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Fragmented Selves and the Search for Identity: A Lacanian Study of '*The Water Cure' (2018) by Sophie Mackintosh*

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research paper is to apply Jacques Lacan theory of psychoanalysis to analyze the novel, The Water Cure (2018) by Sophie Mackintosh. The close reading in the paper has been applied to examine the patriarchal structures of the society in the novel and how the structures restrict the freedom of the women, by putting them within the confines of a particular boundary that the Symbolic order places on women. It employs the Mirror stage and the Symbolic stage that was proposed by Lacan in understanding the sense of self in the characters and how the characters reacts to the outside world. The theme of power in the family and the navigational and resistance strategies of the characters is also discussed in the paper. It is a qualitative research methodology that is founded on Approach based on qualitative content analysis that focuses on concepts arising out of the cultural background. This study is informed by the analysis on the female characters presented in Novel 'The Water Cure' (2018) by Sophie Mackintosh. The technique for selection of Population and Sample is judgmental sampling. The female characters of the chosen pieces of literature have been selected as the population and Sample. The analysis

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shows that the Lacanian reading of The Water Cure (2018) provides a more in-depth insight into the themes and characters of the novel. It brings out the repressive aspect of patriarchal systems and how it affects the agency of women. The Mirror stage, and the Symbolic stage analysis shed some light on how the characters form their identity themselves and how they are complexly oriented towards the external world. The paper also reveals the different power relations involved in the family and the negotiating and resisting strategies of the characters. The psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan will form the basis of this paper to show that there is more to The Water Cure (2018). The Lacanian reading of the novel brings more meaning to the novel since it examines the hierarchy of patriarchy, subjectivity of the self as the characters are involved with the power structures. This study contributes to our perception of the overall themes in the novel and the intricacies of the characters experiences.

Keywords: The Water Cure, Lacanian Reading, The Mirror Stage, The Symbolic stage.

Introduction

Water Cure (2018) is a novel by Sophie Mackintosh, which borders the problem of gender, power, and trauma as this is the story of three sisters, who live in the post-apocalyptic world, in which there is no place for men. The novel has garnered critical acclaim of these themes. The Water Cure (2018) novel will be discussed in the present paper in the context of the Lacanian psychoanalysis criticism, which will provide a unique and valuable interpretation of the novel. It will enable us to understand the world of the characters and their life inside and get familiar with the way in which the novel deals with the issues of gender, power and trauma in a rather innovative and educative manner. The discussion will be used to help give a conception of how the novel has explored the above themes.

Brief Plot of Novel

It is a dystopian novel where Sophie Mackintosh tells the tale of three sisters, Grace, Lia and Sky, in a dystopian society, Water Cure (2018). The parents, King and Mother have brought up the sisters in isolation on a windblown island, and have inculcated in their minds that the world is unhealthy and deadly and the males

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harmful to their well-being. They have been exposed to different rituals by their parents such as the so called the water cure, where they are immersed in water till they cannot breathe. This water medicine has been visualized as a means of safeguarding them against the negative influences of the external world and keeping them safe and healthy. The novel begins when their father, King disappears. Shortly after his disappearance, three men wash up on the island, and the sisters' lives are forever changed. The coming of the men is of great concern to the sisters and their mother as they are afraid that the men will introduce violence and destruction to their island. The sisters have never encountered any men in their life and find it difficult to comprehend the feelings they have towards men. As time passes by, they end up forging sophisticated relationships with the men and this makes them doubt all they were taught.

As the plot unfolds, the sisters disclose the shocking aspects of how they were raised and how they were abused by their parents. They also give an account of how they were conditioned to live separately, excessive rituals and how they were conditioned to be afraid of men and the outside world. Although both of them are living traumatizing lives, the sisters find hope in their relationship, and their ability to survive and live in the beautiful and brutal world.

The lives of the three sisters who were brought up by a heavy hand particularly by their father form the basis of this novel plot. Such discipline of lives of female children is evident in both the Pakistani literature and Pakistani society. This study will thus be founded on Lacanian theory of subjectivity and will provide an insight on the self-development of character. This self-development analysis, which the parent closely observed can be used as an example to the future researcher, who is planning to study Pakistani literature and analyze sense of self, particularly in terms of young women. Discussing the above-mentioned themes and elaborating how the sisters reach their understanding of self, the paper in question will add to the extremely limited field of criticism, which exists in relation to this novel.

