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Conflicting Thoughts of Motherhood - Elif Shafak's Acceptance in Black Milk vs Leda's Denial in The Lost Daughter

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Abstract: The paper examines the inner voices of Elif Shafak's success in balancing her writing career and motherhood and those inner voices are based on Hubert Herman's Dialogical Self Theory, DST. The DST is classified into seven types of subscales, the Integral Dialogical Activity Scale, IDAS. But, 'Leda' in 'The Lost Daughter', is only a successful Writer, and an unsuccessful Mother, has Psychological Egoism.

Keywords: Postmodernism, Contemporary Writers, Feminism, Motherhood, Dialogical, Egoism, Black Milk, The Lost Daughter, Elif Shafak, Elena Ferrante, Leda

I. INTRODUCTION TO POSTMODERN WRITINGS

Postmodernism is the emergence of the ideas against modernism, after the 1960's. The Post Modern Writers adopt the paradox, lengthy, less detailed information, imaginary or unreal characters, distort of time structure, the events go back and forth, slow and speed and different angles of a same situation, difficulty in differentiating truth and fiction.

The structure and style of Postmodern writers are Minimalism, Maximalism, Intertextuality, Hyperreality, Pastiche, Metafiction, Temporal Distortion, Magical Realism, Faction and Reader Involvement. Feminism is one of Postmodern Philosophy. It was said falsely that Postmodern Feminism is to keep women above men. Postmodern Feminism seeks the right to equality with men. The major feminist writers are Simon De Beauvoir, Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, Ihab Hassan, Bell Hooks, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Fredric Jameson and Sandra Cisneros, who all have Feminist Theory of analysing oppression of women by men. The themes of Postmodern female writers bring out the freedom of expression, human rights with Gender equality, against stereotypes, self identity and sometimes people against universal truth of women's life in Family, Marriage and Parenthood. Not only in the themes of books, but also their life displays rejection of Parenthood, there are few writers who lived the same for their love of literary journey.

In the Contemporary writings, Books like Motherhood by Sheila Heti thinks, 'Motherhood and womanhood are not the same thing'. Meaghan O'Connell in her book, And Now We Have Everything, thinks 'Motherhood Is What Keeps Women Oppressed', Mother of Invention by Caeli Wolfson Widger, promotes that 'pregnancy and motherhood can stand in the way of women's ambitions'. Why do the Postmodern Female writers think, family life and motherhood as the obstacles for being a successful writer?

The Selected Books for the study on the conflicting thoughts on decision of Motherhood are, Elif Shafak, in her 'Black Milk - on Writing, Motherhood and the Harem within'; Leda in 'The Lost Daughter' by Elena Ferrante. These Autobiographical fictionals, carry the stories of a Mother, who is also a Writer on the confusion to accept motherhood or not, in order to pursue their talents.

II. DIALOGICAL SELF THEORY (DST):

According to the Dialogical Self Theory (DST) (Hermans, 1996), human consciousness functions as a similar "society of mind" containing mental representations of numerous voices of culture, family members, close friends, significant others, and other sources. These voices can engage in a variety of communications, including posing questions and answers to, and having agreements and disagreements with, each other (Hermans, 2003). Inner speech also allows people to regulate their mental states and can be involved in recalling past situations and emotions, also along with autobiographical memories (Morin, 2012). The dialogical self has dynamic multiplicity of I-positions in the landscape of the mind and is bound to particular positions in time and space but has the possibility to move from one position to the other in accordance with changes in situation and time. In this process of positioning, repositioning, and counter-positioning, the I fluctuates among different and even opposed positions, both within the self and between self and perceived or imagined others and has the capacity to endow each position with a voice so that dialogical relations among positions can develop. The voices behave like interacting characters in a story or movie, involved in processes of question and answer, agreement and disagreement, negotiations and integrations. Each of them has a story to tell about their own experiences from their own perspective. As different voices, these characters exchange knowledge about their respective Me's, creating a complex, narratively structured self.

The Internal Dialogical Activity Scale (IDAS) by Oleś (2009) enables the assessment of the intensity of general dialogical activity in everyday life. The seven kinds of internal dialogues measured by subscales: (1) pure dialogical activity (AD), (2) identity dialogues (ID), (3) supportive dialogues (SD), (4) ruminative dialogues (RD), (5) confronting dialogues (CD), (6) simulation of social dialogues (SS), (7) taking a point of view (PV).

