

**EXISTENTIALIST ANGST AND SUICIDAL
BEHAVIOUR: A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF
*DRINKING FROM A BITTER CUP AND THIRTEEN
REASONS WHY***

By

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NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MODERN LANGUAGES ISLAMABAD

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**Existentialist Angst and Suicidal Behaviour: A Psychoanalytic Study
of *Drinking From A Bitter Cup* and *Thirteen Reasons Why***

By

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: Existentialist Angst and Suicidal Behaviour: A Psychoanalytic Study of Brown's *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* and Asher's *Thirteen Reason Why*

This study poses objectives that include the exploring of the theme of existentialist angst and suicide, possible effects of interpersonal relations, social norms and customs on suicidal behaviour and to identify the insinuations of suicidal behaviour in the selected texts of *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* (2013) and *Thirteen Reasons Why* (2007). Suicide, as portrayed in the selected texts, can be seen as a product of Existentialist Angst combined with interpersonal reasons like thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness. The textual analyses are helped by the notion of Existentialism and Thomas Joiner's Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour specifically to trace out the hidden motifs behind individual's suicidal behaviour. According to Joiner a suicidal individual acquires the ability to enact lethal self-injury after going through several stages of interpersonal frustrations. The precepts of existentialism also assisted in discovering and analyzing the essence of one's existence as well as the possibility of choice of non-existence. Whereas, psychoanalysis, as a literary approach, probed into the characters' concealed cognitive activities. The study revealed that Existentialist Angst leads main characters to commit suicide. Further it has been found out that suicidal characters experience existentialist angst, thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness before suicide. Research is concluded with Joiner's remedy i.e. "acting right" to curtail suicidal behavior and summing up of all the findings. The study is significant for its interdisciplinary nature as well as its in depth analysis of human psyche exhibited by the characters and their behaviours in their respective societies.

Key Terms: Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal Behaviour (ITSB), Psychoanalysis, Suicide, Existentialist Angst, Thwarted Belongingness, Perceived Burdensomeness, Acting Right with suicides.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my wife, Maryam and daughter Kashaf as their appealing presence and confidence in me kept me going despite extremely unfavorable circumstances.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Literature is not merely an imitation of life but also helps the readers to see beyond the limits of immediate horizons. Therefore, studying suicidal behaviour in literature not only helps to establish an understanding about why people commit suicide but also facilitates to educate that how it can be minimized. Suicide, since time unknown, has had an essential existence in every ethnicity around the globe and across the history, literature and even the literary authors are no exceptions. A considerable number of literary figures, including poets, novelists, historians etc. committed suicide, beside portrayal of suicides in fiction.

Suicide can be a contagious phenomenon. For instance “Copycat” suicides are seen in local clusters from time to time. A copycat suicide is defined as an emulation of another suicide that the person attempting suicide knows about either from local knowledge or due to accounts or depictions of the original suicide on television and in other media. *Thirteen Reasons Why* and *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* are not the first works of fiction that portray suicides. Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet* also presents suicide in a romantic manner. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, released in 1774, describes the pain and heartache experienced by Werther because of his affection for Charlotte, who eventually married Albert, Werther’s friend. Unable to cope, Werther decides that one of them must die and ends up shooting himself with Albert’s pistol. It was widely believed that von Goethe’s work led to a wave of young men deciding to end their lives all over Europe, many of whom were dressed in the same clothing as von Goethe’s description of Werther and using similar pistols. Counteracting the Werther Effect is the Papageno Effect. It takes its name from the character, Papageno in

Mozart's Opera *The Magic Flute*. Papageno tries to hang himself after he's convinced that he will never win over his love, Papagena. He is persuaded, though, by three child-spirits not to end his life.

Suicide is generally defined in more or less the same words. It is in its causes that delineates the depth of field of study. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, definition of suicide is: -

1a: the act or an instance of taking one's own life voluntarily and intentionally.

b: ruin of one's own interests.

2: one that commits or attempts suicide.

Farlex Partner Medical Dictionary defines suicide as, "The act of taking one's own life". Similarly in Darland's Medical Dictionary for Health Consumers puts suicide as, "the taking of one's own life". The American Heritage Medical Dictionary by Houghton Mifflin company defines suicide as, "the act or an instance of intentionally killing oneself". However Mosby's Medical Dictionary 9th Edition steps forward and presents Etymology of the word suicide as "sui, of oneself and caedese to kill", thus meaning the intentional killing of one's own self. It further defines "A person who commits or attempts self-destruction". It further explains that "Early signs of suicidal intent include depression; expressions of guilt, tensions and agitation, insomnia, loss of weight and appetite; neglect of personal appearance; giving away of personal or valued possessions; and direct or indirect threats to commit suicide". It is pertinent to mention here that Mosby's Dictionary claims depression as the primary and the most ample reason of suicide listing it as number one. Similarly Collins Dictionary of Medicine after defining suicide as, "Intentional self-killing," also claims that "Depression is the commonest cause of suicide and severely depressed people are always at risk" (The Free Dictionary).

Suicide attempts range from well-planned attempts to poorly planned attempts. Well-planned attempts involve highly lethal methods that include usage

of guns, dangerous poisons, jumping off high places, like hills, buildings, bridges etc or throwing oneself in front of trains or subway cars. Poorly planned attempts include less lethal methods like medication over doses cutting of wrists etc. Such suicides that involve less lethal methods to kill are sometimes referred as suicide-gestures and pseudocides. A history of suicide gestures and pseudocides foreshadow the possibility of well-planned attempt of suicide in future involving highly lethal methods that can cause serious threat to life. It is also worth highlighting that suicide gestures and pseudocides should never be taken as forms of attention seeking, rather they are a cue to psychological disease. In more professional tone it is known as a state of psychiatric emergency leading an individual to commit suicide.

Suicide studies are commonly delimited to psychological understanding of a person who commits suicide. However a suicide leaves behind the friends and family of the deceased to deal with the aftermath. Along with the common grief entailed by natural deaths the people around suicide victims have to suffer the feelings of guilt and shame as well. The research in hand goes a step ahead, and after the detailed psychoanalysis of the characters that commit suicide in light of the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour by Dr. Thomas Joiner, the research further looks into the characters that are affected by these suicide and try to find out the possibility of committing suicide.

The ultimate tragedy behind suicide is that in most of the cases, such lethal self-killings are potentially preventable yet due to lack of knowledge they cannot be prevented. It is proved from the study of suicidal case-files that most of the people who attempt suicide afterwards change their minds, if they are helped well in time during their immediate crises. Dr. Richard Seiden, a specialist in treating survivors of suicide attempts, comes up with a theory that after the crises, 90 days period is more important in which there is a high risk of committing suicide. Some potential suicidal individuals even change their minds during the actual suicide attempt. For instance some survivors who attempted suicide via throwing themselves off the Golden Gate Bridge later on told interviewers that they regretted their action even as they were falling and they were actually grateful that they survived.

It is interesting for researchers to probe into the minds of characters and find out psychological motifs behind actions. Psychoanalysis has been deemed appropriate to study the psyche of the characters as it connects psychology with literature. Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour, by Dr. Thomas Joiner, Clinical Psychologist and a professor of Psychology at Florida State University, USA, has been selected for application on. *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* (2013) and *Thirteen Reasons Why* (2007).

1.1 Synopsis of *Drinking From A Bitter Cup*

The first novel that has been selected to be analysed in the context of suicide is *Drinking from a Bitter Cup* written by Angela Jackson Brown. The novel starts with the suicide of Rose, the mother of the protagonist Sylvia Butler. Though the plot of the novel develops on the basis of her suicide, however little is told about her character in the beginning of the novel. It is in the course of the novel that the reader finds out the reasons of Rose's suicide in the life of Sylvia. The story revolves around Sylvia Butler, who, at the time of her mother's suicide, is 10 years old. Young Sylvia has to endure so many pains and sufferings after the death of her mother. She has to live with her father who is a complete stranger to her. He happens to be a caring person but he also dies after some time, and she is left alone to face the hardships of life all by herself. She is constantly maltreated by her step-mother. Her pain and anguish reach at climax when she is sexually abused and raped by Uncle Charles.

Sylvia Butler is not only the protagonist but also the narrator of the novel. Story starts from 1978, when Sylvia becomes 10 years old and her mother comments suicide so the suicide of Rose is the first brick that starts building the plot. Due to the suicide of Rose, Sylvia's life starts changing. She starts living with her father. She experiences alienation and thwarted sense of belongingness as she is not warmly welcomed there by her step mother. Her father dies soon, and right from the night of his death she is being child abused by Uncle Charles who is at the same time her tormentor as well as a shelter from others. She lives in such mayhem and absurdity and then she is enrolled in High School where she meets Drew. Uncle Charles cannot tolerate this relation and builds so

much grudge that drives him insane. He tries to kill both Sylvia and Drew. She hardly escapes from him. However at the end she is left with no one again but a baby in her belly.

Keeping in view the ending of the novel, forgetting the names of characters and focusing on the given circumstances, let us compare the beginning with the ending. All through the novel, reader can relate Sylvia's life with the life of Rose. As per initial information provided in the start of the novel we know that Rose has also spent her life without having any blood relation. Moreover she is also ill-treated by the society. Though she has tried her best to spend a happy life with Sylvia however she fails and commits suicide. Here it must be kept in mind that Sylvia is an illegitimate child.

The novel ends on a stage when again a young girl having no blood relation is pregnant and the baby in her belly is illegitimate. She has no one to take care of her, yet she is looking forward to provide better future to baby. At the start of the novel Rose is a person that Sylvia will become after 10 years. Similarly at the end of the novel Sylvia is what ten years ago Rose was. It can also be seen as Sylvia's journey from awkward girl to a confident young woman.

Psychoanalysis can be applied on these two characters Rose & Sylvia. Rose, in the beginning of the novel, is going through post-traumatic stress disorder and has become a paranoid, but the traumas that she has suffered in her life are rarely disclosed. Throughout the course of the novel parallels can be drawn between the post-traumatic stage of Rose and traumatic life of Sylvia. Sylvia who has to endure all those traumas that can lead an individual to commit suicide like death of her mother, then the death of her father, feelings of solitude, child abuse, sexual abuse and harassment, insult and all of them in such a young age. Though the past of Rose and future of Sylvia is not revealed in the novel yet two presents are available and the comparison of them makes sense that the future of Sylvia is going to be suicidal just like her mother. This might be due to Repetition Compulsion as conceptualized by Sigmund Freud, that Sylvia herself is making such circumstances to resurface the traumas and reface them. However detailed

analysis would be discussed in the content chapters that how the history would repeat itself.

1.2 Synopsis of *Thirteen Reasons Why*

Thirteen Reasons Why written by Jay Asher, is the second novel that has been selected to be analysed in the light of Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour. It is the story of a young girl named Hannah Baker, who commits suicide after being a victim of social mockery and disgust. The novel begins when the narrator Clay Jensen finds seven audio tapes in a parcel. These seven tapes contain thirteen stories from her class fellow Hannah. These thirteen stories basically bring forth thirteen reasons of her suicide. Hannah in the start of the first audio tape accuses her listeners for her death. She directs that, after listening these tapes, each person must forward the tapes to the next person on the list. She further threatens that if any person fails to pass along the audio tapes, a copy of these recordings will be made public. This additional copy has been given to another class fellow with the request to spy the listeners and make it public if anyone on the list fails to forward it. The narrative of the novel moves back and forth in time and stories of Hannah are mingled with the thoughts of Clay i.e. the narrator of the novel.

In thirteen stories Hannah tells thirteen reasons, as to why she is going to commit suicide, accusing twelve persons for this act. First person is Justin Foley her class fellow and first kiss. Justin is alleged twice, in the first tape due to spreading rumors exaggerating the kiss to other physical interactions and in the tenth story he appears back when he allows Bryce Walker to have sex with Jessica, during her unconsciousness. They however do not know that Hannah is somehow witnessing this criminal act. Therefore, Justin happens to be culprit in two of the stories. In the second story, or the second reason of her suicide Hannah accuses Alex Standall, who arranges a voting between Hannah and Jessica, that ends on labeling Hannah as “the best ass of the Freshman Class”. This act triggers feelings of animosity in Jessica against Hannah. Jessica has been her best pal ever since she joined school. Jessica Davies is the third person, or the third reason of her suicide, who could not tolerate the voting and gets so upset that she ends up hitting Hannah. Fourth name that appears on the list is of Tyler Dawn, Hannah calls him Peeping

Tom as he allegedly takes pictures of Hannah through her window making her insecure in her own house. Fifth person is Courtney Crimson, a faux sort of girl having an artificial attitude. Courtney spreads rumors that Hannah keeps sex toys in her bedroom. Sixth on list is Marcus, who is matched up with Hannah on a Valentine's Day survey, however he on the first date makes a move on her which appears to be a guys' bet as there reveals to be a witness of his advancements.

Seventh name on list is Zach Dempsey who first attempts to comfort her by sympathetic words. When Hannah ignores him he starts stealing the notes of encouragement left for Hannah by her class fellows in her Peer Communication class. Ryan Shaver takes the eighth place on the list, Hannah trusts him yet he steals a personal poem of her and gets it published which entails further ridicule for Hannah. Clay the narrator finds himself at S. No.9 of the list. Though he has not done any harm to Hannah and once he tries to share his feelings for her and they then share a kiss too. However when she desperately needs him he remains absent instead of standing by her. She only complains his indifference towards miseries of her life. As it has been mentioned earlier that Justin Foley's name is twice on the list on number 1 and 10. Eleventh reason of Hannah's suicide is Jenny Kurtz who offers Hannah a ride home, but knocks down a stop sign. Hannah asks her to report about stop sign but she refuses to report which later on causes a fatal accident. Next name on the list is Bryce Walker, who rapes Jessica and from then Hannah starts hating him. The reason of his name on the list is a party night when Hannah is in extreme depression and desperately needs a refuge. Bryce starts touching Hannah in a hot tub, Hannah lets him do whatever he wants, this proves to be a conclusive episode and she becomes resolute in her decision to commit suicide. The last name on the list is Mr. Porter, Hannah's guidance counsellor. Hannah seeks his help and even expresses her intention to commit suicide yet he lets her leave his office without providing any help. While listening to the audiotapes, Clay travels on the City Bus where he meets Skye Miller, his middle school crush. Though Skye seems interested to converse but Clay deliberately ignores her. However at the end of the novel Clay sees Skye at School and associates her with Hannah, he then walks towards her saying her name.

It is evident from the reading of these novels that there are ample opportunities to study and understand the causes and effects of suicidal behaviour. These novels would provide considerable food for thought not only to understand the socio-psycho reasons behind suicidal behaviour but will also help find the meaning of life and that of death in the pointless absurdity and utter chaos, this way the existentialist angst that leads to suicidal behaviour is also addressed in the research. Besides the research is going to point out the indications of people who are at a risk of committing suicide. Therefore, this research can be seen on various levels having multi-dimensions. Firstly the theme of suicide is explored through lens of existentialism, selected texts are analysed (as subject matter) and evidences are gathered that correlate existentialist angst with suicidal behaviour. Secondly both the novels are psychoanalysed in the light of interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour. The research is concluded in the last chapter.

1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Existentialism is the pursuit to explore the meaning of life; it turns into existentialist angst when the pursuit leads to suffering, pain, anguish and most importantly suicide. At the same time there are interpersonal reasons behind suicidal behaviour. Both, existentialist angst and interpersonal bases of suicidal tendency are evident in the selected texts by Angela Jackson's *Drinking From A Bitter Cup* (2013) and Jay Asher's *Thirteen Reasons Why* (2007).

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Studying suicidal behaviour through literature may help in understanding and overcoming the growing rate of suicide through acting right especially among youth all over the world. The research is interdisciplinary as it paves its way not only through literary approach but also via researches and approaches from sociology and psychology. As the delimited texts and theory are contemporary, therefore, this research can be considered as a significant inclusion in literary criticism.

1.5 DELIMITATION

The study has been delimited to the theme of suicide in *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* by Angela Jackson Brown and *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher. For analysis, the researcher has applied the theoretical framework formulated by Dr. Thomas Joiner on the texts. In addition to this psychological theory, existentialists point of view is also taken under consideration to provide cross references and to establish an integral nexus among sociological and psychological reasons behind suicide.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Since the research in hand intends to investigate the reasons of suicidal behaviour, this research has the following aims and objectives:

- To trace out the theme of existentialist angst behind the suicidal behaviour
- To investigate into interpersonal relations that can cause suicidal behaviour
- To identify the insinuations of suicidal behaviour in the persons who are at a risk of terminating their lives

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is an effort to elaborate socio-psycho nature of suicidal behaviour. The research posits the following queries:

- To what extent does the existential angst result in lethal self-injury in the selected texts?
- How far do the psycho-social aspects lead the characters of the selected texts to commit suicide?
- How do the characters acquire the ability to enact lethal self-injury in the selected texts?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The word associated with suicide is “commit” i.e. to commit suicide, just like to commit a criminal offence. Existentialist philosophers and even prior to them the religious scholars labelled suicide as some sort of a punishment of failed relationship with God. Existentialist stepped ahead and further inquired the lifelong quest of individuals to find meaning in life that leads to existentialist angst, that angst finally results in either philosophical suicide or physical suicide. In both of the cases one is forced to stop wondering the meaning of one’s life, putting all burden and alleging the chaos, nothingness and absurdity as the base of suicides.

Much has been worked out on the Freudian psychoanalysis, and so much of it has been applied on literary texts in its true essence. One may always find the great deal of researches carried on literature in light of Freudian psychoanalysis, on web and in libraries worldwide. One cannot mitigate the importance of Freudian share both in Psychology as well as Literature in any way. Nevertheless, keeping in view the intent of the research in hand, Freudian psychoanalysis does not suffice to fully develop the required magnitude of understanding regarding suicidal behaviour. To acquire the obligatory understanding with respect to suicidal behaviour in light of Dr. Thomas Joiner’s Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour and establishing its pioneering application of literature for the first time, it is indispensable to review the literature and literary criticism from Freudian perspective to the extent where the researcher has tried to include the Interpersonal Theory of suicidal behaviour by

Dr. Thomas Joiner, in the canon of literary criticism. The researcher, in the present chapter of literature review, will not only review the literary linking pavement from Freud to Joiner, but all those secondary sources shall also be appraised that are connected with the research in hand.

2.1 Suicides in Fiction: Review of literature from suicidal context

The theme of suicide has been present in literature even in the literary writings of ancient Greek times for instance the suicide of Dido in Virgil's *Aeniad* which is often compared to *Hamlet*. Shakespeare's works also portray a number of suicides. In the play *Hamlet* the character of Danish Prince Hamlet keeps on considering whether he should commit suicide or not, his famous soliloquy "To be or not to be" (Shakespeare 78) is representation of his inner conflict. In the same play character of Ophelia drowns herself in the river and commits suicide. Among all the suicides portrayed in Shakespearian plays, suicide of young lovers Romeo and Juliet in the last scene of *Romeo and Juliet* stands the most tragic. Romeo misconceives Juliet's death and drinks the fatal potion and commits suicide, Juliet being awake from the anaesthetic doze finds Romeo dead and stabs herself with the dagger of Romeo. There are a number of suicides in *Julius Ceasar* as well. Brutus and Cassius plot against Julius Ceasar and murder him. After losing the battle with Antony and Octavius they both commit suicide. In the same play Portia, wife of Brutus knowing that her husband would be defeated, too commits suicide in her house in Rome. Just like *Romeo and Juliet* the two main characters of Shakespeare's play *Antony and Cleopatra* also commit suicide. Mark Antony, the hero of the play asks his fellow Eros to kill him, as he hears about Cleopatra's death. Eros instead of killing Mark Antony, kills himself. Antony commits suicide in Roman way and falls on his own sword. Cleopatra when comes to know about death of Mark Antony decides to kill herself as well, she chooses the deadly venom of two asps to enact lethal self injury that results in her death. In *King Lear* there is another notable suicide, Goneril the wicked sister who plots nefarious schemes against her father, sister and even her husband commits suicide once her plots are exposed. In *Macbeth* lady Macbeth commits suicide. Othello, the protagonist of Shakespeare's play *Othello* commits suicide when he learns

that he has inequitably murdered his wife, Desdemona, in false doubt of adultery. He stabs his chest with a dagger and bleeds to death beside the dead body of Desdemona.

The theme of suicide exists from ancient Classics to Shakespeare and from Shakespeare to modern, post modern and the most recent works of literature. *Madam Bovary* (1856) by Flaubert is a masterpiece that needs no introduction. The illustrious character of Madam Bovary, the protagonist of the novel commits suicide. She is depicted as a woman whose desires and ambitions are far above the range of her sources not only in lifestyle but in romance as well. She involves herself in many love affairs and cheats on her husband who loves her, Bovary's suicide entails the death of her husband as well and destitution of their daughter. The theme of suicide is explored not only from the suicidal individual's perspective but also the effect of the suicide on the people who are left behind.

Nobel Laureate Leo Tolstoy's famous novel *Anna Karenina* (1877) also deals with the theme of suicide. Anna Karenina the protagonist of the novel struggles throughout her life being a woman in society dominated by men. She loves Vronsky too much, Vronsky returns her affections and they spend time filled with love with each other. However she soon realizes that Vronsky has affairs with other women as well. In the end of novel, believing that she can only escape her frustrations and failures by ending her life, she finds no place for her in life and finally jumps in front of moving train and commits suicide. Her suicide also leaves number of questions on the nineteenth century Russian society objecting the roles society bestows to its male and female members.

Appointment in Samarra (1934) by John O' Hara is another novel with a dominant theme of suicide in it. The Protagonist of the novel, Julian English who happens to be a rich car dealer goes through various social and psychological traumas and finally decides to end his life, finding no meaning of life. *The Heart of the Matter* (1948) by Graham Greene, is another novel wherein the theme of suicide is explored. However in this novel, theme of suicide is explored from the catholic point of view. The protagonist of the novel Major Scobie kills himself after a detailed internal religious quest.

History of literature is not only thick with the theme of suicide in fiction containing suicides of fictional characters but some of famous authors also committed suicide. Whether they wrote about suicide under the influence of their suicidal instinct or they committed suicide being impressed by their own writings that is another debate and requires volumes to be discussed. However as far as the research in hand is concerned a brief description of some of those authors is added to highlight the importance of the theme of suicide in fiction as well as in real life literature. There are a number of authors who have committed suicide but the first name that comes to mind while considering the suicides of authors, is Sylvia Plath (1932-63). She is one of those American poets who achieved popularity and fame in her life, rather considerable short life. Though always loved by her readers and people around her, she however led a life full of depression. She has often indicated her inclination towards death in her works, for instance, in *The Bell Jar* (1963) she adores death that death must be so beautiful, and to lie down beneath the soft brown earth having green grass over one's head, listening to silence, having not even a single thought of yesterday or tomorrow, forgetting time, forgiving life, and being at peace. This is her definition of death and from this poetic description she seems to have been half in love with the easeful death like John Keats. Suicide of Sylvia Plath has been so consequential that later on in 2001 the term "Sylvia Plath Effect" was coined by James C. Kaufman. This can be defined as a phenomenon that poets, particularly female poets, are comparatively more prone to mental illness than other creative writers.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) is another famous writer who committed suicide. She decided to end her life after completing the manuscript of her last novel *Between the Acts*, she filled the pockets of her overcoat with stones and drowned herself in the river. John Berryman (1914-1972) one of the most celebrated American poet and writer also struggled with depression throughout his life. He also decided to end his life by drowning, in 1972 he walked to Washington Avenue Bridge and jumped out onto the frozen bank of Mississippi River, just before jumping he waved to the passerby as if saying goodbye to them. Similarly David Foster Wallace (1962-2008) a modern American fictional and non-fictional writer committed suicide. He suffered from severe depression all his life. In 2008 just after completing his manuscript of *The Pale King* he hung himself in his house.

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) is a name that requires no introduction, one of America's most celebrated novelists having so many best sellers. Suicide of Ernest Hemingway is strange in so many ways as it can be studied on various perspectives. His father committed suicide, his brother and his sister also committed suicides. However most of his characters deny the possibility of suicide even in the worst scenarios, like Santiago from *The Old Man and The Sea* and Robert Jordan from *For Whom The Bell Tolls*. They fight the hardships till the last breath and defy death itself. Life of Hemingway also proves the strength of him that match to his characters, he has fought both the World War I and II, and secured a number of medals. He has been a good boxer, fisherman, hunter and of course the Nobel Prize Laureate. Yet in the last days of his life, he was obsessed with the idea that federal agents are after him, he committed suicide by shooting himself. Hunter S. Thompson (1937-2005) also committed suicide by shooting himself. He shot himself in front of typewriter, with "Feb 22' 05" "Counselor" typed on a paper in it. However his official suicide note addressed to his wife written four days before his suicide seems like a riddle. The main thing that is highlighted from that is, he wanted a life not more than fifty years, and killing himself in age sixty seven seems like too late. He might be in a wish to take control on life itself.

