

A Psychoanalytical Interpretation of Omar El Akkad's American War: An In-Depth Study of Sarat Chestnut's Neurosis



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Abstract: This research paper postulates the sociological and psychological factors responsible for prompting neurosis in the protagonist Sarat Chestnut in the novel *American War* (2017). It is the study of Sarat's disturbing behavior and the constant struggle to exist in her society and bear its ill-treatment. The theories of Neurosis and Seduction; a part of the theory of psychoanalysis, have been applied to study the symptoms and causes of Sarat's neurotic behavior. Instead of presenting neurosis as a pure medical disorder, neurosis has been discussed as a mental disturbance. Two types of neurosis i.e. compulsion neurosis and anxiety hysteria are found in Sarat. The symptoms of these two kinds of neurosis includes agoraphobia, ambivalence, traumatic fixation, disabled sublimation, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. The reasons responsible for neurotic behavior of Sarat are sexual abuse, disturbed family unit, sibling rivalry, suppressed fear, and hatred, suppressed desires or drives, and societal norms.

Key Words: Sexual Abuse, Neurosis, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Ambivalence, Societal Norms

Introduction

This paper deals with the study of the phenomena of neurosis of Sarat following a psychoanalytical interpretation of Omar El Akkad's novel *American War* (2017). It specifically studies the symptoms and causes of induction of the compulsion neurosis and anxiety-hysteria in her. There has been comprehensive research carried out and theories developed to explore the affected attitude, emotions, and thoughts of Sarat because of her disturbed family unit, dark past of torture, thirst for love, phobias, loneliness, subjection to societal and psychological factors suppressing her desires and sexual drives.

The applied theories are Psychoanalysis, Neurosis, and Seduction by Sir Sigmund Freud. Most of the theoretical concepts and major strands have been taken from the e-book of *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1920). From the theory of psychoanalysis, the researcher has studied various

psychological and societal factors which leads to Sarat's neurotic behavior. From the theory of neurosis, the researcher has explored the phenomena and kinds of neurosis; and is of the opinion that various symptoms and causes of compulsion neurosis and anxiety hysteria is evident in the protagonist. The theory of seduction is applied to understand the most significant and the earliest experience of sexual abuse of the protagonist in her childhood, which happens to be the origin of neurosis in her.

Omar El Akkad gained prominence for this fictional work which pictured a horrendous distant future from this day to a few decades later. He has shown how war, massacres, and climatic devastation is demolishing millions of people. The writer has introduced us to a new world of destruction where scientific advancements are misused, where war has undone human progress, and where rigid and defective sociological state apparatuses make an individual less rational and more extremist. It is a world

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where innocent human desires are suppressed, and human belongings, and their identities are taken away. One must expect such episodes to lead to horrible transitions in humans, as the innocent Sarat turned neurotic in her adulthood. She has been transformed due to the lack of love, attention, and due care which she always longed for. Her connection with her family and outsiders is weakened by rigid sociological factors and disabled ideological apparatuses (court, law, education, etc.).

The story of the novel is replete with war horrors, undeserved punishment of the innocent, massacres, madness, physical and mental abuse, etc. The protagonist's mind is disturbed appallingly as she is observing and experiencing them all. Her wishes remain unfulfilled because of the unjust attitude of society towards her. It is not just the war but her surroundings and even her family that becomes the cause of her outrageous behavior.

Literature Review

American War (2017) has been analyzed and evaluated by a lot of literary critics, readers, and reviewers from several points of view and theoretical frameworks. This multitude includes Hasanul Rizqa, Ginanjar Gailea, Laura Miller, Susie Wang, Shadi Hamid, Bonnie Marranca, and many others. Omar El Akkad's innocent protagonist's (Sarat Chestnut's) transformation into an outrageous lady has been a controversial topic and is usually discussed by the aforementioned literary critics. Many literary critics justify while few have written in complete disagreement about the odd and unusual behavior of the protagonist. Those who are favoring the protagonist Sarat are not judging her on moralistic grounds and they think that every individual reacts to injustice in the same way. However, the researcher finds some critics like Holly and Philip, etc. condemning her actions, thoughts, motives, and the change in her personality calling her 'extremist' and her actions 'caricatured'.

