

## A LACANIAN READING OF KANZA JAVED'S *ASHES, WINE, AND DUST: THE MOURNING SUBJECT OF DESIRE*

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### ABSTRACT

*Every human being is born with certain aspirations and desires. The glitter of worldly temptations blinds our eyes, and we ultimately flow along the currents, causing damage not only to our own self but also to the world around us. The novel *Ashes, Wine, and Dust* by Kanza Javed focuses on the notion that “We have come from dust and to dust, we shall return” therefore, life is transient. This study aims at exploring certain stages of human development and discovers that if those stages are kept in mind, one can easily judge or monitor their own behavior and desires. Keeping in view this prospect, Lacanian psychoanalytical reading is presented to understand the human psychology, that, why all human beings are running blindly in the fulfillment of their desires. The study clearly indicates that the self-identity is the supreme value which can be achieved if one is quite open to the outer world and have a spirit flexible enough to adjust in adverse circumstances. Furthermore, if one is a non-conformist, only then they will get it. This study also suggests that the imitation of others and greedy approach to materialism results in the downfall of one's self-respect and brings disaster to an individual and ultimately to the entire world around him. Thus, the pleasure is not in going after one's desires but in knowing the self or in other words in identifying one's self-identity.*

**Keywords:** *Aspirations, Temptations, Self-Identity, Self-Respect, Materialism.*

### INTRODUCTION

The novel by Javed (2015), *Ashes, Wine, and Dust* embody biographical elements in it. As the name suggests, it is divided into three parts: *the first part* or the world is *Ashes*. During this time, *Mariam* spends

most of her time in the village along with her grandparents. As a result, there comes an interference of the adult world with childhood, due to which a lot of grandparents' memories settle in the innocent mind of *Mariam*. She mourns the death of her grandparents in the native town. It is here that for the first time in her life, she comes across the feelings of loss and death. *Mariam* most of time remains infused in the memories of her grandfather who although apparently had a simple outlook, uttered words of wisdom, showing vast experience of his life. Her elder sister *Anika* struggles against her arranged marriage as the sober-faced man loves someone else. Contrary to this, the twin sisters are easy going and possess a lively nature. The youngest of all, *Abdullah* has been fond of pigeons - a healer of hurt pigeons.

*The second part* of the world is *Wine*. In this part, the character deals with the dilemma of duality. *Mariam*, her brother, and a few other family members migrate to America in search of freedom and living a peaceful life. As the name wine shows that the experiences were foreign to their own culture which brought mental agitation and suffering in their lives.

The same suffering then leads them to *the third part* or world, named as *Dust*. The *Dust* actually signifies that they finally come back to their native place, Lahore, to explore their identity which they once left at their own choice. *Mariam*, the protagonist of the novel, flies back to Lahore to look for her lost deported brother *Abdullah* from America. After such a painful struggle, her brother finally allows her sister to meet him. He had been hiding, for he was fearful that the powerful political family, due to which he was deported back to Lahore, would kill his whole family. The novel ends with a suicide explosion at a shrine, their meeting place, taking away the lives of both *Mariam* and *Abdullah*. So, their uncontrolled desires remain unfurnished and take them to a non-transient or everlasting immortal world.

French psychoanalyst *Jacques Lacan* (1901-1981), promulgate a non-traditional psychoanalytical theory which is rather ambiguous and abstract. He was of the view that as the subconscious is an entity which is not easy to understand, thus, the theory that explains it should also be like the dark and winding alley, not so simple and straightforward to be comprehended easily (Kirshner, 2017; Lacan, 2013b).

Lacan (2013b), uses different concepts in different ways. He gives them a new look and definition. For instance, the students misunderstand the meaning of the word 'symbolic' generally. The students at the beginner

level interpret it as symbols, in a literary work. Nevertheless, in order to have a better understanding of the literature or its interpretation, we need to comprehend the psychological development of an infant. In the beginning, a child is not able to differentiate the environment that is around him. The reason is that his own body is yet to be explored like he sucks his own thumb to feel it or to understand it.