2.2 Psychoanalysis and suicidology

Keith Green and Jill LeBihan in their book *Critical Theory & Practice* rightly observed that although psychoanalysis may not be predominantly a literary practice, it is rather a clinical and therapeutic methodology (Green 143). Nonetheless, an extended extensive relation, which is multifaceted with the practices of literature, is always observably present regarding suppositions that we deduce about what makes folks write and how that writing affects its readers. Typically a psychoanalyst seeks the answer to the question of what is being subjected to the analytic process, and what repressed meaning can be hoped for to uncover. Shoshana Felman explained that we "normally tend to see psychoanalysis as the active practice performed upon the passive text" (Green 143). According to Felman, "while literature is considered as a body of language

– to be interpreted – psychoanalysis is considered as a body of knowledge, whose competence is called upon to interpret” (Green 143). She suggests that the structure of the relationships between the critic, the text and the writer can be discussed in relation to the structure of relationships between the analyst and patient. Thus psychoanalysis may be exercised as a determining, defining and decisive model.

This operational association between psychoanalysis and literature is not the lone link amid the two discourses. A number of significantly valuable ideas and theories of psychoanalysis are expressed and explained by virtue of their reference to classical myths and classical works of literature. Many key concepts of psychoanalysis are references to literature, using literary ‘proper’ names – names of fictional characters like Oedipus complex, Narcissism or of historical authors like masochism and sadism. Literature, in other words, is the language which psychoanalysis uses in order to designate names to its concepts. Modern approaches to suicide study the classical suicides, for instance suicides of Cato and that of Socrates, as their primary source of inquiry. Long term evolution of the practice of suicide and discourse about it has always been neglected. Late in the twentieth century Philippe Aries’ a French Medievalist and historian, famous for his seminal work *L’Homme devant la mort* (The history of attitudes to death and dying, published in 1977) saw death as a social construction. It is pertinent to mention that despite having a volume over 600 pages he scarcely mentions about suicides. On the other hand Richard Charles Cobb, a British historian and professor at Oxford University, in his work *Death in Paris* published in 1978 devoted considerable attention to the theme of suicide. On the basis of records of a morgue that received victims of violent death, he reconstructs suicide patterns that he later on explicates in terms of the circumstances and habits of city’s poor. Although he remains rigid regarding his opinion that suicide is the most private, personal and impervious human act yet he refrains from theorizing the motives of individual suicides.

2.3. Review of psychoanalysis

Right after acceptance of psychoanalysis as a critical theory, its appliance augmented and many sub-fields of psychoanalysis with respect to interpretation of literature emerged. Soon psychological theoretical works such as Sigmund Freud became literary critics' gears to interpret literature. According to Lionel Trilling in *The Liberal Imagination*, as quoted by Ann B. Dobie in the *Theory into Practice* Freud has afforded us the insight of the inner elements of human nature and the antagonism between the intro and extro nature of human being (Dobie 61).

Another aspect of Freud's Psychoanalysis, comparatively more relevant to this research, is the concept of libido. Libido is energy drive or life force, associated with sexual desire. It has 3 stages to focus, the oral, the anal and the phallic. The libido, in the individual is part of a more generalized drive which the late Freud called Eros which roughly means the life instinct. In his theory of instinct Freud uses another term i.e. libido (sexual urge or desire) with reference to three stages oral, anal and phallic. According to Freud Libido never cease completely rather it transforms from oneself (narcism) to other objects of world. Later on Freud used the word Eros (love) for libido (Habib 557).The opposite of which is Thanatos the Greek word for death, which roughly means the death instinct.

Much has been worked out on the Conscious-Unconscious relationship of mind, the three part module of psyche, id-ego-superego, and the libido i.e. the sexual drive. This research primarily concerns with Eros and Thanatos i.e. the life and death instinct. Suicide, attempt of suicide and desire for suicide can be seen as a constant competition / epic war between Eros and Thanatos.

Carl Jung's share in establishing the psychoanalysis may not be as much illustrious as that of Freud but to the extent that the present research is concerned Jung's psychoanalysis is comparatively more relevant and close to the subject. Carl Jung (1875-1961), Swiss Psychiatrist, was once apprentice of Freud but

later on developed his own philosophy, nonetheless based upon the ideas of Freud. Where Freud based his work on individual's unconscious, Jung stepped ahead and formed his theory of Collective Unconscious, which is an important contribution to psychoanalysis. According to Jung, human psyche is made of three parts, Personal Conscious, Personal Unconscious and Collective Unconscious. Personal Conscious means a state of awareness about the present, understanding of the immediate situation and circumstances, whereas Personal Unconscious is the past, when one experiences Personal Conscious, it becomes the part of Personal Unconscious which may be considered as store room of the Personal Conscious. Collective Unconscious is in the bottom of human psyche, that stores knowledge, experiences, and images of the human race (Dobie 62). Collective Unconscious is like ancestral reminiscence which is communal and primordial. Jung views this psychic life as the intellect of our antediluvian antecedents, their modus operandi and modus vivendi, their understanding of life, the way they ever thought and felt, their conception of this world and life in it, the life of gods and human beings. Human psyche cannot be exclusively and individually acquired, as it is inherited.

As the Freudian Psychoanalysis forms the base of Unconscious but lacks the specific theoretical apparatus to thoroughly study the theme of suicide and remains only on individual level of human psyche, similarly Jung's contribution to psychoanalysis in form of Collective Unconscious paves the way further and brings the researcher on collective ground, where the roots of even some personal and conscious acts lie deep down in collective social unconscious.

The final contribution to psychoanalysis that is relevant to this research is French Psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's interpretation of Freud in light of the ideas of structuralists and poststructuralists theories, which may be called a renaissance of Freudian psychoanalysis (Dobie 67). Lacan began psychoanalysis focusing unconscious with substantial variance from Freudian School of thought. Lacan's works are considered to be complicated, advanced which are not easily understood, even labelled as abstruse and perplexing being influenced by Claude

Levi Strauss and Ferdinand de Saussure. Lacan's psychoanalysis in its theories and practices were so much idiosyncratic from his predecessors and contemporary psychoanalysts that he was ousted out of International Psychoanalytical Association. Freed from prototypical impressions Lacan formed a new psychoanalytic society with like-minded fellows and developed a new theory independent of conventional criticism. He elucidated his theory in *Ecrits*. Lacan was interested in understanding the conduct of the conscious by virtue of understanding unconscious, he tried to define the unconscious as the core of one's being. This propensity shook the Freudian concept of the unconscious as a force that determines our actions and beliefs it further deteriorates the decades long epitome that human beings can control their own destinies. The purpose of the Freudian psychoanalysis was to uncover the clandestine cravings of the unconscious and bring them in conscious to be controlled. Whereas Lacan asserted that the ego cannot supersede the course of unconscious for the mere assumption that the "ego, the I self is only an illusion produced by the unconscious" (Dobie 68). It was a monumental challenge to our sense of who we are. It is pretty pertinent to mention over here that at this point Psychoanalysis finds its border shared with existentialist angst. Another important aspect of Lacan's psychoanalysis is the assertion that "Unconscious is structured like language (Lacan 12). It is not like Freudian frenzied unconscious full of repressed desires and wishes. Saussure, proclaimed that relationship between a word and a physical object is arbitrary which is not inherent and that is maintained by convention. He spotted that signifier and signified are two parts of a Sign. Lacan, on the other hand, observed that in the unconscious there are only signifiers that refer to other signifiers. Every signifier has some meaning just due to the fact that other signifiers have different meanings. Unlike language there is no objective signified. Such nonexistence of signified object deprives the whole system of stability. That means the unconscious is like a perpetually progressing procession of signifiers, with nothing to prevent its fluctuations and floodings in forever adaptations of meanings. According to Lacan, the rudiments of unconscious are all signifiers having no point of reference afar outside itself

which makes unconscious unstable. An unstable unconscious means an unstable self, ego, personality or character, whatsoever is the outcome. As the only objective, concrete or Real thing i.e. signified is missing or at least beyond our capacity to comprehend. Therefore, all we could have of our unconscious is only the conceptualized reality. Lacan denotes this missing object as *objet petit a* “object small a,” where ‘a’ is abbreviation for French *autre*, the meaning “other”. It is also worth mentioning here that *objet petit a* also relates to whatever sets oneself in contact with the one’s repressed desire for that lost object (Tyson 28).

Tyson in *Critical Theory Today* illustrates the *objet petit a* with several examples. For instance, he explains it referring from *Remembrance of Things Past* by Marcel Proust, wherein the narrator finds the taste of small teacake that he eats a long time after his childhood, and gets driven away with the memories of the past, when he used to have this teacake quite often. So the teacake can be called the *objet petit a* for the narrator. Similarly for the protagonist *Jay Gatsby* in *The Great Gatsby*, the green light at the end of Daisy’s dock is *objet petit a* as it not merely a green light it is rather a promise of reunion with the Daisy, and the return to his innocent youth (Tyson 29). Lacan interprets the Freudian concept of dreams and their relationship with unconscious in his own way. For Freud dreams have two elements, the condensation and the displacement. Lacan identifies these two with literary devices i.e. Metaphor and Metonymy, as his psychoanalysis of unconscious rests on the assumption that it is structured like a language. According to Lacan, Condensation just like Metaphor stocks so many meanings for a single image. On the same footing, displacement like metonymy utilizes one aspect of a personality or experience to denote to the entire body of art. For Lacan, use of other linguistic and literary devices by Sigmund Freud for the purpose of psychoanalysis is further evidence of the claim of Lacan. (Dobie 69)

It must again be noticed here that in all the given examples in favour of the Lacan’s claim that the unconscious is structured like a language, the quintessential factor is loss or lack. Something is always replaced by another and

is finally hard-pressed into the background i.e. from Conscious to Unconscious. Once lost in the realm of unconscious it will always be pursued and will seldom be found. Therefore, as in the *Mirror Stage as formative of the Function* Lacan claims that in infancy child forms an Imaginary Order by which he means the world of images, this Order is not the world of imagination it is rather the world of perception (Tyson 27). This Imaginary Order is ideal or what may be called utopian where the child is one with its mother, not as a segment but as a whole. According to Lacan, when the child starts acquisitioning the language, he enters into the world of Symbolic Order. The language for the very first time introduces the symbolic system of significance or meaning making out of symbols, rather more appropriately it can be called that first introduction to the meanings made for us. The most preliminary meanings that are forced upon child are the concept of 'I' i.e. self, which means that I am a separate being, an individual, and I am 'me' not you nor anyone else. After that separation from the whole, 'I' is assigned further meanings of having gender, I am a boy not a girl or vice versa. This way it can be looked as child's entry into the Symbolic Order entails the experience of parting from others, and the most major separation is the separation from the most cherished union of child with its mother throughout the phase of Imaginary Order. Lacan views that this separation from being one with mother and the Imaginary Order causes the gravest experience of loss, and this sense of loss happens to haunt the human being throughout their lives. Hence entry into the and acceptance of the Symbolic Order, one enters into a world of loss and lack, an exodus from the Imaginary Order i.e. a world of delusion and deception about wholeness, fulfilment and control. One has to live in a world where Others have needs, desires and rights which will not let us attend out own needs, desires and even the fears. As Tyson sums up the Symbolic Order having "no more illusions of sustained fulfilment, no more comforting fantasy of complete control. This new world is one in which there are rules we must obey and restrictions by which we must abide." (Tyson 30)

Aforementioned renowned psychoanalysts like Freud, Jung and Lacan have greatly contributed in the development of psychoanalytical approach, still

the theme of suicide on a larger scale of social and interpersonal relations has to be discussed at length. So far the researcher has reviewed the relevant literature and brought the development of psychoanalysis to the extent where it directly involves the philosophical underpinnings of Existentialism.

2.4 Existentialist angst and the theme of suicide

As is evident from the earlier review of psychoanalysis that despite its practicality and efficacy in understanding of even extremely obscure aspects of unconscious yet there are no traces available for its direct application on the subject of suicidal behaviour as a matter of a social and interpersonal catastrophe. Prior to proceeding towards existentialist aspects of suicidal behaviour it must be kept in mind that existentialism may be seen as a philosophical approach that cannot be applied as a theoretical framework or a research methodology, for the purpose every researcher has to turn toward any standard literary framework like psychoanalysis. Therefore, in the present research, the purpose of discussing existentialist angst along with the selected theory on the delimited novels is to develop better understanding with respect to suicidal behaviour both from individuals' existential quest and interpersonal perspectives and to leave no empty room for any slip-up or oversight throughout the research.

According to Steven Earnshaw, in *Existentialism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, "Existentialism is a philosophy that takes as its starting point the individual's existence" (Earnshaw 1). What it ought to opine, and whatever it supposes and considers can be said of significance, regarding the earth where we dwell and the life we live, our feelings and their reflections, beliefs, convictions and faiths, knowledge and experiences, ethics and morals, evolves from this inner most existential establishment. Thus the main difference between Existentialism and other philosophies is that it starts with the 'individual' and focuses on the same whereas most of the other approaches begin with the 'universal', therefore unlike other philosophies it seldom comes to the

conclusion of ‘general truths’, its perseverance on personal perception as the only way to gain genuine understanding proves that it crafts no claims to objective knowledge (Earnshaw). History of Existentialism, like the philosophy itself, is quite ambiguous and obscure. Many critics consider the Danish philosopher Soren Aabye Kierkegaard as the pioneer Existentialist. Yet St. Augustine (354-430) and Pascal (1623-62) are often cited as unveiling Existentialist inclinations. Even Kierkegaard had not had an international fame unless in the twentieth century, where a number of writers were identified with Existentialism for instance Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Franz Kafka, Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Sartre etc. Nonetheless two personalities from nineteenth century cannot be neglected as they definitely helped to shape Existential philosophy namely Friedrich Nietzsche and Fyodor Dostoevsky. Hence it can be concluded here about the history of Existentialist thought that the chain of influence and development is not that linear (Earnshaw 2-3). As the philosophy of Existentialism is so detailed, long and extended to centuries that it requires a number of volumes to cater the details of it, which is neither possible nor relevant to the nature of present research, therefore only the relevant chunks shall be discussed.

The awakening that is a general theme of existentialism, is also relevant with the research in hand. In existentialist literature there comes a point when the protagonist surprisingly develops, like disillusionment, an understanding or awareness of his / her existence. The protagonist is often depicted as living an unthinking life like ‘everyday man’ in Camus words unless this ‘awakening’ happens. Kierkegaard describes ‘the awakening’ as the “spirit breaks through from its dream state” for Heidegger it is “realization of, and astonishment at the ‘isness’ of the world”, similarly Sartre’s *Nausea* it is the “quiddity of the self’s world, the thisness” (Earnshaw 16). We found that in Kafka’s *The Trial* when K is arrested for the crime he never knows, we also find the same in *The Stranger* when Meursault kills the Arab on the beach. From these points K and Meursault starts Existential Quest. The awakening is accompanied by the feelings of

anxiety, which is the concept of 'dread' or anxiety' also termed as 'Angst' (Earnshaw 17).

The concept of finitude is the most important contribution of Existentialist school of thought as far as the relevance to the present research is concerned. Existential concept of finitude is different than the normal connotation of 'death'. According to Earnshaw "Finitude has a particular meaning within Existential thought, of which death is only part" (Earnshaw 18). Concept of Finitude emphasizes that our lives are finite, they have an end in the form of death, which we intentionally or unintentionally try to ignore. We need to confront death, according to it, only through death human being is offered a choice and a possibility. In opinion of Heidegger and Sartre death should not be treated as a future, it should rather be bound with present that defines the very existence. Camus assesses death in another way, he thinks that as the life and very existence of mankind is absurd therefore whoever tries to find meaning in life, basically commits suicide. As there are only two possibilities, either the wandering individual would commit philosophical suicide, by which he means that he would stop being sceptic and acquire faith in any religion, which according to Camus is philosophical suicide. The second possibility is that after the failed attempt of finding meanings to the absurd life, in frustration the skeptic mind would commit physical suicide using the only choice human beings have.

Jennifer Willging in her paper "*Existential Angst and Role-playing revisited in Paule Constant's Fiction*" published by University of Nebraska Press in 2006, brings forward the element of existential angst in Paule Constant's works *Ouregoano* and *Balta*. According to her these works are replete with allusions, some subtle, some more explicit, to Jean Paul Sartre's existentialist notions covering role-playing and authenticity. Sartrean Existentialism posits that while the human being exists, he is not; that is, he lives but has no pre-determined essence means that the human being is perfectly free, he is also, Sartre argues, responsible. He is responsible for creating or for 'choosing'

himself, not once and for all, but at each and every moment of his life. Of course, this never ending obligation to create and recreate oneself is exhausting. An easier alternative, one for which most individuals opt according to Sartre, is to assume, on a permanent basis, a ready-made role (Wilging 75-97).

Despite these multiple echoes of Sartrean existentialist discourse in her work, Paule Constant's fiction is much more than just a literary illustration of Sartre's philosophy. Despite Constant's affinity for Sartre and Beauvoir's ideas concerning bad faith and role-playing, she does not tow the entire existentialist line. One significant way in which her thought diverges is that, for her, God is not dead, as he most emphatically is for Sartre and his set. The men appear pathetic rather than heroic, the women are indignant rather than proud, their vanity as incompetently stroked as the ball. Athletics, they all realize, is clearly not the sort of play that will offer them relief from their existential ennui.

Richard Raskin in his paper *Camus's Critiques of Existentialism* published in 2001 by Minerva-An Internet Journal of Philosophy claims that, Camus identifies existentialism with philosophical suicide in the series of the absurd, and with a reduction of human life to its historical dimension in the subsequent series of revolt. He further asserts that this philosophical suicide leads mankind to physical suicide. Matthew H. Bowker, more clearly puts this stance forward in his paper *Understanding Albert Camus' Absurd as Ambivalence, and its Relevance for Existential and Psychodynamic Approaches*. According to him in *Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus' central question is whether we can survive the absurdity, or if the experience is so painful that it must end in suicide. His answer is that we must never choose suicide, neither the physical nor the metaphorical 'intellectual' kind, but must seek to remain in perpetual ambivalence'.

2.5 From Freud to Joiner

Though for a considerable long time suicide remained unexplored in Psychoanalytic studies as compare to its other domains. Yet a number of theories are now in vogue at least in Clinical Psychology. Over the past century some of the psychoanalytic theories and studies have attempted to explore suicide on several levels. Although not a major portion of Freudian Psychoanalysis deals with the element of suicide yet a number of psychological theories on suicidal behaviour emerged in the backdrop of Freud's observations of self-objectification in melancholic depression. These theories range from Object Relation Theorists to structural vulnerability and include self-psychology to Narcissistic state of suicidality. Neither academically nor literally, nevertheless psychoanalysis retains the understanding of suicide as an aim since its beginning on clinical psychology level. Evidence of which can found as early as in 1910 when the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society arranged a meeting to discuss suicide in which Adler, Sadger, Stakel and even Freud himself participated. This meeting paved the way for future psychoanalytic theories of suicide (Friedman 1967).

Sigmund Freud himself brought forward his first paper having discussion on suicide, seven years after that Vienna Meeting published as "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917) wherein he discussed melancholic depression and suicide. In that paper Freud suggested that:

The self reproaches are the reproaches against a loved object which have been shifted away due to patient's own ego.

(Freud 248)

This remained the central idea dominating the understanding of suicidal behaviour in the theories that followed. Suicide depends upon the capacity to stand aside from one's own self i.e. to objectify oneself. Freud acknowledged a paradox that ego's self love is so immense that it is inconceivable how ego consents to commit suicide. Freud tries to resolve the paradox claiming that the "shadow of the object falls upon the ego" (Freud 249). Six years later Freud further formulated that the sadistic attacks of the super-ego drive the ego to suicide. According to Freud the "Superego withdraws libidinal cathexis

from the ego and the ego feeling abandoned by its protective forces surrenders and dies (Freud 185). Moris R. et al in the *Comprehensive Textbook of Suicidology* claimed that Sigmund Freud did not study suicide in detail but claimed that depressed individuals did not have energy to kill themselves unless they had identified an external object or person when the wish to kill internalized that object and turn their aggression against it (Moris R. 85-86).

Karl Menninger adopted and expanded Freud's later elaboration of death instinct. Menninger explained that the physical and mental health depend upon the fusion of life and death instincts. He further developed his view that suicidal personality has three wishes i.e. the wish to kill (revenge), the wish to be killed (guilt) and the wish to die (hopelessness). The wish to kill includes the aggressive self that intends to destroy, attack and retaliate. The wish to be killed is a product of guilt, it contains sadistic tendencies and tries to end guilt by self-inflicted punishment. The wish to die is basically the longing for death, it is the state in which one explores the essence of death and dying (Menninger 185). The next significant development in psychoanalytic study of suicide occurred by the virtue of Melanie Klein, she is often considered as first Object-Relation Theorist of suicide. She formulated her hypothesis of suicide on the distinctions between "Paranoid – Schizoid" position and "Depressive" position. In paranoid - schizoid position one develops the predisposition to protrude hatred onto objects. Suicidal individual under paranoid – schizoid position tends to terminate the bad object in order to protect the good object whereas in the depressive position the qualities of good and bad are perceived in the same object which develops the depressive anxiety. Hence loss of goodness is feared and guilt arises that leads to suicide (Klein 262-305).

Herbert Rosenfeld (1910-1986), a British psychoanalyst, further stretched the meaning of the term narcissism by augmenting the idea of Klein relating the innate aggression. Rosenfeld believed that Narcissistic character structure is a defence against envy, as an object that is identified as good invites envy. According to him the envy is considerably more violent and causes destruction. Rosenfeld also highlighted that some of his patients developed suicidality, they desired to die openly, identified themselves almost entirely with the destructive Narcissistic part of the self which provides them with

a sense of superiority and self admiration (Rosenfeld 173-174). After Rosenfeld, Otto Kernberg (1928-), president of International Psychoanalytic Association, further developed the theory of Narcissistic suicidality, using the term “malignant narcissism”. In *Aggression in Personality Disorders* (1992). Kernberg hypothesized that the self is identified with and extreme form of hatred is expressed in suicide as the hated object and self elimination is the only way to destroy the object as well (Kernberg 23). Later on Kernberg, in his 2001 work *The Suicidal risk in severe Personality Disorder: Differential Diagnosis and Treatment*, discussed some of his patients the suffering from malignant Narcissism’. According to him when these patients are being treated they grow more suicidal feeling that therapist is being helpful. They lie in a fixed, characterological position on a deteriorating continuum, stopping short of full psychotic fragmentation (Kernberg 195-208).

Heinz Kohut (1913-1986) in the *Analysis of the Self* (1970) wrote a short footnote alienating shame, envy, ego-ideal and narcissistic rage to suicide. This minor short note later on paved the way for a major impact on psychoanalytic theoretical conceptualizations towards suicide, labeled as self-psychology. According to Kohut:

This state of shame and envy may ultimately be followed by self-destructive impulses. These too are to be understood not as attacks of superego on the ego but as the attempts of suffering ego to do away with the self in order to wipeout the offending, disappointing reality of failure. In other words, the self-destructive impulses are to be understood here not as analogous to the suicidal impulses of a depressed patients but as expression of narcissistic rage. (Kohut 181)

This appears to be the basic variation from Freudian concept of ego versus super ego and all its successor theorists. Kohutian school of thought focuses on self and its facets for studying suicide. After Kohut the study of suicide through self-psychology is further explained by Dr. Robert Reiser in essay *Self-Psychology and the problem of suicide* (1992). Reiser classified self-states and suicidal dynamics accordingly to Self Psychology. He presented following five Self-states of suicidal individuals: -

1. The endangered Self.
2. The enraged Self.
3. The vulnerable Self.
4. The grandiose Self.
5. The mirroring Self.

In the endangered self-state, the self is torn among the longing for closeness, suicide represents coping with breakdown of this defence with the threat of annihilation. In the enraged state of self, an individual has a negative self-image due to identification with the negative introjects projected into him by parents. Suicide in this state stems from a combination of turning of negative strivings of the abusive introjects against the child self and expression of the rage against these introjects. In vulnerable self-state the suicidal individual feels empty lacking self-fulfilment and self-satisfaction. In this state due to persuasive misery, the person is at a risk of chronic suicide and repetitive suicide attempts. In the grandiose self-state, suicidal individual feels disintegration, emptiness and rage, and seeks suicide as an escape from painful feelings of self-disintegration, emptiness and rage. In the mirroring self-state, suicidal individual acquires high sensitivity to the feelings of others, directing his / her empathy to others, he / she is depriving himself / herself of it, as a result experiences emptiness and depression, due to unrelenting self-sacrifice the person experiences increasing depression that lead to suicide (Reiser 227-240).

