

Female Misrepresentation in Selected Peripheral Pieces: Glimpsing
into *Native Son*, *Beauty is a Wound* and *The Lonely Londoners*

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in English

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It is hereby declared that

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2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The thesis titled “Female Misrepresentation in Selected Peripheral Pieces: Glimpsing into *Native Son*, *Beauty is a Wound* and *The Lonely Londoners*” submitted by Nusrat Tasnim Arna (19103017) of Spring, 2022 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English.

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Ethics Statement

Hereby, I, Nusrat Tasnim Arna, for the dissertation titled “Female Misrepresentation in Selected Peripheral Pieces: Glimpsing into *Native Son*, *Beauty is a Wound* and *The Lonely Londoners*”, clarify that -

- 1) This thesis is written by me and I have acknowledged any sources that I have used while writing this paper.
- 2) This paper has not been published before on any other source of media or publication.
- 3) This paper has been written based on my own research conducted through analyzing different secondary sources.
- 4) I have given credit to the authors whose quotes and writings I have referred to in my paper.
- 5) I have used quotation marks and a ‘works cited’ page in the end to avoid any issue regarding plagiarism.

I am aware that not fulfilling any of these ethical statements can result into severe consequences.

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Abstract

Women have been used as accessories in different novels and play for a long time. The female characters have been serving the role of mute or passive speakers in different literary pieces. Most of the time, they were portrayed as decorations or as objects for male pleasure. However, over time, female characters have gained their voices in literature to an extent. Now, they are sexualized indirectly to serve the purpose of the literary pieces. In *Native Son*, while the focus was given on sympathizing with the male protagonist that his heinous activities like raping two women were subdued. Again, in *Beauty is a Wound*, the female characters are seen being the victim of rape and violence over and over again and this action of the rapists has been justified by showing their background story or gaining resolution over time. Also, in *The Lonely Londoners*, most of the female characters are shown as mute characters without much character development. This paper aims to show how women have been victimized by different male authors of different times. However, this paper will focus especially on the viewpoint of the marginalized writers; Black, colonized and immigrant writers. This paper will try to dissect the reason behind their fixed perspective on women and how their marginalized background is connected to these kinds of representations of women in their writings. In these literary pieces, it has been noticed that the female characters are always presented in a way that causes visual pleasure to the readers. Because of the background of the writers, they could have had an inferiority complex which led some of them to use females this way to increase their readers. Some of them only presented the truth of the females they witnessed occurring to their female counterparts. Also, some of them thought conquering women was the way to gain freedom from colonial power. Either of these can be responsible for this misrepresentation of the females in these selected pieces and this thesis will try to identify the most prominent reason.

Keywords: female characters; marginalization; sexualized; victimized; misrepresentation;
male authors

Dedication

I dedicate my thesis to those underprivileged and unknown authors who are still fighting for their rights using literature as an instrument.

Acknowledgement

I am thankful to Almighty Allah for bestowing me with the patience to complete my thesis. I am grateful to my parents for giving me space and comfort whenever I needed it during these seven months.

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Table of Contents

Declaration.....	ii
Approval	iii
Ethics Statement.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgement	viii
Table of Contents	ix
Glossary	xii
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Rational for choosing <i>Native Son</i>	2
1.2 Rational for choosing <i>Beauty is a Wound</i>	3
1.3 Rational for choosing <i>The Lonely Londoners</i>	4
1.4 Research questions.....	4
1.5 Thesis statement.....	5
Chapter 2 Review of the Literature	6
2.1 Stereotypical representation.....	6
2.2 Misogyny	9
2.3 Gaze	11
2.4 Male gaze	12
2.5 Colonization and Women	14

2.6 Resistance through literature.....	18
2.7 Feminist and Post-colonialist theories	20
2.8 Implication of theories in the selected texts.....	22
Chapter 3 Research Methodology	28
3.1 Research design	28
3.2 Feminist criticism.....	29
3.3 Post-colonial criticism	29
Chapter 4 Visual pleasure	31
4.1 Visual pleasure.....	31
4.2 Male gaze	31
4.3 Scopophilia	32
4.4 Castration complex	33
4.5 Fetishization.....	34
4.6 Justifying the male gaze.....	37
Chapter 5 Following the Mainstream Stereotype	38
5.1 Objectification.....	38
5.2 Concept of beauty and physical appearance	39
5.3 Labelling	41
5.4 Portraying the sufferings of females	41
Chapter 6 Colonization and liberation	43
6.1 Taking control over the female body	43

6.2 Resistance against the oppressors	45
6.3 Gaining White skin	46
6.4 Justifying rape	48
Chapter 7 Marginalized man.....	49
7.1 Backgrounds of the authors	49
7.2 Biased representation	51
7.3 Double marginalization.....	53
7.4 Still authoritative.....	55
7.5 Instrument to make people aware about the underprivileged females.....	56
Chapter 8 Conclusion	58
Works Cited.....	59

Glossary

Anthropomorphic:	Giving excessive focus on the human body parts.
Castration complex:	Representing women in a way that makes them seem incomplete without a male.
Double marginalization:	Being in a marginalized position in terms of both gender and race.
Fetishization:	Reducing the reason for someone's sexual pleasure to certain body parts or characteristics
Gaze:	Being spectated by someone.
Infantilization:	Treating someone as innocent, harmless and childish because of being from an underprivileged background.
Male gaze:	A theory coined by Laura Mulvey in her essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"; indicates the way women are used in media to create fetish.
Marginalization:	Lacking the privilege of attaining all human rights.
Objectification:	Treating a person as an object.
Scopophilia:	Gaining sexual pleasure from watching something; mostly vulgar.
Stereotype:	The way someone is reduced to the traits that are easy to remember; mostly negative traits.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Are female characters added in the literary pieces only for being portrayed as a symbol of vulnerability, a victim of torture and injustice? Or, are they used only as an instrument to get the sympathy of the readers? Or, is adding female characters in the literary piece only necessary to highlight their sexuality and to make it pleasant for the audience? If not, then are the female characters shown to portray their real-life condition? Do the female characters in novels portray the reality of women or is it only an exaggerated version only to make the story appealing to the readers? Why is it that females are more vulnerable and sexualized in the post-colonial pieces? Why females are portrayed as the victim of rape and harassment more in the writings written by male writers? These are the questions that can come to one's mind after reading the selected pieces. This paper will try to locate the reasons behind this portrayal of women in some of the noteworthy pieces. For this research purpose, three novels by three different writers have been chosen; *Native Son*, *Beauty is a Wound* and *The Lonely Londoners*.

Does the past background of a person have anything to do with the writing of present reality? Is it only a coincidence that women face extreme violence and objectification whenever they are a part of dominant male writing? From a close reading of *Native Son*, *Beauty is a Wound* and *The Lonely Londoners*, it can be assumed that men with conflicted backgrounds have a hard time imagining women in a safe and protected environment. All of these novels are written by male writers. Richard Wright, Eka Kurniawan and Sam Selvon, these writers do not have many similarities. They are not even from the same country. However, all of them have a certain similarity in their writings; which is victimizing women. Also, from their biography, it can be learnt that all of them faced discrimination because of race and colonization. Also, a person's writing cannot be isolated from his/ her social and

cultural position. One can try to ignore his past but cannot completely eradicate it from their mind. The perspective of the marginalized becomes biased and their writings represent that attitude. Wright, Kurniawan and Selvon have portrayed a biased version of women, their bodies and their status in society. Their depiction of women may not always portray the true picture.

1.1 Rational for choosing *Native Son*

Native Son is a novel written by a Black American writer, whose families and ancestors were slaves. As a Black American, he faced different acts of racism and discrimination himself throughout his life. He did not start writing with any idealistic thought. Instead, he started writing to represent the Blacks. He wanted to protest against the Whites through his writings. His lead characters were usually Black and presented the repressed mentality of the Blacks. His writings carried rage and anger against the Whites. He mainly wrote protest novels conveying the sentiments of his people. He rebelled against racism through his writings that has been going on for hundreds of years. He tried to represent the sentiment of all the Blacks who live in America. Through *Native Son*, he wanted to show the way an ordinary Black man turns into a criminal only because he could not accept a White treating him like a human. This shows a cruel reality imposed on the Blacks. In this novel, the male lead Bigger Thomas is seen killing a woman to avoid the misunderstanding of raping her. This action is portrayed in this novel in a way that will seem like a natural reaction from this discriminated man. However, it is still difficult to justify the actions done by Thomas as he even refused to show any feeling of guilt or redemption. Instead, he felt like a hero for committing this crime against a White woman. The crime that should have been seen as a crime against humanity is seen as a crime against Whites because of the marginalized background of the author. So, this is more like an unjustifiable justification.

In this novel, females have been classified into two classes, upper-class White women and working-class Black women. These women were gazed at differently because of their different skin color. Through the characterization of Mary and Bessie, Wright shows the contrast between how females with White and Black skins are perceived by others (Bigger). The purpose behind choosing this text is that the rape and murder of the female characters of this novel have been normalized and justified through Bigger being a victim of racism. Also, the females of two classes facing the same consequence in life show that the females from different backgrounds suffer in the same way for different reasons.

1.2 Rational for choosing *Beauty is a Wound*

Then *Beauty is a Wound* is a feminist novel written by a male post-colonialist writer, Eka Kurniawan. He tried to bring out the sufferings of Indonesian women in different periods by portraying the lives of the different generations of females of the family of Dewi Ayu. However, while doing so, he exaggerated the sexual aspects of the female characters in this novel. Even though this novel is supposed to be a feminist novel, it represents females inappropriately in a vulgar way. This can be understood by analyzing the female characters of this novel; Dewi Ayu, Beauty, Alamanda, Adinda, Maya Dewi, Rengganis etc. All of these female characters have their own stories of subjugation to tell. The events of their lives are presented in this novel using a storytelling technique that allows the readers to visualize them. The activities of the characters of this novel are precisely elaborated so that this novel can visually appeal to the readers. This elaboration sometimes makes this novel seem anthropomorphic, which means focusing on the human body parts. With this kind of elaboration, females are not portrayed positively.

As a colonized minority, Kurniawan tried to portray the miserable condition of women in the time of colonization. He gave an elaborate description of the sufferings inflicted on the four female children of a prostitute; who faced different kinds of horrendous

events in their life. These female characters were created from a marginalized man's perspective and so they could not get out from the fixed perception the author himself had of women. The female characters of his writings were vocal but were still oppressed by men of the society and the colonizers as well. This reflects the reality of Indonesian women during the colonization period. However, still, the portrayal of women in this novel seems biased and seems like the author is viewing these incidents as he wants them to be. Though the author depicted the lives of the female leads, the perspective from which they were described was the perspective of the males.