The next stage is the *mirror stage* which according to Lacan (2014), begins between six and eight months. As the name suggests, about this stage, it begins when a child stands in front of the mirror and gives a look at himself. This is the time when he gets a feeling of wholeness. He is now no more fragmented or without any form. This mirror stage then further leads to a stage named as an *imaginary order*. Here the phrase imaginary order does not mean imagination, instead of a world of perceptions. These perceptions are conceived through images not words, because at this stage the child is yet not able to use the language to make himself understood. He gives his understanding through images which help perceive different things in his mind. The child is yet unable to separate himself from the environment around him. He is at the moment in an illusionary world of exercising his authority over the surrounding environment. For instance, he considers himself inseparable from his mother and vice versa because his mother is fulfilling all his needs. The stage carries forward till the child starts speaking a language. The stage is named as a *symbolic order*. The learning of language brings many revelations to the child. The language teaches him the difference between *You* and *I*. He identifies his gender. This separation from his mother brings a significant loss in the life of a child. It creates such a vacuum which can never be bridged up. However, he tries his best to get a mate of his own choice or wish to accumulate material things which might overcome his loss in any way, or become popular, or handsome enough to be praised by everybody. According to Eagleton (1996), this separation or the desires which can never be fulfilled are named as *Object petit a*. The capital letter "O" in object signifies everyone who is obviously not part of himself and the small letter "a" shows things which are a part of himself or the things he alone is influenced by.

### **Lacan's Literary Theory and Criticism**

*Jacques Lacan, The Barred Psychologist*. In this paper, Parker (2003), discusses a series of conflicts between the work of *Jacques Lacan* and the discipline of psychology. The focal point is that there is a fundamental

incompatibility between the psychological views of the individual subject and Lacan's work, with the emphasis on his own writings.

***Bourdieu's Disavowal of Lacan.*** Psychoanalytic Theory and the Concepts of "Habitus" and "Symbolic Capital" far from being distracted to psychoanalysis, (Bourdieu) feared that on theoretical grounds his concept of conscious and Freud's were the same:

*"It's the same thing: confronted with the unconscious action of dispositions as we notice resistances, displacements, repression, negations...."* (Lacan, 2014).

***Intersubjectivity in Psychoanalysis.*** It refers to the dynamic interaction between the patient's subjective experiences and the analyst's in the clinical situation (Lacan, 2014).

***An Open-Door Review of Outcome Studies in Psychoanalysis: Jones et al. (2002).*** The review helps to monitor the limit and the quality of research work completed during past decades.

***Fredric Jameson, Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, Psychoanalytical Criticism, and the problem of the subject (1977).*** It is an attempt to coordinate the Freudian and Marxist criticism confronts.

***A review of Lacan's Seminar on Anxiety.*** This seminar is a turning point in the development of Lacan's thought from several perspectives. He abandons his theory which proclaims that the unconscious is structured like a language (Diatkine, 2006).

***Older People in America's Immigrant Families: Dilemmas of Independence, Integration, and Isolation.*** Immigration has given rise to the population of older people in the US, who migrate here to be close with their children. Though, they are highly integrated into the system, yet they voice dissatisfaction (Jones et al., 2002; Jameson, 1977).

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### Content Analysis

The analysis of the novel *Ashes, Wine, and Dust* is carried out with the help of Lacanian Psychoanalytical Theory of Literary Criticism. A fundamental trait of this theory is that it helps us understand the human psychology, by knowing the reasons for human behavior. Different parts of the story are analyzed; how characters, incidents, themes work

coherently to give an understanding of the human behavior (de Maat et al., 2009).

As mentioned in the Oxford's Advanced Learners Dictionary of current English by Wehmeier (2000), psychoanalysis mean "a method of explaining and treating mental and emotional problems by having the patient talk about dreams, feelings, memories, etc." The reasons for these mental and emotional problems are well categorized under Lacanian Psychoanalytical Theory in which he clearly defines the five stages, i.e. *Infant Stage*, *Mirror Stage*, *Imaginary Order*, *Symbolic Order*, and *Object Petit a*.

