

## *Chapter II*

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### **From Withdrawal to Familial Attachment**

The perspective of women change in accordance with the social, cultural and historical changes. This chapter aims to deliberate on various relationships the women in the novels of Gail Godwin develop with a vision for self-development. These relationships that start within the family having mother as its base widen to those outside the family circle. All these relationships are significant as they contribute to the development and progression of the women in the novels.

Among the middle-class families, industrialization brought in many changes in the first half of the nineteenth century. A noteworthy change was the separation of home from the work place, and in consequence home became a domestic refuge to turn to from the outside world. The separation and the celebration of women for their role as home makers and mothers assigned homes the status of ‘therapeutic refuge’ more importantly, to the children of the families from the external forces. The women, the mothers at homes, who were seeing their children as the source of economic contribution had to recognize them as an entity of the family and had to focus on child rearing and making homes an ideal place for living. Regard for others, tenderness and reassuring bearing were identified as the essentials for an exemplary domestic life with sentimentalities taking the center stage.

This chapter focuses on reestablishing the belief that women need not necessarily be isolated to be liberated. The study also reiterates the fact that women can identify and form healthy strategies through interrelationships to define their lives. Women instead of being the stereotypes accepting pre-ordained relationships can create an identity and role of their own choice.

Object Relations Theory focuses on relationships between people. This particularly applies to relationships within a family and much to the relationship between the mother and her child. This theory substantiates that human beings have a determined urge to form relationships with others. When they are not able to build early relationships then there are problems later in life. The ORT theory is associated with Attachment Theory.

There are also external and internal objects with which people develop relations. The subject relates itself to an internal mother as well as an external one..According to Winnicott, this object relating is about the projection and the early undifferentiated unity when the mother facilitates the child's illusion of omnipotence.

Karl Abraham(1927) invented the idea of object relations, but it was Melanie Klein(1882) who developed the modern theory, with the mother as the principal object. The process of developing a psyche in relation to others in the environment during childhood is ORT in psychoanalytic psychology. An adult's response to others around them, the environment and the incidents depends on the child's family experiences during infancy. Adults are susceptible to the belief that they will be neglected or hated by persons who remind them of neglectful or hateful people of their past life.

In this way events and images from the past life is transferred as 'objects' to the unconscious memory of a person. So in adulthood, the unconscious predicts people's behavior in their social relationships and interactions .Continuous exposure to various things and experience in the environment of a person turns into 'internal objects' to the person. These internal objects need not be the exact copy of the external object influencing the person. The term 'Internal object' is widely used by Klein and it denotes an inner mental and emotional image of an external figure, also known as the external object,

together with the experience of that figure. The inner world of a person is thus populated with internal objects that influence the person.

These objects have a strong hold over the subject. More than the object its actions are first registered by the subject's mind. This object is called part object. When and if the environment is conducive the part object is turned into a whole object that is understood completely. However this is left to the adult's ability to tolerate ambiguity and to differentiate the 'good' from the 'bad' of the influential subject. Such a subject could be persons, places or things.

Otto Rank who coined the term "pre-oedipal" was the first to create the modern theory of "object relations" in the late 1920s. Ronald Fairbairn in 1952 independently formulated it and Melanie Klein, who is much associated with the term "Object Relations Theory" developed the modern theory. Klein believed that the association between the child and the mother is very strong and it dominates the infant's structure of drives. This association gives way to anger, frustration and instills strong emotions of dependence. This is when the subject understands that the object is more than a part object. This complexity of the process of the subject's understanding of the object as a whole and the subject's resolving of the complexity is reflected in the adult's personality.

To Freud, people in the subject's environment were the object of people's drives. But Fairbairn's view was that people were not satisfied by the drives as such, but seek satisfaction that comes when they associate or relate with real others. Though Klein and Fairbairn were working along similar lines, Klein always held that she was not diverging from Freudian theory but was extending on the early developmental phenomena consistent with Freudian theory.

ORT is also considered the offshoot of psychoanalytic theory. It is chiefly about interpersonal relations in the family and especially between mother and child. According to Martin Buber, object means the person on whom the other person relies completely. Relations is the interpersonal relation of a person's past that affects the present. This relationship is carried over to other interpersonal relations in life. In ORT objects are usually persons, parts of persons, or symbols of one of these to which a subject relates. Melanie Klein uses the term object in a way without ever making mention of it as a person or an inner representation.

The ORT is sometimes referred to as "id psychology." There arose conflicts between Klein and ORT on one hand and Anna Freud and ego psychology on the other in England within the London psychoanalytic community. This influenced the psychoanalytic politics throughout the world.

When the object refers to a part of a person like a hand or a breast it is called a 'Part Object'. When the term refers to another person who is identified with similar feelings, needs, strengths, weaknesses and insecurities to that of the subject, then it is termed 'Whole Object'. This also speaks about object constancy which Margaret Mahler describes as:

The capacity to recognize and tolerate loving and hostile feelings towards the same object; the capacity to keep feelings centered on a specific object; and the capacity to value an object for attributes other than its function of satisfying needs. (*Victor Daniels' Website*)

This object relations is extending psychoanalytic thinking to the personal realm by conceptualizing interpersonal relations. This school of psychology includes Henry Guntrip, Edith Jacobson, Heinz Kohut, Otto Kernberg, Melanie Klein, Margaret Mahler, D.W. Winnicott.

Klein differed from Freud's idea of the protective function and she found that the psychic world of infant and child in the Freudian tradition was filled with primitive and savage conflict. She was a transitional figure who stood between classical psychoanalysis and ORT. To her, unlike Freudian proposition, the psychodynamic battleground occurs during infancy itself. In this, the relation between the infant and the mother predominates. This is the basis of all drives. There is conflict in the infant's mind as it grows. This happens when it realizes that the mother known to it is more than the breast that fed. Klein believes that how the infant finds a solution to the conflict reflects the adult's personality. Klein's belief was not entirely different from the Freudian proposition theory. She was only elaborating on the early developmental phenomena consistent with Freudian theory.

Klein further developed Freud's understanding of the unconscious mind by analyzing children's play like how Freud analyzed dreams and thus identified an early Oedipus complex and the earliest roots of superego in the children. The child's deepest fears and its defenses against those made her formulate the 'paranoid-schizoid position' and the 'depressive position' to explain how these primitive mental states have their effect on the adult. In the 'depressive position' the baby that is in the process of attaining physical and mental maturity, starts associating the fragmented understanding of its parent it has, to a more integrated sense of self. Bringing together the divergent feelings of love and hate and realizing that the person hated and the person loved are one and the same, the child is led to the most anguished sense of guilt and, in time, a wish to repair. This state is continuously revisited and refined throughout early childhood, and intermittently throughout life.

The 'paranoid-schizoid position' is about the primitive and early mental state in which the self feels disintegrated undergoing a mixed feeling of anxieties, defenses and

internal and external object relations that Klein observed to be the features characterizing the earliest months of an infant's life that continues to varying degrees throughout life. The self and the object divides into good and bad and there is little or no integration between them.

Godwin's women in the novels *A Mother and Two Daughters*, *A Southern Family*, *The Odd Woman* and *Glass People* can be seen possessing the trait of mixed feeling. The women, most notably the daughters, in their relationship with others in the family go through these states of complexities of hatred, disintegration, the consequent sense of guilt, love, integration and the wish to repair the damages caused. Here an analysis is made of the mothers and the daughters in the novels, by observing them passing through the various stages of maturity for formation of self.