Literature Review

The literature review has been further split into two sections. The first part has dealt with literature on the Lacanian readings of various texts and in the second part

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we will be conducting reviews of various critical reviews of The Water Cure (2018). A variety of characters in literature has been analyzed using the Lacanian theory of psychosexual development. We shall only discuss four of such studies taking into consideration the boundaries of this papers. In the character of Lily Briscoe in To the Lighthouse Weil (1986) uses Lacanian theory to explain the nature of the character of so-called Lily Briscoe. Weil believes there is something wrong with the issue of having the portrait of Mrs. Ramsay painted by Lily, trying to have some fixed sense of self in regards to identification with idealized other. Weil explains the artistic process of Lily with the aid of Lacanian Mirror Stage and assumes that child recognizes him/herself as an independent entity by recognizing himself/herself in the mirror.

The Symbolic Father in Steinbeck East of Eden Perkins (1989) employs the Lacanian theory to talk about the character of Charles Trask in East of Eden. Perkins (1989) says that the violent behaviors of Charles can be considered as the response to the lack of a symbolic father and a lack, and as a result, the inability to form a stable sense of identity. The violent tendencies of Charles may be regarded as the effort to develop his subjectivity independently of the symbolic figure of the father because, according to Perkins (1989), he does not have the symbolic father.

In her article 'Revisiting the Mirror Stage': The Construction of Identity in Toni Morrison 'The Bluest Eye, Zheng (2010) alludes to the Lacanian theory and writes about the character of Pecola Breedlove in The Bluest Eye. Zheng (2010) believes that the need of Pecola to have blue eyes is based on her effort to create a stable sense of self by identification with an idealized other. Zheng (2010) says that we can say that Pecola desires to have blue eyes in the context of the Lacanian mirror stage whereby the child recognizes himself or herself as an autonomous entity by relating to the image in the mirror.

Hegemony, Agency, Production of Identity: Lacanian Subject in the Kindred of Octavia Butler: Melzer (1996) is a paper that uses the Lacanian theory to the character of Dana Franklin in Kindred. According to Melzer (1996) when Dana is in the crossroads between self-image she has of herself and the image she is to the people, she is in a dilemma. The efforts of Dana to figure agency in the scenario of

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this imbalance are indications of the Lacanian concept of the symbolic order, whereby the social norms and conventions define up the meaning of identity of the subject (Melzer, 1996).

Then we discuss The Water Cure (2018) novel. The novel presents complicated issues of power relations, trauma, gender and identity. It explores the ways in which the experience of being abused can have an impact on the worldview of the person. The Water Cure (2018) also highlights the dangers of feeling lonely and the importance of community and human interaction, as well.

The other aspect of the novel that has been reviewed by most people is the way the characters are affected by trauma. The sisters have undergone different types of abuse and the novel is a narration of how they are trying to overcome this trauma. In her critique of novel, Zambrano (2019) notes that Mackintosh has developed a contemporary myth of family trauma, which provokes the interactions between women and their bodies. 3). The issues of power relations and control inside the family are represented by the character of the father, referred to simply as King, the main figure of authority in the family, and his daughters have to follow all of his orders. The novel elaborates on the relationships between women as Bick (2018) writes: Mackintosh is concerned with how people enforce themselves on other people... the way people treat the bodies of the girls like money, which can be spent to show loyalty or love (para.). 3). It has also been mentioned that the relationships between women are difficult and strained due to the strained atmosphere that they are forced to exist in. The sisters are connected as Girdwood (2018) notices: The sisters are bound by a deadly mixture of bitterness and stinging necessity (para. 2). It has been called a twisted fairy tale (Miller, 2018) and haunting (Brookner, 2018), and has garnered many awards, among them long listing at the Man Booker Prize in 2018.

On the whole, the analyses conducted above indicate that the Lacanian theory can be used effectively to analyze literary works, especially when it comes to analyzing the character struggles of establishing a solid sense of identity amidst the social conditions. It has been reviewed in magazines and newspapers but in this regard, The Water Cure (2018) has practically no literary criticism. Specifically,

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there is no research study which could explore the sense of self development of the three sisters. Thus, this paper will satisfy this vacuity and it will offer the readers and the researchers a clue of how the self-identity was created besides the themes of oppression of patriarchy that were rife in this novel.