1.3 Rational for choosing *The Lonely Londoners*

The Lonely Londoners, this novel by Sam Selvon, is about the struggle of the Black immigrants who came to London for a better future. In this novel, the lead characters are male Black characters and this story revolves around these male characters. Females are portrayed as supporting characters for the character development of these male characters. Female characters of White skin and Black skin both have been represented in a negative gesture in this novel. The Black male characters of this novel act like they can become White if they can make love to a woman with white skin. Also, the White females of this novel are seen having a certain fetish toward Black males. The Black females are also seen being involved in prostitution because of not meeting their desired fate in the city of London. This novel does not directly devalue the female characters but adds a sexual aspect to every female character. The female characters are represented differently based on their race.

1.4 Research questions

1.4.1 Primary research question

What are the reasons behind the misrepresentation of female characters in these selected literary pieces?

What is the connection between the vulnerable and sexualized representation of females in literary pieces and the marginalization of the authors?

1.4.2 Secondary research questions

How are the female characters represented in the selected writings?

Why are female characters being objectified in novels written by marginalized male writers?

How the marginalization of the male authors is related to the objectification of women in their writings?

What are these writers trying to portray about women? Are they trying to portray females only as objects for the male gaze?

1.5 Thesis statement

The female characters tend to follow the stereotypical version of females more in the literary pieces written by the marginalized writers; which include victimization, subjugation and misogyny. I think they are represented in this way to evoke visual pleasure through the male gaze, to follow the mainstream stereotype, to liberate themselves from their marginalization or to represent the reality of the women they perceive. In this thesis, I will try to dissect the reasons behind these kinds of female representation and misrepresentation with the help of three novels; *Native Son*, *Beauty is a Wound* and *The Lonely Londoners*.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

There have been different discourses about the stereotypical extreme sexualization of women in literature. However, there are not enough discourses about the way females are represented particularly in the writings of marginalized male authors. Therefore, this review will try to determine the reasons behind this excessive victimization of females in works of literature written by writers with conflicted histories from the existing literature.

2.1 Stereotypical representation

A stereotype is a misrepresentation that is different from reality. Stuart Hall, in his book chapter titled “Stereotyping as a signifying practice”, explains the term ‘stereotype’ as a way that reduces people to their certain attributes which might not be even real but some assumptions about them. He simplifies this by saying that people only remember what is easy to remember about someone or a community and do not pay any heed to know about the whole. Also, this stereotype he talks about creates a boundary between what is acceptable and unacceptable by norms. Julia Kristeva, a feminist theorist, labelled this group of people who do not meet the standard of society as “abjected” (Hall 258). Hall shows a power relation in this reducing people to their certain characteristics as the people with the power are seen as reducing the people who do not have equal power in the society. He thinks of stereotypes as vital for the “exercise of symbolic violence” (259). Then he goes on to talk about the stereotypes associated with the Black people which reduce them to being strong, savage, primitive and having extreme sexual urges. Also, as opposed to the White, they are not supposed to have the basic ability to maintain a family or keep any property for their attribute as a slave. They are misrepresented because of different types of subjugation that has been bestowed upon them from time to time. Through ‘infantilization’, their thoughts and activities

are suppressed by treating them as childlike for being incapable of rational thinking. Hall thinks it is a way for the Whites to make the Black men feel castration. Mercer and Julien argue that many Black men made themselves look and act 'tough' only to make themselves get out of the label of a child. So, this "mugger", and "rioter" version of the Black men were only the consequence of the stereotype (262). He argues that this stereotype about Black men came from the fantasy of the Whites, who were always drawn to this thought of Black men having more power over sexuality because of their "big black penis" (262). So, to cover this fetish of the White, the Black men were treated like children and the Black men tried to tackle this stereotype by projecting a masculine and rebellious side of them. In this way, they are indirectly accepting the stereotype and acting accordingly. Then Hall brings out the example of "The Hottentot Venus" to show the way fetishism works (264). He discusses the way this 'orient' female Saartje Baartman was presented as an object of research in the exhibition only because of having a large 'buttock', which was different from the White females. Instead of confessing this desire of looking at her buttock as a form of desire, the Whites referred to her as a research subject who needs to be gazed at because of her anatomic differences. Hall says that the Whites seemed to have an obsession with this physical otherness. Hall claims that this is an act of extreme "fragmentation" through which this person was being reduced to her sexual organs (266). She was being objectified and fetishized to meet the fantasy of the White scholars. Then he talks about voyeurism and scopophilia, which demands visual pleasure to be sexually satisfied. He does not agree that an orient woman was projected before the researchers for the sake of research as by looking at her buttocks one "can see nothing but her buttocks" (269). In this book chapter, Stuart Hall is making many bold claims saying that the orient females have been represented as being reduced to their sexual organs in history. In my thesis, I will talk about reducing women to their sexual organs in different literary pieces. He talks about the stereotypes that are created

in the fantasy of the Whites and projected on the Blacks. I will try to implement this idea while analyzing the act of Bigger Thomas in the novel *Native Son*. He also talks about the pleasure that arouses from watching. I will try to show the way females in literature are represented in a stereotyped way based on the fantasy of the authors or the readers.

In “Men and Women Writing Women: The Female Perspective and Feminism in U.S. Novels and African Novels in French by Male and Female Authors”, Cheryl Lange talks about the role gender plays in determining their way of writing and while examining it, she analyses writings by both male and female authors. Her analysis shows whether gender difference is a myth in the different representations of women despite the social and cultural backgrounds of the authors. So, her lack of consideration in evaluating the background of the authors becomes a great obstacle in her research. Lange, in her journal article, calls attention to different existing debates regarding the reason behind the misrepresentation of females in writings by male authors. The inability of viewing the world as a woman has been thought of as the reason behind portraying the false perception of women. This article revolves around finding whether gender is responsible for the different representations of women in literature by males and females. Lange highlights the way the perception of human changes from person to person based on their gender rather than humanity. Lange discovers that men are not incapable of writing from a female perspective as women are capable of writing from both male and female perspectives. She also finds that certain male writers wrote from the female perspective and also produced feminist pieces while being men, in doing so, she is showing that choosing not to present the real perspective of women in literature can be considered as gender prejudice. Also, shame is considered a quality only women can have in the literature created by men and this way, she is highlighting that women are being reduced to the quality of shame. She brings the idea of Susan Gubar’s “Blank page” to elaborate on the fact that male writers create the female characters in a way they wanted women to be,

vulnerable, someone who needs to be protected by a male figure, someone who will only be complete with the help of a man (Lange 2). She also refers to Judith Kegan Gardiner, who explained that men and women have different experiences in their different stages of life and because of that their representation of females in writing is also different. Lange criticized the feminist writings created by some men saying that these writings contain different purposes than conveying equal rights for men and women. She declares by writing from the female perspective, the male is representing something foreign to themselves. She also focuses on the incapability of men in portraying the patriarchal society in their writings as they were not affected by it. She also brings out the idea of Robbins saying reading women as something they are not can damage the individual growth of women in real life (3). She clarifies that incidents like rape, abandonment and sexual harassment in literature are always one-dimensional (performed by men to women) and occur both in male and female writing intensively. She identifies different writings for which male writers were appreciated for their gender unbiased perspective. However, she criticizes the tendency of giving a happy ending to the female characters with heterosexual marriages. Her study is detailed and focuses on the perspective of both males and females in representing females. This study will also try to reveal different aspects that are responsible for women's victimization in male literature (1-6).

2.2 Misogyny

Elizabeth Skomp, in her journal article titled "Misogyny, the Male Gaze, and Fantasies of Female Death: "Eto ia, Edichka and Russkaia krasavitsa"", analyses the misogynic portrayal of women in two Russian prose titled *Eto ia, Edichka* and *Russkaia krasavitsa* written by consecutively Eduard Limonov and Viktor Erofeev. I think these two writings are the perfect examples of showing the way female characters become the victim of the male gaze of the

male writers. Here, she identifies the presence of the male gaze in literature with which I agree as well. Then Skomp implements the concept of the male gaze in these pieces of literature. She identifies the sexual elaboration in these two writings, and in doing so, finds three kinds of gazes visible in these pieces of literature. She explains there are three kinds of male gazes that are occurring in these texts, gaze from the male characters, the gaze of the author and the gaze from the readers. Skomp also talks about the misogynistic attitude of the male protagonists; which spurs the maltreatment of the female characters. She also talks about the male writings often containing the concept of the male character taking revenge against the whole womanhood for a crime committed by only one woman. In this article, Skomp illustrates the female characters of the chosen Russian writings and shows the way these characters are being victimized by the male characters and male authors of these writings with the use of the male gaze and misogyny. This paper will also try to show the way the male authors are often victimizing the female characters of the novels (Skomp 137-38).

Women always had conflicted positions in different forms of literature. In the journal article titled, "The Female Voice and Traditional Discourse Biases: The Case of Francophone African Literature", Beverley Ormerod et al. talk about the prominent differences in female representation among male and female francophone African writers. These male writers presented women in their literature following the superstitious way of representation. I think these marginalized groups of male writers have often misrepresented the female characters in their writings by following the discourses about women that have been popularized. Ormerod et al. identify that the lack of voice of women in literature by men was always a matter of great debate. They determine this tendency was more dominant among the minorities, the Black writers from different continents. Because of the overpowering male authority among the African male scholars, the writings of the female writers were not approved easily. So, the

representation of females created by men was symbolizing women as a whole. Being influenced by the subjugated female representation, female African authors also started to represent themselves as something they are not. This writing is crucial as it identifies that the voice of a character in literature is conditioned by their gender role. The reconstruction of different gender roles of male and female has been so prominent in their literature that the stereotyped version of women bears the standard of a woman in literature. They think that the distinction of male and female in literature represents the gender distinction present in real life, in doing so, they identify that there are many more male roles than female roles in male literature. Also, they focus on the lack of power, authority, personality and voice of female characters created by male authors. This article is focused on the perception of male writers toward the unequal distribution of power among the male and female characters in literature. They correctly argue that the female representation of male writers has been taken from the real-life discrimination of men and women. This discriminated real image of males and females in terms of power, authority comes into light more prominently through the marginalized writers. Unlike Ormerod et al., I will try to focus more on the marginal position of the chosen writers (Ormerod et al. 353-66).

2.3 Gaze

Space determines the class, status, living conditions, privacy, sexual orientation and many other aspects of life. In the book chapter titled “The Eye of Power”, Michel Foucault talks about the way the surveillance system and space create a power relationship among the people in the society. The activities of a person are constantly gazed at and conditioned by the space he lives in. Foucault highlights the way the activities of the prisoners, schoolboys and patients in mental asylums are controlled through the power of space and gaze. The structure of these spaces is created in a way that makes these people think that they are being gazed at and they control their behaviors and activities accordingly. Through Jeremy

Bentham's idea of the panopticon, the space is created in a way that demonstrates power and control. The activities of people are conditioned and automatically refined by this power over space. The thinking of these people also become constrained and fixed on certain ideas.

Again, the structure of a house always maintains the same pattern and it always promotes heterosexuality. In an ideal home, there is always a room for the procreation where the husband and wife live and there are other rooms specified for their children. This structure of a house normalizes heterosexuality and ignores homosexuality. According to Foucault, every room of a house has a function to fulfil and people tend to fulfil that function as if he is being gazed at. In this book chapter, Foucault brings out the way space has control over the people living in that space. In my thesis, I will try to show the way the lives of the Blacks are determined by the space they live in. Also, he relates the functionality and hypocrisy of space and power. I will also try to demonstrate the way this space determines the thinking process and action of a character or an author.