In *The Odd Woman*, Jane's reflection over her insomnia moves immediately to her mother Kitty who is 'a veteran somniac' of many years who had adjusted her life style to her insomniac state through reading spiritual guides and when 'the malady grew more challenging' (OW 4), she had taken to reading Latin and Prussian and prepared to teach herself Italian if situation demands. Jane's grandmother too when she turned a sudden insomniac in her eightieth year asked her son-in-law Ray to get her an AM-FM Radio that could get police calls to engage her during the sleepless nights. Jane read books, just like her mother, all through her waking hours. In her confrontation with her lover Gabriel, a married man, who is not explicit about his stand in the relationship with her she was left with a question 'were women by nature more faithful than men?'(OW 9), and she turned to her mother's life for guidance. Her mother when she had been married to Ray Sparks had ended her love relationship with an English professor at Tulane, a

married man, who wanted their connection to be discreet. This ‘close of the uncertain option, however joyous’(OW 11) by her realistic mother was a sensible decision according to Jane who was into believing in romantic ideals, and then on she could be seen guarded in her relationship with Gabriel and eventually following her mother she ended her affair for good. She thought of Edith who did not marry again and was faithful to her husband Hans ‘to the end of her own widowhood’ (OW 9). Jane recalled incidents in her graduate school times in which she could find the semblance of her mother in her when she had ended her relationship with some men whom she had not actually loved for the reason that “each of us knew the other was not really what was wanted....It was like going to bed with one’s own dissatisfaction”(OW 65).

Jane also experienced mental conflicts in her association with her mother as she grew and she felt that there was a growing gap between them and searched for its reasons. When she was home for her grandmother’s funeral, she viewed her mother objectively and found that she saw her mother to be just any ‘woman’ with whom she will have one ‘confidential talk’ as was the custom, both knowing well that their talk ‘in itself won’t be very confidential at all’(OW 83). She saw that a formality had crept into their relationship that deprived them of the intimacy with each other and she asked herself the most important question ‘When did this discrepancy between our real talks and our expectations and memories of them begin? We were once confidantes, close friends. Weren’t we? Is it that I have “grown away” from her, as other daughters do, or is it she who has given me the slip, into that mystical, religious realm of hers?’(OW 84). When she returns home for her grandmother’s funeral, she is determined to ‘resurrect the bygone flavor of those’ (OW 85) moments with her mother. Jane realized that she had been too selfish in wanting her



mother to herself when she had her husband and the other children also to be taken care of. Kitty's 'different key' to her emotions that she reserved for her husband that showed her a completely transformed person from the mother of her girlhood days now made sense to Jane and she renewed her love and respect for her mother.

Klein also speaks of 'envy' which is the anger that someone possesses and enjoys something that is desirable, and this is often accompanied by an impulse to take it away or spoil it. Jane viewed her half-brothers Jack and Ronnie and her half-sister Emily Sparks as rivals when she wanted to think of herself as the only child, since they were the ones with whom she had to share her mother Kitty. In fact, her anger was primarily against Ray Sparks, her step-father whom she called 'the villain in my life' whose entry into the family according to Jane was the cause of her mother's removal from her world.

In the depressive position of Klein's theory, a mention is made of the feature of reparation, where the subject has love and respect for the separate other, and that which involves facing loss and damage and making efforts to repair and restore one's objects. Driven by possessiveness over her mother, Jane had not realized that her mother was an individual with a life of her own and that, she will have to live her life her way. Jane and Emily were anxious and mistrustful of the other because 'Kitty might love the other more.' (OW 94). She could then see that her mother had never belonged to anybody and in 'a strange way' had 'managed to evade both Emily and me, evade all her children; and she has managed to evade Ray, too;' (OW 94). Kitty before her marriage to Ray, while Jane was a little girl, was so different from the Kitty who was after her marriage to Ray. Jane recalled her mother telling her "You had me all to yourself for nine years" (OW 91), when she complained to her mother that she did not spend much time on her like how she

spent on Emily. It was true that she had owned her mother for the best part of her life and her demands on her mother now were unreasonable.

As Klein observes, the personality of the adult-the mother is a major factor influencing the conduct of the child- the daughter in this instance and Jane regulates her life through observing her mother. When she looked for ‘precedents’ before her lunch appointment with her friend and colleague Sonia Marks when she received the news of her grandmother’s death, she clearly saw that both her mother and her grandmother would have cancelled such an appointment given the circumstance. Despite knowing this when she joined her friend for lunch, she was guilty for not doing what her mother would have done and to convince herself of her misgivings she turned their conversation to discuss Edith’s death. She tried reasoning her out of her dependence on others, especially her mother in her conversation with Sonia. She told her, “Living alone makes you your own only child. There is nobody else to please, nobody’s schedule or temper to consult but your own. Your only lonely self’s.”(OW 62). But as she uttered it, she could not deny the truth of her relying on people around and how her mother had been “owned” by her when she was a widow and soon added “I say self, but that is another aspect of living alone: the self splits into many....which contains all the things in everybody, all the things in the world...”(OW 63).

Nell, the sensible mother in *A Mother and Two Daughters* is mindful of the shortcomings of her daughters Cate and Lydia. Even when her husband Leonard Strickland, a loving father to his daughters, does not realize the true state of things, she gets angry with him as seen in the very beginning where she is the first person to suggest that her elder daughter Cate “would hurry up and find ...happiness”(MTD 21), and “find herself” was

what she wanted to say. When Leonard was killed in an accident, she was left with the huge responsibility as the head of the family to bring things together, most importantly to bring together, Cate, who moved around so much that Nell had stopped memorizing her phone numbers and Lydia, an exceptionally well organized woman, her two daughters who were different entities under the same roof.

Cate in her 'depressive position' searched for opportunities to vent her irritation and frustration on others who came into contact with her. Her inner fear of being left alone in the world that reserved only blight promises for her future took the form of anger and emptied itself on the 'objects' around. The feeling of insecurity made her defensive, alienating her further from the very objects-her mother, her sister, from whom she could derive strength to overcome her inner struggles. As Klein observes, the subject moves from love to hatred to love and back again to hatred, with remorse and guilt alongside. Her imbalance is reflected in her utterances and in her ever changing behavior. She resorted to hiding her real self to keep her helplessness from showing.

In Klein's theory 'unconscious phantasies' that form the basis of every mental process, and the resultant mental activities are discussed. Those phantasies are the mental representation of the events related to the body inclusive of instincts, and the physical sensations are the result of its relationships with objects. These phantasies are the mental expressions of both libidinal and aggressive impulses and also of defense mechanisms against those impulses. The brewing egoistical combat between Cate and Lydia was restricted by both the sisters through conscious effort as it was the time of their father's funeral. But the resentments that Cate had against Lydia which she held back in her conscious state found its release in her dreams. She dreamt of her sister forcing her to the benches in

the very back of the church at her father's funeral service which was 'an unusual funeral' in which the dead man would stand in the pulpit speaking of the meaning of life and advising the living about facing future. Though she was able to hear her father mentioning her name several times she could neither see him nor hear him. Such dreams represent the dreamer's inner beliefs and thoughts. Cate feared that her sister would supersede her in life with her image of being the dutiful daughter and responsible mother, and in the absence of Leonard who stood by her she will have no chance of recognition in the family. Her dream is the result of such thoughts she had been keeping to herself. Her sister Lydia suspected such actions of hers where she indulged in complex ideas and arguments, her phantasies and dreams were all her way of shunning her true state from the public view. She believed that 'Cate's "mystical" side, or her pretension to be one, had frequently spoiled things between them.'(MTD 31).

The precarious position of Cate annoyed Nell, but she stopped her emotions from showing so as not to hurt her daughter who was going through difficult times. But these thoughts piled up in the inner regions of the mind, crept up the moment it had a chance to express. She had a dream about her daughter Cate which gave form to all those thoughts well hidden in the conscious mind. Nell dreamt of her and Cate swimming in the water and in the dream Cate had her adult face but had the body of a little baby. Nell knew she could not tell her that because Cate will surely drown if she saw that she had the body of a little baby. Nell had identified a vulnerability in her daughter and an oddity that kept her away from others, and the happenings in the dream were signifiers of how Nell saw her daughter in real life, and her fear for her daughter's welfare. From then on Nell was careful while chastising her daughter .

One of the bedrooms in Felix's cottage at Ocracoke was another store house of phantasies and the dreams one dreamt there showed what the person is in reality. It can be best understood in Jane's dreams of her falling in love with the 'timeless' captain of a spaceship where to her surprise, the captain was also Jane, herself. Jane had narrowed her understanding of others and the self-importance she bestowed on her was expressed in her dream about "falling in love with myself." (SF 407).

