand, during the same period, a woman feels dependant on men and expects men to recreate her. This makes it easier for men to victimize women. When the sadistic tendency of men as opposed to the masochistic tendency of women is supported by the repressive power of society, male serial killers and female sex victims are born.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WAYG, WHYB? : **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**



## INTRODUCTION

What is the relationship between serial murderers as worldwide celebrities and society? How do these brutal slaughterers gain fame and become the center of attraction in the world? Which mystic power draws people into serial murder cases like a magnet? Although much has been told, written, and discussed about these central questions, it is a fact that serial murderers and murders still keep their mysticism and arise numerous unanswered questions in people's mind. This study presupposes that media lies at the core of the relationship between serial murderers and the society. That is, serial murderers receive widespread media coverage; thus, people find themselves involved in these cases.

In the mid-twentieth century America, it was horrifying that people felt themselves insecure because of the infamous serial killers such as Ted Bundy, Jeffrey Dahmer, and Charles Schmid. It is not surprising that people's fascination and fear towards these manslaughters have also been inspirations for writers as works that mirror the brutality of real life murders have been created.

In this study, among the serial murderers that have been mentioned above, special attention will be paid to Jeffrey Dahmer and Charles Schmid because they are the inspirations for Joyce Carol Oates to write her Bram Stoker Award winning novel **Zombie** and widely discussed story **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**, respectively.

Being one of the most renowned and prolific contemporary writers, Joyce Carol Oates has written more than fifty novels, lots of short stories, and poetry as well. She won the National Book Award for her novel **them**, and her three other novels were nominated for the Pulitzer Prize. In most of her novels, an obsession with violence, murder, terror and fear especially in women can be seen. As Paul Zimmerman notes:

passion is Miss Oates's subject – passion and its irrational power over human destinies. *them*, like her other novels, is filled with murder and mayhem – throats slit, heads blown off, crimes of passion and reason, riots, beatings, prostitution. “Things like that happen every day in Detroit”, she (Oates) says in a voice that is almost a whisper” (Zimmerman, 1970: 14).

This study examines literary representations of true life criminals, focusing on Joyce Carol Oates since “for during the past twenty five years Oates has given readers nothing less than a modern panorama of American life” (Milazzo, 1989: XI). Therefore, Oates is the best choice to examine both real and fictitious serial murderers. The works that are examined in this study are selected on the basis that both **Zombie** and **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?** are inspired by two real life serial murderers; hence, they are the best examples to study the reflection of human brutality in real life. Victimization of people, especially women, after or before sexual abuse is central to serial murders. Therefore, an epidemic of sexual abuse and murder which implicitly attempts to mute women will be examined in the mentioned works of Oates. My discussions heavily rely on psychoanalytic and feminist literary approaches in order to deconstruct the relationship between patriarchy, sexual violence, gender politics, and identity problems.

This study consists of three chapters, and each chapter opens with an introduction of key concepts, continues with an outline of major concerns and develops with a discussion of these points in the fictitious works by Oates. The first chapter establishes a context on serial murders/murderers in the United States of America. The role of the media on the popularity of these cases is emphasized. Regarding this role, David Schmid argues that “the rise of the serial killer is a product of the media's attempt to give a face to the faceless predator criminal” (Schmid, 2005: 15). Indeed, the media has succeeded in this because there are a number of serial murderers who are also worldwide celebrities. Moreover, Schmid draws attention to the admiration and fascination Anthony Hopkins received with the character Hannibal Lecter in the movie *Hannibal* and he maintains that “it seems

both offensive and ludicrous to claim that American culture is not only repelled but also fascinated by serial killers” (Schmid, 2005: 23).

The first chapter specifically concentrates on the real life serial murderers Jeffrey Dahmer and Charles Schmid. General characteristics that are common to almost all the serial murderers in America are examined; among these characteristics fragmented self, the desire to dominate, the tendency to relate violence to eroticism, the role of childhood traumas in murder are studied in detail. The reflection of those characteristics in Oates’ true-crime narratives is discussed with the help of Freudian psychoanalytic approach. As it is noted by Lachmann, if Freudian theory is used to explain the motivations of serial killers, it must be kept in mind that the serial killer experiences an “emotional death” in childhood which means the death of the soul. This experience lays the groundwork for the serial murderer to kill his victims in order to enact his own “soul murder”, (Lachmann, 1995).

This chapter continues with a brief discussion of these issues and their reflection in all serial murder stories by Joyce Carol Oates. In this respect, the serial murderers in all four works **Zombie**, **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**, **Bad Habits**, and **The Girl with the Blackened Eye** are explored thoroughly.

The second chapter concentrates on the novel **Zombie** and the protagonist of the work, Quentin. The problem of identity in Quentin is pondered as a representative of male gender. To explain the fragments in Quentin’s self, Freudian triangle of id, ego, and superego is used. Moreover, a detailed analysis of identity crisis in boys is provided with Nancy Chodorow’s feminist and psychoanalytic discussions on the long-term effects of the earliest identification with father and mother on the construction of identity. In this regard, fathers as lacking figures and mothers as primary identifications are discussed.

Moreover, the desire to master and dominate the others as a male characteristic is one of the main concerns of this chapter because Quentin’s main objective is to create a zombie that can obey all his demands unquestioningly. He

both kills and rapes his victims but his motivation is neither erotic fulfillment nor murder. He wants to recreate himself with a new, unified identity. As a social outcast, he needs someone to love him and not to judge him because of his homosexuality as Richard Isay's comments on homosexuality include "his sexuality known to his father but secret to his mother, became a focus and displacement of aspects of himself that made him feel hated and hateful" (Isay, 1986), and this is exactly what Quentin suffers from.

The chapter continues with discussions on the attempts made by Quentin to construct a new identity for himself. In this respect, Quentin's use of pen, ice pick, car has phallic significations, representing men's feeling of superiority over women. Furthermore, the reflection of gender roles on these works is examined, concentrating mainly on the male gender as the active and superior gender to the female gender.

The main concern of the third chapter is the short story **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**, and an analysis of the protagonist, Connie, in terms of split identity is given. As opposed to the second chapter, this section searches for the reasons that cause fragments in the identity of women. Connie, as a representative of rebellious young girl who has a split personality, embodies both the id and the ego, while her conformist and dominating mother personifies the superego.

The crucial effects the society has on the identity formation of women cannot be ignored as Georg Simmel argues that the society challenges individuals with some rules and regulations. Even though these rules and regulations are not written, all the individuals are expected to obey them in order to survive in that society. Hence, people get used to the impositions of the society as if these orders need to be fulfilled unquestioningly. Over time, people internalize those social impositions and act accordingly as if they are their own decisions (Simmel, 2009: 127). In a patriarchal world, these rules and regulations restrict women and favor men; therefore, it is

women more than men who experience submission and repression as Karen Horney illustrates:

...women have adapted themselves to the wishes of men and felt as if their adaption were their true nature. That is, they see or saw themselves in the way that their men's wishes demanded of them; unconsciously they yielded to the suggestion of masculine thought" (Horney, 1926).

In the light of this argument, women's willing submission to patriarchy, and their unconscious enforcement of passive female roles on their daughters are discussed in relation to Connie and her mother.

The serial murderer Arnold in the story is reflected as an omnipotent figure that signifies the omnipotence of male gender. Connie's immediate submission to Arnold and her perception of him as a father figure are discussed in the framework of feminism. Moreover, Nancy Chodorow's and Juliet Mitchell's discussions of the masochistic tendency of women as opposed to the sadistic tendency of men are examined thoroughly. The story narrates the masochistic serial murderer Arnold and the sadistic victim Connie because Connie submits to Arnold even though she knows that Arnold will harm her.

Another important point in the last chapter is the criticism of blaming victims for the violence to which they are subjected. That is, Connie rebels against the predetermined female gender role by exceeding the limits that are imposed upon her by the society. Hence, she is perceived as deserving the punishment as a result of tempting boys. As David Schmid notes; "blaming the victim is a time-honored tradition in true-crime work about the serial murder of women, especially where the victims are prostitutes, working-class, poor women and/or women of color" (Schmid, 226). Surprisingly enough, there are rapists who think that dressing style and manners of women invite men to sexual abuse; moreover, it is women to blame for this, not men. The relationship between such a belief and the impositions of society, patriarchy and dominant ideology are one of the issues in this chapter.

In a general context, this study suggests that patriarchal values have the leading role in the transformation of males into serial killers and transformation of women into muted objects. It is also argued that both male and female characters that reject predetermined gender roles end up with fragmented selves, each of which personifies Freudian id, ego, and superego. Since these transformations are majorly experienced at the unconscious level and they cause the repression of women as opposed to exaltation of men, it is appropriate to benefit from psychoanalytic and feminist literary theories to examine the gender roles within the context of the mentioned works by Joyce Carol Oates.

## CHAPTER 1

### PATRIARCHY AND THE MALE GAZE IN THE SERIAL MURDER STORIES OF JOYCE CAROL OATES

#### 1.1 Serial Murder/Murderer

The rapidly increasing number of academic studies on serial murders/murderers and the widespread media coverage they receive certainly reflect people's curiosity, fascination and interest in serial murder cases and the need to attain some substantial data on this issue. Furthermore, it is beyond any doubt that there is a parallelism between the increase in the popularity and number of serial murder cases. That is, as the number of cases increases, people feel more involved and more insecure. On the other hand, these cases pique public interest to an extraordinary extent. In turn, stories, novels, and movies based on real or imaginary serial killer cases gain popularity because of their partial fulfillment of people's curiosity about their mystery.

Characteristic features, race, age, occupation, childhood history, sexual orientation, genetic predisposition, selection of victims and especially the motivations that drive serial murderers to killing successively have always been a subject of great debate. This chapter aims to explore some of these factors and reach a conclusion on the common features serial murderers share because they possess both convergent and divergent characteristic features. Moreover, it will be brought to view how most serial murderer cases are a reflection of patriarchy and how the victimization of sexually objectified people - almost in all cases women - is a result of the male gaze. The works of Joyce Carol Oates that are based on real serial murder cases will be scrutinized in the framework of patriarchy, the male gaze, and their impact on murder.

What makes a person a serial murderer is the act of killing people within a period of time. As Fox and Levin define it, it includes victimization of four or more people

which is carried out within a time span that ranges from a day to years. The age range of a typical serial murderer is usually from late twenties to thirties, and the serial murderer is usually a white male. Although what lies behind their psyche that motivates them to kill is controversial, serial killers are thought to be power-hungry sadists who assassinate people to provide satisfaction for their fantasies and to achieve domination and mastery over others by force, (Fox & Levin, 1998: 410). The role of the fantasy in killing is one of the key points because it has a significant impact particularly on killing serially. That is, because serial murderers seek mastery and domination over other people in their fantasies, the act of killing is an attempt to make their fantasy/dream world come true. With each person they kill, they temporarily quench the thirst for mastery over the others. After a period of time, the quench for blood and domination stimulates them again, and it leads to another assassination. Since it is impossible to attain the dream world in which serial killers have total and permanent mastery over others, the act of killing is repeated over and over, resulting in a series of murders. In the article written by Fox and Levin, these attempts are called “trial runs”, and it is maintained that “the killer strives to make his real-life experiences as perfect as his fantasy. Nevertheless, because the trial run can never match the fantasy, the killer repeatedly needs to stage his fantasy with another victim”, (Fox&Levin, 417). It can be argued that the most striking characteristic feature that distinguishes a serial murderer from a murderer is the fact that a serial murderer is controlled by his fantasies, and the murders are like plays that stage these fantasies. Philip Simpson, in his analysis of the novel **Zombie** by Joyce Carol Oates, draws our attention to what the serial killer in the story says; “For everything that happens, has happened, will happen again” (Oates, 2009: 149). Simpson suggests that “The statement is also an apt description of the structuring principle of the serial killer” (Simpson, 2000: 158). It refers to serial murder cases as being repetitive. There is no doubt that the serial killer here does not offer the reader information on the successiveness of serial killing; however, what he says is parallel to what he does. It is all due to the fact that the fantasized world he has is far beyond his reach. Therefore, this statement uttered by the serial murderer indeed summarizes the principle in serial murder cases.



Another essential point that should not be ignored is that in most serial murder cases, victims are not only murdered but also raped after or before the murder. As Angela Pardue and Bruce Arrigo define it, rape is the penetration of a person's vagina, mouth, or anus with a penis or an object without the consent of that person. It is done through violence and with threats. They maintain that the aim is not erotic fulfillment but control over the victim. It proves that rape is not a result of sexual hunger; on the contrary, it is a means for serial murderers to conceal their inadequacy and display their masculinity by humiliating their victims, (Pardue & Arrigo, 2007).

In both real and fictitious cases of serial murder, mastery and domination are executed through sexual victimization. In other words, the act of combining sexual intercourse with murder exposes the way these murderers perceive eroticism. According to them, sex is a means of mortifying women, as Brownmiller points out:

In a case of rape, the threat of force doesn't secure a tangible commodity as we understand the term, although sex traditionally has been viewed by men as "the female treasure"; more precisely, in rape the threat of force obtains a highly valued sexual service through temporary access to the victim's intimate parts, and the intent is not merely to take, but to humiliate and degrade (Brownmiller, 2000:258).

In fact, it has been demonstrated that while sex is simply a natural instinct to reproduce or obtain pleasure, it is associated with violence, power, humiliation and degradation in the minds of the serial murderers which are coded with patriarchal values, even if the victim is not a woman but a man. Like the objectification of women in patriarchy, victims are considered as objects to provide satisfaction for the sexually deviant demands of murderers.

What is also crucially noteworthy is that "contrary to the popular stereotype, serial killers tend in many respects to be "extraordinarily ordinary", (Fox&Levin, 1998: 413). In addition to a large number of surprising facts about serial murderers, people mostly feel shocked when they learn the identity of a serial murderer. It is

highly possible that people who are perceived as innocent and harmless next door neighbor turn out to be serial murderers. This confirms that the serial murderer leads double lives; one is hidden and the other one is exposed to other people. Of course, the only person who is exposed to that hidden self is the victim. Except for the victim, nobody knows the split personality in the serial murderer, and this is called “fractured identity syndrome” as Holmes explains:

Fracture... means that there is a small breakage of the personality. It is not a total destruction; the old personality is not ravaged. A small, but potent, and destructive segment takes its place alongside the total personality. More often, the fracture is not visible to the outside world, it is only felt by the serialist. To the outside world, the serial appears normal...the only person to witness the fractured identity component of the actual social identity is the victim of the sexual killer. (Holmes, Tewksbury, Holmes, 1999: 267-269).

It is also maintained that this fracture usually comes into being in adolescence as a result of one or more social events that affect the victim deeply. This hidden identity, for sure, provides serial murderers with a chance to avoid suspicion by the people around them. Not only do serial murderers pretend to be as normal as others in society, some of them are also known to be loving and affectionate family members, ready to help people whenever they are needed. Therefore, on the façade, a serial killer is not different from other people. In addition to hiding their true self, serial murderers carry out their plans in an organized way in order not to arouse suspicion. In particular, they are selective in the choice of their victims to prevent being caught by the police. They usually victimize hitchhikers or people whose absence will not be noticed immediately. Pardue and Arrigo point out that geographic location, personal characteristics, age, race, marital status, mobility, life style patterns, and residential location are all taken into account in the selection of victims, (Pardue-Arrigo, 2007: 385).

In order to find out what makes serial murderers develop split identities and become bloodthirsty homicidal individuals, one must look back to their childhood. Childhood abuse and traumas play major roles in turning an innocent person into a sexual predator as explained by Annette and Frank Lachmann, “the early abuse and

neglect result in massive arousal of reactive, aversive motivations - to the point that the development of the other proactive motivations may be compromised” (Lachmann, 1995). That is, a person who has undergone sexual abuse or experienced any kinds of trauma may act with aggression in order to get revenge for what has been done to him. Hence, such feelings may push a serial murderer to make the victims go through the very traumatic experiences he already lived in the childhood. Or, another motivation is the effort to reverse the pain, abuse or helplessness so that the early pain is transferred into pleasure through dominating, controlling, and torturing the victim, (Ibid.). By inflicting pain on the others, they purify themselves of their own pain. Also, the fact that they have already suffered a similar pain makes them feel free of guilt. As a result, most serial murderers do not feel any mercy towards their victim and also do not regret what they have done.

A final characteristic trait is that serial murderers often keep something that belongs to their victims; those mementos can be body parts of their victims or anything that belongs to them. There are various reasons for doing so, yet the pleasure that is felt by murderers during a murder plays the biggest role in this respect.

Lachmann puts forward the claim that serial murderers not only keep something that belongs to their victims, they may also bury the dead bodies of victims in their own house or eat the body parts. He claims it is a way of uniting and being one with the victim; consequently, the serial murderer achieves total control and possession over the dead body by eating it. As for the mementos, they enable serial murderer to re-live the feelings of mastery and control over the victim again and again, (Ibid.). In a parallel way, Ron Longevin argues that for a serial killer who leads an ordinary life, these mementos may represent a treasure that makes him feel proud. They are of such high value because they are the only things that distinguish a serial murderer from others. Moreover, they are the only proofs of his murders, and whenever he looks at them, he remembers the “good times” he spent with the victims, (Longevin, 2003: 419). In short, they provide him with an opportunity to feel the pleasure again that was felt at the time of killing.

## 1.2. The Serial Murder Stories by Joyce Carol Oates That Were Inspired by Real Life Serial Killers

The increasing number of serial murder cases and the power of media to inform the public of their activities have certainly had a strong influence on people. As far as the United States of America in the 1900's is concerned, Longevin makes the claim that there was a 30% increase in the number of murders by unidentified perpetrators in 1994. Therefore, the American public became scared, and thought that there was an epidemic of serial homicide, totaling approximately 5000 victims each year, (Longevin, 2003: 411). It must not be surprising that Joyce Carol Oates, having gone through the same experiences as American society, was inspired by these well-known serial murderer cases in America and produced works that reflect the fear, terror, and horror those cases inspired.