2.4 Male gaze

In the book chapter titled "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Laura Mulvey identifies the way female characters are presented as sexual objects for the male characters to gaze at in the movies. She introduces scopophilia in her text, which refers to gaining pleasure from watching and being watched. She thinks producing something scopophilic can result in creating many peeping toms. Peeping tom is the people who gain sexual pleasure only by watching people naked or being active in sexual activity. She also talks about the way females are portrayed in a way that it feels like they are suffering from a castration complex. Castration complex is the inferior feeling of females for not having a penis, which they were not supposed to have in the first place. Mulvey clarifies that the portrayal of females in media makes it seem like this castration complex of females can only be solved by a male. Also, this male gaze is the gaze or perspective of a heterosexual male. She talks about the films being

anthropomorphic and so the camera movement of these films mainly focuses on the human body structure. I think this concept of the male gaze is also applicable in different pieces of literature where the female characters are portrayed in an objectified manner. The female characters of different pieces of literature are gazed at and objectified by the male author, male characters of the novel and the male readers as well. This extreme sexualization of women is not only visible in pieces of literature but also in different movies. Laura Mulvey theorized the concept of using women as objects of male pleasure and named it the male gaze. In her essay, she explains the male gaze saying women are used as a passive image that needs to be looked at by men. She mentions that women are usually presented in narrative cinema from the perspective of a male spectator. She thinks of this representation as the reflection of the real-life gaze female receives from the male. Even the movement of the camera reflects the movement of the gaze by the male protagonist to a female body. She compares this to scopophilia, which is gaining pleasure from watching a person. The female characters are portrayed in a sexualized way and their characters deteriorate as personal property of the male figure. This research is crucial as she determines that female characters lose their sense of self in the narrative cinema through being a part of the power and authority of the male protagonist. According to her, these female characters are portrayed as suffering from the anxiety of castration for which they appear and are treated as insignificant by the male characters. Her research makes it clear that the male gaze is responsible for the fixed perception of males in writing female figures in their literature. This paper will try to implement the idea of the male gaze in explaining the reason behind the victimization of women in male writings (Mulvey 62-64).

2.5 Colonization and Women

In “In Respect to Females...”: Differences in the Portrayals of Women by Male and Female Narrators”, Frances Foster brings out the different representations of female slaves in slave narratives written by male writers and female writers. She points out the way the male slave narratives portray women only as victims of slavery and they neglect the resistance of women against slavery. On the other hand, the slave narratives produced by women contain the brave steps taken by the females who were previously enslaved and pursued their freedom. I agree that the slave narratives written by males do not present the female characters appropriately. Foster brings out the victimization of slave women in different male writings and how they are different from female writings. She shows the way slave women were always portrayed as victims of sexual assault and lost their children in the narratives written by male authors. This idea of reducing women to sexual objects came from various slave narratives; which were mostly written by male slaves. The marginalized male slaves represented their fellow female slaves as victims of sexual abuse, which later on continued to represent the female slaves. Foster does not blame the male writers for their misconceptions; instead, she thinks the society is responsible for victimizing women in real life for which they get discriminated against in literature. She reveals that the female slaves were given unnecessarily detailed descriptions of their physical features in male writings with female slave protagonists. Also, these female slaves are seen fulfilling the gender role of a female by having docile qualities. She mentions the idea of William Craft about the female slave representation, which is the slave narratives only present the cruel reality of the female slaves. This runaway slave also clarified that the maltreatment faced by the female slaves was not presented in the slave narratives for male pleasure but to show people the cruelty done by the slave masters. However, as a refutation to that, Foster declares there were incidents of sexual abuse of men and homosexual assaults as well; which were not highlighted in these slave narratives the way

sexual exploitation of women was described explicitly. She also boldly clarifies that the whole life of a slave woman was not limited to the incidents of sexual assaults and they were competent enough to escape and rebel against the White masters as well, which were often underrepresented. By comparing the marginalized male writings with female writings, she is showing that the male writers focused solely on the oppression faced by the women and female writers brought out their strength in fighting that oppression. She also identifies the way male writers do not show much concern in characterizing the personality of the secondary female characters. She concludes by saying that slave narratives were mostly written by men and they were able to contain only the oppressed version of the female slaves. This journal article is ground-breaking as it rationalizes the male perspective behind writing the slave narratives. In this paper, I will also try to dissect the reason behind having a certain viewpoint of the marginalized authors in writing the chosen texts (Foster 620-24).

In the journal article titled “Not an Indian Tradition: The Sexual Colonization of Native Peoples”, Andrea Smith points out the relation between colonization and rape. In her research, she has portrayed sexual violation as a way of having authority over the colonial subjects. She counter-argues saying that colonization also takes place from the urge of the colonizers in committing violence against the powerless people. I agree with her that the idea of colonizing people and land is interconnected to their participation in the sexual violence of colonial women. Smith provides a view of realism by explaining the way colonization was the root of the sexual violence against women. This colonization is expressed through taking possession of the female bodies. Haunani Kay Trask refers to the modern-day fashion and portrayal of females in movie production as “prostitution” because they put more focus on their sexuality. She also compares females with Hawai’i saying, “Hawai’i, like a lovely woman, is there for the taking” (Smith 71). She does so because of the resemblance between the tourists and viewers coming to see the beauty of a sea beach and the sexuality of a

woman. Then Smith goes on to declare that conquering a female body is like conquering land for men. She recollects the history of colonization and explains that the colonizers thought of the colonial people as subjects that cannot be violated as they are already considered “impure” (73). She relates this to the idea of prostitution as raping a prostitute is not considered rape because of their profession. She also describes the vicious politics of the White male colonizers demanding lynching of the Black men to protect the purity of the White women they possessed. Smith highlights that the marginalized men grew up thinking of this victimization, abuse, and lynching as the social norm for everyone. Because of colonization, these marginalized males thought of females as objects of sexual violence. This is how the misogynistic ideology of the colonizers was spread to the colonies, the marginalized people. The violence against women during the period of colonization was justified because of the reproducing ability of women; which were troubling for the White colonizers. Smith concludes her article with a heavy heart saying that this sexual violence against these native women will continue as long as they will keep living in prosperous lands. This article is pivotal to my research as it contains the history behind the dysfunctional attitude of the marginalized colonial people. I will try to relate this history with the way it influenced the writing of the marginalized writers of my chosen primary texts (70-82).

In the journal article titled, “Making Meaningful Bodies: Physical Appearance in Colonial Writings”, Sharon Block depicts the description of women found in different colonial writings. She also points out the way this representation of women with objectified characteristics has influenced the Black writers of the colonies at that time. I also think of colonial hangover as responsible for the female subjugation in literature written by different Black writers from the colonies. Block, in her journal article, talks about the way women are represented in the English colonizer’s writings. The use of the female body in their writings is the focal point of this study. It was their writings that started spreading the deterioration of

female characters in literature. These White dominant male writers wrote about the colonial female subjects based on their imagination and fantasy instead of adding facts. These writings were portraying the difference in bodily appearance and function of Black males and females very prominently. Then Block categorized the number of Africans who were executed because of suspicion of committing rape on White women. Then she distinguishes the difference in voices of males and females while writing a piece of literature. Again, she talks about the way these male colonist writers chose the physical attributes of women which were worth mentioning in their writing and which were not. She exemplifies these physical traits of women mentioned by John Harrower who said, "preshus lips" the "mistress of my hart" and a "weel looked girl ... of a good temper" (Block 530). The physical appearance of women appeared in the diaries of these English people based on the behavior they presented in front of them. Those who behaved badly were presented as ugly whereas only those Black women appeared as pretty who behaved well with them. She gave a brief history of a slave women's description that was published after her running away from her White master; which contained nothing more than the clothes she was wearing. The colonist writer reduced her worth to the outfit she was wearing and her physical features were not worthy of mentioning to him. However, sometimes Black males and females were identified regardless of their genders, like "negro" or "mulatto" (540). These discourses about Black women created by White males had a big influence on the creation of literature by the Black male. Though they were no longer ignorant about the racial discrimination in their writing, they recreated the gender discrimination in their writing. This article is significant as it portrays the female body in White male-dominant writings. However, in my paper, I would like to draw my focus on the writings of the Black or marginalized writers and the way they represent the female body in their writings (525-34).

2.6 Resistance through literature

In the essay titled “Criteria of Negro Art”, W. E. B. Du Bois presents the art created by the Black artists as an instrument to fight against the oppressors. He thinks that Black writers should use art as a means to protest. He highlights that he wants the Black arts to become propaganda against their misleading representation by the White authors. He says that Black artists are bestowed with the responsibility of representing their authenticity, even if they need to exaggerate the story to attract the audience. He also thinks it is okay for Black artists to write a piece that will bring sympathy among people towards them and he is justifying this action because of the constant misrepresentation of these people by White writers. He is also justifying the Black art being used as propaganda only because of their silence as opposed to overbearing Whites for so long. He gives an example of mainstream content which is a White man being popular with women of other races and the man still loving his White lover; which shows the portrayal of colored women in literary content. He clarifies that the White writers can only manipulate the Black representation as they cannot do the same with the White characters. Then Bois brings out the fact that the Blacks being superstitious, primitive, backdated and conservative while speaking about ‘sex’ is more highlighted in the misrepresentation of Blacks in White writings. He refers to ‘negro’ people as merely ‘human’ who do not contain many different characteristics than the Whites. He thinks that Black artists need to come forward to create art and show the world how their arts can also be beautiful and worthy of praise. He thinks creating art is the only way to make people recognize the Blacks as indifferent to other humans. This essay is an eye-opening bold confession, which resolute the necessity of Black people creating art as they are misrepresented in the arts made by the Whites. This essay is different from my writing as I plan to highlight the Black art which misrepresents women. This essay is focusing on the way Blacks are misrepresented in White writing in general and the research gap of this writing is

the way there are misrepresentations among the Black writings as well in terms of the gender difference. This essay is focusing on the Black female misrepresentation and I will be focusing on the misrepresentation of females in general. I will try to address the female misrepresentation in post-colonial writings that are not written by White writers.

In the book chapter titled “The Man of Color and the White Woman”, Frantz Fanon psychoanalytically dissects the hypocrisy in the relationship between a colored man and a white woman. He identifies the politics behind a Black male longing for a white female. He says that psychologically Blacks think that they can become white by being loved or married by a white. They unknowingly think that they can also become a part of the white civilization by marrying a woman who has white skin. He talks about the way the Blacks living abroad go through a conflict of recognition between Black and white. They fail to recognize themselves among the Blacks or whites. This book chapter psychoanalytically discusses the way colored men feel an attraction toward white women and I would like to implement this among the Black male and white female characters of the selected texts in my thesis. My thesis will try to provide instances in literary pieces where the Blacks try to become whites differently. I will try to show how the Blacks used this becoming white as a form of resistance in my paper.