Theoretical Framework: Theory of the Mirror Stage, the Symbolic Order and the Real

The Lacanian Theory of subjectivity, which encompasses the Mirror Stage, the Symbolic Order and the Real, is an obscure and potent theory of psychoanalysis and the way subjectivity is formed and language and symbols are used to interpret reality. Jacques Lacan, in this theory argues that the human subject is born into a fragmented and anarchic world, and that our sense of self and identity is created through a series of symbolic interactions with other people, as well as with language.

The Mirror Stage

The initial phase of Lacanian theory of psychosexual development is the Mirror stage where the children are exposed to a mirror or reflecting surface, and they find unity and wholeness. This experience to Lacan is what he refers to as the jubilant assumption of his specular image (Lacan, 2006, p. 4) i.e. the child assumes that the mirror image is his or hers. This identification with the mirror image is assumed as Lacan (1977) supposes that it is the alteration that happens to the subject when he takes an image (p. 1-2). It constitutes a central experience to the ego or self-identity which is never a reality as per Lacan. Nevertheless, the most remarkable thing in this case would be that the newly-formed ego that has not yet differentiated itself and other objects yet is actually a result of misrecognitions (para. by Sheikh, 2017). 4).

Symbolic Order

The world of words, culture and social conventions which we perceive to be the reality is called the Symbolic Order. The Symbolic Order according to Lacan is a matrix of signifiers which organize our experience and define our identity (Lacan, 2002, p. 30). It is through our relations with words and symbols that we learn about ourselves, and our place in the world. The Symbolic Order can be changed and transformed and it makes changes along with the world experiences. The other idea

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which Lacan (1977) introduced in the Symbolic Order is the Name-of-the-Father which can be defined as a type of power in the life of a person. Of the sister, their father is the authority. It is not the case that all subjects are subjected to this authority, some can adjust to the social world under the authority, others can rebel against it (Hadi&Asl, 2022).

The Real

The Real is the world of unpresentable, unknowable, that which is not possible to transform into symbols and language. It is that which is not concerned with language and symbols and which cannot be dragged into service of any endeavor to make sense. Lacan believes that the Real has never vanished but that it can only be glanced in the moments of breach or shock when the Symbolic Order is disrupted, and we find the boundaries of our knowledge. By writing, he says that The Real is the one which never leaves the same place, the same event, the same sentence, the same word, but in a manner that it will never be repeated (Lacan, 1998, p. 67).

Methodology

Research Design

This study is qualitative and has a qualitative Approach of content analysis and focuses on the concepts of cultural background. It aims to use the theories of Lacan regarding the mirror stage and regarding the Symbolic Order to the character and experience of the characters in the novel. To learn about the way the sisters perceive themselves and how they relate to their bodies, an example of such mirror stage will be used. The Symbolic Order will be used to analyze the Gender and power dynamics that are depicted in the novel. So, the present research piece provides the critique of the selected concepts in terms of the application of Qualitative Approach.

Population and Sample

The paper is based on the discourse of female characters in the Novel (2018) The Water Cure by Sophie Mackintosh. The technique for selection of Population and Sample is judgmental sampling. The population and Sample chosen are the female characters of the chosen literary works.

Data Collection Instrument.

The main data gathering to undertake this study is new in itself. Two main sources

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of data that were chosen to be used in this study are: The concepts of Mirror stage, and the Symbolic stage by Lacan, and The Water Cure (2018) by Sophie Mackintosh. The secondary data are of the following sources: journals articles, definitions, websites and novels.

Data Analysis Technique.

According to Lacan, the process of a child growing towards his or her mother, father and others is the main foundation of acquiring the human experience and world around which language is very important. The tripartite plan of the real order, symbolic order and imaginary order is the basic plan in the philosophy of Lacan. The real order that comes before the language acquisition as defined by Lacan is the symbolic order which as defined by Lacan is the level in which human beings are learned the language and other symbolic systems that dominate this world. The last is the imaginary order, which starts with the symbolic order and continues to the rest of the life of an individual together with it. The stages would be used by the researchers on the novel The Water Cure (2018) by Sophie Mackintosh.

Analysis and Discussion

The Mirror Stage in 'The Water Cure' (2018)

The Mirror Stage is a theory of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan that states that a child grows to have a sense of self by observing its reflection in a mirror. IT is the beginning of individualism and non-individualism. The sisters Grace, Lia and Sky are constantly in search of their own identities and this is observed in the manner they relate with one another and their body. The rituals and actions they are forced to do are not only material but also symbolic as they are directed towards cleansing and elevating the self of the sisters. Parents, King and Mother, have a major role in influencing the sisters and their views of the world and their own identity are influenced by their parents. The Lacanian Mirror stage theory is personably put to test on the three sisters, Grace, Lia and Sky in the following manner.