Two of the short serial murder stories, written by Joyce Carol Oates are **Bad Habits** and **The Girl with the Blackened Eye**. The first one narrates the shock and disappointment a family feels upon learning that the father in the family is arrested for torturing and killing nineteen people in the neighborhood within a period of twelve years. Not only the members of the family, but also people who know the father feel distressed when they learn this because the father had always appeared "extraordinarily ordinary". More specifically, he has always been famous for being good and helpful, "Father had recently been elected president of the church council. In our new church, the minister prayed for Father and for Father's family", (Oates, 2007: 103). He makes a perfect serial murderer whom nobody suspects, just as Fox and Levin argued that most serial murderers have both jobs and families. They also often help people by doing volunteer work, and they kill part time. Additionally, the multiple roles they play as loving fathers or good citizens, together with a process of dehumanization, could be the factors that make it possible for them to kill so many people without feeling guilty (Lachmann, 1995). It is emphasized in the story that the father shows no remorse or regret for what he has done despite the fact that he is known for being a helpful and good person. He represents the typical serial murderer

in America in the 1900's. Besides, the family has nowhere to go to maintain a peaceful life after this event because the notoriety of the event in the media makes people stare at them wherever they go, as it is written that "we knew that Father was frequently on TV and in the newspapers because in all the Midwest no one was more famous than Father", (Oates, 2007: 104). Taking all these elements into consideration, the father has both a visible and an invisible identity as a loving father and a sexual predator. He is devoid of feelings such as guilt or remorse. Lastly, as a case involving a serial murder, it attracted people's interest, so it was frequently represented in press coverage.

In **The Girl with the Blackened Eye**, the protagonist narrates how she was raped, beaten, and tortured years ago at the age of fifteen by a stranger. It happened when she left a mall after spending some time with her friends. The murderer is again a man in his thirties, and he uses his car to abduct the girl. Furthermore, the murderer is depicted as an omnipotent figure who knows everything and about whom the victim notes "he knew me, he knew all my secrets, what a dirty minded girl I was" (Oates, 2010). The typical serial murderer, with his car that symbolizes his masculinity, is again depicted as an omnipotent figure. Moreover, the serial murderer is careful in his murders; he decides not to kill the protagonist, yet he rapes her repeatedly, and tortures her physically. However, when he believes there is a victim who deserves death, he does not hesitate to kill her. A woman "with a shapely body, breasts I could envy and her hips in the tight-fitting khaki pants that were stylish, with drawstring waist" (Ibid.), comes across the murderer, and the way she is dressed and her sexually attractive manners lead to her death. In other words, the serial murderer with his patriarchal attitude believes these kind of sexual manners in women make them worthy of death. Additionally, what is disturbing about the story is the loyalty the protagonist feels towards her rapist; she naively claims that "He trusted me, and I could not betray that trust. Even if he would kill me, I could not betray him", (Ibid.). In spite of all the torture she underwent and the fact that she witnessed the victimization of others, she cannot put an end to the feeling of loyalty she feels towards her abductor. This is indicative of the power, patriarchy has to

create muted women who choose not to speak even they know that speaking could put a stop to such murders.

### 1.2.1 Dahmer and Schmid in Fiction

The Bram Stoker Award winning novel **Zombie**, by Joyce Carol Oates is remarkable due to the fact that it is narrated by a serial murderer who appears as if he has no evil intentions, but he undertakes endless efforts to create a zombie for himself. The narrator of the story is Quentin, who is on parole for the crime of child molestation, so he attends psychological therapy. He is a sociopath who lives isolated from people, and a homosexual who is attracted to teenage boys. As a son of a distinguished professor, he performs lobotomies in his house to turn the young boys that attract him into zombies. Unfortunately, unlike his well-known and successful father, Quentin does not succeed in making a zombie. Each experiment with his victims results in the death of the victim. During these experiments, Quentin rapes them numerous times, even after they are dead. The drives that motivate Quentin to rape his victims repeatedly in fact do not stem from a need to have erotic fulfillment but to have psychological fulfillment by making his fantasies real. He continues raping his victims even after they are dead because, just as Lachmann asserts, serial killers need total domination and control and only “an inert body can provide unambivalent acceptance and unquestioned control”, (Lachmann, 1995). The motivation for psychological fulfillment is so powerful that in spite of his being highly selective in choosing his victims, he cannot help but drag “Squirrel” into his car. “Squirrel” is the son of a middle-class white family and his disappearance brought on much media coverage, which is quite risky for Quentin. Up to that moment, Quentin’s selection of his victims is like what Fox and Levin describe; serial killers prefer people with whom they have no previous connection like prostitutes, hitchhikers, or children, (Fox-Levin, 1998: 426). He is so much determined to experience a sexual intercourse with him that, for the first time, he does not hesitate to risk his life and break his principles.

Throughout the narration, Quentin depicts his childhood memories, each of which is about his failures and sexual deviance, and his father's reproachful gaze on Quentin. In this way, his father is like an omnipotent figure that can see everything, and he condemns Quentin for everything he does. There is no doubt that such a problematic relationship with his father, together with the possibility of being raped in his childhood triggered the transformation of Quentin into a serial killer, just as Lachmann argues "a serial killer is born when early experiences of abuse, deprivation, and deception lead to a specific fantasy system and motivations" (Lachmann, 1995). Indeed, Oates' inspiration for Quentin was Jeffrey Dahmer who was "... identified as a sexually sadistic offender on the basis of the crimes he committed in the Milwaukee Wisconsin area before his arrest in 1951" (Pardue-Arrigo, 2007: 384). Just like Quentin, Dahmer killed boys and men, and hence became notorious for his brutal murders in America. As Simpson points out, there is much parallelism between Quentin and Dahmer; both are sexually deviant murderers, victimizing and raping boys and men, both have strained relationships with their well-educated fathers, and both Quentin and Dahmer were alcohol and drug abusers who had been convicted for child molestation, (Simpson, 2000: 157-8). The popularity of these serial murders in the media drew people into these cases whether they wanted to be interested or not.

Another very widely-known story by Joyce Carol Oates is **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**, which narrates the tragic life and the unknown end of the protagonist. As Showalter argues, "the story deals with a terrifying possibility of contemporary American life, a situation of invasion, abduction, and probable rape and murder" (Showalter, 1994: 4). It is the story of Connie, who is just fifteen years old and is determined to live a sexually independent life. However, her rebellion against prescribed gender roles is the first step that takes her to Arnold Friend, who is determined to take Connie away to an unknown place and rape. At the end of the story, Connie leaves with Arnold. Although neither serial murders nor any kind of killing are mentioned in the narration, the fact that Oates was inspired by the real life serial murder Charles Schmid makes us think that Arnold is a serial murderer, too.

She noted that she read about him most likely in *Life* magazine, but she avoided reading the full article to prevent herself from being distracted. The serial murderer was referred to as “The Pied Piper of Tucson;”and he was quite skillful at charming young girls. Although there was more than one murder, and the teenagers around him knew this fact, they did not tell the police anything about it, (Oates, 1994: 67). That is how Oates finds herself involved in writing the story **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**.

Charles Schmid was a twenty-three year old murderer when he was arrested by the police. He killed the girls in his neighborhood, and surprisingly his friends who knew this did not tell anything to the police. Charles wore make-up and stuffed tin cans into the bottom of his boots in order to look taller because he was short, (Moser, 1994: 53). Like Charles, Arnold wears make up and walks as if there is a problem in his feet because of the tin cans in his boots. It is true that the story is open-ended, but all the similarities between Arnold and Charles, and Oates’ own statement that the news on Charles Schmid was the inspiration for this story make it probable that Arnold rapes and kills Connie at the end of the story.

A closer inquiry into the serial murderers in these works, namely Quentin and Arnold, can indicate how successful Oates is in the creation of these characters. At the most basic level, it must not be forgotten that both Quentin and Arnold are white males, aged around thirty. Moreover, despite Quentin’s lack of attachment to reality and having led a life of fantasies, he is very selective in choosing his victims. He pays maximum attention not to kill any boys whose absence will be detected immediately.

The highly rich and colorful fantasy life that Quentin creates is an ideal example in this respect. Indeed, the title of the novel is revealing because Quentin himself is already a zombie without a real life. He lives in his dream world with the hope of acquiring a zombie one day. Therefore, one of his most powerful motivations is his fantasies with his zombies, as Simpson asserts: “Quentin’s fantasy life is so powerful because his reality is so bleak”, (Simpson, 2000: 158). Indeed,



Quentin's fantasies are a reflection of his real life encounter Jeffrey Dahmer's fantasies. Quentin wants to turn a boy into a zombie with the help of performing lobotomies on his victim. He imagines this zombie will obey his all demands without any questions, like Dahmer, who used a syringe to inject acid into the brains of his victims in order to have a compliant and unconscious partner (Pardue&Arrigo, 2007: 389). In this regard, he is typical of other serial killers in this era. In addition, Quentin keeps something from each of his victims, either a tooth, or boots, or clothes. He frequently checks on them and sometimes wears them. As for the tooth, he believes it will bring him luck. These are the mementos that will always remind him of his power and domination over his victims, and the pleasure he experienced with them.

What Arnold and Quentin have in common is their cars that play a significant role in the way they carry out their brutal murders. Quentin drags his victims into his car; he, then, either rapes/kills them in the car or he takes them to his room by his car. The importance of his car in his life really cannot be underestimated. He notes:

I drive everywhere in my Ford van. It is a 1987 model, the color of wet sand. No longer new but reliable. It passes through your vision like passing through a solid wall invisible, (Oates, 2009: 4).

In fact, the invisibility of the car as mentioned by Quentin is symbolic because he performs his murders in the car, so it must be invisible to keep them secret. Furthermore, it is an inevitable component of Quentin. He cannot realize his plans without the car, so it metaphorically stands for Quentin's power. Also, once his father lets Quentin drive his car, he feels so proud; therefore, it is a like symbolic masculine power that passes from father to son. In a parallel way, Arnold arrives at Connie's house in his car. The car is again a part of Arnold's identity as when he introduces himself to Connie, he points out the car and shows his name which is written on the car. Like Quentin, Arnold is planning to take his victims away by his

car. Moreover, in both cases, it is males that own and drive cars; thus, the car signifies their masculinity and power. In this respect Showalter maintains that,

in the story (WAYG,WHYB?) only boys and men seem to drive. If the girls want to go to the movies, they have to find a father to drive them; if they want sexual privacy with a boy, his car provides it. Connie is always at the mercy of men who will come with a vehicle to take her away, to take her somewhere else. Women have no agency, no vehicle, no wheels. It's not coincidental that Arnold Friend's golden convertible is part of his magic", (Showalter, 1994:17).

Therefore, cars are considered as phallic symbol that belongs to men; furthermore, it enables them to maintain their gender superiority over females.

### **1.2.2 Patriarchy and Male Gaze**

A point of vital importance reflected in these books is that they demonstrate how patriarchal violence is distilled in the minds of people. In other words, in addition to all the inequalities between women and men, patriarchy encodes into the minds of people that men have the right to be violent towards women. To clarify, dominant ideology has the central role in creating assassins that victimize women. Margaret Randall draws attention to an important point in her article that female victims in serial murder cases are consistently called "people" as if it is a rule that victims are supposed to be females. It is because in almost all cases females are victimized, in contrast to a smaller number of young male victims, (Randall, 1987). In **Zombie** and **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**, the serial murderers are male; but the victims are male in the first one, as opposed to the female victims in the latter. Interestingly enough, a closer look into these two works by Oates shows that sexual deviance in men drives them to be inhuman serial murderers; on the other hand, it is not sexual deviance but even the wish to have sexual freedom that makes women become men's victim. In this respect, the male gaze plays a central role because it is what creates male victimizers and offers them women as sex victims.

In **Zombie**, Quentin's biggest challenge in life is his father's omnipotent eyes that follow and see him everywhere. Whenever he narrates an event from his childhood, it is seen that he has always been under the control of his father's eyes that always criticize Quentin. Initially, it is his failures at school and in life, and later his homosexuality that cause his father to be disappointed in him. As a result, his father reflects his feelings towards Quentin through his reproachful gaze. For this reason, throughout the book, Quentin repeats over and over that he should avoid eye contact.

On the other hand, Quentin strives not to look into only the eyes of men, but he is not afraid of the gaze of women, because, according to him, instinctively women do not judge, and as Quentin says "for women, it is their nature to forgive", (Oates, 2009: 20). Women do not constitute such a threat for Quentin as Simpson explains;

Quentin recognizes how difficult it is for his father to not pass judgment on him...With the terror of the Dark Father's disapproval providing the script, Quentin's life is determined in large part by his avoidance of the judgment of others, symbolized in the narrative by his consistent refusal to make eye contact with others (Simpson, 2000:161).

Therefore, it is the male gaze that is judgmental, threatening, expecting you to conform to society, to do what your gender role requires you to do. Additionally, it is the male gaze that influences and shapes one's behavior. Undoubtedly, anything that pleases the male gaze is patriarchal and anything against patriarchy triggers a critical male gaze. It is because the dominant ideology supports and is supported by patriarchy.

In **Zombie**, Quentin fails to fulfill the requirements of his gender in terms of sexual intercourse. His sexual orientation is against the norms of society, the pressure of which is felt through the criticizing eyes of the father. All this pressure triggers the hidden and violent part of Quentin's personality, which bursts out as the urge to be a serial murderer. That is to say, his sexual deviance and the judgmental eyes on him, like in a chain reaction, force him to create a zombie for himself who

will never judge him. The split personality in Quentin is a result of the burden he bears to hide his sexual orientation and to gain approval. Thus, Quentin the serial murderer is a creation of patriarchy and the male gaze.

Although patriarchy turns Quentin into a sociopath serial murderer, he is also favored by it because it offers women to serial murderers as victims. In other words, the roles offered to men and women in a serial murder case favor men because it is almost always men who kill and women who are killed. It is true that in **Zombie**, the victims are not women but young boys. However, it should not be ignored that nothing derogatory or negative is told about these male victims throughout the narration. That means they are depicted as innocent victims who definitely do not deserve such death. It is completely Quentin's sick mind that causes the death of these boys, who are pure and guiltless victims.

Just same as in **Zombie**, the male gaze is an important issue in **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**. As Quentin suffers from the male gaze throughout the book, what counts for Connie in life are the looks of men and their evaluations of her through their looks. The strongest evidence of this is the importance of physical beauty for Connie and her underestimation of her mother and her sister owing to the fact that they are not physically attractive.

Patrick Paul Christle constructs a definition of male gaze and makes an essential point in this respect:

I found him (Arnold Friend) to be the personification of phallogentric sexuality and, thus of patriarchal culture. My interpretation here has much to do with what Irigaray writes about the masculine "gaze" ...Irigaray finds that Freud's definition of women is based on sight, specifically what Freud sees when he looks at male, and female genitals...Irigaray finds that this "gaze" has nothing to do with reality of women (Christle, 1993).

His analysis of the male gaze in **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?** is revealing. When Arnold is with Connie, he looks at her through his metallic-mirrored glasses. These glasses reflect the views of men toward women that

is biased by patriarchal values, so the glasses actually do not reflect reality. Indeed, at the end of the story Arnold calls Connie “my little blue-eyed girl”; however, Connie has brown eyes, (Ibid.). The way Arnold sees Connie and the way Connie is do not match each other. It is fairly clear that when Arnold looks at Connie, he does not look at her literally. That is to say, he has already been affected by certain ideas about the female gender. Whenever he looks at a woman, what he sees is just the embodiment of these imposed ideas. Therefore, women are devoid of subjectivity, and they are all the same according to male gaze. Moreover, not only Arnold but also his friend accompanying him in the car wears glasses, too. It is related that these glasses “mirrored everything in miniature” (Oates, 1994: 32). Reflecting something in miniature means showing them in a much smaller size than the real size, and that entails ignorance of details. In patriarchy, how males perceive females is through an underestimating of them and rendering of them as objects. Arnold and his friend, both with glasses, see Connie in a smaller size, not literally but in a social and feminist perspective; this reveals the underestimation of women through the male gaze. Hence, Connie stands for the muted women or “women rendered silent and inarticulate in American society”, (Showalter, 1994: 8).

While the controlling male gaze creates a psychopath out of Quentin, the same male gaze causes Connie’s death. To be clearer, Quentin is supposed to be obeying the codes of society and be heterosexual. On the other hand, he is homosexual and this is against his gender role, it is especially what his father cannot stand. The pressures male gaze puts on him lead him to be a murderer. Similarly, Connie rebels against the female gender role and resists it as much as she can. On the other hand, the male gaze in disguise of Arnold punishes Connie with rape and death for her rebellion against her gender role.

These two fictions **Zombie** and **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**, based on real serial murderer cases, demonstrate the reality that eroticism and domination are two key factors that are accompanied with violence in these serial murder cases. Psychopath killers fulfill their wish to dominate others by combining their sexuality with violence. In other words, it can be argued that for patriarchal

minds, sexual intercourse is conceived of as a means to humiliate the opposite sex.

As Simpson argues:

Sexual murder is a product of the dominant culture. It is the ultimate expression of a sexuality that defines sex as a form of domination/power; it, like rape, is a form of terror that constructs and maintains male supremacy, (Simpson, 2000: 156).

It cannot be denied that there must be some psychological disorders that trigger these men to kill; however, the fact that the majority of victims are women and killing is carried out through erotic domination proves that patriarchy shapes killers' minds to a great extent. Moreover, in an analysis of the title of the story **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**, Peter Betjemann focuses on the source and the end of patriarchy which are both unknown, and he argues:

Where are you going and where have you been are questions that Connie should ask Arnold, who seems to come from nowhere and be headed anywhere and, most importantly, who wants to take her with him...this is an interesting metaphor for patriarchy, as well, since it is everywhere and always pervasive, though not always recognized (Betjemann, 2010).

As a result, **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?** is not only about serial murder, or the life of a young girl; it is a powerful representation of the power of patriarchy over both women and men. It is also undeniable that patriarchy has been existing since the beginning of human kind. Moreover, the question about when a social order which is independent of patriarchy in society, politics, education, and all areas of life will be established is unanswered. Therefore, Arnold Friend, as a foreigner without a known origin and end, represents patriarchy. As for Connie, she can be any woman who resists patriarchy. Her mother and her sister are conformists, so they lead a life of little value because there is nothing to make them feel like individuals and they are submitters as opposed to Connie.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY

#### 2.1 Male Characters

A common problem to both female and male characters in Joyce Carol Oates' works is their disability or insufficiency to construct a whole, unified identity for themselves. Particularly, they are entrapped among the paradigms such as family, society, culture, and their inner psyches. Each of these paradigms regards itself as the dominant factor in the formation of identity; therefore, the interrelation between them corresponds to a power struggle. In this power struggle, the individual suffers from bewilderment since s/he feels obliged to satisfy all these paradigms. The most important result that emerges from this confusion is that the individual turns out to be the victim of this power struggle, and s/he ends up with an identity crisis.