Sarat is considered to be an 'aggressor' rather than a war victim. Moreover, those writing not in her favor consider the political climate and the ongoing war as a point of consideration rather than focusing on Sarat's personality. Few critics like Rincey, Diane S, and Michael (2017) have slight insights into the social and psychological life of Sarat. Besides, some have taken the Marxist and Postmodernist reading of the novel; some read it as a postwar trauma text, while others

view the novel from political, geographical, ecological, and historical perspectives.

Some reviewers place the novel in the category of Science fiction and some find the novel to be Young Adult Fiction, not in terms of Sarat's homosexuality but as dark young adult fiction. Bonnie Marranca (2017) calls *American War* a random contemporary book that does not reach the level of science fiction and only presents dystopian ecological disasters, landscapes, totalitarian societies, and mass murder. Ginanjar Gailea (2018) calls Sarat and different characters the Interpellated subject of Ideological factors leading to extremism using Althusser's theory of Ideological Interpellation. Marcia Klotz enlists *American War* (2017) among many other apocalyptic narratives of the 21st century featuring the endangered end of the world by various social, political, or environmental conflicts.

Brenda (2017) finds the novel to be extremely pessimistic in terms of violence and terrible decisions taken by Sarat. However, Bryan Alexander (2018), Laura Miller, Michiko Kakutani (2017), and others believe that the imagined future and birth of such violent extremists due to the ongoing war, devastated landscapes, pathetic geopolitical relations, disturbed social life, the mad race for status, and the high economy as presented in the novel is very realistic and plausible.

Jim Hannan (2017) in his article mentions that in El Akkad's novel forces like globalization and climate, cataclysm reshaped the imagined United States of the late 21st century, both figuratively and literally. The novel is structured attentively and the narrative is constructed with state records, historical documents, and journalistic descriptions and reports. The narrator fails in the struggle to resolve the conflicting strands of devotion, betrayal, love, and disappointment after reading about the involvement of Sarat in various awful events of the war. Sarat is devastated by the experiences of her imprisonment by the Northern forces. Sarat's resistance to torture is ruthless and unsentimental. Sarat is driven by her desire for vengeance and not by political ideals.

The literature review tends to focus on all the possible forms of devastation shown in the novel, either physical or mental, whether it's about the American state or the protagonist Sarat. Furthermore, the process of Sarat's transformation has been evaluated and re-evaluated by many critics, and some have even refused to accept her natural reactions to

her sufferings. They believe that her reactions were outlandish, outrageous, and usually not practiced by normal individuals. They believe that Omar has not fully focused his attention to design a feminine character in his female protagonist. The factors of homosexuality, non-girlish interests, and tallness are usually questioned by many critics. These critics negate the concept of neurosis. However, many critics believe that the writer is showing the best plausible picture of the near future and they can expect such reactions from individuals under the current social or political condition of the United States of America.

Some critics think that the novelist misses the major issues of conflict in America i.e. racism and slavery and skips the culture and cultural values of America. A handful of critics draw a resemblance between the life of Omar El Akkad and his protagonist. Omar's movement to several cities and countries has an impact on sketching the movement of the protagonist to different places as every new place has a different impact on her. Few critics have assessed the novel from the perspective of various psychoanalytical arguments given by Sir Sigmund Freud in his theory of psychoanalysis, while some have not fully meditated upon the major issue of neurosis and transformation that the protagonist undergoes. The issue of 'Sexual abuse' has been ignored by all critics. Hence this research study intends to some of these unexamined issues and to fill the research gap.

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

The research study is based upon the extensive psychoanalytical analysis of Omar El Akkad's *American War* (2017) in the light of various psychoanalytical arguments given by Sir Sigmund Freud in his different theories of Psychoanalysis such as Neurosis and Seduction given in "A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis" (1920). Freud in his aforementioned work says, "The theory of neurosis is psychoanalysis itself". Neurosis and Psychoanalysis are greatly infused with each other. These theories offer a verifiable base for the understanding of the phenomenon of neurosis from a psychological point of view.