Bibring, Litman, Broucek and Lansky analysed the role of shame and ego-idealization in respect of suicide. Bibring in *The mechanism of depression* (1953) noted that the shame would appear to arise from helplessness to master either inner or outer challenges, or Sometimes both (Bibring 13-48). Litman in *The Psychology of Suicide* (1970) described suicidal states in terms of acting out of an autonomous ego state that encompasses suicidal potential: preoccupation with suicide as well as contribution of fantasies, wishes, memories, and identification with this ego – state – and identification with this ego – state (Litman 293-304). Broucek in his article *Shame and its relationship to early narcissistic Developments*, published in *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* (1982) suggests that incompetence, inefficacy and the inability to influence, predict or

comprehend an event in the face of expectations that one should be able to control or understand, stems of suicide (Broucek 639). Lansky in his article *Shame and the problem of suicide* published in the *British Journal of psychotherapy* (1991) asserted that shame is the most significant affect in suicidal patients, other suicide related subjects like depression, guilt, psychic pain and anger are secondary to shame (Lansky 230-240).

Fonagy in his article *Aggression and the Psychological self*, published in the *International journal of psychoanalysis* (1993) noted that a boy's self inflicting behaviour could be deadly, according to Fonagy his primitive reflective self did not see the death of his body as leading to the death of his mental self (Fonagy 481). Six years later in his book *Treatment of Personality Disorder* (1999) Fonagy defined mentalization as the ability to understand behaviours, thoughts and feelings. He suggested that the capacity for mentalization can help protect against narcissistic injury (Fonagy 53-60).

The theme of suicide may have been discussed by critics of literature, yet not an ample research has been carried out on suicidal behaviour presented specially in the delimited texts in the light of the Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour by Dr. Thomas Joiner. On the other hand, both novels that have been delimited to be researched upon are recent publications. Some research papers, as quoted above, have been written but no considerable work has yet been done.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the researcher intends to present the research methodology and methods that are required to conduct the research in hand. As this research is in qualitative paradigm hence according to the practice of the qualitative research this study will attempt to bring forward a thoughtful understanding of individual / social behavioural and psychological patterns that direct such behaviour models specifically suicidal behaviour. Textual analysis will be the method involved in exploring the theme of suicide in light of the suggested theoretical framework i.e. the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour. Analysis of delimited novels will be done from a multidisciplinary perspective as a necessity since knowledge of a number of subjects is required for the complete comprehension of the theoretical background of the research. These subjects include Psychology, Sociology, Philosophy and the English Literature. Therefore the present research can also be considered as an interdisciplinary Research as it includes the theories and concepts presented by literature, psychology, philosophy and sociological studies. Moreover, the reviews on the delimited novels' thematic structure, writing style and art of characterization by various critics, if required, will also be explored. Official interviews of authors, when necessary, will also be evaluated to bridge a connection between the topic of this thesis and author's own intention behind his writings.

Methodically, the research is divided into three steps. Initially as a first step the Research will be of the exploratory nature wherein the information and the informative data relating the research with respect to the suicidal behaviour will be explored. This way research will be provided with robust base prior to the proper analysis of the selected texts. In the next step the Research will be of descriptive nature as it will be concerned

with comprehensive review of world's literature to support the research topic with the textual evidence. The final phase of the research will be conducted in explanatory nature which will be beneficial to reach any conclusion of the study being held. In this the evidences being collected and the careful reading of delimited novels will be dissected and analysed to form the essence of this research.

3.1 Research Method

Textual Analysis as a research method is adopted as it will provide a way for interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour to be applied on the delimited novels. Catherine Belsey outlines the definition of textual analysis as textual analysis is indispensable to research in any discipline specially to understand the inscription of culture in its artefacts (Belsey 157). Allan McKee states that "When we perform textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text" (McKee 21). According to Cristiene Cornard, "Textual analysis is indispensable to research in psychoanalytical criticism, the history of human mind and mental attitude is interpreted through textual studies in the shadow of psychoanalysis as well as any other discipline that focuses on texts, or seeks to understand the inscription of individual and the community" (Cornard 136).

The focus of this research is to trace out the theme of existentialist angst and the effect of interpersonal relations behind the suicidal behaviour as portrayed in the delimited texts. It will further facilitate the researcher to examine the social norms and customs that somehow promote suicidal behaviour. Moreover it will also aid in exploring the psychological factors that instigate the instincts of suicidality. It will also provide instances from the characters of delimited texts that are at a risk of terminating their lives. Text of the delimited novel will provide representation of events as well as characters, therefore, the textual analysis will consequently provide opportunity to discover the theme of suicide.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

According to Ann B. Dobie, “Human beings are fascinating creatures. Readers can be said to take a psychological approach when they try to understand these characters (Dobie 60)”. Sigmund Freud gave some principles to understand and analyse the conscious and unconscious working of mind (Eagleton 129). According to Freud “The unconscious consists of thoughts that one is not aware of, but that still influence one’s behaviour (Weiten 3). For so long, Psychoanalysis has been used to delineate, deduce and decipher literary texts, ever since Sigmund Freud’s introduction of psychoanalytic therapy. Psychoanalytical criticism is a form of criticism where literature is interpreted using some techniques of Psychoanalysis (Berry 96). According to Peter Berry, “All of Freud’s work depends upon the notion of the unconscious, which is the part of mind beyond consciousness, which nevertheless has a strong influence upon our actions:.. Freud’s further work incorporates, interpretation of dreams and sexual development of a child. Prior to Freud infants were supposed to be asexual. However, Freud reviewed the concept and rejected the notion that sexuality has nothing to do with a child’s mental / physical development during infancy, he rather believed that infancy is the period of intense sexual experience. According to Freud a Child’s sexual development in infancy consists of three stages, oral, anal and phallic. He further corroborates his claim with relationship of an infant with his mother. He uses the term of Oedipus Complex, which is derived from a literary context of Greek tragic trilogy of King Oedipus, to define this relation. Freud asserts that male infant longs to exterminate his father. However the logic of Oedipus Complex cannot be applied on the present research as the protagonists in the delimited novels are females.

Unconscious and repression go side by side however according to M.A.R. Habib, we develop the concept of others even in our personality which is far above than our understanding, so we cannot acclaim we are outcome of our repressed “Needs” (Habib 57). Whereas Horland school of thought believes otherwise. “Unconscious and repression are closely associated with each other, as unconscious is born when derives towards gratifications are postponed (Horland 130).

The selected works will be primarily analysed within the theoretical framework proposed by an American Clinical Psychiatrist and Research professional at Florida State University, Dr. Thomas Joiner. Besides this theory philosophy of existentialism will also be exercised for cross referencing. The interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour is derived from *Why people Die by suicide* by Dr. Joiner. This theory postulates that one cannot commit suicide unless one has a desire to commit suicide along with the ability to commit suicide. In more simplified version it can be stated that the Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal behaviour primarily tries to find answers of the following two questions:

1. What is the desire for suicide? And what are its constituents parts?
2. What is the ability to die by suicide and in whom and how does it develop?

Riposting the first query regarding the desire to commit suicide, Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal Behaviour asserts that when people retain two specific emotional / psychosomatic states simultaneously in their minds for so long they may foster the desire to commit suicide. These two psychosomatic states, according to Dr. Joiner, are Perceived Burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness or social alienation.

In order to understand the answer to the second question regarding the ability to commit suicide one needs to first understand the suspension of self-preservation. Self-preservation is a dominant predisposition and only a few people can conquer or surpass it by force of will. To outdo this powerful instinct one requires to develop a fearlessness of pain, injury and death According to the theory such tendency to transcend through the instinct of self-preservation is acquired by virtue of frequently facing excruciating, agonizing and otherwise provocative events.

These encounters commonly comprise of past self injuries, and other physical emotional and psychological tortures either directly or indirectly. One can wonder present pragmatic base bearing on this interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour. Part of it is vicarious, nevertheless an emergent empirical part is ensuing directly. The subsequent segment /portion of the theoretical framework will review the three main conceptual components of Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour.

Perceived burdensomeness is a notion that an individual's existence is nothing but a burden. When one fails to find meaning and significance of one's life, one thinks of oneself as a useless creature having pointless existence. So the very existence becomes a burden for family, friends, society and most importantly for one's own self. This belief generates the idea that one's death will be far more worthier than one's life. It is pertinent to mention here that this belief embodies drastically fatal misperception. Past researches have recorded an association between penetrating concept of perceived burdensomeness and arising desire of suicide. Direct to application of the theory has also been supportive on clinical level. In a psychotherapeutic patients' study, Thomas Joiner along with his peers namely, Van Orden, Lynam, Hollar found out that this perceived burdensomeness happened to be a substantial indication of suicide attempts, even its covariates like hopelessness should also be considered. According to Joiner, the perceived burdensomeness is "a key precursor to serious suicidal behaviour" (Joiner 35).

Thwarted sense of belongingness can be defined as an experience shared by suicide potentials that they are estranged and distanced from others, they are not vital or integral part of any social circle, for instance, family, friends etc. Low sense of belongingness, just like perceived burdensomeness, is involved in suicidal behaviour, and this fact is also acknowledged by the psychotherapeutic experimentation. Thwarted or low sense of belongingness or social isolation is the most common risk factor for suicidal behaviour from biological to interpersonal and socio-cultural factors. The link between thwarted sense of belongingness and suicide is so strong that it can be commonly found in extremely diverse situations, like diversified socio-cultural populations, elderly and even adolescents, students and professionals, males and females etc. Joiner along with peers demonstrated through direct test of interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour on 131 patients under methadonic treatment that thwarted sense of belongingness foreshadows lifetime history of suicide attempts. This aspect of Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal Behaviour proved to be true in accurate accounting for demographic characteristics. Yet another study by Joiner et al on college students, highlighted that thwarted sense of belonging is high in students in summer when the campus is less active. This emphasize the relation between semester and suicide that even the mild sense of thwarted belongingness could rise suicide ideation.

Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour further suggests that the sense of thwarted belongingness and burdensomeness may invoke the desire to commit suicides, however these two factors are not enough for an individual to have the courage to commit suicide. To commit suicide, as per the theory, there must be the third factor, that is the acquired ability for this lethal self-injury. According to Dr. Thomas Joiner, the desire to commit suicide is basically fight with self-preservation. When an individual fights this battle time and again, and in various ways, one acquires the ability to enact lethal self injury and commits suicide. The concept of acquired ability to enact lethal self-injury is basically derived from the opponent-process theory. Opponent process theory was initially introduced by Ewald Hering, who have the concept of visual perception. According to him, when contrasting colour schemes are again and again exposed to our eyes, the chemicals, in our eyes, they start producing different chemicals and a member of exposure of such contrasting colours, could create ambiguity in our eyes regarding this production of specific chemicals. This sometimes leads to colour blindness as well. The opponent process theory was further developed by Richard Solomon, he introduced aspect of motivation in opponent process theory. According to Solomon every process, having operative balance in form of pleasant or unpleasant, is always followed by a secondary process that is opponent process. The opponent process happens when the initial operative process having pleasant or unpleasant impact is mollified. Frequent nature of experiences subsides the primary process and strengthens the opponent process (Solomon 691-712). In simple words Solomon suggests that recurrent experiences having pleasant or unpleasant impact, which acts as an effective stimulus, change reaction to this stimulus, and with every exposure fails the fundamental process and enforces the opponent process.

In view of above it can be concluded that the capability to commit suicide is acquired when the painful and frightening experiences are occurred repeatedly. After such repeated exposure to painful and frightening experiences one develops an elevated forbearance for pain and fearlessness for death. Acquired ability is a continuous process, which is accumulated with the passage of time due to aforementioned traumatic experiences, more the provocatively painful experiences more are chances of committing suicide. An overt implication of the theory is that an individual adopts the pain and self-

injury after suicide attempts and chances of suicide in future increase. As a matter of fact, researches prove that a history of suicide attempts foreshadows future suicidal behaviour including death by suicide. Furthermore, Dr. Joiner along with his fellow researchers in his clinical experimentations finds that the individuals having a history of past suicide attempt experience more severe suicidality than those having no past history of suicide attempts. They further find that individuals having history of suicide attempts tend to evidence higher pain tolerance, and less fear of self-injury. In an experiment regarding acquired ability to commit suicide, Dr. Joiner finds that number of past suicide attempts predicted levels of acquired capability. The highest levels of acquired capability were found in the individuals having numerous suicide attempts, so would be suggested by theory.

Nevertheless, acquiring the ability to enact lethal self-injury is never limited to previous suicide attempts or suicidal behaviours. It is also acquired via recurrent exposure to other painful and frightening behaviours, for instance non-suicidal self-injury. Researchers suggest that the expectancy of suicide attempts is greater in individuals having a number of first hand experiences. The theory postulates that even witnessing sufferings pain and injury of others by an individual may also cause to acquire the ability to commit suicide.

So far three major modules of theory i.e. Perceived Burdensomeness, Thwarted Sense of Belonging and Acquired ability to commit suicide have been discussed separately, along with the evidence for the independent effect. The Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour is interactive in nature. Basically, the theory conceptualizes that collaborative incidence of these three components may lead an individual to commit suicide. However the reasons of these three components are interpersonal in nature, and clinicians may observe the levels of burdensomeness, belongingness of their patients to help them out of this suicidal drive.

The Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour is promising, with a transcending (empirical base) in its support. So far this theory has never been applied on any literary text, its application on literature shall not only open a new horizon of research on multidisciplinary grounds, but it will also help develop the understanding of the

psychosomatic reasons along with interpersonal reasons of suicide. Moreover reading of selected texts in light of the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour shall also help readers in better understanding of the literature in general and the selected novels in particular. Another benefit of including Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour in literary canon is that it will enable readers to not only see a literary text as a story but can also identify the characters who are prone to commit suicide. AS literature is imitation of life, and reader do empathize with characters, therefore, like Sigmund Freud, Dr. Thomas Joiner may also transcend through literature more than psychology, and help readers to better shape their lives. As the theory of Interpersonal suicidal behaviour identifies the people prone to commit suicide, hence it cannot also be applied in real life. A layman cannot provide the clinical or psychiatric treatment, however one can always identify such life threats to professionals and can be a reason to save lives of those who are going through any phase of acquiring the ability to commit suicide.

3.3 Research Design

Research is designed as per requirement, convenience and convention. The thesis will be basically divided in the following chapters: -

- **Introduction:** Suicide will be defined being the core theme of the research. Moreover research proposal, research questions and the objectives of the research will be introduced to the reader along with the significance of the study. Furthermore, in this chapter synopsis of the delimited novels will be introduced to the readers for future references and biographical background of their authors will also be briefly discussed so as to explore if there is any influence of their biography on their works.
- **Literature review:** In this chapter relevant suicidal literature will be reviewed with reference to the proposed research along with the history of authors who committed suicide. Besides socio-psycho researches on suicidal behaviour will also be brought under discussion including existentialist angst and Psychoanalysis so as to weigh the novelty of the applied theory i.e.

interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour. Furthermore similar sort of theories on the subject would also be briefly considered for the better understanding of the topic.

- **Research Methodology:** This chapter will set a functional criterion to proceed further into the research. It will explain the approach and method with which the research will be conducted.
- **Content Analysis:** This mega portion of the research will be a minute analysis of the texts of delimited novels in the light of the theoretical postulations. The texts will be acutely examined. Initially the theme of the existentialist angst will be discovered. The selected texts will then be analysed in light of the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour by Dr. Thomas Joiner focusing on the key points of the theory that are perceived burdensomeness, thwarted sense of belonging and the acquisition of the ability to commit suicide. Each of these key points shall be discovered in the characters of the novel.
- **Conclusion:** Conclusion will be the final chapter of the research which shall be comprised of the findings of the research. It will impart the outcomes and present the decisive deduction in form of conclusion. It will further elaborate the contribution of this study and its benefits to the future researchers to further look into suicidal behaviour. Besides being the concluding chapter of the research, it will also present the ways based upon the research to identify the individual who are at a high risk of suicide, it shall further discuss the ways to act right with them to decrease the risk of possible suicides.

CHAPTER 4

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Textual Analysis of *Drinking From a Bitter Cup*

Drinking From A Bitter Cup is a novel by Angela Jackson Brown, it is a story of a little girl, Sylvia Butler, an illegitimate daughter of Rose. The novel begins with the suicide of Rose, and ends on a stage when her daughter Sylvia is at a risk of possible suicide. Synopsis of the novel has already been presented in the introduction portion, therefore the researcher is going to directly present the analysis of the novel.

4.1.1 Existentialist Angst

The elements of existentialist angst are pretty palpable in the novel right from the beginning regardless of the fact whether they have been inserted intentionally or unintentionally. Recollecting the happy days of her life, just in the beginning, Sylvia remembers her mother saying that, “Everything needs to be free sometimes” (Brown 7) while tending to her hair i.e. the theme of eternal existential quest for liberty from the absurd boundaries of the world. Man has always been in a quest for freedom and even from shackles of beliefs. It has always been difficult to digest the fact that we are not in control of our fates. An ample discussion on this aspect from Existentialist point of view has already been presented in the earlier chapters. From Freud’s point of view that by controlling our unconscious we can control our destinies to Lacan’s negation of the decades’ long epitome that we can control our destinies. Through this short claim about Sylvia’s hair, her mother Rose, foreshadows an important theme of novel i.e. the existentialist angst. Existentialist

angst that in the initial part of the thesis has been defined as the feelings of anxiety is a particular type of anxiety associated with the feelings of 'dread'. This existentialist angst happens after the existentialist awakening. Rose, in the start of the novel, is on a stage, which can be deemed as post-awakening stage. That is a stage where Sylvia is going to be in the end of the novel. Every action of this character i.e. Rose, like aforementioned dialogue, is an evidence of this statement, which will be discussed hereunder.

Theme of existence is evident right from the first line of the novel, "1978. The year I turned ten and the Year my mom killed herself" (Brown 7). The very existence of human kind has been brought under consideration. With growing of daughter, the writer has associated the death of mother. This is the core of our existence, the balance of the circle of life. This life and death reality has no meaning or purpose as per the existentialist perspective, and according to Camus we have to face this absurdity every day. As in the succeeding lines Sylvia comments that "dying is the last thing that should have been on her mind" (Brown 7). So the suicide was so sudden and sort of unimaginable action that just came out of blue and consequently left the life of Sylvia upside down. Another aspect regarding matter of identity, which is also a domain of existentialism, is highlighted in the start of novel when Sylvia describes the coming of landlord to collect rent cheque from her mother. Whenever her mother tries to speak to him regarding the things he has to fix in the house he behaves as if she was not even existent, "he would just look past her like she was not even talking" (Brown 8). This shows the plight of her mother, this disconnectedness and unimportance is not only predictor of her non-existence or existentialist angst but also an important factor in respect of her suicide according to the theory proposed by Joiner.

Element of their existentialist angst that co-relates with the idea of thwarted sense of belongingness is observed when on the eighth birthday of Sylvia they plan to throw a party with the theme of *The Wizard of Oz* (Brown 9). They invite a complete bunch of 30 kids who are in their third grade class. But to their utter despair not even a single kid appears on the day. Sylvia gets ready quite early in the

morning and waits for the fellows. The whole day fruitless wait leaves her in extreme disappointment. This part may also be seen through existentialist lens, like we cannot have someone to share our feelings even. Moreover it is also an example of alienation which will be discussed in details in the later part of the chapter. However, later in the party when Rose plays with her and they sing and dance together, Sylvia altogether forgets the fact that no one has joined her. That is existentialist thinking of individual alienation, where we learn to live with ourselves.

At another place, describing about her class fellows' behaviour, Sylvia tells that she has been used to be beaten, hooted upon and even harassed sexually (Brown 20). An important dialogue regarding her condition that clearly indicates the existentialist angst, when she is teased to death for her mother's mental condition, she considers her mother's condition as "Mama was different' and Mama was just sadder than most mamas" (21). This is the quest of an existentialist to find one's own very own identity, not given by the society but by one's very own self. She is an alien, a "Stranger" like *Meursault* of Camus, who is just different, though a bit different as her predictable past seems to have been traumatic enough. Unlike Meursault who has a family in form of her mother and a choice to live with her but he leaves her behind, Rose on the other hand does not even have a family yet she longs for one, she has been raised in an orphanage.

At another place, Rose tells her daughter that, "The streets are a mean place to live and a meaner place to die" (25). Here the idea of streets can be stretched to the view of world. Streets may stand for this world which is a mean place to live and even a meaner place to die in, if we consider her as an Existentialist figure. The way she lives and the way she is forced to commit suicide are ample evidences of the fact. As the sceptic rather atheistic approach of Existentialists towards God has already been established and discussed in Literature Review, we again find the points of reference to the existentialist angst in the tone of Sylvia on the night before her mother commits suicide. She prays to God, but the selection of words for prayer can only be expected of an existentialist, she asks the help of God in the

following manner, “God, if you are up there, please help us, please. Amen” (39). Even a 10 year old young girl is in doubt about the existence of God. There pointless life, that is full of disasters and pains and their non-acknowledged existence from people as well as God, makes her feel as if there is no one up there to help her, yet she is in so desperate a need for help.

“the broken bricks, the cracked windows and the shingles on the roof that were barely hanging on for dear life” (Brown 55). This is the description of the way Sylvia sees life. Life has nothing to grant her up till that point in life. Ironically after suicide of her mother, she gets a bit of life when her father Hank Butler takes her with him. Hank Butler is comparatively a well settled man, credit goes to his other wife Vivian though. He provides her with some luxuries of life, yet under the stringent un-motherly relation of Vivian. In a matter of months all her happiness and progressing life comes to an end as his father suddenly dies of heart attack. She is sexually abused by Uncle Charles, the very night her father dies.

It is pertinent to highlight here that she after being sexually molested, while in the tub to bath the only thing that runs in her mind is a song of the church service i.e. “What can wash away my sins / Nothing but the blood of Jesus” (Brown 185). Here it is obvious that a young girl around ten years of age, has had no sins to allege her responsible for whatever has happened to her. Her innocence as compared to her suffering may also be seen as a reference to existentialist angst where it is believed that people are trialled and punished for the sins and crimes that they do not commit. For instance the punishment of Sisyphus, as presented in *The Myth of Sisyphus* by Albert Camus, is an ample example. Moreover, the Trial of Meursault in *The Stranger* appears to be regarding Meursault’s relation with his mother instead of his killing the Arab. So, remembering the song and thinking about her sins, just after being sexually abused by a person she had built a trust is also a reference to element of existentialist angst. Next day that is when she wakes up she is told that her father has died and she has lost her only refuge. After being sexually tortured in the night, such a news makes her loose her mind. She could not get rid of the thought that she is still dreaming, whatever happened to her during the night, and

this news of the death of her father is just her nightmare. Here again a great reiteration of Meursault's trial scene is observable. Just like Meursault, Sylvia is unable to mingle with the other characters. She behaves like an alien, laughing at the death of her father (188), a bit extremist than Meursault who oddly behaves on the death of his mother.

After the death of her father her existentialist and atheistic approach seems to settle down, when she says, "God, if there was a God, had left me with no one. I didn't see any cause to say anything to him. He had taken everything and right then, I hated Him" (Brown 192). This shows that pointless nature of existence, absurd nature of anguish and baseless punishments turn her thinking that there is no God and even if there is a God, that God is extremely cruel. On this stage there comes a point when one thinks that it is better to get rid of this brutal life and accept death as a refuge. In most of the cases this mentality leads the individual to commit suicide. However according to Joiner everyone cannot acquire the ability to enact lethal self-injury, therefore, most of them keep on desiring and praying for death, so does Sylvia. She asks God for death, as she is done with her life.

If you are really God. If you really have all of this great power, then you should take me right now. You should let me go where my mama and daddy are, and if you can't or won't do that, then you and I have nothing more to say to each other (Brown 192).