Cate's stubbornness made her unapproachable and those around her got wary of her easily. Nell did not like her daughter's standoffish attitude towards her godmother Theodora, who had been offended by Cate before, and also her natural curiosity that probed matters, which the victims themselves would not have had time to ponder over. When her father left them, Cate was bereft more than anybody as she knew that 'he hadn't given' up on her and he was the only member in the family who had approved of her momentary way of life and her 'socialist tendencies'. Neither the failure of her second marriage nor the unsettled job of hers worried Leonard who had so much faith in his daughter and her decisions. Nell knowing Cate warned her husband, who was rewriting the will the third time to help Cate, that making the will based on per capita distribution to the grandchildren may not be a good idea since "Cate may not have any children" (MTD 54). But later when Lydia's husband Max was critical about Cate calling her hopeless, Nell's 'maternal loyalty' rose to the fore and she stopped him reminding him that Cate may not go without children all her life because "Modern women are hanging on to their options to the last minute, nowadays." (MTD 71). When she thought of her younger daughter, she had to admit that like how she had inherited her 'supercritical streak' from her father, Cate had inherited the 'perfectionist streak' from her father that had led to her habit of

fault finding in things around. Nell, during crisis in her life had missed ‘an Ideal Mother, an all-wise female’(MTD 163), to advise her and was determined to be a such a mother who was available to her daughters at times of their need. While Cate called Nell, asking about the first signs of menopause, though annoyed, she however answered her in her professional tone. But when Cate told her about her new beau, she, a mother, did not stop herself from telling her to consider the proposal seriously as “it’s not such a piece of cake spending your old age alone.”(MTD 173).

When Cate got pregnant with her lover Roger Jernigan’s child she sought asylum in her mother ‘dumping the whole problem in Nell’s lap’(MTD 197) asking her for a way out of it. In the phone call to her mother then she was disappointed to find that her mother did not notice the difference in her voice that was the result of all the distressing emotions that were bearing her down. In fact, Nell was aware of the difference, but was growing tired of ‘Cate’s intransigence’ and to avoid anything unpleasant being uttered had ended the phone call. Cate had grown up seeing her mother and so was aware of her indifference. It deepened her suspicion that had been residing in her for some time that her mother wished her to be a ‘different daughter’ and decided to work on ‘what had been spoiled’ (MTD 199), all her moods, emotions, relationships and herself. When she was with Jernigan later, she tried being the ‘smooth hostess’ she and Lydia as little girls had seen their mother do, the moment daddy came home. It was the role that her mother had adopted to receive her man from the outside world, saving him the domestic troubles. Not able to understand this change in her mother then, she had adopted the fiery nature of her mother, which her mother had left behind to run the family that made her appear a rebel, while Lydia who had gone into a ‘neat shell of herself’ had brought on herself the image of the “tamed” mother.

The understanding of the ‘old family configuration’ by Cate is rewarding as it helped her regain her lost balance. Nell thus becomes a whole object to whom Cate, the subject relates to with understanding. This knowledge of life and its intricacies which is the result of understanding the various patterns of life are rewarding to Cate and Lydia and they invest their knowledge in rebuilding, repairing and forming productive relationships with people around them. Cate, left with a remote prospect of a job for a short while, is also brought out of her remorse at their family cottage at Ocrakoke when she expressed her reluctance in accepting help from her mother. Nell for once was firm in making Cate understand that the immediate family and more so a mother is available by her side whenever required. Nell told her daughter:

When you’re alive, you do what you can do. That’s the duty, that’s the privilege of the living. I’m not sure the rest matters very much. If you love me, if you honor me at all, you will accept what I offer out of love-and because I have it to offer. Otherwise-what has it all been for?. ( MTD 451-452)

Accepting the support offered by her family, Cate curtails her uncanny expectations from people and in the end is seen winning her relationships with people like Theodora, Lydia and her mother Nell. She is even left with the promising future of a long time companionship of Jernigan.

Ivan Boszormenyi Nagy is explicitly interpersonal of ORT theorists and applied it to admit social interactions and development. According to Nagy, a subject needs an object to relate to and thereby identifies its individuality, and in the process the object also mutually benefits by knowing its individuality. They also can clarify self-object boundaries by understanding better the “internal conception of the self” and an “internal conception of the other.”(Victor Daniels’ Website 63).

The novel *Glass People* is of a different order where the daughter Francesca learns greater lessons for life from the aloofness of her mother. Francesca Bolt, a flawless beauty, married to Cameron Bolt, the wealthy attorney, feared losing her identity to her husband who regarded his wife as a talisman to be treasured. Even the many lovers she had before her marriage to Cameron were dissatisfying for the reason that they all 'seemed to freeze her into an image and hold her there' (GP 29) which actually bothered her. After marriage as time progressed, Francesca grew tired of her position in the house and wanted to live her life for what she was-a free spirited being. She had a nightmare in which she went around the city wearing his pajama top. To her dismay nobody in the street recognized her. She, literally was non-existent in the impersonal city. This was a highly symbolic dream, a forerunner that made her realize how rapidly she was to be deprived of her sense of self. The role of Klein's phantasy is explicit in this dream of Francesca's.

When Francesca was left to face the world with her mother Kate, after her father's death, both women were not prepared for such a situation in life. The mother and the daughter were whimsical and extravagant. When her very beautiful daughter haunted people, Kate was helpless and could not warn her of 'the exigencies of life' as she did not know it herself. She did not heed to the warning from some of her friends about her not raising her daughter in a suitable atmosphere.

Later when Francesca wanted to be relieved temporarily of her monotonous married life, on her husband's advice she wrote to her mother asking her if she could visit her. She wrote ' I don't think I have ever needed to talk to you so badly. I am unhappy and don't even know why. I need you to tell me.'(GP 10). She was baffled when she received a 'not-so-welcome' reply letter from her mother. All that her mother could offer her for her



unhappiness was ‘I’m sorry you are unhappy. Ask C to take you away.’(GP 37). On Cameron’s advice when she wrote to her again she was allowed to visit her. On her visit she found that her mother after her marriage to a farmer, had transformed completely to a new woman and the ‘old Kate was gone’(GP 52). With her mother she felt like being with a stranger on a mountaintop who ‘moved differently, spoke differently’(GP 58). Kate kept herself clearly away from entering the ‘magic space’, the leftovers of their old habits that would allow them entry into the chastening past, as her life dwelt in the present. After Kate told her, to confront the state of paralysis in life one should “let yourself turn into someone else” (GP 63), Francesca comprehended the meaning of her mother’s transference which was adapting to the new environment. Although grasping the locus of this change was difficult, she had to accept it nevertheless applying it to her life. After her attempts at her job as a private secretary to an uncanny woman who called herself a writer and taking lovers at the place where she stayed for work she returned to Cameron. Her homecoming testifies the adjustments she is to make to save her married life from stiffening, and her decision to remain the woman who is treasured by her husband even if it is only for her beauty.

The constellation of emotions that Francesca went through is reflected in her creation of an imaginary lover in the woods at her mother’s place. The unusual phantasy is the expression of her weariness at the perfection of everything at Cameron’s place. She ventured to formulate something out of the ordinary, something of an illusion that cannot be given an identity like her lover at the woods.

Klein points out to the strong association between the child and the mother that decides the infant’s structure of drives. Kate’s unbridled extravaganza and independence made Francesca also to wish for a life that will allow her to conduct herself at her own free will.

In the developmental process though sometimes relatedness dominates and sometimes individuation dominates, mostly both are present to some extent at every stage. For healthy development and interaction, the subject and object should reverse their roles at times. This is an important part of personality growth and developing relationships. If there is no reversal of roles then these processes ends in complexity. It is suggested that each could adjust to suit the others' object seeking needs. Both could interact with the other and in the process can identify and understand themselves.

In life, one may be always forced to play the role of the object and this is done by the authoritative of either . At times when the role of subject is denied then the person uses the strategy of “passive-receptive mastery” where strategies to influence powerful others is developed. This also leads to disregard for any individuality or autonomy among family members.