III. DIALOGICAL SELF IN BLACK MILK

In, 'Black Milk -on Writing, Motherhood and the Harem Within', Elif Shafak, is Dialogical Self Theory that brings her thoughts to think on the decision of Marriage and Motherhood, through various inner voices. Through the seven kinds of Dialogical subscales, the thoughts in the book were categorized accordingly.

Few examples of Dialogues from Black Milk.

(1) pure dialogical activity (AD), The internal dialogues on solving the decision of motherhood, Elif discusses herself on the Lives of mother writers and non mother writers, and the family life of Leo Tolstoy and Sophia, Scott Fitzgerald and Zelda and the further more discussion on lives of the literary world comes under Pure Dialogical Activity (AD).

"If Sophia had been a novelist, would Leo Tolstoy have assisted her in the same way she assisted him?" I wonder. "Would he have made copies of his wife's manuscripts over and over again? Would he have taken the children out for a walk, and met their every need, so that his wife could have more hours of peace and quiet to concentrate on her writing?" (Black Milk,68)

(2) identity dialogues (ID), The internal dialogues are for self-knowledge and answering identity questions.

Why do I always go around forgetting something or other?(Black Milk,13)

What difference did it make if I was a good caretaker or not? After all, turtles weren't babies.(Black Milk,14)

(3) supportive dialogues (SD), The internal dialogues that confirms beliefs, supports, the imagined interlocutor, during stressful situations.

How many more years can I postpone the decision to have children? The clock on the wall, the clock inside my head, the clock in my heart, the clock in my uterus, they are all ticking at once. Suddenly I undergo a strange emotion—as if all these clocks were set to go off at the same time: now (Blackmilk,44)

Elif talks to her inner selves in the form of Thumbelinas. But, she has one Thumbelina, named Blue Belle Bovary, which reflects her own desire for Marriage, Motherhood and Family life.

"Like many young women I, too, want to get married, wear a wedding dress, have a diamond ring, raise children and cruise the sales aisles of supermarkets. But you pushed away all my desires and looked down on them with such force that I couldn't even mention them. I was silenced, suppressed and denied."(Blackmilk,110)

(4) ruminative dialogues (RD), The internal dialogues that evokes unpleasant, difficult topics in thoughts, and pursuing them in the form of dialogue with a sense of fatigue, frustration and breakdown.

When one of her inner voices talks about pursuing the writer and mother.

Dame Dervish sighs and tries again. "I want you to stop thinking.

Stop examining, stop analyzing and start living the experience. Only then will you know how being a mother and being a writer can be balanced." (Blackmilk,51)

(5) confronting dialogues (CD), conducting dialogues between two clearly separated parts of oneself, playing out internal conflicts.

Elif hears several inner voices which she mentioned as 'Choir of Discordant Voices'. They were nearly finger sized women like Thumbelinas, which exhibit at various stages and by multiple thought processes.

When I ran out of the building of the Self that I had carefully constructed all those years, there in the darkness, scared and shaken, I encountered a group of Thumbelinas—

six tiny finger-women, each of whom looked like a different version of me—sitting side by side. (Blackmilk,Note to reader - x)

Little Miss.Practical, Dame Dervish, Miss Ambitious Chekhovian, Miss Highbrowed Cynic, were all originated before her decision for Marriage. Then comes Blue Belle Bovary, when Elif falls in love with Eyup. Then arrives, Mama Rice Pudding, after her Pregnancy. Then comes a djinni, Lord Poton, who controls all the Thumbelinas, after her delivery, when she is encountered with postpartum depression.

When Elif meets the first inner voice and asked for the reply to the question by Ms.Agaoglu, on decision of motherhood, Little Miss Practical, replied:

"Yup. Here's what we'll do. We'll split your time into two chunks:

writing time and nursing time." (Blackmilk,47)

(6) simulation of social dialogues (SS), dialogues that are a continuation of conversations or a reflection of social dialogue relations: quarrels, discussions or exchanges of ideas

The internal dialogues, that arouse inside as a discussion or exchange of ideas, when she found she was pregnant.