Yet being powerless she had to again and again turn towards God for help, and the circumstances make it necessary for her to believe in God like Miss Cora's letter wherein she advises her to keep faith in God and in herself. She tells her that God does not put more grief to a body more than it can endure. She asks her to keep trust on herself and on God (Brown 197). Despite her being done with God, she thinks that God has truly forsaken her (196).

The researcher has written a research paper on the very theme of this religious connotation in the novel. According to that research paper abovementioned

statement of Sylvia that God has truly forsaken her is a Biblical reference from Mathew “Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthan? (27:46) (Psalm 22:1) which means that “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?, cried by Jesus on the cross. This relates that Sylvia just like Jesus has taken the responsibility of other’s crime and she is being punished for them. Uncle Charles keeps on raping her and she loses every hope of faith. She remembers her father’s songs for church and she remembers the lines where her father uses to sing that, “Father, you are wonderful.... Your existence proves ours,...” (Brown 200). As she remembers this song, it entails that a part of her unconscious still believes or at least is in doubts of God’s existence and the association of her own existence with that of God. At this point she comes to the level where she clearly reveals that “I had stopped believing in God” (200) this can be stretched a little far, as God’s existence proves ours, what if God does not exist, so it means we do not exist as well. Here the existentialist angst of Sylvia copiously appears.

4.1.2 Perceived Sense of Thwarted Belongingness

In *Why People Die by Suicide*, Joiner reviews a study of African-American women wherein the reasons for the association between types of childhood maltreatment and suicidal behaviour are examined. Out of numerous factors, alienation (described as incapability to have trust and attain unwavering and mollifying relationships) proves to be the most vigorous reason that completely provides various shapes of childhood maltreatment and later suicidal behaviour (Joiner 124).

Drinking From a Bitter Cup is a novel by an African-American writer *Angela Jackson Brown* wherein the character that commits suicide is an African-American woman named Rose and the character that is most prone to commit suicide is an African-American girl named Sylvia Butler. Therefore, the aforementioned research seems viable to the study of the selected novel. It has been examined that of all the reasons or shapes of childhood maltreatment alienation is the most dominant one, which can drastically lead an individual to commit suicide.

In the novel we see that Rose grew up in an orphanage, and as it is evident from the reading of the novel, she has been different from other children. Uncle Ray who is Rose's childhood friend and a fellow from the orphanage, describing the alienation of Rose from the society tells Sylvia that, "Baby Girl, don't mind Rose too much. She's just been through a lot of shit. And shit is heavy" (Brown 30). This comment of Ray tells the readers that Rose right from her childhood has gone through such circumstances which were not easy to be born. Due to those sore experiences Rose has alienated herself from the society as she has become different than the rest of the folks. Further in the novel, Rose herself advises Sylvia that she is not crazy. She requests Sylvia to remember it that her mama is not crazy and no matter what other people try to tell Sylvia. She tries to get sort of affirmation from Sylvia and trusts that one day Sylvia is going to defend her mental status (Brown 34).

Similarly Sylvia throughout the novel is kept alienated from the rest of the society members. Kids in her school and in her neighbourhood keep on bullying her, harassing her emotional, physically and sexually. (Brown 21-22). The whole novel is filled with such incidences which are evidence of this forced alienation, which shall be further discussed in detail as Sylvia is a character that does not commit suicide in the novel, but the researcher, on the basis of textual evidences and by virtue of the theory provided by Joiner believes that Sylvia is going to commit suicide sooner or later. However at this point it is enough to say that *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* is a novel that is a proof of the aforementioned research as discussed by Dr. Joiner in *Why People Die by Suicide*.

One question that can capture the mind of the reader is that what is the applicability of the thwarted belongingness as in the novel both Rose and Sylvia may have been victim of alienation from majority yet they always have someone who would care them. In case of Rose, Uncle Ray, here lover is the one always taking care of her even for the time they lived in orphanage. Similarly Sylvia may also be counted as one person always loving to Rose and taking care of her despite her young age. Furthermore Mr. Schlesinger, a German man, who has always been

kind to Rose. As far as the character of Sylvia is concerned it is obvious from the reading of the text Sylvia does have a person who could console her in the time of desperations like Rose, Miss Cora, Uncle Ray, etc. So why on earth one should consider one's life to be ended having at least this much people around them

According to Joiner, normally the need to belong or belongingness comprises of regular and recurrent interaction along with continuous caring. He further classifies the fully satisfied need to belong into two components that are frequent interactions with others and the feelings of being cared about (Joiner 96). As we already know that the importance of a sound relationship and belongingness which has been discussed earlier in the theoretical framework section, here Joiner has categorically classified the exact type of belongingness. A person cannot be satisfied with his / her social standing unless he / she regularly stay in contact and be cared about. Joiner further asserts that such interactions must be frequent and positive (97), here another factor of a satisfied sense of belongingness is put forth i.e. the relationship must be positive. Now it can be seen as two components are a must for a proper social interaction, it must be frequent and it should contain care in it, moreover the nature of such interaction should be positive. Being positive is important, as one can constantly stay in contact with someone, but that interaction may be so stressful that in future it could cause traumatic effects on the life of individual. Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour will be further applied while its application on *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* and it will be analysed that how far the claims of Dr. Joiner in the given theory help us to understand the nature of interactions the characters in the novel have. Moreover, their implication towards the destinies of the characters will also be considered.

Rose is the character, whose suicide basically fabricates the plot of the novel. Novel starts with the description of her character from the mouth of her daughter i.e. the narrator of the story. If we see the life of Rose, keeping in view the nature of interactions she had all her life in light of the theory proposed by Joiner, we find that she never has met the criterion set for satisfied sort of interaction. For ease of understanding analysis is conducted chronologically from her childhood to her

death, not in the way it is presented in the novel which accounts her life from her suicide. Uncle Ray is a person who has been with Rose from her childhood, Sylvia learns a great deal about her mother's early life from him. She is told that Rose grew up in an orphanage, where Uncle Ray comments, she was like a little spitfire, "She didn't back down from nobody so I was always getting into a fight to save her ass" (Brown 29). This comment reveals the nature of interactions Rose used to have while in her childhood. Uncle Ray is the only person who constantly remains in contact and also cares for her throughout his life. But the nature of Ray's relation with Rose is way too complex which will be analysed after judging the episodic interactions Rose had with others.

Hank Butler, father of Sylvia, comes in the life of Rose for a short period of seven days. He is a military man on the way back to home from Viet Nam War. He gives her love, promise of marriage and most important of all a daughter. However, he is revealed to be already married with Vivian. Yet he gives her his telephone number, but Rose never contacts him back, rather she only dials his number listens to his voice and hangs back the receiver. Such action cannot be claimed as an interaction. Here we can dare to deduce that no relation in her life except for Ray happens to be frequent. Joiner at another place claims that "depressed people engage in less eye contact... same is for head-nodding" (Joiner 121). He further draws comparison that non-depressed people contact normally and connection to others can be seen in their basic behaviour, like eye contact and harmony between one person's and other's facial expressions or gestures (121). If we compare that with the relation of Rose with Hank, astonishing we do not find an interaction at all, yet she mothers his daughter and waits for his return all her life.

Ray is the only person in life of Rose, who frequently provides her love and care. The only issue with this interaction is that it is not positive. Rose is basically an artistic soul, who sings and paints, whereas Ray is a criminal, and a drug smuggler. Rose often tries to stop him from doing these negative activities and do not contribute to the downfall of black folks (Brown 22). She is extremely irked by Ray's use of word Negro, she believes in the thoughts of Malcolm X (Brown 23).

She is also not in favour of using abusive words which he does a lot in front of Sylvia. Therefore despite Ray's love, care and constant proposals for marriage she refuses him. Ray always loves Sylvia as his own daughter, yet Rose would never allow him to help them. She would only allow him for meals or movies as a friend, but not as permanent member of family, as her husband and Sylvia's father though Sylvia really wanted this marriage to happen (Brown 24). The only reason seems behind her refusal of Ray is that the interaction with Ray does not seem positive. She believes Ray would be a negative influence over Sylvia and she believed Ray as a negative relation for herself too, despite years long love and care. This sort of relation approves Joiner's second claim that an interaction requires to be positive as well (Joiner 97).

All this analysis shows that Rose never has lived a life that satiates the need to belong. All her life she has had a sense of thwarted belongingness, and an alien. She never has fitted anywhere, has been an odd at every sphere of life, from her early childhood in orphanage, to her relations with Ray and Butler, where she worked, where she lived and died, she seems to be an alien everywhere. She fails to form a normal relation, a frequent, caring and a positive interaction throughout her life. Her suicide is a proof of Joiner's claim that thwarted sense of belonging is one of the basic reasons of suicide.

The unmet needs to belong is a contributor to suicidal desire:
suicidal individuals may experience interactions that do not
satisfy their need to belong (unpleasant, unstable, infrequent).

(Joiner 97)

Character of Sylvia, is an obvious example of victimized or broken interactions. To analyse her character in light of the theory provided by Joiner we first have to look into her interactions and categorize them. Her first interaction / or relation that is to influence her all of her life is her mother's. Though it remains for her initial ten years period but for those ten years Rose happens to be a frequent interaction, loving and caring too. Unfortunately that is not a positive interaction.

Her mother loves and takes care of her, yet due to her mental disorder she deteriorated the life of Sylvia not only with her mistakes and wrong decisions but being a heavy burden both physically and emotional. This element of being a burden on Sylvia shall be discussed later in the relevant part of analysis, so far the focus is its being negative. First of all Rose preordains Sylvia's Bastard life by not telling her father about her birth (Brown 18), and dooms the little girl to face the bare rigidity of the world. Then, she does not happen to be strong enough to provide Sylvia the basic necessities and even the security. Again by denying marriage proposal of Ray (30), she closes every possible mean of stable future and security to her daughter. Most important of all she influences the psychological development of Sylvia with her abnormal *modus vivendi*. For instance Sylvia shares that at some nights, Rose becomes so sad and sacred that she would have them hid in their bedroom closed, to escape from bad people but at that point of life, Sylvia never knows those bad people are just imagination of the paranoid mind of Rose, she believes in her, and along with her mother panics at every creak of the floor or car horn blowing on the street (16). Sylvia has to endure all the traumas of her life, like craziness of her mother, child abuse, sexual abuse, insult, then suicide of her mother, death of her father, rape and everything just because of the wrong decisions of her mother. So Rose appears to be a negative interaction that curtails every possibility of happiness of her daughter.

Sylvia's school and neighbourhood is another place to look for the possible interactions. In the initial chapters of the novel we find Sylvia being verbally and physically abused in her class. About those torturous occurrences she tells that, "I never had any little girl friends" (Brown 20), she then starts considering herself stupid and ugly and the fellow classmates have always been terrible towards her, they steal her lunch push her down on the ground. She was even sexually harassed by a boy named Michael Martin (20). Her own account of life in school before suicide of her mother not only depicts her isolation but also correlates with Dr. Joiner's claim that "Childhood physical and sexual abuse may particularly confer risk because they are both painful and imply burdensomeness and disconnection" (Joiner 65). Here it is evident as Sylvia not only starts isolating herself from the

class but she has to suffer an internal quest which she calls a private war (Brown 20). This private war leads her even to the very thought of killing herself. She vividly verifies Dr. Joiner's claim that childhood physical and sexual abuse particularly confer risk when she comments on the conclusion of this private war that if she would have a gun, she would have thought of killing herself (21). This is evident that the thwarted belongingness can lead an individual to commit suicide as is proved by the aforementioned dialogue of Sylvia.

Uncle Ray is a character that can be counted as a positive interaction as far as Sylvia is concerned, as she does not have any issues regarding from where he earns money, and what sort of life he is spending. Nonetheless he is loving and caring to Sylvia. Sylvia feels sort of secure when he is around, and somehow up to some extent he gratifies her longing for a father. However, first of all he is not a frequent interaction, he is sort of an episodic character who shows up and fades away in early stage of her life. Examples of his love and affections for Sylvia has always been given earlier, along with his love, being a helping hand and a perceived sense of security and future happiness he also acts as a mentor to Sylvia. During his short span in her life, Ray teaches her many things, most important of all he teaches her about the cruelty of life and taking responsibility. About cruelty of life, his speeches are sort of direct in crude form, which Rose thinks as a bad influence, however after the murder of Ray and suicide of Rose, Sylvia finds the truths about every word he ever spoke. He teaches her to play chess, tells her that chess is like life. He believes that the stupid people play checkers, but the smart folks play chess. He further relates chess with life that just like life, White has to play the first move in the chess (Brown 26). He teaches her many other lessons of life which he believes she will never learn from books. He is even her only source of knowing about her mother's life of early age. He often tells her stories about his mother (29). As far as the learning to take responsibility is concerned it is not due to his language rather it is his love that makes her take the responsibility of his last wish i.e. to pour his ashes into flowing water and it can also be deduced that this promise of taking the ashes of Uncle Ray keeps her alive after the suicide of her mother. Through given analysis of the character of Uncle Ray it can be clearly observed that though

Ray happens to be a loving and a positive interaction in life of Sylvia yet he cannot be counted as a frequent interaction keeping in view of the short episodic nature of his appearance in life of Sylvia. Nevertheless by virtue of his love and affections for Sylvia his name echoes throughout the novel.

There are positive characters in the life of Sylvia and interacting with them she truly believes that she belongs. These interactions include his father Hank Butler, Her neighbour Aunt Cora, Her cousin Jean, and her beloved lover Drew. Unfortunately none of these characters last forever in her life, either they die, snatched away from her or she herself gets aloof due the unavoidable reasons. A brief analysis of these is drawn hereunder so that the thwarted nature of Sylvia's belongingness may be fully understood. First of all, her father Hank Butler comes in her life after her mother commits suicide. He is a loving, caring and affectionate man. Though Sylvia is conceived as his mistake or a sin, keeping in view the Christian nature of the character, yet he is ready and welcoming her to his life accepting her as his daughter. Rose is too disappointed on his never coming back as he has promised, that she never tells him about Sylvia, though she has had his number. She sometimes complains about this to Sylvia while being drunk but always apologizes the next day. She introduces him to Sylvia in the following manner:

Sylvia your daddy is somebody you can be proud of, honey. He owns his own business. Your daddy is a high-class black man. Even though I never told him we had made you, I know he would love you. (Brown 18)

This shows the type of man Butler is, it may be counted as meanness on part of Rose to keep Sylvia away from his love for a long period of ten years knowing all about her sufferings, miseries and absence of basic necessities in her life. About having sleep with Rose, Hank Butler acknowledges that it was a terrible mistake, however he also exclaims that having Sylvia is not a mistake though, he tells Sylvia that he was happy to have her as his daughter (Brown 71).

Later in the novel, Hank Butler proves to be a good father who loves his daughter very much. He provides her with best clothes good schooling and helps her build self-confidence. He even teaches her to swim and kills the water phobia out of her. He also guards his daughter from every thick and through till his death, and no one ever dares to molest, abuse or harass again save mother Vivian. Mother Vivian having a superiority complex in several ways over Sylvia and even on her husband Hank Butler often involves herself to torture Sylvia. May be her strict behaviour towards her is due to the association of Sylvia's very existence with her husband's cheating upon her. However, Hank Butler tries his best to keep Sylvia save from both physical as well as emotional sufferings, and during this short time Sylvia develops a great affection and love towards her father, which is evident from her saying that, "Daddy, I love you/ And I meant it" (Brown 132).

Unfortunately, just like other loving and caring positive interaction her father leaves her alone and dies after spending hardly a year with her. This episode of Sylvia's life with her father shows the development of Sylvia's belongingness to life and people around her. She starts enjoying life, meeting people and talking to them. The same Sylvia who was once become quiet and had no friends (Brown 18) is now lively, friendly and an apple of everyone's eye. She is progressing in her studies as well, and her teachers are thinking to promote her in higher class skipping the present class. This is the influence of a relation that remains regular and positive. This fact also approves Joiner's view regarding having a frequent, loving, caring and positive interaction that "this need to belong is so powerful that, when satisfied it can prevent suicide" (Joiner 118).

Sylvia's interaction with some other characters like Jean and Drew too appears as a fragment of happiness in the life of Sylvia. Her Cousin Jean is a positive, loving and caring towards Sylvia. She is a pretty girl having light complexion and having big green eyes, almost exactly fourteen months older than Sylvia (Brown 97). Prior to meeting Jean, psychological condition of Sylvia is so worse that she is always afraid of new people, knowing that no one is going to like her as she does not belong to anyone. The night before she meets Jean she prays to

God that, “Please God let Cousin Jean like me” (Brown 95). This prayer exhibits the plight of Sylvia that how much desperate she was to belong to someone, to call someone as her friend or faithful. Fortunate enough after her mother suicide she finally gets a bunch of people who really love her and care for her. But the most unfortunate thing in her life is that no one stays in her life long enough to be called a frequent interaction as required by the Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal behaviour by Joiner. Throughout the rest of the novel, Jean happens to be a best friend and a great refuge during her times of sadness.

Her friendship with Jean grows and they wear same shirts with the words “Jean and Sylvia. Best Friends Forever” (Brown 134). This is the effect of a positive interaction and friendly relationship that Sylvia, who has once been left alone and alienated having not even a single friend, is enjoying life in the company of her best friend Jean. Again a comparative reference is made on the day of her eleventh birthday with that of her Eighth birthday. On her eighth birthday, Sylvia’s mother Rose has thrown a party with the theme of *The Wizard of Oz*, and she invites 30 kids (Brown 10) but not even a single one of them appears, whereas on her eleventh birthday her father throws a party and there are over thirty people in that party (Brown 136). This shows the element of belongingness, not only as a sense or feeling but as actually co-existing directly proportional to happiness. So is the case with the unavailability or nonexistence of such belongingness and the sadness and suicidal behaviour. Unluckily Jean also gets out of the life of Sylvia after a couple of years. Though she remains in contact but she no more remains a frequent interaction, as she becomes sort of distant friend, and the medium of their interaction becomes telephonic. Therefore, after her father, she also loses her best friend and cousin Jean as this distant type of relationship is not sufficient to satisfy the primary need to belong which can somehow lessen the risk of suicide or lethal self-injury as highlighted by Joiner (Joiner 118). Moreover, Joiner does not include these type of distant interactions in the category of belongingness which is evident from the following excerpt from *Why People Die by Suicide*:

The need to belong will be only partially met if an individual feels cared about but does not have face to face interactions with the relationship partner. (Joiner 97)

This statement reveals the insignificance of future interactions of Cousin Jean as she is supposedly not going to affect the life of Sylvia, at least the way she has had earlier unless by chance they again come into face to face interactions.

Andrew is another important interaction Sylvia has in her life, though episodic like her father and her cousin. Andrew is also called Drew. He is seventeen years old and senior to Sylvia. He is depicted as having “movie star good looks with shoulder-length white blond hair and medium bronze skin” (Brown 216). He is the boy who loves Sylvia, and beloved by her. About Drew Sylvia shares that “He and I immediately connected” (Brown 217) she further informs the reader that “I basked in all of his attentions” (Brown 218). Their love flourishes and they share their first kiss (Brown 220). Sylvia further reveals that she becomes so infatuated with Drew that it helps her concentrate on her studies despite her regularly being raped by Uncle Charles in the nights. Drew wants to introduce her to his family, but Sylvia refuses as she is so afraid about her family having a non-motherly Mother Vivian and Uncle Charles who acts purely like her father in the day but rapes her in the nights. Drew and Sylvia share many likings like they both have a passion for poetry and have read many of same poets. They both love the poetry of John Ashberry and his poem “Street Musicians” (Brown 220). They even like the same music, or least she develops Drew’s taste for herself. They like Pink Floyd’s “Comfortably Numb” Sylvia shares with her readers that Drew and this music for the first time in her life cause the beginning of her rebellion. (Brown 223). Interaction with Drew makes life even happier for Drew despite the painful and tabooed nights she keeps on having with Uncle Charles. This fact is evident from her statement that “Drew and I always had something to laugh about” (Brown 222).

Just like all other good, lovely, caring and positive interactions, Sylvia’s relation with Drew comes to an end. Right after they make love her relation with Drew comes to an end and she is brutally raped by Uncle Charles. She moves back

to Louisville and never meets Drew again. This may seem as a huge mistake on her part, she along with Drew and his family could make things right, but the sort of life she has spent makes it natural to act in that manner. Sylvia, at the back of her mind, always has the feelings of thwarted belongingness despite having a handful of good people who love her. This fact is evident from her dialogue that "... but I knew me being around made things worse" (Brown 98) regarding the disturbed relation of Hank Butler and Mother Vivian. She was also in a complex mental state regarding her relation with Uncle Charles as well, as one part of her hates her for whatever he does to her but the other part of her likes him too, may be due to the reason that Uncle Charles was the only one who cared for her and acted as his father providing her everything she needs.

Uncle Charles is the most important character as far as the psychoanalysis of Sylvia's character is concerned. A number of statements given by Joiner can be proved by analysis of Charles' relation with Sylvia. Nature of Charles' relation and interaction with Sylvia is too complex, he is at the same time her lover and tormentor. The study of Charles character ought to be multifaceted, as he himself, as per view of the researcher, is the victim of perceived burdensomeness and ineffectiveness which kill the good part of his personality and only beast remains, this facet of his personality will be analysed later in the relevant section. In this section, his appearance in Sylvia's life, and his complex relation with her has been viewed in respect of psychoanalysis of Sylvia in the light of Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal Behaviour, that how his existence in her life will affect her decisions and may lead her to acquire the ability to enact lethal self-injury.

Uncle Charles is a military man, coming back from Vietnam War. His first interaction with Sylvia is quite normal. He shows his affections toward her and praises her and accepts her as his niece, calls her the best surprise and tells her that he believes they are going to be the best friends (Brown 148). Initially he proves to be the best friend, unless her father dies. Right from his arrival in the family Sylvia compares him with her mother, may be her sixth sense, the implication of which goes deep down the surface, which shall be discussed in detail in the later part.

However, at this point, the researcher wants to highlight that Sylvia compares him with her mother. Sylvia finds him wearing a Marine uniform, having walking cane, his face full of pains, he is about twenty five years old and a handsome man, though the sadness and feelings of pain are what attracted Sylvia the most, yet all other females on the station seems to ignore his cane and pain, they all try to catch his eye (Brown 147). Sylvia asks her father whether he is going to be fine or what, her father Hank tells her that he will be fine as there are a lot of people to take care of her specially Vivian. Even this dialogue of Hank highlights the importance of loving and caring relations. Nevertheless, Sylvia does not seem satisfied as she finds an array of agony on his face. Following description of Sylvia regarding Charles tells the reader the exact vibes Sylvia received from Charles that can help understand the complexity of interaction between Sylvia and Charles:-

I didn't really think he would be fine. Something about Uncle Charles's eyes reminded me of Mama's eyes. Something about him made me think of Mama's sadness. (Brown149)

Uncle Charles gets really close to Sylvia and forms a good friendship with her. On the first day at home, he reveals his secret to Sylvia that he has not told to anyone else in the house, not even his beloved sister Vivian. He tells Sylvia about the horrors of Vietnam War and that he has lost one leg in the Vietnam War, and now he walks with a wooden leg with the help of a cane (Brown 152). They watch the old black and white version of Godzilla together the next day, and he feels sorry that he should not have told an eleven years old girl about the things he has seen and gone through. Sylvia loses her father Hank shortly after the arrival of Uncle Charles. Uncle Charles takes off the mask of a caring fatherly figure and his internal beast takes control over him, and the very night Hank is dying in the hospital and Vivian is in the hospital, he comes and sexually abuses Sylvia. After sexually molesting he gives Sylvia a bath. Sylvia who has just lost her virginity in the eleventh year of her life is so much in pain and anguish that she feels numbed,

having no power to stop him. In her own words she happens to be “numb, past hurt, past embarrassment” (Brown 185).

Next day when her father’s dead body arrives at home, she does not remain in senses, she feels like having a nightmare, she loses consciousness of dream and reality. She thinks whatever has happened the night before was part of a nightmare, and she is still dreaming, she laughs at her father’s dead body, believing it will just end (Brown 194). But gradually with the passage of time, she has to make her believe that her days of happiness have just ended. From this night forward, she is forced to share her bed with Uncle Charles almost every night, and she cannot even tell anybody about what Charles does to her, as she thinks no one is ever going to believe her. Besides Uncle Charles is the only person left, who takes interest in her life, going to her parent teacher meetings, games and other school functions as a parent. No one else from family cares about whatever she is going through in her life. However she is having Jean and her education as a refuge, on the other hand one part of this forbidden love making is that she truly feels loved the nights Uncle Charles visits her. With its utter complexity it can be deduced that one part of Sylvia feels repulsive of what Uncle Charles does to her, but the other part enjoys those nights. Whenever Uncle Charles is dating some other women, and stops visiting Sylvia’s Room she sort of feels betrayed. She even starts hating those ladies that Uncle Charles date (Brown 212). For three years Sylvia leads two lives, one doing those things in night with Uncle Charles and the other as a shy little girl.