As the name of the novel suggests, it is divided into three different parts: *Ashes, Wine and Dust*, the stages of *Lacanian Psychoanalytical Theory* are thus incorporated in this way. The central character of the novel is an eight years old girl named *Mariam*. Thus, the whole story revolves around her. The first part of the story is *Ashes*. This is the time that she spends with her grandparents mostly in her village. So, this part of the story comes under *Infant Stage* as she hardly can understand her grandfather's words of wisdom. The second part of the story is named is *Wine*. This is the time when she moves to America in the pursuit of independence and in accomplishment of her desires. Thus, this section of the story falls under *Mirror Stage and Imaginary Order*. The third part is named *Dust*. This section deals with the time when *Mariam* comes back to Lahore to find her brother *Abdullah*. This part of the story is considered under *Symbolic Order and Object Petit a* (Lacan, 2013a; Steinmetz, 2006).

The novel opens with the death of *Mariam's grandfather* and her recollection of his full of wisdom sayings, which are hard to understand during an infant stage of a child. Like in the very beginning, in the prologue of the novel, her grandfather says:

*"We must not abandon the people we love so easily, even after we lose them, even after they perish. We must always find love within us for all beings, for the frailest bird, the smallest insect and even the dead. We must never lose that warmth."* (p.200)

At this stage, *Mariam*, who is just eight years old cannot understand the value of love in one's life or how it is a binding force of this universe. On the day of her grandfather's funeral, she moves to the village. She along with her elder sister *Anika* attends the mourners. Both of them go to the

hand pump, carrying big water jugs to bring drinkable water for those who seem to have a close affiliation with their grandfather. The mourners used to say that *Mariam* was very much like her grandfather in appearance.

*“I had his eyes, and the arch of his eyebrows stamped on my face.” (p.3)*

When her father finally decides to go back to the city, her all sisters and brother named as *Anika*, *Amina*, *Fatima* and *Abdullah* aged 12, 10, 10 and 4 years respectively, were relieved enough to be away from work, wailing sound of the mourners and stillness.

*“No more work, no more sounds of women wailing, no more stillness” (p.6)*

Whereas, she who was eight years of age and at number four by birth, after the twin sisters, was thinking entirely different about the cruelty of nature that now how her grandmother will manage to live alone all by herself.

*“What was she to be alone? Whom was she to blame for all her solitary evenings and unhappiness?” (p.6)*

At this stage of innocence, her mind could not process the bitter realities of life and that Allah has his own ways to justify. We as human beings are superficial in our thinking and cannot foresee the life to come. Their father was a businessman, and they belonged to a religious family, but they were never restricted to go out. Their father used to remain busy in his business which provided them with an opportunity to have an interaction with the outer world so often.

Following a few days after the death of their grandfather, their grandmother comes to the city to stay with them. Their father assigned them the task of receiving her from the railway station. At the railway station and on the way back to home their grandmother teaches them how to deal with the strangers. A porter at the railway station who was trying to charm the girls was so harshly treated by the grandmother this way:

*“Damn you! Rot in hell! I am well aware of your strategy. Trying to charm the girls! You snake!.....his smile died, and his mouth engaged in muttering some alien curse.” (p.11)*

On the way back home on a rickshaw, their grandmother told them about human trafficking that how the young girls were abducted and raped.

*"They put drugs in the food; her tone became intense, have you heard about human trafficking? They abduct girls like you, rape them and then sell them. Selling another human like yourself, how shameless!" (p.12)*

The grandmother further tells them that how they should behave in case, the rickshaw drivers tend to become too friendly. She teaches them that they should keep the red spices with them and throw in the eyes of the rickshaw drivers in case they try to behave in an unwanted way.

*"Throughout the ride, she taught us how to toss red spices into the eyes of rickshaw and bus drivers if they tried to become what she called, too friendly." (p.12)*

Reaching home, she tells them that it is important for a woman to take care of herself. They need to take care of their beauty. The sensitivity, beauty, and fragility of a woman make her more charming. She further tells them that how in her take she used to take care of herself and their grandfather used to call her a doll.