Even though identity crisis leads to trouble in both females and males, the conflicts and struggles women and men experience during this period really differ for each sex extensively. The expectations of family, society, and one's inner self, conscious and unconscious drives are highly different for girls and boys; they are sometimes the opposite. While female characters are pushed to reside in their domestic sphere passively, male characters are expected to entail all characteristic traits that signify power, dominance, and activity in all areas of life. Therefore, despite suffering from the same difficulty, the pain each sex has during this identity construction period drives them to diverse paths due to the opposite expectations from each gender. This chapter aims at providing a critical discussion on the commonly believed idea that it is always females who are less favored than males during the period of identity formation. On the contrary, men do endure more psychological trouble. While males' and females' first identification is with their

mothers, females have the privilege of being the same sex with their mother, of which males are deprived.

The problem of identity construction can be analyzed in the frame of psychoanalytic literary criticism; hence, it is indispensable to focus primarily on the inner conflicts of one's psyche, as Chodorow points out:

the major contribution of psychoanalysis is not its account of the necessity of repression but its account of the fundamental opposition between the individual and the culture. The individual's core-her or his drives-cannot be completely dominated; the instincts can be a center of resistance and opposition, (Chodorow, 1989: 116).

A whole, unified identity prerequisites a parallelism and agreement between the way one thinks and behaves. In this way, a person does not feel the pressure of domination by anybody; in other words, a balance between the self and external world is kept. Thus, one states his ideas freely, and feels aware of the distinction between the self and the other. He has a clear sense of the boundaries between the self and the external world; therefore, he is not hesitant about stopping the inference of others into his life whenever it is necessary. On the other hand, these two - the way one thinks and behaves- sometimes contradict each other. That is to say, some desires of the self are repressed by the individual to get the approval of the people around him. Such a renunciation of certain drives results in a tension in one's inner psyche; consequently, the individual ends up with an identity crisis. In this respect, Freud notes:

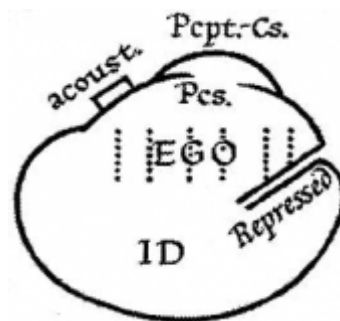
In the course of things it happens again and again individual instincts or parts of instincts turn out to be incompatible in their aims or demands with the remaining ones, which are able to combine with the inclusive unity of the ego. The former are then split off from this unity by the process of repression, held back at lower levels of psychical development and cut off, to begin with, from the possibility of satisfaction, (Freud, 1960: 8).

The drives that cannot be reconciled with the instincts of the ego are driven by the pleasure principle. It is the id that compromises the pleasure-seeking and immoral instincts of human psyche. These feelings need immediate satisfaction



without taking into consideration any sense of value, judgment, and morality. On the other hand, people do not live alone; society determines some codes, regulations, and norms to be obeyed by its members. When all these codes, regulations, and norms are intertwined together with the expectations and the rules of family, they constitute the reality principle. Therefore, the pleasure principle serves the id while the reality principle is the guide for the superego. To put it in another way, the id seeks for pleasure, whereas the superego is occupied with regulating the drives of the id so as to adapt them to what is right and wrong. The negotiator between the id and the superego is the ego, “represents what we call reason and sanity, in contrast to the id, which contains the passions”, (Freud, 2010: 24). As it can be seen in figure below, the id is totally independent of neither the ego nor the superego, and Freud explains that:

We shall look upon the mind of an individual as an unknown and unconscious id, upon whose surface rests the ego, developed from its nucleus the Pcpt-system. If we make an effort to conceive of this pictorially, we may add that the ego does not envelope the whole of id, but only does so to the extent to which the system Pcpt forms its surface, more or less as the germinal layer rests upon the ovum. The ego is not sharply separated from the id; its lower portion merges into it. But the repressed merges into the id and simply a part of it. The repressed is only cut off sharply from the ego by the resistances of repression; it can communicate with the ego through the id, (Ibid. 22).



**Figure 2.1. Id, Ego, and Superego**

**Freud, Sigmund, The Ego and The Id, The United States, Pacific Publishing Studio, 2010, p. 22.**

While the id forces the ego to obey its immoral wishes, the superego is there to repress them; and the ego acts as a conciliator to keep the self in a unified form, with the effort to please both. The reason why the demands of the id are considered to be immoral and obliged to be repressed is the fact that they are against the regulations of society and family. A psychologically healthy individual is the one who keeps the balance between these drives; s/he neither sacrifices her/his independent wishes nor isolates her/himself from the society.

This is the exact point where the protagonist of the novel **Zombie**, by Joyce Carol Oates, fails. It is the story of a psychopath serial killer who is both a victim and a victimizer. The son of a distinguished professor, Q\_ P\_, as he introduces himself to us, is the narrator of the novel. The story is not narrated in chronological order, so Quentin depicts us his past memories as he remembers them. While narrating them, he implicitly blames the past for the remorse of his present life. He was convicted of molestation of a young boy; therefore, he attends therapies, and he takes medication. His familial ties are not strong; he especially has contradicting feelings towards his father. One day, he comes up with an idea of creating a zombie for himself who can love him unquestioningly. To reach his goal, he takes young boys to his house by his van, and tries to turn them into zombies with an ice pick. Each attempt fails; and Squirrel, his last victim, is also a failure; however, Quentin never gives up his desire and makes new plans for creating a new zombie.

Under the command of the id, Quentin tries to achieve a whole self by raping and killing young boys. Although there are several motives for his inhuman murders, revenge is the strongest one that is satiated by his past memories.

In the course of the novel, when Quentin is walking through the attic and sensing the dust and dead-mice-like smell, a past memory is revived in his mind through the smell. He remembers a problem which has been buried deep years ago and he says “This could actually be for the best. Bringing a problem out into the open” (Oates, 2009: 18) Then, he recalls having been there before with a boy; nevertheless, he is not sure which boy he was; the one who was bleeding and

choking in the dark or the other one who was hiding “something glittering”. Right at that moment of the narration, he indicates twice what his father utters then; “Now we are going to turn over a new leaf aren’t we son” (Ibid. 19). Despite the fact that there is not an obvious reference to being raped by somebody or raping somebody, the former is highly implied on the same page.

In the beginning of this chapter, Quentin writes about the attic “The peak of the ceiling is not high enough for me to stand upright & anyway I needed to crouch there looking up at the sky night sky where there was a MOON so bright it hurt my eyes” (Ibid. 17) It is impossible for Quentin to stand upright in the attic. The word “upright” may imply a phallic meaning and signify erection; and “the moon” in capital letters in the book is so bright that it hurts Quentin. Indeed, Quentin unconsciously tells the reader about his being raped in the attic. His masculinity has been threatened there; he has been castrated and cannot get an erection. Moreover, the brightness of the moon that hurts Quentin’s eyes is a reminder of the boy, who has been raped in the attic, so he was bleeding and choking. The rectum, which is shaped like the moon in a full circle (Quentin provides the reader with a picture of full moon), is bleeding and hurting during the rape. Here, rape is implied by a reference to the moon that hurts Quentin. Furthermore, the attic where he has been raped is not safe. It is a place that puts an end to certain things “this space in the attic is like certain dreams I used to have where shapes meant to be solid start to melt & there is no protection & there is no control. Unlike the cellar which is safe UNDERGROUND, the attic is far ABOVE GROUND” (Ibid. 19). In addition to all these, Quentin informs the reader that the only distinguishing trait of his individuality can be the “worm-shaped scars on both knees”. He goes on “...I was a little boy then... I don’t remember (how scars happened)” (Ibid. 3). It is possible that when he was raped, he was on his knees, so he has these scars on the knees. Also, the reason why he does not remember those scars is because he wants to forget the rape.

Being out of protection and control in “ABOVE GROUND”, he has gone through that experience which he does not remember in detail, or strongly avoids doing so. The “underground” is safe because, like Dostoyevsky’s **Underground**, the

word “underground” stands for one’s inner world where he can live as he wishes. One’s “underground” enables one to live his life without the judgment of others and to satisfy all the immoral desires of the id. On the other hand, the attic is not safe like “above ground” because the “above ground”, where he has been sexually abused, represents the real world in which he is under the threat of danger by others. A psychoanalytic approach to these memories such as the insecurity of the boy who was bleeding and choking, the other boy accompanying him in the attic, Quentin’s not being able to stand upright there and being hurt by the moon, suggests that there is an unconscious implication of rape there. Quentin has buried it deep in the psyche; thus, he cannot be sure of it. The story progresses with Quentin’s father’s efforts to comfort him with the possibility of a new leaf in his life. Quentin does what his father suggests; he opens a completely new leaf in his life, but it is not like the one his father has imagined.

In chapter twelve, he narrates his memories at the age of twelve, so the age of twelve may signify something important. During his childhood, he becomes aware of his interest in boys. He amplifies upon their naked bodies, bellies, and bodies with “glistening cocks in the shower”. However, his great fascination by these boys must be kept as a secret; otherwise, if his friends get to know the secret “their faces would harden with disgust “QUEER QUEER QUENTIN’S QUEER” it is how they would humiliate Quentin (Ibid. 38). In the same chapter, Quentin’s father finds his porn men magazines and a naked Ken-doll. The father gets so outrageous that he twists the magazines like wringing a chicken’s neck and says “This is sick Quentin...this is disgusting I never want to see anything like this again in my life. We won’t tell your mother” (Ibid. 39). His father is like the superego who speaks on behalf of morality and conscience.

In this chapter, as it has been argued above, Quentin is twelve years old. He also states that when he went through the experience in the attic, he was not twelve yet. Therefore, his homosexual tendency starts after the age of twelve and after the rape in the attic. Freud informs us that “both homosexuality and heterosexuality for both sexes are products of development. Neither is innate” (Chodorow, 1989: 168);

it is apparent that Quentin's homosexuality is caused by the sexual assault in the attic. Moreover, people's reactions to Quentin's homosexuality have influenced his mental development. For his father, it is shameful and it is a sickness that must be kept as a secret even from the mother. He commands Quentin to stop and forget everything related to homosexuality as if it is possible. What Freud tells us about the significance of the childhood memories is that parents organize children's autobiographical memories. They impose on the child the moments which should be forgotten and remembered. Under the parents' influence children try to do so in order to please them, but this causes an alienation of child to his true self, (Freud, 1960: 17). His father tells Quentin to forget destroying the magazines and put an end to this sickness. This explains why Quentin calls himself Q\_ P\_ throughout the book because he is defamiliarized to Quentin. He is only Q\_ P\_; in other words, he does not have a full name with a meaning, but he uses only initials of his name. His avoidance of using his full name signifies that he is not complete; furthermore, it connotes that he lacks identity. The sense of guilt that stems from his childhood memories never leaves him alone even though he tries to forget the past. It is also another unconscious motive for Quentin to be a psychopath killer as Freud notes:

In many criminals, especially youthful ones, it is possible to detect a very powerful sense of guilt that existed before the crime, and is therefore, its result rather than its motive. As if it had been a relief to be able to fasten this unconscious sense of guilt on to something real and immediate" (Freud, 2010: 74)

Quentin never feels any mercy for his victims while he is assaulting them. On the contrary, when he rapes them, he feels great satisfaction and power. The feeling of guilt that unconsciously resides in his psyche precedes his psychopathic murders. He has already been feeling guilty because of being raped and being homosexual.

His awareness of his sexual choices is challenged by many troubles, emerging from the early childhood. Being homosexual is even regarded as a shameful and

offensive sickness by his father. His childhood friends and, there is no doubt, everybody around him would not appreciate his homosexual desires. Therefore, Quentin is entrapped by his inner desires, which are contrasted by the expectations of the society. He has to choose either a heterosexual life and please everybody, especially his father or be brave enough to lead a homosexual life. Homosexuality is considered to be a sexual deviance; thus, it is driven by the id. In contrast, heterosexual intercourse complies with regulations of the society, so the superego imposes it on people. Both the id and the superego fight vigorously to overcome the other just like homosexual desires of Quentin fight with heterosexual society. While suffering from this dilemma, Quentin cannot achieve a whole and unified identity for himself, and instead experiences a lack of identity. His sexual deviance clashes with his father's expectations. As an outcome of those contrasting urges, Quentin is born as a serial sex murderer.

From the early days of childhood to even his thirties, and probably till death, Quentin's only aim is to search for his rebirth with a complete identity. In every boy he rapes and kills, he avenges the rape he had suffered during his childhood and the rage his father feels due to Quentin's homosexuality. In this respect, Freud says that children act out the important events that affected them deeply during their childhood because doing so makes them relieved of their aggression and thus, be controllers of those unfortunate moments. A child takes revenge of these bad moments by exposing his playmate to the same unfortunate events that he himself had lived his during childhood, (Freud, 1960: 17).

Indeed, Quentin's feelings of aggression and hatred emerge from his past, which is impossible to change. In order to compensate for his losses, Quentin assumes the role of an active agent rather than a passive participant. In this way, Quentin himself becomes a rapist and struggles to forget his being raped. Every boy he rapes becomes a relief for him when he makes those boys suffer from the same pain inflicted on him.

In the very beginning of the novel, Quentin introduces himself to us “My name is Q\_P\_” (Oates, 2009: 3). Quentin never calls himself by his name because he is a stranger to himself, he is only Q\_P. The others call him Quentin as he is a product of those, by whom he is forced to hide his being raped and his homosexual desires. The name Quentin stands for the boy known by others whereas Q\_P\_ is his inner self and his hidden homosexuality.

It is an undeniable fact that one’s personality is like a web constructed as a result of one’s social relations with his environment; as Chodorow points out, “According to psychoanalytic theory, personality is a result of a boy’s or girl’s social-relational experiences from earliest infancy” (Chodorow, 1989: 47). These relations are internalized by people, and they are processed in their psyche. It is an unconscious process as it is carried out without the awareness of the conscious self. Only when a consistent and stable relationship is established between the unconscious and the conscious that unified identity is achieved (Ibid.). However, Quentin cannot succeed in constructing an identity for himself; the clash between the expectations of the family/society and his own demands makes him an empty body without a soul. Nevertheless, Quentin is not a submissive character; he is unconsciously determined to recreate his soul. Chodorow argues that “Depth psychology disappears as the individual conforms totally to external institutions and an external reality principle” (Ibid. 33); yet Quentin does not conform to the external world easily. Hiding his desires, he rejects the identity that has been offered to him. It is clear that the early childhood experiences have a great role in the construction of self. As a result of these childhood memories, children may achieve a consistent and whole self or they end up with a fragmented self (Ibid. 106).

It is pretty clear that Quentin has multiple selves. One of these multiple selves pretends to be the good boy of the neighborhood avoiding any disagreement with the people around. Nonetheless, there is also another self which serves Quentin’s own desires. As “The adolescent is confronted with the demand to create multiple selves associated with different social roles” (Bleiberg, 1997: 85), Quentin is both his

grandmother's favorite who thinks he is the kindest person on earth, doing favor for everybody, and he is also a serial killer who rapes and murders his victims.

Furthermore, when the Doctor asks him the nature of his fantasies, his reply is a surprising one because he pretends not to have any fantasies and even not to know the meaning of the word "fantasy". Indeed, he leads a life of fantasies; a life that is quenched by his sexually perverted fantasies. He dreams of boys, their bodies, and having anal sex with them. Quentin's fantasies are the only means of survival for him. On the other hand, he has to veil them so as not to be attacked by the people. Fantasies and reality belong to different sides of Quentin's fragmented self. Indeed, it is a common aspect of Oates' characters to have multiple or fragmented selves as it is pointed out by Waller; "the real events by which Oates's characters are motivated lie deep within the protean chaos of the personality" (Waller, 1980:12). In this case, the superego represses pleasure seeking drives preventing a tension between the society and the individual; however, this repression in turn tragically creates a tension in one's own psyche.

### **2.1.1 Invisibility**

From the beginning till the end of the book, Quentin's biggest challenge is his identity crisis. He does not feel comfortable pretending to be an ordinary boy by hiding his real personality. Hence, he envisions himself to be invisible. In order to cope with this, he gives detailed and factual information about himself like his height, weight as if he is trying to prove the reader with the necessary evidence that he is alive and real as he says; "I am thirty-one years old, three months. Height five feet ten, weight one hundred forty-seven pounds. Eyes brown, hair brown. Medium build. Light scattering of freckles on arms, back." (Oates, 2009: 3). Actually, the purpose of the images drawn by Quentin such as the picture of his victim's tooth in its real size is to demonstrate that he is real, alive, and he is the author of the book.