From the theory of psychoanalysis, the researcher has studied various psychological factors that become the cause of Sarat's neurotic behavior. From the theory of neurosis, the researcher has explored the phenomena and kinds of neurosis; from which the researcher finds that various symptoms and causes of compulsion neurosis and anxiety hysteria are

found in the protagonist. The theory of seduction is applied to understand the origin of neurosis in the protagonist as it deals with the earliest experience of sexual abuse of a child.

Different scholarly articles, reviews, criticism, reviews of the critics about the author, and the selected novel, interviews of the author, and different psychoanalytical perspectives of well-known theorists are the secondary sources of the research.

The qualitative data has been collected from the primary text of the anti-utopian novel *American War* which consists of 333 pages. It was first published in 2017 by Penguin Random House LLC, New York, and then by Picador, London.

Some major issues like sibling rivalry, disturbed family unit, insecure sense of self, impaired ambivalence, disabled sublimation, traumatic fixation, sexual abuse, superstitions, etc. have been thoroughly discussed one by one by the researcher. The researcher has allotted an individual section to each issue to build and strengthen the arguments in the light of literary theories by Sir Sigmund Freud.

The targeted endeavor of this research study is to explore how rigid sociological factors induce psychological disorders in an individual such as neurosis (compulsion neurosis and anxiety-hysteria in the case of the protagonist of this novel). The thing we take to be 'reality' is controlled by the social factors of the time in which we live. The conflict between the social values of a specific culture and the internal mechanisms of an individual's psyche highly influences the psyche of sensitive individuals. Such a clash creates psychological complexities as the rigid sociological clichés suppress the individual's identity. Nevertheless, sociological beliefs are designed to protect an individual's existence in society; on the contrary, these values expand the breach between societal units. Such a gap is easily seen in different groups of any society where any individual has been subjected to these certain sets of ideas and values.

Freud argues that civilization bounds an individual. The major crime of civilization (ideology too) is the rigid impositions of its values which complicates an individual's life and ultimately induces neurosis in him (Gabriel 42). The rigid sociological factors aim to choke an individual, sublimate Eros (love), and drive him to Thanatos. In Freudian classical psychoanalysis, Thanatos (the death drive) is the drive toward death and destruction, often expressed through behaviors

like self-destructiveness, aggression, and repetition compulsion (Freud 228).

Terry Eagleton (1996) expresses that repression plays a vital role in shaping an individual's identity; he says that we come to be what we are only by massive repression of the elements which have gone into our making. Freud is of the opinion that the essence of any society is in the repression of its individual and the essence of the individual is in the repression of himself.

Neurosis is a mental disorder that causes a sense of anguish and failure in functioning. Freud in his 'A general introduction to psychoanalysis' said that neurosis would appear as a result of a sort of ignorance, the incognizance of psychological processes that we should know of. We would thus very closely approximate the well-known Socratic teachings, according to which evil itself is the result of ignorance.

Textual analysis, careful reading, and making research-based questions are the different techniques used by the researcher to evaluate, interpret and relate to the analysis of the novel. The methodology and techniques of phenomenological research have been used to structure the research study. As this research study is not based on facts and figures, so all it focuses on is the basic body of the primary source's text. In a precise context, this research study proposes to drill the following hypothetical questions that are discussed in the next section of the research paper, accordingly:

- I. What are the operational societal and psychological factors that make Sarat neurotic?
- II. How neurosis originates in the protagonist at a young age?
- III. Why even after getting released, Sarat restricted herself to the particular lifestyle of the Sugarloaf Detention Facility?