*"Women should be like ornaments, fragile and beautiful."*

As the time passes on, they confront different things. Their father once told them that pain or suffering does not fade away all of a sudden. It takes time. Different people behave in a different way to tackle it.

*"Pain takes time to soften; people recover differently. Some change cities, some fall in love and some begin writing." (p.20)*

Their grandmother had used a different tactic as she handed all her jewelry to her mother. The mother saved it for the elder sister *Anika*'s wedding.

*"I will gift this to Anika at her wedding, she declared." (p.20)*

Her father used to say that the true loves come to the surface in case the person whom you loved, dies.

*"One realizes the immortality of true love only after the lover dies." (p.20)*

That's the reason her grandmother after the death of her husband

forgave his supposed infidelity. Only one thing that she could not forgive was that why he had died earlier than her. To keep the memory of her husband alive, her grandmother kept all things of her husband at their proper place as if he were still alive.

*“After his death, Dadi’s love also finally came out from under the ragged quilts. Though he was no longer there, she made sure that his bed was always made, his old fawn safari hat hung on the rusty hinges, greeting spiders, and his sunburnt hookah sat peacefully next to her charpoy. Even his brown leather chappals sat on the doormat, greeting every new pair of feet that entered or left the house. She felt less alone, I believe, knowing that some part of him was still around. His things gave her comfort, made life feel more normal, and made the void he had left within her less visible.” (p.21)*

Being the favorite of her grandmother, *Mariam* gives company to her on her way back to the village. There she meets *Gulshan*, the blind sister of her grandmother. As *Gulshan* herself says that she has done some difficult things in her past due to which she is now suffering. Her husband had left her for another woman, who was much younger than her. On their arrival, she rips the chest of her husband.

*“That’s what God does if you meddle in his affairs. That’s what he always does, and then He makes the whole family pay for it. One bad seed ruins the entire crop. Why else do you think I was married so late? God and his funny ways of vengeance, she shook her head as she compartmentalized the divine.” (p.34)*

So, in the company of *Gulshan*, real-life experiences are descended upon her but being young at that time, she could not understand them. She tells her the stains of tea on the bed or on the wall does not matter, as they will fade away in the time to come. These stains, you may not call a matter of suffering; it is not even at the time of childbirth, but it comes with the death of one’s lover or when your heart gets broken. But the women with a brave heart never gives up so quickly. They fight till the end and finally get over their miseries.

*“Chai stains on the bed, puddles on the carpet, dirt on the wall, such things are transient. What is real is the*

*inevitable pain every woman experiences in her life. By that, I don't mean childbirth. Other kinds of pain, a heartbreak, the death of a lover, infidelity, losing a child to various things, death.... this world.... a woman is built to endure great pains. But don't worry, a real woman never gives up...." (p.35)*

There in the village, she also comes across a Hindu family. They were actually the next-door neighbors. *Karan's* mother was a widow. The family was waiting for the time to go back to India to immerse the ashes of their dead ones in the river, Ganga. She was actually the same woman with whom her grandfather once fell in love but could not marry. It was merely a coincidence that she moved to Pakistan and unknowingly got a residence next door to her lover.

*"We have come from dust, and to dust, we shall return."*

*Mariam* at that time could not understand that why it was important to flow the ashes in the river Ganga. Why had they not thrown it in River Ravi? Such questions bothered her mind.

*"Why can't you immerse them in the Ravi River? I asked referring to the main river that flowed past Lahore. Because it's not the Ganga, you idiot. The Ravi is not holy, Karan said quietly."*

She had never seen human ashes before. They were in three big urns tied tightly with a piece of cloth. Strange feelings empowered her mind. She was thinking how human beings could be converted into ashes. All their lifetime joys, sorrows and experiences were condensed into a small container.