At the climax of the novel Uncle Charles plays his part that finally devastates her life leading her to the existentialist awakening. Drew enters in her life when she turns fourteen. Up till now she has found a way to live a dual personality to exist. She becomes shy and even more introvert than before (Brown 208). One thing must be kept in mind that though Sylvia seems compromising the dual life and she herself feels some part of tabooed attraction in what is being done to her by Uncle Charles yet she does not accept it in her heart. A fact clues of which reader can get when Sylvia gets her first menstrual period and she refuses Uncle Charles to have sex. Through this refusal she somehow takes pleasure of not allowing him to use her

body. Later on she often says no to his urges on the basis of those periods whether she is having them or not. This shows that Sylvia from the core of her heart does not like indulging in tabooed and forced relationship with Uncle Charles (Brown 215). Sylvia takes three years to understand that she was not in that relationship that Uncle Charles has forced upon her, rather she was constantly being raped. This is revealed to her when she makes love with Drew, only then she feels the difference between making love and being raped. Only then she realizes that Uncle Charles has been the bad person and not herself (Brown 231).

After indulging herself in love of Drew, and making love with him, Sylvia finally decides to end that negative interaction with Uncle Charles. There happens to be a Prom, for which she requires the permission to go, she thinks it the perfect time to cut off the tabooed relation with Uncle Charles. However, this leads Uncle Charles so mad that he brutally beats and sexually abuses (Brown 239). He further threatens her to kill her boyfriend as he does not know the name of Drew. This event is so influential on the life of Sylvia, that she cuts her hair short and ends her education and interaction with Drew. To save Drew from the wrath of Uncle Charles she moves back to Louisville and terminates every single contact with Drew. Sylvia gets pregnant without knowing whose baby she has conceived, Drew's or Charles. Uncle Charles does not hold on what he has done to the life of Sylvia, he loses his mind and gets totally insane. He leaves home, and starts wandering to search Sylvia and somehow manages to find her. When he breaks in the house of Miss Cora, where Sylvia is hiding or at least trying to hide, Sylvia finds him in a state of utter insanity like a lunatic. Sylvia describes his appearance wearing dirty clothes, shirt is buttoned up all wrong and the stain on the pants as if he has been peeing in on himself (Brown 270). Sylvia faces a terrible fight to save her life, unless the police comes in and shoots Uncle Charles down. Meanwhile Sylvia also gets shot by the pistol of Uncle Charles. She spends three days in hospital unconscious of everything dreaming about her mother Rose and Father Hank (Brown 280). At the end of the novel, Sylvia lives in the same vicinity where her mother has raised her, pregnant with an illegitimate conception like her mother, and decides to raise it all by her own.

After the aforementioned analysis of people's interaction and its effect on the life of Sylvia we can now say that throughout her life she never gets a single relation that can fulfil the criterion suggested by Joiner in the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour. She never enjoys loving and caring relations that last longer enough to be called frequent as required by the theory nor does she flourish much under positive interactions. All loving, caring and positive interactions sooner or later come to an end. The novel starts when Sylvia is aged 10 and ends when she is hardly above 14 years of age, so it tells us the story of just four years. We can see that no positive, loving and frequent interaction remains in her life, not only for these four years at least. Instead those having negative influences remain more in her life like her mother gave Sylvia 10 years of psychological horrors and social alienation. Similarly Uncle Charles torments her for three years in a row out of the four years narration. Therefore, the thwarted sense of belongingness is at its peak, Sylvia never belongs to anywhere the whole life.

According to Joiner "painful forms of childhood sexual abuse are more associated with suicidality than less painful forms" (Joiner 65). In case of Sylvia we find that she not only suffers emotional and physical alienation from her childhood but she also goes through both physical and sexual abuse throughout her life. She is hooted upon, and beaten again and again from the kids in the class and of the area as the examples have been provided in the above analysis. Then she is time and again both physically and sexually abused even regularly raped by Uncle Charles, and in the end she even gets a gunshot from her. This sort of life is definitely persuasive for enacting lethal self-injury. As per theory of Joiner:-

Depressed people speak more slowly and with less volume, have longer pauses in their speech patterns, and take longer to respond when someone address them, they are therefore, negatively perceived by others. (Joiner 104)

This is surely the case with Sylvia, as she herself shares the fact that being bullied by people around her she quiets herself and people do not like her for that and she does not make friends (Brown 18). Therefore Sylvia is depressed young girl,

alienated by society, molested and abused emotionally and physically as well as sexually, and all of that in a small age. Furthermore, she always remains in a perceived sense of burdensomeness throughout the novel, which shall be discussed shortly in the relevant section of the research.

The last character with the traces of thwarted sense of belongingness is that of Uncle Ray's. Uncle Ray though always be a strong character, who according to Rose, always have behaved liked a Super Fly (Brown 25). As a matter of fact, he feels all the way cut off from the roots, he is in a constant war with the society regarding colour and class differences. He has built so much hatred for the white folks that he sees everything from this perspective, compares everything bad that happens to him as fault of some white men. He does not belong to America, he does not belong to Christianity, and he does not even belong to his black folks being a drug (Marijuana) smuggler. He does not even want to be buried, rather he opts for being burnt and his ashes to be spread on water. This shows he does not own the standard trends of area, religion and even his race even in the matter of death and life hereafter.

Ray happens to be an orphan like Rose, and he grows up in the same orphanage house where Rose has grown. He repairs cars and sells marijuana on the side. He starts selling marijuana after the Ford factory terminates his services and kicks him off without any fault of his own. He has been robbed of his job in the Ford Company to pay it to some white boy coming back from Vietnam War (Brown 23). This shows the thinking of Ray regarding the biasness and racism that alienates him out of the society he is living in, and as a result his sense of belongingness is shockingly thwarted. According to Rose, "Ray has always been a bad son of a gun" (Brown 22) which shows the perilous personality of Ray. Elements of thwarted belongingness works for Ray to destroy all his goodness, he may have committed suicide, but before he could have acquired the ability to commit suicide he has been murdered. On the other hand, as described by Rose like bad son of a gun and a Super Fly, Ray happens to be a strong man and unless he is full of power he is fighting, he has diverted his thwarted sense of belongingness towards animosity to

others. He is now an enemy to the society, which is a stage prior to suicide. He himself describes his doping business as, there was nothing left out for him out there to do instead of these side business. He does not have any professional even non-profession education, moreover he has been twice to be jailed for reasons unknown. Hence there are not much opportunities left for him. (Brown 22) As all the good jobs belong to White Folks, in response to lecture of Malcolm X revolution of Black Power he truly believes that the only colour with power is green (Brown 23).

His thwarted sense of belongingness is also discernable when he teaches Sylvia to play chess. He tells her that the white is always the first to move in the chess, and if that is not the fact of life itself, then what it is he cannot understand (Brown 27). While playing chess, Sylvia tries to capture his king but loses her queen. He advises her that one has to always know what is going on the board. That is the way of white folks, they let blacks get distracted by some unimportant thing in the world and next day black comes to know the white owns the Wall Street and black got to clean up the street (Brown 27). He fails to build even a single, loving, caring, frequent and positive relation. The only woman in his life is Rose, and despite all his love, caring and feelings for her, she is never ready to marry him. He fulfils all criteria to satisfy all her needs, and that of her daughter's, yet she refuses him. Even when he spends more time with Rose and Sylvia, Rose starts getting irked and aggressive, they start having fights in which Rose uses to throw thing over him to hit him. Sylvia in those days keeps herself safe under the bed. Rose not even lets her do those things that are expected from a father, she would not let him give money to Sylvia or herself, she would not let him repair and fix her house which is in desperate need of being repaired. Once when he fixes the window, Rose picks up a brick and breaks it down again. So this sort of complex relation predicts that it is not perfect relation as per the criterion suggested by Joiner in the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour.

4.1.3 Perceived Burdensomeness

When I refer to ‘perceived burdensomeness’ I would like to emphasize the term perceived. People who are contemplating suicide perceived themselves a burden, and perceive that this state is permanent, only death is a solution, it is important to highlight that these perceptions are mistaken. (Joiner 98)

Joiner in *Why People Die by Suicide* further explains the perceived burdensomeness as “any perception, mistaken or not, can influence behaviour. My contention is that perceived burdensomeness influences suicidal behaviour” (Joiner 99). For what he means from perception is that, being a burden is commonly perceived as such by those who feel like they are burden, on the family, friends and even for their societies as well. They think of themselves as so ineffective that at a point they start perceiving their death would be in greater interest of their families, friends and people around them. Joiner explains that “When one perceives oneself as ineffective, it is painful indeed” they believe themselves to be so ineffective that their loved ones are burdened by their very existence, therefore the desire for death is generated (Joiner 97). Joiner shares one of his own examples from the time he uses to play soccer, once he gets injured and does not play soccer for a while, when he joins back his team after recovery he feels that instead of contributing to success of the team he is being a burden, and team is being suffered by his inclusion. Same feelings are shared by the fellow teammates (Joiner 98). This simple incident generalizes the nature of perceived burdensomeness. When someone fails to be effective or contributing as much as the other stakeholders or family members, he / she starts perceiving himself / herself as a burden and according to Dr. Joiner this perceived burdensomeness leads an individual to commit suicide when coalesced with the thwarted sense of belongingness and consequent sufferings from traumas and painful happenings that help acquire the ability to enact that lethal self-injury.

In *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* by Angela Jackson-Brown, we find that there are many characters that remain in a constant state of this perceived burdensomeness. Rose, among those characters, commits suicide. Uncle Charles

does not commit suicide as he is shot down by cops nevertheless he has already committed moral suicide and he may have committed physical suicide as well had he not found the address of Sylvia. His appearance tells that he has lost his interest in life or the libido that is the life force. He is slowly moving towards thanatos that is the death instinct. In this section of the thesis those characters are psychoanalysed who retain the tendency to commit suicide on the basis of perceived burdensomeness. It is pertinent to mention over here that as a novel is bound to a plot that has limitation of time, space and action, therefore a novel can never tell the history of all its characters from cradle to the grave, therefore the researcher finds it convenient to apply the selected theory on the delimited novels to deduce the finding and conclude the research.

On the basis of the previous analysis of Rose and knowledge of the plot of the novel *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* it has now been understood that Rose is the only character who practically commits a physical suicide in the novel. Other characters are either prone to commit suicide in near or far future or somehow they change the course of their lives. In the previous analysis element of thwarted belongingness was discovered in the character of Rose, in this section element of perceived burdensomeness shall be explored. Rose is a female with an esteemed sense of self-respect and ego, though throughout her life she happens to be sort of a burden to or dependent of someone. In the beginning of her life in the orphanage she is always dependent upon the sense of security which is provided by Ray which is evident from the depiction of her life at orphanage from the mouth of Ray. Ray describes her life in orphanage as a spitfire never backing from brawling from others and it is Ray who always saves her from those fights and takes beatings in her place (Brown 29). Rose herself delineates this fact while talking to Sylvia telling her about her relationship with Ray, she admits that “Nobody messed with me when Ray was around” (Brown 22). This dialogue shows that how much she was in need of Ray or anyone who could provide her security from outside world. As already mentioned above, Rose being an egoist and having self-respect, she does not want to be burden, for anyone. Therefore, all her life she suffers just because she does not want to be burden on anyone, she struggles and struggles hard to find her own

identity, but the world around her is dark and so full of menace that she finally fails to establish and keep up her own individual identity and decides to end her life and ceases to exist. Here one thing is important to highlight that she does not want to be a burden on others therefore she fights and she struggles, which is an evidence of Joiner's interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour.

In the start of the section, it was noted that Joiner stressed on the term "Perceived" for burdensomeness, which was further explained that mistaken or not mistaken this idea that one is burden on his beloved ones is enough to lead an individual to commit suicide. Character of Rose is a fair example of this perceived burdensomeness, throughout her life she fights this perception and tries not to be a burden. Her fellows and friends want to help her out of this situation but she is so struck up with this idea of being a burden that she could not allow anyone to help her. In the short episode of her character appearance in novel, we find a number of examples where she acts like a person obsessed with this perception. When Uncle Ray repairs her window she breaks in again, she does not want him to help her which leads to the clue that she does not want to be a burden on him. Similarly she is never ready to accept any help from him, despite the pathetic plight she is going through along with her daughter. They are often in need of money, they do not have money to buy Sylvia a cloth even, she makes clothes for Sylvia by herself. She is unable to protect Sylvia from the kids in school and in the surroundings where she lives. The simplest and the straightforward justification for all of these actions of Rose is that she perceives herself as a burden, which she does not want to be. She does not tell Mr. Hank about Sylvia, knowing that Hank is married to Vivian and he cannot sever all connections with her, all he could do is to keep his hand over the head of Sylvia and help Rose for taking care of Sylvia. She does not want to be that burden as well. When she tells Sylvia about her father, she tells her that her father is an important man, and Sylvia can be proud of him. She even tells her that he would love Sylvia (Brown 18). However despite all his goodness she does not let him know about their daughter, she rather accepts to suffer whole of her life along with Sylvia. In her attempt to be not a burden to anyone, she somehow becomes a great burden on her own daughter. During the fits of insanity, she often loses her senses,

she does not even care of hygiene and in those days Sylvia despite her younger age has to look after her. During those fits, she often tells Sylvia that she does not want to lose her, Sylvia is the only person she has (Brown 17). The point to be stressed here is that despite all that, Sylvia loves her mother, like Ray does, both Sylvia and Ray want her to lead normal life and they have always been ready to help her, but she perceives herself a burden and does not accept any outside aid. She finally loses the fight and surrenders, just the way Dr. Thomas Joiner has identified in his theory that those people who feel themselves as burden develop a negative notion about them, and start feeling out of control of their lives and start thinking that their death is more worth to the people around them than their lives. So becomes the status of Rose which is evident from her last dialogue to Sylvia before she commits suicide. She apologizes Sylvia saying that, “Mama has cheated you out of your childhood. Mo poor baby doesn’t even have any little playmates in the neighbourhood. All you do is worry about me. I’m so sorry” (Brown 43). This recognition of her being a burden to Sylvia proves that in her own perception she is a burden for Sylvia, and she has snatched away the childhood out of her. She believes that Sylvia has to look after her all the time that she could not even find some friends of her age. She thinks her suicide would be a better turn in life of Sylvia who will thence be free of all worries regarding her mother. Therefore we can see that for Rose, perceived burdensomeness just as described by Joiner, made it easier for her to commit suicide.

Throughout the life of Sylvia, we find that she has been dependent to someone, just like her mother. Nonetheless, being a child her perception of being a burden is not that developed as much as her mother’s, yet as she is a sensitive little girl, she always feels the helplessness with regard to her ineffective personality and always being in need of someone. Though she is a small girl, but she always wants her mother to marry, in the little mind of hers she even constantly keep comparing different men, who can be a suitable husband to her mother. She almost believes that Uncle Ray will for sure marry her mother up until he dies (Brown 24). Just after the murder of Uncle Ray she turns her mind towards Mr. Schlesinger, a squat, bald-headed German a co-worker of her mother. She wishes her mother to marry him

(Brown 38). This concept of her mother's marriage is just due to the fact that she feels they need a man looking after them, taking care of them, they were not both sufficient for each other. This fact is further proved from Sylvia's comment that about the fatherly love of Uncle Ray, when she says that, "To me, he was more real than the man in the picture" (Brown 30). Here she overtly acknowledges that she was dependent and in a desperate need of a father, so that she may not remain as a burden on her mother. This feeling of being ineffective takes them both mother and daughter to the stage where they start perceiving themselves as burden. Even before suicide of her mother, while going to watch TV at Miss Cora's house, Sylvia often finds it embarrassing to eat out of her food, knowing that Miss Cora herself does not have a lot of groceries. This again shows the nature of the child, who is suffering from all deficiencies in her life, yet she does not want to be a burden just like her mother. She does not want to be a burden because she understands what burden means, she has been thinking about being a burden, therefore she does not want to be it. It can be explained under the philosophy of denial, we can deny what we believe exists, what does not exist does not require to be denied. Similarly she perceives herself as a burden therefore she does not want to be a burden.

After her mother's suicide when she goes with her father Hank Butler, she feels herself a burden to that family too. It is, there, not only her perception, but right from the very first day, she is behaved in a manner where she must learn the fact that for living she has to be effective, she to be doing things which is evident from Mother Vivian's behaviour at parlour. She orders Sylvia to keep floor clean of hairs, and wash used towels. She further makes it clear to Sylvia that, "she need to learn early there are no free rides in this world" (Brown 89). This shows that she has to be like a subordinate worker in the house, not as a rightful daughter. She needs to keep on doing chores as time to time entrusted upon her. Such behaviour transfigures her mentality further in the perception of being a burden. At another place when her father takes her to shopping and buys her things she needs a lot but have never been able to buy due to the plight of her mother. The next day there is a birthday party in respect of her father. She feels so much stressed out that her father has bought her so many things and she has not even bought a single gift for him.

She feels sorry for that and expresses her sentiments embarrassingly in the following manner,

Thank you for taking me shopping. I don't have anything for your birthday but a card, but I'll save up and get you something later if you don't mind waiting a little while.
(Brown 105)

This shows that she perceives herself a burden, and she needs to do something to contribute to the family and be able to walk along, which can be associated with being a burden.

Her final instalment of this perceived burdensomeness happens in form of her life with Uncle Charles. The complex nature of her relation with Uncle Charles makes her believe further that she needs to be effective to carry on her existence. She indulges herself in sort of a contract with Uncle Charles to allow him to do whatever he wants with her body, in return he provides her the importance of herself. She is almost non-existent for other characters of her family as they do not take any interest in her personal life save cousin Jean and then Drew, all others are indifferent to her. Its only Uncle Charles who goes to her school in parent teacher meetings, and other events related to her curricular and extra curricular activities. Once she even had an accident while having a ride of Cousin Henry's Three Wheeler and breaks her arm. She spends two full days at hospital and Mother Vivian only visited her once, but Uncle Charles remained there the whole time, taking care of Sylvia (Brown 211). Sylvia who has already lost both her parents, is now left with Uncle Charles, and a kid of this age, of course cannot grow on her own but keeping in view the sensitive nature of Sylvia it makes sense that her indulgent in that tabooed relation with Uncle Charles is just because her perception of herself as a burden. By silently allowing Uncle Charles to do whatever he wishes to do is like a payment to him for bearing the burden of Sylvia. This perception of being a burden takes her to the extent when she tries to be faithful with her boyfriend Drew and end this tabooed relation, in the core of her heart she already knows that she has to end it before it kills her (Brown 224). This shows that how

much she has been feeling in debt of Uncle Charles, as he is both her lover and tormentor. According to Dr. Joiner “childhood physical and sexual abuse may particularly confer risk because they are both painful and imply burdensomeness” (Joiner 65). In the case of Sylvia we know that she goes through both physical as well as sexual abuse throughout her life. She is in a state of both perceived and actually burdensomeness and she is definitely going to acquire the ability to commit suicide.

Nonetheless Uncle Charles is not the protagonist of the novel yet he is the most complex character in the novel. He is at the same time a good and a bad character. He is introduced in the novel as a beloved boy of Mother Vivian’s side of house. He is a fair complexion young black man who is just returned from the Vietnam War. War has been too horrific for him that he has been left both emotionally and physically handicapped. He has lost his leg during the war. He is so much depressed on his post war plight and he does not consider himself worth living. He finds it fit to terminate his life, right after the war. However he does not reveal both his physical as well as psychological condition to anyone else other than Sylvia. On her first interaction with Sylvia he tells her that he has been walking on a wooden leg so far, and he does not want to tell anyone about it (Brown 152). Right from his appearance in novel, we see Sylvia constantly comparing him to her mother. She sees something that no one else has seen in his eyes, Sylvia finds traces of sadness, same sadness that she has been looking into her mother’s eyes (Brown 149). At another place we find Sylvia comparing him to her mother, observing that he was hurt badly from inside, a lot like her mother (Brown 154). Yet another place she relates him to her mother commenting that, he reminds her of her mother, he drinks like her mother, and for sure he seems sad just like her mother (Brown 160).

War has been an existential awakening for Uncle Charles, his point of viewing life has been ever since changed. He believes that he is not fit for the society, as he like other Marines, has been trained like an animal for the war, and as now being a handicapped he is not fit for the war, so he is not fit for the survival. He further believes that Govt. is wrong to suppose that they can now lead a normal life

like house pets they have now become war beasts (Brown 153). Therefore, they should have been treated like useless animals now, he believes that Govt. should kill them, just like animal in misery, if not killed it can hurt others as well (Brown 154). This supposition of Uncle Charles proves to be true and he hurts Sylvia and gets himself killed in the events to come. Such mentality is a clear vindication of the fact that he perceives himself as a burden, and being killed suits him best as per his perception. This correlates his thoughts with the victims of ‘perceived burdensomeness’ as defined by Joiner in the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour. Joiner explains that “those who feel like burden have a negative self-image, they consequently lose control of life, and they finally develop negative emotions (Joiner 97). This statement explains the complex nature of his personality. He is not satisfied with what he is, though a number of people care for him for instance Mother Vivian who happens to be her sister, is too much concerned about him, and is ever ready to do anything for him. Uncle Charles does not want to be a burden on her though. He finds a refuge in form of Sylvia, and his behaviour with her may be seen as moral suicide, which finally leads him to commit physical suicide. His words when he sexually abuses for the 2nd time depicts his emotional state of mind. He requests Sylvia that he needs her, he wants to hold her without doing anything negative (Brown 198). His physical condition when Sylvia leaves him and hides herself at Miss Cora’s house, after he brutally rapes her and physically tortures her, describes the fact that he has lost his interest in life. Had the police not shot him dead he must have committed suicide.

4.1.4 Acquired ability to enact lethal self-injury

In the above sections of the research, elements of ‘Thwarted sense of belongingness’ and ‘Perceived belongingness’ have been analysed through the psychoanalysis of the various characters of *Drinking From a Bitter Cup*. So far it has been found out that there is a character who commits suicide i.e. Rose, and there are characters who might have committed suicide like Uncle Ray and Uncle Charles, but due to some other reasons they do not commit suicide, however they either have

not met the natural end of their lives, rather they were murdered. Then there is a character that is more likely to commit suicide i.e. the character of the Sylvia, on the basis of availability of evidences that have been found during the psychoanalysis of the character of Sylvia in light of the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour proposed by Joiner. In this section, it shall be tried to find out why some people commit suicide and others do not despite suffering from more or less the same circumstances. Joiner suggests that one cannot commit suicide unless he / she is going through both thwarted sense of belongingness as well as the perceived sense of burdensomeness. Joiner further suggests that only these two elements are not enough to understand the full magnitude of the stress a person feels prior to committing suicide. He outlines that the ability to enact this lethal self-injury establishes when an individual frequently goes through certain circumstances of painful and disastrous nature. He defines and explains the acquired ability to enact lethal self-injury in the following manner: -

People are not born with the developed capacity to seriously injure themselves, rather they are born with the opposite, i.e. the knee-jerk tendency to avoid pain, injury and death. Through an array of means some people develop the ability to beat back this pressing urge, towards self-preservation. Once they do, according to the theory laid out in this book, they are at a high risk for suicide, but if certain conditions apply, namely that they feel real disconnection from others and that they feel ineffective to the point of seeing themselves as a burden on others. (Joiner 23)

This statement exhibits that the suicide, according to the research of Joiner is an amalgam of thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness that are collectively and consecutively affecting an individual's state of mind. Through repeated happenings of such agonizing experiences an individual develops the tendency to tolerate pain, and gradually it is so much developed that one even loses the fear of death.