Analysis

I - Societal and Psychological Factors

Family and People at Camp Patience

Sarat is weakened by the loss of her family. She is bullied by the people at Camp Patience because she is dark; homosexual, and 6'5" tall. She is daring like a male and is called a 'tomboy' by her mother because of her non-girlish interests (Omar, 2017, p.12). She is called uncultured and wicked. She seems to be prohibited by both her family and the people around her. She has compromised and suppressed her desires and everything to be socially acceptable but

she could not resist permitting them to appear in front of everyone. In all these situations, she keeps longing for affection, warmth, and tenderness. Sarat's longing for love can be seen when she is in prison and called for an inquiry by a woman. Sarat questioned the repatriation specialist of the Peace Office from Columbus that what does she want. The lady replies and holds Sarat's hands in her own "The sensation of a stranger's bare skin on hers felt alien to Sarat; the sensation of proximity without violence felt alien" (Omar, 2017, p. 259).

Sibling Rivalry and Unladylike Things

Sarat is different from her twin sister Dana whether it is looks or in interests as a girl. Sarat is interested to explore birds, rivers, oceans, and bushes of the natural world. The girlish things like makeup, lipstick, fairy dress, or mother's fancy dress do not excite her. These things give no adventure to her. She loves adventurous things (Omar, 2017). 'Why young Dana wants so desperately to join the ranks of fully grown, Sarat could not understand' (Omar, 2017, p. 12). One day Sarat asked Dana who was applying her mother's lipstick to play with her to which Dana refused by replying that she is trying 'being a lady'. Martina asked Dana if Sarat is doing the same to which Dana replied that "She (Sarat) can't put makeup on, she's ugly" (Omar, 2017, p. 13). Sarat does not reply to the usual comments on her non-girlish looks and interests, instead, she smiles.

Albert Gaines exploits Sarat in the name of fighting against the enemy or any wrong-doer. Instead of helping her out and supporting her in learning good things for protection in near future, Dana called Sarat 'Albert Gaines' pet'. Moreover, she keeps reminding Sarat that she and her missions are weak and she would not be able to fight for their right. She keeps on discouraging her right decisions like "Ain't nobody in this camp our people (will help or stand with you)" (Omar, 2017, p.151). It happened because Sarat's family does not promise her any adventure and even she is not made comfortable by her family to share what she feels. The repressed experiences of Sarat bring tragic results. This is the reason for Sarat's distancing from her family physically and emotionally.

Lack of Education System and Role of Albert Gaines

There was no sort of educational institute at Camp Patience. Moreover, Sarat's family was not there to teach her anything. She gains her education from the

erudite tutor Albert Gaines and who is by no means right for her. She is used in the name of fighting for her land. She has been hypnotized as she finds this man as a fatherly figure. He feeds her delicious food with honey (Omar, 2017, p. 118) and gifts many valuable things (Omar, 2017, p.143). Sarat longs for love, affection, and comradeship which she finds in this person but she was not aware that he is preparing her for his evil purpose.

Sarat is bored by the adventure less life at Camp Patience. She is tired of hearing the same stories of grown-ups at the Camp. She is attracted and charmed by her tutor whose stories as she admits "happened someplace far away" (Omar, 2017, p.141). Gaines introduced her to history, the geography of her place, the Reds and Blues, the use of weapons, armaments, blades, knives, resistance and so many other things that arouse curiosity and a sense of newness in her. Earlier, she does not have a feeling of hatred for those who killed her father but now she starts hating the nation beyond the line (Omar, 2017, p.154) because Gaines germinated this seed of hatred in her.

Sarat is made a victim of orthodox societal values by accepting and internalizing them. She is forced to leave her house, and her land; and forget her identity and history from her memory. Albert puts an intense impact on her psyche, he said: "You pick up a gun and fight for something; you best never change your mind. Right or wrong, you own your cause and you never, ever change your mind" (Omar, 2017, p.142). In a sense, almost everything that Sarat does in her life-almost every transition in the way she transforms from this curious, trusting human being to a fundamentally evil person- has to do with an agency (the cause of transformation i.e. Albert Gaines and his mischievous acts).