*Hameeda*, the maidservant of the grandmother, whom once grandmother hired to lessen the feelings of her loneliness, had now become a part of her family. She also once had been a victim of her husband. So, the grandmother's home was a shelter for her and for her kids. She possessed negative feelings for her husband.

*"Sometimes loving a man is like loving a cat.... a monster I had hopefully fallen in love with." (p.55)*

When *Hameeda* notices that *Mariam* was taking an extraordinary interest in *Karan*, she tells her that though it's not less than a blessing to

find a friend in a very lonely place like this, yet she also needs to understand that everything in the universe is not worthy of friendship because all that glitters is not gold.

*“Every breathing thing in the face of the earth is not capable of our love and friendship. Appearance can often be deceptive.” (p.59)*

Later, *Karan* turned out to be a thief but *Mariam* being a child still had a soft corner for him. She did not care at all either he was a Muslim or Hindu. One day she found *Karan* with the clouds of sadness hovering over his mind. He told her that someone had taken away their ashes as revenge. *Mariam* was struck with sadness for *Karan*'s family who had held onto only that precious possession. After the death of her grandfather, it was the second memory of pain that she ever felt.

*“I felt upset and confused and angry, all at the same time. Who could plot such revenge for Karan’s indiscretion? Who could be so mindless, inhuman, destructive? Who took away the only precious thing that they had onto? (p.63)*

*Hameeda*, the maidservant learned from *Mariam* the beauty of childhood. This is the time when nothing can pass away unnoticed.

*“I have learned the beauty of childhood now. Every trivial thing holds great significance. Mariam, you are sensitive and vulnerable to everything around you; you notice the changing leaves and all the colors in the rainbow. Every conversation leaves a brilliant imprint on your mind.” (p.65)*

Then there comes a time when her grandmother also dies. They performed the same duty of collecting water from the water pump and quenching the thirst of mourners who always remain thirsty. With the death of her grandmother, many questions arose in her mind about death, hell, and heaven. Such thoughts could only be aroused in one's childhood.

*“Why does one die? Where is heaven and hell? Does the spirit abandon the body as soon as a person dies? Do all children go to heaven? Is Dada waiting for her lover back in heaven? What will Dadi do there alone?” (p.67)*

The time passed on, and *Mariam* stepped into adulthood. It's the mirror stage. This is the stage in which we follow the mirror set by our parents or the society (Dunn, 1995). So, *Mariam* and *Anika* both entered the world of idealism in pursuit of finding independence and true love. *Mariam* wanted to visit America to study Literature and History. It was the time when she would, for the first time, come in touch with the outer world.

*"I always bore in my heart a desire to discover new places and learn new things." (p.80)*

*Anika*, her elder sister, got married to a sober-faced man, who openly before marriage declared to her that he was interested in someone else. All her idealism was shattered before her marriage. It was their uncle's family settled in America. *Mariam's* mother, who already had fishy feelings about *Lubna*, the mother of sober-faced man, asked several questions openly to make her realize that after the death of her husband, she should have come back to Pakistan.

*"She had never liked Lubna. She openly questioned her motives and believed that after her husband's death, she should have returned to Pakistan and reunited with the family." (p.83)*

Materialism was part and parcel of their lives. When they were asked that if they hired a tonga to reach here. *Lubna* answered as;

*"You come on a Tonga? My brother asked excitedly. We wanted to come with style, so we hired a desi carriage." (p.83)*

*Rizwan*, the son of *Lubna*, was the second male stranger whom *Mariam* came across. He told her that her father was a painter. He told her many stories about the life in America.

*"He told me about his life, boarding school days, girlfriends and past drinking problems." (p.88)*

He also told her that how his father was living a life full of miseries away from his hometown. He was left all alone. His sense of alienation was at its height when he approached death. As *Rizwan* was recounting the memory of his father, *Mariam* felt a gap between him and his father. It appeared as if he had heard all the stories about his father from someone.