On the other hand, the person performing the subject role demands or tries to make others agree to whatever he or she does .This person is called a “taker” and the taker never learns to give. In a relationship if both involved are takers, then there is imbalance that converts the interpersonal relationship into intrapsychic ones.

The story of *A Mother and Two Daughters* spins around the life of three women Nell, the mother, and her daughters Cate and Lydia. Leonard Strickland, husband of Nell and father to Cate and Lydia, was killed in a car accident and the women were left to decide their destiny. These women took complete responsibility of themselves. Though Leonard who had been their source of strength was no more, life did not end there. These women identified, developed and renewed relationships that mark a new beginning.

The interrelationships of the characters mainly Nell, Cate and Lydia are examined for the different experience these women in the novel undergo. The experience these women share have many parallels that marks the change in the outlook of the women of liberation.

These women are independent and yet form an integral part of the society. Most importantly these women cannot be reduced to definitions that confine the liberation of women as something that is possible only when they alienate themselves from the community. The women view themselves as part of the society they live in and build relationship with it to evolve into a new self that is more compassionate, understanding and secure. This process of interaction is illustrated through the discussion of the characters of Nell, Cate and Lydia and other characters associated with them.

The self-structures of these women are influenced by the people around them. In this, mothers share a greater responsibility facilitating their daughters to discover the means of a complete life in their society. Susan Kissel in *Moving On : The Heroines of Shirley, Ann Grau, Anne Tyler, and Gail Godwin* writes that Godwin's heroines "come to value inclusion and connection over exclusion and isolation in their lives"(100).

From a very early age some are used to enjoying dominance over others. There is no chance given to the others to deny their authority. Those who are passive are subjected to this kind of authority. Leonard Strickland intended to be good to everybody and had become passive. Consequently, he was subject to Theodora Blount's mastery over him. Theodora could not succeed in having an influence over Leonard's wife Nell, as she was too observant of people's attitudes to make herself an object to Theodora or anybody's domination. But the rudimentary goodness in her, made her value relationships and, had taught her to adjust to people like Theodora. She did not express her disapproval to those who tried to be dominant,

but still had learnt that none can disrupt her freedom. She felt obliged to suppress any feeling that will destroy relationships. This quality in Nell made her socially amicable and she was accepted everywhere and people were dependent on her assistance.

The negation of adjustment to people by Cate annoyed Nell. There was the imminent danger of a drama being created everywhere where Cate was present. This is the mechanism of 'splitting' recognized by Klein where the person involved, externalizes the inner anxiety and anger. Nell would not be able to forgive Cate "For not making more of an effort to blend gracefully into the landscape and keep her unruly instincts to herself" (MTD 08).

Leonard's "I just can't abide a scene"(MTD 13) made him accept Theodora's impositions on him. In order to establish harmony amidst the members, he accepted Theodora's authority over him. He willingly served as an object to her self-gratification. He did not lose anything this way. In fact both Leonard and Nell were successful in maintaining family and friendly ties.

Lydia had been under Max's guidance for years and she wished to be away from him so that she could decide matters on her own. Max had been exercising his authority over Lydia without the realization that she was a woman who was capable of making her decisions. Lydia had allowed herself to be parented by her husband Max for long and there was no opportunity provided to her to realize her capabilities. Lydia who wanted to be independent, decided to leave the shelter provided by her husband, however safe it may be to experience the world outside. Though Max's intention would have been to keep Lydia protected, all his actions only led to resentment as Lydia was not willing to be so much in his shadow. In search for her identity, Lydia refused to be the 'object' to her husband. She grew up watching her mother remaining independent of her husband and she wished to be like her mother.

There should be someone to hold relationships together for all. Lydia, of the sisters, consciously played this role of bridging the relationship gap. While Cate was insensitive of her slighting and sharp remarks at her sister when they had returned home for their father's funeral, Lydia reminded her sister that "out of respect"(MTD 34) to their family at least they should try to be at peace with the other. And when both her daughters were insensible to their faults, Nell the dutiful mother shouldered the responsibility. This effort put in by one or the other ensures peace among members of the group.

The verbal combat between Cate and Lydia was mainly due to their feeling of insecurity. When they had to decide on more demanding things like career and marriage, their fears and doubts needed a vent, and the easy target was the other one to the sisters. This is one of the features of ORT where the person denied the subject role uses the strategy of passive-receptive mastery where strategies to influence power over others is developed. This ends in the person having disregard for any individuality among family members. The theory suggests adjustment to others' object seeking needs so that the autonomy of every member is considered.

Cate was oblivious to the opinion of others around her and this attitude of Cate often made her disagreeable to others. And though her intention was not to spoil relationships her 'well established stubbornness' (MTD 42), stopped her from relenting and this estranged others. She was not able to reconcile with Theodora Blount who was her Godmother. Cate's strong sense of individuality did not allow her to be an object to Theodora's fancies. When people moved away from such authoritative personalities who curbed their development, they should learn to be understanding and were even willing to be beside those people at times of need. A simple gesture of willingness to care, by either would

have been beneficial in sustaining the relationship. This is possible only when the natural order of relationship formation, where everybody is a subject looking for an object to relate to is understood. Only then there will be regard and respect for the other.

Nell was sociable and made people around her feel comfortable and respected. This concern for others was a noble quality in her and her life as a nurse had refined it all the more. Leonard and Nell's respect for each other's feelings and that of others around had strengthened their relationships. Leonard had held things together for them and they were always available when others were in need.

The condescending attitude of the daughters was painful to Nell. She and Leonard consciously had held on to the faculties of their mind, which if left uncontrolled would have distorted relationships. They had even taught their daughters the necessity to develop this quality. While in the fourth grade Lydia refused to acknowledge her old uncle Osgood who lived on a hill as her relative because of his facial deformation, Leonard told her, "when you deny your relatives, even when they are unfortunate or eccentric, you deny part of yourself." (MTD 48). Nell, who was otherwise strong willed, told her son-in-law Max that she had been strong because her husband was always there to support .

Cate had set standards and imposed it on others without realizing that she tried to live their lives. She failed to accept people for what they were and this trait made her acquaintances defensive. This is known as 'projection' in Melanie Klein's Object Relations theory where, a person attributes a part of oneself to another in order to control the other.

Godwin, in her interview with Diane Osen, Director of Special Projects for the National Book Foundation on July 15, 1993 said she loves to write novels because it was like meeting the hidden aspects of oneself. She added that there is some paradox since a

character she created thus though embodied an aspect of oneself, it was an entirely different perspective on the world. To Godwin, all of her protagonists represented some aspect of herself. Life has certain interrelationship patterns that can be observed as the resultant of Klein's concept on internal objects that populate the inner world of a person. Those who understood and allowed themselves to co-exist, survive. Those who tried to evolve their own patterns to evade others were not successful as they were bound emotionally and mentally by the internal and external objects of the Kleinian theory and it was in accordance with this that a person can always live. Cate, Lydia and Nell were seen returning always to their objects which they identified in the other.

The identification of a man is with the external world, whereas a female's is from within the family. As a family, Jane and the other members shared qualities that were not common. Jane in fact, wished for a traditional family with everybody's oddness restrained that allowed space for healthy independence.

Kitty, her mother, had brought her up telling that, good books described things so perfectly that one can feel them and see them. Jane while growing up, marked her mother's words in her mind and started seeing herself in the characters of various authors, and related herself to the people in the novels of various writers that she read, and those characters became her objects, and placing herself beside those she recognized some parallels in them and thus made a dispassionate study of herself. The habit of the subjective study of fictional characters whom she credited with her qualities made her visualize their conduct when placed in her position. It was this exchange of characters that revealed the impropriety of her love for Gabriel who is already married to another woman. She thus reformed her course of actions and ended her love for the man.

She adapted herself to changing situations without anything to deter her in her ways. This was often through a thorough analysis of the precedents and what it had in store for the future. For examination of the past she involuntarily turned to observing her mother. Her constant observation of Kitty had led her to following her. More than genetics, it was the psychological proximity that brought in this resemblance in conduct. The qualities observed in the other always permeated into one's system, and here her mother continued to be her object and aided in shaping her character. Daughters are emotionally bound to mothers .and they are identified with their mothers. Mothers are tied to their mothers, and identify themselves in their daughters.