We start with Grace who has been retarded in the sense of development as a result of the oppressing environment, she has grown up in. Her parents believed that the world outside was evil and unsafe, so, the sisters had been introduced to isolation. This segregation has not enabled Grace to get an opportunity to experiment with

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the mirror stage and define herself as a person. As a result, Grace cannot find a definite identity, she frequently ends up being dependent on people. She is extremely enmeshed with her father, in particular, and is unable to assert herself and establish healthy boundaries. As the novel progresses, Grace seems to introspect on the position her parents played in her self-identification: My father called us his precious jewels. My mother referred to us as her three little miracles. But they were not our refractions. They were the images of us that existed first, the first people with whom we started to believe (p.9). Here is something which is likely to bring in the element of the parents in the development of the child to acquaint him to himself and the world. The parents become the mirrors and are reflected to the child through the mirror of the parents and they are the sense of self as well. The sisters are reflected in their parents, but in the case of the sisters twisted due to the fears and anxieties of the parents. Second sister is that of Lia who is first portrayed as a shy girl, and reliant on her sisters and parents. Lia is characterized as being thin and small and pale (p. 13) and her parents have always been concerned about her (p. 14). The fact that parents of Lia have named her a bearer of good news (p. 15) indicates that the parents consider her a messenger or a mediator between the family and the outside world. This implies that Lia is not who she is based on her own but on the other people. The Lacanian theory of the Mirror stage suggests that the ego of the child are formed at the stage where the child is looking into the mirror and the child begins recognizing himself or herself with what he or she sees. Nevertheless, the image of Lia is also introduced as the one that does not want to see mirrors, and, when she glances in the mirror, she believes that she is not worthy to be looked at (p. 52). This would mean that Lia is not yet a full-fledged ego, and has not defined herself as a person yet, which a consequence of being raised in isolation is.

The absence of self-identity of Lia can also be comprehended in the framework of her relations with her sisters. Lia has very close connection with Grace and Sky, and she often speaks for them, saying "we" instead of "I". Lia then describes an occasion when she tells us we are always about to do something (p. 32). In this quote, the lack of sense of self is portrayed in Lia and her sense of self is defined due to the relationship that she forms with her sisters. Moreover, it is also

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evident that Lia is dependent on her sisters, as Grace and Sky do disappear and when they do, Lia becomes catatonic with sorrow (p. 88). Her sisters are perfect reflection for her and she attempts to take on their personalities and characteristics. This can be seen when Lia writes, "I tried to be Sky, tried to be Grace, however, it was not the same" (p. 189). Lia is also defined by her associations with her sisters and she does not have her own personality. This is in the pursuit of establishing and identifying her sense of self and she has come to terms with her identity.

The third is the personality of the character of Sky which becomes one who is independent and has a rebellious nature. She has wild hair (p. 15) and streak wanton (p. 17). Her rebelliousness also causes her to risk and break the rules thus indicating her wish to create her own identity, and associate herself with none of her family. Because it is the ego of the child that is developed when he/she takes a glimpse at the mirror and recognizes himself/herself, in the example of Sky, the formed sense of self seems to be the one that is created by herself and her physical image. She also tends to inflict self-harm, by cutting words and designs into her body. This may be viewed as one of the ways that Sky is trying to define herself and have a sense of control over her body. Her sister Grace is her reflection since she sees herself in her sister Grace and wishes to be like her. Sky says, "I always wanted to be Grace... I wanted to look like her, be as smart as her, as brave as her" (p.91). This demonstrates that Sky is not a person but her identity is founded on her being in a relationship with her sister.

Later in the novel, Sky desires to define herself and she parted ways with her family, leaving the island. She then alters her name and identity and cuts her hair and makes it black thus rejecting the imposed identity. This can be seen as an initiative by Sky to create a new identity to herself and avoid the identity which had been created to her on the island. Initially Sky's sees Grace as a Mirror Image, however, her decision to change her name and appearance can be seen as an attempt to create a new, separate identity for herself.