It is not the war only but the betrayal that becomes the cause of Sarat's final revenge killing millions of people with the deadly virus 'The Quick'. It becomes clear when a visitor came to inquire about Sarat in Sugarloaf Detention Facility. The woman said: "Albert Gaines told us about you... Albert gave you up. He told us that you're an insurrectionist" (Omar, 2017, p. 249). Sarat has been exploited by Albert because of the ineffective roles of the family and lack of education. As Sarat has no one to guide her to the right path, she is misled by Gaines and becomes a pitiless fighter for her rights. Sarat affirms that she would violate the enemy the way he had violated her and her people. She not only shows resistance in her

physical actions but is symbolic also; she travels in vehicles using fossil fuels rather than solar power. It shows her expression of self-affirmation and rebellion.

Hatred for North

Sarat's only brother Smith Chestnut disapproves of many of Sarat's actions and he sides with the North, 'the rebels' (Omar, 2017, p.151) against Sarat's will; 'Sarat had never hated anyone more than she hated her only brother' (Omar, 2017, p.129). Sarat hates all the people who lived behind the Tennessee line. She even does not want to talk about them. Sarat loathes the caretaker Karina who is in love with Simon. Karina Chowdhury is from the North, 'the rebels' for Sarat. Sarat argues with Simon about his love and Karina's culture. She says: "She ain't even from the Red. Her mother and father, live up there in the North, with the Blues. The same Blues... that killed our father and our mother, the Blues that kill and humiliate our people every single day" (Omar, 2017, p. 240). Sarat was very furious about her brother's decision and even after being released from prison; she wanted his brother to die in the South rather than get treatment in the North. She does not want to get any kind of help from the rebels (Omar, 2017, p.263).

Sarat arrived after seven years at Simon's home. She was astonished when she found that his caretaker from the Blues Karina was still there and she got married to his brother. Sarat even before all their relationship did not like her brother who sided with the rebels earlier when they were adults. Simon and Karina were leading a peaceful life but Sarat was always superstitious about Karina's attitude as Albert Gaines has trained her to loathe the enemy. Simon used to be sick because he was shot in the head. Sarat came and asked Karina that "How much of him (Simon) is left" (Omar, 2017, p. 269). People from the North or even his brother who sided with the North remind her of her tragic past.

Death Drive

As a child, Sarat is characterized as one who notices trivial things that promise her adventures and she feels that her life has some meaning. When the massacre was all around, she was praying desperately to be safe, "please God, don't let them see me. Don't let them kill me" (Omar, 2017, p. 165). Lack of love and physical torture changed her into one who feels no ounce of will to live saying that "I'm not afraid to die" (Omar, 2017, p.235).

Transformation

The unbroken and guiltless 13-year-old girl has been transformed from a girl who 'believed every word without questioning and unable to hold a knife' (Omar, 2017, p. 143) to a girl who needs 'ocular pieces of evidence and works with the surgeon's hands when she kills Joseph Wieland and leaves no trace' (Omar, 2017, p. 195).

Self-Centeredness and Revenge

Sarat is taken to and subjected to torture at a remote Caribbean location in secrecy. This incites neurosis and ultimately leads Sarat to take revenge. Sarat cannot overcome or lessen her fears of the physical torture she experienced. She confesses to Karina Chowdhury who thought that Sarat will harm her son; she says that these traumatic incidents "broke me. They broke me. They broke me... I can't bury it... what's been done to me every day since I was your boy's age? ...whatever part of me can do that is dead" (Omar, 2017, p. 290). Sarat would not have done wrong to anyone who earlier wronged her and, she was healing. However, some of her acquaintances keep visiting her, remind her of her past, and ultimately drive her to take her final revenge. The driving force for these acts was not the country's cause but her defense. She killed the most annoying person Bud Baker who thrashes her every single day at the prison. Bud Baker keeps criticizing her and taunting her that she was the subject under his authority and he could do everything with her.