Drawing a circle around with defined boundaries, both the women, Edith and Kitty, could restrict strangers entering their personal space with queries. Similarly Jane consciously kept others away and avoided conversations with anybody on topics on her leaving Gabriel. She tried to make others around her understand that, newness was impossible in all matters and remembered how Kitty convinced Emily quoting as examples, happenings close home, when she raised doubts about her conduct. There were people in the society who served as objects all times to validate ideas.

Everybody is content with one's own neighborhood. When there is lack of acceptance by others then one loses the ability to interconnect, and thus struggles. Though Jane could not accept Kitty's theory, later on, at the time of her impasse, it entered her mind slowly and influenced her decisions in accordance. She reversed her role from the subject to the object and acquired great lessons for life that would last long. She was able to understand what her mother underwent and what she was undergoing when she put herself in her mother's place. All the 'Awesome diplomacy' (OW 122) which she exhibited were



beneficial to her and had kept all her family members together. She recollected various incidents where Kitty pacified all those involved in the incidents like once when Jane was angered, when she was chastised by her step-father Ray for opening a new jar of coffee while the old one was there . Kitty casually remarked to Ray that Jane appeared “queasy this morning”(OW 122) and added “I don’t see how you two manage to drink that terrible freeze-dried stuff...”(OW 122). With this she had maintained peace by expressing admiration for Ray for drinking the tasteless coffee, had associated her husband and her daughter in the words ‘you two’, and had also referred to Jane’s ill health which allowed her the excuse for bringing a new cup of coffee to her without angering Ray. Jane knew she can never be diplomatic like Kitty. At the same time, blaming her mother for her ‘diplomacy’ was unreasonable as her mother’s life was different from hers. Thus change of roles to see what the other person is experiencing is necessary for healthy relationships. And ORT also states that these two stages of relatedness and individuation are to some extent present at every stage of development of a person. For healthy development and interaction the subject and object should reverse their roles to put together the fragmented perceptions of its object. This is an important step that leads to the making of persons who wish to repair relationships with their objects that have not been rightly understood for long. Jane reprised her role as a confidante daughter more placid with the capacity to value differences in nature.

When the self –object boundaries are set between the mother and the daughter, a subject turns to other possible objects in the vicinity. It is usually the sisters who play the role of objects. Though Jane was in relationship with Gabriel, it was to his wife Ann to whom, Jane was mentally associated. She wished to be friends with her and had countless dreams about their friendship in near future. She thought ‘if she added up all the thoughts

she had ever had about Gabriel and all the thoughts she had had about Ann, his wife would win.’(OW 06). For a woman like Jane who lived in a family that was full of women it was a regular practice to turn to women around her for clarifications, to share, to reconcile and to be reconciled and at times even to be chastised.

According to Adriane Rich women unite and seek power from each other and:

Discover the erotic in female terms, which is by no means confined to bodily experience, but is interpreted as an omnipotent energy in the sharing of physical, emotional and psychic for that empowers women to shake off “ resignation, despair, self-effacement, depression, self-denial “ imposed by men. ( Lorde, 1984, as cited in Rich, 1996, pg-136)

Jane’s association with her half-sister Emily was quite different. Emily was a person of determination. When she was just fifteen years old she convinced her parents and got married to John. To Jane, Emily had grown out of her childhood very smoothly. The shared past served as a link between them and both knew that their mother was the link.

It is in relation with the siblings, that each child learns care-taking and socializing. From psycho analytical perspectives, care taking of the sibling precedes care-taking as a mother to the children.

Clare, notwithstanding her stepfather’s idiosyncrasies left Quick’s Hill where her mother and her step father lived to be with her paternal aunt. However, during her visits to Quick’s Hill at regular intervals she involuntarily became a part of the Quicks and this process of identification in her was natural. The characteristics that she shared with her family members and the qualities she had absorbed from them in her childhood was deeply rooted and this made Clare’s reentry into the old atmosphere easy. As a subject in the family, Clare clearly witnessed the roles played by everyone in it and was able to

interpret every action . She was so accustomed to the environment that she was able to identify the distinct quality of every member. This in turn helped her identify herself and had provided her the opportunity for subjective and objective view of things around her. It allowed her the possibility of multiple views . She followed her people closely however much she tried to keep away from them. She learnt to evaluate others and was open to the views of others. It was beneficial when she associated herself with them without sacrificing her individuality. She strived to maintain a balance with her mother, half-brother and her step-father. Her family was the object to which she related her and in the process identified her individuality and her personal traits. She observed herself as an individual and also in relation with the family. This made Julia, Clare’s friend, remark about Clare that “She was still under the family spell” and “She willingly reentered the noxious enclosure and let herself be sucked back into the old games”(OW 15).

In fact Cate objected to her Godmother Theodora dictating how others should live their lives. When Theodora started dominating Cate, she moved away from her. Cate’s aloofness resulted in her doubting herself as it left her with no one to console. If she had learnt to value people she would have felt secure. But then Nell’s continuous prompting made her realize the need to be in communion with people. She understood “We are not strong by our power to penetrate but by our relatedness. The world is enlarged for us; not by new objects but by finding more affinities and potencies in those we have” (MTD 523).

Cate’s despair at not being understood made her act wildly. When she came to understand her mother and her sister and how they accepted her for the person she was however good or bad, she is comforted. This provides her with confidence to move forward. Westerland, in *Escaping the Castle of Patriarchy* noted that in the female

protagonists of Gail Godwin's novels there is always a "vision of transformation" which aims at a better definition of themselves. The female characters are in search of fulfillment and liberation to keep up Godwin's concept of "wholeness" which is the merging of body, mind and soul to forge female identity.

Jane's mother Kitty, married to a man who possessed everything which the world looked for in an ideal man, was leading a life of pretended happiness. The women in the novel *The Odd Woman* idealized what they had dreamt of but never could achieve in reality. They chose to follow what they did not possess in their lives.

Ivan Boszormenyi Nagy, explicitly interpersonal among Object Relations Theorists, has mentioned a subject needing an object to relate to it to identify its individuality. All desire to be their own selves and when certain associations threaten their individuality, then people end such associations. Lydia relished her association with Renee, her lecturer at the university and she felt secure since she could express herself while she was with her. There was no threat to her autonomy and that made her rely on Renee. Later on she was empathetic, and understood her sister Cate who like her was in the middle of her individual vision of serving the society through voicing out for social causes despite the limitations the circumstances laid before her.

Children shrink from things which they feel may offend their mother. In reality, they understand the mothers and they also realize that they are replication of their mothers. The daughters then suffer an unknown fear that grows out of this realization. The women in the extended family as well, have this unrecognizable fear for every mother figure.

The women in the novels are creators or artists who create works on which they superimpose their yearnings and cravings. Sometimes it is the art that compensates what reality lacks or denies serving the object seeking need of its subjects.

Most daughters seem to relate better with/ to their mothers. They are more likely to open their minds to their mothers and it is with them they share their feelings. Mothers continue to affect the way daughters feel about themselves even when the daughters have approached mid-life (Conflict 2010) according to Object Relations Theory and Personality Development Theory.

In the earlier novels of Godwin the female characters concentrated on survival in the world. In her writings their attention is on the development of the selves, overcoming or accepting their shortcomings. Kitty was an expert at removing all complexities from her life. She abstained from attaching too much importance to things that will be a threat to her balanced life. Watching her mother, Jane was aware that life was not all predictable and it was meaningless and unreasonable to expect perfection in all things as people gained from experience. She realized that she herself was unclear about many things in life.

The process of developing a psyche in relation to others in the environment during childhood is a prominent feature of the Object Relations Theory in psychoanalytic psychology. Jane responded to others around her depending on her experience during her infancy. While growing up she was humiliated by overbearing Ray and she found asylum at her paternal relations' family. When Jane objectively evaluated her lover Gabriel, she identified the similarity between him and her step-father. So her decision towards the end of the novel was to keep herself away from situations which she fled from as an adult.