So far the lives of various characters have been psychoanalysed in light of the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour. In this section those psychoanalysis are compared and contrasted. Character of Rose that is the only character that commits suicide, has been thoroughly analysed and despite her brief appearance in the novel, there is a lot of evidence regarding her thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness. We do not have a lot of details about her past life that could be analysed however in the character of Sylvia we can see the possible past of Rose. The researcher in his term project has written a research paper, which has not yet been published but submitted to the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad for partial fulfilment of course work requirements, has also researched on the cyclic nature of tragedy in *Drinking From a Bitter Cup*. The researcher believes that in the present life of Sylvia we find the past of Rose, and in the death of Rose there is the future of Sylvia. The Novel starts in the year 1978, when Sylvia turns ten. If we go a decade back around 1968, most probably we would find Rose, pregnant with illegitimate child, having no one to take care of either. The novel ends when Sylvia is in the same stage, a girl pregnant with an illegitimate conception having no one to take care of either. During the study of the novel, it becomes quite clear that Sylvia makes certain mistakes, some are similar to those committed by Rose, the most important of which is not telling the true father of the child about conception. Rose never tells Hank Butler about their daughter. Sylvia at the end is determined to commit the same mistake, she would not let Drew know about the conception. Researcher discussed that Term paper with the author Angela Jackson-Brown, though the author refused the claim of the researcher believing that Sylvia is bit stronger character than that of her mother's. She further commented that the sequel to the novel is in the process of writing and future of Sylvia will soon be made known to the public. However as far as this novel is concerned researcher finds a great deal of evidence that future of Sylvia is no different from Rose. We do not know much about Rose but we know that she has gone through thwarted sense of belongingness and perceived herself as a burden to her loved ones including Sylvia which is a fact that has already been established so far during the multi-facet psychoanalysis of Rose. We know that she had gone through a great deal of

disasters during her short life which is evident from the comment of Uncle Ray who advises Sylvia regarding her mother as, “Baby Girl, don’t mind Rose too much. She’s just been through a lot of shit. And shit is heavy. It’ll weigh you down if you don’t shake it off (Brown 30). This tells the reader that Rose has definitely lived a life full of disasters and traumas. Moreover she has gone through thwarted sense of belongingness and perceived burdensomeness and after going through all this she acquires the ability to commit suicide and finally commits suicide.

As far as the character of Sylvia is concerned we see that throughout her life she suffers both thwarted belongingness and perceived sense of burdensomeness just like her mother. Sylvia has also been physically and sexually abused. She is molested by the school fellows even in grade three class, classmates would steal his food, beat her up and call her with abusive names and make fun of her mother’s craziness. A Boy named Martin even tries to sexually assault her. Again she manhandled and physically abused by Mother Vivian. Then Uncle Charles repeatedly rapes her, and even beats her when comes to know regarding her love with Drew. According to Joiner “Childhood physical abuse and certain forms of childhood sexual abuse may be more closely linked to acquisition of lethality than other forms of abuse (i.e. neglect or verbal abuse) (Joiner 65). In case of Sylvia there are ample examples of everything that can lead an individual to commit suicide. She herself a number of times wishes to die. In the first chapter she shares her desire for death, when she is verbally and physically abused by the fellows she says that she would have thought of suicide only if she had a gun (Brown 21). There are many other places where Sylvia desires for death but most stressful of all happens when she is being sexually abused by Uncle Charles and tries to divert her attention from the reality she starts making limericks, and those limericks are indication of her desire for death. She sings in her mind that:

“There once was a girl named Syl
Who gulped down a whole jar of pills
She hoped she would die”.

(Brown 199)

These limericks show she has already been developing desire for death. She only needs the existentialist awakening or the required acquired ability to enact lethal self-injury. At the end of the novel, though her life seems bit static but as a matter of fact this calmness may be perceived as a prediction of coming upheaval in form of suicide. Rose, ten years prior to starting time of novel, may also have been so full of confidence and hopes as Sylvia is at the end of the novel. The life, Sylvia has so far lived is full of catastrophes and those catalysts that can lead an individual to commit suicide. She has been living life of perceived burdensomeness, she has never had any interaction that can make her life perfect therefore she has always been in a state of thwarted belongingness. Even if those who act as positive interactions come in her life, they leave her too quick. On the basis of psychoanalysis of Sylvia from the perspective of Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour, researcher finds that unless her course of life changes in the sequel to the novel, Sylvia is prone to commit suicide.

Psychoanalysis of the characters of Uncle Ray and Uncle Charles depicts that Uncle Ray suffered through the thwarted sense of belonging and Uncle Charles suffered through the perceived burdensomeness. Both of the characters exhibit strong physicality. Psychoanalysis of these two characters further approves that the desire for death arises due to thwarted sense of belonging and perception of being a burden on loved ones (Joiner 65). He further suggests that people who undergo such difficulties become demoralized (Brown 74). The fact that they do not commit suicide finds its roots in their physical strength on one hand, and facing only one facet of the proposed theory either burdensomeness or thwarted belongingness. Both find refuge to give vent to their distresses, Uncle Ray through her relationship with Rose and Uncle Charles through physically and sexually abusing Sylvia. However, they both do not die a natural death either. Uncle Ray is murdered by Boon, another drug smuggler and Uncle Charles is murdered / shot dead by the police before they could have acquired the ability to enact lethal self-injury.

4.2. Textual Analysis of *Thirteen Reasons Why*

Thirteen Reasons Why is a novel by Jay Asher, it is the story of a young girl, Hannah Baker, who commits suicide and just before ending her life she sends seven audio tapes to thirteen persons. These audio tapes contain thirteen reasons that why she has committed suicide. As the synopsis of the novel has already been presented in the introduction, therefore the researcher is going to directly present the analysis of the novel.

4.2.1 Elements of Existentialist Angst

She was building quite a reputation in a short amount of time.
Only now do I realize that her reputation started in Justin
Foley's imagination. (Asher 39)

Thirteen Reasons Why is unique in several ways, Jay Asher has presented a double narration, both from first person singular perspective and all of this with a twisted time shifts. First we are introduced to our narrator i.e. Clay Jenson, a teenage boy who has just found a package containing seven audio tapes, each tape contains two stories, two reasons of the suicide of her school fellow, Hannah Baker who has committed suicide a few weeks back. Clay listens to the tapes all through the night and his life is changed. These thirteen stories / reasons are based upon thirteen interactions Hannah makes that lead her to commit suicide and Clay is one of them. Through the tapes we are introduced to our 2nd narrator, i.e. Hannah Baker, who narrates the story of her suicide. Through the study of the text, the researcher finds that existentialist angst is also a clandestine reason of the suicide of Hannah Baker. Moreover there are other characters in the novel who are wandering through endless labyrinth of life. Aforementioned excerpt from the novel throws light on the element of existentialist angst. Clay Jenson is disillusioned on the fact that how a mere rumour about the character of Hannah Baker altogether changes her very existence. The rumour emerges on surface when Hannah goes out on date with Justin Foley. It works as a snow ball that gets bigger and bigger while rolling down the mountain. Similarly that simple rumour spoils her life, it becomes

consequential and a chain of terrible effects begins affecting her remaining life. Everyone starts looking at her through the lens of this rumour and those that come later in the story. She tries hard to clear the fog off her image but despite her best efforts she fails. Aforementioned excerpt reveals that how she has to live up to character she is assigned by the society. She tries much to live up to her individual identity but finally surrenders to the fate. Sufficient arguments regarding existentialist angst and suicidal behaviour have already been developed so far in the thesis. In this section the elements of existentialist angst that lead an individual to commit suicide with reference to the *Thirteen Reasons Why* will be analysed on the similar steps as were followed during the analysis of the *Drinking From a Bitter Cup*.

‘Awakening’ as defined in the initial chapters is an important argument of Existentialism, is as relevant to the *Thirteen Reasons Why* as it was to the *Drinking From a Bitter Cup*. In the literary texts, containing the theme of existentialist angst, there comes a situation when the protagonist is disillusioned regarding his / her existence. Up until that point he / she is leading a life like a dream unless that ‘awakening’ happens. This awakening may be like the “spirit breaks through from its dream state” according to Kierkegaard or as Heidegger hypothesizes “realization of, and astonishment at the ‘isness’ of the world”, or “quiddity of the self’s world, the thisness” as per the philosophy of Sartre (Earnshaw 16). In the previous chapters examples have been provided from Kafka’s *The Trial* and Camus’ *The Stranger*. “The awakening is accompanied by the feelings of anxiety, which is the concept of ‘dread’ or anxiety’ also termed as angst” (Earnshaw 16). In *Thirteen Reasons Why* the theme of existentialist angst is so powerful that the novel begins from ‘awakening’ of the living protagonist i.e. Clay Jenson and ends on the ‘awakening’ of the dead protagonist i.e. Hannah Baker. Novel starts when Clay is posting the tapes that are sort of suicide note from Hannah Baker after listening to them over night. There he symbolically utters that, “But I need to wake up somehow” (Asher 2) though he is already awake, he has not even slept for a fraction of second throughout the last night, yet he needs to wake up. This waking up is not biologically, it is basically

existentialist awakening, he has been disillusioned last night, now he wants consistency to remain awake. At the same point he thinks about the next recipient of the tapes that is Jenny Kurtz, that he should not right away post these tapes to her, to give her final day of peace, as he knows that , the way he has reached his ‘awakening’ similarly Jenny is going to be ‘awaked’, though she does not deserve that according to his own point of view (Asher 3) yet he sympathizes with her. Awakening, as discussed earlier, brings forth, dread, anxiety and fear, Clay has gone through all these and now he knows same will be the fate of Jenny.

Theme of existentialist angst is also obvious when in the start of the first audio tape Hanna plays with words, in justification for the validity of these tapes and her accusations she says, “Why would a dead girl lie, because she can’t stand up” (Asher 8). This is PUN on existentialist angst she has gone through before committing suicide. ‘Lie’ is used in two different meanings, as is obvious that dead bodies always lie because they do not have life inside them to stand up but she is talking about the truth of her accusation, hence she cannot lie, but she joins the phrase that a dead girl which she would surely have become unless the audio tapes would be revealed, cannot tell lies because she cannot stand up. Here it can be deduced that the existentialist angst has become so intense and unbearable that she cannot further forbear it and stand it anymore. We can compare this state of mind with that of Meursault’s in *The Stranger* by Camus and K’s in *The Trial* by Kafka. They have lost their will to defend the individual reality of their existence. They have surrendered to the baseless accusations of the nameless people around them. They are accused, trialled and punished for the sins they have never committed. So is the case with Hannah, she is constantly being accused of the things she has never done and also she is constantly labelled as a character she is not. This pathetic life endorses no meaning or purpose to their existence.

Religion and the life after death are often questioned in existentialist philosophy. Similarly in *Thirteen Reasons Why* the life after death is being doubted due to existentialist angst which is evident from the following dialogue of Hannah:

And you lucky number thirteen, you can take the tape straight to hell, depending upon your religion, may be I will see you there. (Asher 9)

The choice of words in the aforementioned excerpt shows that either Hannah does not believe in the concept of heaven or hell, or at least she is doubtful about it. She is not only doubtful regarding her being at hell may be due to her thought of suicide which is not considered a pious act in many religions but also about the number thirteen that is actually Mr. Porter, English Teacher and Student Counsellor, therefore, she relates his being going to hell depending upon his religion. Though the novel does not give any other hint about Hannah's views regarding religions or divinity or any other belief regarding God and faith as compared in the *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* where religious views of almost every character are presented, yet these lines give bit of an idea regarding her shaken views in respect of religion and life after death. At another place she tells about her understanding of the death, she comments that, "I am not actually sure how this whole dead thing works. Who knows, may be I am standing behind you right now" (Asher 12).

The absurdity of human existence is further discussed in the novel when Clay finds out that the first name that is the first reason of Hannah's suicide is Justin Foley, he suddenly remembers that he is the first kiss of Hannah. At that point he questions his own self that "Why do I know that" (Asher 12). This shows that there are two facets of Hannah's story. One the real Hannah and the other is a perceived image of Hannah, perceived through the rumours and imaginations of their minds. Clay knows that Justin Foley was his first kiss because he has been hearing the gossips and rumours about her. Later in the novel, he acknowledges that what terrible role this perceived image has played, it has been stopping Clay to advance his interaction with Hannah despite his love for her. He has been afraid of people, particularly due to her spoiled image. This turn of the tale further explores the reality of one's existence. She is not the girl as depicted in the exaggerated romantic adventure of Justin Foley, but due to the frequent impositions she lowers her guard, and becomes one like she has always been projected. Extreme of which can be seen

when she lets Bryce play with her body, something she should never have allowed specially to a person of that reputation, who has even once harassed her in the Blue Spot Liquor. This shows that she has lost her existentialist quest, she has surrendered to the meaninglessness and pointlessness of life, only she is too sensitive to carry on this absurdity on daily basis as Camus suggest, rather she decides to end it.

Clay Jenson, as depicted in the start of the chapter while discussing about his existentialist awakening that he is also suffering from the existentialist angst, along with Hannah Baker. Just like Hannah Baker, Clay is also in an utter doubt regarding his existence even before the ‘awakening’. Feelings of existentialist angst are validated through his comment when he goes to get Walkman from Tony. When Tony introduces him to his father, his father acts like he knows Clay, but at the core of his heart Clay thinks that Tony’s father is faking to know. It is important to read between lines, he says, “But he is faking. He does not remember me.” (Asher 33). Another important theme of Existentialism, one can relate it to the plight of Vladimir and Estragon from *Waiting For Godot* by Samuel Beckett. They are in constant fear of being forgotten. They want to validate that they exist, but everyone deals them in a way that they are non-existent. Similarly, through this fear or doubt of Clay, it seems that he is also doubtful of his being remembered as his existence does not matter to others. Same dilemma affects the life of Hannah as well. She goes through this stage of non-existence as well, Jessica who joins the school at the same time with Hannah, both are freshmen in the school. But despite having only other freshman girl Jessica does not remember Hannah’s name, and calls her Hilary. It is worth mentioning here that Hannah never forgets her name, even she is equally a new to school. Following conversation can be read as an evidence to ongoing argument:

I am sure Hilary and I have things in common,...

Its Hannah

I just called you Hillary, didn’t I. (Asher 57)

This is how Hannah is being neglected and ignored, her very existence and her name is brought to doubts. Her actual name just like her original personality is always ignored rather the false rumours about her are believed. It can also be related to the condition of Meursault, where he is trialled for what people think about him, his ethics his strangeness but he is not trialled for the crime he has committed that is the killing of the Arab. Therefore, there is found to be a constant clash between the reality of one existence and the perceived image of one's self. Again there is a reference to this theme in the mid of the novel, when Clay fails to recognize the girl the Monet's, the girl that is not even named in the novel, claims that they have been going to same school two years ago, she looks familiar to Clay but he does not remember her (Asher 70).

Hannah time and again wishes that people around her may trust her, despite anything that has been fabricated about her. She wanted them to know her, the reality about her, not the stuff that has been propagated about her, she wants them to leave behind the rumours, or at least they should investigate that whether they are true or false, before judging her (Asher 135). But unfortunately no one cares to do that, they are happy with the stuff rather the sexy gossips about her, no one cared for her the actually her, the sensitive part of her being a human, about her existence as a human being. She happens to be just a body to play with or a gossip to talk about. Had she ever been cared and considered leaving aside the rumors she would have been alive. At the end she comes to know that there is no one who cares for her, the real her, not for any coarser pleasure but for existence, not for her body but for her soul. She further considers that she is only one who cares about her (Asher 144). It appears that actual Hannah does not exist only the infamous character that has been created in the mind of Justin and then the list of Alex Standall is the verdict, that gives every right to play with her to every person in the class, to Bryce to Marcus and even to a shy boy Zach. No one listens to her, no one knows her, no one cares for her. Her feelings of pointless existence without being cared by anyone reaches its climax when she is going to attend a party just due to the Clay gossip that he is expected to attend it too. On the way to party she walks pass her old house. A feelings of nostalgia stops her to stare at the house for a while, she stands on the

side walk of the house and keeps on looking at the house. A man takes his car out of garage and drives away. He does not happen to notice her, though she is looking in the side walk constantly staring at the house, but the unknown man ignores her as if she has never existed. In Hannah's words, "It felt surreal" (Asher 206) she starts feeling lonely, that affects her time with Clay, where despite being loved and cared, she fails to develop her relation with Clay in the party. Throughout the novel the theme of this non-existence has been running through which is a clear indication of elements of existentialist angst in the novel.

There are a number of characters in the novel that affect the life of Hannah Baker. Justin who happens to be the crush of Hannah, is a senior who at the time when Hannah shifts in the town, dating Kat, her only friend at that point of life. Justin comes to visit Kat along with his friend Zach, while Kat and Hannah are watching them walk up the road. Clay in his commentary on the audio tapes, comments that:

Would she have fallen for Zach instead of Justin a few months later? Would Justin have been wiped out of the picture? Would the rumors never have started? Would Hannah still be alive?

(Asher 44)

This shows that how we are bound to fate, how the destinies are decided far above in the heavens and we are bound to follow. Clay rightly observes that a small likening resulted in so devastating consequences. Only if she would have liked Zach instead of Justin, all this may never have happened. Nonetheless, it is also important to question here that does likening happen intentionally? Is it under the control of anyone's power? The answer to it is negative; one cannot help liking anyone, or loving on a larger scale. Hannah herself remains in a constant quest that why she likes Justin? why she ever wanted to be his girlfriend? why she was so powerless? She herself fails to understand it. So, she was forced to like Justin by design of the fate, as was Oedipus to go on the road and fight his father. This existentialist angst leads to the final quest for one's point of existence. Oedipus Rex, after being

disillusioned or having existentialist awakening blinds himself and cries, “Apollo friends Apollo, he ordained my agonies, but the hands that struck my eyes were mine” (Sophocles 77). This is the Existentialist awakening that leads to suicidal behaviour that enables an individual to acquire the ability to enact lethal self-injury.

4.2.2 Perceived Sense of Thwarted Belongingness

New town, new school, and this time I was going to be in control of how people saw me, after all how often do we get a second chance. (Asher 19)

These lines are uttered by Hannah, when she shifts to this town that is the setting of the novel. There are two definitions to aforementioned lines, one the optimistic and the other pessimistic. The optimistic definition is straight forward, she is looking forward to making new acquaintances, hoping for new interactions the way she wants. She looks at this relocation or change of vicinity as a second chance, a chance that she wants to fully avail, to be in control of her life. Whether she succeeds in this venture or not, that is another discussion. The gloomy or the pessimist side of it is that she does not seem satisfied from her previous life as well. The words “this time” highlights that previously she has not been in control of how people see her. She is not satisfied with her image that is the why she is looking forward for a second chance, to change the course of her life only she does not know that the change will be drastic, that will bring an end to her life force i.e. libido and help the death instinct i.e. the thanatos to take over. Nonetheless, one thing is pretty sure from these lines that she has never been satisfied with the interactions she has ever had, therefore she wants to change and transform them, and present an image of her that truly represents her. It is further validated when she is advised to be introduced to Jessica by the new students’ Guidance Counsellor Miss Antilly, she is extremely nervous and even irritated to the point that a part of her wants to refuse this meeting (Asher 56). At another point Hannah comments that, “I hoped - silly me – that there would be no rumours when my family mover

here” (Asher 66). This is not only an evidence of her previous failures in establishing a sound interaction; it also foreshadows her limitations in forming relationship in future that can fulfil the criteria for an effective interaction as per the Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal Behaviour.

According to Joiner, “Like separation from parents, separation from mother country according to a belongingness view, might be associated with heightened suicidality (Joiner 127). Hannah Baker may not have known that changing the vicinity and the school will not help rather she would suffer a great deal of increased pain, but Joiner have knowledge enough to formulate the Interpersonal Theory of Suicidal Behaviour, he knows that separation from mother country shall only add insult into injury. In the case of Hannah, it added enormous injuries that finally led her to commit suicide. Clay’s comment regarding his understanding about Hannah is also important as far as the issue of being an alien and specially a new comer alien is concerned. About Hannah he comments that, “She was so new to school that the rumours overshadowed everything else I knew about her” (Asher 30). This way the second chance of Hannah is wasted horrifically. She unfortunately does not have a second chance, and her image is further deteriorated to the extent that she decides to end her life.

Hannah’s feelings of thwarted belongingness are far more intense than that of Sylvia’s from *Drinking From a Bitter Cup*. She faces it even from home. Her parents are going through hard times, and they have stopped giving her the required attention. At the climax of novel, when she cuts her hair short her mother even does not notice it (Asher 169). Sylvia at least has Rose beside her till her death, than her father Hank, and later cousin Jean and Drew, whereas throughout her life, Hannah does not have anyone around her to talk out the loneliness. She even believes that her mother does not trust her own daughter, which is evident from the point when Justin for the first time calls at her home, and tells her mother that he needs Hannah’s help to solve a maths problem. Her mother asks her before giving her his number, on which Hannah thinks that her mother trusts Justin more than her own daughter. She comments that, “I accused her of not trusting her own daughter”

(Asher 21). Afterwards in the new town and new school, all her new interactions happen to be far more disturbing and indifferent to her emotions. As we have already discussed that interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour by Joiner, naturally the need to be fit in a circle or relations or belongingness includes primarily regular and recurrent interactions that come along with continuous caring (Joiner 96). A lot of discussion has already been made on the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour in the theoretical framework chapter and later in the psychoanalysis of the characters of *Drinking From a Bitter Cup*. Therefore, in this chapter only the points of references from the text of *Thirteen Reasons Why* will be analysed in light of the already established focal points of the selected theory.

Thwarted belongingness is the most dominant theme of the novel *Thirteen Reasons Why*, by Jay Asher. Right from the start of the novel we come across the fact that no one is actually connected to anyone in the novel. If we compare *Thirteen Reasons Why* with our previous novel *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* we find that the nature of relationship amid the character in *Thirteen Reasons Why* is even far more distant than the relationship in *Drinking From a Bitter Cu*. Of course time of the narration does matter, as the novel, *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* tells us a story that happened in 1978 to 1988 or so, that was a time when telecommunication and internet has not yet emerged to this great extent, and people have had enough time for each other. Whereas *Thirteen Reasons Why* tells us a story of more recent times that is around 2007. Though neither Sylvia nor Rose could have establish an interaction that fulfil the criteria of satisfaction as drafted out by Joiner, but that was mostly due to their misfortune that every positive, loving and caring interaction either dies or gets out of the life of them detail of which has been thoroughly researched in the previous chapter. As far as *Thirteen Reasons Why* is concerned we find that the nature of interaction among the character has become far more distant. No one even properly knows anyone unlike the *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* where people know each other but they are not mostly sympathetic to each other. Here in this novel even those characters do not know each other, who ought to. Right from the start of the novel, we see that Clay Jenson who should have known everything about Hannah Baker being her admirer and having love for her in his heart. He

himself acknowledges that, “I hardly knew Hannah Baker. I mean I wanted to” (Asher 9). This shows that even Hannah’s lover do not know much about her. He honestly wants to know her better than those rumours he has been hearing about her from the day she has joined the school but he has been afraid of the people around him and the reputation of Hannah. He does never dare to get pass the rumours and meet Hannah. He does not believe that his name is on the tapes, he is compelled to think that it must have been a terrible mistake or a craziest joke, he believes that he is befooled. He does not even know how to tackle in the given situation, even if somehow he belongs to this list, then what to do he does not know (Asher 11).

Throughout the novel, Hannah goes through the phase of thwarted belongingness in which Sylvia episodically suffers. Sylvia has been having good and bad interaction side by side, though her physical torture is far more higher in intensity as compare to that of Hannah’s but Hannah suffered more emotionally particularly on the basis of this thwarted belongingness. According to Joiner, “The pain of thwarted belongingness may activate similar brain areas as physical pain” (Joiner 118). It is pertinent to mention over here that Joiner is not only a simple psychologist having formed a theory on the basis of treatment of his patients. Joiner is also a clinician, and a university Professor, his statements regarding human neurology are according to the scientific researches. Therefore, on the basis of less physical tortures as compare to Sylvia, one cannot mitigate her agony since it is scientifically proved that pain of thwarted belongingness and pain of physical torture affects one’s mind equally. The limit of her loneliness can be understood by Hannah’s commentary regarding her first discussion and meeting with Jessica that, “Conversation felt awkward, but it was nice having someone to talk to other than my parents” (Asher 57). This shows that Hannah has never had anyone else to talk to other than her parents. She does not have any friends or whatsoever. Yet at another place she acknowledges that, “Sometimes there is no one around to tell you to be quiet” (Asher 74). It is extremely important to understand here, when no one is around, to whom would she speak? There are two possibilities, either she speaks to herself in her solitudes or she must be hearing voices just like Rose does which is a clear indication of thwarted belongingness.