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, is a slave narrative written by Harriet Jacobs, a runaway slave. Here, she brings out the lives of the Black males and females as slaves of the Whites. She tells her experience and what she witnessed around her as a slave. She highlights the way the white masters sexually violated the female slaves of their plantations. The way the author herself was proposed by her old master from her childhood was a crucial part of her narrative. Also, she makes the readers aware of atrocities committed by the white masters. She tells the incidents where the fathers and husbands had to endure their daughters and wives getting raped by the white masters. They could not protect the females of their

families from being pregnant with Mulatto children. She brings out the way that whenever the male family members tried to protect the females, they became the target of torture and killing. It was narrated by a female slave and I will try to implement the atrocities she mentioned in my thesis. She brings out the violence against the slave females by their white masters and their Mulatto children. I will also try to show the Mulatto children as evidence of the white domination.

In “How ‘Bigger’ was Born”, Richard Wright explained the reason behind his making of this rebellious Black character named Bigger Thomas. He made this character based on the neighbors he witnessed in his childhood who used to break the Jim Crow laws. By accumulating their anger and frustration, he showed the way discrimination criminalizes people.

2.7 Feminist and Post-colonialist theories

In the book chapter titled “Gender and Sexuality”, John Storey introduces different types of feminism. Marxist, liberal, radical, dual-systems theory, postmodern, psychoanalytic, existential, socialist and so on are some of the criteria of feminism. Each of these looks at the condition of females from a different perspective and angle. First of all, Marxist feminism talks about females being the victim of capitalization and in this type of feminism, the economic stability of females is very crucial. Then radical feminism talks about the role patriarchy in society plays in dominating women. Dual-systems theory, coined by Sylvia Walby, is an integration of patriarchy and capitalism and this theory promotes that both of these powers are responsible for dominating women. Liberal feminism talks about the prejudice men hold against women and the way men try to show that prejudice by action, force and law. Storey also discusses the way females are portrayed in stories of the romantic genre. Females are portrayed as being in a passive position from where they have no need

and males only have sexual desire. He talks about the connection between feminism and pop culture. Also, he brings out the essay “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” by Laura Mulvey and criticizes the way the female gaze has been ignored in this essay. He thinks the female gaze is also a prominent aspect now and needs to be discussed. However, in this thesis, the theory of Laura Mulvey will be used to analyze how visual pleasure and the male gaze work in forming literature.

In the book titled, *Post-colonial studies the key concepts*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin discuss the key terms related to postcolonialism. They bring out the relation between postcolonialism and feminism. They agree that there is a certain similarity in the dominating power of patriarchy and colonialism. There are even some differences found in the lives of the subjugated females and the lives of the colonized people. In feminism, representing the human body plays a serious and sensitive issue and at the same time, representing the place can create a huge issue in postcolonialism. They identify that colonized females face “double colonization” as they become victims of both patriarchy and imperialism (Ashcroft Bill et al. 95). However, they claim that the females are victimized even without the presence of any colonial power. It is the native males that confine the native females to a stereotype of being submissive. Then they talk about the way the Black females are portrayed in a sexualized manner in different mediums of representation. In the paintings, the Black females were presented as economically inferior and at the same time, their sexuality was in focus. Their bodies were exoticized more through these mediums of representation. In this book, the authors focus on the way females become targets of both male dominance and colonial power. In my thesis, I will try to take a look at the way the female characters in literature are marginalized by both of these dominant authorities. This book also talks about the way the native males are not outside of this power relation and in

my thesis, I will also try to show the way native males also demonstrate their power and dominance over the native females.

2.8 Implication of theories in the selected texts

In the journal article titled, “Visions of Tribulation: White Gaze and Black Spectacle in Richard Wright's ‘Native Son’ and ‘The Outsider’”, Becca Gercken has presented the novel *Native Son* as a novel where the female characters are being subjected to the male gaze. Also, through the portrayal of the female characters in this novel, she came to conclude that it seems like Richard Wright himself was in a state of castration. She continues to argue saying that the female characters of the novel are intentionally depicted in a way that it feels like they are designed to be gazed at by the central character of this novel, Bigger Thomas. In her journal article, she implements the concept of the male gaze in the text *Native Son*. According to her, the female characters of Richard Wright are seen suffering from castration. This article is about the way these characters are being treated by the author. Gercken thinks Bigger’s idea of masculinity is the root of the problem that occurs in the novel. She is saying that Bigger thinks of himself as the spectator and someone who is in the position of gazing at the white female body. However, Gercken breaks his misconception saying that he is not a dominant gazer himself but he is only repeating the action of gazing that he received from the dominant White spectators. She is portraying Bigger as a delusional character. She is putting Bigger in the same position as the female because of his passive status as a Black man in society. Gercken says that Wright is putting Bigger in a resisting position against the Whites by making him act like a criminal; which is not his true nature. Bigger is someone who wanted to achieve the power of controlling the Whites he sees around him. According to her, by committing the act of raping Mary Dalton, Bigger was only trying to perform the act that was done to him by the White world, controlling the object of the gaze. She also admits that

this novel is not merely about the spectatorship of Bigger, but it contains the passive status of a gazer for being a Black or marginalized male. She mentions “How Bigger was Born” by Wright to indicate the “reckless eyeballing” of Bigger towards the female characters of *Native Son* (Gercken 635). She criticizes the way the physical features of Mary Dalton are presented in this novel. In her first appearance, she is gazed at constantly and intensively by Bigger and Gercken thinks that Bigger thought of being able to gaze at this White woman was a great accomplishment because of his status as a marginalized Black driver. He gained his confidence in overpowering her because of being unpunished for looking at her. The way Wright presents the bodily features of Mary from the perspective of Bigger with reductionism shows the despise against the White female body. Gercken shows through claiming power over Mary’s body, Bigger feels like he is achieving something unattainable. She also says that Mary is a separate entity, who has more authority when she is not the subject of gazing and she is someone whom Bigger feared rather than desired. Even when he murdered Mary, his immediate reaction confronted the fact that he is a marginalized Black and the victim is a White woman. Gercken highlights the insecurity the character of Bigger feels whenever his object of gazing gains authority. His girlfriend Bessie was also a victim of the male gaze by Bigger because of his desire to impose the controlling attitude he received from Whites. As Mary overshadowed the gazed form of Bessie, he earned the authority of killing Bessie as well. Gercken comments that Mary and Bessie both are not presented in this story as separate identities, but as objects of the male gaze. Mary was the “symbol of beauty” among the Whites and Bessie was the substitute for Mary (639). Gercken shows that the gaze of Bigger is only the reflection of the gaze he received even from a blind White woman, Mary’s mother. She also clarifies that the limitation of a marginalized man derived from the sense of committing a crime here. A Black man like Bigger being able to be in the room of a White woman was an impossible event and it led to the crimes that took place afterwards. She says

Wright wanted to portray the willingness of a marginalized man to come out from the White dominance by conquering the White female body. Also, he wanted to show that Bigger only performed the expected role of a Black man. Gercken makes many valid points in stating that the female characters of *Native Son* are presented in the same way Bigger is presented from the point of view of the Whites. So, in my paper, I will also try to look at the way Wright is using conquering the female body as a way of resisting racial discrimination (633-44).

In the journal article titled, “What Bigger Killed For: Rereading Violence against Women in *Native Son*”, Sondra Guttman discusses the way Wright is showing the resistance of the Black Americans against the years of injustices of the White through committing crime and violence against the female characters. She explains that Wright thought of this resistance as the predicted outcome as Karl Marx prophesized about the working-class people in this unequal class system. She also points out the way Wright refused to distinguish this crime as rape and sympathized with the readers with this character. However, she redefined this violence by regarding this as violence against women. Among these criticisms, I agree with the fact that the characters like Bigger Thomas are created even in real life through constant exploitation. However, this exploitation does not justify the crimes against women, even Black women. In this paper, I am going to focus on the violation of women portrayed in this piece of literature.

In “*Beauty Is a Wound: A Novel* by Eka Kurniawan (review)”, Rudolf Mrázek reviews *Beauty is a Wound* as a piece that can often make the readers feel disgusted by its portrayal of sex. In this review, he highlights the way the central character of this novel earns her livelihood through prostitution and her children are the outcome of her constantly being raped by her clients. He thinks even though the content of this novel is depressing, still it is written in a manner that gives hope to the readers.

In the journal article titled, “An Analysis of Women’s Subordination in Eka Kurniawan’s Magical Realism Novel Entitled *Beauty is a Wound*”, Riksan Dani Juniardi and Nia Nafisah implement the socialist feminist theory of Juliet Mitchell in the novel *Beauty is a Wound*. They identify the four fundamental factors; birth, reproducing ability, objectification and the social role of women in this novel. Also, they point out the way the Indonesian native women are presented in a vulnerable and inferior state to men throughout this novel. Among these articles, I agree that Indonesian women had to take prostitution as a profession to earn their livelihoods. However, even though in some places this novel shows compassion for women and plays the role of feminist writing, this novel sometimes over-emphasizes the parts which Mrázek regarded as ‘disgusting’. I would like to focus on this objectification of the strong female characters of this novel. Juniardi and Nafisah, in their journal article, present the way women are portrayed in *Beauty is a Wound*. In their article, they are trying to prove the sexual representation of women in this novel is a way for Eka to represent the women of Indonesia who were in an inferior state to men. They categorized this distinction based on birth, reproducing ability, objectification and the social role of women. In terms of the physical differences of women, according to them, the female characters of this novel are seen playing the role of only subordinated professions related to their sexual function; concubines, sex workers and housewives. They also mention that in this novel, Eka is showing the lack of power of the female characters in controlling their wish to keep their children achieved from prostitution. On the other hand, the married women in this novel are seen being forced to give birth to children even if it means being raped by their husbands. Moreover, Juniardi and Nafisah point out that the female characters of this novel are treated as sexual objects without any feelings and raped constantly by different male characters. These characters are objectified as the male characters think that their looks do not matter as long as they can have sex with women who are being labelled as “ugly” in this novel

(Juniardi and Nafisah 12). Then there is the portrayal of the inevitable responsibility of the female characters in nurturing and caring for their and others' children. Juniardi and Nafisah mention that this novel is written by a male author and it is impossible for a male author to write the exact experience and have a female voice in feminist writing no matter how compassionate he is. This article is influential as it brings out different sociological aspects that Eka focused on while writing this novel *Beauty is a Wound*. This study would have been more useful if the writers focused on whether Eka's marginalized position had any effect on creating this novel. In my paper, I will be focusing on the marginalized background of Eka and if it had any effect on the representation of women in this novel (1-22).

In the journal article titled ““In the Big City the Sex Life Gone Wild” Migration, Gender, and Identity in Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*”, Ashley Dawson points out the way the Black immigrant women living in the United Kingdom faced constant objectification. He highlights the way calypso songs were being used to dominate these women. He blamed the colonial ruling for this misogynic view.