More than once there is a reference to Jane comparing a reader at a book store to a religious person inside a church as when she imagined her at a book store it was like how ‘the religious are always popping into churches.’(OW 235). And to avid readers, a bookstore or a library is their home. Gabriel’s ‘quarter of an hour’ that he used to keep her waiting for him was analogous with the ‘deadly poise’ hour when she was made to sit silently at the Pinner sister’s school from which she quit as she had to carry out activities that were against her wish. When this semblance forays, it dawns on her that she will move away sooner or later from Gabriel too. She regarded herself before the mirror when Gabriel was about to meet her, to see how she will appear to an onlooker. She could realize that she will look different to others from how she looked to herself in the mirror since perceptions differed. She had often thought that Kitty was making herself into something different from her original self without realizing it. When Jane had tried telling that to her mother, she was silenced with the reply “I am not just your mother, you know”. Now as she was preparing to meet her lover, she had many things to consider even from how to greet and it was then she realized the intricacies of relationships. She thought about the preparations she had to concentrate on before meeting him and the nervous embarrassment that followed the formal nature of the meeting. She realized that the conscious adornments in her bearing which was uncharacteristically hers, but that which was necessary for her to face him, made her a different being and it left her doubting what will remain unchanged of her originality when she turned away from the mirror before which she was wearing all those false smiles for the customized union with him.

Reality eluded Jane often and she was back to her childhood days pondering over incidents that were fresh in her memory. Both the mother and the daughter in the process

of subject-object relation came to understand their personality. Nagy's theory states this as "internal conception of the self" and an "internal conception of the other". Jane came to understand her mother better. When she had questions in life "she wheedled confidences out of friends, investigated and ruminated over the women she had sprung from, searched for models in persons who had made good use of their lives, admirable women who, even if not dramatic, might guide her through their examples."(OW 24).

Aware that it was the change in the attitude that mattered, Jane customized it to suit the environment around. She learnt to free what cannot be held, and the simple truth that every person was only a tiny part of the 'Entire Event' (OW 272), and it was sensible not to control things for the mere reason of serving personal needs. This forgoing of what is ephemeral for higher things is in positive semblance to Kitty's adoption for spiritual. Jane's inquisitive nature made her critique everything and everybody. She never overlooked any single emotion of her mother and the people with her. Her empathy in most cases placed her in agony and in such circumstances the situations governed her. But gradually she learnt from her mother not to dredge into details that will lead to despair and, to leave certain things as they are for reconsideration.

Nell's association with Leonard saved her from the supercritical streak of making harsh judgments on others and on herself. Leonard had the perfectionist streak of concentrating on perfect things in life and people. Cate, who inherited this from her father was critical of the absence of any trait of such perfection in things around her. Unlike him, Nell reminisced that it would have done Cate good if she had cared to be critical of herself, as she was of others.

The choosing of a Southern President Jimmy Carter is because the people felt that “the South has preserved...individuality of region as well as person and has not been homogenized to quite the extent of the rest of the nation.”( AS 171), said poet and novelist James Dickey and is quoted by Louis D. Rubin, Jr in his book . True to his observation the social and economic changes in the country that followed the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Civil War and reconstruction could not destroy the ethnic and regional differences in the country as those who had to leave the region for education or other reasons remained rooted to the older culture of the South. The root that holds the people in place is the mothers in the families and their sustaining power is significant in the constructive change in relationship between and among the members of the family. Nell in *A Mother and Two Daughters* is remorseful of Theodora’s criticism of Cate’s life doubting her possibilities since her intelligence and her independent womanhood will not alter the limitations that the society has laid on the women. This observation by Theodora leans towards the popular culture of the twentieth century America that assigned a “proper place” to its women teaching them to be moral, pious, devoted, subservient, and nurturant and they were prone to censure than their male counterparts. Though Nell was not in allegiance with such contradictions of the society however, expressed her concern over her daughter Cate’s negligence of herself and wished that “Cate would hurry up and find...happiness.”(MTD 21). She indeed wanted Cate to “find herself” without losing herself because of her ‘egalitarian tendencies’ that placed her in unpleasant situations. She also stopped Max in the middle when he started being critical of Cate. In testing situations in her life that followed immediately after her marriage to Leonard, Nell had wished her mother was alive to advise her and save her from the burdening conscience she was forced into when she was confused over her



concealment of her former love for a doctor Grady Moultrie, from her husband. The yearning for 'an Ideal Mother, an all-wise female', prepared Nell to be one such mother to her daughters.

In the subject and object relation of Nagy, an object while helping the subject is mutually benefitted by identifying its own individuality. Just as how the acquaintances help in providing strength, they also serve as tools to measure against each other. Though Nell by nature was amiable to all, especially the women in her circle, she was also aware of their weakness in not letting her alone lest she would find some resource to engage herself. In spite of realizing the inner satisfaction in some of those women who had been conscious of their shortcomings and naturally sadistic in seeing her as a widow, a woman without a companion, she continued her friendship with them since she had come to understand how human relationships were formed. Despite the fact that she was different in many ways from other women around her, she had regard for them and accepted them for what they were. She instilled this quality in her daughters. Her daughters arrived at understanding the context in which their mother lived and her reasoning of the ways and people they came across.

Cate and Lydia were already seen to absorb these characteristics from their mother. These qualities besides life's experience and their faith in humanity made their peace a near future possibility. Women change for better when others lay their faith in them and they start identifying goodness in others.

Fairbairn affirms that when others have faith in a person, then with conscious effort that person could change for better when he says that people look for satisfaction that comes when they associate or relate with others. Nell and Leonard's faith in each

other had strengthened the bond between them. Nell was sensibly aided by Leonard Strickland in her confrontation with others. She was a practical mother who acted rationally to help her daughters to internalize the nuances of relationships. All three women, Nell, Cate and Lydia, found means for their essential transformation from this approach towards them by the other. Ultimately they realized “in the absence of the ideal- which was usually not to be found when you most needed it – you had to rely on your instincts and common sense” (MTD 168). Cate came to a confrontation with herself and saw that she had been fleeing from her own history of things that she could control and also on those that she could not control. In the end Lydia turned out to be a successful television personality. Nell was married again and also resumed her nursing profession. Thus the daughters saved their mother the agony by bringing to order their disorderly lives.

In her love relationship with Gabriel Weeks which did not leave any certainties for future, Jane like her mother chose the sensible option and ended her relationship with Weeks. Many times, she placed Gabriel beside Ray for judgment and identified similarities - the same self-righteous attitude, the same tone of one who thought that he was more knowledgeable than others. Kitty was unaware of these identities but still she advised Jane not to get into any serious relationship with Gabriel. Jane in fact measured herself by the standard of other people around her and she noted “I turn into an anachronism every time I come home.”( OW 131).

Jane learnt to adapt to the changes in times. A reader as she was she reminded herself that even in the modern novels, there was no clear division of good character and a bad character. A hero was no longer too good nor a villain too bad. This is the developmental process of ORT where the subject’s individuation dominates. Sometime or the other all ruminate over and investigate women they had sprung from like their mothers and grandmothers.

Kitty quotes from *The Cloud of The Unknowing* that “when you feel that you are completely powerless to put these thoughts away cower down before them like some cringing captive overcome in battle and reckon it is ridiculous to fight them any longer. This humility causes God himself to come down in his might and avenge you of your enemies and take you up and fondly dry your spiritual eyes.”( OW 108). Kitty thus has abandoned herself for the peace it could bring.

Jane while at home once let the window open to let the heat bill run up for the reason that it would irritate Ray. Even this small act of aggression pleased her. Kitty’s asylum at spirituality was a means of aggression to show Ray that she would like to retain some part of her individuality. Ursula King writes in *Woman and Spirituality* that “spirituality... has to do with an age old human quest to seek fulfillment, liberation... transcendence amidst the welter of human experience” (5).