Slowly but surely my mind recognizes what my heart has already accepted: I am pregnant.(178)

That's when I recall Mama Rice Pudding. She is the only one among the Thumbelinas who knows anything about babies and pregnancies. But where is she now? How is she doing? I haven't spoken to her since that night under the Brain Tree. I need to see her urgently. (Blackmilk,178)

(7) taking a point of view (PV), The internal dialogues measure willingness to take a different viewpoint from one's own or question the opinion, give different perspectives and assess events.

Today, we do not speak or write much about the face of motherhood that has been left in the shadows. Instead, we thrive on two dominant teachings: the traditional view that says motherhood is our most sacred and significant obligation and we should give up

everything else for this duty; and the "modern" women's magazine view that portrays the quintessential "superwoman" who has a career, husband and children and is able to satisfy everyone's needs at home and at work.

As different as these two views seem to be, they have one thing in common: They both focus solely on what they want to see, disregarding the complexity and intensity of motherhood, and the way in which it transforms a woman and her crystal heart. (Blackmilk,252-253)

IV. ELENA FERRANTE 'S 'THE LOST DAUGHTER' AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EGOISM

Psychological egoism is the scientific theory that all human actions are motivated by self-interest. This does not judge any actions as right or wrong, but simply observes and describes them as fact, making this a descriptive doctrine. If egoism holds that all ultimate desires are self-directed, what are we to say of someone whose ultimate goal is his own destruction? The protagonist, Leda left her two daughters, Bianca and Marta and her husband Gianni, in order to pursue her own urge upon Writing due to Psychological Egoism. It is the Psychological Egoism that affects Leda on leaving her daughters to carry out her own desire.

.... I was running after my own desires, I Couldn't wait to escape that house, forget it and forget everything. Make a snake for us, she asked then, for herself and Marta, too, and Marta smiled at me encouragingly. They sat in front of me waiting, they assumed the poses of cool and elegant little ladies, in their new dresses. All right, I said, took the orange, and began to cut the peel. The children stared at me. I felt their gazes longing to tame me, but more brilliant was the brightness of the life outside them, new colors, new bodies, new intelligence, a language to possess finally as if it were my true language, and nothing, nothing that seemed to me reconcilable with that domestic space from which they stared at me inexpectation. Ah, to make them invisible, to no longer hear the demands of their flesh as commands more pressing, more powerful than those which came from mine. I finished peeling the orange and I left. From that moment,for three years, I didn't see or hear them at all. (The Lost Daughter,20)

VI. THE DIALOGICAL SELF OF ELIF SHAFAK VS PSYCHOLOGICAL EGOISM OF LEDA:

Elif Shafak confesses that depressions must be used as a paddle to flow through the stream of life.

"Depressions happen to us against our will and without our knowledge, but then, slowly and furtively, they may turn into a river in which we willingly paddle." (Blackmilk,249)

Elif clearly states, whatever difficulties of life we face, there is a time to get back to normal, like a new Season, a newborn Butterfly. *Only when the time was right, when I was "right," did I get out of that dark, airless rabbit hole. Just as a day takes twenty-four hours and a week takes seven days, just as a butterfly knows when to leave its cocoon and a seed knows when to spring into a flower, just as we go through States of development, just as everything and everyone in this universe has a "use by" date, so does postpartum depression.* (Blackmilk,254)

Elif recommends all women to be optimistic in a way out of depression.

There are two ways to regard this matter:

The Pessimist: "If one cannot come out of depression before the time is ripe, there is nothing I can do about it."

The Optimist: "If one cannot come out of depression before the time is ripe, there is nothing depression can do to me."

Every woman requires a varying amount of time to complete the cycle. For some it takes a few weeks, for others more than a year. But no matter how complex or dizzying it seems to be, every labyrinth has a way out.

All you have to do is walk toward it. (Blackmilk,255)

The Balance between Motherhood and Writing, that Elif propagates to all mother writers to cradle as well as write.

"The difficulty of trying to be responsible, hour after hour, day after day for maybe twenty years, for the well-being of children and the excellence of books, is immense: it involves an endless expense of energy and an impossible weighing of competing priorities." Despite the difficulties involved, she says the hand that rocks the cradle writes the book. (Blackmilk,266-267)

Elif started rethinking her career as a writer. She started questioning her life choices. All the questions arising in her mind had a snowball effect on her and that is how she was diagnosed with mental distress.