The definition of Lacan in the Mirror Stage is a characterized mirror which is defined by fragmentation and loss of self. The characters perceive themselves in the mirror as a complete and consistent whole which is however an illusion. The sense of

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fragmentation and disintegration is similar to the three sisters in The Water Cure (2018) who are all on a search to have a solid sense of identity. They are instilled with the fear of the outside world and the males more so, resulting in fragmentation and detachment to the surrounding world. This disconnection is considered by Lia when she writes: "Everything is foggy, I feel I am still in the water, nothing is real (p. 118). This quote can be understood as the disconnection that Lia feels towards the world she lives in, how she is trapped in the state of limbo, being unable to become completely involved in the real world. The insights that the mirror stage theory gives us also help us to comprehend the relationship between the sisters as well. They question each other to determine their self-identity and at the same time they are constantly in competition against each other, in an effort to gain the approval and love of their father. This is a competition that is based on the fact that they need to be acknowledged by the other and they need to be able to confirm their sense of self. They are in search of one another all the time to prove their existence, and to prove their being.

Symbolic Stage of 'The Water Cure '(2018)

The language and system of culture are the terms that are referred to as Lacanian Symbolic Order and affect our perception of the world and our position in it. This is the realm of sense and representation and the subject is molded and defined by laws and rules of the society. The symbolic order helps to define our social position in the society as well as our status in comparison with other individuals as Libbrecht (2001) explains the symbolic is closely associated with the concepts of law, pact, social and kinship structures (p. 198). The Water Cure (2018) is one of the novels, the analysis of which with the help of the Symbolic Order helps to comprehend the gender and power relationships in the novel.

The Water Cure (2018) demonstrates a highly patriarchal society, in which a woman is conditioned to see herself as a lesser creature and graciously submit to the authority of a man. The way in which the sisters are treated by the father, reflects the highly patriarchal nature of society. Their father is the ultimate authority in their lives whose power is dominating in every aspect of their lives; the way they dress to the way they think and he uses violence to impose his authority. The

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symbolic patriarchal values have been internalized in the sense that the sisters have internalized them so much that they end up being submissive to unjust and harsh treatment of their father. They have learnt to believe that men are superior and that they need to bow to their authority. Conflict of sister who desire to find their voice and identify themselves in the male dominated society they must live in is another theme of the novel. They are never finding themselves since they are always in search of their identities but they are confined within their rules and laws of the Symbolic Order. They are enslaved by the prescribed identities of symbolic order and they cannot get out of these shackles.

The character of Grace is brought out initially as a very quiet and reserve character. We find her frequently reading books, and interested in language and storytelling. This demonstrates that she is longing to know the language and be a member of the symbolic order. The Lacanian concepts suggest that it is the language acquisition that is required to construct the ego. The child comes to identify with a certain signifier particularly his/her name, which is employed to perceive himself/herself as a separate entity. The symbolic signifier that Grace identifies with, is her name. Storytelling is an activity that can be regarded as one of approaching the symbolic order and as a method of forming a sense of self based on the narratives. As the novel is progressed we realize that Grace is evolving; she is becoming outspoken and starts to challenge beliefs and values instilled in her by her parents. This is her way of developing her sense of self and ego. When Grace says to her mother, "I don't want to be told what to do anymore, I don't want to be limited by what you think I should be" (p. 153), we can see this as an indication of Grace starting to assert her own identity and reject the identity that defined for her by her parents. Her transformation from quiet and reserve individual to an assertive individual is an indication of developing ego and sense of self.

The first image of Lia in the sequence of sisters is of a conforming person as she is an adhering to the regulations of parents. In the book we see her doing rituals and following strict routine prescribed by parents and in doing so, she proves to be obedient to the role assigned to her by her parents and, thus, can be considered as an expression of her obedience to the Symbolic Order. We can say that the things

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which she does are helping her to form her sense of self. Lia does not take language and narrating stories to be of much interest and this can be explained by the fact that she was subjected to the Symbolic Order of the parents. However, later on in the novel we also discover Lia undergoing a change. Just like Grace, she too proves to be aggressive and starts questioning the beliefs, values and practices of her parents. This can be seen as an indication of her maturing ego and self. When Lia tells her mother that she no longer believes her (p. 189) we can read between the lines that Lia has started to discover her own identity, and renounce the identity which her parents had imposed on her according to the Symbolic Order. Further, the relationship of Lia with her sisters can be also considered as a means through which she can talk to the symbolic order. The obedience and the subsequent following rituals of Lia can be regarded as a form of her communication with the symbolic order and developing a form of self-identity through the actions she takes. Though she does not take part in the work with the use of language and narration as actively as her sisters do, one can speak about her as a representative of the symbolic order in their stories. Her self-development and ego is also demonstrated in the change she undergoes in the novel.