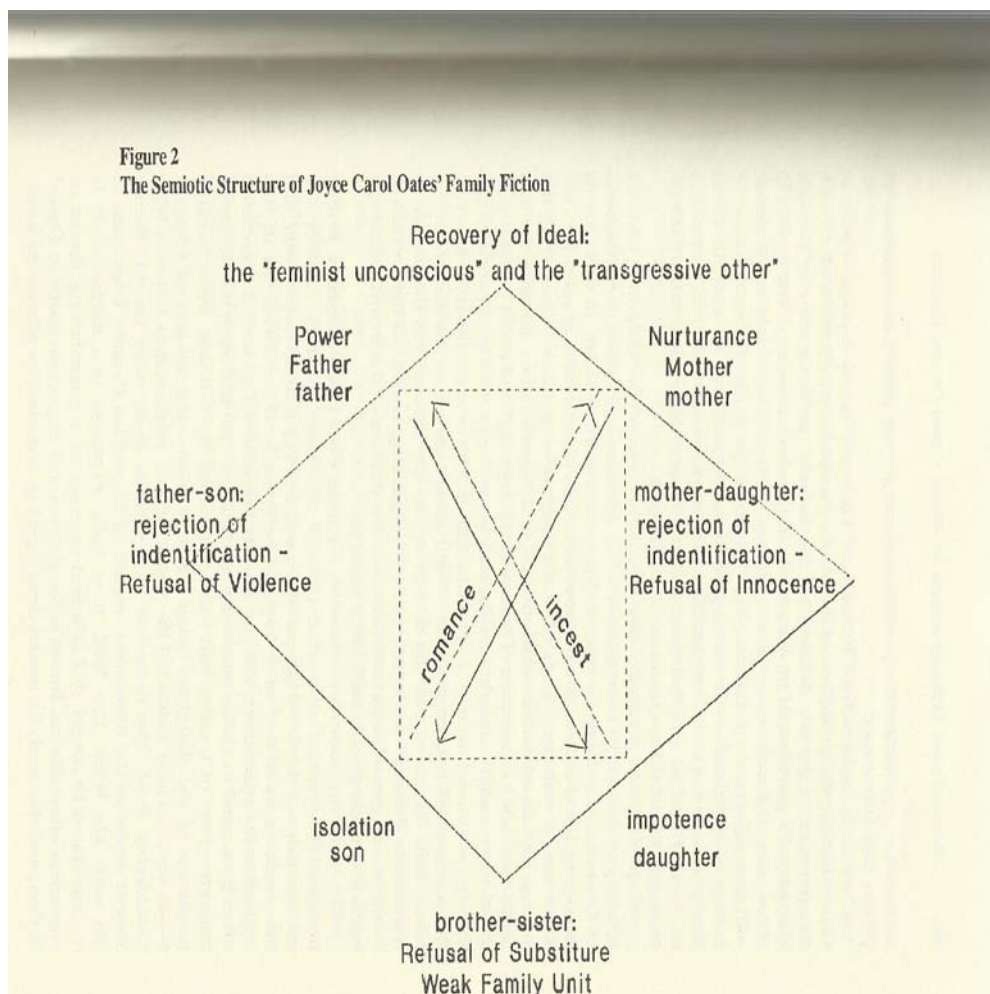
Quentin feels alienated from both himself and the people around him. That is the reason why he calls himself Q\_ P\_, his father Professor P\_ and others Dr. B\_, Dr. T\_, and Mr. T\_. There is nobody in his life with a full name because full name signifies familiar people, yet initials signify strangers. The feeling of estrangement that surrounds Quentin is so strong that he cannot even recognize himself as he says “I was staring at my hands as if I had never seen them before, like learning my name is Q\_P\_ & that is who I am & and there’s nobody else for me to be” (Ibid. 34). The loss of his soul creates the loss of his body, too. Thus, he is not pleased with his physical and psychological (non)existence. He cannot recognize his own voice as if it is somebody else’s, and he always complains that people do not see him. He is full of aggression to life as a result of the role life offered to him. Continuously, his ego forces him to overcome this aggression so that he can have a peaceful relationship with the society. However, this tension is like a volcano which is ever ready to blow out, so the more his aggression is repressed; the stronger it gets and turns into sadism.

On the one hand, he feels deeply aggrieved by abandonment and isolation; as a result he says “Why didn’t Q\_ P\_ have friends like that, guys who liked me, guys like brothers? twins?”(Ibid. 113). The lonelier he gets, the more angry he becomes as he comments “Hadn’t noticed me at all...the little fucker will pay for it one day...Q\_ P\_ the invisible man” (Ibid. 113). In order to cope with this tension, he makes plans to turn young boys who attract him sexually into zombies, who will obey him like slaves and respond “Yes, Sir”. In fact, these are Quentin’s pathetic and unconscious efforts to recreate himself because he himself is a true zombie.

### **2.1.2. Isolation**

According to feminist criticism, women are regarded as the “other”, personifying almost all the negative terms about human beings due to the patriarchal system of the world. Nevertheless, in the complicated tree of family relations, men and women are located in different areas of trouble. In his analysis of Oates’ works, Wesley argues that the antonyms for the words “power” and “nurturance” are “impotence” and “isolation” (not being able to connect to others), respectively,

(Figure, 1). As it is seen in the figure below, while the father symbolizes power, mother stands for nurturance. Traditionally, the daughter is the one to be opposite or unlike of her father; therefore, she embodies impotence. This is what Freud also agrees by claiming that girls feel impotent when they realize the fact that they lack penis. Moreover, the figure shows that it is boys who must be unlike the mother; therefore, while mothers are associated with nurturance, boys are associated with isolation (Wesley, 1993: 9).



**FIGURE 2.2 The Semiotic Structure of Joyce Carol Oates' Family Fiction**

**Wesley, Marilyn C. Refusal and Transgression in Joyce Carol Oates' Fiction, London, Greenwood Press, 1993, p. 13.**

In the novel, it is apparent that Quentin opts for living in his underground. He has neither friends nor any strong family relations. He sometimes visits his grandmother because she means material support for him. Furthermore, he usually doesn't answer his sister's and mother's calls; all their family meetings are carried out unwillingly on Quentin's side. He tries to keep his contact with his family at a minimum level. There is nobody else on earth who knows Quentin except for his doctors and therapy friends, with whom actually he does not have the slightest connection. In the tree of family relations, Quentin perfectly fits to the role of the isolated boy in the family.

In this atmosphere, Quentin creates a world for himself in which he is the master, who is occupied with his so called scientific experiments in creating a zombie for himself. It is his isolation that imposes such an idea on Quentin; he needs a zombie to rest his head on his shoulder like a baby, a zombie to eat pizza slices from each other's fingers and to lie beneath the covers in his bed while listening to the wind. What he looks for in a zombie is the affection of a mother and father, the warmth of a friend and also the love of a lover, all of which he has been deprived during his life. He needs somebody to accept him as he is and penetrate into his heart to meet the real Quentin because he believes "not that anybody in the universe knows me" (Oates, 2009: 136). In his segregated life, he is trying to survive by holding on to a person to be able to compensate all the lacks in his life. Moreover, there is no room for his past in his own world because past and memory mean pain and terror for Quentin. He strives for breaking out all his connections to his past; therefore, he breaks the hands of the clock, rendering time meaningless. For Quentin, the outside is your enemy with "clocks and calendars", but "if INSIDE, you do what you want. Whatever. You create your own Time" (Ibid. 6). To cope with his trouble with the past, he dreams of a zombie who does not have any sense of memory, "Nor would be terror in my zombie's eyes. Nor memory. For without memory there is no terror" (Ibid. 169). What he does is in fact trying to erase his memories of the past because of the rape. He also wants to remove the terror in his own eyes.

All people around him such as his parents, his sister, doctors and instructors have a common purpose, which is to drag Quentin into a life lived by their valid rules. In other words, they want Quentin submit to them and be like one of them. Otherwise, Quentin's existence is meaningless for them, as he says; "the instructor is a young guy who looks right through me like there is a blank space where I am" (Ibid. 73). However, Quentin objects to such an imposition by keeping himself away from all of them and also from the image of Quentin they want to create. The most obvious result of breaking all ties to people and also to himself is his alienation of his own self. Until creating his own identity, he is only Q\_ P\_, not Quentin. Since it is the environment that excludes Quentin, he, in his own way, tries to exclude them from his life. In his dialogues with people, the reader is almost never informed how Quentin replies the addressee because it is not of much significance for both Quentin and the addressee. As it is narrated that, "Quentin, how're things going on? & I say. How's your caretaking job? & I say", (Ibid. 67). We are not told what he says because his reply does not mean anything to the speaker as the question is of no importance for Quentin. These conversations are just formalities without the warmth and care of a real dialogue.

### **2.1.3 Lack of Role Models**

During their lifetime, people are obliged to stick to certain ideologies and norms which are imposed on them by the society. The most confusing one among them is the gender roles. Before people are old enough to understand sex differences and gender roles in a society, they are already conditioned by such rules unconsciously. Without being aware of this unconscious process, the individuals end up with identities which try to fulfill the necessities of their gender roles unconsciously. It is unconscious because the origins of such an identity formation go back to very early

childhood. Parents have the greatest role in this process since children mostly pursue the traces of their parents wherever they go.

Although patriarchal world organization always favors men over women, men are as confused as females psychologically. As Freud claims, most problems stem from childhood traumas. In accordance with this, according to psychoanalytic theory, until the end of the Symbiotic Phase, which is the first five months, the child is not aware of itself as a separate being. The child considers himself as one with his mother; thus, he identifies himself with his primary caretaker, the mother. Up to that moment, the child lives peacefully because the mother provides satisfaction for all of his needs. He does not need anybody else as his caretaker not only meets his physical needs by nurturance but also supplies him with the warmth, affection and love of a mother. On the other hand, the child unfortunately has to confront the truth that he is not one with the mother; “it is the forced recognition of the mother’s separateness and separate interests which constitute the entrance of the reality principle into the infant’s life” (Chodorow, 1989: 71). At this point, the infant faces one of the biggest challenges of his life. The infant is now able to see the boundaries between himself and his mother both physically and psychologically. They are not meant to be unified, so he has to cope with this separation. Unfortunately, this is more traumatic for boys than girls; “from the time of birth, girls can begin to take on feminine identity through identification with their mother, while for little boys, masculine identification comes through a process of differentiation” (Ibid. 32). As Chodorow claims, children of both sexes identify themselves with their mothers because they are not aware of the sex differences yet. This identification surely does not create a traumatic experience in girls’ lives because they are of the same sex with the mother. A girl can continue his identification with her mother despite getting aware of the fact that they do not constitute one and a common body. A role model for the baby girl is always within her reach from whom she can attain feminine attributes, feminine identity and many other commonalities. Therefore, while constructing her gender identity, the girl is not alone with a new and unknown identity. On the other hand, this period is not that much easy for boys who are the

opposite sex with their mothers. When they happen to realize the separateness with their mother, there is nobody for them to hold on to and support them to construct male gender identity, unlike girls. A girl can continue to have her mother as a role model, but boys get lost after separation from the mother. Chodorow explains it in that way;

a boy's masculine gender identity must come to replace his early primary identification with his mother. This masculine identity is usually based on identification with a boy's father or other salient adult males. However, a boy's father is relatively more remote than his mother. He rarely plays a major caretaking role even at this period in his son's life (Chodorow, 1989: 51).

Father, being absent in the boy's life, cannot provide the boy with male attributes to be internalized and thus form a male gender identity.

As stated above, the child is faced with two big challenges or traumas; they are the separation from the mother and the conflict of developing a self without the guidance of a father. During this period, mother's attitude is also different for children of each sex, and boys surely feel that difference as Nancy Chodorow points out:

...though children of both sexes are originally part of herself, a mother unconsciously and often consciously experiences her son as more often an other than her daughter. Reciprocally, a son's male core gender identity develops away from his mother. The male's self, as a result becomes based on a more fixed me-not me distinction" (Ibid. 110).

According to Chodorow, this "me-not me" distinction lies at the core of male gender identity because just immediately after separation from the mother, the boy has to internalize the differences between the mother and himself in terms of gender. Furthermore, the attitude of the mother and the society towards the boy contributes to this "me-not me" distinction because a boy is never supposed to be like his mother.

To exemplify, a girl with masculine attitude may not cause much trouble for parents; on the other hand, a boy with feminine attitude would create a big breakdown in the family because they would panic if their son is going to be a homosexual. All these lead boys to have confusion because as Chodorow points out boys conceptualize masculinity as being “not feminine”, always in “not”s and rejections. This negation ultimately causes them to repress anything female in them and fail to value femininity. Moreover, this stage overlaps with the Oedipus stage in boys. Therefore, boys feel more obliged to detach themselves from the mother because of the potential rivalry of the father to mother’s love. The boy is again pushed towards a dilemma because not only does he have to identify with his father but also protect himself from his potential castrator (Chodorow, 1989: 51). In his solitary confinement with the complexities of the male gender role, the boy lacks a satisfying company for himself who could ease the period of construction of his male gender identity. Mother is lost; father is mostly missing and cannot provide enough presence to replace the mother. Hence, boys need something to compensate for the emptiness left by the mother. Freud throws light on this indicating that to cope with melancholia, resulting from a lost object, the ego looks for something else to substitute for the lost object. It means the replacement of the lost object with something completely different. When doing so, the ego internalizes the aspects of the new object, offering itself to the id as a love object. The only aim for doing so is to fill in the gap that has been left by the previous love object, (Freud, 1960:120) In the case of Quentin, the image of the mother is lost, the father is too controlling, and hence, he feels a void and loss of identity. To cope with all these, Quentin needs new substitutes for his lack.

While Quentin is struggling with his fate hopelessly trying to create stability and overcome the fluidity of his self, he looks for a meaningful identity for himself by killing the boys who sexually attract him. When it is analyzed deeply, it can be seen that Quentin tries to establish object relations with whom each boy he rapes and kills. He identifies himself with them and internalizes their identities, in the following example, he imagines himself to be Bruce, one of his victims; “A door

opened in my dream & I was Bruce” (Oates, 2009: 62). Similarly, in chapter forty-four he writes about his dreams in which “how many time Q\_ P\_ is SQUIRREL pedaling his bicycle....SQUIRREL with his TIGERS cap backward on his blond-brown hair” (Oates, 2009: 134). His identification with his victims is so powerful that he even wears the same outfits so that he can physically look like them. For example, he wears a Tigers baseball cap backward just like his Squirrel. In the light of Freud’s analysis mentioned before, it can be said that Quentin pathetically endeavors to replace the missing mother and father roles, and his missing identity with these boys by taking their identities. He seems to prove himself that he is like them; therefore, he deserves love and approval. According to Freud’s theory of object relations, Quentin’s rape and murder of these boys are the results of his viewing them as objects to fill in the gap left by the mother in Oedipus stage, (Freud, 1960: 32).

Moreover, in his book **Beyond Pleasure Principle**, Freud also relates homosexuality to the love and hatred of homosexual boys towards their objects of desire. He asserts that even the love for brothers grows out of rivalry because when the hatred is not possible to be overcome, it turns out to be love. People’s desires need fulfillment, especially the desires of the id. If they are not satisfied, the self looks for other ways to do so. Hence, unsatisfied hatred turns into love in homosexuals. This explains Quentin’s conflicting relationship with his victims. He claims to love them, but instead he rapes and kills them. He makes himself believe that he really loves them and he does not mean to hurt them. He always tells his victims how much he loves them. However, he only needs hatred for men since he was raped by a man.



## 2.1.4 Homosexuality

As Freud claims, Oedipus stage is the time when a child feels himself in a dilemma about how to get rid of the sexual attachment to the mother and how to cope with the father because the father is both a rival for mother's love and a new object to identify himself. It is stated above that to cope with the relationship with his mother as an object of desire, a boy rejects all the feminine qualities in himself, and achieves an identity based on negation and differentiation from female attributes. When this is correlated with Scott Goldsmith's analysis of the connection between homosexuality and people's approach to it, it is quite revealing. Goldsmith claims that:

...clinicians and sociologists have pointed out that the self-hatred of many homosexual men, as well as the condemnation of homosexuality that permeates Western culture may be due in large part to a fear of and hatred of what is perceived as feminine, particularly when it is found in men (Goldsmith, 2001).

The boy's mind requires all the femininity in him to be erased and replaced by the qualifications of the father by identification with the father. While doing this, the boy unconsciously develops fear and also hatred to anything feminine in himself. Therefore, almost in all societies, people, particularly men cannot tolerate men with female attitude. It is clear that society's and men's disgust of homosexuals emerge from the Oedipus stage of getting away from the mother and getting rid of anything feminine in himself. Therefore, hatred for homosexuals grows in men, and it very often results in regarding them as immoral and even deserving to be murdered. Additionally, homosexuals mostly keep their sexual orientation as a secret and even feel self-hatred due to being so.

Like the big majority of people who strongly oppose to homosexuality, it is not acceptable for Quentin's father, either. He symbolizes the "moral society", by rejecting homosexuality. As for Quentin, he narrates in the novel that his homosexuality is not something to be proud of or to be ashamed of as he says "a man who is "gay"& does not advertise the fact but is not ashamed of it either & guilty of nothing because of either" (Oates, 2009: 156). No matter how strongly he denies the

discontentment for his homosexuality, he in fact does not feel so. It is his lifetime goal to hide his homosexuality. From the beginning till the end of the novel, Quentin avoids eye contact with people, especially with men. Even a slight look into men's eyes alarms him, and he reminds himself not to look at them in the eye. He believes that eye contact would be his biggest ruin because he is afraid that they can see or understand his homosexuality that way. For him, eye contact enables people to go deep inside one's self and see all the secrets hidden in the soul. Deep in his soul, he has a lot to keep as a secret like his being raped, his father's disgust of his homosexuality, his unconscious hatred for his father, his murders, but most crucially his homosexual fantasies. Whenever talking to somebody, he pays maximum attention not to have eye contact. On the other hand, it is really challenging for Quentin because he believes like a paranoid that people, particularly men, always watch him. He sometimes suspects that his father is around somewhere watching him behind a newspaper. He sometimes thinks that in therapies they are like laboratory animals as he indicates "we are being observed like laboratory rats maybe videotaped" (Oates, 2009: 43). All this paranoia is due to his fear of being discovered by people that he is a homosexual.

It is also strange that Quentin never feels guilty for his horrible deeds. His attitude to his zombies is always sadistic. Killing them is like killing the homosexual Quentin. Quentin's conscience is not developed to be able to cope with such human feelings. While raping and killing people, he does not feel guilty, either. Like stated previously, he already has the feeling of guilt because of his rape, now he justifies himself by his murders. His sadistic tortures do not stop even if he sees his victims crying in pain; in contrast, his sexual desires are strengthened by his victims' pain, so he feels hornier. Moreover, the feelings like love, affection, and pity are so foreign to Quentin. Ironically, even though he murders boys without feeling remorseful, he has a bumper sticker on his car "I brake for animals". This is also like a mask for the murderer Quentin. Lastly, he is bothered by one of his therapy friend's pain for killing his sister's daughters, and he thinks it is trivial and waste of time to cry over it.

Hatred and fear of women as an outcome of Oedipus complex may result in homosexuality in the case of men. It is asserted that while trying to exclude feminine qualities in themselves, men end up with excluding females even from their sexual intercourse. Therefore, an unhealthy resolution of Oedipus complex turns boys into homosexuals. Chodorow says that sex against procreativity implicitly means rejection of women in sexual intercourse. On the other hand, men, who love only boys and prefer them to women, like Narcissus and Orpheus are praised (Chodorow, 1989: 140).

Moreover, a healthy resolution of Oedipus complex is the prerequisite for a sexually healthy- heterosexual- boy. Otherwise, a very strong attachment to father and hatred of mother may also cause a boy to regard men as his object of desire throughout his life. As Scott Goldsmith points out,

An oedipal stage of development exists that is in fact specific to the developing homosexual boy: During this stage, not only is his father the boy's primary object of desire, but his mother becomes the chief rival for the father's affection...On this view the arousal of these feelings should coincide with the development of fantasies of a dyadic love relationship with the father, (Goldsmith, 2001).

Therefore, the motives for homosexuality may stem from the child's perceptions of the father as the object of desire and not being able to achieve a healthy resolution in this period.