In the journal article titled, “Sam Selvon's "The Lonely Londoners" (1956), White Sexual Desire and the Calypso Aesthetic”, Kate Houlden boldly claims *The Lonely Londoners* as a piece of white fetishization of the Black immigrants through their explicit desire of forming sexual relationships with the White females. She thinks that the beauty and joy that has been expressed in depicting the summertime also has some implicit meaning related to sexual desire for the white female body. Also, she depicts that the Black immigrant characters of this novel express their willingness to gain their control over the colonial power by possessing the White women. By reviewing these articles, I agree that this novel has some underlying meanings that portray White fetishization and the desire to conquer White

women. I would like to emphasize this objectification of the author in portraying women in my paper.

Through the review of the literature, it can be understood that most of the critics think of the male gaze, colonization and marginalized perspective as responsible for the female misrepresentation in the literary pieces.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Research design

Qualitative research has been conducted in this research with the help of different secondary sources. To find the answer to the research questions, the biography of the discussed authors has been taken into consideration. *Native Son*, *Beauty is a Wound* and *The Lonely Londoners*; these three novels have been used as primary texts. Relevant journal articles from scholarly sources like *JSTOR* and *Google Scholar* have been found and used in this paper. To find these articles, different keywords, like stereotypes, marginalized authors, female representation through literature, writing by male authors and others have been used. These journal articles have been used as secondary sources to write this paper. In this paper, important and relevant quotes and lines from these books and journal articles have been used in paraphrasing form.

This paper aims to focus on the marginalized authors and their way of representing women. This paper tries to find out whether the marginalization and the fixed perception of women have any connection. At first, this paper offers some claims as a reply to the research questions. Then information from some supporting sources is added to earn credibility for the research.

Feminist criticism and postcolonial criticism have been used in this research. This paper mainly focuses on the male gaze and objectification of feminist theory. Laura Mulvey is the developer of the term 'male gaze' and her famous essay titled, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" has been used here as a secondary source. The male gaze is designing a piece of literature or visual narrative from the perspective of a heterosexual male and

objectification is treating a person as an object, which is prominent in different pieces of literature.

3.2 Feminist criticism

As this paper seeks to find the reason behind the objectification of women in selected pieces of literature, feminist criticism is more appropriate to use in this paper. Also, through feminist analysis, the concept of the male gaze can be applied in these writings to indicate the way the female characters of these novels are shaped by the male gaze. Feminist theory can be used in this paper as the female characters of the texts used in this paper are presented as passive, neglected and dehumanized characters.

The third wave feminist criticism has been used while writing this paper. The third wave includes analyzing women's positions based on different indirect signs. In these texts, females are being sexualized indirectly. The second wave is appropriate when a distinction in behavior will be shown while treating White and Black women. However, mostly this paper tries to show the distinction in representing the female characters in general despite their race and class. Through a close reading of the three primary texts, this analysis has been conducted.

There are different criteria for feminism; Marxist, radical, dual-systems theory, liberal and so on. Liberal feminism is dominant in this analysis as liberal feminism talks about men having prejudice over women and implementing that prejudice in some way. This kind of oppression against women is visible in these chosen texts and so, liberal feminism will play a dominant role in this paper.

3.3 Post-colonial criticism

Postcolonial criticism has been used here as two among the three pieces used in this paper are postcolonial writings. The primary texts used in this paper either portray the injustices done

by the White Americans, the Dutch colonial power, or the British supremacies. As this paper seeks to understand the rationale behind the excessive objectification of women in the postcolonial pieces specifically, postcolonial criticism is appropriate for this research. The authors of these selected pieces have somehow been subjected to different colonial powers and the way it has influenced their way of portraying women has been focused on in this paper. The way the victimization of the female characters of these novels is related to their authors being in marginalized positions will be theorized with the aspect of postcolonialism. The presence of colonial power can be sensed in the settings of these novels.

Chapter 4

Visual pleasure

Female characters in the history of literature have always been a subject of pleasure for the readers. The female characters sometimes serve no other purpose than being the love interest of the male protagonist. They are seen being present in the play or novel to develop the character and personality of the male protagonist. Also, in present-day literature, the female characters are seen being the lead character, however, indirect sexualization is still visible. They are still portrayed as marginalized, vulnerable and in need of protection provided by a man. This matter of representing women in selected texts is being analyzed here. All of the selected texts are written by writers who have witnessed colonization, racial subjugation and marginalization at a point in their lives.

4.1 Visual pleasure

Instead of having a strong personality, they are seen being portrayed in a way that provides visual pleasure to the readers. Even in the Shakespearean play *Hamlet*, Ophelia's death was only used as a way to progress the story and strengthen the personality of Prince Hamlet. She was portrayed in a visualized manner and even her death was narrated in a way that made the readers evoke visual contentment. Even though visual pleasure is considered a technique that is hugely used in movies and series. However, this visual pleasure is visible in different pieces of literature as well through the narrating and storytelling techniques.

4.2 Male gaze

Male gaze, the concept coined by Laura Mulvey can be implemented in these pieces of literature. In *Native Son*, the body of Mary Dalton is gazed at secretly by the eyes of Bigger. Instead of focusing on the character development of Mary, particular body parts of her get focused on here. Through the gaze of Thomas, she is being reduced to her different

body parts. The description of the body parts of Mary makes this text anthropomorphic, with excessive focus on the female body. Here, she is being used to create a fantasy and visual pleasure for the readers.

In *Beauty is a Wound*, Rengganis is gazed at by everyone in the class after she enters the classroom naked. The elicited description of her body and her interaction with the 'dog' can make the readers wonder about the necessity of this description. As Mulvey suggested, she is being gazed at by the male characters of this novel, by the male author and also by the readers through this storytelling technique that evokes visual pleasure.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, the female characters are not even prioritized. Still, they are presented as an object to gaze at. The girls are perceived by 'the boys' of this novel in this manner, "when them white girls have on summer frocks and you could see legs and shapes that used to hide under winter coats" (Selvon 55). These gazes are always signifying the heterosexual norm.

4.3 Scopophilia

Scopophilia can be regarded as the pleasure that one can get from watching someone and also by being watched by someone. The practice of scopophilia is prominent in male writings while depicting a female body. In *Native Son*, Mary Dalton's body is represented as a passive image; which is spectated by Bigger Thomas. Thomas's gazing at her is a heterosexual gaze by which he was staring at the Whiteness of Mary. Bigger keeps on looking at the backseat of the car, where Jan and Mary make out. Thomas "looked at the mirror; Mary was lying flat on her back in the rear seat and Jan was bent over her" (Wright 75). He receives pleasure by watching someone being active in inappropriate activity. Bigger turns into a peeping tom while objectifying someone by the power of gazing. Also, the way Bigger handles the drunk Mary makes it seem like Mary is suffering from the castration complex.

On the other hand, in *Beauty is a Wound*, different female characters of this novel are gazed at by the male characters of this novel. To illustrate, the way Rengganis is gazed at by Krisan is a heterosexual scopophilic gaze. Even though Krisan did not have any emotion or feelings of love for Rengganis, still she was gazed at by Krisan whenever she was not wearing anything or wearing fewer clothes. In this novel, there are explicit descriptions of Krisan gazing at Rengganis, “Krisan was in awe of Rengganis the Beautiful’s body, which was both beautiful and provocative. Delicious, that was the only word for it” (Kurniawan 421). At first, he acted as a peeping tom. However, then he was aroused and felt the desire to rape her as a consequence of that heterosexual male gaze. He raped her even though he loved another girl. Rengganis was only an object of desire for him which he clarified through this statement, “There are two kinds of women that a man can love: the first kind of woman he loves in order to dote upon and cherish her, and the second kind he loves in order to fuck” (421). In this novel, the scenarios consisting of sexual activities are elaborately described in a way that it feels like someone is gazing at them. For example, the sexual intercourse between Rengganis and Krisan is unnecessarily descriptive. As suggested by Skomp, the author can be regarded as the gazer for peeping at the private moments of these characters.

4.4 Castration complex

Castration is the process of separating oneself from his phallus. It is also the way men think of women as incomplete for not having any phallus. All of the chosen texts are written by male authors and the castration complex is visible among the female characters. In *Native Son*, Mary is represented as someone who is suffering from castration and she is seen inviting Thomas to complete her. Though it was only because she was drunk and she seemed vulnerable, Thomas thought she was suffering from a castration complex and wanted to complete her. He was imagining, “her face came toward him and her lips touched his, like

something he had imagined” (Wright 80). Also, another female character in this novel, Bessie Mears showed her castration complex through her desire of being acknowledged by Thomas.

In *Beauty is a Wound*, Beauty is also seen suffering from a castration complex and she is seen waiting for her prince to escape from this castration. Beauty is represented in a way that she is going to be incomplete without a phallus and in the text, it seems like it does not matter who that prince is. It did not matter to her if the person who was relieving her from this castration was younger than her. She showed no sign of resistance when she was being used for the sexual pleasure of a man and it clarifies her castration. She still considered him as her prince even when she found out that her prince was the son of one of her sisters. Even after his death, Beauty refuses to reveal his identity to her sisters, “I’ll never tell. He is my prince” (Kurniawan 464). Because of being considered ugly, she is portrayed as a castrated character.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, the White privileged women are portrayed as having the castration complex. They are seen begging random unknown Jamaican men to sleep with them, “you would meet women who beg you to go with them” (Selvon 61). They seem incomplete without the excitement of being with someone different from them in terms of skin color and the form of castration.

4.5 Fetishization

Fetishization is reducing the reason for sexual desire for someone to a certain feature or characteristic. For Bigger Thomas, the White race and skin color of Mary Dalton worked as the object of fetish. The act of Thomas trying to rape Mary could not be out of love as it was the first day of their encounter. He even constantly admitted how much he hated Mary through his internal monologue, “He hated the girl” (Wright 54). Instead, it was a reaction to his fetishization of a White girl. Thomas reduces the whole existence of Mary to her White

race and made her the victim of his fetish. Frantz Fanon, in his book chapter titled “The Man of Color and the White Woman”, reveals the intention of a Black man while loving a White woman. He indicates this saying, “By loving me she proves that I am worthy of white love. I am loved like a white man. I am a white man” (Fanon 45). While Mary is in a drunk and vulnerable condition and asks Thomas to stay, Thomas thinks of this as his way of gaining whiteness through having her. Though he has a girlfriend from his race, he has had this fetish of becoming a White by having a White upper-class woman in his arms. This fetish of Thomas is directed toward the Whiteness of Mary and it can be understood through his different treatment of people based on their races. He behaves differently to White and Black people and this can be understood clearly by Fanon. He makes the condition of Thomas clear saying, “The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man. A Negro behaves differently with a white man and with another Negro” (8). Fanon thinks the Blacks have this double sense of acknowledgement where they want to belong among the people of both races. When Thomas notices Bessie in the restaurant, he ignores Bessie because he refuses to be acknowledged as a friend of a Black person in front of the Whites. He refuses to acknowledge himself as a Black and he turns this refusal into a fetish by desiring to become a White by having a White girl. Later on, he even rapes Bessie imagining her as Mary; more specifically as White. His desire can only be fulfilled by a White woman and this desire can be regarded as a fetish. This clarifies his desire for the White skin color turning into his strong urge of gratifying this need by raping a White woman.