The other trait of Sky that is introduced is that she is highly interactive in the language and storytelling. She has a tendency to construct her own stories and plays imaginatively as well which can be regarded as the means of her addressing to the symbolic order and forming a sense of self on the basis of the tales she is telling. Sky often plays the role of a leader in these stories and it is an indication that she was an aspect of participatory nature of the symbolic order of her sisters. It can also be regarded as the sign of her active involvement in the symbolic order and her ego formation with the help of the stories she develops. The fact that the sisters came up with the narratives can be viewed as a means by which the sisters were sharing a symbolic order and building their own sense of self using their mutual narratives.

The character of Sky, just like the character of Grace and Lia, evolves in the novel. She turns into an independent individual and starts questioning values and beliefs of her parents. This can be regarded as an indication of her inflated ego and self. This happens in one of the scenes when Sky explains to her father that she no

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longer needs him (p. 212). This quotation can be seen as an indication of Sky's rejection of the identity defined by her parents and assertion of her own identity. Her father narrates all the stories, and becomes an authority and a sage. The fact that Sky rejects authority of her father can be explained as her way of creating her own identity and morally construct her own sense of self in opposition to the figures of authority in her life and rejecting the Symbolic Order placed on her.

The character of mother and the character of the father may be interpreted in terms of the Symbolic order as well according to Lacanian interpretation. Husband overpowers the mother over her body, her actions and her thoughts with the symbolic systems that are imposed over her by the patriarchal society that the mother lives in. Her controlling husband who makes all decisions is their father and the girls have no voice and agency, nor do the mother. This shows that even the small world of their own homes, the patriarchal societies are capable of controlling and manipulating women and lead to their complicity in the mistreatment of their children and themselves. The behavior of the father can also be considered as a type of power, which is granted to men by the patriarchal societies, and they can employ this power to oppress and control individuals. Power usage may turn out to be a goal in itself, and not a path towards a fair and just society. He is ready to lose the well-being and freedom of his family to protect his beliefs, ideals and feeling of protection.

Conclusion

Summarizing our discussion we can conclude that the mirror stage is an important developmental stage as it is in the course of the stage the child recognizes itself as a distinct entity by looking at the mirror images. In The Water Cure (2018) the only mirror images that the sisters have is either of their parents or themselves. Since the girls have been raised in isolation, it has its' consequences. This means that in situations like the one in which Grace she cannot create a clear sense of self due to it, unlike Lia who has no interest in using the mirrors since she does not want to be undeserving of being perceived. Lia is unable to recognize herself as a separate individual and her sense of self is defined by her relationship with her sisters and this is reflected from the fact that she often uses pronoun "we" instead of "I". In Lia case, her sisters are a mirror image of that and she desires to be similar to them. Sky is no

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different to her sisters as she initially even romanticizes Grace but later leaves the island, renaming herself and adopting a new name and identity that denies the identity that was forced on her. The sisters are in search of stable sense of self and they are constantly looking towards each other to confirm their existence and to validate their sense of self.

To achieve the realization of how the relationships of genders and power are represented, the Water Cure (2018) could be discussed with the assistance of the Lacanian theory of Symbolic Order. The extremely patriarchal world the sisters exist in and the manner in which it made them to see themselves and their role in the world can be explained with the help of Lacanian theory of Symbolic Order. The Symbolic Order allows oppression of women and it allows men to oppress women in whatever way they wish to. It also enables us to view how the sisters are grappling to discover their voices and identities in this oppressive system. This interpretation of the novel reveals that the two sisters are in a trap of the dominant identities of symbolic order and they fail to get over the hurdle of identification. Both sisters have been changed in one way or another and we observe the maturity and ego of the sisters. In a bid to be free, Grace tries to communicate with language, and she tries to create her own sense of identity by narration, she claims her own independent sense of identity. Lia is first presented as a person, who has already come up with a decision to deny her place in the Symbolic Order but further in the novel Lia is also trying to develop her identity by denying the imposed identity. Sky, being quite active in language and narration also refuses father as the authority and the symbolic order imposed. Mothering and fathering relationship reveals the fact that the Symbolic Order in a patriarchal society places dominant role to men and the submissive role to women.

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