## **2.1 Identity Construction**

Freudian triangle of the self demonstrates the different layers of the self and how they are interrelated to each other. The id stands for the repressed self although it is partly included by the ego. That means the repressed self of one individual is not totally unconscious. The desires of the repressed self are not silent, but expect to be satisfied. Otherwise, the dissatisfaction of desires creates aggression and tension in people like it has been stated in previous chapters. Likewise, the tension in Quentin demands a resolution. He needs to free his suppressed self, construct a male

identity, unify his fragmented self into one, and reach wholeness; however, how can he achieve this?

It has been already argued that Quentin struggles to have a stable identity by creating a zombie for himself who would obey all his commands, beg for food and everything, and say “You are good, Master. You are kind & merciful...Fuck me in the ass, Master, until I bleed blue guts” (Oates, 2009: 49). The relationship between his dream zombie and himself is a sadistic master-slave relationship. In other words, it is through homosexual sadism and mastery, he tries to achieve wholeness. At the core of his sadism, indeed, lies his effort to be recognized by somebody. The traumatic experience of being raped undermines his masculinity; thus, he needs to prove his masculinity in order to get rid of the psychological effects of the rape. In the novel, Quentin frequently mentions the strength of his libido, the enormous size of his penis and “how he wakes up in the morning with HARD-ON as a ROCKET & sizzling-exploding going off LIKE A COMET’S TAIL” (Ibid. 76). He is fighting against the effects of rape on his masculinity and providing evidence so that he can be more convincing. In her analysis of Genet’s two novels **Our Lady of Flowers** and **The Thief’s Journal**, Kate Millett points out that in the homosexual society, masculinity is deemed to be cruel and sadistic. Put in another way, it is considered that penis is a sign of their power and masculinity. The protagonist, Millett says, boasts how he can lift a man with his penis and also his penis has the value of its weight in gold. In this world, sexuality is equated with power, so sexual partner is just an object, denied of recognition by the master. (Millett, 1970: 20). The protagonist’s view of sexuality in Genet’s novel is parallel with Quentin’s, who imagines of his sexual partners to be slaves, and feels proud of his libidinal potential. Actually, homosexuality itself stands for mastery as Kate Millett notes:

...sodomy has a number of possible meanings for in Rojack’s mind: homosexuality; a forbidden species of sexuality at which he is an expert and over which he holds copyright; or anal rape, which is his way of expressing contemptuous mastery” (Millett, 1970: p.13).

In the world, there is nobody recognizing Quentin, but his zombie will go deep inside him and discover his self, and provide him with recognition as his master commands.

If Quentin's need for recognition, his dream of zombies, and master-slave relationship are considered from the viewpoint of Jessica Benjamin, it reveals crucial aspects of human relations. She explains that a healthy relationship between people is possible through the mutual recognition of each person included in the relationship. She asserts that, according to Hegel, one needs to be recognized to be able to define himself, and reciprocally, he has to provide recognition for the other. If you reject to recognize the other, then there is nobody to recognize you. In other words, lack of recognition from any of the sides or total control from one side ends in nonexistence for both parts. Therefore, each side depends on the other for existence and this balance of mutual recognition is to be kept. As a result, she asserts that domination of one individual over the other means the denial of this dependence (Benjamin, 1988: 53). Quentin denies both dependence on others and recognition for his zombies. Firstly, he thinks that it is only women who need someone to live with as he says "they want somebody to love & live for-women. It does not matter who like it would be for a man" (Oates, 2009: 139). On the other hand, if his zombies are excluded from his life, Quentin cannot go on existing because he has nothing else to hold on to for survival. He is totally dependent on his zombies; it is his possibility of creating a zombie that keeps him alive. Nevertheless, he wants his zombie to be dependent on him. In his scientifically carried out experiments with zombies, he wants to reduce their mental cognition, emotion and agitation so that they will be serving him without any rejection and judgment. In reality, everybody, especially his father always threatens his self-esteem because he always finds a fault with Quentin. He is always disappointed by Quentin, and disgusted by his homosexuality. Susan Bleiberg thinks that "false self-behavior resulted from care givers who did not validate the child's true self, thus leading the infant to become alienated from the core self" (Bleiberg, 1997: 83). To be liked by the people around or at least not to have conflicts with them, Quentin creates false selves for himself like a disciplined caretaker or a caring

grandson in order to get the approval of people. If his father, therapists, doctors all stand for cruel judgment of the society, his zombie will be the one to whom Quentin can exhibit his core self without any hesitation.

### **2.2.1 Motivations behind Men's Desire to Master**

The drives that cause men to act like executors of domination, especially erotic domination can be grouped into three; the mother's role, the society and the way in which the unconscious functions.

Earlier, it has been discussed that the resolution of Oedipus stage differs for boys and girls, because boys have to cope with the difficulty of differentiating themselves from their mothers, and experience discontinuity whereas girls continue to have their mothers as role models. Jessica Benjamin claims that to establish their own male identity, they dissociate themselves from identification from the mother. Therefore, a boy denies recognition to the mother and views her as "the other" and an object. He also renders himself the master for this object so that he distances himself from the mother through domination. His object of desire, that is women, are also substitutes for the first object of desire, his mother, so they are denied recognition, too. The fear and tension of unifying with the mother cause the boy to dominate and master women and prevent such unification. It is a kind of defense developed against the mother, (Benjamin, 1988: 76-7).

As far as homosexual love is concerned, Jung informs us that "in homosexuality, the son's entire heterosexuality is tied to the mother in an unconscious form" (Jung, 2003: 130). In the novel **Zombie**, Quentin's obsession with the father is greater than the mother's; indeed, Quentin seems not to take mother into much consideration, and he thinks she always talks about trivial things. On the other hand, getting closer to the mother physically irritates him; when she hugs him, he is stiff, avoiding to touch "her breasts, or belly or the soft place between her legs", (Oates, 2009: 63). It is weird because normally a mother's affectionate hug never

stimulates a person sexually, or has any erotic implications. However, Quentin makes a connection between her mother and a sexual intercourse, and also wants to keep himself away from such an intercourse. It is clear that the influence of Oedipus stage keeps on existing in Quentin's unconscious. The fear of touching her mother's breasts and vagina is perceived as a threat going back to past and becoming one with her.

Moreover, mothers' attitude, accompanied with the society's, motivates boys to be aggressive and dominant as if they are inevitable characteristics of masculinity. As explained by Kate Millett, "the society thinks that the testis, penis, and scrotum are all indicators of maleness which should be accompanied with masculine traits like aggressive impulses" (Millett, 1970: 31.) More importantly, mothers are the strongest imposers of the idea that males must be more strong, aggressive, and active than females through their mothering. Being primary caretakers and primary identifications of children, mothers play a great role in the identity construction of their children. Having grown in a patriarchal society, women unconsciously feel that men are superior, and again unconsciously impose it on the baby and cause him to feel the same. Chodorow argues that as a result of establishing a self-other relation with the mother, a boy develops a defensive attitude to his mother. Moreover, women's psychology and mothering, accompanied with the dominant patriarchal ideology are the primary motivations for male dominance. (Chodorow, 1989: 2-3). Therefore, in sexual intercourse, women are objectified due to the objectification of mother in the Oedipus stage. Like a child's denying dependency on the mother, a man denies dependency on women. Otherwise, as Benjamin claims in Hegel's terms, he may turn into depending on his slave for existence, and thus loses control to the slave. In Oates' work, it is women who are considered to be slaves, of course. In her analysis, which combines Hegel's and Freud's assertions on mastery, Benjamin informs us that mastery/domination is caused by the death instinct in order to realize the fantasy of omnipotence and prevent the limitation by the outside world. By master/slave relation, the self achieves recognition and becomes the controller. According to Freudian analysis, domination is unavoidable because it is driven by

death instinct. If domination is turned towards the self, it can destroy it. However, it is confronted with Eros, which is the life and sex instinct. Therefore, death and life instinct reconcile and neutralize aggression. It connotes that dominance and eroticism are never seen in isolation, but together as erotic dominance (Benjamin, 1988: 67).

In the light of all these, in the novel **Zombie**, Quentin avoids physical contact with her mother because he is anxious about becoming one with the mother and not being able to establish his independent, male identity; that is a pain suffered in the Oedipus stage. Viewing the mother as the other and as an object, Quentin considers sexual intercourse as a master/slave relationship and hopes to create an object of desires, namely zombies, for himself. He expects them to obey him without any questioning, satisfying all his immoral wishes, and leading a life dependent on him. Although, in the novel, Quentin's object of desires is male, this is just a reflection of heterosexual intercourse and similar to what Millett says about Genet's novels:

the barbarian vassalage of the sexual orders, the power structure of masculine and feminine revealed by a homosexual criminal world that mimics with brutal frankness the bourgeoisie heterosexual society, (Millett, 1970: 69).

Therefore, Quentin's and Connie's stories reflect heterosexual society because Quentin is a sex murderer. That is, Quentin kills and rapes boys. In the heterosexual society, men kill women and have sexual intercourse with them, so the common point in both of them is killing and raping. Moreover, although Quentin kills boys, these boys are reflected as innocent victims who do not deserve such a brutality. On the other hand, in **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**, Connie as the victim is reflected as if guilty and deserving punishment just because her relationship with the boys. Hence, the society worries over the victim boys but not victim women.



### 2.2.2 Achieving the Dreamed Identity with Phallic Symbols

For the first time in his life, Quentin has a purpose, which makes him feel ecstatic because he has something to live for. While brainstorming on how to change his life, he comes up with the idea of creating a zombie. It is a turning point for Quentin as he tells “Jesus, at such rare times you can feel the electrically charged neurons of the prefrontal brain realigning themselves like iron filings drawn by a magnet” (Oates, 2009: 26). He is so determined and ambitious to achieve this; hence, he informs us how decisive and hardworking he is when he has a goal. This is a chance that he feels he must take, and he takes any kind of risk for this chance. This is really a great opportunity as he himself says because what lies beneath creating a zombie is killing the repressed Quentin and revitalizing his independent self. One of the biggest challenges of life for Quentin is his struggles to get rid of his past; he says that “THE PAST IS PAST & and you learn to move on. I could be a REBORN CHRISTIAN is what I sometimes think”, (Ibid. 85). Therefore, his each step fulfills this aim.

Firstly, he changes his name “Quentin”, alienating himself from and ignoring the loser Quentin. From now on, he is a “CARETAKER”. He always writes the word “caretaker” in uppercase letters as this responsibility makes him feel important and in control of something. He also provides the reader with a picture of the white card tacked beside his door, on which he himself has written “O\_P\_ CARETAKER” with a black felt-tip pen. This is a part of Quentin’s new identity, and Quentin has created it with his pen. Since the pen corresponds to the phallic symbol for the penis, his penis is his most important tool throughout the book, he constructs an identity for himself in this way. Another important tool for him in this process of identity construction is the ice pick he uses to penetrate into the victims’ brain, putting an end to their mental cognition. In a parallel way, the ice pick, in a penis-like shape, is a substitute for the penis; the ice pick penetrates into victim’s mind like the penis penetrates into the victim’s rectum. Not only does Quentin deactivate zombies’

active sexuality by raping them, but he also deactivates their mental activity with the ice pick. Therefore, his victims become his slaves, obeying anything that their master desires. Hence, the pen and the ice pick correspond to phallic symbols that represent Quentin's masculinity, which he needs to prove.

Together with a new title for himself, he also has a new signature and a new name for himself, Todd Cutler. His new name is full, unlike Q\_ P\_, which consists of only the initials. The name TODD personifies the desired whole self whereas the initials Q\_P symbolize the fragmented version. Whenever Quentin kills somebody, he keeps a memento of them, as he narrates:

I am wearing RAISINEYES' funky leather slouch-brim hat & BUNNYGLOVES' soft-bunny-fur-lined leather gloves are in the pocket of my \$300 sheepskin jacket & my aviator-style amber prescription lenses are in BIG GUY's frames...I should mention my hand tooled kinskin boots just a little big for me courtesy of Rooster" (Oates, 2009: 78).

From top to toe, Quentin has already created a new identity for himself physically with the mementos of his victims. When he achieves bringing his zombie into existence, he will be successful in constructing a whole, unified, independent identity for himself. He says that the zombie "will be awaiting me in the cellar. food & drink & a full length mirror for his master's use" (Ibid. 140). The mirror has also symbolic connotations. According to Lacan's theory of the mirror stage, a child develops a sense of self-identity and subjectivity for himself by looking at his image in the mirror during this period. In a parallel way, after Quentin has reached his goal by organizing his fragmented self into one whole and unified form, he will finish the whole process identification by looking at his self-identity in the mirror.

## 2.1 Dual Relations Between Father And Son

When Quentin's references to his father and his mother in the book are examined, it is pretty clear that the number of times he refers to his father exceeds his mother. This is an evidence of Quentin's obsession with his father as opposed to undermining the role of the mother throughout the narration. Despite the fact that his father occupies a greater part of the book, Quentin's tie for his father is ambiguous, even in Quentin's mind. His feelings towards his father are twofold; sometimes lovely and affectionate, but sometimes hostile and awakening parricidal intentions in Quentin's mind. Similarly, his father fails to establish a strong fatherly relation to his son. Although he shows his trust in him at one time, he reveals his disgust and hatred through his eyes at other times.

The biggest gap that cannot be bridged between the father and the son is the father's distinguished academic life as opposed to Quentin's failures during his period of education. Moreover, Professor P\_, his father, has a good reputation and influence on people. However, Quentin is infamous for child molestation, and it is Professor P\_'s authority on the judges that saves Quentin from punishment.

Quentin introduces his father as follows; "...he is well-known & admired & has many graduate students wishing to study with him. His Ph.D.'s & they are both from Harvard..." (Oates, 2009: 23). There is a lot to write about his father and his qualifications in contrast to Quentin's. Hence, Quentin introduces himself by referring to his weight, height, and color of eyes as he has no other qualifications to introduce himself as a unique identity.

### 2.3.1 Dyadic Period

The boy, who is already confused and kind of lost in the Oedipus stage because of the separation from his mother, now has to solve another puzzling relationship with his father. Judith Fingert Chused, in his review of Peter Blos' book **Before and Beyond the Oedipus Complex**, points out another dimension of Oedipus complex. He notes that:

Blos believes that much of the psychic experience of the adolescent male that had been attributed to the revival of the oedipal father is related instead to the father imago of the dyadic period (Chused, 1991: 24)

According to this idea, in the dyadic period, the boy strongly idealizes his father and his masculinity. This idealization passively exists and it is revived in adolescence. Therefore, the father is not only a rival but also a desired subject because he symbolizes activity, omnipotence, unlike the mother's passivity. The boy in this stage wants to recreate the strong relation with the father, so he needs a re-identification with the father.

Like the feelings of the child who is struggling to find a way through the dyadic and the oedipal period, Quentin partly idealizes and partly hates his father. Quentin's efforts to create a zombie that are based on so-called scientific research by himself are actually a representation of his identification with his father. Those scientific experiments with zombie emerge from Quentin's endeavor to fulfill both his family's expectations of him and his own wishes as he says; "Dad & Mom had hoped for me to become a scientist like Dad, or a doctor. But things had not turned out that way. But I knew I could perform a *transorbital lobotomy* even if it was secret" (Oates, 2009: 42). A successfully performed lobotomy will satisfy his ego in two different aspects; firstly, he will provide himself with the desired zombie, and secondly, he will realize the dyadic identification with his idealized father.

Unfortunately, his father's attitude to Quentin is almost always discouraging. His painful past memories are all witnessed or somehow related to his father, one of

those memories is when Professor's P\_ finds his son to be disgusting upon finding the porn magazines. Throughout the narrative, Quentin's memories with his father usually end with his father's scolding, shouting, or disapproving him in disgust. Envisioning Quentin as a failure and a loser, Professor P\_ no more bothers himself with trying to understand him, as he says; "Finally dad gives up for *he does not want to know*" (Ibid. 36).

Moreover, Quentin is obsessed with his father's eyes, which he feels fixed continuously upon himself. He is paranoid on this and feels as if his father is watching him anywhere, any time. He remembers his "'DAD'S EYES'" when he was two years old, and twelve years old and so on, as "Quentin reviews past humiliations suffered under his father's omnipotent gaze'" (Simpson, 2000:160). Therefore, the father represents the superego, denouncing Quentin through his gaze due to his sexual deviance. On the other hand, as Judith Fingert Chused argues a permanent disapproval or criticism by the father leads to inadequacy and aggressive self-sufficiency in the boy. If the father drags the boy into a relationship that highlights the father's own narcissist needs, leaving no room for the boy to achieve his self, the boy feels having failed the father. This feeling strengthens the longing for a dyadic relationship with the father and protection from the mother. Just like Quentin, the boy idealizing the father turns out to be a homosexual (Chused, 1991: 68). As far as Quentin's expectations from his father are considered, Philip Simpson points out that "one of the most important keys to understanding Quentin's psyche is his fear of disapproval from his intellectually intimidating father" (Simpson, 2000: 159). To give an example, when his father gives the keys of his car to Quentin, he feels his dad's trust in him, and feels really honored. Similarly, upon being offered to work as the caretaker in his father's house, Quentin again repeats his gratitude as his dad believes and trusts him. On the other hand, these small instances of encouragement are too late and not enough for an over-thirty years old man.

Quentin is continuously discouraged by his father's look. This creates a tension in Quentin's psyche because he looks for the approval of the father.

Therefore, his feelings towards his father are always confusing since they both embody love and hatred.

A rivalry between the father and the son on the son's side is inevitable under these circumstances. Like the Oedipal child, Quentin views his dad as an enemy and says; "the two of us the same height if I stood up straight which is hard & lifted my head to confront him" (Oates, 2009: 32). Here, "standing up right" is a phallic symbol, signifying erection and the penis. The equality of their height connotes Quentin's belief in his potential strength in himself. On the other hand, the fear of being castrated by the father makes it hard for Quentin to stand upright and confront his father. This also implicitly displays the father to be the rapist, who has dwarfed Quentin's masculinity in his childhood. As Simpson puts it, his relationship with his father has a great influence on Quentin's psyche "Quentin is predisposed to murder anyway, largely as a result of his emotionally barren relationship with his cold and distant father" (Simpson, 2000: 157). His predisposition to kill sometimes targets at his father, "Could I strangle Dad? But he would resist, he would put up a struggle, and he is strong & and in a struggle we would be so close" (Oates, 2009: 34). Here again, the father is a potential rival who threatens the son. Quentin struggles with the idea of killing his father, but he doesn't dare it because the idealized father is perceived as omnipotent; an inheritance from the dyadic period in infancy. As David Mann points out:

the father's triumph at the oedipal stage must be tempered by a degree of failure elsewhere if his son is to gain a sense of potency, competence and mastery. The child's rivalry with his father is in part a reaction to the rivalry from his father (Mann, 1993)

Professor P\_, as a distinguished and renowned academician with lots of admirers, never fails to allow Quentin to be able to have a feeling of victory over the father. It is a chance that could enable Quentin to develop a sense of individuality.