On the other hand, in *Beauty is a Wound*, an unnecessary amount of effort has been given to identifying Beauty as an ugly girl. Even the title itself is an oxymoron emphasizing the physical appearance of this female character. The title is a little satirical and it dehumanizes and at the same time mocks the protagonist of this novel. Beauty was a prodigy

who is seen to have learnt language without any external help. Rosinah even admitted that it was like Beauty was being taught by “an angel” (Kurniawan 468). However, though Beauty is a character with different good qualities, her skin color and other physical features were given more emphasis in this text. The extreme description of the bodily feature of Beauty makes it seem like the fetishization of the descriptor. The obsession of the author in making this character ugly cannot be normalized as he even referred to her with different offending names only for her physical appearance. Beauty, in this text, has been referred to as 'ugly' almost thirty times. This extent of objectification makes reductionism prominent in this text. This objectification of ugliness turns into fetishization when it is mentioned, "what's the difference between a pretty face and an ugly face when you are behind some dark bushes?" (434). Even till the end, she was reduced to her ugly features by her prince as well, “What's wrong with ugly women?” he asked himself. “They can be fucked just like beautiful women can” (484). This extremism with the skin color of the female characters can be regarded as the fetish of the other male characters or the authors themselves.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, the reversed fetish can be seen among the White female characters. The White women of this novel are seen as having an untold desire for the Black. Stuart Hall, in “Stereotyping as a signifying practice”, shows the stereotypes that are associated with the Black body. The Blacks are considered as the orientals who are supposed to be primitive, savage, masculine and they are supposed to have a great sexual appetite. Hall supports this by saying “whites often fantasized about the excessive sexual appetites and prowess of black men” (Hall 262). In this novel, Moses is seen being approached by White females because these females seem to hold a fantasy about this stereotype of Blacks being savage. They ask Moses to join them because “they feel they can't get big thrills unless they have a black man in the company” (Selvon 61). Their relationship with the Black man cannot

be regarded as anything but a fetish because he gets paid at the end of the day for putting on a “jolly good show” for the White ladies (61).

4.6 Justifying the male gaze

The male gaze is visible in almost every literary piece. The authors of the selected texts have designed their texts in distinct ways which made these texts visually appealing to the readers. In *Native Son*, the perspective and inner turmoil of Bigger Thomas have been heavily described and this may have led his perception to become visual for the readers. *Beauty is a Wound* is a novel that uses the storytelling technique with the usage of magic realism and as a result, it becomes a source of visual pleasure for the readers. Also, *The Lonely Londoners* is written mimicking a form of continuous thought process like a stream of consciousness that it ended up labelling people in the process. The authors of these texts had to make their texts pleasing for the readers despite the competition with the mainstream privileged writers. Using different techniques that will evoke visual pleasure while representing the female characters may have been their way of making their writing acceptable and interesting for their readers.

Chapter 5

Following the Mainstream Stereotype

As discussed earlier, these marginalized writers had to meet the expectations of the readers who were not necessarily reading from the same perspective. So, they had to maintain the mainstream trend while writing these pieces of novels. Though *Native Son* is a protest novel, still it could not get out of the subjugated representation of female characters. While trying to make this novel different from other novels, this novel only followed the pattern of portraying women as the victim. The reproduction of the same stereotype has normalized the stereotypes. These novels include the stereotypical objectification, concept of beauty, labelling, slang and many other mainstream ways that misrepresented female characters in literary pieces.

5.1 Objectification

When a character is being treated as an object and his or her comfort is not being prioritized, that character becomes objectified. This dehumanizing act can be seen done by Bigger to Bessie when he thinks of Mary while having Bessie. Through thingification, he reduces the human quality of Bessie and generalizes all the females. As Thomas does not consider the convenience of his girlfriend Bessie and ends up forcing on her, she has been objectified here. She ends up dying as a result of this objectification.

In *Beauty is a Wound*, Alamanda is treated as an object when she is constantly raped by her husband. Her worth is reduced to her capability of providing pleasure. She is dehumanized and devalued as she is constantly being forced to get herself out of her “iron underwear” to satisfy her husband without her consent (Kurniawan 239). She felt “humiliated, dirty, and so full of regret” after being forced by him (298). Here, instead of

treating Alamanda as a human with flesh and blood, she is being objectified and her feelings are not being considered by her husband.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, the female characters are reduced to their skin color and race. Their behaviors are determined by their skin color. Here, the White females are being objectified for being attracted to Black males. On the other hand, the females with Black skin are also not able to get out of the objectification as well. Most of the female characters of this novel are not even considered as having separate identities, instead, they are known with the help of a male character. “Cap take up two girl and he gone home long time”, this line shows the objectification of the female characters (Selvon 67). The female characters here are seen to have no name and is referred to as girl does not make them portrayed as more than any object. Also, Cap picking up two girls dehumanizes the females in this novel.

5.2 Concept of beauty and physical appearance

The female characters of these pieces are strictly judged by their physical appearances. They are labelled, referred to as, stereotyped and portrayed according to their looks and bodily features. In *Native Son*, Mary is portrayed as an object to admire by men and Bessie is shown as someone who is only a replacement for Mary. Here, Mary is admired because of her beauty and mostly, for her skin color. She is seen being assumed to be “a hot kind of girl” because of being rich and White (39). Whereas, Bessie is a Black woman with whom Bigger is seen to have a complicated relationship where Bigger seems only attracted to keep a physical relationship with her. Bigger even refuses to acknowledge her in front of his White masters only because of her skin color. Even though Bigger is also a Black American, he is a male and he was worthy of interacting with Mary and Jan. However, he does not introduce Bessie to them who is from the same race as him only because he found it embarrassing to have a Black girlfriend. Also, raping and killing Bessie was not portrayed as a heinous crime

like killing a White woman in this novel. So, physical features, here especially skin color, play a big role in treating women differently.

The concept of beauty is used excessively in the novel *Beauty is a Wound*. The beauty of Dewi Ayu has been emphasized throughout the novel. She was regarded as beautiful for having “gleaming black hair and bluish eyes” (49). This novel shows how unfortunate Dewi Ayu and her friends were to be forced to become prostitutes. Beauty has been regarded as a wound in this novel. Because of the beauty of Dewi Ayu and her daughters, all of them suffered a great deal. Her first three daughters have also been known for their grace and beauty. Because of their beauty, they were popular among men and they also faced misfortune because of their beauty. Like the name of the novel, beauty became a wound for them. Rengganis was known as “Rengganis the Beautiful” because of “her extraordinary beauty” (337). On the other hand, the younger daughter of Dewi Ayu named Beauty has been regarded as “hideous” from the time she was born (10). Her ugliness was exaggerated by saying that the midwife mistook her for “a pile of shit” during labor (11). Even her mother thought of her as “a cursed monster from hell” (12). Her physical features are illustrated in a way to make the readers understand that she was the complete opposite of the definition of beauty. A distorted depiction of a newborn baby shows the perception of people toward those who do not match the beauty standards of society.

The baby’s entire body was jet black as if it had been burned alive, with a bizarre and unrecognizable form. For example, she wasn’t sure whether the baby’s nose was a nose, because it looked more like an electrical outlet than any nose she’d ever seen in her entire life. And the baby’s mouth reminded her of a piggy-bank slot and her ears looked like pot handles. She was sure that there was no creature on earth more hideous than this wretched little one, and if she were God, she would probably kill the baby at once rather than let her live; the world would abuse her without mercy. (12)

This bizarre description of a child shows that even a child needs to meet the expectations of the people in society to be recognized. Her name being beauty is a bittersweet irony and mockery towards the way she looks. Her being 'ugly' and referred to as 'beauty' is one kind of oxymoron gifted by the author himself.

5.3 Labelling

In *Beauty is a Wound*, Dewi Ayu is regarded as impure because of not being a virgin in Mama Kalong's whorehouse. It is ironic that she needs to meet the standard of being pure even in a place like a whorehouse. Also, while labelling her, her purity is being considered based on her virginity.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, "a woman in Chelsea" is seen labelling a Jamaican male as a "black bastard" (Selvon 61). This labelling was done by this woman based on the exoticism Whites seem to have about the primitiveness of the Blacks, as supported by Hall. This labelling is done as a result of this relation between the orient man and occident woman. Also, the female characters are labelled by the counter-part of the male characters. "Look at the old

Five beating close to the wind with Harris girl!", this female character like other female characters in this novel, is being mentioned by her male counterpart (66). This female character has no own identity, personality, or background story; instead, she is only a 'Harris girl'.

5.4 Portraying the sufferings of females

The female characters of these novels are seen objectified differently. They are being referred to by the man they belong to, they are being evaluated because of their physical appearances, they are being called different offending names, and they are being the victim of torture, rape and many other kinds of violence. However, this representation of females cannot be only

from imagination. Instead, this kind of objectification of females gives light to the condition of females in real life. All of these authors of the selected texts are indirectly giving instances of reality. They are showing the way females are recognized by the name of their husbands, the way females are more vulnerable to rape and torture even after marriage, and the way females are objectified daily in different circumstances. So, this objectification of females in literary pieces can be a glimpse of reality and they may have wanted to give a realistic approach to representing women. Also, this kind of representation of females may have been necessary for these novels because they were able to uphold the sufferings of the Dutch women during the Japanese invasion. While analyzing this text in-depth, it can be understood that this novel is portraying the life of a prostitute. At first, Dewi Ayu is referred to as a prostitute without any context. Then as the story goes on, the reason and the misfortune behind her being a prostitute are revealed. After knowing her story, this labelling her as a prostitute does not seem right. So, this novel is successful in making the audience cautious before labelling a person as a whore or a prostitute.

Chapter 6

Colonization and liberation

Females and lands are connected in terms of ownership, property and power relation. They have the similarity of being owned or claimed by an individual. Whenever colonizers colonized a nation, first of all, they took control over the women of the country. Though there is this aspect of desire and fetish for committing violence and rape toward the vulnerable women, still there is this notion of owning the women of the colonized nation to demonstrate the power of the colonizers. This resemblance in treating land and women aligns with what Andrea Smith says in “Not an Indian Tradition: The Sexual Colonization of Native Peoples”. Here, he compares Hawai’i (land) with the female body because both of them are treated as property to be conquered. So, conquering the females is like a weapon for the oppressors to own and colonize a nation. At the same time, this same tactic is used by the native males as a form of resistance against the foreign power. They try to get their authority over their women back or they try to show their dominance over the women from the oppressor’s side. In any way, women become an easy target of both the colonial power and the males of the colonies in both realities in literary pieces.

6.1 Taking control over the female body

In history, in times of war and colonization, the females suffer the most. They become the victim of rape and violence by the foreign oppressors. It can indicate that alongside the reason of fetish and desire, by owning the women of the colony, the colonial powers demonstrate their power over the native people and try to break away their self-esteem.