*“When he talked about him, it was almost though he was recounting an acquaintance or someone he had just heard about, not his own father.” (p.88)*

The incidents that now she is passing through clearly indicate her that life is something in which your wishes are hardly granted. Her aunt *Lubna*, when visited the graveyard along with *Mariam*, pointed towards a grave and said my husband wanted to be buried next to that grave. I am so sad that I could not fulfill his desire. So, life is the name of desires; they will carry forward until you die.

*“My husband wanted to be buried here, next to his parents, she said.” (p.96)*

She further tries to calm herself down by telling that even her own mother could not have buried her husband in Berlin, where he once wished.

*“My father wanted to be buried in Berlin next to his first wife, but of course my mother never kept her promise.” (p.97)*

By studying the behavior of her aunt *Lubna*, *Anika* concludes that these people though living in a developed country like America yet got nothing to do with the relationships. They simply believe in ‘eat, drink and be merry’ principle.

*“We need relationships, roots, and boundaries. It’s who we are. We have roots, Mariam, Anika said, Lubna does not believe in roots. Her ways are different. She abandons things easily.” (p.114)*

Finally, *Mariam* gets an admission letter and plans to leave for America. Her father in symbols clearly tells her the difference between light and darkness.

*“The dark was everything the family found unusual and out of the ordinary..... Darkness was Lubna. Darkness was her husband. Darkness was the grandfather.” (p.122)*

This was the stage of *imaginary order*, a time of perceiving different things through images because uptil now she had not seen America through her naked eyes. All images that she yet perceived were taking

form through her American relatives or the way people carried various notions about a foreign land like America.

Now as she lands on the soil of America, her stage of *Symbolic order* begins (the section in the book categorized as Wine), because now she is separated from her parents and the hometown for the first time. Now she will live here independently and find the difference between *You* and *I* in other words between America and Lahore. This is the stage when a vacuum of love is created due to the separation from the parents. Throughout one's life, a person tries a futile attempt to bridge it in aspiring and desiring his utmost desires to be fulfilled.

The first feeling that she encountered was of displacement. She felt that everybody was displaced in one way or another. So, in that way she was not in a position to blame anyone.

*"Are we not all displaced in our own way?" (p.130)*

The moment when she visited the art gallery of *Lubna's* husband, a visitor remarked that his paintings would not make any sense because he paints such things which apparently do not seem to have any connection. For instance, he will write Iqbal's poem under the painting of *Hermes*, bathing outside the Buddhist temple.

*"He paints Hermes bathing outside a Buddhist temple...  
and.... underneath writes Iqbal's poem." (p.129)*

The time passed on quickly. A whole year passed away. She thinks that she has been so flexible upto now. She made new friends. She tried to understand their culture. In the beginning, everything seemed to her so difficult. Every new thing compelled her to draw a difference between Lahore and America. So, the first year was passed away in adjustment to the new environment.

*"My transitioning took time, but like water, I made an effort to be flexible, shaping and reshaping myself to surroundings. The first year was hard; everything was different, everything smelled and sounded different. Time and again in that first year, I would remark at all these differences between Pakistan and America. The roads were different, their meaning was different,*

*the buildings and their history was different, and even the family that had eagerly brought me with them suddenly morphed into different people. Over time, I saw them for what they really were in their true, American lives.” (p.135)*

As she went on coping with new people and places, a feeling of disappointment started creeping over her mind. There was a difference between appearance and reality. Her ideal notions were being crushed, and a journey towards self-identity had begun.

*Lubna* and his son *Rizwan* went separated because after the death of *Lubna*'s husband; she gave less time to the company that her husband once established and more time to her lovers. Eventually, the company was going down day by day. *Rizwan* had left her who had great skill in capturing his customers. Now it was the time when *Lubna* had realized that she should have listened to her husband advises when he was alive. Everything now seemed to crumble, and she sensed it that very soon she was going to be left alone.

Time passed on, and there came a twist in the story when *Mariam* got the news that her youngest brother *Abdullah* was coming to America to study. This twist in the story would take *Mariam* to the last stage of Lacanian Psychoanalysis.

*Abdullah* was actually severely shaken there at Lahore as he had lost one of his best friends in a bomb blast in a mosque. His parents thought the change of environment would bring liveliness back to him.