The dilemma of the life of Hannah is that, she has been ruined by the people, who have been hurting her without knowing the intensity of their actions, for them they have been either playing with her or simply joking around. That is why, at the end she forgives them all, whatever they have been doing, she forgives everything, yet she wants them to know what they have been doing, and how it has been affecting her tearing her apart from inside. The analysis of this novel is far more complex than that of *Drinking From a Bitter Cup*. In our previous novel, relationships were pretty clear except that of Uncle Charles's tabooed relation with Sylvia. Here things apparently seem minute little teenage adventures, or young love scandals but as a matter of fact the incidents documented in the novel are just the tip of the iceberg. No one honestly knows what consequences these actions could have. First of all the rumour that is spread by Justin may be considered, he could never have thought he disfigured one the best memory of Hannah Baker. She has been planning it for days, she wants it to be special, and she wants it to remain special. But the negativity and selfishness of Justin destroys this beautiful memory. About her love for Justin and about her first kiss, Hannah shares with her audience that, "Justin, Honey you were my very first kiss, very first hand to hold" (Asher 12). Justin's act of spreading rumours exaggerations regarding the kiss is a betrayal, Hannah thinks it as a betrayal (Asher 13). At another point Hannah tells that, "a rumour based on a kiss ruined a Memory that I hoped would be special" (Asher 32). Our second narrator that is Clay Jensen also accepts the impact accusing Hannah's being so new to the school that rumours overshadowed her personality and everything that could have been understood (Asher 30).

Defining the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour, Joiner argues that the need to belong requires two fold interaction, interactions should be frequent and positive. Considerable discussion has already been made in the earlier chapters regarding definition and explanation of these two components of a fully satisfying interaction, therefore in this chapter it will be directly applied to the *Thirteen Reasons Why*. We have already seen that Hannah has not had even a single relationship that can be counted for a satisfying interaction in light of the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour, not from her previous vicinity and not

from the present one, moreover her parents too have to ignore her in the crucial time of her upbringing due to difficulties in establishing their business and even to earn bread and butter for the family, due to which Hannah has been left ignored. It has also been pointed out that her first interaction with Jessica remains quite awkward, but it ends in the most awkward of the ways (Asher 57). Besides Jessica, she makes another friend, or more specifically an acquaintance who is Alex Standall. Alex, Jessica and Hannah start in the same school together as freshmen. They form sort of a bond together though not that of a friendship, they use to go to Manet's together whenever anyone of them have been going through a hard time in school. Alex uses Hannah, to take some revenge from Jessica, details of which are unknown. He prepares a list of "Best ass and worst ass in the freshman class" comparing Hannah and Jessica, and voting Hannah as best ass in the freshman class. From this act he actually wants to hurt Jessica, but as he uses Hannah for the purpose, though thinking that he is contemplating her. This joke of list later on in the novel causes terrible consequences. According to Hannah herself, "Every single event documented here may never have happened had you, Alex not written my name on the list" (Asher 41). First of all, this list hurts Hannah, then it sort of gives right of not only staring at her body awkwardly to every person in the class, and those outside the class who come to know about this list but also gives some of them the right to touch her whether she likes it or not. This sort of relation approves Joiner's second claim that an interaction requires to be positive as well (Joiner 97).

Soon after the joke of list, she is even sexually harassed due to the same list in Blue Spot Liquor, when Bryce appears in the shop and gropes her ass, when she tries and shakes his hand off, he clutches her wrist and shouts at her to calm down as he is just kidding (Asher 53). The shopkeeper, who never has smiled even once ever since Hannah starts visiting Blue Spot Liquor, the same serious man laughs out a lot on mockery and ridicule of Hannah instead of helping her out. After this sexual abuse, she goes through physical abuse as well, simply because of that list. Jessica who is hurt on the list of Alex, feels that it is due to Hannah, and she misinterprets the list and thinks that Hannah is trying to be close with Alex and feels like betrayed by her. She does not even give Hannah a chance to clarify her stance rather she

fights her and scratches her forehead leaving scars on Hannah's forehead. Hannah asks in the tape, that whether anyone noticed those scars (Asher 68). According to Joiner childhood physical abuse and some types of sexual abuse can be closely counted for acquisition of lethal ability to commit suicide. He further explains that physical and sexual abuses in childhood specially propose suicidality because they are not only painful but also increase the feelings of burdensomeness and disconnection (Joiner 65).

Throughout her short span of life in the new school, Hannah has to face so many negative interactions, rather every interaction in her life save the other narrator that is Clay, every other person she comes across happens to be a negative interaction be it Jessica, Alex, Bryce and then Tyler, the peeping tom. Tyler is famous for his passion of photography, he is even working for the Year Book of the school. He used to come to Hannah's home and tries to take her candid photos from her bedroom's window. Effect of his visits is so drastic that it changes the course of her life. She happens to sleep with open window always looking at the sky, the star and the moon, but Tyler snatches all of these from her. Hannah describes about it in the following manner, "You stopped coming around my house, but your presence Tyler, that never left" after his visits she starts twisting her blinds shut every night locking out the stars and she never sees lightening again (Asher 89).

Tyler, the Peeping Tom, causes Hannah to indulge in another interaction that disillusioned her, this interaction is with Courtney Crimson. Courtney is her senior, a green-eyed girl, apple of everyone's eye. Everyone likes her including Hannah, she is too sweet with everyone, apparently. She maintains an image that is too perfect, she does not even want anyone be against her in any way. She is so conscious of establishing her image that Clay hearing her name on the tape comments that, "Courtney comes off as genuinely sweet. Hearing her on these tapes must have killed her" (Asher 95). Even Hannah forgives her, knowing that she believes Courtney does not do it intentionally, she puts her name on the tape just to let her know that whatever she does affects others, specially she affected Hannah (Asher 95). Keeping in view her ostensible attitude, Hannah decides to share about the

peeping tom, at that point of story she does not know that the peeping tom is Tyler. Courtney, who is always in hunt to be in news and be a subject of everyone's discussion, immediately suggests that both the girls must try and catch the peeping tom. She comes to Hannah's house right that night, however, she is having her own plans. She lets Hannah play a dirty role, and pretends for a back massage, to give peeping tom a chance to further fall in their trap, however when they come to know that he is taking pictures, she starts talking in a loud voice as if she wants the peeping tom to overhear, she acts like she has just found some sexual toys in the drawer of Hannah. Hannah trusts her and performs her part, and suddenly they rush towards the window and find Tyler taking pictures. However, right from the next day, she starts avoiding Hannah, and somehow Hannah's reputation is further ruined, and everyone have a rumour that Hannah keeps sex toys in her drawer. Hannah describes this cold shoulder behaviour of Courtney in following way,

Every time our eyes caught each other in a crowded hall and I watched your gaze jumped to someone else, I lost a little more respect for you. (Asher 99)

Courtney keeps this selfish attitude with Hannah, unless Hannah starts avoiding her too, at that point Courtney again joins her thinking that she might cause her reputation to ruin. On that point she offers Hannah to go to a party with her, Hannah who is so much stressed out, and torn out of every interaction, do not believe her, however she wants to give her a chance thinking that she may be rectifying her mistake, but it is lately revealed that Courtney simply wants a ride to party and her friendly attitude is a latest charity case, which will be further discussed in the next section because that is more related to the concept of being a burden than the thwarted belongingness.

Meanwhile all this is happening, Hannah is somehow earning an undeserved reputation. People talk about her, mock her, in her case even the rumours are extremely exaggerated. The most unfortunately all those don't even have a slight base of truth, all that started in the mind of Justin, and reinforced by the list of Alex. Now everyone looks at her like she is a corrupt girl. As there is no evidence of her

characterlessness, no one dares to talk anything out in her face, which is more irritating. Even a good boy like Clay, who even likes her to the extent of loving, avoids being with her as a friend, despite all his wishes, just because he is afraid of losing his own reputation. Attitude of every person with Hannah is so ridiculous and humiliating, the effect of which is further increased due to the fact that Hannah does not have even a single person to trust or talk to. Hannah shares this feeling with her audience, “People talk about you at your back, and turn their eyes when you turn to them they will shift glance” (Asher 138). She wants them to get past the rumours and trust her, know her, the reality of herself, but no one is ready to understand her. At this stage she is in a phase, where a single positive, frequent and caring interaction could have saved her life. She requires ears to hear her, eyes to see the reality of herself, shoulders to cry on and give vent to her agony, but there is no one (Asher 134). At every step we find the importance of being belonged as highlighted by Joiner.

Hannah is so depressed to form an interaction, that she participates in a charity survey namely, ‘your dollar valentine’, wherein the credentials of participants are analysed and based upon finding a list of three top suitors is provided. She finds herself on the top of Marcus’ list. They decide to date at Rosie’s ice-cream parlour. Hannah, does not want to go, she wants to refuse, but she has no one to talk to, so as another attempt to belong she goes on the selected place in time and waits for Marcus. A part of her is continuously telling her that Marcus will never come, a thought which is at the same time, relaxing and depressing. She waits for him for more than half an hour (Asher 138). This shows her plight that how much she has been left along to face the agonies of her life, agony of thwarted belongingness on the top. However, when Marcus appears he selects a cornered place, avoiding the open place in front of the counter, and soon after breaking a couple of jokes, starts caressing her knee and thigh. Hannah tries to avoid but he behaves as if he has a right to play with her body and his soul purpose to come is to play with the body of Hannah, he does not want any other friendly sort of interaction. Hannah feels terribly awkward. She looks around in search of any help, “I didn’t want to yell... but my eyes were begging for help” (Asher 142). There are

a number of faces, which Hannah feels have been watching those actions of Marcus but no one cares to intervene. “But everyone turned away. No one asked if there was a problem” (Asher 143). When Marcus does not stop his physical advances and starts crossing limits she pushes him and he falls down on the floor. He then leaves her alone in the ice-cream parlour. She finds that Marcus has brought Zach to record his sexual adventure with infamous Hannah.

Right after the Rosie’s Ice cream parlour incident, Hannah feels lonelier and her sense of belongingness is ultimately thwarted. She reconsiders her life, and asks herself that whether she will always be shoved back and pushed around by every person she will ever trust. She loses faith from every relation and every interaction (Asher 145). At this point of life, she starts thinking about suicide. She wonders that how people at school would react if she never goes back to school, if she simply gets herself out of their lives, would it affect them? (Asher 145). In the guidance class of Interpersonal communication, teacher starts a practice of sharing personal comments and places a drop box outside class, wherein everyone can drop notes for any other class fellow. Zach whose character has already been discussed, as he first accompanied Justin and then Marcus, starts stealing the notes that are meant for Hannah. The notes at that time, are the only mean that can make her feel connected. She herself comments that, “My world was collapsing, I needed those notes. I needed any hope those notes might have offered” (Asher 165). Zach’s crime does not remain on this only, rather to add insult into injury, he does not even care to say sorry or apologize for this act. This sort of rude and proud behaviour makes Hannah feel that she is not even worth an explanation, for stealing her personal notes. All these events and all those interactions Hannah has in her life, prove the claim of Joiner that “the unmet needs to belong is a contributor to suicidal desire: suicidal individuals may experience interactions that do not satisfy their need to belong (unpleasant, unstable, infrequent)” (Joiner 97). It is evident that throughout her life Hannah has not had a single experience that can satisfy her need to belong, not a single relation in her life has come to the point where it can be claimed that Hannah belongs to that relationship.

The only relation that could change her life is that of Clay Jensen's. Unfortunately Clay never has the nerve to establish a relationship with Hannah, he likes her, sometimes during the course of the novel while listening to tapes it seems like he even loves Hannah, but he is always afraid of her image, her reputation. Clay is always good at talking and discussing things with Hannah, but whenever anyone comes around, he steps back. He pretends he is just working not hanging out with her. Just because Hannah has a reputation, a reputation that scares him (Asher 180). When finally he gets the chance to get close to Hannah and share his feelings for her, unfortunately Hannah is not in a condition to understand. She has just gone through so much that she cannot even believe that the good reputation of Clay is actually true and well deserved. She comes to a party just because she has learned about Clay's expected presence there. They finally talk to each other and make out, they share a kiss, but Hannah is so depressed that she could not continue though she loves the time she is spending. In her own words she expresses her feelings as, "Loneliness returned, but I was not alone, I knew that. For the first time in a long time, I was connecting, - connected -, with another person at school. How in the world was I alone? (Asher 212). This shows that only if Clay has entered in her life a bit earlier, the tragedy would never have happened. Or if Hannah has not had the existentialist angst right before the party, when she stand in front of her old house staring at that building, and being ignored as if she never existed, which she later on revealed as the reason of shouting and not proceeding further with Clay in their little romance. Only if these two things have not happened Joiner's view regarding importance of a frequent, loving, caring and positive interaction that "this need to belong is so powerful that, when satisfied it can prevent suicide" (Joiner 118) would have been proved. Since for the first time she felt like connected, but the most unfortunately Clay does not stay long enough to be called a frequent interaction as required by the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour by Joiner. Character of Clay is merely a distant type of relationship which is not adequate to satisfy the primary need to belong which can somehow lessen the risk of Suicide or lethal self-injury as highlighted by Joiner (Joiner 118). Furthermore, Joiner is of the view that these forms of distant interactions do not fit in the category of belongingness :

The need to belong will be only partially met if an individual feels cared about but does not have face to face interactions with the relationship partner. (Joiner 97)

Throughout the short span of her life, Clay only properly interacts with her in that party when step ahead than a formal relation and fall into intimacy and establish a personal relation that could help stop her from committing suicide. They do not have face to face interaction and remain distant. However she acknowledges Clay deserves his reputation, as compare to Hannah who does not deserve the disreputable image that she has been forced in. She does not deserve her reputation (Asher 216).

4.2.3 Perceived Burdensomeness

As we have already discussed that Dr. Thomas Joiner in his theory, “interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour” refer to perceived burdensomeness with emphasize on the term perceived. He is of the view that the people who contemplate suicide they perceive themselves a burden, they further form a faith that this state of being a burden is permanent and only death is a solution. Nonetheless they are mostly wrong about its perception as in most of the cases this perception is mistaken (Joiner 98). He further adds that “any perception, mistaken or not, can influence behaviour. My contention is that perceived burdensomeness influences suicidal behaviour” (Joiner 99). Considerable debate regarding definition and explanation of perceived burdensomeness according to Joiner has already been made in the previous chapter. In this chapter aspects of perceived burdensomeness shall be discovered in *Thirteen Reasons Why* by Jay Asher, keeping in view the points provided by Joiner.

Right from the beginning of the novel we find the clues of perceived burdensomeness in the character of Hannah Baker. Even the 1st tape starts in the following manner,

Hannah Baker here,
No return engagements,
No encore,
And this time, absolutely no requests. (Asher 7)

It is important to highlight here that the choice of words with which the writer introduces the protagonist Hannah, entails that she thinks herself as a burden. No, return engagements, no encore and no requests, this is the perception of Hannah about her disappearance from the lives of the people around her. With Hannah there must be, as she perceives, return engagements, encores and many requests to be faced by the people who have some interaction with her. It shows that she thinks herself as a burden who always come with requests and return engagements. According to Joiner, “When one perceives oneself as ineffective, it is painful indeed” (Joiner 97). When one feels oneself as an ineffective member of the group as compare to the other stakeholders or family members, he / she starts perceiving himself / herself as a burden. This perceived burdensomeness mostly leads him / her to commit suicide as this feeling is indeed painful. When it is accompanied by dissatisfying relationship, frustrated and foiled interactions and repeated experiences of traumas it helps acquiring the ability to enact that lethal self-injury.

Dream analysis is a handy and useful tool of psychoanalysis. In *Thirteen Reasons Why* Hannah shares a recurrent dream that she has prior to her little romance with Justin. She often sees herself in a park on a rocket slide and beneath the slide stands Justin. She sees that her feet are way too big than normal. In her own words she shares, “My feet are too big, do you still want me to come down? I have noticed that your feet are too small, almost non-existent” (Asher 26). We find that even in her dreams she feels herself a burden, the question she asks is an ample evidence, ‘do you still want me to come down?’ it means she doubts that Justin would be willing to take care of her, as her feet are too big as compare to Justin’s non-existent feet. She thinks that she is a far bigger burden than Justin can bear. This dream correlates her thoughts with the victims of ‘perceived burdensomeness’ as defined by Joiner who vindicates that “those who feel like burden have a negative

self-image, they consequently lose control of life, and they finally develop negative emotions (Joiner 97). From the interpretation of the dream it becomes too obvious that she thinks herself as a burden.

Her feelings of being a burden are further validated when she desperately feels in need of someone to be fearful for her. When Tyler the Peeping Tom starts visiting her house for candid shots, she feels dependent on Courtney to find a way, though Courtney misuses her in her own vested interests. Dependency may be counted as a step towards being a burden. Hannah feels so helpless that she does whatever Courtney ask her to do. Hannah tells to her audience about it in the following manner, “I wanted someone to be afraid for me. I wanted someone to validate my fears” (Asher 84). This shows her dependency that may turn to perception of burdensomeness evidence of which may be seen when she wants to remain in contact with Courtney. She wants to discuss the matter with her in detail. She thinks of Courtney as a partner and friend. But when she sees Courtney’s disinterestedness in her affairs, she thinks herself as a burden on Courtney. Though she suffers a great deal of disrespect due to her, yet up till that point she thinks of Courtney as a saviour. When Courtney starts neglecting Hannah she thinks that Courtney is fed up of her burden, she shares it as, “Every time our eyes caught each other in a crowded hall and I watched your gaze jumped to someone else, I lost a little more respect for you” (Asher 99). When Courtney in her own interest tries to rebuild friendship band with Hannah to have a ride to the party, Hannah picks up the point of this change in Courtney’s attitude. Yet she misperceives that Courtney wants to show people that her friendship with Hannah is a charity case, Hannah who is left alone with no one around her. “I was her latest charity case” (Asher 112). This is what Hannah thinks of herself, a charity case.

Hannah’s feelings of being a burden are also evident from the fact that she does not share anything about what she is going through with her parents. As it has already been discussed that her parents having hard time in settling their business as well as accommodation, stop giving her the required attention, and she feels herself an additional burden to them. This might be the reason that why she starts part time

job at Cinema theatre. She seemingly wants to contribute to the house. Same time Clay joins the theatre as well, just because Hannah works there, he wants to spend time with her, but of course unnoticeably. Unfortunately, whenever she tries to contribute, results are never in her favour. When she starts working in Cinema she is further distant from her parents, they do not even notice when she gets a hair cut (Asher 169). When she tries to form friendship bond with Courtney, character of Courtney appears deceptive and she feels betrayed just like betrayed by Justin. She shares these feelings with her audience, “It may seem that every time someone offers you a hand up, they just let you fall further down” (Asher 145). Due to these circumstances, she starts losing trust on people around her. She does not share her sufferings with her parents, she does not share anything with anyone else only when she makes her mind to commit suicide she tries to share what she is going through with the Student Counsellor Mr. Porter. She forms a defensive wall that says no to every help, she does not want to be a burden. While working in cinema theatre, when Clay finds Hannah talking with Bryce, he tries to tell her about the character of Bryce, and warns her to be careful, she reacts rather in a rejection saying, “You don’t need to watch out for me, Clay” (Asher 148). So she simply rejects any help that could have saved her from suicidal behaviour, but due to this perceived sense of burdensomeness she refuses.

Again when she drops a note not naming her, that someone wants to commit suicide, Ms. Bradley holds a full discussion class on that note in the class of “Peer Communication”. Unfortunately due to her perceived burdensomeness she fails to get benefit from that thought that discussion could have been way too beneficial. A lot of relevant points are raised and a number of precautionary measures are discussed but in the false perception of being a burden Hannah fails every hint. She thinks, “May be I was being selfish. May be I was just looking for attention. May be I just wanted to hear people discuss me and my problems” (Asher 173). This shows that despite all the indications that are highlighted in the class discussion, and despite all other ways to avoid this tragedy she focuses on the fact that she is being selfish, and she wants others to solve her problems, this feeling of perceived burdensomeness keeps her from availing any benefits, and as Ms. Bradley tries to

invoke the person who has written the note, that he / she can share things with her in solitude but Hannah does not proceed further unless she fully acquires the ability to commit suicide.

The postulation of the researcher that the suicidal mind of Hannah perceived herself as a burden is further accredited from the study where a preponderance number of people who has been around suicidal patients testified that their support of the patient represented a burden to them (Asher 138). This shows that the perception of burdensomeness whether mistaken or not, may have some basis of its existence. In case of Hannah there seem to be circumstances which are the base of her perception, in her case most of her interactions are which make her feel burden, but offended by these interactions unfortunately she ignores those like Clay, Ms. Bradley and her parents who might make her feel better. She was not in fact a burden for any of them. Had she ever told them her problems straightforwardly, she would never have acquire the ability to enact lethal self-injury.

4.2.4 Acquired ability to enact lethal self-injury

Does life please you? Live on,

Does it not? Go from whence you came.

No vast wound is necessary; a mere puncture will secure your liberty.

(Seneca qt Asher 119)

Joiner suggests humans are not born with the acquired aptitude to fatally injure themselves, to be more accurate they are born with the fostered predisposition to avoid pain, injury and death. Nevertheless some people acquire the ability to defeat this fostered predisposition of self-preservation (Joiner 23). According to him one cannot commit suicide unless he / she suffer from both disenchanting sense of belongingness and the perceived burdensomeness. Joiner proposes that only thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness are not sufficient to fathom the full extent of the stress a suicidal mind goes through before committing suicide. He delineates that the ability to commit suicide is acquired when one recurrently suffers painful and traumatic experiences. A detailed discussion has already been made on how an individual acquires the ability to enact lethal self injury, in light of

the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour, in the previous chapter. In this section *Thirteen Reasons Why* shall be analysed to discover these painful and traumatic experiences that lead Hannah to commit suicide. There are other characters as well, who are possible suicides, in this section they will also be brought into discussion. For instance character of Clay, though he does not seem to be suffering from thwarted belongingness and perceived burdensomeness, but her experience of failed love for Hannah and then witnessing her suicide and the way she has been tortured throughout her life, changes his mindset. Moreover, the girl Skye Miller, her short appearance in the novel is also indication of her suicidal personality. These two shall be discussed in detail besides the analysis of Hannah's acquisition of suicidality.

Hannah Baker's suicide is not a result of an impulsive action of a sentimental personality. Right from the start of the novel, Jay Asher gives his readers the clue that Hannah has been planning her suicide quite dramatically. A few weeks ago, just days before Hannah took the sleeping pills, she slips a map of the town where they live in the mail boxes of those thirteen people she alleges the reason of her suicide. She writes on the envelope, "Save this, you will need it" (Asher 11). Which is a clear indication that Hannah has been thinking about committing suicide, and even after finalizing her suicide she took "a few weeks" to finally do it. She further comments that she does not know how this whole dead thing works, she is not sure what will happen to her when she will commit suicide may be in form of a ghost she will be standing right behind her listeners (Asher 12). Throughout the course of the seven tapes, readers come to understand the frequent traumatic experiences she has that make her an alien in the vicinity with thwarted sense of belonging, and further develop her perceived sense of burdensomeness. These recurrent experiences have been discussed in detail in the preceding sections of the analysis. In this section the parts of the novel shall be analysed where Hannah starts acquiring the ability to enact lethal self-injury.

In the party where Courtney takes her, Hannah starts developing suicidal behaviour, she feels intense emotional collapse, she comments "I didn't feel

physically pained, but mentally my mind was twisting in so many ways” (Asher 111). She starts getting tired of being in a constant combat with the world outside. Later on when Ms. Benson praises the picture of party, wherein Hannah forcefully indulges Courtney, and hardly decorates a smile on her own lips, but as a matter of fact Hannah knows that “everything about it was fake” as there is no factual friendship bond between Courtney and Hannah, there in the office she realizes that no one knows the truth about herself, and her life, right then her views about the world shake. She starts giving up, she starts acquiring the ability to accept the forfeit she considers to surrender. “At some point, the struggle becomes too much.. too tiring.. and you consider letting go. Allowing tragedy ... or whatever ... to happen” (Asher 124). These lines show that her mind is now twisting towards suicide, though as yet she is thinking of suicide as a tragedy. However soon she finds hope in suicide, just like the proposition of Joiner that suicidal individuals think of suicide as their only chance to end the miseries of their lives. “This time for the first time I found the possibility in giving up, I even found hope in it” (Asher 126). However, up until now she has just started viewing the possibility of committing suicide, but she is still looking for some aid, to shake off this suicidal thought. In her own words her heart and her trust are in the course of collapsing (Asher 159). At that point she starts recollecting her life and all her thwarted belongingness with the world around her, the more she thinks, linking the happenings in her life, the more her heart starts collapsing (Asher 160). Finally with her interaction with Marcus & Zach at Rosie’s, she starts considering about committing suicide, which she was still unable to spell out (Asher 161). Her one dollar valentine experience with Marcus is so devastating that right after that she cuts her hair short the very day she meets Marcus Cooley at Rosie’s (Asher 163). Clay’s reaction is also worth highlighting when he listens to the tapes and comes across the point where Hannah is struggling to spell out that she really intends to end her life, Clay comments that “Suicide, such a disgusting word (Asher 164).