Native Son is a novel written from the perspective of a Black American. From the history of Black Americans, it is evident that the Blacks were brought and sold like objects during the time of slavery. Blacks faced an immense amount of violence, and torture, men

were lynched and women were raped. The Mulatto children who have parents from both the Black and White races are clear evidence of the rapes of the Black slave women by their White male masters. In the slave narrative of a Mulatto girl *The Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, she brings out the way the White male masters used to force themselves on their Black female slaves even when their husband and father tried to stop them from this heinous action. This was described by Harriet Jacobs this way,

At night, they formed themselves into patrol bands, and went wherever they chose among the colored people, acting out their brutal will. Many women hid themselves in woods and swamps, to keep out of their way. If any of the husbands or fathers told of these outrages, they were tied up to the public whipping post, and cruelly scourged for telling lies about white men. (Jacobs 99)

So, the torture of the Black females by the White dominance was normalized through this slavery. Even here, it was the woman of the family who had to be owned, raped by the White master to show his dominance over all the Black slaves. Bigger Thomas of *Native Son* is a character who came out from this real-life context.

In *Beauty is a Wound*, the Dutch plantation owners are seen violating the women from the colonies as a means to own the colonial land. Even though they did it out of their desire, still owning the women of the nation is also a way for them to own the land they were colonizing. The women of this novel had to work in a “cocoa plantation” (79). Then the ordinary women of the colony (here in Indonesia) were turned into prostitutes forcefully. In the novel, Dewi Ayu and her friends are seen being turned into prostitutes even though many of them were married and from prestigious families. The author of this novel may have tried to show the colonizers believing to take over a nation by taking control of the colonized women. It may have been a way for them to break the native men by torturing the women of their families.

6.2 Resistance against the oppressors

In history, whenever the marginalized men tried to fight their oppressors, they first targeted the women from the supreme side of the power dynamic. In *Native Son*, Bigger Thomas is seen protesting against the hundreds of years of discrimination against the White dominance through taking control of a White female body, Mary Dalton. Even though he showed his hatred towards this female, still he went to bed with her to prove his ability to dominate a White woman. Even though what he did was wrong, he did not feel any guilt because of it. Because he believed his action was an act against the oppression of the Whites. He was proud of his crime and said, “it was the most meaningful, exciting, and stirring thing that had ever happened to him. He accepted it because it made him free, gave him the possibility of choice, of action, the opportunity to act and to feel that his actions carried weight” (Wright 305). The reason behind his action and speech can be understood taking the help of the journal article titled “What Bigger Killed For: Rereading Violence against Women in *Native Son*” by Sondra Guttman. She looks at American racism before analyzing this text *Native Son*. During the time of slavery, the Black males and females had to work in the plantations without any salary for the Whites all day and night. In those plantations, hundreds of Mulatto children were born by the Black females out of rape of the White masters. However, they were never convicted of committing any crime. On the other hand, Thomas is seen being arrested because of the suspicion of committing the rape and murder of a White woman. Instead of thinking of it as a crime, he thinks of it as his way of fighting against the White domination. Guttman suggests it as a natural outcome of the hundreds of years of endurance of the Black Americans. She mentions that the Marxist theory supports that constant violence over a group of people will result in rebellion and this became the truth for Thomas.

In *Beauty is a Wound*, colonizers were not the only ones showing their power over the women, but the native men also showed their authority over women as husbands, landlords

and as service takers by the prostitutes. By raping the female characters, the native male characters of this novel were also seen trying to reclaim their authority over the country. Because of that even after the country is free from the colonizers, the prostitution does not stop and the natives make a habit of visiting the “Mama Kalong’s whorehouse” regularly (134).

In *The Lonely Londoners*, the Black male protagonists do not seem interested in the Black females. Instead, they are seen running after females with White skin. They liked to be exoticized by the White women. Even though they know that they are being used for momentary fun, they still prefer to be with a White woman. The relationship between Galahad and Daisy tells much about the authenticity of the relationship between a Black man and a White woman. Daisy is a racist as she says that “You know it will take me some time to understand everything you say. The way you West Indians speak!” (Selvon 52). On the other hand, Galahad also feels contentment when a “piece of skin walking with him” (51). Galahad is a Black immigrant in London who does not have much authority to fight against the racism in workplace and living places. However, he may think that making love to a girl with White skin is his way of fighting against this racism. He feels superior when he is seen walking with a White woman and when he is being loved by a White. He thinks he becomes an object of jealousy for other Blacks when he is with a White girl. This is his perception of resistance against the White dominance.

6.3 Gaining White skin

The way colonizers need to possess lands to show their power, the male characters also need to own female characters to show their power, dominance and authority. In *Native Son*, Thomas did not seem to have much feeling for Bessie, however, they were in a relationship. Bessie was treated like property for Thomas. It seemed like Thomas needed to own or

possess a woman to show his dominance and Bessie was being possessed by him in the act. He only used her whenever he needed support and comfort. He even admitted that “He had had no need to think of her. But now he had to forget and relax and he wanted to see her” (Wright 111).

In *Beauty is a Wound*, the relationship between husband and wife is shown as the relationship between a colonizer and a colonized. The married life of Alamanda and Shodancho can be taken as an instance. Their married life was not normal, to begin with. Shodancho sexually violated her when he could not have intercourse with her because of her iron underwear. Then he even went to the washroom to meet his desire. He tied his wife up only to fulfil his desire whenever he wanted. Alamanda almost died while fulfilling his need. She constantly tried to save herself from this rapist who was her husband. However, she had to starve and be on the verge of death to escape from his grasp. Even the fetus of their child died because of being produced out of rape. He is seen raping Alamanda again the moment he realizes that their child was gone. He was only able to win the consent of having intercourse with Alamanda after saving the life of his wife’s lover. It showed his desire of possessing his wife as property to show his authority. Owning a female body is like a source of power in his colonizing mentality.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, the tendency of marrying White women to upgrade their social status is visible. A minor character Joseph is seen marrying a White woman to ride the social ladder. Marrying a White woman can suggest that he wants to possess a White woman to become a White man. As it is the Whites who receive all the privileges of living conditions, children's education, and health care facilities, so it is an instinct to try to be a White man. Marrying a White can be thought of as a way to become a White. As Fanon says about the perception of the Black men in his book, “I marry white culture, white beauty,

white whiteness. When my restless hands caress those white breasts, they grasp white civilization and dignity and make them mine” (Fanon 45). Joseph may have thought that he can also become a part of the White civilization by marrying a White. He wanted to possess the right to better living conditions, better housing facilities, a better education system for the children and a better health care system. However, a Black cannot become a White only by possessing a White wife. Instead, their family becomes the victim of racism. Fanon also shows the consequence of a Black man marrying a White woman, “When he marries, his wife will be aware that she is marrying a joke, and his children will have a legend to face and to live down” (Selvon 14). The same consequence can be seen in the life of Joseph as well. Even though he thought his life would become better after marrying a White, his life only worsened. They were not able to receive a good living place for Joseph being Black and their Mulatto children started to be bullied for not being White. This is how Joseph wanted to become a part of the White culture by possessing a White woman.

6.4 Justifying rape

The authors of these novels made it seem like it was mandatory to dominate women to revolt against the supreme power. They made it seem like it was not possible to gain revenge or protest against the supremacy of the oppressors without violating women. While justifying these actions as resistance, the act of rape, violence, and betrayal is seen as being justified as well. Bigger Thomas attempted to form a sexual relationship with a girl who was drunk and killed her as well. This action is a crime; which cannot be considered a resistance against the White supremacy. Shodancho simultaneously raped Alamanda and it is an act of marital rape. Shodancho cannot be forgiven for thinking of his act as only a way for him to demonstrate that he possesses his wife and land. Also, marrying someone with the intent of gaining prestige in society can only be considered an act of deception and betrayal. However, these actions are seen to be justified through the storytelling of these novels.

Chapter 7

Marginalized man

Richard Wright, Eka Kurniawan and Sam Selvon are authors from marginalized backgrounds. Even though they are not from the same country and they do not have many similarities, still all of them have an uncanny similarity in their writing styles. All of them are trying to represent the sufferings and the tortures of marginalized people. All of them tried to represent the reality they perceived about their surroundings. While doing so, they may have misrepresented females from time to time.

7.1 Backgrounds of the authors

Richard Wright, as a Black writer, solely focused on the marginalization of Black Americans and wanted to rebel against White supremacy through his writings. His forefathers were enslaved by the Whites. His generation has faced extreme racism by the Whites only for their skin color. He witnessed the severity of racism from his childhood. He shares his experience of seeing “three naked black children looking across the room to the other bed on which lay a man and woman, both naked and black in the sunlight” through the character Thomas (201). This shows the dehumanizing condition in which the Black Americans lived. From this, he wanted to show that privacy was a privilege that was not for these Black Americans as the family had to live in a single congested unhygienic room. On the other side, the White Americans lived the life of luxury. This kind of realistic condition is not present in the literature written by Whites. Wright, as a Black American and an author, wanted to protest against the unequal distribution of wealth and power. He wanted to show the wrongdoings done by the Whites. However, while doing that, he overlooks the characterization of the female characters and used them merely as accessories for his revolt. The action of raping and murdering a white female body is justified in this text as it was done by a marginalized

Black person. This act shows the desired way of revolting of the marginalized author against White supremacy.

Eka Kurniawan, as a writer from a minority background, focused on narrating the Dutch colonization and discussed the suffering inflicted on the Indonesian people. However, in the process, he ended up giving an explicit description of the female and reduced females to their sexual function and reproduction system only. The female characters of this text could not get out of the narrator's marginalization and were represented fixedly. Dewi Ayu, her four daughters, and two granddaughters- all of them are seen suffering from patriarchy in various forms, like incidents of abuse, rape, sexual violence, child marriage, objectification, cheating and so on. They were considered a "cursed family" because of their continuous grief and loss (Kurniawan 477). These female characters are presented as people who only have suffering listed in their fates. This whole novel can be regarded as a novel about the sufferings of Indonesian females. However, as Foster argues in her journal article, male writers give their main focus on victimizing the female characters. She also says that females in male writings are usually portrayed as being in a crisis regarding their sex and otherwise, about losing their children. Here, in *Beauty is a Wound*, almost all of the female characters have been sexually violated. Dewi Ayu was violated for being a prostitute her whole life, Alamanda was raped by her husband numerously, Maya Dewi had to get married at a very young age, Beauty was cheated on by her sister's son, Rengganis was gazed at, raped and murdered by her cousin, and Ai was raped after her death. So, the author of this novel is reducing the lives of the women to their victimization. Also, three among four sisters lose their children because of different incidents; for instance, because of sickness and even murder. So, here every misfortune is related to the lives of the women. Because of living in a marginalized and colonized nation, Kurniawan had this perspective about women. However, he has ignored the incidents that occurred to the colonized men and homosexuals as well.

Also, the female characters of his novel could not get out of the marginalization he witnessed in his land. As an Indonesian, Kurniawan witnessed the oppression women had to face during the colonization, by the cruel regime, the way women were taken into prostitution by force and the way female Marxists were killed. So, it is only natural that the female characters in his writings will reflect these oppressions.