Another striking point in the same quotation "Could I strangle Dad? But he would resist, he would put a up a struggle, and he is strong & and in a struggle we

would be so close” (Oates, 2009: 34) is Quentin’s avoidance of getting physically closer to his father. If it is analyzed with the difficulty “for Quentin to hug them (his family members)! Especially Dad” (Ibid. 21), it can be concluded that physical closeness to his father signifies something negative for Quentin. This in turn, inevitably, leads the reader to think that the sexual abuse Quentin has experienced during his childhood is performed by his father. No matter how much hateful or furious Quentin feels towards his father, Quentin’s identification with his father in an omnipotent way prevents any kind of confrontation to his father. Therefore, on the façade, Quentin is submissive to his father, who hurts his son’s hand while shaking it. However, deep in his psyche, he hates him and regards him as his rival.

## **2.4 Women: Conspicuous For Their Absence**

In contrast to Professor P\_’s deep impact on Quentin’s life, her mother is conspicuous for her almost total absence in his son’s life. Indeed, the novel itself is a product of Quentin’s mind with patriarchal codes, like himself is a member of a patriarchal family, in which the father is the authority, the first and the last to speak as he says; “Mom began to speak in her high quick voice & Dad cut her off calmly” (Ibid. 63). The narrative frequently exemplifies Professor P\_’s distinguishing qualities, whereas the mother is reflected as a stereotypical, mediocre woman without any distinguishing features. The reader is not informed of her name, either. The main characters, Quentin, her father, and the zombies are of male gender. As for the female characters; the mother, Junie, and the grandmother have no primary significance in the novel. In this limited reference to the women in the book, it can be concluded that women are nonexistent and pliable stereotypical characters who usually serve men’s world unconsciously.

One of the most important points that cannot be ignored is the women's unknowing assistance to Quentin to realize his brutal sex murders. Ironically, the only active role women have in the book is their help to Quentin in this respect and his grandmother is the leading figure among all the women. When the police investigates the murder of Quentin's last victim, the grandmother with her old friend are Quentin's ultimate defenders as we read; "By this time Dad's lawyer had contacted Grandma, & Mrs. Thatch, to corroborate that I had been at Grandma's for the hours stated, & both were adamant that this was so" (Ibid. 160). She goes on telling how kind and thoughtful Quentin is, helping not only her but also her friends. However, the grandmother is a provider of money and an easily manipulated old woman for Quentin. Actually, he does not mean to help but sees her as a source of money. Moreover, when Junie's friend sees the wristband on Quentin that is made of the hair of one of Quentin's victim, he claims that it is an Indian thing from the reservation upstate. Junie supports what he says and adds that he used to be hippie and have longer hair even though she knows nothing about the wristband. Unknowingly, Junie helps Quentin to hide his murder. Therefore, it is not difficult to deceive women and obtain their support; furthermore, women themselves make it is easier for men to fool women. Despite his mental and cognitive problems, Quentin twists the women around his little finger, even the sister Junie, who is the principal of a high school.

As long as he does not have materialistic benefits, Quentin is indifferent to women. He does not answer their calls, and he thinks they always talk about the same trivial things. Throughout the narrative, the mother and the grandmother say repetitively "this time things will turn out well" (Ibid. 75). Therefore, Quentin does not listen to them like "the way you don't listen to females mostly" (Ibid. 90). Compared to men, women "want somebody to love & live for..." (Ibid. 139), worry over unimportant things, easily believe in and forgive you unlike the father.

He excludes women even in his sexual intercourse because women do not fit in the desired zombie qualifications of Quentin as he says; "you would want a healthy young, person, male. Of a certain height, weight & and body build, etc. you



would want somebody with “fight” & “vigor” in him. & well hung” (Ibid. 28), women are too weak and simple to make a good zombie; furthermore, they cannot supply Quentin with the “fight” and “vigor” he looks for. Additionally, as it has been explained formerly, homosexuality signifies the rejection and hatred of women because of the effects of the oedipal stage. During this stage, the boy experiences traumatic dissociation of himself from the mother. The boys, who cannot establish a healthy resolution of this trauma, avoid anything feminine in them and avoid females, too, because closeness to them is a threat to going back to this trauma of the oedipal stage. Like the possible hatred of the boy towards the mother in order not to share the father, Quentin hates young girls, whom he calls “little cunts” because of a possible sexual intercourse between these girls and his victims. Despite Quentin’s underestimation and exclusion of females, there is not an obvious misogyny in him.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE PROBLEM OF IDENTITY**

#### **3.1 Female Characters**

It is seen that a common male attitude defines femininity with negations, discarding all commonalities between masculinity and femininity. This is due to the fact that men need to do this to dissociate themselves from their first love objects, namely from their mothers. Nonetheless, it is mystifying to observe that women also feel the same discontent towards womanhood and they need to distance themselves from the gendered role of women. A deeper analysis of mothers as the main agents that play the primary roles during the process of the identity construction of girls make it possible to demystify this ambiguity.

The foremost difference between men and women is apparently not biological but psychological despite the fact that Freud averred it is the awareness of lack of a penis that drives women to feel impotent. However, from birth till death, women are under the psychological and physical pressure of mothers, fathers, husbands, namely all the members of society, culture and the dominant ideology. Therefore, it is the psychological not physical differences that create the secondary status of women. While women are expected to spend a passive life in a domestic sphere, men are expected to embody aggressiveness, activity, power, and superiority over women. What must be more torturous for women is that women themselves submit to these secondary roles and unconsciously pass them from generation to generation, serving the continuity of this hierarchy.

In a patriarchal world, it is men who constitute the dominant group and shape the opposite sex accordingly as it is indicated by Millet:

The first item, temperament, involves the formation of human personality along stereotyped lines of sex category (masculine and feminine), based on the needs and values of the dominant group and dictated by what its members cherish in themselves and find convenient in subordinates: aggression, intelligence, force and efficacy in the male; passivity, ignorance, docility, virtue and ineffectuality in the female, (Millett, 1970:26).

In this respect, it is possible to claim that females personify everything opposite to the valued roles of men. As a consequence, anything that is associated with womanhood is lacking in value. In accordance with this, women devalue womanhood and feel the need to distance themselves from womanhood. In patriarchy, while men have the opportunity to repress women and satisfy their ego, women do not have much chance but to submit. What if they challenge the dominant ideology and patriarchy? Unfortunately, under such circumstances, the people who consider such a rebellion for women as deserving of punishment would not be only men but also women themselves. It is because the unconsciously implanted gender roles in women's psyche force them to submit to patriarchy. This is one of the arguments that will be discussed in this chapter.

A very widely known short story **Where Are You Going, Where Have You been?** by Joyce Carol Oates, is one of the best representations of a girl's entrapment by her gender role and her inevitable fatal end. It is the story of Connie, who is a beautiful girl, enjoying adolescent sexuality with boys. She is fifteen years old and, unlike her sister, she yearns for sexual freedom which she can savor only away from home. This, inevitably, creates major problems between Connie and her mother, who always favors the older, responsible, and traditional daughter. Unfortunately, Connie's sexual passion leads her to encounter the ambiguous character Arnold Friend. He is to turn the child Connie into the adult Connie; this is indeed what Connie has been looking for. However, the implications in the story show that Connie will be raped and killed by Arnold.

As a teenager, Connie does not have a developed, strong sense of identity yet. She is in a dilemma, feeling herself both as superior and weak. Her biggest treasure is her beauty which makes her feel self-confident and sexually attractive. Indeed, physical beauty is what counts in Connie's life "she knew she was pretty and that was everything" (Oates, 1994: 25). It is a kind of obsession with her that she keeps checking her face through other people's eyes. The moments in which Connie feels herself best are those when she is out with her girlfriends, enticing boys through her beauty. It is not challenging for her because "Connie had long blond hair that drew anyone's eye to it" (Ibid. 27). Even in a moment of terror, her mind is firstly occupied with her beauty. When she sees an unknown car coming towards their home, her reaction to it exposes Connie's priorities in life "Her heart began to pound and fingers snatched at her hair, checking it, and she whispered, "Christ, Christ", wondering how bad she looked" (Ibid. 31). It is clear that not safety but beguiling beauty is what Connie desires, even in danger.

In another perspective, she may think that beauty is the key to safety. That is to say, in a patriarchal world, it is women who are victimized by men, and therefore, beauty might be the strongest weapon against a man. In accordance with this, beauty is what she needs to enchant men, that is why beauty is so significant for her. In other words, her beauty constitutes the basis for her dream world through which she attracts boys.

Connie is full of libidinal energy, but she is not allowed to use her sexual potency independently. Such potential in a girl is not acceptable in the small town where she lives, nor is it acceptable in her middle class family. Therefore, she suffers from a dilemma of identity, which means that she acts different roles in different social atmospheres. This is clearly the reason for the split personality in Connie as it is narrated:

She wore a pullover jersey blouse that is one way when she was at home and another way when she was away from home. Everything about her had two sides to it; one for home and one for anywhere that was not home..” (Ibid. 27).

In a patriarchal society, the dominant idea is that a girl should restrict herself to home in a complacent manner and should not lead the free sexual life men enjoy. Hence, Connie, who is full of sexual energy, needs to hide her own wishes in her hidden self, and behave like a stereotypical, socially approved girl at home. In the story, Oates draws the reader’s attention to binary oppositions in Connie; as opposed to her cynical laugh at home, she charms boys with her high-pitched laughter outside. Furthermore, her mouth is pale at home, whereas it is bright and pink outside, and this brightness signifies Connie’s sexual hunger. Taking into account Freud’s model of the human psyche which consists of the id, the ego, and the superego, it is apparent that when Connie is out of her house, she is driven by the id. On the other hand, when she is at home, she is under the command of the ego. As Winslow points out “Connie’s identity is split: one part of her displays her emerging sexuality; the other part conforms to what other authorities in her life consider proper” (Winslow, 1994: 91). Like her hair “half pulled up on her head...the rest of it she let fall down on her back” (Oates, 1994: 27), Connie is half self-controlled, half free. Clearly, it is the mother who acts as the authority to repress Connie’s hunger for sexual freedom; therefore, she is like the superego, representing the restrictions of conscience.

Nonetheless, the immoral desires of the id are so powerful that Connie cannot resist them. Indeed, walking along the busy road, hanging out with boys, going into the restaurants where older boys are, all make Connie feel like she is in a pilgrimage “(there)... (Connie’ and her friend’s) their faces pleased and expectant as if they were entering a sacred building .... (that) give them what haven and blessing they yearned for” (Ibid. 27). The way Connie and her friend feel outside is like they are performing a religious duty, as a result of which they will be awarded and enlightened. It is presumably sexual enlightenment which Connie covets so enthusiastically. She is so strongly driven by her “trashy dreams” that, over and over,

she dreams of the boys she meets and the moments she spends with them, as Freud says “the fulfillment of wishes is, as we know, brought about in a hallucinatory manner by dreams and under the dominance of the pleasure principle this has become their functions”, (Freud, 1960: 36). It shows that Connie seizes every opportunity to satisfy the id and the pleasure principle. If she is not out with boys, she dreams of them. It is pretty clear that Connie is like a servant of the id; she can object to the pleasure principle neither in reality nor in dreams. However, as far as she is with her family in their home, she does not have a chance to ignore the voice of the superego, namely the mother. Consequently, Connie at home embodies the ego “as a poor creature owing service to three masters and consequently menaced by three dangers” (Freud, 2010: 112) . Thus, the outside or anywhere that is not home makes her feel like she is in heaven. There, she is not judged by anybody. Her mother is not with her outside, so she cannot torture her by her codes of conduct and mores. Therefore, being out means putting a temporary end to the conflicts between Connie and the mother, and these conflicts symbolize the battle between the id and the superego. Obviously, Connie rejects all these social, cultural, moral codes, and opts for the independence of her inner wishes. She cannot respond to the demands of the mother because they are against her own demands deep in the self. However, total rejection of social norms certainly disables the chance of surviving in that society. Instead, Connie, unconsciously, creates two selves one obeying the rules of society as much as possible, and the other, stronger one serving her inner wishes. All these indicate that Connie lacks a whole self and tries to survive with her fragmented self against the forces repressing her.

As opposed to her older sister June, Connie is more experienced outside her house due to her relationship with the boys. Therefore, June, who has not gone through such an experience, does not feel the need for sexual freedom in her life. On the other hand, Connie has knowledge of boys and experiences sexual intercourse to a limited extent. What knowing signifies is really important as it is indicated; “Everywhere in the Bible ““knowing”” is synonymous with sexuality, and clearly a product of contact with the phallus” (Millett, 1970: 53). It is true that Connie has

been in contact with the phallus outside the home; and the phallus is signified by the boys she meets there. This knowledge offers Connie a strong will to escape from her family in Connie. Connie's womanly desires are in conflict with her mother's endless efforts to deny her daughter's sexuality. Therefore, while she wants to please her womanly desires, her mother is the first obstacle she must cope with. Consequently, the easiest way is to be away from the home. In contrast to Connie, June is confined to domestic sphere except for time spent at work, she is not married, she does not have a boyfriend; therefore, she lacks knowledge about sexuality and freedom.

Another connotation of knowledge is being aware of gender roles and the inequality between male and female roles. Connie is aware of her superiority over her mother and her sister. She looks down on June "who was twenty-four and still at home" (Oates, 1994: 26). She thinks she is plain and steady just like her mother. Moreover, the mother is always occupied with housework so she does not embody an envious personality. The two role models for Connie are June and the mother; however, she rejects identifying herself with those role models. She has the sexual potential not only to attract boys but also to be able to ignore them. She is also superior to her mother who was once beautiful "but who hadn't much reason any longer to look at her own face" (Ibid. 25). As for June, she lacks beauty and womanly attractiveness. As a result, Connie feels superior to her mother and her sister, and she refuses to play the passive roles they personify. In light of all these issues, Chodorow says of the mother-daughter relationship:

...for the daughter, feminine gender identification means identification with a devalued, passive mother, and personal identification is with a mother whose own self-esteem is low. Conscious rejection of her Oedipal maternal identification, however, remains an unconscious rejection and devaluation of herself, because of her continuing pre-oedipal identification and boundary confusion with her mother (Chodorow, 1989: 64).

As discussed above, girls firstly identify themselves with their mothers, yet they later reject this and hope to identify themselves with the father. It is because the

mother symbolizes passivity, devaluation, and self-deficiency. For the girl, who rejects all these negative attributions, the only solution is to flee from the mother and womanhood. Therefore, knowledge about sexuality and knowledge of the subordinate role of women makes Connie strive to keep herself away from the stereotypical passive womanhood. As Chodorow argues, “The flight from womanhood is not a flight from uncertainty about feminine identity but from knowledge about it” (Ibid. 49). That is the reason why she feels hatred towards the mother and sister, who is like an extension of the mother.

### **3.2 Family**

In the story, the impact of family on one’s life is highlighted over and over again. Connie’s relationship with the members of her family has its own unique significance, and also a unique influence on Connie’s fragmented self. Her hatred of her mother and perceptions of her sister or distant father are meaningful.

The greatest influence on the girls is caused by the mothers. It has been argued that earlier that both boys and girls first identify themselves with their mothers, who are the primary caretakers. Then, boys need to dissociate themselves from the mother to complete their masculine identity. However, it is not the same for girls. Because mothers and girls are the same sex, girls do not need to reject the feminine role that is modeled by the mother. Unlike boys, who are challenged by conflicts, in terms of identity, girls’ gender identification develops in a process of continuity with the mother as Chodorow notes:

Core gender identity for a girl is not problematic in that sense that it is for boys. It is built upon, does not contradict her primary sense of oneness and identification with her mother and is assumed easily along with her developing sense of self. Girls grow up with a sense of continuity and similarity to their mother, (Chodorow, 1989: 110).



As Chodorow asserts, boys get confused after the separation from the mother because unlike mothers, fathers are missing in boys' life. That is to say, fathers in a family are not always with the children and also do not have a close relationship as compared to the relationship that mothers have with their children. Therefore, boys lack a role model to replace the mother. On the other hand, from very early childhood to adulthood, a girl, (un)luckily, is accompanied by her mother. Due to this, a girl has a chance of observing her gender role and adapting herself to this role. She learns her duties as a woman, and internalizes her role in the patriarchy. Unfortunately, because since mothers who have a passive role are examples for their daughters who themselves become passive mothers in the future.

In this respect, if we analyze the relationship between daughters and their mothers, it is obvious that June fits in the role discussed above. Throughout the story, the mother's approval of June is emphasized. She thinks June is a good role model for Connie, who lacks her sister's good attitude. June does not have "trashy dreams" like Connie, she keeps her room clean all the time, and never uses hair spray unlike Connie. Furthermore, the mother's tone is always approving when she talks about June as opposed to her disapproving tone of voice when she is talking about Connie. Connie is aware of that because in the novel, it is narrated that:

...(she) had to hear her praised all the time by her mother and her mother's sisters, June did this, June did that, she saved money and helped to clean the house and cooked and Connie couldn't do thing, her mind was all filled with trashy dreams, (Oates, 1994: 26).

This quotation explains best how all of June's praiseworthy features are related to the socially constructed passive role of women. She is submissive, and remains confined to the house and work, except for the occasional trips out with her girlfriends. She is good at domestic service, as expected from a good girl. Furthermore, she does not occupy herself with the thought of boys unlike Connie. In

a psychoanalytic framework, June's repression of her sexual drives indicates that the superego defeats the ego. Indeed, June ignores the wishes of the self for the sake of adapting herself to reality as Joyce M. Wegs analyses the daughters:

...the former character represents the "pleasure-oriented id (Connie) and the latter the "reality-oriented ego" (June). In this instance the ego is oriented toward the reality of permanent oedipal fixation, and therefore constitutes a negative personality, conforming to the Jungian concept of the shadow, (Wegs, 1994: 122).