She writes note to Mrs. Bradley in the “Peer Communication” the teacher who operates the notes. She writes, “Suicide, It’s something I have been thinking about” (Asher 170). Here in this note she finally gives voice to the very thought of

suicide, and places it in front of the class to discuss, though not showing her name. She further explains that it was a partial lie to start with, she had been thinking about suicide but always pushing away the thought, but she is tired of pushing it a lot. Discussion on the note comes ironically relevant, not only to her circumstances, but to the research as a whole. Most of the students come up with the view that, suicides happened due to the fact that suicidal individuals happen to be lonely, or due to upset home life (Asher 171). At the end of discussion about suicide, Mrs. Bradley passes out a flyer regarding the warning signs of suicidal individual, wherein among the top five predictions “a sudden change in appearance” (Asher 173) is most important. If we notice that sudden change in appearance is observable almost in every suicidal character, first of all, Rose changed dress code she starts wearing that gloomy looking loose dark grey suit of her before committing suicide. Sylvia Cuts her hair short right after, her Uncle Charles rapes her and tortures her, cutting the hair short is a symbol of change in course of the life. Hannah cuts her hair too, right after her interaction with Marcus at Rosie’s. Skye also changes her dress code, Clay finds her in the bus, she is wearing grey sweatshirt with matching pants, Clay notices that she has stopped dressing in a more lively manner. It is pertinent to mention over here that the grey colour is a symbol of gothic life ahead. It is also pertinent to mention that among these four character, two characters belong to *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* and two are from *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Rose changes her dress code, and starts wearing grey colour before she commits suicide and Skye also starts dressing herself in grey and gloomy style and she is a possible future suicide. Similarly Hannah cuts her hair down and she commits suicide, Sylvia cuts her hair short and she is too a possible suicidal aptitude.

Hannah faces so many traumatic collaborations, even after that event in Rosie’s that she drops guard. She gives up the war with the world. She finally loses her individuality. Up until now she has fostered the pain tolerance, she is not able to forebear every pain, which is evident from the fact that despite looking two persons, she does not trust namely Courtney Crimson and Bryce, together in the pool, she accepts their invitation. She knows they are neither trust worthy nor they will miss any chance to further increase her agony, yet she share the hot tub with them. She

even lets Bryce with her body in the pool in whatsoever way he likes to do (Asher 263). Despite the fact that she does not feel good the actions of Bryce, and his touch on her body, she weeps silently, closes her eyes but she does not stop Bryce, she accepts the pain as her fate because she has given up, she has acquired the ability to enact lethal self-injury. In her own words, “The night was over. I was done” (Asher 266). She is done with the life and the world, Thanatos has taken over her Libido, she has acquired the ability to commit suicide.

Clay Jensen is the second character in *Thirteen Reasons Why* who happens to somehow acquire the ability to enact lethal self-injury. Though at the end of the novel, he seems to get a way through it, yet during the passage of the tapes and the night of listening them, there are points where we see the changed Clay Jensen. Right from the start of the novel he is under extreme psychological pressure which is evident from his actions as well. Right on the first page of the novel his mental state is depicted as, “I rub two fingers hard over my left eyebrow. The throbbing has become intense” (Asher 1). He is at a post office, he has been listening to the tapes the whole night, and now he is here to forward these tapes to the next person on the list. Though he has been liking Hannah very much and her suicide has changed the course of his life but he does not want to hear these tapes again. Nonetheless he believes that the voice of Hannah will never leave his head (Asher 3). He is in so agonizing a pain that he feels that his head is still pounding deep behind his left eyebrow, every swallow tastes sour to him. He feels that, “the closer I get to school, the closer I come to collapsing. I want to collapse. I want to fall on the sidewalk right there and drag myself into the ivy” (Asher 3). This shows that he wants to collapse, just like Hannah has been willing to die and collapse in her life. These feelings are so intense that he feels himself as a hollow man, “My fingers my hands, my arms my neck everything feels hollow” (Asher 9). The effect of audio tapes on him is so grave that he could not stay at his home, he has to move somewhere open, he feels suffocated, “But I need Room, Room to breathe” (Asher 22).

We also find a drastic change in Clay’s character, Clay is depicted as the most polite and ethical boy of the town. He is always liked by the parents of his

friends due to his “pleases and thank yous”. He is always polite speaking, loving and caring who always know the boundaries and limits of ethics. However to listen to the tapes he steals Tony’s Walkman, which is a thievery that cannot be expected from him (Asher 33). Clay is a boy always obedient to his parents however he starts reconsidering relations, “I needed to get out of home, my mom was getting on my nerves” (Asher 34). One cannot expect such reckless attitude and behaviour from the gentleman Clay. He feels obsessed with the suicide of Hannah, “Like I am obsessed. Too obsessed” (Asher 97). This obsession can definitely lead Clay to acquisition of the ability of enacting lethal self-injury. The positive factor in his life is that, he neither goes through the thwarted sense of belongingness nor he establishes the perceived burdensomeness. However Clay has a feeling that he will be doing the same, “I am starting to get there too, Hannah” (Asher 118). This is the risk factor, despite all good things in his life Clay can come across inspired suicidality. He can be inspired by the giving up of Hannah, he is also starting to give up, to leave things as they are. In his own words his revolt against trying has started, “I hate this. I don’t want to find out how everything fits together anymore” (Asher 143). Effects of tapes on Clay are so evident that he starts thinking like Hannah, “why didn’t Tony stop to say goodbye” (Asher 177). This feeling of distant relationship reminds us of Hannah’s feeling when Courtney stops saying goodbye to her. It shows that somehow Clay Jensen is following the footsteps of Hannah Baker. Clay starts sharing the agony of Hannah Baker, he feels each and every pain, agony and anguish that once Hannah goes through. “Just hearing my name, the pain in my head doubles. I feel an agonizing twist in my heart” (Asher 198). His emotional state is not a bit covert, he overtly goes through all this. His condition is so obvious that Tony comments, “It would drive you crazy not knowing what happened to her” (Asher 201). Tony knows that if Clay is not given a chance to give vent to his sorrow, he can drive crazy. Clay’s being crazy also correlates with Hannah’s feelings of insanity, when sitting at Rosie’s she thinks that, “is this what it feels like to go insane, (Asher 160).

The most important of all Clay also develops the pain tolerance, while listening to the audio tapes, he grasps the barbwire of the fence and keeps walking

holding it. He seems altogether ignorant and unaware of the wound that cuts his hand from inside. He notices it when he listens the whole story, "I tighten my fist and lift it, in front of my face, through my teary eyes. I watched the blood squeeze through my fingers. The skin is cut deep in a few places, torn by the rusted fence" (Asher 266). Pain tolerance is important in acquisition of the ability to enact lethal self-injury. According to the theory of Joiner, individuals develop the tendency to tolerate pain due to frequent happenings of traumatic experiences, in case of Clay, we see that his love for Hannah is traumatic enough to enable him to tolerate pain. After listening to the tapes, he starts crying, regardless of the fact that others can hear him crying, which shows that he is past personal egos now. "With my face pressing against the bars. I begin to cry. If anyone is walking through the park I know they can hear me. But I don't care" (Asher 280). Now he is at a stage that he does not care what anyone can think of him, what consequences can occur. He feels already guilty of considering other people's views regarding Hannah, only if he has not believed the rumours and only if he has never been afraid of his image being destroyed Hannah may have been alive. He feels powerless, he seems like lost, he is about to collapse just like Hannah, "I fight every muscle in my body, begging me to collapse (Asher 283). But the fact that Clay has not yet gone through the thwarted belongingness nor he has perceived himself a burden to his loved ones. He has so many frequent, positive, caring and loving relations in his life unlike poor Hannah. However the analysis finds his character at the verge of acquiring ability to enact lethal self-injury though at the end of novel, he seems recovered from the tragedy of Hannah, which shall be discussed in the conclusion in detail.

Skye Miller is another character who seems to have a possible suicidal behaviour. She is Clay's 8th grade crush, she has been a lively girl as far as Clay remembers, but she has changed altogether especially from past couple of years. Now she dresses in dull loose clothing, Clay finds her travelling in the same bus, she is wearing a bulky grey sweatshirt and matching pants (Asher 104). No one knows the reason of her changed appearance and attitude. She does not talk much, she does not smile. Finding Clay in the bus, she asks him "Miss your house?" as she knows where Clay lives. Clay recollects that these are more words he has ever heard

her speak to anyone in a long time (Asher 105). She seems bit positive and interactive towards Clay, however Clay at that time is so much intrigued into the audio tapes that he cannot pay much attention to her. Yet he asks her that where is she going. In response she tells him that she is not going anywhere (Asher 105). Clay thinks about Skye, that why does she insist on being outcast? He wanders what could happen to her that has changed her so much? He feels like one day she just has stopped wanting to be a part of anything (Asher 105). This behaviour highlights that she must have been going through the thwarted belongingness. She has cut herself off from the society. She has closed down herself in a shell of her own. Clay steps down the bus and the bus pulls away. Clay stands and observes Skye's window passes with her head resting against the glass and her eyes shut (Asher 106). This depiction reveals the hidden agony of this character. Though a brief account of Skye is provided in the novel, yet she possesses an important role in the novel, which shall be brought under discussion in the conclusion of the novel. After this little introduction Skye is again brought on the surface on the last pages of novel, in her depicted gloomy way, only Clay has learnt to act right with the suicidal individuals.

After suicide of his father Joiner found his Uncle Jim, who was heartbroken and confused that how or why a successful person like his father has committed suicide. Joiner thinks that his uncle did not understand anything about suicide, Joiner further claims that the "relation of understanding suicide and acting right about it is interesting to explore" (Joiner 3). On his father's suicide he thinks no one really understood that. For some people like his uncle Jim, understanding about suicide does not really matter and does not work as a barrier stop him being sympathetic and compassionate. Understanding about suicide is important not only for the reason of curtailing the rate of suicide, but also for improving the behaviour that mostly people keep with those who are left behind by the suicidal persons. Through the research in hand the researcher has tried to elaborate the theme of suicide as depicted in literature. Just like real life, literature is also suicide from Seneca to the very present day. Some of renowned poets and authors have even committed suicides. Clay in *Thirteen Reasons Why* has learnt to act right with suicide, and his changed behaviour with Skye Miller verifies this transformation.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Throughout the course of the research, the researcher has found links between the existentialist angst and suicidal behaviour. To live or the will to exist is clearly contrary to the choice of ending one's own life as suicide. Therefore, suicide is verily a domain of existentialism. Existentialist school of thought has been explored in various sections of this research from Kierkegaard's 'being and self' to Camus' pondering about suicide that suicide and murder are two aspects of a single system, the system of an unhappy intellect. Existentialism is a philosophy of individual's existence; suicide on the contrary is an individual's extermination. The researcher is of the view that from existence to extermination an individual goes through a number of experiences that lead him to commit suicide or exterminate himself and existentialist angst is one of those experiences. As there is an understandable relation between existence and literature so the researcher has selected literary texts to find elements of existentialist angst. An example of relationship between existentialist angst and literature is Shakespeare's *Hamlet* wherein Hamlet puts forward a question of existentialist angst while thinking about ending his miserable life, he asks, 'To be or not to be, that is the question'.

Faith has been the simplest and the most straight forward way to discover the meanings of life. There are two important examples in this regard. As already have been mentioned, Joiner's father committed suicide in 1990. In the years before he committed suicide, he, a Caucasian, occasionally started attending African-American Churches. Similarly, Joiner's friend Sten also committed suicide. Apparently there seems to be no reason for his suicide, just like Joiner's father's suicide. Sten happily lived with his girlfriend. To Joiner's surprise, a remark of a visitor in the guest book on his cyber

obituary was that Sten had recently re-baptized as a Christian and had become a member of Springview Church, and he had found great joy in his renewed faith. Here the association between these two actual suicides is existentialist angst. Similarly in the *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* and *Thirteen Reasons Why*, all the characters who commit suicide go through the existentialist angst. They come at a point where they consider the pointlessness of their existence and ask themselves whether they should continue to exist or otherwise, just like Hamlet does. Unfortunately they decide to end their lives. However, there are characters like Sylvia, Skye and Clay who remain in the phase of existentialist angst. The first objective of the research i.e. to trace out the theme of existentialist angst behind the suicidal behaviour is hence concluded.

Another aim of the research in hand was to investigate into interpersonal relations, focusing on the interactions that instigate suicidal behaviour. The suicidal thoughts not only were stimulations of the minds of the characters that commit suicide but also provoked unconsciously by other characters during various interactions. First of all, in *Drinking From A Bitter Cup*, Rose throughout her life fails to establish even a single frequent and positive relation. Moreover she interacts with people who do not value her the way she deserves. She is mal-treated in childhood, sexually exploited in the youth, harassed and left alone in the last days of her life. Her only frequent relation is Uncle Ray. Though he loves and cares for her, but she is never satisfied with him. She never accepts him as her life partner as she never even accepts his role as father of Sylvia and does not assign any responsibility to him. The man she accepts as her husband who has fathered Sylvia biologically never returns and marries her. So her life seems a fuss of failed interactions. Sylvia does not have any frequent or positive relationship, those people who are loving and caring do not stay longer in her life.

Likewise, the textual analysis of the second novel highlights the interpersonal interactions that lead Hannah to commit suicide. An account of such interactions that basically form the seven audio tapes show that how those interactions force Hannah to end her own life. During the analysis it has also been found out that just like the negative interpersonal interactions can lead an individual to commit suicide, the positive interpersonal interactions can reduce the risk of committing suicide. As per the theory,

the satisfied sense of belongingness is so commanding that it can even avert the very desire of suicide, even if the suicidal individual has already acquired the ability to enact lethal self-injury. In *Drinking from a Bitter Cup*, we have seen that Sylvia who has already decided to end her life turns toward life again when her father Hank and then her lover Drew enter in her life one after another. Unfortunate enough, at the end of the novel, she is left with none of them. In *Thirteen Reasons Why* also we see that Hannah does not have even a single interaction that can stop her from committing suicide, all people in her life are those interactions that cause her suicide.

After investigating the interpersonal interactions that cause the suicidal behaviour, it has also been analysed that whether the social norms and customs play any role in promoting the suicidal behaviour. In both the novels we find fair evidences that prove the stance that social norms and customs play an important role in generating the suicidal thoughts in the minds of individual specially those individuals who are somehow negatively affected by these norms and customs. There are a number of occasions in both the novels where the mere existence of social norms or customs causes some traumatic influences on the characters with suicidal tendency. For instance, in *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* we see that there is a certain air of prejudice for the coloured people. Though the novel is all about an African-American family yet there are constant echoes of white people's supremacy over black. Uncle Ray's comment, while playing chess that white always plays the first move, is an example of this racism. Again recurrent debates on Malcolm X and his philosophy is also an evidence of this stance. Later in the novel when Sylvia and Drew starts dating, no white girl can tolerate that. These white girls not only pass disgusting glances towards Sylvia, but they often indulge in hooting, and even once they write about it on Drew's car. Here it is pertinent to keep in mind that Drew is European American and Sylvia is African American, and the setting of the novel is of a time when inter-racial marriages were not accepted by the society and they were considered against social norms and customs. In the second novel i.e. *Thirteen Reasons Why* we see that some social norms and customs pave the way for her future suicide. In her very first class at the new town, the tradition of ragging stimulates the future mishaps. A number of such norms and customs instigated the suicidal behaviour in her.

Joiner puts forward that perceived burdensomeness and thwarted sense of belongingness are the most important motives of suicide. He further suggests that even being a victim of perceived burdensomeness and thwarted sense of belongingness, an individual cannot commit suicide unless he acquires the ability to enact lethal self-injury. This ability to commit suicide is acquired through repeated exposure to traumatic experiences or psychologically painful events. Joiner has come up with a scientific justification regarding importance of traumatic experiences where he asserts that these traumas or pain of thwarted belongingness activates similar brain areas as are affected by physical pain. The theory further encompasses the experience of childhood physical and sexual abuse as a solid base of suicidal behaviour. In *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* characters of Rose, Sylvia, Uncle Ray and Uncle Charles all go through traumatic experiences in their lives, specially Rose and Sylvia as they both also suffer from childhood physical and sexual abuses. *Thirteen Reasons Why* can also be read as a chronicle of Hannah's psychological sufferings, which includes socio-psycho traumas, physical and sexual abuse. In the end as an escape she commits suicide. Her suicide fulfils the criteria as suggested by Joiner in the interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour. She suffers from displacement, thwarted belongingness, perceived feeling of being a burden and other psychological and physical abuses.

The most important aspect of interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour is that it not only highlights the symptoms of suicidal behaviour and knowing about these symptoms one can identify the persons with suicidal behaviour but it also shows the ways through which the risk factor of suicide can be curtailed. This theory teaches to act right with the suicidal people, to act in a way that can reduce the chances of their committing suicide, and to attract them back to life. The most tragic fact about suicide is that it has been underestimated, it is rarely understood and lacks researches that critically discover the motives and reasons behind this act of self-termination in the light of some valid socio-psycho theoretical approach. In literature or real life, people always miscalculate the gravity of suicide and its consequences. Marcus, in *Thirteen Reasons Why* represents the layman attitude when he brushes off the blame upon him about Hannah's suicide His comment makes Clay Jensen annoyed; however, Jensen himself has been in the same state of mind that is he has also been thinking that he does not belong in the audio tapes.

The important point is that people affect other even without knowing it that they are affecting the lives of other people, and sometimes even causing their suicides. Hannah, who suffers the most through the hands of others, tells her audience that everything affects everything, whether you wish the consequential effect or not. Hannah says that when you mess with one part of a person you are not messing with just that part, you are actually messing with their entire life. Here it is pertinent to mention that, both Joiner and author Asher seems to be on one page on philosophical grounds. The tragedy about suicide is that the deserved sympathies are always undermined and side-lined by mostly misunderstood causes as is evident in suicide of Joiner's father, or as in the novel *Thirteen Reasons Why* where some people caused a suicide and yet they do not understand their crimes. Surprisingly, Hannah who herself has committed suicide may never have thought after recording the account of her suicide on audio tapes, she would leave at least two more people at a risk of committing suicide. One Clay Jensen, the second narrator of the story, as he has a feeling that he will be committing suicide too. He starts thinking like Hannah, when Tony does not say goodbye to him, which he would never have noticed had Hannah not highlighted it in her story. Even Tony comments about it that, and advises Clay that it would drive Clay crazy not knowing what happened to Hannah. His psychological condition is depicted right from the beginning of the novel till the end, in the manner that the reader can feel his pain. Even at the end when he cuts his hand with the barbwire, readers can see that he has enhanced his ability to tolerate pain that is acquisition of the ability to commit suicide.

A suicide therefore, leaves behind two types of effects on people, one that leads other people to follow and feel the same agony and as a possible result terminating their own lives. Second effect is comparatively more common, it prevents people to even pay sympathies, and they think that a suicide is simply an impulsive act, or some Godly punishment, as is evident from the dialogue of Marcus, that Hannah may have killed herself anyway, as if she only requires an excuse to kill her. Hannah herself thinks that some people are just preconditioned to think about suicide more than others. Skye Miller is another character with suicidal behaviour. She is told to be Clay's crush when he was in his 8th grade. An energetic and lively girl as far as Clay remembers about her, however he finds her drastically changed. Her present dull loose clothing, bulky

grey sweatshirt and matching pants correlates to the dressing of Rose, in *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* just before she commits suicide. Skye now does not talk much and does not smile. She appears to be communicative to Clay but unfortunately Clay at that time is so much enthralled by the suicide story of Hannah that he ignores her. Clay ruminates regarding her solitude, and suspects that as if she just has stopped wanting to be a part of anything. Skye appears in the novel for the second time exactly in her overcast and disconsolate manner in the hallway, but Clay has learnt to identify the suicidal individuals and to act right with them. In the end Clay has come to understand his fault, he torments himself that he has never had any idea what Hannah felt for him, not even the slightest idea who Hannah really was. Instead he always believed everything people said about her, and he was afraid of disclosing his feelings for her. He has watched Hannah walked down the long stretch of hallway, never to return. In the end he finds Skye in the same hallway where he has lost Hannah, saying sorry to people around her as over the years she has learned to avoid people just like Hannah. When Clay finds Skye walking down the hallway, he wants to say something but he cannot, he is again trapped between opposite feelings, a part of him wants to ignore her but he remembers Hannah that walking down the same stretch of hall where he has watched Hannah slip away two weeks ago. He comes across many students and avoids them to reach to Skye. He feels a flood of emotions including pain and anger, sadness and pity. But most surprising of all, he feels hope. He calls her name, and enters in her life as a positive interaction. The novel ends here, but the story goes on. Clay's attitude is ample evidence that he has learnt not only to identify but also to act right with those having suicidal behaviour. He is ready to make Skye feel connected with the world. He is ready to get her back to life. His calling the name Skye can be compared to tragic suicide at Golden Gate Bridge. Dr. Thomas Joiner in his book *Why People Die by Suicide* writes psychiatrist Jerome Motto's account of Golden Gate Bridge suicide. Motto claims that this suicide affected him the most. The suicidal guy was in his thirties living alone in a pretty bared apartment, in his suicide note writes that he is going to walk the bridge, if anyone smiles at him on the way, he will not jump and commit suicide. Regrettably no one smiled at him. Clay's calling the name,

‘Skye’ is basically that most deserved smile that the young man at Golden Gate Bridge could not get.

Sylvia, in *Drinking From a Bitter Cup*, is a character who can also commit suicide. In a video conference with the author Angela Jackson Brown, the researcher discussed his view of Sylvia’s possible suicide to be on the footsteps of her mother. Author, though not convinced with the idea of her suicide, told the researcher that Sylvia is comparatively a stronger character unlike her mother was and her future shall be revealed in the sequel to the novel. However, unless the sequel to *Drinking From A Bitter Cup* is published wherein her thwarted sense of belonging is cured, the researcher concludes that she is at a risk of terminating her own life. For the reason of validating his point of view, researcher has compared the character of Sylvia with Skye and that young man walking down his last walk of life in hope of some strangers’ smile. Skye finds Clay as a light at the end of tunnel and it can be hoped that she may be rescued by him, however Sylvia is still waiting for that smile, for that intimate interaction that is frequent, positive, loving and caring. As the author Angela Jackson Brown denies the possibility of her suicide, in sequel to *Drinking From a Bitter Cup* hopefully Sylvia may find a reason to live on.

5.1 Recommendations

In the light of above conclusion, the recommendations for future researches are given hereunder:

Elements of Marxism: The text of *Drinking From A Bitter Cup* can be analysed with respect to Marxism. There is a constant debate regarding rich and poor classes of society. Characters like Rose, Sylvia and Uncle Ray belong to working class. They live miserable lives and despite their hard work they cannot secure respectable social status. Moreover, they are often exploited by the members of elite class like Hank, Vivian and Uncle Charles.

Elements of Feminism: *Drinking From A Bitter Cup* and *Thirteen Reasons Why* contain elements of Feminism. Rose, Sylvia and Hannah suffered the tragedies as they are

females living in a male dominant society. They would have never suffered the trauma had they been not females.

African American Criticism: Text of *Drinking From A Bitter Cup* can also be analysed in light of African-American criticism. There are a number of references with respect to Black-Art movement and Harlem Renaissance in the novel. Characters who belong to African-American race are found to be exploited by the white race.

Psychoanalysis with respect to Young-Adult Fiction: *Drinking From A Bitter Cup* and *Thirteen Reasons Why* can also be read as Young-Adult fiction. Both novels contain teenage characters and the issues related to this age group. An in-depth psychoanalytic research may also be carried out with special reference to Young-Adult characters.

The interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour: The Interpersonal theory of suicidal behaviour by Dr. Thomas Joiner can be applied to other classic or contemporary novels that exhibit the theme of suicide glaringly.

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