



# PAINT IT GREY AND WHITE: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF COVERPAGE OF IF I HAD TO TELL IT AGAIN

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## Abstract:

A cover page creates a first impression and generates a curiosity among the potential readers. It is not only important for marketing perspective but also emphasizes on the image of the literary text. This research paper deals with how the colour scheme used explores the meaning and theme of the literary text. The basic theories of colour psychology will be used to explore the cover page and how it contributes to the meaning of the text. It will try to understand how the theme and the colours are an integral part of a literary text.

Key words: Cover page, Colour Psychology

Gayathri Prabhu is an Indian novelist and memoirist who lives in Manipal, Karnataka. Harper Collins published her memoir *If I Had to Tell It Again* in November 2017. She has written it on the aftereffect of her father's death. It was published during WHO's international year-long campaign on depression. It brings out the thoughts and the unspoken realities felt by the Indian families. It explores the traumas which the families of an addict often go through which moves towards chronic sadness. It often leaves a scar on the families to deal with such sadness, blame, guilt which they go through.

*If I Had to Tell It Again* was welcomed with many positive and negative reviews from critics. Poet Arundhati Subramaniam acclaims *If I Had to Tell it Again* "for its mix of candour, poise, and urgency in a fiercely loving portrait of a parent". Madhavi Menon, Professor of English at Ashoka University states "daring and brave challenge to our preconceptions both about writing and about depression" in her review. Writer, editor, and columnist, Krupa Ge write in First Post: "Gayathri's sparkling prose is light, as it meanders artfully conveying memories heavy, laden with emotions". The memoir has also been reviewed in The Shrinking Couch, the *Indian*

*Journal of Medical Ethics*, The Indian Express, The News Minute, Research and Humanities in Medical Education along with independent bloggers.

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i had  
A Memoir  
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*If I Had To Tell It Again* revolves around the ups and downs, her hardships and success and a sad moment. She pens her relationship with her father and how her relationship impacted her whole life. Her father is indeed a complex man. For the outer world he seemed as an epitome of kindness. He helped the needy and the orphans. But this was just a face for the society. He himself battled with depression about which he was completely in denial or rather never understood it. His internal struggle eventually led him to be an alcoholic. This denial of the illness not only affected him but his family too. It had a long-lasting effect on the family.

The author rightly says

The story of depression is hard to tell, always in fragments, hard to cast in words, hard to tell when it seeped out of him, into and through me.

It may be cliché to say but, even in recent times but, the cover page of a literary text still plays a vital role in the perception and view of the reader. In fact, F. Scott Fitzgerald was so transfixed with the image of eyes that he incorporated the image into the cover of *The Great Gatsby*. The cover page plays a vital role in linking the plot and contents of the literary text with the image portrayed on the first page. The book's image is linked interwoven with its plot and genre which the cover page gives a glimpse of.

### Colour Psychology:

Colours are evocative. It gives a visual knock on our thinking process. Often it had been observed that the colour is the first thing liked in an object. Colour Psychology deals with this relation that is relationship between human and colour. How colour can signify the behavioural pattern and how more is communicated than said. It has qualities which can cause emotions in people.

The cover page will be analysed on the basis of the colours used:

I Grey

II White

I. Grey colour is used for the font on a white background.

Grey is a combination of two colours: black and white. It is a neutral, achromatic and subtle colour. Symbolically, it bridges a gap between lightness and darkness. It characterizes balance and neutrality. The colour etymology is

“of a colour between white and black: having little or no colour or luminosity”. But grey also carries some negative attributes particularly it connotes depression and loss. However, the darker the grey becomes, the more deeper meaning it connotes and whiter it becomes, the more illuminating and livelier it becomes. It creates a sense on calm and compose in a chaotic world.

The use of grey on cover page is skilfully used to mingle with the theme of the text. As mentioned above the book majorly discusses about the depression the author has through. Moreover, grey is used for fonts on a white background which gives it a deeper meaning.

Another important use aspect is that the colour grey is an impartial and dispassionate. That is, it doesn't take sides. The same thing is seen in the memoir too. The section 'Leap' a one act plays which is incorporated in the memoir is a discussion between the father and daughter. This though a new variation gives a point of view of the father as well as the daughter. The colour grey skilfully acts a middle ground to talk about the feelings and the emotions.

## II White

The colour white is used as a background of the cover page.

The colour white is most complete and pure. It is a colour of perfection. It stands in start opposition to any colour. Since it contains all the colours of the spectrum, it becomes an inclusive and impartial colour. It doesn't pick sides. It denotes impartiality which is seen in the memoir too. The one act play in the memoir paints a picture of the author's father and his take on the depression as well as justification for his action. The white colour provides a perfect background for the memoir since the author tries to come clean and talks about her depression and how she overcomes it. White is reflective. It awakens, gives a pace for growth and creativity. White is personified as clean and pure. And in a true sense the author deals with the trauma of losing a father, domestic violence, child abuse and her own battle with depression and expresses it through the memoir i.e., cleanses through the memoir.

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