Ray, always controlled her movements and since she was away at the church in town often, he even resented Kitty’s spiritual interests. He had a superior sense of responsibility to shelter his wife and family from anything evil and was maddeningly severe at times. The mother and the daughter by nature, free spirited, found ways to be away from these dominant clutches.

The women realize the necessity to adapt to the constructive changes in the social outlook and shift their concentration from survival in the world to development of the self through overcoming their limitations. The optimistic autonomy executed at this period redefines their self.

Cate learnt to be a “detached observer” and unlike earlier times stopped castigating herself and others. She continued in her stand for truth “ I think I can forgo the luxuries if

I have the freedom and the mobility to investigate things as they are, and may be call a few truth as I see them without getting arrested or put away in a madhouse, If I can be allowed to do that for a few more years, I think I will have fulfilled my purpose in life.” (MTD 367-68). Thus towards the end of the novel the confidence that she derived out of her association with people helped her to position herself in life. Her blind assertiveness that even took her to prison was replaced by sensible actions. When the novel ends, she had become a freelance teacher just as she wished, “may be I can find a cluster...They don’t even have to be disciples, just a few engaged minds, so I won’t go crazy with loneliness....”(MTD 367) .

Nell was always available for her daughters. She was sensitive to every need of her daughters and was beside them. When her daughters also reciprocated her care for them there was hopeful solidarity between them. When her daughter Cate is out of a relationship for want of independence, Nell understood her daughter. Cate told her mother “you’re the glue that holds civilization together”( MTD 349). Nell’s involvement and sincerity helped her to establish a vital connection with her surrounding and its inmates.

In the beginning of the novel Theodora was annoyed with Cate and told Nell that however much she supported “independent womanhood” still there were limitations which these women can never venture. She added that especially “a middle aged woman with no base attracts more pity and censure than her male counterpart.”( MTD 17). This was a common belief for which Godwin seems to have an answer through her character Leonard. When Nell repeated Theodora’s statement to Leonard that “middle-aged women couldn’t live on their possibilities anymore” he replies ‘Forty today isn’t like forty when we were that age...Life is changing so rapidly. The expectancies are stretching.’( MTD 21).

Considering that most of Godwin's women are independent, middle-aged or somewhere near this sounds prophetic. From seemingly meager possibilities these women identify sources to renew their lives. This may not be an extraordinary feat, but still at the transition period of life this identification of means to revigorate is important.

Cate is described by her father as interesting but at the same time disturbingly unpredictable just like the nature of life. There is always the gratifying presence of support systems to any individual in the family, in the people around and in the social systems to uphold women.

In *The Odd Woman*, Jane Clifford, an attractive woman in her early thirties and a teacher at a Midwestern college returned home to attend the funeral of her grandmother whom she loved most. At home she was left with opportunities to observe and understand her people and herself.

Jane from her childhood had witnessed her mother Kitty's agony over continuing the clandestine phone calls to her lover, who was a professor of English at Tulane. Though fate, had separated the lovers and Kitty was married to another man who died shortly leaving Kitty with Jane, and Kitty had remarried Ray Sparks, these phone calls did not stop. She always carried a purse full of dimes and quarters to make phone calls to her former lover. But when a choice was given, she decided to stay with Jane's stepfather and threw away all the hopeless pain which those phone calls were causing. Jane found her mother's decision, this "closing off the uncertain option, however joyous"( OW 11), to remain where one belonged to be a sensible decision.

Under certain social conditions namely, the rule of the father, whose power, while often hidden in the family is ultimately determinant of the intimacy between the mother

and the siblings. He is the possessor of the mother and in turn that of her rationality. He is representative of culture and society itself. He generally has far more social wealth than women irrespective of whatever his class is. His identity is built in part out of denying the mother's power and devaluing her, and this attitude controls the psychology of the daughter in assessing and understanding the father. Jane started relating herself to her mother giving her the object's role. Her mother was Jane's object and she weighed her actions against her mother's actions thus relating herself to her mother. Her mother in this way helped her understand herself.

In the mid-1970s and 1980s Godwin's female characters were identified through their careers which were related to the mind. Jane Clifford in *The Odd Woman* is an example. Godwin uses inter textuality, literary references, memory and dreams as a means to explore the female mind. It is not only the characters but also the inter textual references that serve as objects leading towards enlightenment of the mind. These also serve as tools skilled in inward journey via which a subject introspects itself.

Both Kitty and Jane knew that it was the family tradition to have women of the family supporting others in it. The members of the family were assured of being taken care by these women. Jane gradually started valuing relationships for what they were and ended her 'detached assessment' of relationships.

Jane was firm about her ideologies and her denial to act against her beliefs was so strong that as a child she felt unconscious every time something was enforced on her and she was estranged at times because she could never associate with people whom she thought were not truthful. She could never bring herself to be a hypocrite and she had been steadfast about her principles and in this she thought her mother was deprived of self

since she was obliging to everyone around her. This peculiarity in her manner was because of her inability to acquaint herself with people who does not fit into her belief system, and her mother's association with those who were unlike her annoyed Jane. Though, it was later on that she realized that her mother, as she thought, had not transformed compromising her identity completely or had altered but only had attuned herself to the new situations and people and had accommodated everyone. She did not ignore social obligations and thus had organized the life that she had chosen.

Kitty did not hesitate to point out that Jane started her affair with Gabriel knowing too well that he had a wife and knowing that she was into a wrong relationship. There was something beyond the natural curiosity to know things about her lover's wife that compelled Jane every time to bring Ann Weeks into her conversation with Gabriel. As she pondered over it, she saw that the reason could be that by nature women were more faithful than men and unconsciously she yearned for a communion with her. She had living examples to prove her theory; Edith her grandmother who was faithful to Hans till her very end and her mother kitty who left back every desire and lived her life with Ray Sparks. Though they had not gone to the extremities of getting separated nevertheless, it had resulted in a rift between them. Her girlhood memories of Ralph had left deep scars that did not allow her to soften towards him even in her womanhood. Ralph's authoritative subjectivity had sapped the growth of Clare. Ralph Quick's love affair with Hannah, a client of his, destroyed his marital life with Lily. Though she found her own ways to come out of his authority, even trivial matters affected her since she relived the painful memories. When she was not able to find the gas tank in Ralph's car, she remarked "Anything connected to him seems to have its own sinister power of sapping your independence"(SF 199).

When his step daughter Clare also moved away from him, Ralph Quick was left with no children in the family to speak his heart. His sons were too small and his business kept him engaged and he could not give his sons the time required. His long drives to the old lady Silvia Gallant, who was his friend was because of his yearning for somebody who will understand him for what he was then. By the time he looked for a daughterly figure in his life who would have understood him and would have been with him, the relation between Clare and himself had gone beyond redemption and there was clearly no opportunity for him to win her back for his daughter.

When his daughter-in-law Snow entered the picture after the death of his son Theo, and when everybody else in the family was reluctant to welcome her, he thought of ways to redeem his 'hillybilly' daughter-in-law. He looked at Snow as his object through whom he could get back something of his duty as a man of the family and develop a healthy relationship that he failed maintaining all these years.

Ralph could empathize with the mountain girl Snow as his life also had started from a social set up similar to her own. When he heard a policeman speaking to him in the mountain accent similar to Snow's and to some extent to that of his, he felt like "for a moment the three of them were united in a silent bond against this enclave of bourgeoisie pretensions" (SF 125). Clare who was on a look out for ways to redeem herself from her guilt over her failure to heed Theo's desperate attempts to be understood by his family, understood this affinity between Ralph and Snow and took a step forward to nourish Snow's inclusion in Quick's circle. Many actions of Theo were the outcome of his strategies to draw the attention of others towards him. He resorted to those strategies when he felt left out and was denied objects and here the family members, besides whom he could judge and



evaluate himself. Clare realized that his tragic end could have been averted if the others around had allowed the reversal of roles and instead of denying his importance had allowed him to have his share in it. That way, his confidence would have increased and he would have had a better hold on life. Clare and Julia came to realize this much later. Clare's friend Julia accepted that Theo was "surrounded by people who weren't a whole hell of a lot of help to him"(SF 97), and in those people she included herself.