Actually, it is more likely that June sacrifices her true self and personifies a false self to get the approval of the people around her. She succeeds in doing so because she is continuously praised by her mother and also by her aunts. It can be asserted that June lives to please not herself but the others since contradicting others would probably cause disagreement which can be difficult to handle for a weak character like June. Most importantly such a contradiction will start a conflict between the mother and the daughter, as in the case between Connie and her mother. June does not take such a risk but submits to her pre-determined role. In this respect, Susan Harter Bleiberg maintains that many young adult women easily perpetuate the stereotypical female gender role exemplified by their mothers and in doing so they behave in a way not to please themselves others but the others. This leads to a repression of the demands of the hidden self and, ultimately creating silent women. It partly stems from the nature of women who need to be connected and related to others and avoid being alone. Therefore, they internalize others' needs and wishes as their own and give up authenticity, (Bleiberg, 1997: 86).

June is clearly a representative of that kind of a girl; her existence is like an extension of her mother's body. It has been already argued that children consider their bodies as an extension of the mother's body and they do not have a sense of individual identity until the mirror phase in childhood. After realizing this fact, they have to construct their own identity. It is as if June couldn't resolve this conflict and does not have an individual self. Showalter points out what the girls need to do in

order to have an identity: “the daughter has to define herself in terms of the mother and she has to define herself in opposition to the mother” (Showalter, 1994: 15). On the other hand, throughout the narrative June never opposes her mother and continues being the favored daughter. Like a stereotypical woman, June avoids possible tensions between herself and the others.

This is the nature of most women in Oates’ stories, as being true to one’s self is risky if the inner drives are in contradiction with those of society. Opposing society, especially in terms of gender roles, requires bodily and spiritual strength because it means opposing the social codes that have been dominant for years. However, being strong is also not enough; therefore, women confine themselves to men’s world as the social codes support the male. As Harter says, men characterize self-focused personalities whereas women characterize other-focused ones (Harter, 1997: 99). This unravels the fact that, in a patriarchal society, men are true to their selves; male gender roles do not require them to repress their freedom unlike women. On the other hand, women sacrifice themselves for the needs of men. This is of course mostly not performed consciously but unconsciously. Women accept the subordinating roles, while the major roles are acted out by men. The mother in the story is such a character, who devotes herself to her family and expects the same attitude from her daughters. June submits to her mother unquestioningly; therefore, she wins the acceptance of the mother.

Although June and Connie are sisters, they are also opposite in terms of both personality and physical appearance. As far as physical appearance is concerned, June lacks beauty; in contrast, Connie is proud of her beauty. Moreover, as opposed to June’s home as the safe territory of her life and her lack of authenticity, Connie risks her life when she steps out of the house and she is also desirous to rebel against the gender roles imposed by the society. These demonstrate the outer-directedness of June and inner-directedness of Connie as these two characteristic features are defined by Susan Harter:

Resiman distinguished between inner-directed individuals who were self-determining and, by definition, more true to themselves, and outer-directed individuals whose malleability in the face of social demands marked them as less authentic (Harter, 1997: 83).

It is obvious that others' thoughts and judgments of her are not important for Connie because nothing, even the continuous complaints of the mother about her, can prevent Connie from leading a life she herself desires. She is so determined and strong that she challenges her mother, which is the voice of the superego, as much as she can for the sake of being true to her inner self. She rejects the role that society imposes on her. However, her mother is the embodiment of the passive role she rejects, so her mother becomes her main enemy in this respect.

The mother thinks and behaves like a traditional woman, so she is concerned about Connie's relationship with boys. That is to say, she does not want Connie to extend the limits of her gender role; on the other hand, Connie is about to reach sexual maturity, and therefore, her mind is always occupied with boys. For the mother, Connie should lead a life very much like her own life, not better or worse. This was firstly out of jealousy that her mother feel towards Connie, and secondly out of fear that she could be seduced by boys.

At the end of the book, Connie is victimized; she will probably be raped and killed by Arnold. However, June is also a victim of her mother and society. It can be concluded that Connie's fate is physical victimization, whereas June's is psychological victimization by the mother. Therefore, the mother's conscious or unconscious limitations on their daughters are vitally important. Nancy Chodorow's analyses concerning the complicated relationships between mothers and daughters will be helpful in understanding the story better. She also includes analyses by Friday and Arcana. She notes that Friday believes that mothers intentionally and consciously prevent daughters from constructing individual selves and they consider daughters to be a part of their own bodies. Moreover, since the patriarchal society

prevents mothers from achieving sexual freedom, they in turn restrain their daughters in terms of sexual liberation. Arcana argues that mothers are the most important agents in the oppression of their daughters as well. On the other hand, mothers do not oppress their daughters on purpose, but it is because of mothers' entrapment within patriarchy, (Chodorow, 1989: 80-81). That is, they pass the passive role the patriarchy offers them to their daughters.

On the very first page of the story, the mother-daughter jealousy is clearly depicted. The mother complains about the fact that Connie frequently checks her face and admires her own beauty in the mirror because the mother is old and no longer beautiful. She is just,

...a shadowy vision of Connie (who )...had been pretty once, too, if you could believe those old snapshots in the album, but now her looks were gone and that was why she was always after Connie (Oates, 1994 : 25).

Connie is like a reflection of the mother in her teenage years; therefore, she has beauty, which her mother used to have once but now lacks. Consequently, Connie is a reminder of loss for the mother; on the other hand, June, who is not beautiful, cannot be a rival for the mother. Hence, she is the favored daughter as opposed to Connie. Furthermore, Connie is aware of her sexual attractiveness and does not hesitate to make the best use of it, which drives her mother crazy.

In the course of the story, it is stated that "Connie thought that her mother preferred her to June just because she was prettier" (Ibid. 31). Actually compared to Connie and the mother, June is very submissive, so it is as if she does not actually exist. The mother, "who noticed everything and knew everything" also knows that June will not be able to have a better life than herself. June is already twenty-five and still single, and this cause even Connie to pity her. Nonetheless, Connie has the potential for higher life standards and a more independent life, which causes her mother to envy her. Therefore, she always criticizes and tries to stop her.

Another factor that must be taken into consideration when analyzing the relationship between mothers and daughters is the fact that mothers identify themselves with their daughters. It is discussed earlier that mothers' attitude towards their children differs owing to the sexual differences between children and their mother. That is, a mother feels closer to her daughters and identifies herself with them because they are of the same sex in contrast to their sons. While such closeness provides the daughter with a gendered role model, this identification can cause problems of individuality for the daughter.

Boys grow up with an awareness of a "me-not me" kind of relatedness to mothers. Therefore, the mother is always the "other" for the son, who should put an end to his identification with her. On the other hand, the self and other relation between mothers and daughters cannot be constructed so easily. Girls do not feel the urgent need to dissociate themselves from their mothers, unlike boys. This unfortunately would cause daughters to lack individual selves, and who still consider themselves to be one with the mother. Similarly, Chodorow maintains that mothers' obsession with their daughters also prevent them from individuation. Mothers do not accept the idea that the daughters are independent of them. A combination of these two, daughter's identification with the mother and later the daughter's identification with her own daughter is combined in the mother, and it causes double or over identification. This ends in "no room for separation or difference between the mother and daughter" (Chodorow, 1989: 54-59)

In **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**, the mother leaves no chance for differentiation for her daughters and wants to shape them in accordance with her own expectations. As discussed above, she is a traditional woman, so her expectations indeed reflect the expectations of society, to which she herself has submitted. She is entrapped in a patriarchal American society, having a limited independence in terms of sexuality, and hence she leads a life that is confined to her domestic territory. All these attributions are equated with womanhood by the patriarchal society. What Connie sees in her mother is a socially repressed, ordinary

woman. While June accepts that role unquestioningly, Connie rejects it and struggles against her mother/society.

From Connie's point of view, the role offered by the mother is not a desirable, respected one. She thinks "her mother was so simple... [she] went scuffling around the house in old bedroom slippers and complained over the telephone to one sister about the other..."(Oates, 1994: 29). The gap between what the mother represents and what Connie hopes for is a huge one; therefore, the more the mother insists on repressing Connie, the more Connie gets away from her. She even wishes her mother to be dead. Connie's dream world does not overlap with the world of the mother. Therefore, Connie not only rejects the mother but the whole family, and she prefers the attractive ambience of the outside world to the safety of her home.

### **3.3 Rejection of Female Gender Roles**

Indeed, Connie's objection of her mother is a symbolic one. Her rebellion against her mother reflects her denial of the secondary gender role imposed upon women by society. In the story, Oates unfolds the fact that women are required to yield to the impositions of society; otherwise, any rebellion will have significant consequences. In this case, Connie's punishment is being raped and murdered by a man.

Undoubtedly, the physical characteristics that distinguish men and women do not signify a hierarchy between them. The cause of inferiority of women is social norms. Kate Millett analyses the self-other relationship between men and women as:

Under patriarchy the female didn't herself develop the symbols by which she is described. As both the primitive and the civilized worlds are male worlds, the ideas which shaped culture in regard to the female were also of male design. The image of women as we know it is an image created by men and fashioned to suit their needs...the male has already set himself as the human norm, the subjects and the referent to which the female is "other" or alien (Millett, 1970: 46).

Indeed, the relationship between men and women is similar to the one between a bottle and a liquid poured into it. Like liquid, women easily flow into the concrete shape of men's substance. Since they are shaped by men's fixed qualities, they can never fulfill their authentic selves.

It is possible to claim that the roles expected from women are predetermined by patriarchy. Unfortunately, these roles are not of high value; in contrast, women are expected to occupy themselves with everything that men do not condescend to do. At the most basic level, child-rearing is considered to be the primary duty of women. A traditional family structure requires the mother to be a child's caretaker. A family with a mother working outside and a father taking care of the child is often considered to be improper for the father. This obvious inequality, favoring men is one of the most salient features of the world.

### **3.3.1 Home Versus Outside**

Another important signification of the story is how women react to their predetermined, inferior status, and how others respond to these reactions. In the narrative, the protagonist is obviously rebellious to her mother and her sister, who represent the repressed, domestic women roles. As it is indicated,

a girl's conflicts, rather, are about whether or not she wants this identity reliant on her ability to inhibit herself and to respond to the demands of others, leading eventually to an adult fate where her role and her dependence upon it doom her to bring up sons and daughters resentful to her and the femininity she represents (Chodorow, 1989: 42).



It is the same conflict that Connie suffers from, that is, she is never sure of which self she should prefer. Should she struggle to make her trashy dreams come true or give up the life outside and just be like June and her mother?

The turning point of the story answers this question; “ In refusing to attend a family picnic, Connie is rejecting not only her family’s company, but the settled order of their existence” (Oates, 1994: 76). A family barbecue is organized at her aunt’s; June, her mother and her father are all attending the picnic. The only one rejecting it is Connie. This rejection symbolizes Connie’s rebellion towards her mother, father, society, and patriarchy; unfortunately, this brings in the murder and rape by Arnold Friend.

“Patriarchy’s chief institution is the family” (Millett, 1970: 33), Millett argues. Therefore, the way that people perceive the family is actually different at the conscious level and the unconscious level. That is to say, although the family is viewed as the safest territory, it is very common that people unconsciously desire to escape from the limits of the family. Most of the time, teenagers and women feel the need to get away from their families because that is where the seeds of patriarchy are planted. Family is the mediator that enforces the rules of patriarchy because it serves:

... as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads” Millett, 1970: 33).

Hence, the family is the first area where children face the secondary role of women, which is personified by the mothers. The domestic sphere as the proper place for the mother versus the social sphere for the father is imposed on the children during their childhood unconsciously. Consequently, the way boys and girls are brought up, the secondary role of mothers as opposed to fathers, and also the mother’s over identification with their daughters all imprint in the child’s psyche the image of the oppressed woman. This image continues unconsciously to condition the

children in such a way that the boys and girls are brought up accordingly. That is how the patriarchy maintains its existence within the family.

When all these are taken into consideration, Connie's rejection of the family picnic connotes her unconscious protest to the family, where patriarchy emerges. Moreover, home is a powerful tie between family members because it is the place they share as a family. Connie not only alienates herself from her family members, but she also prefers the outside world over home because there she can she act independently without the limitations of her family. Christina Marsden Gillis states that "the two major locations in the story are the home and the family unit it signifies, and the outside world", (Gillis, 1994: 135). She maintains that home signifies an established order- the patriarchal order- and the wisdom of the family which is in contradiction with Connie's trashy dreams. While the word home connotes daylight, Connie enjoys herself outside at night in the dark. (Ibid.). All these signify that home is safe, stable, fixed, and ordered. Nevertheless, it is surrounded by walls, and these walls obviously provide the family with a safe atmosphere; however, in the narrative, they represent the limits and restraints of the family on its members. This is the reason why Connie looks forward to going out with her friends. As opposed to home, there are no limits, no restraints outside. On the other hand, outside is unknown and chaotic which means it lacks the safety of home, so it is where Arnold rapes Connie.

In the beginning of the narrative, like all of the other family members, Connie belongs to home. As she breaks the ties with the family by refusing to go to the picnic, she is also alienated from her home: "Her eyes darted everywhere in the kitchen. She could not remember what it was, this room" (Oates, 1994: 43). From that point on, she is out of the protection of the family and home. Similarly, Arnold Friend's sphere is outside because Arnolds signifies the danger and insecurity of the outer realm as opposed to the safety of home, so he says "I ain't made plans for coming in that house where I do not belong, but just for you to come out to me" (Ibid. 43). The door of the house corresponds to the border between a dangerous

threat and a safe shelter. Unfortunately, Connie crosses this border, so she steps into danger.

Connie's preference for outside over the safety of home is actually not a sharp, definite decision made consciously. As discussed above, she has a life full of contradictions, even her character, which consists of two contradictory selves, one for home and the other one for outside is contradictory. Therefore, it can be concluded that Connie's enthusiasm for the outside is always challenged by her attachment to her family and home. She has not been able to construct an identity by making rigid decisions. Hers is a dilemma, as Wesley argues "Oates' oeuvre is the presentation of American family as the classic dilemma of colloquial expression; you can't live with it; and you cannot live without it" (Wesley, 1993: 144). Connie's psychological predicament is that she seeks liberation from the family for the sake of independence. However, what she desires is not a life without the family, and this is the reason why she keeps her two selves-one for the home and one for outside- in balance. Moreover, she has so little life experience that the outside is chaotic and terrifying for her, yet she realizes this only after Arnold comes to take her away. Nonetheless, the patriarchal world order is not merciful enough to pity and save Connie, and once she opposes it, she will eventually be punished.

### **3.3.2 Women's Unconscious Contributions to Patriarchy**

It is indeed thought provoking that not only men but also women serve and contribute to the patriarchal system of the world. Chodorow points out in this regard that "...women's motherhood and mothering role seem to be the most important features in accounting for the secondary status of women" (Chodorow, 1989:46). She means that mothers' attitudes towards children contribute to the development of an unconscious feeling of inferiority for girls, as opposed to mastery in boys. This

again emerges from the fact that mothers identify themselves with their daughters, yet they encourage the boys to put an end to the identification with their mother. A boy who grows up in such an atmosphere, undoubtedly, feels superior to girls. As for the girls, they internalize the role offered to them by their mother; they are trained to be passive women, and later mothers. These concepts are embedded in the unconscious of the girls within the family context by the mother who represents the salient parent, (Ibid. 54-55).

In addition to Chodorow, Jessica Benjamin also agrees that the roles of men and women are like a master and slave, respectively; the basis for such an idea is founded by the mother's renunciation of her own demands, giving up her subjectivity for the sake of the male's annihilation of the commonalities with the mother, (Benjamin, 1988: 82). As a result, mothers themselves expect the same passivity from their daughters, while they expect activity from their sons.

As argued earlier, boys dissociate themselves from their mothers and seek identification with their fathers. This allows sons to annihilate any feminine attributes inherited from attachment to their mother. As a result, boys are purified of all the aspects of womanhood, and they are trained to be masters. In contrast, girls are not provided with such dissociation; therefore, they are trained to be like mothers. They imitate their role models with all the negative characteristics intended for women and internalize these over time. They do not realize how they turn out to perceive themselves as subordinate to men because of this unconscious process which occurs in childhood. As Jung explains, in particular, young girls and boys are driven strongly by their unconscious desires because they have just emerged from an unconscious state. That is, they have not developed a complete understanding of themselves, so it is the unconscious drives to a great extent that motivate their behavior. Moreover, he argues that there are unconscious motives that emerge from the parental influence as well (Jung, 2003: 48). If the claims of Chodorow and Benjamin are combined with what Jung says, we could claim that young boys and girls are mostly under the control of parental codes in their unconscious and lead their lives accordingly.

Moreover, women's acceptance and internalization of this secondary role is a powerful factor as Carolyn Heilburn illustrates with a comparison between women and Arabs,

...women had differed from Arabs in one important way: for more than Arabs internalized the Western view, women have internalized the male view of themselves, have accepted it as the "truth", as Arabs rarely accepted...the Western view of their ineptitudes and essential inhumanity (Heilburn, 1994: 26).

Indeed, such a comparison evidently demonstrates how people try to define others with negations and consider themselves as having the right to label people with such depreciatory terms. The Western mind did consider the Arabs to be inhuman. In a parallel way, patriarchal minds define women as passive due to their sexes. On the other hand, women do not reject to this definition as much as the Arabs have objected to the Western people. Undoubtedly, what Heilburn expects from women is that they should define themselves and not submit to the definitions given by men which perpetuate this oppression.

These issues can elucidate why Connie's mother struggles to keep Connie away from her trashy dreams, expresses her great satisfaction of June, and disapproves of Connie's rebellion. It is because she has been trained to believe so. Moreover, it again clarifies why June accepts the secondary status of women, and why Connie hesitates to get rid of the role of oppressed womanhood.

## **3.4 Characteristics Unique To Womanhood**

### **3.4.1 Masochist Women and Sadist Men**

Among the characteristic traits concerning women which have been thus far been discussed, the most striking is that men tend to be more sadistic in contrast to women, who tend to be more masochistic. This is significant in the light of the fact that Connie obeys whatever Arnold says even though she is not a weak character.