Next, *Mariam*'s cousin *Rizwan* whom once she idealized during his visit to Pakistan finally exposed himself too. One day *Rizwan* met her outside, and after a lengthy discussion full of emotions, all of a sudden went wild and tightly gripped her. She anyhow managed to escape. This incident, however, took all her attention, and she went out of touch with her brother *Abdullah*. She searched for him everywhere but could not find him. She was later on told that he had been deported back to Pakistan. She was told that he looked sad and disturbed, but she could not understand that why he did not contact her. Later on, through one of his friends named as *Max*, she came to know that it was actually no one's mistake. *Max* was drunk and thought of playing a prank. *Max* asked them to enter the gas station pretending that they were going to rob them. *Max* himself stayed

in the car and handed over one of his pistols to them. But the things went wrong when the old women in the gas station sensed the danger and called the police. Police arrived there, in no time. In the state of confusion, nobody knew either it was a real or fake pistol. Anyhow one of the stepbrothers pulled the triggers and then there were screams all around. Everybody fled away. *Abdullah* being slow was arrested.

The story seemed to be connected when one day one of *Mariam's* friend received a call from Lahore; it was *Abdullah*. She went more desperate that why her brother was not contacting her. So, in order to find her brother, she went back to Lahore. Only after she reached Lahore, she came to know that *Abdullah* never visited home. Ultimately, after a few months, she got a trail of her brother. It was actually a politically empowered group. They were influential people connected with *Max*, who could do anything to save their skin. They apparently told her that as *Abdullah* was involved in the prank, they could kill him and his family for he could expose whatever happened on that day.

*Mariam's* eyes were desperate to see her brother when one day she received a call from her brother that he wanted to meet her at a shrine. She passed the whole day waiting for him.

*"He was everywhere that night, in every child, in every restless man, in every devotee, in every beggar and in every cloud and star." (p.349)*

It shows the intensity of her love for her brother. She had now identified that which things matter her the most and the absence of which things could not give her ever lasting sufferings. It was only his brother and love for the city Lahore that drew her back to the hometown. Then all of a sudden he appeared before her eyes.

*"I had finally found him. I looked at him as if he were an enhanced creature from a fairytale. There was a bright, mysterious light around him, but there was also something potent. He was beautiful. He was simply beautiful." (p.350)*

These lines actually speak of *Mariam's* self-identity, which she had finally found. This sense of self-identity appears to her so beautifully and powerfully.

## CONCLUSION

*Mariam* an eight years old girl, a resident of Lahore, born in a well-off family, the central character of the novel, spent her enough time in a village. In the company of her grandparents, she listened to their words of wisdom. Being favorite of her grandmother and close in facial expressions to her grandfather, she came in touch with the outer world and wished to be an independent girl in the manner of her grandfather. So, she experienced it as she went to America to complete her education. There, she carefully observed the manners of Americans and especially of *Lubna* and her son *Rizwan*, who are the residents of America, and who accompanied her to that foreign land. There she did not let her morality down and fought bravely in adverse conditions. The visit to America brought out her self-identity, and she in madness came back to Lahore to find his deported brother *Abdullah*. Her love for the homeland and for the blood relations finally fades away all other materialistic or worldly relations of her life. After realizing her self-identity both *Mariam* and *Rizwan* meet at a shrine for the last time, when *Abdullah* turns away after meeting her sister, there comes a splitting sound, breaking the glasses of the windows and leaving everything in ruin. It was a bomb blast, and she could see *Abdullah* lying on the ground. She ran to cover his body, but she also died along with her brother in this hostile journey. The death of both is the symbol of the fact that there is nothing beyond this self –identity (Treas & Mazumdar, 2002). Nonetheless, all these stages of Lacanian Psychoanalysis, i.e. *stage of infancy*, *Mirror Stage*, *Imaginary Order*, *Symbolic Order* and *Object petit a*, work in sequence and step by step to bring out the self- identification of the central character *Mariam*.

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