Clare, the successful author, wanted her book to possess the quality of a compassionate understanding towards people and events in life as human relationships are essentially inscrutable. Kitty was always avoiding situations that would cause mortification to her and to others and safely removed it from her life. To maintain peace in her home she turned flexible to appease Ray and played the role of the moderator and was diplomatic at various instances. Jane could see herself growing into a person like her mother who conducted her life in a rhythm that had in it a speculation on the duties at home and the need to live an independent life.

Jane learnt to be a "tight rope walker" like her mother, who had to consciously balance her husband and his erratic moods with that of her other family members. Though it was a long process of trial and error nevertheless Jane appears quite in the way to be one like her mother who beautifully balanced relationships. At the same time, she found that to be giving way for domination by people like Ray Sparks and her lover Gabriel was sacrificing one's individuality.

The place a person belongs to influences the life of the person. It has its own passions, emotions and flavors that leaves a strong impression in the minds of the residents. People prefer their own place and the idea of being identified with it. People's likes are symmetrical

to the place they live in and are also patterned accordingly. Julia had returned to her place to be with her ailing father. Though she could socialize she found herself much useful to her father. As Julia's mother states "we would do much better to show a little more guilt and compassion for the people closest to home..."(SF 64). Clare came to accept that to be identified as a 'Beloved Local Person' was a power base. If this was a sort of refuge, the other refuge was spirituality. This spirituality Julia called as an inviolate spiritual life. This "sense of place" that has been noted as a marked trait of Southern life and culture by many, observes Rubin in *The American South*, makes 'one's community unique and, in particular, the existence of a web of friendship and, often, kinship that would be impossible to reproduce elsewhere' (33).

Clare discovered that, she might have moved very far from her mother's family but, a large part of her had always stayed with them and she had never actually outgrown her old life. And the life with them from her childhood days to recent times had been "at once provoking and sorrowful and treacherous and vengeful and duplicitous and miasmatic – yet perversely compelling"(SF 109). Her affection for her region and the community as such seemed to grow even more greater.

Clare like most of the other members of her family evaded the reality of the state of affairs at home. This was seen even in her writing where she gave a happy ending to all her characters which did not happen in real life. When Theo pointed this out to her she was taken aback. It was like being enforced to the reality that she had been overseeing all these years. Perplexed, she sought the opinion of her soul mate Julia to help her out of her frustration and misgivings. She doubted, however much she thought herself a liberated woman, she was still clinging on to some of the outdated values and beliefs of the society

that she sprang from. She asked Julia “What if my efforts, such as they are, have been achieved simply by leaving to satisfy the tastes of the culture that shaped me, rather than trying to sniff out its rotten spots or going beyond it in my imagination”?(SF 51). Julia allowed herself to be the object for Clare to relate herself to and convinced her by speaking of their varied temperaments and how their actions were justified. ‘In particular, two enduring aspects of Southern culture may be useful: the nature and extent of religious belief and practice, and a relatively great attachment to local communities.’ (AS 30). On her return, unable to overcome the emotional clutches of the South returned, she understood it is her demons like self-doubt and hate that was carried over by her from the past .

When Clare’s step father Ralph Quick came to Julia’s place with photographs of Julia and Clare when they were teenagers and then told her that he had to stop by his old friend Miss Alicia Gallant’s place whom he visited regularly to keep company, Julia sympathized with him for his loneliness and his driving around to look for somebody to sit around. Even though she was not ready to entertain Ralph, she appreciated his care for his older friends, before she saw him off. This is in alliance with ORT’s suggestion where each could adjust to the others’ object seeking needs.

Theo’s attention craving nature was understood by Clare and she decided to spend some time at home with him. She adjusted to the needs of Theo and decided to invite him to New York and spend some valuable time with him. Though in his case it was not possible she was careful later on in her understanding of others around.

After Theo’s terrible death, Lily paused to think of who was her favorite among the children. It was not her interesting daughter Clare or her younger son, beautiful Rafe, but the most loving Theo she had been counting on to take care of her in her old age. But

now that he was gone there is no chance for her to tell him that it was he whom she loved the most of all which would have made him very happy. Neither Lily nor anybody in the family had ever understood Theo's emotional need to be loved, to be cared for when he was alive. They had only made the matters worse for him.

Lily's regular visits to old age homes to be with some of its inmates made her think of life at that age. Their peculiar habits and their conscious efforts to hide their pains that old age usually brings reminded Lily of Father Weir telling her that when she shunned "a trait in someone, you'd better look carefully" (SF 193), to see if it was something that has started finding its way into her. Thus her visits turned out to be a process of understanding herself.

But when each one tried to dominate the other members in the group it disrupted the intimacy and situation turned unbearable. This was felt by Julia who was used to the Quick's temperament from her childhood days. It was the reason for her feeling exasperated while at Quick's Hill for Lily's birthday. Notwithstanding "She had the beginnings of a headache from all their exhibitions and undercurrents knocking against one another like wild molecules in an wireless jar" (SF 29). In a sense, Julia was an outsider and it was possible for her to escape the situation. But the plight of the inmates was difficult and survival became taxing. This strained the relationship.

In most cases the members' object seeking need makes it necessary for them to somehow influence the other members by some means. Thus the strategies adopted by them brings a difference in their real self and when this becomes the way of life, in due course their identity is at stake. Inwardly each one realizes this change in the other one and starts losing faith in each other. The ORT states this to be leading to disregard for any individuality or autonomy among family members.

There was always the tension of impending and difference of opinion when Lily and Snow were together. Lily was from a generation which was entirely different from 'Hillybilly' Snow. They were in extreme contrast to each other. What must have been natural in their case looked affected, when seen by the other. The reason could be that each one was oblivious to the fact that the other persons' actions will be influenced by the surroundings from which he or she emerged. When this understanding is not possible then there is complexity in maintaining relationships.

Theo wished to be cared for by others made him to do things which was not in his nature. But this care for those around him was not reciprocated by them. And since he continued to do things with the purpose to bring them to him, he ended up being a threat to the family. Snow, his wife was able to see the real Theo when he was dead and was kept in the casket. "I saw the way he would of looked if he could of just been himself and not so intent on pleasing and escaping them, both at the same time." ( SF 235).

Theo even used his dress that was disliked by his family to express his disappointment at not receiving their attention in spite of the various things he did to gain it. It arrived at a stage where he wore it whenever he wanted to tease or punish them.

Nell, aware of Cate's extremes of emotions pondered over her pursuit of her aspirations to weigh how much of it was the result of her conviction and how much was for the sake of action and reaction. She had the urge to 'seize control' of her daughter's life to clear her from the spoilage that she had created of herself that had severed her from the people around and that which had left her divided. Nell was ever patient to her daughter's 'steamroller judgment on everything and everybody' ( MTD 334) and her typical 'Cate-ness'. She never relented when it came to reminding her daughter that

people were more important than some utopian ideals that she fought for. A clear discernment made the mothers conceptualize the primary need for adjustment and negotiation to live in harmony. The mothers' desperation made their children realize that the essence of life is relating oneself to their people and that materializes ultimately.

Though at the initial stages of these adjustments where they had to compromise, the women faced difficulties in establishing their individuality. Towards the end they are seen as characters who have learnt to accept it as their way of living. They reverted to the ways that established and strengthened relationships.

The women characters in Godwin's novels validate their identity by relating themselves to the people around that provide promising certainties in the evolution of the self. The family members or practices enjoyed, endured or criticized all contribute to the growth of a person. This way people's faith in the increasingly suggestive term 'relatedness' is proved rewarding.

At every phase it is the underlying values of the family or the individual member that acts as the major influence in shaping oneself. The strategies adopted by the characters to form alternative relationships that are different from the traditional patriarchal system are outcome of such influences and hence could be validated as safeguarding self-identity and are suggestive of commendable development of liberated women.

The next chapter 'Sisterhood – A Shared Commitment' attempts at analyzing the resourcefulness of the relationships formed by the women in the novels, with the women outside the family that aid in their evolvment.