One of Sarat's acquaintances Bragg junior hits the idea of fighting for the country after she got released from Sugarloaf. He forces her to take revenge in the name of the Reds from the Blues. He says: "You're going to be remembered Sarat... you'll be a hero for the Southern cause for as long as the South exists" (Omar, 2017, p.313). Sarat is not charmed by this idea at all. She becomes self-centered, her intention, her motive, and everything is modified for her cause. She replies to Bragg that "Fuck the South... Fuck the South and everything it stands for" (Omar, 2017, p. 313). These words suggest that Sarat is driven by her purposes and frustrations. This is the same Sarat who was annoyed with the government authorities and the people of the power of the state. She was furious that how could they sit at their homes comfortably; why are they not fighting for the Southern cause; and why are they not proud of their Southern state. She wanted them to work through media, newspapers, or any

other channel to convey the feelings of patriotism and evoke the nation to play its part. She wanted them to give strict punishment to the wrongdoers and hang them so the state as a whole gets clean (Omar, 2017, p.215). Before being taken to Sugarloaf Detention Facility; she was the one who was willing to sacrifice anything for her country and nation. She did not quiver no matter whosoever comes in her way to save her nation; she said: "I'm not afraid to die (for the Southern cause)" (Omar, 2017, p.235).

2- Origin of Neurosis: Sexual Abuse

Freud's theory of seduction states that a suppressed memory of early childhood sexual abuse becomes a crucial precondition for compulsion (or obsessional) neurosis and anxiety hysteria. Furthermore, these become the cause of self-destructive behavior and disturbed sexual life in adulthood. The traumatic experiences shape the mind of the growing-up child. It can be said that this first emotional and physical abuse is where the phenomena of neurosis start. Freud mentions various kinds of signs of the victim such as repetition of self-destructive behavior, displaying inappropriate social behavior, choosing unhealthy friends or romantic partners, engaging in substance abuse, engaging in unwarranted violent behavior, and the like.

Sarat was only 13 years old when taken to the Sugarloaf Detention Facility without due process. She was subjected to extreme physical torture by a guard Bud Baker, "Before she could turn her head, he slapped her across her face. Her head snapped but the rest of the body, chained in place, did not move" (Omar, 2017, p.250). She was blinded by the flooding white lights in the room. When Sarat did not agree to their demands, Bud Baker grabbed her by the fuzz of the remaining hair on her skull and ordered the guards to take her to the loud Sound Room of the prison (Omar, 2017, p.251).

Symptoms of Neurosis

Disabled Sublimation

Even after getting released from Sugarloaf Detention Facility, Sarat cannot adjust to her new environment, the house of his brother Simon. She cannot sleep in a normal bedroom. She wants to sleep on the floor as she is used to sleeping in prison. "I want to sleep on the soil", said Sarat (Omar, 2017, p.268). She started making her place by ripping off the boards from the

floor. Everything seems terrible and insane. She does not want anyone to think that she is still disturbed. She does not want anyone to feel bad for her and become sympathetic towards her; she says "I'm fine" whenever someone wants to let his decision into her matters (Omar, 2017, p. 268).

The narrator says, "She seemed to exist in her own wild space... it amazed me to think that she slept on soil and ate where she stood" (Omar, 2017, p.272). Here, Laura Miller's comment truly resonates with the essence of the words mentioned above; when she says that Sarat's identity is entirely shaped by the sufferings she went through (Miller, 2017). Sarat was an adventure-loving girl which is now made into a sorry state by the war and the damage done to her.

Dream Symbolism

One night 'she dreamt of drowning' (Omar, 2017, p.242). Here the symbol of 'water' has been used. Water can symbolize the unconscious, emotions, and/ or sexuality. The drowning scene foreshadows Sarat's aquaphobia which she develops at Sugarloaf Detention Facility. She has been drowned by guards at the prison to admit the crimes with which they charged her. She admitted to all the crimes to end the drowning (Omar, 2017, p.256). "There was no lie too big that her fear of drowning could not make it true" (Omar, 2017, p.257).

The drowning scene can also be interpreted in terms of repressed sexuality. Sarat has never experienced any sexual relations. At Sugarloaf, one day she has been observed digging her nails into her inner thighs (Omar, 2017, p.257). Freud believes that repressed natural desire causes problems or dysfunctional behaviors and in Sarat's case turns her neurotic.