Concerning features of males and females, Juliet Mitchell has argued that dreams about violence have different significations for girls and boys. Take the case of a dream in which, a child is being beaten. Girls analyze it that way; firstly it is a sister or a brother that is beaten by the father. This is the sadistic phase, and it signifies jealousy and emerges from the attachment to the mother. On the other hand, in the second phase, girls perceive it as “I am being beaten by my father” this phase signifies a sense of guilt, the call for punishment, and masochism. This sense of guilt stems from girls’ sexual desire for the father. The second phase is always unconscious and it signifies the oedipal attachment to the father. Therefore, girls feel guilty and need to be punished. The sadism in the first phase turns into masochism in the second phase. Mitchell maintains that “it expresses the wish to submit to castration, copulation or childbirth and to get erotic pleasure out of painful experience” (Mitchell, 2000: 114). Boys get rid of the oedipal attachment to the mother by identifying themselves later with the fathers; however, girls’ oedipal attachment to the father makes them feel guilty by birth. Therefore, boys turn out to be sadists whereas girls tend to be masochists.

The moment Arnold Friend and Connie first see each other, the way they address and treat one another other is very revealing because, over time, it turns out to be a master-slave relationship, in which Connie submits to Arnold Friend’s orders without questioning him. Moreover, it is as if she obeys what Arnold says like a

child is listening to her father in an obeying manner. During Arnold's unexpected visit to Connie's home, the characters Connie and Arnold symbolize the roles women and men have in patriarchy.

At the end of the story, Connie leaves her home and walks towards Arnold; it is emphasized that Connie is going with him. On the other hand, it depends on the reader's imagination and point of view where they are going and what is awaiting Connie there. The most common belief is that Connie will be raped and killed by Arnold Friend due to Oates' implication of Arnold as a serial sex murderer, who killed and raped girls.

On the other hand, it is left unexplained why Connie submits to a stranger so quickly and easily. One possible answer is that Connie submits because Arnold threatens her by telling "you don't want your people in any trouble, do you?" (Oates, 1994: 45), which means if she doesn't do what Arnold says, Arnold will harm her family. Therefore, she gives in and goes with Arnold to prevent any possible harm to her family; however, this is not a satisfactory answer. It is highly possible that behind Connie's passivity and subjection to Arnold lie more powerful, unconscious motives.

There is no doubt that it is a masochistic behavior unquestioningly obeying a person who is going to hurt you and prevent you from seeing your family again. What Arnold tells her has sexual implications because he claims that he is always very nice at first, which signifies Connie's virginity, and afterwards, he will go inside her and "Connie will give her". Connie who had been confused about Arnold's plans up to that point could understand that he is planning to rape her through what he says. Consequently, knowing this fact and agreeing to accompany him proves that Connie has her share of masochism as a woman.

One of the essential motives for women's masochism or the pleasure that women get from pain is explained by Jessica Benjamin. She notes; "the desire for submission represents a peculiar transposition of the desire for recognition" (Benjamin, 1988: 56). One of the most striking points in the story which has already

been discussed is Connie's divided personality. Apart from Connie known by people, she also has a hidden personality, which she partly reveals when she is outside with her friends, enjoying freedom and boys' company. It is also obvious that, her "trashy dreams" are where her hidden self resides peacefully, yet she is alone and isolated there. She needs somebody to recognize and approve the hidden self. The need to let her hidden self free and get rid of the false self drives Connie to masochism as Benjamin notes:

masochism can be seen, therefore, not only as a strategy for escaping aloneness, but also as a search for aloneness with the other: by letting the other remain in control, the masochist hopes to find a safe, open space in which to abandon the protective false self and allow the nascent, hidden self to emerge (Benjamin, 1988: 73).

Such an analysis is indicative of the ambiguity in Connie's passive obedience to Arnold. When she is with Arnold, she is again in a dilemma; she is extremely fearful of him as a stranger, but also hopeful for the possibility of attaining the sexual freedom she has sought. Unconsciously, she feels that going away with Arnold means leaving the family, home, and most importantly, being freed from the suppression of her mother. By escaping from her home, she escapes from the sense of aloneness, brought about by her repressed self, and she perceives Arnold as an opportunity which will enable her to annihilate her false self and absolve the hidden self.

Moreover, Connie was always scolded because of her rebellion against the stereotyped role expected from women, so she lacks the approval and acceptance of the people around her. In other words, she needs an atmosphere where people will provide her with the recognition of her hidden self. Similar to what Benjamin says about women, Connie seeks for recognition of her true self by the others, so that she can attain an authentic self. As Benjamin argues masochism is a desire to be discovered; in contrast, sadism is driven by the desire to discover, to get outside and penetrate into someone else's reality, (Benjamin, 1988: 73). Taking all these into consideration, it can be concluded that Arnold personifies the sadist who seeks to



discover Connie, and Connie embodies the oppressed self, that looks for discovery and recognition of the true self. As a result, Connie's conscious fear and terror felt at that moment are beaten by her unconscious desires for recognition.

The roles mothers have concerning women's masochism and men's sadism are quite potent. Benjamin says, in terms of mutual recognition of each person by the other in a relationship, mothers willingly provide their children with recognition; however, they don't expect the children to recognize them. As a result, girls who continue to identify themselves with their mothers recognize men without being recognized. As for men, they deny the other (women) rather than denying themselves. This explains masculine sadism and feminine masochism. Moreover, identification with mother leads girls to sacrifice their independence and perceive men's desires as theirs. Therefore, girls are not familiar with the power to assert independence because their role models, mothers do not have that power, either. In addition, both the desire for sexual dominance and sexual submission signify the need for wholeness. It is obvious that men can achieve wholeness by sexual dominance, while women do so by sexual submission (Benjamin, 1988: 79).

The lack of a means to attain independence for girls is explanatory as regards the reason why Connie cannot succeed in forming an independent self. It is what mothers are deprived of, so each new generation grows up without such a foundation in the development of their personality. In this way, Connie unconsciously expects to release her hidden self or construct a whole and unified identity for herself through submission to Arnold.

Except for the sadistic and masochistic relation between Connie and Arnold, Arnold's mystic power of knowing everything and his father-like attitude towards Connie also connote Arnold's superiority over Connie.

It is as if Arnold owns magical power because though he is a stranger, he knows Connie's name, her family members, and friends. Moreover, he is informed of the family barbecue, who has attended it, what Connie's sister is wearing at the barbecue and so on. As opposed to Connie who knows nothing about Arnold,

Arnold has a higher status because of his unlimited knowledge about Connie. Furthermore, his superiority over Connie is like a reflection of the father as the head of the family. Arnold calls Connie “honey” and “my sweet, little blue-eyed girl”, as if he is the authority, like a father. Moreover, it is also interesting to note:

Connie’s quick submission to Friend reveals her attitude towards masculine authority. Invited to take a ride, Connie asks, “Where?”- to which Friend responds, “Where, what?” when she answers as if already under his command “Where are we going?”, Friend’s psychic invasion has begun (Daly, 1994: 151).

Psychologically, Connie feels obliged to accompany Arnold to the place he wants to take her. It is a psychological motive because physically there is nothing forcing her to obey. At the very least, she could refuse his request; she has already agreed to go, as if it were an order. Now she is curious and anxious about where they are going as the title of the story indicates.

### **3.4.2 Passivity and Jealousy As Feminine Traits**

Apart from the depiction of women as sadistic, another feature that is portrayed as feminine is jealousy. As discussed earlier, the mother feels jealous of Connie because of her beauty, her longing for freedom, and her sexual demands. Moreover, the way that Connie underestimates June also implicitly signifies jealousy since June is always favored by the mother. Schulz and Rockwood argue that Connie’s ambiguous relationship with June represents an “unresolved oedipal conflict, aggravated by sibling rivalry”, (Gillis, 1994: 120). Moreover, sisterly love between June and Connie is not mentioned in the book. Jealousy resulting from rivalry is always a major constituent of women’s relationships; even the closest family ties are not strong enough to eliminate such feelings. Additionally, apart from the jealousy between Connie, her mother and her sister, the narration reveals that Connie’s

mother and her sisters are also not sincere to each other. Showalter analyses the ties between the women in the story that way:

...sisterhood is no more powerful than motherhood. Bonds between women are weak and superficial. Connie's girlfriends are scarcely important enough to be named. When they go out together, it is not to be together but to escape from their parents and to find boys. In the world of the story, women cannot group together for mutual support, but only gang up against a third, (Showalter, 1994: 16)

When the mother and the aunts talk on the phone, two sisters complain about another sister, but when the third sister calls, they complain about the other. It is evident that not only the sisterhood between Connie and June but also the ties between the mother and the aunts are weak. Moreover, this demonstrates that women's discontent does not target at one certain woman; in contrast, it is a trait that is common to all women regardless of their relationship. Concerning this, Millett claims, "a witty experiment by Philip Goldberg proves that everyone knows that having internalized the disesteem in which they are held, women despise both themselves and each other" (Millett, 1970: 55). Here, Millett touches on the issue of women's internalization and belief of the dominant, patriarchal view of females. This self-deprecation is what lies behind their hatred, rivalry, and jealousy towards other women.

### **3.5 Connie's Desire for Sexual Freedom**

It is a universally accepted fact that the teenage years constitute a challenging period. It is especially a period in which people become drawn to the opposite sex in terms of sexual matters and, in turn, begin to grow distant from their parents. At the age of seventeen, Connie is such a teenager, and she is filled with "trashy dreams". Throughout the narration, the reader is exposed to Connie's search of freedom in terms of sexuality. She and her friend frequently go to the malls and restaurants where older boys are and she always looks around invitingly to entice boys.

In a patriarchal world, it is common to blame women for their sexual encounters with men and regard such events as cause of rape and murder. As Millett argues, The Pandora myth and the tale of Adam and Eve are two striking examples in this respect. She points out that these are Western archetypes that are based on the idea of blaming women for their sexuality and as a result, they are perceived as being well-deserving of punishment for this primal sin. She maintains that the Bible defines knowledge as contact with the phallus and, the loss of Eden stems from Eve's contact with the snake which signifies a phallus. Therefore, this tale implies that all the sorrows of life are the results of women's sexuality, just as Eden was lost because of Eve's sexuality, (Millett, 1970: 52-53). Indeed, Connie's fate is similar to Eve's, in which her contact with sexuality is thought to be inviting Arnold and death.

What makes the reader think so is the fact that the mother continuously complains about Connie's behavior, as Showalter points out what the mother is doing "... condemning Connie's trashy values, and boy craziness, and blaming the debased adolescent culture of her world for her susceptibility to the fatal seduction" (Showalter, 1994: 9). When she is out with Eddie in his car, Connie cannot stop herself from looking around at other boys, besides the narration suggests that Connie has orgasm when she is with boys or dreams of boys. When she is with Arnold, she is sexually aroused: "the wave of dizziness, the sweating, panting, and shaking all characterize a woman well on the way to orgasm" (Gretchen & Rockwood, 1994: 126). Therefore, her interaction with men, even when she is danger, makes her feel sexually attracted.

Indeed, in **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?**, Oates sets up the framework of a religious allegory-the seduction of Eve" (Urbanski, 1994: 75). The story of Eve seducing Adam parallels to the situation between Connie and Arnold in the following way; it has been already mentioned that when Connie is out with Eddie, she cannot help but look around charmingly, taking deep breaths with pleasure. At that moment, she glances at a boy in a convertible jalopy. After winking at him, she glances back again. This is the moment when Connie seduces Arnold with her sexually inviting manners. Moreover, the way her chest rises and

falls as she breaths just before Arnold arrives, is like a call for him. Therefore, Connie seduces Arnold with her smile as Eve seduces Adam with the apple. Furthermore, after she meets Arnold at her house, she remembers that moment and Arnold. Surprisingly enough, Connie's reaction to Arnold's questions are not meant to stop him. In contrast, theirs is a dialogue; it is as if Connie encourages Arnold to keep the conversation going. During the dialogue, she smiles and lets her hair fall loose over the shoulder, signifying sexuality. Furthermore, she is quite curious about him, so she asks questions to him encouragingly.

Such examples could be invoked to defend the belief that women are to blame for the violence to which they can be subject. As Rich claims, "Connie is punished for sex with sex. Connie is singled out for rape because she is guilty of being pretty and flirtatious. She was asking for it, wasn't she" (Rich, 1994: 142). Therefore, rape and murder can be interpreted as caused by Connie's self-guilt.

Undoubtedly, rape as the result of self-guilt, that "bad girls" feel is not what the message that Oates wants to convey, rather the story emphasizes the fact that sexuality is viewed as the right of men, and that it does not fit in the gender roles of women in patriarchy. Diana Scully points out that, rapists are not always held to blame in cases of rape. She specifically means that any behavior by the victim that contradicts socially expected gender roles can be considered as a provocation for rape. Furthermore, the way a woman dresses and social evaluation are important factors for a decision of who is to blame in a case of rape. Scully mentions a real case in which a murderer blames a female victim by saying that she tempted him by wearing sexy dresses, not wearing bras, or revealing her legs when she was getting out of a car (Scully, 1990: 131-132).

In my view, when all these discussions are taken into consideration, it is seen that, in this patriarchal world order, as a woman, one is not privileged to object to her family, to look for freedom, especially sexual freedom, or to act in a contradictory manner; if a woman does rebel in these ways it is her destiny to be punished by rape or murder because the patriarchal world system makes people

foolishly think that “a virtuous woman either cannot get raped or does not get into situations that leave her open to assault” (Brownmiller, 2000: 260).

It is for sure that the intended messages by Joyce Carol Oates may not match what the reader thinks about the story. The following is what Oates thinks about Connie:

Connie is shallow, vain, silly, hopeful, doomed-but capable nonetheless of an unexpected gesture of heroism at the story’s end. Her smooth-talking seducer, who cannot lie, promises her that her family will be unharmed if she gives herself to him: and so she does. The story ends abruptly at the point of her “crossing over”. We don’t know the nature of her sacrifice, only that she is generous enough to make it (Oates, 1994: 68).

As a reconsideration of Connie’s analysis and Oates’s comments on her, it is possible to assert that the story ends with the image of fallen heroine because Connie is brave enough to object to her gender role and also brave enough to sacrifice herself to protect her family. The cause of considering the end of the narrative as her fall is her punishment for her courageous acts that result with rape and murder.

## CONCLUSION

Joyce Carol Oates is one of the most prolific writers of contemporary literature. Her works range from short stories to novels, poetry, drama, novellas, essays, and memoirs. Indeed, she is a devoted writer who won numerous prestigious awards like national Book Award and Bram Stoker Award. Two of her greatest works **Zombie** and **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been** are outstanding due to the fact that they provide the reader with the brutality of human nature in two different perspectives. **Zombie** presents us the mind of a serial killer with all hidden and brutal wishes going on in it. **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?** narrates the role of patriarchy in female victimization.

This thesis examines the reasons for the problem of identity in both male and female characters in these works. The first focus is on serial murder cases which have been an phenomenon in the United States of America. It has been discussed that the role of the media in creating celebrities out of serial murders cannot be ignored. Being one of the people who experienced the terror and fear due to these serial murder cases, Oates has reflected these experiences in her works. The reason why **Zombie** and **Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?** have been chosen as the focus of this study is the fact they were inspired by true life serial murderers; it means that they are reflection of female victimization and male brutality in America.

In the first chapter, it has been concluded that a common aspect of serial murderers is having split identities and combining their instinct for murder with eroticism. In other words, they have hidden selves that embody the id, and publicized selves that personify the ego. To study human psyche, Freud's and theories about the development of human mind have been used. As a result, it is noted that the fragmented selves of serial murderers offer them an opportunity to keep their serial murderer identities as secret. Moreover, in almost all cases, serial

murderers are male and victims are female, and murder is preceded or followed by rape by the murderer. This displays that patriarchal values and male gaze are the major causes of brutality in men and passivity in women. It is because patriarchy and male gaze force women to repress their authenticity and submit to male desire. In this respect, Connie becomes the victim of patriarchy because she resists to the predetermined gender roles. Similarly, Quentin rebels against his father, who represents patriarchy because he is homosexual and his father strongly objects this. On the other hand, patriarchy turns rebellious women into victims as in Connie's case, but it turns rebellious men into victimizers as exemplified by Quentin. Quentin, who feels entrapped within his own wishes and the demands of the society, ends up being a sexual predator.

The second chapter reviews the novel **Zombie** in a detailed way. The problem of identity of the male is the main concern in this part, and with the help of Nancy Chodorow's psychoanalytic feminist arguments, it has been concluded that males experience an identity crisis because mothers are the first love objects with whom both boys and girls identify themselves. However, as the Oedipus stage reaches an end, boys need to dissociate themselves from their mothers and identify themselves with their fathers. This separation from the mother causes a trauma in boys and the absence of father in boy's life as a role model makes this trauma worse. Hence, the boys have fragmented selves, they feel isolated and lost, and also invisible as in the case of Quentin.

As a solution, Quentin looks for means of recreating himself with phallic symbols that signify the desire to reconstruct his masculine identity. His desire to master his zombies emerges as a result of an experience during his childhood. With the help of the arguments presented by Nancy Chodorow, it has been discussed that the boys feel forced to annihilate everything feminine in themselves, and they do so by objectifying mothers and dominating all females. As a result, the child experiences the fear of turning back to the mother and identifying with her again. Therefore, he feels hatred and fear towards women. Therefore, Quentin keeps himself away from females as much as possible; he also thinks that touching her



mother is disgusting. Moreover, it is noteworthy that women are also excluded from sexual intercourse because Quentin believes only males can be good zombies. Since all these feelings reside in the unconscious and bring in the repression of women, psychoanalytic and feminist literary theories help to elucidate the experience of the characters analyzed so far.

The third chapter examines the identity problem in female characters. As opposed to the boys, girls do not feel the need to detach themselves from their mothers because they are the same sex and they consider mothers as their role models. On the other hand, this does not prevent Connie from having a fragmented identity because patriarchal values oppress women's subjectivity. Hence, there are two sides of Connie, that is, one represented by the id, and the other by the ego. As for the mother, imposing patriarchal codes for Connie, is the superego.

Moreover, Kate Millett's arguments about the masochistic personality of women are quite illuminating. It has been argued that people need each other for recognition and, while men look for recognition through sadism, women look for recognition through masochism. This is the reason for Connie's masochistic behavior because she needs somebody to free her repressed self. Her house, her family and especially her mother are indicators of patriarchy creating inhibitions for people. Therefore, only when she is outside, she is out of their limitations so that she may have a chance to live independently. Unfortunately, patriarchy does not leave any chance for Connie's survival, so she is victimized by Arnold, who assaults Connie with his patriarchal ways.

This study has aimed to demonstrate with vivid examples the destructive power of patriarchy. It is believed that, Oates wants to raise consciousness of people, especially women, indicating the fact that both men and women, like Quentin and Connie, are under the influence of patriarchy. It shapes people's lives in a way that enables the maintenance of destructive force of patriarchy as the dominant world system.

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