Sem Salvon is also from a marginalized background. He moved from his birthplace Trinidad to London seeking better living conditions and opportunities. However, he did not get to upgrade his social status in London because of being a Caribbean. Even though he used to work as a clerk, he managed to write some masterpieces with his wits. He wrote with authoritative power and wrote about the racism and injustices he witnessed around him. He wrote about the immigrants like him who came to London for the sake of improvement in their lifestyles. He was bold enough to write using creolized English. He wrote about his people and he tried to bring out the struggle his people had to tackle in order to survive in London. His writings highlighted the job crisis, the poor living condition, and the depression of the Caribbean immigrants who went to London for a bright future. He fought against the racism faced by these people through his writings.

7.2 Biased representation

As the authors of these texts were marginalized, their works reflected their biased feelings. Though Mary was an understanding character, she could not become a good character in the eyes of the narrator because of her White skin color. Wright was biased and he could not isolate himself from his race while writing this novel. The justification and sympathizing with a rapist and murderer because of his Black identity shows Wright's biasedness towards Black Americans. However, it cannot be ignored that this kind of attitude can normalize crimes in society. Almost every criminal can have a difficult past; however, it does not change the

crimes they committed. Raping and killing White women can be thought of as an accident that occurred because of the overthinking of Thomas, however, it cannot be a rebellion against the Whites. Because killing an innocent Black woman did not and cannot change the social reality and cannot miraculously end racism. Instead, it can only bring more discrimination against the Blacks and also justifies the racism against the Blacks for being criminals. Again, according to Stuart Hall, Thomas only acted against the stereotypical representation he was bearing. Through “infantilization”, he was being treated as innocent and harmless by Mary (Hall 262). To get out of this stereotype of being childish, he showed his masculine side by raping and murdering her. Hall thinks of the resistance as a natural reaction against infantilization. However, he also says that by resisting the stereotype, the Blacks only match the forbidden fantasy of the Whites; which includes the fantasy of being “aggressive, over-sexed and over-endowed” (263).

On the other hand, women are not only violated in a colonized country, they need to play their roles in taking care of their families and also sometimes revolt. However, from the point of view of the marginalized writer, the female characters of *Beauty is a Wound* are only presented as vulnerable exploited victimized women; who lack proper characterization. Rengganis is portrayed as a naive adolescent, who lacked personality. Her life is seen being revolved around having sex, getting pregnant, and dreaming about marrying the person she loves only. Her interaction with her family and her personal life was ignored. Also, the characterization of Beauty shows that her life could never be complete for looking a little different from others. She is seen being relied on by a male to lead her life. Her characterization also revolves around finding her prince charming. So, the portrayal of females in this novel seems biased and confined to the marginalized background of the author. Kurniawan has reflected the lives of the colonized women in his writing.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, Sam Selvon is a little biased in portraying the White females. They are always being portrayed as negative characters without emotions. Even when they are in love with a Black, while making their Black boyfriend meet their family and even after marrying a Black, the White females of this novel are seen being portrayed as self-centered characters who only exoticize the Black people. From his perception, a White female can never be a good person. Most of the time, the Black females in this novel are portrayed as prostitutes. Their representation is quite biased as they are not even given much background story. Selvon has given effort into portraying the struggle of the male immigrants adjusting to the new life in London. However, the same effort was not given while portraying the female immigrants who came to London for a better lifestyle. Instead, these females have been portrayed in an objectified manner even without mentioning their names. Selvon was biased in terms of focusing only on the discrimination faced by the male immigrants from the Caribbean like him and his friends.

7.3 Double marginalization

Double marginalization is the act of subjugation, discrimination and violence because of both race and gender. The female characters from marginalized positions are seen facing double marginalization. They are seen being represented as inferior to the mainstream community and also inferior to their male counterparts. Not only their gender but their races are also seen gazed upon offensively. “[T]he black mother and brown daughter gazed open-mouthed”, their skin color is seen being mentioned in a line that does not need this clarification (16).

In *Native Son*, Bessie is seen facing double marginalization. She is seen being ignored and neglected by her boyfriend in front of whites because of being a Black woman. As a woman and a Black, she is seen being dominated by Thomas. She has been portrayed as a submissive character who is a victim of discrimination for both her race and gender. She works as a waitress for low pay for being a Black female in America. Also, she is treated as a substitute

for a white woman while making love with her boyfriend Thomas. She is being projected as a character who is worthy of being raped and murdered. As Mary is a white female, she is being considered to be raped by a Black even when she was not raped by Thomas. As a white, Mary receives justice even after death, however, the death of a Black woman Bessie is not even recognized as death. Mary's death is the foundation of this story, on the other hand, Bessie vanishes from the storyline after her death. Bessie is only a character that was needed for the character development of Thomas. She receives this kind of representation because of being a female with Black skin. She becomes the victim of double marginalization by the author and the characters of the novel.

In *Beauty is a Wound*, Dewi Ayu and her friends are forced to become prostitutes because of being from a colonized nation and being a female. They are being dehumanized and reduced to their bodily functions only because of being females from the colonized nation. Being females from the colonies, they do not have a say when they are forced to become the victim of prostitution. They are seen being tortured, violated and raped by the colonizers and also the natives for being native females without authority. They are being portrayed as victims by the author because of being colonized women.

In *The Lonely Londoners*, the Black female characters are double marginalized. This double marginalization can be understood by observing the relationship between Lewis and Agnes. Agnes is a Caribbean female who came to London with her husband for a better career of her husband. She is a character who is present to support her husband. However, she was being suspected by her husband of committing adultery even when she claims that she does not even speak to another man. Agnes becomes a victim of domestic violence regularly because of doing something she never did, "as soon as he get home he starting to beat up Agnes, though the poor girl don't know what for" (Selvon 38). The colleagues of Lewis encouraged him in believing that his wife is cheating on him and he believes the statements

they made for fun and beat his wife constantly for whom he was even able to come to London. He was able to beat her and his colleague Moses was able to comment on her activities only because she is a colored woman. Even they know that if she was a white woman, she would have certain rights for which Lewis would not be able to beat her and Moses would not be able to spread untruth assumptions about her character. While knowing she does not have that authority because of being double marginalized, they are constantly making her pay for a crime she did not commit. Because of being a female and a Black, she is seen as facing discrimination from both the white supremacy and patriarchy. Being a colored woman in London was not enough, she even had to face the cruelty of male dominance.

7.4 Still authoritative

Even though the female characters of these novels are portrayed as subjugated, and victimized, however, they are somehow still given authority over their body. In *Native Son*, though Thomas is convicted for committing the rape and murder of Mary, the readers know that it is Mary who initiated their physical interaction. Though she was drunk during the act, she was in control of her body. She was seen as a female with strong opinions and different points of views about life. However, later on, she does lose control when Thomas becomes violent, however, initially, she had authority over her body. In *Beauty is a Wound*, When Shodancho asks for Alamanda's hands for marriage to Dewi Ayu, she gives the full authority to her daughter. She thinks it is up to her daughter whether she wants to marry this man. She makes a bold claim that "Alamanda is in charge of her own brain and her own body" (Kurniawan 143). In *The Lonely Londoners*, all the female characters are not subjugated and victimized. There is a Black female character named Tanty, who breaks the stereotype of the colored female. She has been portrayed as a very independent, brave and authoritative figure despite being Black and a woman. She has been portrayed as an old wise woman who does not have any experience of living in a place like London. However, she is seen slowly

adopting the place and lifestyle of London. Throughout her character development, she is seen overcoming her fear of riding a tube alone in a new city. She is a strong female character with personality even though she has the potential to be marginalized for her race and gender. Instead, she shows that a colored female can be something other than a prostitute or a housewife.

7.5 Instrument to make people aware about the underprivileged females

These descriptions of the woman's sufferings were not irrelevant in these novels, because through this portrayal many aspects of the marginalized females came to light. The way the Black American females had no privacy even in their own house due to having a shortage of space can be understood through this portrayal. "Turn your heads so I can dress", this yelling of Bigger's mother was crucial in upholding the reality of the living condition of the Black Americans (15). Through the female characters, Wright shows the cruel reality of the lack of privacy of the male and female members of the same family. He shows the way a Black family had to confine themselves in a single room and the way the sons needed to look away while their female family members had "enough clothes to keep them from feeling ashamed" (15). Michel Foucault, in his essay "The Eye of Power", talks about the way space of a house of a working-class family promotes the idea of procreation and heterosexuality. However, these discussed subjects, the Black Americans even do not seem to have that luxury called space that is needed for procreation. Instead, they are being portrayed by Wright as animalistic while procreating before their own children, "the man and woman moving jerkily in a tight embrace, and the three children watching" (201). This reality of lack of space and privacy of the Black Americans could only be exposed through gazing at this family secretly through the character Bigger.

The writing of an author is not limited to the writing itself, however, it also discloses different social and historical phenomena that were going through in the surroundings of that

particular author. For a writer, it is close to impossible to write a piece that has no attachment to his worldview, his background and the society he lives in while writing that piece of literature. One cannot isolate his thoughts from the setting he lives in. A writer who has always witnessed discrimination, exploitation and constant objectification of women in daily life cannot write a piece without objectifying the female characters. For a Black author living in the United States or the United Kingdom, it is impossible to forget the hundreds of years of slavery, racism, lynching, violence and rape that their ancestors and people of their surroundings have and the indirect discrimination they are still facing every day. So, the female characters in the marginalized male writings often contain a truth that is the reality of objectified women of their times. At the same time, a writer who has seen most of his surrounding women being taken into prostitution forcefully or willingly cannot write about independent women who are not bound by any constraints. However, while showing the landscape consisting of exploited women, these writers have often exoticized, objectified and misrepresented the female characters in their pieces. The reason behind the exploited representation of women in their writings can only be their incapability of showing a version of women they never experienced. However, portraying the misfortune of women through literature could have been possible without excessive exoticization and objectification. Instead, the resistance of women against colonized exploitation could have been given more importance in these novels where women have been sexualized more than necessary.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

To sum up, humans cannot be entirely separated from their past. They are bound to make decisions based on their history. Someone who witnesses women as socially inferior and violated all the time, cannot suddenly portray women as independent and free from any violence. His writing is bound to reflect on the condition he experienced. Underprivileged men have witnessed the discrimination, rape and torture of women more and can write more authentically. So, Wright could not ignore his people and write about the goodness in the character of a White female. Though the female characters of his novel were mistreated, still, it may have been acceptable for some readers considering the past of the author. Ignoring the marginalization and biasedness, *Beauty is a Wound* is a feminist novel. Here, Dewi Ayu wanted to abandon her child and even cursed her child only to save her from the grasp of the patriarchy. This novel conveys the condition of women in a colonized nation. At the same time, Selvon could not see the love in the relationship between a Black male and a white female without any intention in this racist world. In the end, in this paper, among the visual pleasure, maintaining the stereotypes, resistance from the colonized mentality and the marginalized condition of the writers; the gaze of the marginalized author have been found as the reasons for their fixed and biased perception of women.

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