Shafak writes honestly about the obstacles as well as the beauty and happiness of becoming a mother.

Leda, a middle aged woman, in 'The Lost Daughter' written by Elena Ferrante, has all the negative impacts of a Mother writer. It has set a bad example for the literary world. But, her reminiscences occurred at the age of forty eight, makes her remorseful in her lonely vacation.

It seems Leda's Mother doesn't give happy thoughts to her daughters.

I remember the dialect on my mother's lips when she lost that gentle cadence and yelled at us, poisoned by her unhappiness: I can't take you anymore, I can't take any more. Commands, shouts, insults, life stretching into her words, as when a frayed nerve is just touched, and the pain scrapes away all self-control. Once, twice, three times she threatened us, her daughters, that she would leave, you'll wake up in the morning and won't find me here. And every morning I woke up trembling with fear. In reality she was always there, in her words she was constantly disappearing from home. That woman, Nina, seemed serene, and I felt envious. (The Lost Daughter,4)

However she had bad childhood memories, Leda as a mother, gave her love to her daughters.

Nina's doll was taken by Leda and cared about with all sorts of love, which was a symbol that she was satisfying her 'left motherhood'.

Then I realized that Bianca, too, was watching, on her knees, with her forehead pressed against the bars of the railing. I picked her up, she let herself be held, yielding. I kissed her for a long time, I hugged her as if I wanted to take her back into my body. (The Lost Daughter,11)

When Leda came back leaving her daughters after three years, they were old enough and she could not share her love to them, so those teenagers got their boyfriends to share their love.

When my daughters' boyfriends came to the house, I tried to make myself more attractive to them. I barely saw them, when they entered, when they left, saying goodbye to me in embarrassment, and yet I was very careful about my appearance, my manners. Bianca took them into her room, Marta into hers, I Was alone. I wanted my daughters to be loved, I couldn't bear them not to be... (The Lost Daughter, 12)

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, In 'The Lost Daughter', Family, Love and Security needs were not provided to her kids as a mother (Leda). But, Leda went behind the Self actualisation needs, for which Maslow himself was against skipping the hierarchy of needs and that resulted due to Psychological Egoism.

In 'Black Milk', All needs have the delay that in hierarchy of Love And Belonging Needs Is later achieved after the Self Esteem and Self Actualisation needs by the practice of Dialogical Self Theory. But, it doesn't avoid or not skip off.

The conflicting thoughts of Elif Shafak's 'Black Milk' wins the human heart to be a Successful Writer and a Successful Mother, compared to 'Leda' in the 'The Lost Daughter', who is only a Successful Writer, but not found as a Successful Mother.

VI. CONCLUSION:

The paper examines that the inner voices of Elif Shafak is the reason for her successfulness in balancing writing and motherhood and that inner voices are based on Dialogical Self Theory, DST of Hubert Hermans. The Subscales of DST are measured by the Integral Dialogical Activity Scale, IDAS, assesses the inner dialogical self of Elif Shafak under Seven types: 1. Pure Dialogical Activity(AD); 2. Identity Dialogues(ID); 3. Supportive Dialogues (SD); 4. Ruminative Dialogues(RD); 5. Confronting Dialogues(CD); 6. Simulation Dialogues (SD); 7. Taking a Point of View(PV). Through the above subscales, her mind underwent various stages of development right before her marriage that ends being a successful writer and Mother, and again restarts her writing career after a few months of delivery. On the other hand, the selfish inner thoughts of Leda did not have the tactics, strategy or vision for balancing her writing and Motherhood, leaving her daughters who were five and three, that leads Leda to feel somber in her old age, which is a result of her Psychological Egoism.

As a result of this study, when their achievements are done, in their geriatric age, there remain dejections, which is pretty clear in Adalet Agaoglu of 'Black Milk' and Leda in 'The Lost Daughter'. Finally, the thoughts of Elif Shafak triumph over Leda in being a Successful mother and writer. There are many other authors, who are mothers as well as writers to have a completely successful life against self-destruction. And the one who follows the writer path alone can have self-satisfaction at present, but feels desolate later.

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