Agoraphobia

Freud in his book explains that 'the sufferer of this agoraphobia has the fear of spaces'. It is included with anxiety hysteria. The person is afraid of small and closed spaces, open large centers, highways, parkways, and long stretched streets (Freud, 1917, p.239). Earlier, Sarat was a child who was close to nature and loved it. She loved to move around, play, and see the wonders of nature. She was fascinated by rivers, bushes, beasts, and birds of the natural world

(Omar, 2017, p. 12). She loved to spend quality time with her siblings playing outside near the river (Omar, 2017, p.19). Even after being released, Sarat does not want to sleep with her brother's family in the living rooms; instead, she prefers to sleep in the greenhouse on the damp soil of Simon's home (Omar, 2017, p.268).

Deep Ambivalence

Sarat tries to avoid reality and is constantly occupied by disturbing thoughts that she forgets how to behave with a particular person. She both dislikes and loves her nephew. Between 'Do not ever come here again (in the greenhouse)' (Omar, 2017, p.271) to setting his bone and caressing him (Omar, 2017, p.284), the reader can find a deep ambivalence in Sarat's character.

Traumatic Fixation

Freud says: "The traumatic neuroses give a clear indication that a fixation to the moment of the traumatic accident lies at their root" (Freud, 1917, p.241). The sufferer is not able to realize the effects that are in the traumatic events which ultimately lead to a neurotic disorder in his behavior. His both psychological and social lives are disturbed by this inability to stabilize him. The sufferer shows symptoms such as, first, he will not appearing before any unknown person. After coming to her brother's house; Sarat stays inside the greenhouse all day and evening long. She only comes at night when she cannot face anyone (Omar, 2017, p.271). The second symptom is that the sufferer is not concerned about his looks and personal appearance. Sarat keeps wearing a dress for many days and does not bother about what she looks like. She wears the same clothes she had on when she arrived at her brother's place. She even shaved her head (Omar, 2017, p.272). The third one is that he is unable to adjust to a different place, a new environment, different people, and different positions. Sarat is unable to adjust to her new environment, the house of his brother Simon. She cannot sleep in a normal bedroom. She wants to sleep on the floor as she is used to sleeping in prison. "I want to sleep on the soil", said Sarat (Omar, 2017, p.268). The fourth symptom is that his unconscious is not letting him move from where he is now residing. Everything seems terrible and insane. Sarat does not want anyone to think that she is still disturbed. She does not want anyone to feel bad for her and become

sympathetic towards her; she says "I'm fine" when her brother's family wants her to move into a living room and leave the littered greenhouse. She feels that she is comfortable on the damp soil in the greenhouse (Omar, 2017, p.268). The fifth symptom is that the person is unable to give any of his things to anyone around him or he will feel that he has lost everything he owns. Sarat is shocked to see Benjamin carrying her rusted knife given to her by Gaines. Her reaction shows the insanity and wild memories associated with that knife (Omar, 2017, p.270).

Findings

This research study has explored the causes of Sarat's neurotic behavior such as social subjection, sexual abuse, sibling rivalry, disturbed family unit, suppressed desires, and sexual drives. These factors form a breach between Sarat and her society. The inference which comes from this research study is that the weak sociological and familial bindings disturbed the

psychological development of Sarat. The symptoms of neurotic behavior that have been discussed are ambivalence, traumatic fixation, agoraphobia, disabled sublimation, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Conclusion

Sarat was not accepted by society due to her dark skin color, gigantism, fearlessness of everyday life happenings, and toughness of her character. She had given priority to societal rituals, culture, and cultural values over her desires, and feelings. It highlights how a society with its every tired cliché overthrows basic human feelings and desires. Societal norms and stereotypes have made a complicated relationship between man and his society more complicated. The obstacle of these societal stereotypes ravaged Sarat and the degradation leaves behind severe harm. This leaves serious neurotic marks in her personality and drives her to take grim and serious decisions causing destruction on a very large scale.

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